

Bonhams to sell Old Pretender's medal case in Edinburgh



Some fascinating pieces associated with the Jacobite rebellions are to be auctioned when Bonhams sells the selected contents of Stobhall Castle at its Edinburgh sale rooms, 22 Queen Street, tomorrow morning. Stobhall is one of the ancestral seats of the Drummond family and, was, until recently, the home of James Drummond, Viscount Strathallan, heir to the Earldom of Perth.

Among the highlights is The Old Pretender's prized medal case which he filled with images of himself and his family, including of course, his son Bonnie Prince Charlie. The case had a permanent place on his desk in Rome where he lived in exile after his failed attempt to seize the British crown from George I in 1715. Estimated at £5,000-7,000, this important piece, dating from 1725, bears his arms on the front and back and has space for 13 medals.

According to a contemporary visitor, the German traveller, Georg Keyssler, James liked "seeing his image struck on medals". Although the original medals were dispersed many years ago, a similar collection was put together for the Earl of Perth and these are also to be sold, separately, in the Bonhams sale. These include a particularly interesting medal struck for the marriage of James III to the Polish Princess Maria Clementina Sobieska (£400-500). The profiles of the happy couple appear separately on the face and obverse of the coin rather than side by side because the marriage in May 1719 was initially a proxy one. The actual ceremony (commemorated with yet another medal, also in the sale) did not take place until September that year.

Bonhams, Senior Specialist, Grant MacDougall said, "This is a significant piece for what it tells us about The Old Pretender. By the time the case was made in 1725, James was firmly established in his court in Rome. Though he still entertained hopes of a Stuart revival, he was increasingly

politically marginalised after the French throne had withdrawn its support for his claim to the British Crown. It is easy to see why this case with its slightly vainglorious contents would have been so important to him.”



Commemorative
medal for marriage
of James III and
Clementina reverse



Commemorative
medal for marriage
of James II and
Clementina face

James Stuart was the son of Britain's last Catholic monarch, James II, who was deposed by William of Orange in 1688. On his father's death, James claimed the British throne as James III (James VIII of Scotland). In 1715, he launched the first of the two serious Jacobite attempts to regain the crown but the rebellion attracted little support and quickly fizzled out. The Drummonds were strong supporters both of the Old Pretender and Bonnie Prince Charlie, the Young Pretender, who invaded England in 1745 but turned back when he reached Derbyshire. He and his troops were pursued and harried by the army of George III led by the Duke of Cumberland and their defeat at the battle of Culloden on 16 April 1746 effectively put an end to the Jacobite cause.