

Lynedoch's wedding band to be sold in Edinburgh



Lyon & Turnbull are to sell the 18th century wedding ring of General Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch. Valued at £500, the gold wedding band, which belonged to his wife, the Honourable Mary Cathcart, was worn by Graham for over forty years following her untimely death in 1792, it was only removed from his finger after his death at the age of 95.

Thomas Graham was born in 1748 and was the third and only surviving son of Thomas Græme of Balgown, and Lady Christian Hope, a daughter of the first Earl of Hopetoun. In 1785, he purchased the estate of Lynedoch, situated in a picturesque part of the Glen Almond. "He married the Honourable Mary Cathcart, and was a devoted husband. There is a portrait of Mary, in the National Gallery of Scotland here in Edinburgh, it's quite famous and she is referred to as the 'Beautiful Mrs Graham'." said Douglas Girton, specialist at Lyon and Turnbull. "On one occasion his wife discovered on the morning of a ball in Edinburgh that she had left her jewellery in Perthshire, he rode the ninety miles to and from the Estate using relays of horses to ensure that she would have her jewellery at the ball."

His wife's health worsened, and on the recommendation of her medical adviser they went, in the spring of 1792, they went to the south of France, sadly she died on board ship. He hired a barge to take the body to Bordeaux, but near Toulouse a group of French soldiers opened the coffin and molested the body. He closed the casket and returned home to deposit her remains in a mausoleum, which he built in the churchyard of Methven. Her husband took their wedding ring and wore it on his finger until his death at the age of 95.

Girton continued "After the loss of his wife and overwhelmed with sadness, and only forty-three years old, he immersed himself in military life. Before the incident near Toulouse, Graham had sympathised with France and their revolutionary ideals but from that point on he detested the French and saw his military career as a way to take revenge for his wife."

He was a dynamic man who once arrested a highwayman when his carriage was 'held up' in Park Lane. Graham, who was at the opposite side of the carriage, leapt across the ladies to the carriage-door, drawing his sword he threatened to run the man through, if the assailants did not release the horses' heads. They fled, and the captured highwayman was subsequently arrested.

The ring and other personal affects of Lord Lynedoch will be sold at auction at Lyon & Turnbull on the 3 October 2012 as part of their International Fine Antiques & Decorative Arts.