

First Edition of The Great Gatsby sold today in Edinburgh

Auctioneers at Lyon & Turnbull today sold a first edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald's Great Gatsby for £1875, on the eve of the premiere of the new film starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Carey Mulligan. The book valued at £700 is from one of the most remarkable private libraries of English literature to come to auction.

The library, sold for a total of £226,000, belonged to the late Bruce Ritchie. Tom Stoppard on hearing of his death said "I've known very few people as kind, as learned, as civilised as Bruce. He taught my son Oliver at Merchant Taylors' forty years ago and many pupils remember him fondly. The world is poorer without him."

As well as the first edition of The Great Gatsby, the collection, of Stirling-born school teacher, Bruce Ritchie, included Henry Fielding, History of Tom Jones, 1749. 1st ed. £1,700; Alexander Pope. The Rape of the Lock. 1714. 1st ed. £1,800, Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol. 1843. 1st ed. £2,700; T.S. Eliot., Prufrock. 1917. 1st ed. (one of 500 copies) £3,600, Kenneth Grahame The Wind in the Willows. 1908. 1st ed. £1,200; James Joyce Ulysses 1922. 1st ed. £4,400 and Dubliners 1916 1st ed. £3,800; Evelyn Waugh, Brideshead Revisited. 1st ed., 1945. (this included an insertion signed by Waugh), £1600, W.B. Yeats. Mosada. Cuala Press, 1943, Lily Yeats's copy, £1,200.

John Sibbald, book specialist at Lyon & Turnbull said:-"This was an outstanding result. What is even more astonishing is that, as a private collector, Bruce Ritchie could assemble this kind of collection, particularly relying chiefly on a

school teacher's salary. For me, the outstanding items in the sale included the collection of works by Alexander Pope, Seamus Heaney, Tom Stoppard and the works of Yeats. The run of publications from the Cuala Press, the press established by Yeats's sisters also spring to mind."

Ritchie's father was a banker with the Chartered Bank and Bruce spent much of his childhood and school holidays in the Far East. Bruce returned to Scotland in 1950 to attend Dollar Academy, going on to the University of St Andrews in 1961 to read English and German.

After a year at Cambridge training as a teacher, he was appointed to the English Department at Merchant Taylors' School in London where he developed into an outstanding teacher of English. It was there that he met Tom Stoppard, a Merchant Taylors' parent, and where too the novelist and biographer A.N. Wilson was briefly a colleague as well as becoming a lifelong friend.

This is the catalogue from today's sale:-