

## **MAGNIFICENT SCOTTISH FOUNTAIN FETCHES RECORD £106,000 AT SOTHEBY'S SOUTH**

***-Nineteenth century fountain is the most expensive object ever sold in Sotheby's sales of Garden Statuary-***

***-The two-day sale realises £1,473,844-***

A RARE and impressive terracotta fountain by the Glaswegian company Garnkirk, dating from around 1870, sold for £106,000 in a two-day sale of Garden Statuary and Architectural Items at Sotheby's South on May 25 & 26, 1999. This was the highest price ever realised for a piece of garden statuary at Sotheby's saleroom in West Sussex, which has been holding specialist sales of garden statuary since 1986. It is also believed to be the most expensive fountain to be sold in the United Kingdom.

The fountain, which measures almost two metres high, is arranged on two tiers and was originally installed at Waternish House (formerly Fasach House) on the Isle of Skye. It carried a pre-sale estimate of £40,000-60,000. The Garnkirk Fireclay Company was operating in Glasgow between 1838 and 1895 and was associated with the Scottish architect Alexander 'Greek' Thomson and the sculptor E H Baily, who designed Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square. The whole sale realised a grand total of £1,473,844 which paid for 968 lots, which attracted international interest among buyers from as far a field as USA, Mexico, Switzerland and Canada.

Tim Wonnacott, Chairman of Sotheby's South, said: "The result underscores the serious interest shown by buyers for architectural pieces of quality, for display in gardens and grounds. The market has at last come of age and begun to flower in the garden sales at Sotheby's South." Highlights of the sale included two carved sandstone gargoyles in the form of mythological beasts, dating from the 19th century and believed to have been salvaged from the Houses of Parliament after the Blitz which sold for £632. The gargoyles were retrieved by Lord Hacking, who was once private secretary to Lord Craigavon. Lord Hacking lived at Mannings Hill Cottage, Cranleigh, Surrey, but left the gargoyles in the garden when he moved. They were sold by the daughter of the purchaser of the house who now lives in a flat in Sussex, and had insufficient room to display them.

A pair of substantial early 20th century cast and wrought iron gates removed from the Smithfield Fruit and Vegetable Market in Moat Street, Birmingham, when it was demolished in the early 1960s realised £12,650. The market, built in 1883, once covered more than 14,000 square yards, making it one of the largest wholesales markets in the country. The gates, cast with the coats of arms of Birmingham, were made by Hart, Son, Peard and Co, who were responsible for much of the ornamental ironwork currently in the Birmingham City Council House, including the City's Art Gallery.

The market for cast iron items from the Coalbrookdale Foundry in Shropshire proved to be strong. A Lily of the Valley seat sold for £5,060 against a pre-sale estimate of £2,500-3,500, while the same price was achieved for an Oak and Ivy pattern seat against a pre-sale estimate of £2,000-3,000. A pair of seats from the same Foundry, dating from around 1860 and decorated in an unknown pattern realised £5,520.

Staddle stones in both Cotswold and Cornish stone continued to prove popular. Among 21 lots was a set of four stones which realised £2,990 against a pre-sale estimate of £800-1,200. Items from the Guild of Compton Potters, Surrey were also sought after. A rare sundial, possibly commissioned by Liberty fetched £2,530; while a jardinière on stand sold for £3,795 and a rare poppy bowl realised £2,875.

A pair of corbels removed from the Ritz Hotel, Glasgow, dating from 1900, and modelled as the head of Minerva wearing a helmet which fetched £839, and a pair of rare Japanese bronze cranes, dating from the Meiji period which sold for £19,550 against a pre-sale estimate of £1,500-2,500.

Jackie Rees, head of Sotheby's Garden Statuary Department, said: "There is a strong market for good pieces of statuary such as the Italian white marble figure of Galatea which sold for £21,850 [lot 558]. The marble figure of Sappho by John Baptiste Clesinger realised £23,000 [lot 559], and the bronze figure of a naked woman entitled A Midsummer's Morning Joy fetched £25,300 [lot 628]. Bidding for these lots was fierce and they all achieved above estimate. We were delighted with the price obtained for the miniature tools, lot 750 which reflected the interest in unique pieces (sold for: £2,185)."

**THE NEXT SALE OF GARDEN STATUARY AND ARCHITECTURAL ITEMS IS ON SEPTEMBER 21, 1999**