

PRESS RELEASE

Results from Morton & Eden's auctions on 11-12 December 2003

Morton & Eden auctions of Coins and Medals on 11-12 December fetch £1,056,057

Ancient, Islamic, British and World Coins, Historical Medals and Banknotes, 11 December 2003,

This sale realized £712,753 with only 4.3% by value remaining unsold. British gold coins and a group of rare Australian pieces proved to be the highlights, demonstrating the current strengths of these markets.

An important collection of British gold nobles and their continental imitations, *circa* 1350-1600, sold for a total of £116,955. An extremely rare heavy noble of Henry IV from the London mint realised £10,350 (Lot 327) while another from the mint of Calais brought £13,800 (Lot 328), both purchased by a private collector. Top price in this section was for the ryal of Elizabeth I which sold just over the top estimate at £18,400 (lot 340). This section of the sale was followed by the dispersal of a collection of twenty four exceptionally well-preserved five-guineas from 1668-1753, selling for a total of £173,305. £13,800 was paid for a five-guineas of Charles II, 1669 with elephant below bust (lot 371) and an issue of George II, 1748, realized £11,730 (lot 392), both well over estimate. An indication of the strength of the British coin market was shown by the price of £2,415 paid for a 1937 Coronation proof set of 19 coins (lot 425), representing an increase of over 40% on the price that such sets were selling for at auction a year ago.

Important Australian coins featured an 1813 holey dollar of New South Wales which almost doubled its top estimate to sell for £44,275, selling to a buyer bidding by telephone (lot 518). There was strong competition for the other Australian coins, with Knightsbridge Coins paying £56,350 for a Sydney Mint pattern sovereign of 1856 (lot 520) and £37,375 for a pattern half-sovereign of the same year (lot 521), both bought against strong competition from the room and several telephones.

Strong prices were also recorded for US coins, with a 3 dollars of 1883 trebling its top estimate to sell for £5,175 (lot 558).

The sale also featured ancient and Islamic coins. Greek and Roman coins mostly sold in line with expectations or for slightly more. Islamic saw a more restrained take-up for the common coins but good results for rarities. Umayyad silver saw competitive bidding with a dirham of "Naysabur" 82h going over estimate at £4,140 (lot 157). Top price was the £4,600 paid for an extremely rare coin of the Zanj rebellion in southern Iraq, struck in 261h.

Of para-numismatic interest, two pencil sketches of equestrian portraits of Police Officer Jean Emerson, which were used in connection with the Royal portrait on the Coronation crown of 1953 by Gilbert Ledward sold for £632, purchased by the Royal Mint (lot 487). Finally, a "Garrett's Improved Gold Changer" for changing sovereigns and half-sovereigns into silver coinage, *circa* 1900 (lot 501), purchased recently in a provincial sale for £150, sold for £1,322.

War Medals, Orders and Decorations, 12th December 2003

Morton & Eden have followed their memorable sale of the Dr. Arthur B. King Collection with another highly successful auction. Over 98% of the 577 lots offered were sold in the room, raising a very healthy total of £345,000 (this figure excludes lots sold after the auction).

The collection of British war medals formed by the late Perl van Sant accounted for the majority of the lots offered. Assembled over a period of more than forty years, these medals were acquired with an eye for condition and this, together with the current strength of the medal market, encouraged strong bidding from collectors as well as dealers with many lots exceeding their presale estimates. For example, a rare India General Service medal 1895-

1902, with 1 clasp Defence of Chitral 1895 to Sepoy Khern Singh of the 14th Sikhs realized £1,600 (lot 1322). All 492 lots from the Van Sant Collection were sold for a total of £131,120.

The remaining 85 lots comprised further campaign and gallantry medals and groups, as well as a section of orders and decorations including an extremely rare set of G.C.I.E. insignia provenanced to a former Maharajah (lot 1523, sold for £13,800). Among the gallantry awards, several lots saw strong competition and went on to realise well in excess of their estimates. The fine Great War DCM and MM with Bar Group awarded to Sgt. L.S. Bull of the fourth Dragoon Guards sold for £6,325 (lot 1567, estimate £2,500-3,000), while the AFC Group to Flight Lieutenant Peter Hawke, a Spitfire pilot during the Battle of Britain, brought £4,140 (lot 1569).

The highest price of the sale was achieved by the VC group of three awarded to Warrant Officer Israel Harding during the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 (lot 1571). While his ship, H.M.S. *Alexandra*, was engaging the shore forts, Harding heard a shout of "There is a live shell just above the hatchway" and rushed on deck to find an unexploded 10-inch spherical shell lodged there with its fuze still burning. Taking some water from a nearby tub, Harding doused the projectile before picking it up and immersing it in the tub. Accompanying the medals was a quantity of contemporary documents, including characteristically dramatic Victorian illustrations of Harding's heroic act. The lot was sold to a private collector for £86,000.

Medals awarded to members of the Ryan and Buckle families concluded the sale, beginning with the two fine groups won by Sir Charles Snodgrass Ryan and his son Lt.-Col. Rupert Sumner Ryan. An Australian by birth, C.S. Ryan served as a military surgeon with the Turkish forces in the 1870s, before returning to Australia where he later became the Turkish Consul General. He also had the distinction of treating the wounded Ned Kelly while on the way to his trial at Melbourne. The combination of Turkish and Australian interest saw a bidding war between the room and several telephone bidders, with the room bidder finally victorious at £21,800.

The last four lots in the sale comprised the medals of four succeeding generations of the Buckle family, all of whom entered the Royal Navy and attained the rank of Admiral. The first of these was the gold Louisburg medal presented to Mathew Buckle Senior, captain of Boscawen's flagship at the capture of the town in 1758; although it did not find a buyer in the saleroom this extremely rare piece has subsequently been sold privately. His son, also named Mathew, saw service under Earl Howe during the Glorious First of June, and accordingly received the Naval General Service medal with clasp for 1 June 1794; this sold for £10,300 (estimate £2,500-3,000). The K.C.B., Army of India and Crimea Group awarded to his son Claude Henry Mason Buckle, who also saw action against the North African pirates, realised £9,200 (estimate £6,000-8,000), while the Crimea, China and Royal Humane Group to Claude Edward Buckle, the final member of the Buckle family represented here, sold for £2,180 (estimate £1,500-2,000).

Morton & Eden's next sale of War Medals and Decorations will be held in Spring 2004, and consignments for this and future sales are welcomed.

(All prices include a 15% buyer's premium).