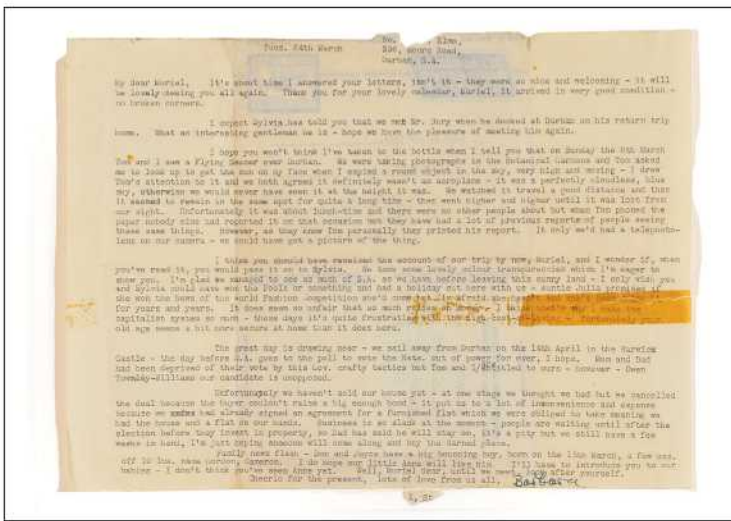




A rare eyewitness UFO account from the early days of the modern "flying saucer" phenomenon written in Durban in 1953 (£300/500).



The sale features an extraordinary collection from Tim Wonnacott, one of television's great showmen and a long-standing champion of the antique and the unusual. His eye for the theatrical, historic and eccentric is reflected in a wonderfully varied assemblage that includes items as varied as a Mi'kmaq (Northeastern Woodlands) tribe model of a canoe (£800-£1,200).



A money box fashioned as a pillar box that opens to reveal a spring-loaded figure of a suffragette concealed inside is a great rarity. Remarkably, it comes by direct descent from Rose Hobden who purchased it new in 1913 (£3/5,000).

Sworders' August 18 Sale Is Out Of The Ordinary

LONDON — Now in its ninth year, Sworders' Out of the Ordinary sale returns on August 18. Beneath the imaginary big top, the curious, the uncanny and the extraordinary take center stage, offering a celebration of objects that sit far beyond the bounds of the everyday. It's the place to find a cavalcade of curiosities: a witch's ball, an iron maiden, a mahogany cased vampire slaying kit or a George I memento mori ring.

Much interest is circling around a rare eyewitness UFO account from the early days of the modern "flying saucer" phenomenon. Written in Durban soon after the sighting on March 8, 1953, the author, Barbara Graves, carefully records the weather conditions, appearance of the object and its unusual movements across the sky.

She told her correspondent, Muriel Armfield, of Chertsey, Surrey: "I hope you don't think I've taken to the bottle when I tell you that on Sunday, Tom and I saw a Flying Saucer over Durban. We were taking photographs in the Botanical Gardens when I spied a round object in the sky, very high and moving. We watched it travel a good distance, and then it seemed to remain in the same spot for quite a long time — then went higher and higher until it was lost from our sight."

At the time there was a wave of similar sightings in South Africa. On the same day, two South African Air Force flying officers reported seeing unidentified aerial objects above coastal city of Durban.

Contemporary documents from the formative years of the phenomenon are astonishingly scarce with this letter expected to attract strong interest from collectors of UFO memorabilia at its estimate of £300/500.

The spotlight also falls on an extraordinary collection from Tim Wonnacott, one of television's great showmen and a longstanding champion of the antique and the unusual. His eye for the theatrical, historic and eccentric is reflected in a wonderfully varied assemblage that includes items as varied as a Mi'kmaq (Northeastern Woodlands) tribe model of a

canoe (£800-£1,200) and an armadillo inkwell.

Of particular note is a relic from the Mutiny on the *Bounty* — a leather-bound book with panel inscribed: "This Relic of John Adams's House was taken from Pitcairn Island by George Fudge of HMS *Reindeer* Dec 1st '65."

Adams was among the eight mutineers, led by Fletcher Christian, who settled on Pitcairn Island in January 1790. They stripped the ship of anything useful, including much of its timber, before it was scuttled.

The mutineers remained undetected until February 1808, when Adams and some Tahitian women and children were discovered. He was eventually granted amnesty and died on Pitcairn in 1829. By the time the crew of HMS *Reindeer* visited in 1865, many of the original houses were in poor repair and they too were stripped to create souvenirs. This one is expected to bring between £1,5/2,000.

Wonnacott's collection also features a large marble relief of a standing pharaonic figure. It was formerly at Ditchingham House, Bungay, Suffolk, the family home of the novelist Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925). In addition to his writing — including best sellers *King Solomon's Mines* and *She* — Haggard is known for his interest in the spiritual realm and paranormal phenomena. His interest in Egypt was fostered by four visits to North Africa and a close friendship with Wallis Budge, keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities at the British Museum.

While Haggard owned many antiquities, this carving, housed in a Victorian polished oak frame with wrought iron fittings, is thought to be later and may have been removed to Ditchingham from one of the secret occult societies to which Haggard subscribed. It is estimated to bring £7/9,000.

A money box fashioned as a pillar box that opens to reveal a spring-loaded figure of a suffragette concealed inside is a great rarity. And remarkably it comes by direct descent from Rose Hobden, who purchased it new in 1913. The estimate is £3/5,000.

For audiences at the time, the symbolism of the pillar box and the suffragette waving a flag inscribed "Votes for Women" would have been immediately understood. In 1911, as the Women's Social and Political Union's campaign for electoral suffrage entered its militant phase, Emily Wilding Davison had proposed setting fire to letter boxes as a form of protest. Later that same year, she was arrested while attempting to burn the mail in a pillar box in Parliament Street.

A similar money box is illustrated in Diane Atkinson's book *Rise Up Women! The Remarkable Lives of the Suffragettes* (2019).

A copy of the banned Sex Pistols poster designed by Jamie Reid (1947-2023) to promote the single "Holidays in the Sun" in October 1977 has an

estimate of £500/800. Reid took the graphics directly from a Belgian tourist brochure, replacing the text in speech bubbles with lyrics from the song. When the Belgian Traveling Service threatened legal action, the artwork was destroyed and the poster reprinted with a replacement

image.

For information, www.sworders.co.uk.



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