

Online Auction #175 Report: Coins & Collectables, 28-29 March 2020

Our online auction held 28th-29th March 2020 achieved total sales of over £600,000.

This extraordinary result was achieved under conditions of lock-down throughout the UK due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. It was a large auction, held over two days as usual, with two auction "rooms" in session; though there were no room bidders this time, only internet, postal, and telephone bids. Having been instructed to close our premises to the public meant that the viewing period was cut short half-way through the first week. We endeavoured to provide sufficient photographs and condition reports to those interested, and the result proves that we will be able operate in this manner for as long as necessary under the current rulings from the Government.

The lock-down doesn't seem to have dampened spirits in the market for collectables, although there will be economic factors at play here, particularly a surge in the popularity of gold as usually happens in a crisis. Confidence clearly remains in the durability of traditional, portable collectables as reliable assets. A simpler observation may be that there are a lot of collectors cooped up at home presently, with plenty of time to browse, to enjoy their hobbies, and with holiday plans on indefinite hold.

Standout items in the Militaria section included lot 376, the WWII Distinguished Flying Medal group to Flight Sergeant Gareth Jones, which sold for £2300 hammer (est. £1200 - £1300). This group was featured by national newspapers due to the fascinating story behind Jones' war career. He served in 25 operations over Europe, including as a Lancaster rear gunner, and was wounded several times in action. On one occasion he was shot down and survived for two days in the North Sea clinging to wreckage, before being rescued.

A 'sweetheart badge' of HMS Hood, lot 591, sold for £360 hammer against an estimate of £80 to £100 - HMS Hood was sunk by the Bismarck. An excellent framed RAF uniform, lot 730, late and post WWI officer's jacket with multiple rank insignia, sold for £1300 (est. £850 - £900).

In the Weapons section a series of 'commando knives' was sold, the highest price being £1100 hammer for lot 1145: Wilkinson Sword genuine 1st Pattern fighting knife, est. £800 to £850. A definite "sleepers lot" was 1170; a Saudi Arabian ceremonial sword with untested gold fittings; estimated at just £150 to £200, the hammer went down at £3600 !

The World Coins section contained many nice pieces which were sought-after, including Spanish and colonial 8-Reales and USA gold coins. A French silver 5 Francs 1852A, in unusually high grade, sold for £540 hammer (est. £100 - £150). A speculative high grade Morgan Dollar 1884-S, lot 1409 (est. £200 - £300) sold for £750 hammer – a good price for a Morgan.

The Ancient & Hammered Coins section contained some unusual pieces: Lot 1534 was a Two Sceptres/Two Stars 'mule' of William I, of the Lincoln Mint, in VF, sold for £2800 hammer. A very quaint, probable contemporary forgery Charles I shilling, lot 1631, sold for £420 hammer.

There was an especially good series of British Commemorative Medals in the Exonumia section. This included Royal Mint gold issues for various coronations and events, and some rare large silver ones. Lot 1719, the William III, Treaty of Ryswick, State of Britain 1697 large silver medal by J. Croker (est. £800 - £1200) sold for £2100 hammer. The large gold issues for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria 1897, and the Coronation of Edward VII 1902, each sold for £4300 hammer. An attractive enamelled Crown 1895, featured on the cover of the catalogue, reached £480 hammer – quite a price for an enamelled coin.

The English Gold Coins section was the strongest overall, as expected; these obviously considered a sound investment. High prices were paid for guineas and sovereigns, the highest being £10,000 hammer for the Sovereign 1853 proof, lot 2007.

A large section of English milled silver and base metal was offered, and well-received, including a choice collection of farthings. A silver pattern Farthing of George I 1717, lot 2176, reached £1400 hammer. Another lot featured in national news was lot 2165, a new type of modern 'mule' £2 coin, where the reverse of the First World War 1914-1918, type K34, was paired with the obverse of the previous commemorative type

K33, leaving the coin without a denomination. This was sold along with Royal Mint authentication letters, for £500 hammer.

Bidders were still very keen to bid on bulk lots throughout the sale, including stamp albums, postcard and cigarette card lots, even though most were unable to view in person due to the 'lock-down'.

One of the later highlights of the sale was lot 2651, a Bristol City v Huddersfield Town football programme 27th March 2910 Semi Final Cup Tie at Stamford Bridge. This was estimate at £40 to £50, and jumped up to £750 !

The quality of the sale itself was of course the ultimate deciding factor in its success; being an assemblage of collections picked up on our travels, at our valuation day and evening 'roadshow' events (pre-pandemic). The catalogue was the largest we've ever produced. We hope to resume publishing in the same fashion at the earliest opportunity. For the time being we shall proceed with smaller and more numerous online auctions, some with printed catalogues. We urge all potential sellers to consign with confidence at this time, as the market remains strong.

Our next online auctions will be Jewellery on 22nd April, Banknotes on 2nd May, and Watches, Silver & Small Collectables 13th May. These online sales are nearly fully prepared, and filled with choice material.

The 30-31 May: Coins, Medals & Militaria Sale remains open for consignment, with the closing date to be confirmed.

If there are other types of items you are interested in selling, don't hesitate to get in touch. A suitable auction will never be far off in our schedule. We will even plan an auction around your consignment in the case of large collections. For obvious reasons, we are unable to accept large bulk lots at the present, due to limitations of communicating such things online (and shipping), but with the lifting of restrictions we will be more than happy to work with you in selling such material. At the present we encourage vendors to consign goods that may be described clearly and bought with confidence over an online transaction, for example: Single coins, other single items, and small bulk lots (minimum £40 reserve per lot).

A massive "thank you" to all those who took part in our March auction, giving us a boost of confidence at this challenging time. We hope to be able to continue to serve you throughout this crisis, and beyond. Lockdales maintains all safety measures in accordance with Government instructions.



Lot 1739: Edward VII & Alexandra Coronation 1901, Royal Mint large gold medal, reached £4300 hammer.