

Property from the Collection of  
**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Countess Mountbatten of Burma**  
 To Be Offered at Sotheby's London on 24 March

A Glimpse into the World of Two Legendary Families  
 Over 350 Lots Spanning Jewellery, Furniture, Paintings, Sculpture, Books, Silver,  
 Ceramics & Objets d'Art

Public Exhibition from 20 – 23 March



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Countess Mountbatten of Burma, great-great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria, great niece of Russia's last Tsarina, first cousin to Prince Philip and the daughter of Britain's last Viceroy of India, the late **Patricia Edwina Victoria Mountbatten** was born in 1924 into a dazzling dynasty of royal and political relations. Over her eminent life at the very heart of Britain's cultural establishment, she is known and remembered for her "unwavering perseverance and beguiling sense of humour".

The eldest daughter of Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma (1900-1979), and glamorous heiress turned philanthropist Edwina Ashley (1900-1960), Patricia had an unconventional upbringing, from weekend parties with King Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson at her parents' estate in Hampshire to evacuation on the eve of the Blitz to stay with Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt III in her palatial Fifth Avenue apartment in New York.

In 1943, at the age of nineteen, Patricia entered the Women's Royal Navy Service. It was there that she met, and fell in love with, John Knatchbull, 7<sup>th</sup> Lord Brabourne (1924-2005) – an encounter that was to spark an enduring love affair and an almost sixty-year marriage. As a Captain in the armed forces, Brabourne had worked for Patricia's father in India, and later became an Academy-Award nominated film producer, behind titles such as *A Passage to India* and Agatha Christie adaptations *Death on the Nile* and *Murder on the Orient Express*. Their wedding at Romsey Abbey in 1946 was witnessed by thousands, with members of the public lining the streets. The Archbishop of Canterbury officiated over a ceremony which saw the King and Queen in attendance, the Royal princesses Elizabeth and Margaret among the bridesmaids and Prince Philip as an usher.

When Patricia inherited her father's peerages, the pair became one of the very few married couples in England each of whom held a peerage in his or her own right and the custodians of two great inheritances. John's included Mersham le Hatch, an elegant house by Robert Adam in the Kent countryside, where the Knatchbull family had settled in the 15th century. Furnished by the great



Thomas Chippendale in the 1770s, it held within it objects with extraordinarily diverse provenances, including the explorer and botanist Sir Joseph Banks who travelled to Australia on Cook’s first expedition, Jane Austen’s beloved niece Fanny and the Marquesses of Sligo. Patricia inherited precious objects associated with her parents from their glamorous Art Deco penthouse on Park Lane – with treasures from Edwina’s maternal grandfather, the great Edwardian financier Sir Ernest Cassel – and their time in India.

Over the course of her life, Lady Mountbatten was the patron of over one hundred charities. She dealt with her own tragedies with extraordinary courage and grace and passed this on in lending her support to those in need.



**On 24 March 2021, over 350 lots from Newhouse, Patricia and John’s charming eighteenth-century home will be offered for sale with estimates ranging from £80 – 100,000.** Through each lot, viewers and visitors will have the opportunity to enter the world of an important family through the art and objects that they lived with, crossing the paths of the twentieth century’s leading figures along the way.

**Harry Dalmeny, Sotheby’s Chairman, UK & Ireland:** *“Lady Mountbatten’s residence, Newhouse was a private place for entertaining only the closest of family and friends, capturing all the magic of a stately home on an intimate scale. Through her belongings, many passed down from members of the extended family over the years, collectors have the chance to see the story of the twentieth century unfold and acquire evocative vestiges of a glittering way of life.”*

**Lady Mountbatten’s family:** *“Our overriding desire when organising our mother’s affairs is to honour her wishes and celebrate the memory of both our mother and our father. They had discussed these arrangements with us, and we are simply putting their plans into effect. We are of course keeping many things and importantly amongst these are objects which are of sentimental value and much loved.”*

#### SALE HIGHLIGHTS

**Anniversary Gifts: A pair of jewelled gold and enamel elephants, Jaipur, 1946 (est. £2,000-3,000), and a Fabergé silver-gilt inkwell, probably workmaster Julius Rappoport, St Petersburg, circa 1900 (est. £4,000-6,000)**



Patricia’s father Louis had been appointed Britain’s last Viceroy of India, with a mandate to oversee the British withdrawal from the country, and the family grew close to the great leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Indeed, following their marriage, the newlyweds John and Patricia Brabourne also spent several months in India.

Inscribed in Lord Mountbatten’s handwriting; ‘Edwina from Dickie’ and ‘18 July 1946’, these gold enamel elephants made in Jaipur were a gift from Lord Mountbatten to his wife Edwina

commemorating their twenty-fourth wedding anniversary. When they had become engaged at Viceroy's House in 1922, the Vicereine Lady Reading had written apologetically to Edwina's father '*I hoped she would have cared for someone older, with more of a career before him*'.

The loving gift is an insight into their marriage – one that had brought together two of the most glamorous and adventurous figures of the period – and testament to the importance of India to both of them. 1946 was the year Lord Mountbatten was made a Viscount and this gift anticipates the news of his appointment as Viceroy the following year.

The sale also offers a Fabergé inkwell gifted to John by Patricia on 26 October 1966, the anniversary of their wedding twenty years before, with a romantic inscription in Patricia's handwriting looking forward to "*20 even more perfect years*".



**'Tutti Frutti' style Jewels: A gem set and diamond wreath of carved rubies, emeralds and sapphires (est. £40,000-60,000) together with other Tutti Frutti style pieces including, dress clips, earrings and a ring**

Patricia's mother Edwina Mountbatten was one of the best dressed women in the world, revered for her style, and owned a renowned collection of jewels, decorations and tiaras. She was known to always travel with her jewels, stating that she never knew when she might be called upon to wear them.

Edwina had a particular penchant for Art Deco "Tutti Frutti" jewels, which took inspiration from Indian cut-coloured gems, and so held a special resonance for the Countess. In 1928, she purchased a Tutti Frutti tiara from Cartier, which until recently was on loan to the Victoria and Albert museum, immortalised in a photograph by Cecil Beaton. These exquisite pieces from Patricia's collection, some of which were inherited from her mother, are the perfect pairing to the famous tiara.



**Edwina's Evening Bag: An unusual and amusing gem-set gold mesh purse by Lacroche Frères, Paris, circa 1905 (est. £2,000-3,000)**

This extraordinary handbag comes in the form of a large pig, its spine, tail and trotters set with diamonds. The Mountbatten family loved animals and had a veritable menagerie of pets wherever they lived, from a horse gifted to Edwina and Louis by the Maharajah of Jaipur on the occasion of their wedding, to a lion cub that Edwina brought home from South Africa when Patricia was thirteen.



**The Banks Diamond: A historic jewel passed down through the Knatchbull Baronets which commemorates Sir Joseph Banks (est. £40,000-60,000)**

A scientist, explorer and botanist, Sir Joseph Banks joined Captain James Cook on his voyage to the Pacific as part of the Royal Society's expedition, collecting thousands of plant specimens previously unknown in Europe. This late 18th century brooch incorporates a cushion-shaped yellow diamond given to Joseph Banks by his sister Sarah around the time of his marriage in 1779, the reverse of the stone featuring a glazed locket with woven hair and their initials JSB. Originally gifted to Sir Joseph Banks' wife Dorothea, it passed to her sister Mary, Lady Knatchbull and thence by descent, until finally to Lord Brabourne and its last wearer, Patricia.



**Important family portraits: John Michael Wright's *Portrait of Jane Monins* and Thomas Hawker's *Portrait of Mary Harvey***

The portraits of ancestors that hung in Newhouse stretched back 500 years and range from the austere to the beautiful. Formerly hung in Patricia's Drawing Room, this beautiful portrait of Jane Monins (d.1699) was painted in 1670, commissioned by Jane's husband Sir John Knatchbull, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet. The payment of £15 to the artist appears in his account book. The painting was shown in the seminal exhibition of Wright's work in Edinburgh in 1982, where it was remarked upon for its sensitive portrayal. A further painting in the sale is by Thomas Hawker, who was one of Sir Peter Lely's chief studio assistants. This depicts Mary Harvey (1629-1705), the first British female composer to have had her works published and niece of physician William Harvey who was the first to discover the circulation of the blood in the human body. Her daughter Mary married Sir Thomas Knatchbull, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet.



**A rare TM (Masudaya) battery-operated Radicon Robot, 1957, in original box (est. £4,000-6,000)**

This incredibly rare 1950s toy robot, still in its original case, was given by Lord Mountbatten to his grandchildren. He delighted in anything modern and mechanical, constructing a large train set in the cellar at Newhouse.

**A silver, enamel and hardstone Fabergé timepiece, St Petersburg, 1896-1903 (est. £15,000-25,000)**

Patricia's father, Louis Mountbatten was closely related to the Russian Royal family through both his mother and father: the last Tsarina was his aunt, with whom he spent many summers. A number of lots in the sale hark back to the lost world of Imperial Russia, including this exquisite Fabergé timepiece which was used by Patricia in her bedroom. Fabergé were the preferred purveyors for European royalty when in search of luxury precious objects particularly for gift-giving.



**A collection of sailors' cap tallies, 20<sup>th</sup> century, including a ribbon for the Royal Yacht (est. £1,200-1,800)**

These sailors' cap tallies were collected by Patricia as a child, many given to her by her father, and come from ships that Lord Mountbatten was directly involved with. Those of the HMS Lion and Queen Elizabeth were worn by Mountbatten at the start of his career in the Navy as a teenager. There are others from vessels significant in his naval career, including HMS Wishart.

Also in the sale are Lord Mountbatten's binoculars, painted with the family colours (est. £400-600).



**Edwina's Magnificent Inheritance: A Continental Parcel-Gilt Silver Tankard, circa 1690 (est. £2,500-3,500) and a Chinese white jade model of a buddhistic lion, Qing Dynasty (est. £15,000-25,000)**

In 1921, two years after Edwina met Louis Mountbatten, her maternal grandfather, the legendary collector Sir Ernest Cassel died. Cassel was a financial advisor to King Edward VII, Edwina's godfather, after whom she was named. The 21-year-old inherited a vast fortune, and the young couple became owners of his properties and custodians of his extraordinary collections of early silver and Chinese jades.



Sir Ernest's belle epoque palatial home was completely rebuilt by the couple, who created an apartment for themselves on the top two floors with some of the most extraordinary interiors of their day – integrating these precious objects into their uniquely glamorous Art Deco space. The sale features a group of property that adorned these famous rooms.

**Museum-Quality Furniture: A rare Anglo-Indian inlaid bureau mounted on a mahogany stand supplied by Thomas Chippendale to Sir Edward Knatchbull in 1767 (est. £40,000-60,000)**

Amongst the treasures in the sale is an object by Thomas Chippendale, England's greatest cabinetmaker. The incredibly rare stand was made by Chippendale for the sum of £4 to house a Knatchbull heirloom, an Indian inlaid miniature bureau – a celebration of the link between England and India.



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