

The reason why this Cotswolds stately-home furniture sale is getting high society excited

The sale has been described as 'the most important collection of English country-house furniture to come to auction in recent decades'

By Jessica Doyle
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Wormington Grange

The country-house sale has long been a draw for the country-house set - a chance to nose around a notable property, see some fine pieces of furniture in the type of house for which they were intended, and perhaps pick up a little something for the drawing room along the way.

In the last days of the current lockdown, with social engagements yet to really kick off, it also offers the rare chance for a sociable day out - hence the excitement surrounding the upcoming sale of the contents of Wormington Grange, a Grade II-listed Regency house in Gloucestershire, which will go under the hammer at [Duke's](#) in Dorchester in a three-day sale starting this morning.



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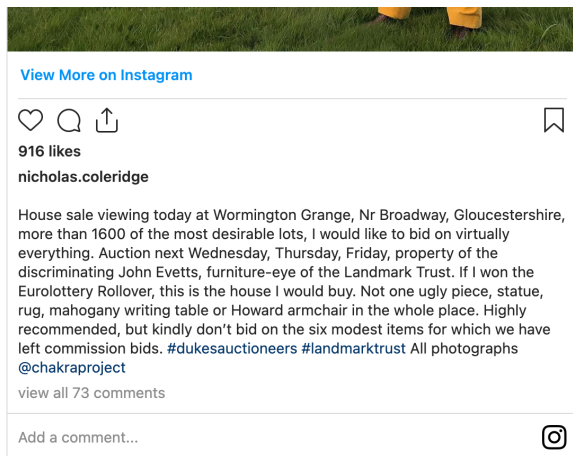
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The sale has been described by Cristian Beadman of Duke's as "arguably the most important collection of English country-house furniture to come to auction in recent decades". Such was the thrill when viewing opened at the house on Saturday, some of the antiques aficionados who flocked there took the opportunity to make a day of it, and combine an inspection of the furniture and artworks with a picnic in the grounds afterwards.

The real fun starts this morning, however, when the sale gets underway at Duke's. The current owner of the house, John Evetts (grandson of Churchill's military adviser and confidante General Lord Ismay, who also lived at the house) is Furnishings Manager for the Landmark Trust, and travels far and wide sourcing pieces for period properties. His eye for interior decoration is evident in his own considerable collection, which includes pieces passed down through his family, who lived in the house for 100 years, along with some fine examples of country-house furniture from 1810 to 1840 that he purchased to reflect an addition made to the building in the 1820s.



The entrance hall at Wormington Grange

The auction includes over 1,600 lots, ranging in value from £50 to £100,000. Among the highlights are some exceptional chandeliers, expected to sell for up to £30,000, and several Howard & Sons sofas and armchairs, some estimated at over £10,000. The standout lot is an oil on canvas by Algernon Newton, A Dorset Landscape, which was exhibited to great acclaim at the Royal Academy in 1928, and is expected to reach at least £100,000. There are also many pieces of furniture by the cabinetmakers Gillows of Lancaster, noted for furnishing grand country houses in the late 18th and early 19th century.

Evetts is selling up to downsize, and looking forward to continuing to collect for his new home. As he puts it, "Maybe there's going to be someone out there who is doing up a house of this period who will benefit from being able to buy in a three-day sale what it's taken me 45 years to collect."





The dining room, with Algernon Newton's painting A Dorset Landscape

The auction will take place at 10.30am on Wednesday 12th, Thursday 13th and Friday 14th May at Duke's, Brewery Square, Dorchester. To view the catalogue, visit dukes-auctions.com.

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