

# ... model sea victories



Encased in a bespoke airtight, temperature-controlled case, it was secured by a Cambridgeshire collector on the lower estimate of £20,000. Although this was a strong price for a modern model ship, Mr Miller had hoped for more as period models of the *Victory* virtually never appear at auction.

Napoleonic prisoner-of-war models were one of the section's more patchy areas with a fine wooden example of the French Trafalgar veteran *L'Intrépide* estimated at £28,000-35,000 failing to sell. However, ships made of bone fare generally better than wooden ones and a finely-carved and detailed early 19th century model of a 74-gun ship found a buyer. It had been given a fierce clean so it had a bleached look, rather than the more desired mellow yellow colouring, and sold just below estimate for £10,000 to a private UK buyer.

It's not all about ship models at these Blythe Road events. The rest of the 249 lots showcased maritime-themed objects from pictures and scientific instruments to scrimshaw and fittings from famous liners.

Among this eclectic offering was a 45-page private journal kept by Admiral Lord Collingwood (1750-1810) written while commanding the British fleet in the Mediterranean in 1807, two years after

*"Considered the most complex and accurately detailed model of *Victory* ever undertaken, it was a labour of love"*

the Battle of Trafalgar at which he had fought alongside his great friend Lord Nelson.

The journal documents the movement of ships, allies, enemies and navigational conditions. Collingwood is described in the catalogue notes as a succinct man "who rarely used two words when one would do", and few manuscripts of his appear on the market, especially compared with Nelson's large output.

On the day, it tipped over estimate to sell for £8500 to a European private buyer.

Another stand-out lot was a pair of 'Big Eye' 3in (8cm) Japanese binoculars consigned by the family of Captain Richard Oliver-Bellasis of *HMS Eurylaus*. It is believed they were captured by a smaller Royal Navy vessel first, then handed over to *Eurylaus* during its non-stop 44-day patrol of the Pacific between July and August 1945 – a Royal Navy record at the time. Captain Oliver-Bellasis later sent them to the Admiralty Research Laboratory in Middlesex for examination before they were returned to his care.

Still in the painted and partially-padded delivery box bearing the Admiralty address, the pair sold comfortably above estimate at £6000.

"With their connection to *Eurylaus*, the binoculars had a fantastic provenance and still retained their original finish which is increasingly hard to find," said Mr Miller.

Once a strong area of the market, 'sailor art' has seen demand weaken as export restrictions over marine ivory, particularly to the US, continue to deter collectors.

Nevertheless, the field still has pockets of strength such as Narwhal tusks.

The sale contained two such lots which were offered with enticing estimates; the first dating from the 19th century, measuring 6ft 4in (1.94m) and with a mellow yellow patina doubled its estimate to fetch £10,000.

The other, a double tusk (a rare trait in Narwhals) took £13,000 against a £5000-8000 estimate. Both went to UK private buyers.



**Above:** a private journal kept by Admiral Lord Collingwood – £8500 at Charles Miller.

## Additional highlights at Charles Miller's Olympia sale on October 31



**Above:** an 18th century study of a brig in four positions in pencil, white chalk and watercolour attributed to Charles Gore – £60.

**Right:** an 18th century shagreen telescope – £800.

**Below:** a distressed mid-19th century 12in (30cm) terrestrial table globe by W. & A.K. Johnston, Edinburgh & London – £380.



**Right:** a late 19th century Venetian decorative brass casting from a gondola – £250.



**Left:** a cut-glass and brass deckhead saloon lamp from the S.S. Roker (1898) – £750.



**Above:** a half-model of the American tea clipper *Red Jacket* (1854) – £150.