

MACKINNON

FINE FURNITURE



A GEORGE III BEDSIDE TABLE

England, *circa* 1765

This exceptional and incredibly rare George III chinoiserie bedside table is one of a group from the collections of the Marquesses of Townshend, from Raynham Hall, Norfolk. A pair of these tables remain at Raynham today and are photographed in the King's Bedroom there. This pair has solid wood backs rather than the more sophisticated and elegant lattice back of our table. Our table has inventory labels for both Balls Park and Raynham Hall on the underside.

Balls Park in Hertfordshire is a Grade 1 Listed mid-17th century house and is believed to have been the inspiration for some of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The house was built between 1637 and 1640 for Sir John Harrison, a wealthy financier and customs official, possibly to designs of Nicholas Stone, the king's master-mason. In the later 18th century, the house passed to the family of the Marquesses of Townshend of Raynham Hall, Norfolk, before being sold in 1946.

In 1732 the Balls Park estate passed to the only surviving daughter of Edward Harrison, Ethelreda – known as Audrey. In 1723 she had married well, to Charles Townshend, Lord Lynn and later 3rd Viscount Townshend (1700 – 1764) of Raynham Hall, Norfolk. Lady Townshend was particularly

fascinated by and amassed a great collection of Anglo-Indian ivory inlaid furniture. The marriage was unfortunately extremely acrimonious due in part to the infidelity of Lord Townshend. In her will, she left Balls Park to her favourite grandson Jack Townshend, 2nd son of George, 1st Marquess Townshend (4th Viscount). The contents of Balls Park were subsequently offered for sale in 1797 although much of her furniture had already been bequeathed to her son George, 1st Marquess of Raynham, and inevitably ended up at Raynham Hall. They also resided at Lansdowne House, Richmond Hill, London.

References include an inventory of furniture, fixtures &c Taken on the Premises, Richmond Hill the Property of the late Marquis of Townshend July 1811. After 1811, the Richmond Hill furniture almost certainly returned to Balls Park, the house having remained in the family. Balls Park was finally sold in 1901, and contents were again removed to Raynham.

In the catalogue entries for the sale of the celebrated Raynham commode (now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art), it is noted that according to a lawyer who acted in connection with the Townshend estates that Chippendale & Haig's original bill for this commode is in existence, and he stated that he had inspected it several times; it could not, however, be produced at the time of the sale. The lawyer further stated that according to the bill the commode was supplied by Chippendale's firm to Balls Park, Hertfordshire. The 'extraordinary controversy' of the missing bill is discussed by C. Gilbert, *The Life and Works of Thomas Chippendale*, vol.1, p.289, vol.II, p.121, pl. 213. A further link between the firm of Chippendale can be found in the ledgers: 'Dear Chippendale' being paid 1,200 for work at Raynham in 1819.

The Chippendale association with Balls Park, moreover, would appear to be difficult to substantiate in that although the house did indeed come into the Townshend family through the marriage of Charles, 3rd Viscount (d.1767) to Ethelreda Harrison, it was apparently never lived in by their son George, 1st Marquess (d.1807), instead passing through his second son John to a collateral branch of the family.

Thus, unless George, later 1st Marquess did in fact live there briefly between 1751, following his marriage, and 1767, when he inherited Raynham on the death of his father, it was only when the title passed sideways in 1855 to John, 4th Marquess Townshend (d.1863) that Balls Park and Raynham again fell into the same hands.

SOLD

An exceptional and extremely rare George III mid 18th century chinoiserie bedside table. Of rectangular form with a panel top with asymmetrical pierced galleries, with latticework sides and standing on detailed pierced square tapering legs. On castors. The mahogany of superb colour and patina throughout.

With 'Balls Park' and 'Raynham Hall' inventory labels to the underside.

Literature:

Michael Ridgill, *Raynham Hall - An English Country House Revealed*, Woodbridge, 2008, pp. 55

and 106

Height: 2' 0³/₄" in (63 cm)
Width: 1' 7¹/₄" in (49.5 cm)
Depth: 1' 2¹/₄" in (36 cm)

Stock Number

R11.120

5 Ryder Street - St James's - London, SW1Y 6PY

Phone: +44(0)20 7839 5671 Mobile: +44(0)7725 332 665

Email: charlie@mackinnonfineart.com Web: mackinnonfineart.com

