

18th century silver wine cooler saved for the nation

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A rare 18th century silver wine cooler of the utmost historical and artistic importance has been saved for the nation.

Image



Keeper emeritus of Temple Newsam House James Lomax with Lord Raby's silver wine cooler

The silver cooler which provides unique insight into the style and ceremonial role of British ambassadors abroad, has joined the impressive silverware collection at Leeds' Temple Newsam House, after it was saved from export thanks to a successful fundraising campaign by Leeds Museums and Galleries. A grant of £1.83million was secured from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), along with £140,000 from the Art Fund and further support from many other

heritage funders and charities including the Leeds Art Collections Fund.

The cooler was commissioned by Thomas Wentworth, 3rd Baron Raby and later Earl of Stafford, when he became the ambassador to Berlin in 1706. It is the largest of three surviving ambassadorial coolers in the UK; measuring an exceptional 129cm across and weighing over 70 kilograms, it is almost large enough to bathe in. It would have formed part of the large collection of silver typically taken abroad by British ambassadors to entertain in a style worthy of their sovereign. It was used during the ceremonial surrounding the serving of wine, which was the fashion in the grand dining rooms of the early 18th century.

Lord Raby's cooler was sold to a private buyer at Sotheby's in July 2010 for more than £2.5m. However, the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest considered it so significant to national heritage that it was temporarily stopped from export allowing seven months for a museum in the UK to match the auction price. Temple Newsam House successfully co-ordinated raising more than £2m** of grants.

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey said: "It's great news that this magnificent silver wine cooler, so illustrative of British ambassadorial life in the early 18th century, is to stay in the UK, following its export deferral and a successful fundraising campaign. Once again, those who care deeply about our heritage in the UK have come together to save this most iconic of objects."

John Roles, Leeds City Council's head of museums and galleries, said: "This magnificent silver wine cooler, which dates back to the early 1700s, is a fantastic acquisition for the city and is one of the star pieces in an already impressive collection of silverware at Temple Newsam.

"The historical importance of the cooler is so significant that every effort was made to keep it in the country and we are extremely grateful to the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and the many other organisations for their generous grants which have made this possible. Temple Newsam House is a grand and appropriate setting for such a valuable and important artefact which provides another reason to visit one of Leeds' finest attractions."

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the NHMF, said: "As one of the most ambitious objects of its kind from a glorious moment in English silver-making, this cooler is exactly the type of heritage treasure the National Heritage Memorial Fund was set up to save. I am delighted the Fund has been able to step in to ensure it remains in the UK for future generations to learn from and enjoy."

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: “This astonishing wine cooler is a real feat of silversmithing and we’re delighted it is on display in Yorkshire, alongside other captivating items of silver. We’re pleased to have joined forces with the National Heritage Memorial Fund to help make the acquisition possible; this is a great example of how private and public money can come together and help build UK collections with outstanding objects.”

Temple Newsam House is particularly appropriate as the new home for the cooler as it is one of the nearest major museums to Wentworth Castle, Lord Raby’s residence near Barnsley. The cooler is now on display.

Notes to editors

*The temporary stop on the export was imposed by the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest. The committee is an independent body, serviced by Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA), which advises the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria. Where the committee finds that an object meets one or more of the criteria, it will normally recommend that the decision on the export licence application should be deferred for a specified period. An offer may then be made from within the United Kingdom at or above the recommended fair market price.

**The full list of funders includes: National Heritage Memorial Fund: £1,832,000; The Art Fund: £140,000; The Monument Trust: £27,000; The J Paul Getty Jnr Trust: - £27,000; Leeds Art Collections Fund: £16,000; Fulford Bequest Fund: £12,000; Jacob Rothschild Foundation: £10,000; The Goldsmiths Company: £5,000; Leeds City Council (Museums and Galleries Acquisitions Fund): £4,648. The total price paid was £2,073,648 (reduced from £2,505,250 after tax concessions).

The Art Fund is a national fundraising charity, helping UK museums and galleries to buy, show and share art. It offers many ways of enjoying art through the National Art Pass which gives free entry to over 200 museums, galleries and historic houses across the country as well as 50 percent off major exhibitions. Over the past five years, the Art Fund has given £24million to 248 museums and galleries to buy art. It also sponsors the UK tour of the ARTIST ROOMS collection – reaching several million people each year, and fundraises: recent campaigns include bringing in £6 million to save the Staffordshire Hoard for the West Midlands and Brueghel the Younger’s The Procession to Calvary for Nostell Priory. It is funded entirely by its 80,000 supporters who believe great art should be for

everyone to enjoy. Find out more about the Art Fund and how to buy a National Art Pass at www.artfund.org.

Further information

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