

## **Press cuttings**

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of Huntingdon; or of Messrs. Thomas and Adrian Johnson, attorneys, at St. Ives aforesaid.

**TO** be Sold by Auction, together or in parcels, soon after Michaelmas next, unless sooner disposed of by Private Contract;

The MANORS of Horseheath, Carbonels, Limberies, Borser's Hall, Jacobs, Goodredge, Barnham, otherwise Barham, Eynell, West Wickham, Stretly Hall and Yenold, together with the rectory impropriate of West Wickham. And also a capital Mansion House called HORSEHEATH HALL, with the parks, lawns, and gardens thereunto belonging, and divers Messuages, Farm Lands, and Hereditaments, of the yearly value of 3050*l.* and upwards, (exclusive of the Mansion House) situate in the several parishes of Horseheath, West Wickham, Bartlow, Shudy Camps, and Wetherasfield, in the counties of Cambridge and Suffolk; being the estates of the Right Hon. Thomas Lord Montfort.

Note. A very considerable part of the purchase money will be suffered to remain on the estate, if agreeable to the purchaser. For further particulars enquire of Messrs. Chamberlayne and

White, in Gough Square, Fleet Street, London; Mr. Haggerston, attorney at law, at West Wickham; and Mr. Lagden, at Abingdon, near Bourn Bridge, Cambridgeshire. Either of the latter will shew the premises.

**SPILSBURY'S ANTISCORBUTIC DROPS,** with Improvements, raised January 1797.

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'Cambridge Chronicle' – October 14th 1769

Horseheath, October 10th, 1769

Whereas the last 2 years have been wet, and occasioned a great rot among the Hares, & prevented the Partridges from breeding such numbers as usual in the manors of Horseheath, West Wickham, Great and Little Linton & Niguellots, Lord Montfort, the owner of those several manors, desires all Gentlemen and others not to sport there this season.



BORN WITH A SILVER SPOON IN HIS MOUTH, DIED WITH A BULLET IN HIS HEAD

# The Baron's Folly

Sold for £1m,  
tureens of the  
free-spending  
peer who ended  
up in the soup

By CHRIS BROOKE

ITS gleaming splendour reflects down the years from an age of aristocratic opulence.

This 18th century silver soup tureen is one of a pair that once held pride of place in the dining room of the splendid stately home where Henry Bromley, 1st Baron Montfort, lived in lavish luxury.

Weighing 16lbs each and decorated in intricate detail, they bear worthy testament to the excesses of the peer, whose profligacy made him a legend in his own lifetime, not to mention lunchtime.

After being lost to the outside world for 73 years, they were rediscovered by a Sotheby's specialist on the Continent — the property of a nobleman — and were yesterday sold for a world record £1,013,500.

The purchase by an anonymous telephone buyer smashed the previous record of £522,000 for a pair of English tureens, set in 1988.

Back in 1744, Baron Montfort paid £500 — then a massive sum — to have the tureens crafted for the dining table of Horseheath Hall, the Cambridgeshire estate he had inherited as a 13-year-old Eton schoolboy when his parents died.

Covered in delicately crafted vines, leaves and husks and with tooled horses' heads as handles, the finished products — designed by architect William Kent and made under the supervision of the Prince of Wales's goldsmith George Wickes — were masterpieces of their kind.

They were also perfectly suited to a man who spent £100,000, a large part of his inherited fortune, on becoming an MP and in 1741 bought his peerage from George II.

Montfort was an aristocrat who did not do things by halves. 'He was known as a good bottle and card man,' said Peter Waldron, the auction house's silver expert in London. 'He gambled a lot and enjoyed dining as well.'

In the latter part of his life he became a very substantial figure of a man, spending many evenings in White's Club gambling, eating and enjoying the company of all.'

**'He never saw that spending ten times his income could be the ruin of him'**

With his fortune diminishing rapidly, the peer turned his attention to refurbishing his home.

He lavished his wealth on the house, which is no longer in existence, because he loved its location — so handy for the horse-racing town of Newmarket, an irresistible attraction for such an ardent betting man.

Part of his improvements was turning a chapel in the north-west corner of the building into a 'grand new dining room'.

There, the tureens were displayed in their full polished glory for visitors to admire, and maybe stand in awe of a man who is said to have

lived in 'the highest style of elegance and grandeur' and 'who entertained on a large and lavish scale.'

But, inevitably, the Baron's free-spending existence eventually caught up with him. And in 1755, with bankruptcy staring him in the face, he made his exit from this world in typically extravagant fashion.

After detailing his will to his solicitor, he stepped into an adjoining room . . . and shot himself.

'He never foresaw that spending ten times his income could ruin his fortune,' a friend wrote at the time.

His son and heir, Thomas, was

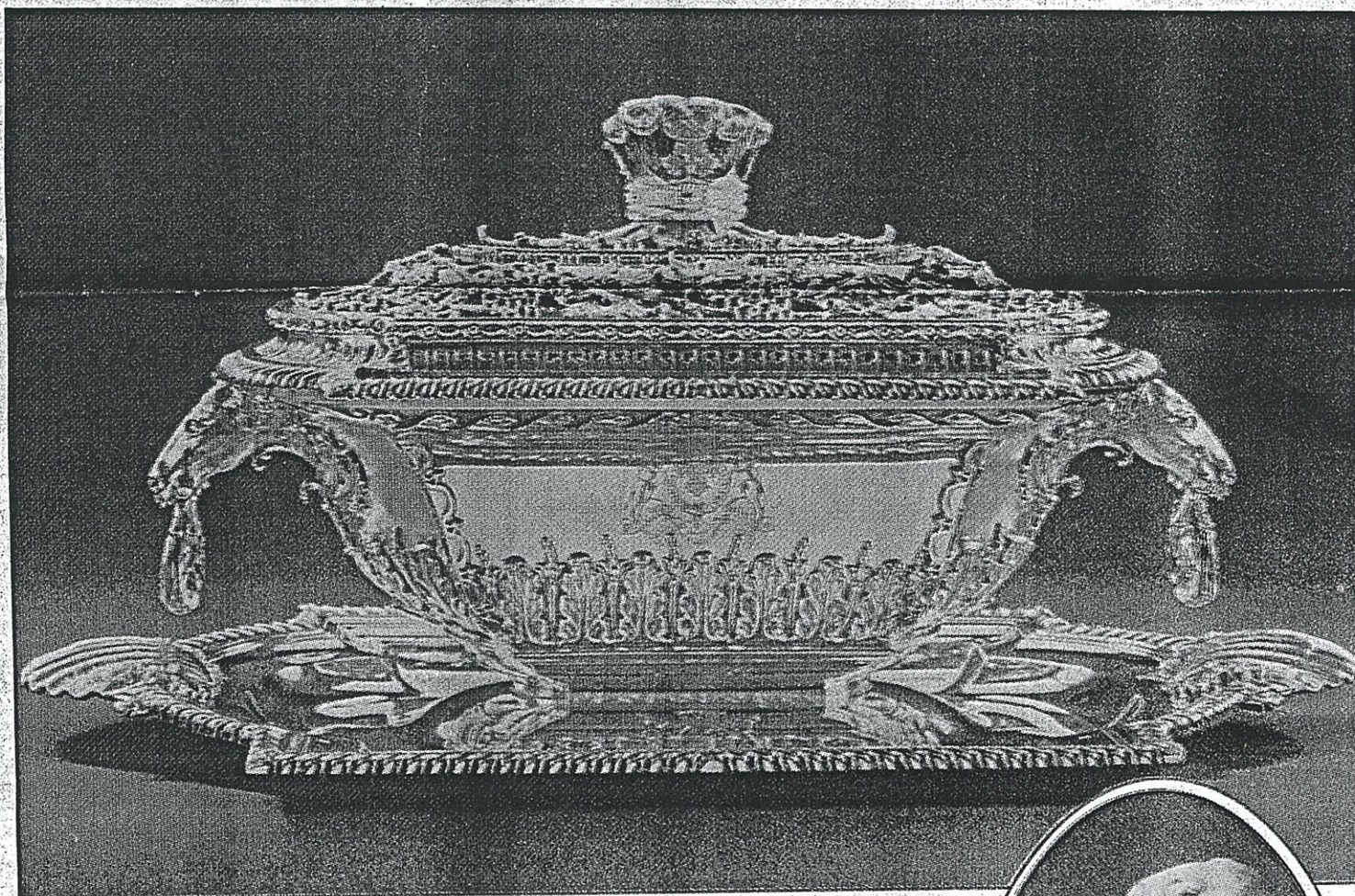
forced to sell off the family silver to deal with his legacy of debt.

The tureens were bought back by the original silversmith for £150 and he sold them to the Earl of Lincoln, later the Duke of Newcastle. They stayed in his family until being sold at auction in 1921.

For the past 73 years, the whereabouts of the Montfort tureens were unknown. Then a Sotheby's specialist in Europe was called in to appraise some silverware at the nobleman's home. He reported back to Mr Waldron, who realised immediately what had been found.

'My heart missed a beat or two when I saw them,' he recalled. 'It was one of those once-in-a-lifetime moments. They are fantastic creations that cross the barriers between silver craftsmanship and works of art.'

The tureens were expected to fetch around £750,000, but the bidding surpassed all predictions. 'I am absolutely delighted with the price achieved,' said Mr Waldron. Equally pleased, no doubt, was the original owner of the tureens . . . gazing down from the heavens and wondering how long it would have taken him to work his way through £1,013,500.



Baron Montfort: Lavish