
Koopman Rare Art

Koopman Rare Art is delighted to be returning to [Treasure House Fair](#) at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea from 26th June to 1st July 2025 at Stand 202.

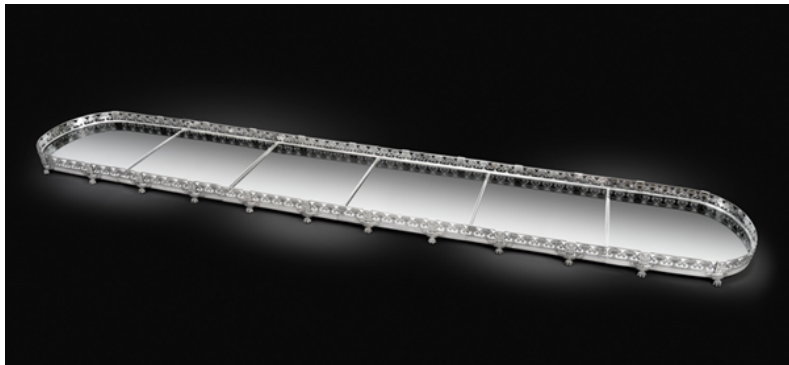
In the weeks leading up to the fair, our Director's Choice newsletters will highlight some of the exceptional pieces we'll be bringing— starting with this extraordinary George III Mirror Plateau.

We would love for you to join us at the fair; if you would like to attend, please e-mail info@koopman.art, and we will send you a complimentary ticket.

We hope to see you there,

Lewis, Timo and the Team at Koopman Rare Art

Directors Choice – Timo Koopman The Duke of Richmond's Plateau



The Duke of Richmond's Plateau

A Fine George III Silver Mirror Plateau

Maker's mark of Benjamin Smith, London, 1807

The plateau with cast and applied coats-of-arms for

Charles, 4th Duke of Richmond and Lennox

Length of Plateau: 306 cm, 121in.

The 4th Duke of Richmond certainly lived extravagantly from his time at Gordon Castle, his wife's family home and his post as Lord Lieutenant in Ireland from 1807-1813 to the most famous ball held in Brussels in 1815. Elizabeth Longford, the famous historian described it as "the most famous ball in history" The ball was certainly a brilliant affair, at which with the exception of three generals, every officer high in Wellington's army was there to be seen. This exceptional six-piece mirrored plateau formed part of his fabulous service in the grand service style so popular with the King and Prince Regent at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Rundell, Bridge and Rundell the royal retailers, once more were at the heart of this all. It is so wonderful in every way that it is our Director's Choice this week.

In six sections, raised on sixteen massive, winged paw feet, headed by rectangular plaques applied with a crest and ducal coronet, the gallery pierced with continuous anthemion and applied at each end with a duke's armorials against elaborate drapery mantling. The silver plateau fully hallmarked is also stamped at one end 'RUNDELL

BRIDGE ET RUNDELL AURIFICES REGIS ET PRINCIPIS WALLIAE LONDINI

FECERUNT' for the royal retailers Rundell, Bridge and Rundell.

The whole plateau cased in a baize-lined iron-bound wood chest

Provenance:

The Duke of Richmond of Gordon, "Removed from Gordon Castle, which was sold to the government," Christie's, London, July 20, 1938.



Gordon Castle and its formal gardens in 1911

The original castle was built by George Gordon, 2nd Earl of Huntly in the 1470s and enlarged by his grandson and George Gordon, 1st Marquess of Huntly. An inventory of the contents from November 1648 mentions lavish beds and a "hen house", a parrot cage in the long gallery.

The first wave of substantial extension was undertaken by Alexander Gordon, 2nd Duke of Gordon in the 1720s, greatly increasing the floorplan in relation to the original tower house.

Architect John Adam was commissioned, alongside the exiled Huguenot (French) architect Abraham Roumieu, to redesign the castle in 1764, but this did not come to fruition.

Eventually the commission fell to the lesser-known Edinburgh architect, John Baxter, who rebuilt it in 1769 for Alexander Gordon, 4th Duke of Gordon. The central four-storey block incorporated a six-storey medieval tower called the Bog-of-Gight and was flanked by a pair of two-storey wings. In 1827 the Aberdeen architect Archibald Simpson was commissioned to redesign the east wing after it was destroyed by fire.

At its peak, the main façade was 568 feet (173 metres) long. The castle served as an auxiliary hospital during World War I, treating soldiers returning from the front. Following the deaths of the 7th and 8th dukes within a decade of one another The Gordon Estates of 180,000 acres (73,000 hectares) were sold to the crown in 1938 by the 9th Duke to pay the enormous death duties. The majority of the contents of the castle were sold (including this Plateau), although some family portraits and furniture were removed to Goodwood House.

Over time, the property fell into disrepair, until it was bought back by Lieutenant General Sir George Gordon Lennox, the grandson of the 7th Duke of Richmond. After World War II, he took on the restoration, though much of the original house had to be demolished due to severe dry and wet rot. The Castle remains in the family until this day.



The arms on the plateau are those of Charles, 4th Duke of Richmond and Lennox, born in 1764. Croker remarks that this celebrated peer appears to have been born, just as he died, in a barn: "his mother Lady Louisa, was taken ill when on a fishing party, and there was only time to carry her to a neighbouring farmyard, where the Duke was born" (The Croker Papers, vol. 1, p. 150). He entered the army in 1788 and achieved notoriety by his duel with the Duke of York on Wimbledon Common on May 26, 1789. The Duke of York, the second son of George III, coolly received his fire and then fired into the air. A short time later, he was involved in another duel, this time with one Theophilus Swift, the author of a scurrilous pamphlet about him.



Swift was hit but the wound proved not to be fatal. Despite this penchant for duelling, he appears to have been a popular soldier and later served as a MP for Chichester. Richmond was born to General Lord George Lennox, the younger son of Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond, and as stated earlier, Lady Louisa, daughter of William Kerr, 4th Marquess of Lothian. His aunts included the famous four Lennox sisters.

Richmond was a keen cricketer. He was an accomplished right-hand bat and a noted wicketkeeper. An amateur, he was a founding member of the Marylebone Cricket Club. In 1786, together with the Earl of Winchilsea, Richmond offered Thomas Lord a guarantee against any losses Lord might suffer on starting a new cricket ground. This led to Lord opening his first cricket ground in 1787. Although Lord's Cricket Ground has since moved twice, Richmond and Winchilsea's guarantee provided the genesis of the best-known cricket ground in the world, a ground known as the Home of Cricket. Nearly always listed as the Hon. Colonel Charles Lennox in contemporary scorecards, Richmond had 55 recorded first-class appearances from 1784 to 1800 and played a few more games after that.

He married Lady Charlotte Gordon. In 1794 and 1795 he participated in naval engagements against the French in the West Indies and Gibraltar but was sent home when he came into conflict with his superiors. He was also MP for Sussex, succeeding his father, from 1790 until he succeeded to the dukedom.



A Set of Twelve George III Dinner plates from the same service. London, 1807 by Paul Storr for Charles Lennox the 4th Duke of Richmond, Lennox and Aubigny
Koopman Rare Art Collection

In 1806 he succeeded to the dukedom and the year following was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a post he held until 1813. This plateau would have been commissioned for his elevation in title and his position as Lord Lieutenant and would have formed part of the prodigious service of plate which he took with him to Dublin. Contemporary writers speak of the almost regal state he maintained there; indeed, he spent so much as Viceroy that on his return to England he could not afford to live at Goodwood, the main family seat, and was forced to take up residence in Brussels. It was there, in a coach maker's depot in the Rue de la Blanchisserie, that his Duchess gave the famous ball the night before Waterloo. The ball the night before the Battle of Quatre Bras was described as the most famous in history. True to its legendary status, the event was immortalized by William Makepeace Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* and by Lord Byron in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.



Before Waterloo (1868) by Henry O'Neil, depicting officers departing from the Duchess of Richmond's ball

He had married in 1789 Charlotte, daughter of Alexander, 4th Duke of Gordon. It was said that she loved pomp "even more than her husband did". In 1818 he was appointed Governor General of Canada and while his personality endeared him to the populace, his extreme views seemed likely to force a clash with the French-Canadian Party. His term of office, however, was cut short the following year, when he died suddenly, apparently as a result of a bite from his pet fox. Rumours current at the time suggested that the fox had been a gift from the Iroquois. He was buried in Quebec Cathedral on September 4, 1819.



A pair of soup tureens, covers and stands from the same service in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California (78.DG.130 1-2)



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All works shown, unless otherwise indicated, are available to view and purchase
in our gallery located in 12 Dover Street, London, W1S 4LL

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