

ISSN 2044-7965

KN

magazine

ISSUE 134
MAY &
JUNE 2023
PRICELESS



WEST NORFOLK | NORTH NORFOLK | COASTAL



Auctioning artefacts from the field

*Many an interesting story has passed through the hands of Wolferton based **HOLTS Auctioneers**, Europe's leading auction house for fine modern and antique guns. And their recent auction was no exception...*

Alongside the beautifully crafted modern and antique weapons showcased at the auction was a more unassuming lot with an incredible history. Lot 1020 represented the bush hat and military shirt of Captain Frederick Courteney Selous, a fascinating explorer, officer, professional hunter and conservationist from the turn of the 20th Century.

The green felt slouch hat features a simple matching green band. The half front safari shirt has three bronze epaulettes for a Captain at each shoulder with Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and British South Africa Company (BSAC) ribbons stitched above the left pocket.

The items were put up for auction by the grandson of William Robert Colton RA, a celebrated British Sculptor. Captain Selous had sat for Colton in his London studio, resulting in the creation

of a magnificent memorial sculpture of him in bronze. This was dedicated to the captain in the Natural History Museum in recognition of a significant collection of over 5,000 plant and animal specimens he donated.

The sculpture depicts Captain Selous in uniform, carrying a rifle, the shirt and hat recently auctioned were the clothing he had sat in and then gifted to Colton.

Beginning his adventures early, Captain Selous hunted in little known regions of Matabeleland, Africa at the age of just 19. He then acted as an exhibition guide, earning recognition from the Royal Geographical Society for his extensive exploration and surveys.

Later, Captain Selous served as a leader in the First and Second Matabele Wars, earning a medal from Queen Victoria in 1896. When the First World War broke out he was initially rejected

for service for being too old, but was then made Captain in the unusual 25th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers which was made up of many men of more distinguished age. He earned his DSO in 1916 for 'conspicuous gallantry, resource and endurance', but was sadly killed in 1917 by a German sniper.

This unusual lot exceeded the estimate, selling for £2,600 on the day. "We are passionate about preserving the unique personal stories attached to many of the items we sell," says Founder Nicholas Holt. "The provenance, or history, of an item can have a highly beneficial impact on its value and, as in this case, is often very interesting indeed."

HOLTS Auctioneers offer a free valuation service and are always on the look out for fine modern and antique weapons, as well as associated items.