

Press release: Unique tear shaped tray from 17th century Southern India at risk of export

A mysterious and uniquely designed tray from the historic city of Bidar in South India is at risk of being exported from the UK unless a buyer can be found.

The 'Tear Shaped Bidri Tray', which is believed to have been made in the first half of the 17th century by an unknown craftsman, has been blocked from export by Michael Ellis, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, to provide an opportunity to keep it in the country.

The tray, deemed to be of a rare size and shape and unparalleled finesse, is in a metalworking technique known as 'Bidri', the name deriving from the capital city of the Bahmanid sultanate of the Deccan which was one of the major Muslim kingdoms of medieval India.

It is also believed to be one of only two bidri objects to have its entire outer surface covered in silver inlay, decorated through a complex intertwining of scrolling lines bearing leaves and stylised flowers.

17th century Bidriware is rare in any collection in the world, with the vast majority of pieces in UK public and private collections dating from the 19th century. Even the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, which has the finest collection of Bidriware in the world, does not own a tray of this type.

Michael Ellis, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, said:

The Tear Shaped Bidri Tray highlights the style, detail and innovation of metalware produced on the subcontinent during this influential period in world history.

When considering its unique nature, it is right that we do what we can to preserve this valuable item for the nation.

Most of the tray's ownership history is unknown. It is recorded as having been acquired by the London-based antique dealer Anthony "Tobi" Jack in London by at least 1974, and was owned by the dealer Bashir Mohamed from 1974 to 2017.

Experts also believed that the tray highlights the Indian superiority in metallurgical knowledge, or scientific study of metals, at the time it was made. Appreciation of the zinc alloy technique of bidri may be indirectly linked to sharing with England how to produce metallic zinc, or carry out zinc smelting, on an industrial scale. This would ultimately lead to a

transformation in English industrial production around a century later.

The decision to defer the export licence follows a recommendation by the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, administered by The Arts Council. They made their recommendation on the grounds that the item is of outstanding aesthetic importance and significance for the study of Indian and Deccan decorative arts.

Chairman of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, Sir Hayden Phillips, said:

This 17th century Indian tray is exquisite; both in the beauty of its appearance, in the shape of a tear, and in the manner of its creation. It fully reflects the sophistication of Deccan design in the region's monuments and interiors.

We were unanimous in our view that the tray was of outstanding aesthetic importance and of outstanding significance to the study of Bidri ware".

The decision on the export licence application for the item will be deferred until 17 April 2019. This may be extended until 17 July 2019 if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £75,000, plus VAT.

Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the tray should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.

ENDS

Notes to editors

Details of the item are as follows:

- Tear shaped Bidri tray
- Matching offer: £75,000 plus VAT
- Blackened zinc alloy inlaid with silver and brass,
- Measurements: length 35cm, width 29cm, height 3 cm.

The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.

The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections:
www.artscouncil.org.uk.

A Buyer's Premium is an additional percentage charge on the hammer price, which is charged by the auctioneer to cover their expense.

[Press release: Work with us – recruitment campaign for new Parole Board members now open](#)

The Parole Board has announced today that a recruitment campaign for new members is now open.

Caroline Corby, Parole Board Chair, said:

Parole Board members play an essential role in the criminal justice system, making decisions on whether a person is safe to release into the community.

If you have an interest in protecting your community and the belief that every prisoner deserves a fair hearing, then you might want to consider applying.

We welcome applications from all backgrounds so that the Parole Board can better reflect the communities it serves.

Indeed, one of the main aims for this campaign is to start to redress the shortage of black and minority ethnic members.

There are three strands to the campaign, with one for each type of member being recruited – independent, psychologist and judicial members.

An independent member can come from a variety of backgrounds and does not need to have experience working in the criminal justice system to apply.

The independent member campaign is focussed on the North-East, North-West and Yorkshire & the Humber regions of England.

The psychologist and judicial member campaigns are open for people with the eligible qualifications across England & Wales.

We anticipate that there will be further recruitment campaigns for independent members covering other regions of England & Wales in the future.

Please contact Will Aslan on 020 3880 0809 or email comms@paroleboard.gov.uk for interview requests.

Parole Board members are public appointments. Potential applicants should visit the Cabinet Office public appointments website to make their applications:

The independent member campaign is open today (18 January 2019) and closes on 7 March 2019.

The psychologist and judicial member campaigns are open today (18 January 2019) and close on 21 February 2019.

Parole Board Member appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the recruitment process follows the principles within the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments.

It is anticipated there will be recruitment campaigns for independent members in other regions of England & Wales in the future. People can register their interest at workwithus@paroleboard.gov.uk.

[News story: Companies House has been recognised as a Disability Confident Employer](#)

Disability Confident Employers are recognised as going the extra mile to make sure disabled people get a fair chance. We've been recognised for our commitment to:

- an inclusive and accessible recruitment process
- communicating and promoting vacancies
- offering an interview to disabled people
- providing reasonable adjustments as required
- supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition, enabling them to stay in work
- making a difference for disabled people

Our campaign

Throughout November 2018, our internal communications team ran a Disability Confident campaign. The objectives of the campaign were to:

- increase awareness of the benefits of employing disabled people
- encourage disabled people to increase their own confidence and that of their employer

To support this campaign, we posted relevant content across our external social channels such as [Twitter](#), showcasing our commitment to being an

inclusive employer and a great place to work.

Our 'We're Disability Confident' campaign.

How Disability Confident will help us

Recognising that 83% of people will acquire a disability while already in work, we also want to know how best to keep the disabled people who are already with us. The Disability Confident scheme can help give our organisation the skills and confidence we need to recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

Being Disability Confident will produce benefits for our organisation, for our customers and the communities we serve, and for disabled people themselves.

This accreditation will help us draw from the widest possible pool of talent, and secure high-quality employees who are skilled, loyal and hardworking. It'll also improve employee morale and commitment by demonstrating that we treat all employees fairly.

Our Disability Confident Employer status also helps customers and other businesses identify us as an employer who's committed to equality in the workplace.

Achieving Leader status

To complete Level 3, we've enlisted the help of Julian John from Delsion. Julian is keen to work with organisations to increase the Disability Confident footprint in Wales. Here's [a recent TEDx talk delivered by Julian John](#).

Julian's willing to work with us to ensure Companies House gains the Disability Confident Leader status, becoming a leader in this field in Wales. We'll be meeting with him later this month.

More information about Disability Confident

You can read a series of [personal stories from civil servants recounting their experiences of working with a disability](#).

[Find out more about Disability Confident](#) and [Companies House equality and diversity policy](#).

News story: UK and Australia agree continuity of Mutual Recognition Agreement

An arrangement which helps boost British trade with Australia will continue when the UK leaves the European Union, supporting jobs in both countries.

The Mutual Recognition Agreement on Conformity Assessment (MRA) was signed by the International Trade Secretary and the Australian High Commissioner to the UK in London today (Friday 18 January).

The agreement maintains all relevant aspects of the current EU-Australia MRA. It helps facilitate trade flows between the two nations and means UK exporters can ensure goods are compliant with Australian technical regulations before they depart the UK, saving businesses time, money and resources. Australian exporters to the UK benefit in the same way.

Total UK exports in sectors covered by the deal are worth an estimated £2 billion. Today's signing marks a crucial step in the important trading relationship between the UK and Australia, one of the world's fastest growing economies.

Today's signing will ensure UK and Australian businesses can continue to benefit from existing arrangements for mutual recognition as they do currently, even if the UK leaves the European Union without an agreement.

On top of this, the UK and Australia have both committed to seeking a new ambitious, comprehensive free trade agreement that will allow UK and Australian companies to enjoy an even closer trading relationship after the UK leaves the European Union.

The agreement covers sectors accounting for an estimated 34% of UK goods exports to Australia, including key industries such as the automotive sector where total trade between the UK and Australia was worth over £850 million on average in the five years to 2017.

The deal will also help protect key growth sectors such as the UK's health tech industry with British medicinal supply exports to Australia worth an estimated £437 million over the same period.

This deal has been welcomed by EEF, the manufacturers' organisation, which collectively represents 20,000 companies of all sizes, from start-ups to multinationals, across engineering, manufacturing, technology and the wider industrial sector.

The UK and Australia will today also sign an agreement today which will provide further certainty to the UK wine industry post-Brexit.

This agreement, which allows trade in wine to continue between the two

countries, also covers winemaking techniques, labelling and certification requirements. It will allow around £250 million of Australian wine to continue to enter the UK, providing greater choice to consumers, and benefitting many businesses involved in the supply and distribution of wine.

Notes to Editors

- The agreement will now be laid before Parliament under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.
- The Department for International Trade has already laid the groundwork for future trade negotiations with Australia after the UK leaves the EU on 29 March. The Department is currently analysing responses to its 14-week public consultation on future trade agreements.
- All figures are based on internal DIT estimations of bilateral goods trade covered by specific directives in the MRA using HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics. 5-year average trade flows (2013-2017).

[Press release: Statement on proposed undertakings by News UK in respect of The Times and Sunday Times](#)



On 10 January 2019 News UK submitted an application to DCMS requesting that the Secretary of State accept proposed undertakings in place of conditions put in place in 1981.

The proposals seek to vary the sections of the 1981 conditions which require that ultimate control over the resources, including journalists, available to The Times and The Sunday Times are kept separate.

The changes requested by News UK would permit a greater sharing of resources and services, including journalists, between the two papers. News UK believes that such sharing is a necessary step to mitigate the financial challenges that the two titles will face in the future.

The application will now be considered by the Secretary of State in a quasi

judicial manner through a fair and transparent process. The Secretary of State has today published details on the process including details on how to comment on the application, available [here](#).

A Written Ministerial Statement will be laid in the House on Monday 21 January 2019.

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