

Sculptor who depicted horrors of war



SUMMERS PLACE AUCTIONS

CARVED OUT: Left, running cheetahs by sculptor Dylan Lewis; above, satyr and nymph sculpture by Charles Jagger; and, below, a 1950s stone clock, on offer at Summers Place.

Land, a full-size bronze now part of the Tate Collection in London. It depicts a 'listening post', a technique of trench warfare in which a soldier would hide among the corpses of comrades, broken stretchers and barbed wire of No Man's Land in order to listen to the enemy close by.

But his reclusive brother David did not see action, possibly because of ill-health, prompting brother Charles to record acridly: "What that great hulking lout must feel like I don't know." Whether the artist, like the man in *The Conscientious Objector* portrait, was himself a 'conchie' is doubtful but such men were often shamed by society and sent white feathers.

Another highlight of the Summers Place sale: the historic and spectacular timber frame of the ancient Blue Barn, last original building on a farm in what is now exclusive St Georges Hill Estate in Weybridge, Surrey. Blue Barn has been dismantled for re-erection and should fetch £60,000-£100,000. Sculptures include a pair of running cheetahs by South African Dylan Lewis (£60,000-£80,000); a wall bronze by Alfred Horace (Gerry) Gerard (£20,000-£30,000); two Isaac Kahn bronzes of dancers (£15,000-£25,000 each); and a bronze, *Neptune's Party*, by Milton Hebdal (£4,000-£6,000).

Also offered are the footprints of dinosaurs preserved in stone. Known as 'trace' fossils, they reveal the actual activity of prehistoric creatures living up to 130 million years ago and bear estimates ranging from £400-£800 each. Other lots include two framed typography drawers containing more than 200 marine curiosities from the early 20th century (£4,000-£6,000); a massive jasper gemstone (£3,500-£4,800); a Rosso Verona (Italian marble) wellhead with cast iron overthrow previously owned by an Italian vice consul in Guernsey (£6,000-£10,000); and a monumental Portland stone clock, dated from 1956, attributed to Charles Wheeler, removed from the Anglo American and DeBeers building, London, during refurbishment in the 1970s (£5,000-£8,000).

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Naughty spirits, dinosaur footprints and racing cheetahs... John Vincent previews an eclectic sale of statuary and natural history exhibits.

HE survived – just – the Great War horrors of Gallipoli and the Western Front. So it's not surprising that Yorkshireman Charles Sargeant Jagger shunned the fashion for heroic symbolism in his war memorials, determinedly setting in stone more realistic images of the hell of warfare.

But the internationally renowned sculptor, one of three artistic siblings born in Kilnhurst, near Rotherham, could also adopt a more classical approach. And highlight of a sale at Summers Place Auctions in Billingshurst, West Sussex, on Tuesday and Wednesday (March 26 and 27) is a pair of erotic Portland stone figures of a lustful woodland satyr squatting on a pedestal while looming over a naked nymph.

In one, the curly-haired satyr, whose immoderate appetites are symbolised by cloven hooves and other animal aspects, crouches over the willing, nubile nymph, who raises herself on tiptoe to offer a kiss. In the other, she leans backwards as the satyr grasps her arms and pulls her up towards his embrace. The 11ft-tall pair, created for Melchett Court,

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Hampshire in 1927, is listed to fetch £140,000-£220,000, although regular readers may recall them being offered once before, nearly four years ago.

In similar vein, Jagger (1885-1934) produced a 6ft high relief, *Scandal*, for Lord Melchett's son, Henry, and his wife, showing a naked couple in an intimate embrace watched by outraged society ladies. The sculpture, and the couple's earlier scandalous life, led to censure from their contemporaries. In 2008, *Scandal* was bought for £106,000 by the Victoria and Albert Museum.

His highly esteemed younger brother, David (1891-1958), has received regular mentions here over the years, not least after the sale at Bonhams in 2015 of his 1917 painting, *The Conscientious Objector*, for a world record £115,300. Their elder sister, Edith (1880-1938), was a landscape artist, painter of still

lives, expert in textile design and chief designer at Painted Fabrics in Sheffield for 14 years. All three attended Sheffield School of Art and in 1940 they exhibited together (Charles posthumously) in a special exhibition at the Rotherham Art Gallery and Museum.

There was little brotherly love. Charles turned down an art scholarship in Rome to join the Army when war broke out, serving in Gallipoli and on the Western Front, while David stayed at home. After being gassed and wounded for a fourth time, Military Cross-winner Charles was commissioned by the British War Memorials Committee to produce a large relief, entitled *The First Battle of Ypres*.

No other British sculptor was better placed to depict the horrors of war. While convalescing from his wounds in 1919, he began work on *No Man's*