



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT COLLECTIONS OF EARLY ENGLISH FIREARMS TO COME ONTO THE MARKET IN DECADES HEADS TO AUCTION

**Opportunity to acquire antique weaponry from the lifetime collection of esteemed world firearms
authority the late Professor David S. Weaver**



A rare gun with exceptional provenance, from the armoury of the Earls of Dunmore from Dunmore Park in Stirlingshire, Scotland and part of the private collection of the world authority on the history of firearms, the late Professor David S. Weaver
Estimate £2,000-£3,000 (lot 30)

LONDON, UK. SEPTEMBER 2025. Olympia Auctions is honoured to present one of the most important collections of early English firearms to appear on the market in decades. The collection was the lifetime passion of the late Canadian-born Professor David S. Weaver (1939–2023), esteemed academic and world-renowned connoisseur of historical arms.

Regarded as the most significant offering of its kind, the Weaver Collection represents more than 60 years of dedication to the study of 17th and 18th-century firearms. Many of the pieces, unseen for generations, are among the rarest and finest examples outside of important museum collections.

Commenting on this one-of-a-kind collection, Arms and Armour specialists at Olympia Auctions, Thomas Del Mar and David Williams, said: "This sale represents a great opportunity for anyone wishing to acquire superb examples of this country's rich heritage in the applied arts that spanned the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, produced by many of the foremost gunmakers."

David Weaver was a past President of the Canadian Guild of Arms Historians and a member of The American Society of Arms for the last 12 years. He was also a published author on the subject of firearms history. John Burgoyne, a fellow firearms aficionado and great friend of his, wrote the

following obituary for David in Arms & Armour magazine on his death in 2023: “He was a man of diverse interests and multiple skills. It was however in the field of early English firearms where his greatest passion lay and over the course of six decades, he assembled an important collection of early 17th and 18th century weapons. He acquired some of the finest and rarest seventeenth century pistols, forming what is possibly the most important private collection extant. He researched and wrote extensively on this subject. His publications were mostly published in the UK and he was fittingly honoured earlier this year (2023) with the Research Medal from the Arms and Armour Society in England.



A fine 16 bore flintlock silver-mounted sporting gun by Griffin & Tow, London from the private collection of the world authority on the history of firearms, the late Professor David S. Weaver. Estimate £8,000-£10,000 (lot 25)

His writing was enhanced by his professional background as a professor of mechanical engineering at McMaster University in Ontario and Associate Dean of the Engineering School, which allowed informed advice on Metallurgy (the branch of engineering focused on the performance of metals in engineering practice) and ballistics, sometimes challenging accepted notions on efficacy and the usage of weapons.”¹ Such was his zeal for collecting and the subject of firearms history, that he purchased a pair of LeMaire pistols just weeks before his death.

Among the highlights of his collection is a rare gun with exceptional provenance, from the armoury of the Earls of Dunmore from Dunmore Park in Stirlingshire, Scotland. Several pieces from the Dunmore armoury are on display at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, USA, as John Murray (1732-1809), 4th Earl of Dunmore (appointed the last British Governor of the colony of Virginia), resided in the Governor’s Palace until he fled from it in June 1775. The present gun was made for either the 1st Earl (Lord Charles Murray, 1661-1710), or one of the six of his seven sons, two of whom became respectively the 2nd and 3rd Earls. It carries an estimate of £2,000-£3,000 (lot 30).



A rare pair of 28 bore flintlock silver-mounted holster pistols by Dutch gunmaker Andreas Dolep (c.1648-1713), from the private collection of the world authority on the history of firearms, the late Professor David S. Weaver. Estimate £6,000-£8,000 (lot 57)

Another notable example is a fine 16 bore flintlock silver-mounted sporting gun by Griffin & Tow, London. Bearing silver hall marks for 1771, this sporting gun is an outstanding example of the art of the gunmaker, in both quality and execution of decoration. In excellent condition, it carries an estimate of £8,000-£10,000 (lot 25).

The Dutch gunmaker Andreas Dolep (c.1648-1713) and his son were of particular interest to Professor Weaver for their outstanding craftsmanship and the high quality of materials used. Their skills afforded them a top position amongst the most important London gunmakers of the late 17th and 18th centuries. In the sale is a rare pair of 28 bore flintlock silver-mounted holster pistols by Dolep, dating from circa 1710, which is a prime example of their best work. The pair carries an estimate of £6,000-£8,000 (lot 57).

A rare 16 bore flintlock gun by the pioneering Lincolnshire gunmaker E. Newton has an interesting history, as it was owned by Charles Watson Wentworth, 2nd Marquis of Rockingham (1730-1782), who, as well as being a politician, was twice Prime Minister of Great Britain. All firearms stored in the gun closet at Wentworth's home (Wentworth Woodhouse in Rotherham, Yorkshire), were numbered on the butt-plate and an inventory of 1782 lists the present gun as 'Newtons smooth barrel'd Gun'. Dating from c. 1760 it carries an estimate of £2,000-£3,000 (lot 31).

The collection also includes a rare pair of 20 bore flintlock silver-mounted holster pistols by George Wallis (1731-1803), the celebrated English gunsmith and private collector. Wallis, who was based in

Hull, was known for producing innovative 18th-century air-powered rifles as well as amassing a large private collection of arms and armour. His in-depth knowledge and love of the subject led him to founding one of Hull's earliest museums, in order to display his extensive collection. He established the museum at his Mytongate premises around 1794, displaying weapons, medals and coins. Among the weapons on display was an important Brunswick all-steel wheel-lock pistol and a sixteenth-century hunting sword which belonged to King Henry VIII.

The pistols are hallmarked 1778 with the maker's mark of Charles Freeth, Birmingham. Freeth was a skilled silversmith, active from the late 18th to the early 19th century. He crafted finely detailed silver mounts for several of the most prominent English gunmakers of the time. The pair carries an estimate of £3,000-£4,000 (lot 80).



A rare 16 bore flintlock gun by the pioneering Lincolnshire gunmaker E. Newton and previously owned by Charles Watson Wentworth, 2nd Marquis of Rockingham (1730-1782), twice Prime Minister of Great Britain. From the private collection of the world authority on the history of firearms, the late Professor David S. Weaver. Estimate £2,000-£3,000 (lot 31)

A fine pair of the ever-popular flintlock Blunderpuss pistols in the sale feature decorative ormolu mounts by Joseph Heylin, a highly skilled 18th-century London gunmaker who worked from 48 Cornhill from 1757 until c. 1779. This pair are particularly desirable as they have survived so well, with most of their original gilding and are in superb condition. Dating from c. 1760 they carry an estimate of £5,000-£7,000 (lot 87).

A fine 80 bore flintlock pistol in the sale is by John Probin of Birmingham, from the esteemed Probin family of gunmakers, who were suppliers to HRH The Prince of Wales. The pistol is rare as it simultaneously fires four barrels at once. It is also highly durable having been produced in the alloy 'tutenag'. In brilliant condition, it dates from circa 1770 and carries an estimate of £4,000-£5,000 (lot 88).

An important pair of 20-bore flintlock silver-mounted holster pistols by James Grice, who operated a shop in London from 1794-1798, exemplifies the pinnacle of 18th-century English gun making. In his pieces, craftsmanship and artistry converge to create objects of both beauty and technical mastery. The pistols have silver hallmarks for 1781 and the maker's mark of Michael Barnett (c. 1758-1823), who was a prominent Georgian London silversmith known for creating elaborate silver mounts for

firearms. Their importance is further underscored by their distinguished provenance, as they were once part of the celebrated Clay Bedford Collection and showcased at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1971. Several other pieces from this esteemed collection will also feature in the sale, many of which were exhibited alongside these pistols in the landmark New York exhibition. This pair carries an estimate of £10,000-£15,000 (lot 108).



An important pair of 20-bore flintlock silver-mounted holster pistols by James Grice and the maker's mark of Michael Barnett (c. 1758–1823). From the private collection of the world authority on the history of firearms, the late Professor David S. Weaver
Estimate £10,000-£15,000 (lot 108)

A fine pair of 32 bore flintlock duelling pistols in the sale are by Harvey Walklate Mortimer (1753–1819), a prominent British gunmaker who was appointed Gunmaker to His Majesty King George III in 1783 and worked from 89 Fleet Street, London. In their original case these stunning quality pistols, which date from c. 1785-90 carry an estimate of £6,000-£8,000 (lot 111). These exceptional firearms will be offered in a sale titled: **The Professor David S. Weaver Collection of Fine Antique Firearms at Olympia Auctions on Wednesday September 24th, 2025.**



A fine pair of 32 bore flintlock duelling pistols by Harvey Walklate Mortimer (1753–1819), gunmaker to His Majesty King George III. From the private collection of the world authority on the history of firearms, the late Professor David S. Weaver. Estimate £6,000-£8,000 (lot 111)

~ENDS~

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