

PRESS RELEASE

**THOMAS DEL MAR LTD ANNOUNCES THE SALE  
OF THE ARMOURY OF THE PRINCELY HOUSE OF  
HOHENLOHE-LANGENBURG**



Schloss Langenburg is the ancestral seat of the Princes Hohenlohe-Langenburg in Southern Germany and is today the family home of Princess Saskia and Prince Philipp zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg. The historical arms and armour from the Schloss Langenburg armoury will offered for sale in Thomas Del Mar Ltd's auction of **Antique Arms, Armour and Militaria** which will be held at 25 Blythe Road, London W14 on **Wednesday, December 3, 2014**.

As Thomas Del Mar explains: "The decision to sell a portion of the armoury from Schloss Langenburg has been taken with sole intention of raising funds for the ongoing conservation of the historic architecture of this impressive castle and to expand the public display of the interior of Schloss Langenburg and the castle museum. The majority of the pieces included in this auction have never been on public display and after consideration it has been decided to make these pieces available to those who would best appreciate them and be in a position to have them correctly restored."

A notable historical characteristic of the Hohenlohe-Langenburg line is the families' close links with Europe's Protestant ruling dynasties especially their **close relationship with the British Royal Family**. This began in 1828, with the marriage at Kensington Palace of Prince Ernst zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg to Princess Anna Feodora zu Leiningen, the half-sister of the future Queen Victoria.

In 1896 Princess Feodora's grandson, Ernst II zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, married Queen Victoria's granddaughter Princess Alexandra of Edinburgh and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. Princess Alexandra was the third daughter of H.R.H. Prince Alfred, son of Queen Victoria and H.R.H. The Prince Albert, she was also the grand-daughter of Tsar Alexander II of Russia. **An**

**English cased percussion sporting gun made for Prince Alfred as a small boy in about 1850** - by Westley Richards of London and Birmingham, Gunmaker to H.R.H. Prince Albert - possibly the gift of his father, is included in this sale, having descended from Alfred to Princess Alexandra at Schloss Langenburg. H.R.H. The Prince Alfred was born on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1844, the second son and fourth child of H.M. Queen Victoria and H.R.H. The Prince Albert. Prince Alfred Ernst Albert was second in line to the throne, and as such from 1866 he was entitled The Duke of Edinburgh. The gun descended from him to his third daughter, H.R.H. The Princess Alexandra (1878-1942), the wife of Ernst II, Prince zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg; the gun has remained at Schloss Langenburg. The gun and its case each bear an escutcheon engraved with a coronet of the British Blood Royal. The proportions of the gun are in keeping with those of a young boy (84.5cm; 33 ¼ in. overall) and carry an estimate of £5,000-7,000 [See below].



The family link between the Windsors' and the Hohenlohe-Langenburgs' remains a strong one. H.M. The Queen visited Schloss Langenburg during her German State Visit in 1965, together with H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh and his sister, H.R.H. Princess Margarita. The original Mercedes 600 in which they toured is today preserved in the Car Museum at the castle.

The collection comprises **158 lots**, of which 89 are antique firearms ranging in date from 1525-1860, the core of the firearms collection is formed of wheel-lock and flintlock firearms, including 19 pairs of holster pistols such as an exceptional pair of Bohemian silver-mounted examples by Paul Poser in Prag, circa 1725 which carry an estimate of £18,000-20,000.

A fine and very rare Nuremberg wheel-lock sporting carbine stocked by the so-called "Master of the Castles", dating from circa 1600 which is estimated at £25,000-30,000 [See below]. The barrel and the lock are etched with scrollwork, while the stock is veneered in ebony and profusely inlaid with finely engraved contrasting plaques of white horn and mother-of-pearl in the style characteristic of this unidentified but highly celebrated stockmaker. A very rare two-

shot superimposed-load wheel-lock pistol that was also made in Nuremberg, circa 1585 carries an estimate of £12,000-14,000.



Many of these pistols and sporting guns are of luxurious quality in keeping with a princely *Gewehr-kammer* (chamber) and others combine technological systems only very rarely seen on the international market. A French bronze mountain howitzer and its carriage captured in the war of 1870 would be a striking addition to any setting and is estimated at £6,000-8,000.



Also included are a broad historical range of swords, notably a group of 17<sup>th</sup> century dress-and hunting-swords with carved ivory hilts. A German Town Sword with a finely carved ivory *memento mori* hilt, dated 1656 is estimated at £6,000-8,000. The entire hilt is carved in relief as a series of serpents entwined with toads and human bones and the pommel formed as skulls. 1656 was the year in which a plague epidemic killed 145,000 in Rome and 300,000 in the Kingdom of Naples. The balance of the Langenburg selection is made up of elements of armour, a further tangible link with the history of the castle [See left].

A rare and exceptional South German heavy bronze wallgun (*Doppelhaken*), dated 1525, with a barrel measuring 145.4cm; 57 1/4in. is expected to fetch £6,000-7,000. Hand-ignited guns of this large size were intended to be fired from a stand or tripod carriage and served by two men as a piece of light artillery.

### **THE CASTLE AND THE HOHENLOHE-LANGENBURG LINE:**

The castle is situated on a spur overlooking the spectacular Jagst river-valley in the Hohenlohe region of Northern Baden-Württemberg. First recorded in 1226, the castle was given in 1235 to Count Gottfried von Hohenlohe-Hohenlohe by his cousin, Walther von Langenburg, each supporters of the Emperor Friedrich II. From this period onward the history of the castle is

inexorably entwined with that of the Hohenlohe-Langenburg line. Each has undergone the inevitable and significant developmental changes which history brings, and in the case of the dynastic line of statesmen, military commanders and patrons of the arts this fascinating complexity is well worth a separate study.

The Hohenlohe family ruled as Imperial Counts (*Reichsgrafen*) from 1450 and its two early principal branches were created Princes of the Holy Roman Empire in 1744 and 1764 respectively. In 1551 Count Georg I divided the various Hohenlohe estates and castles between his sons, creating the branches Hohenlohe-Neuenstein and Hohenlohe-Waldenburg, the first of the numerous and complex cadet branches of the Hohenlohe family line. The Hohenlohe-Langenburg branch is descended from the Protestant Hohenlohe-Neuenstein line, the key to its historical development from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. In 1806 the Hohenlohe principalities lost their independence upon their mediatisation to the Kingdoms of Württemberg and Bavaria.

The fabric of the castle is a chequerboard of changing function and architectural style. The four large round towers at each corner of the original *Staufer weir* date from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century but the castle as a whole underwent two substantial refurbishments, the first in 1610 as a Residence in the High Renaissance fashion under the direction of Count Philipp Ernst (1584-1628); the existing inner courtyard and some stucco ceilings originate from that time. The castle next underwent significant Baroque modifications under Count Ludwig (1696-1765), matched by his own elevation to *Riechsfürst* in 1764. The castle has remained in Hohenlohe ownership since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, uninterrupted except for a brief period of occupation in 1634 by opposing Imperial forces during The Thirty Years' War.

**VIEWING:**

Sunday, November 30 - 12 noon to 4pm

Monday, December 1 - 10am to 7pm

Tuesday, December 2 - 10am to 5pm

**NEXT SALE: June 2015**

**For further details of the sale, please visit [www.thomasdelmar.com](http://www.thomasdelmar.com)  
or call 0207 602 4805**

NOTES TO EDITORS:

**Thomas Del Mar Ltd** was founded in 2005 and has been holding sales biannually entitled "Thomas Del Mar Ltd in association with Sotheby's" since then. Thomas was formerly Head of Sotheby's Worldwide Department of Arms, Armour and Militaria and assisted Sotheby's with sales in London, New York, Denmark, Zurich, Billingshurst and Hanover. The sale of works of art from the Royal House of Hanover included arms and armour which sold for £4,764,004 (\$8,392,610) which continues to stand as a World Auction Record for an ancestral collection in this field. Thomas continues to work as a Consultant to Sotheby's on valuations and sales of major collections. Thomas Del Mar Ltd gratefully acknowledges the specialist contribution of Nicholas McCullough as cataloguer of the Langenburg armoury.

**25 Blythe Road** was founded in 2007 and now runs biannual auctions in five different categories. This includes two online auctions: British & Continental Pictures, and Islamic, Indian, Himalayan and South East Asian Works of Art which take place on this website. The three live auctions that take place in the 25 Blythe Road gallery, accompanied by online and telephone bidding, are Decorative Works of Art, Antique Arms, Armour and Militaria, and Maritime and Scientific Models, Instruments and Works of Art. Each online and live auction is preceded by viewing days at the 25 Blythe Road Gallery. More details can be found on [www.25blytheroad.com](http://www.25blytheroad.com).

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