

## THE BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA CHEST

Members may be interested to know of this particularly early chest which will be offered at auction in November this year at Christie's, South Kensington.

The oak chest (fig. 5) dates from the end of the 14th century (circa 1380-1400) and follows an early transitional form of joinery construction known as the 'clamped front' type. This means that, instead of being held on all four sides in a jointed frame, the front panel is simply held on its two vertical sides by heavy posts which extend downward to form the feet.

The date is confirmed by this early form of construction; by the costume of two ladies on horseback depicted on the deeply-carved front panel; and by armoured knights found on related chests. The ladies are hunting with hounds, two of which are in the act of bringing down a deer. The scene is crowded with figures and architectural detail and flanked by vertical panels with the figures of a king and queen.

The chest is in excellent condition and is of an extremely rare type. There has been considerable discussion over whether or not these chests are of English origin, but modern opinion believes that they were made in the Low Countries and were exported to England where they were referred to in contemporary accounts as 'Flanders chests'.

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Fig. 5 An oak 'Flanders chest' ?