

## **Case 18 2012/13: Peridot and gold suite of jewellery by Rundell, Bridge and Rundell**

### **Expert adviser's statement**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

##### **1. Brief Description of items**

A set of gold and peridot jewels in open-backed settings, comprising a necklace with pendant cross, a pair of pendant earrings, a pair of bracelets and a brooch, by Rundell, Bridge and Rundell, London, 1816 (fig. 1).

Necklace: 48.8 cm. (length); 2.0 cm. (width).

Cross: 8 cm. (length); 5.2 cm. (width).

Earrings: 5.2 cm. (length).

Bracelets: 18.8 cm. (length).

Case: 25.2 cm. (length); 15.2 cm. (width); 2.6 cm. (height).

The overall condition of the jewellery is good.

##### **2. Context**

###### **Provenance**

Bought by the Prince Regent as a gift to 'Miss Coats' to be worn at the wedding of Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, 2 May 1816.

Accompanied by a letter from Princess Elizabeth, sister of the Prince Regent, (fig. 2; chrysolites in modern terminology are usually described as peridots). 'Miss Coats' was either Charlotte Cotes or Lucy Cotes, nieces of the Dowager Countess of Rosslyn who served in the household of Princess Charlotte with their aunt.

The applicant has kindly included a copy of an invoice in the Royal Archives to the Prince Regent from Rundell, Bridge and Rundell in which the separate elements of the set are described (figs. 5-7; entry dated 3 April).

The set passed by inheritance to the Hon. Mrs. Denise Orange who donated it to an auction held on 10 November, 2012 (lot 220), organised by the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, in aid of the Community. It was sold for £30,000.

###### **Key references**

*The Journal of Mary Frampton*, edited by Harriot Georgiana Mundy, London, 1885, p. 281 (specifies the gift of chrysolite and amethyst jewellery to the two Cotes sisters).

Shirley Bury, *Jewellery 1789-1910: The International Era* (Woodbridge, 1991) vol. I, p. 92 (Rundell's invoice).

Diana Scarisbrick, *Jewellery in Britain 1066-1837* (Wilby, Norwich, 1994), p. 345 (Rundell's invoice).

### 3. Waverley criteria

It is proposed that this set meets the third Waverley criterion on account of its outstanding importance to the history of jewellery in the early nineteenth century. In a field where much has been broken up, or, at best, lost its provenance, the set is documented by a note from Princess Elizabeth, a bill from Rundell's and a letter from Mrs Campbell, another member of Princess Charlotte's household. It is a rare, beautiful, and hitherto unknown survival. It is also a witness to the marriage of Princess Charlotte, whose wedding excited great public interest and whose death in childbirth a profound expression of grief.<sup>1</sup>

## DETAILED CASE

### 1. 1 The marriage of Princess Charlotte

On 2 May 1816 Princess Charlotte, daughter of her estranged parents, the Prince Regent and Princess Caroline of Brunswick, was married at Carlton House to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg.

'The marriage' wrote Mrs Campbell 'was very impressive, and Princess Charlotte's manner just what you could wish...We were taken from one room to another, every one finding out that we were in the wrong place, till at last we were brought back to the room we set out from, and then taken from that to the apartment where Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold were. She presented us all to him; that is Lady Rosslyn, *me*, and the Miss Cotes.' After all was over, Mrs Campbell and Miss C. Cotes were presented to the Queen.<sup>2</sup>

The marriage was the culmination of a difficult and often painful childhood and adolescence. In 1814 Princess Charlotte had rejected Prince William of Orange as a suitor, fled during the night of 11 July to her mother, but capitulated by the morning to her father. Thereafter she was kept under close surveillance by a resident team of his own appointment.<sup>3</sup> By 21 July 1814 she made a differentiation between her jailors. The Dowager Countess of Ilchester and Mrs Campbell were praised, but the Dowager Countess of Rosslyn, was 'as detestable' an '*old lump of bones* as ever was, never seems good humored or pleased, & is always listening to what is going on, & *proposing*, but *seldom* agrees, & generally contradicts'.<sup>4</sup> She makes no comment either for or against the two Cotes sisters, nieces of Lady Rosslyn, who were also part of the team, but on 10 September she refers to the trio of

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<sup>1</sup> Recent interest in Charlotte includes: James Chambers, *Charlotte & Leopold* (London, 2007); *Charlotte, the Forgotten Princess*, exhibition at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, 10 March 2012 to 10 March 2013; features on her wedding dress on the website of Historic Royal Palaces.

<sup>2</sup> Frampton, 1885, pp. 280-1.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers, James. *Charlotte & Leopold* (London, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> *Letters of the Princess Charlotte 1811-1817*, edited by A. Aspinall (London, 1949), p. 133

aunt and nieces as '*Famine & the consequences*'.<sup>1</sup> On 23 October 'Old *Famine*' is described as 'more detestable than ever', even though Princess Charlotte felt that she was by then suffering from 'less espionage' and could see that the appointed ladies had been '*set on*, & that it was not their own inclination'.<sup>2</sup> On 15 November she still wanted 'old famine &c. out of the house'.<sup>3</sup>

An example of the more acceptable duties is provided by an undated note in which Charlotte Cotes at the command of Princess Charlotte requested that the conductor and organist Sir George Smart (1776-1867) 'will have the goodness to come... this Evening about half past eight as Her Royal Highness wishes to try over some music before the party begins'.<sup>4</sup>

The ladies were duly rewarded by the Prince Regent when, except for Mrs Campbell, their responsibilities ended with Charlotte's wedding. By 28 April 1816 Lady Ilchester had received 'a magnificent present from the Regent – his own picture superbly set in diamonds'. She knew that Lady Rosslyn had 'a cypher in diamonds which I have on the reverse of my pictures' and that 'Mrs Campbell, the Cotes, and gentlemen are none of them forgotten, but how remembered I do not know yet. Lady Rosslyn, Miss Cotes, and I attend at the marriage, and are all to be cast off together when the new ladies are presented after the ceremony'.<sup>5</sup>

In her letter of 6 May 1816, Mrs Campbell described Lady Ilchester's picture as 'magnificent' and Lady Rosslyn's cypher as 'set round with very fine diamonds'. Mrs Campbell herself had received from the Prince Regent 'a very pretty diamond cross by Princess Elizabeth, who wrote a very gracious note with it', and 'the Miss Cotes a set of amethysts and one of chrysolites, very handsome'.<sup>6</sup>

In Rundell's invoice (fig. 5), it seems likely that Lady Ilchester's picture is the locket listed at a price of £630 with an additional £36 15s for the miniature by Bone; that the locket with cypher at £416 is the one given to Lady Rosslyn; and certain that the chrysolite (peridot) and amethyst sets of jewellery were those given to the Cotes sisters. The chrysolite jewels cost £240 9s, the amethysts £298 15s.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.personalia.co.uk/archive\\_of\\_items\\_sold.htm](http://www.personalia.co.uk/archive_of_items_sold.htm): downloaded 18/03/2013.

<sup>5</sup> Frampton, 1885, p. 278-80.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>7</sup> For comparison, Robert Garrard supplied a set of amethysts consisting of necklace, a pair of bracelets, brooch, and head ornament for £145 in 1815 to Mrs Sherard (Gentlemen's Ledger, 1814-18, p. 44, left). Another amethyst necklace, described as having a 'ball cage pattern gold setting' was supplied by Rundell's to Lord Brownlow in 1818 for £74 ((Hartop, 2005, p. 49; the peridot setting is shown in fig. 4).

All these, and the pearl necklace, listed at a cost of £861, which Shirley Bury has identified as the one much desired by Charlotte for herself, would have been paid from the £10,000 voted by Parliament for her wedding jewellery. The sum was reduced from £15,000 voted in 1813 for the match with the Hereditary Prince of Orange when the jewellery bought had to be returned after the engagement was broken off.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 The Cotes Sisters

The Cotes sisters, Charlotte and Lucy, were the daughters of John Cotes (1749-1821), M.P., of Woodcote, Shropshire, by his first wife, the Hon. Lucy Courtenay (died 1786), daughter of William Courtenay, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Courtenay. Her sister, Charlotte Courtenay, the future 'Old Famine', married Alexander Wedderburn, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Rosslyn (created 1801) in 1782. He died in 1805.

Following the death of Princess Charlotte on 6 November 1817, Lady Ilchester wrote that 'the last duty I was called upon to fulfil was to attend at her wedding, and now so soon to follow her to the grave! C. Cotes is also sent for, I believe, and Lady Harrowby and Lady Rosslyn, but on no account name these circumstances till they are made public, for all may be changed before the next week is over'.<sup>2</sup> In the funeral procession Miss Charlotte Cotes walked beside Mrs Campbell as 'Women of the Bedchamber of Her late Royal Highness', although, unlike Mrs Campbell, she had held no position in the princess's married household.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.3 Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

'These jewellers,' reported the Persian ambassador describing Rundell's in 1810, 'have no equal in Europe'. 'They are famous for mounting stones so that', like the peridots, 'they are visible from all sides and any flaw may be easily detected'.<sup>4</sup> In 1815 the shop was described as exceeding 'all others in

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<sup>1</sup> Bury, 1991, vol. 1, pp. 92-3.

<sup>2</sup> Frampton, 1885, p. 298.

<sup>3</sup> Green, Thomas. *Memoirs of her late Royal Highness Charlotte-Augusta* (Liverpool, 1818), p. 452. Harriot Mundy states that Charlotte and Lucy Cotes both died unmarried (Frampton, 1885, p. 278). Charlotte Cotes died on 10 November 1859, her property assessed as worth less than £45,000 (England and Wales, National Probate Calendar, Index of Wills and Administrations, 1858-1966).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Diana Scarisbrick in 'George IV and Jewels', in Christopher Hartop, *Royal Goldsmiths: The Art of Rundell & Bridge 1797-1843* (John Adamson, Cambridge, for Koopman Rare Art), 2005, p. 79.

the British Empire, if not in the whole world, for the value of its contents'.<sup>1</sup> After Philip Rundell's death in 1827, an anonymous memoir described the firm as having attained such a pitch that 'like a vast ocean it sends forth multifarious streams...throughout the trade of this immense metropolis', 'a wonder in the trafficking world', which had been visited by the Tsar of Russia and the King of Prussia.<sup>2</sup> It had agents in Vienna, St Petersburg, Constantinople, Alexandria, Smyrna, Baghdad, Calcutta and Bombay.<sup>3</sup> As jeweller, its achievement was symbolised by the diamond crown and circlet which it furnished at the time of George IV's coronation.<sup>4</sup> Between 1821 and 1829, the King's purchases amounted to £105,618.<sup>5</sup> As has often been described, the business at its height benefited from the Oil of John Bridge who was polite to all and a successful salesman to royalty, and from the Vinegar of the obsessive, determined Philip Rundell, trained as a working jeweller, 'an excellent Judge of the qualities and prices of every description of Jewels'.<sup>6</sup>

Napoleon is said to have promised Rundell's to the first of his marshals to conquer London.<sup>7</sup> Yet the descriptions of contemporaries, and the richness of the silver and silver-gilt plate in the Royal Collection and the public collections of Britain, cannot obscure the rarity of significant surviving gem-set jewellery like the peridot set. Associated with George III, Queen Charlotte, George IV, William IV and Queen Adelaide there are small objects mounted with portraits or cyphers, such as pendants, snuff boxes and bracelets, and a very few other items such as watches and swords, but none would disagree with the conclusion of Christopher Hartop, who masterminded the exhibition on Rundell's in 2005, that 'jewellery is the most difficult category of the firm's output to assess, largely because so few of the more expensive creations have survived the vagaries of fashion'.<sup>8</sup> No ledgers and only a few jewellery designs survive. Jewellery is normally neither signed nor marked. Whereas many other items bear Rundell's name, only jewels documented by the archives of their purchasers or by named cases can be identified as the work of Rundell's.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Hartop, 2005, p. 28 from Joseph Nightingale, *London and Middlesex: or an Historical, Commercial and Descriptive Survey of the Metropolis of Great Britain*, London, 1815.

<sup>2</sup> Anonymous, *Memoirs of the late Philip Rundell, Esq.* (London, 1827), pp. 11, 8.

<sup>3</sup> Hartop, 2005, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Shirley Bury, 'The Regalia Catalogue', in *The Crown Jewels* (London, 1998), vol. II, pp. 42-5; Hugh Roberts, *The Queen's Diamonds* (Royal Collection Trust, 2012), pp. 22-7..

<sup>5</sup> Bury, 1991, p. 193.

<sup>6</sup> George Fox, untitled manuscript account of Rundell and Bridge, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, of which a photostat and a transcript are in the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum; column 33.

<sup>7</sup> Comment of Persian ambassador, cited by Diana Scarisbrick, 2005, p. 79, from Margaret Morris Cloake, translator, *A Persian at the Court of King George 1809-10*, London, 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Hartop, 2005, p. 47.

The rarity of provenanced work by known makers extends to the predominantly gem-set jewellery by all jewellers of the period. Judy Rudoë's survey of the 'prodigious quantities of jewellery' owned by Queen Charlotte during her long life records that 'today only a handful of pieces survive or have been identified'.<sup>1</sup> Diana Scarisbrick has emphasised the delight which the Prince of Wales took in jewellery, the pleasure which his gifts of jewellery brought to his sisters and to others – 'no one but my dear angelic brother would ever have given me anything half so pretty', said his sister, Princess Amelia - and the indispensable 'necessity' he perceived 'of attaching splendour to the person and family', but little has survived.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The significance of the peridot set

The major scholarly accounts of early nineteenth-century jewellery by Shirley Bury in 1991 and Diana Scarisbrick in 1994 both noted the record in the Royal Archives of the purchase of this peridot set. Diana Scarisbrick cites it as an example of the matching sets which were '*de rigueur* with court dress'.<sup>3</sup>

That the set should now be discovered, thanks to the generous donation to the Mirfield auction, in its original case and with a note from Princess Elizabeth, is a major addition to the jewellery of the period. It is outstanding as a set of documented coloured-stone jewellery, as an example of the open-set work of the pre-eminent jeweller of the age, and as the commission of the Prince Regent for the wedding of Princess Charlotte. If it remains accessible, it will be a key work of reference for the study of early nineteenth-century jewellery in Britain. It would almost certainly feature in any exhibition or book which told the history of Rundell, Bridge & Rundell, the Prince Regent's patronage of jewellery, or the life of Princess Charlotte. Whatever their role in the custodianship of the princess, we are indebted to one of the 'Consequences' and her heirs for having preserved this superb peridot set when so much other jewellery has been recycled or lost its identity.

Appendix 1.

Text of note from Princess Elizabeth (see fig. 2):

My dear Miss Coats

I write in great haste by com

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<sup>1</sup> Judy Rudoë, 'Queen Charlotte's jewellery: reconstructing a lost collection', in *The Wisdom of George the Third, Papers from a Symposium at the Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, June 2004*, edited by Jonathan Marsden (London, 2005), p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> Scarisbrick, 2005, p.79.

<sup>3</sup> Scarisbrick, 1994, p. 345.

mand of The P. Regent to beg  
you to accept the set of Chry  
solytes which I send with  
this note He hopes You will  
wear it at the Wedding as  
a proof of his regard. – I  
fear I have not said half  
enough to Your Sister but  
they are all talking so  
hard I scarcely know what  
I am saying

April 30<sup>th</sup>  
1816



Fig. 1 The Peridot Set

My dear Miss Coates  
 I write in great haste by some  
 messenger of the P. Request to beg  
 you to accept the set of my  
 styles which I send with  
 this note. The other I have  
 worn at the wedding as  
 a pair of my own eyes. — I  
 fear I have not said half  
 enough. — My dear sister but  
 they are all talking so  
 loud I cannot by any means  
 have saying, Y<sup>r</sup> obed<sup>t</sup>  
 April 30<sup>th</sup>  
 1716

Fig. 2 Note from Princess Elizabeth accompanying the jewels

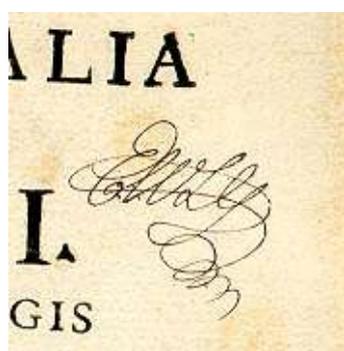


Fig. 3 Princess Elizabeth's signature from a book in Glasgow University Library:  
 Aquino, Carolo d' *Sacra exequalia in funere Jacobi II. Magnae Britanniae Regis  
 exhibita ab ... Principe Carolo ... Cardinali Barberino in Templo sui tituli Sancti  
 Laurentii in Lucina, descripta a Carolo de Aquino ... Romae : Typis Barberinis,  
 excudebat Dominicus Antonius Hercules, 1702* [Sp Coll S.M. 1571](#)

Fig. 4 Detail of setting

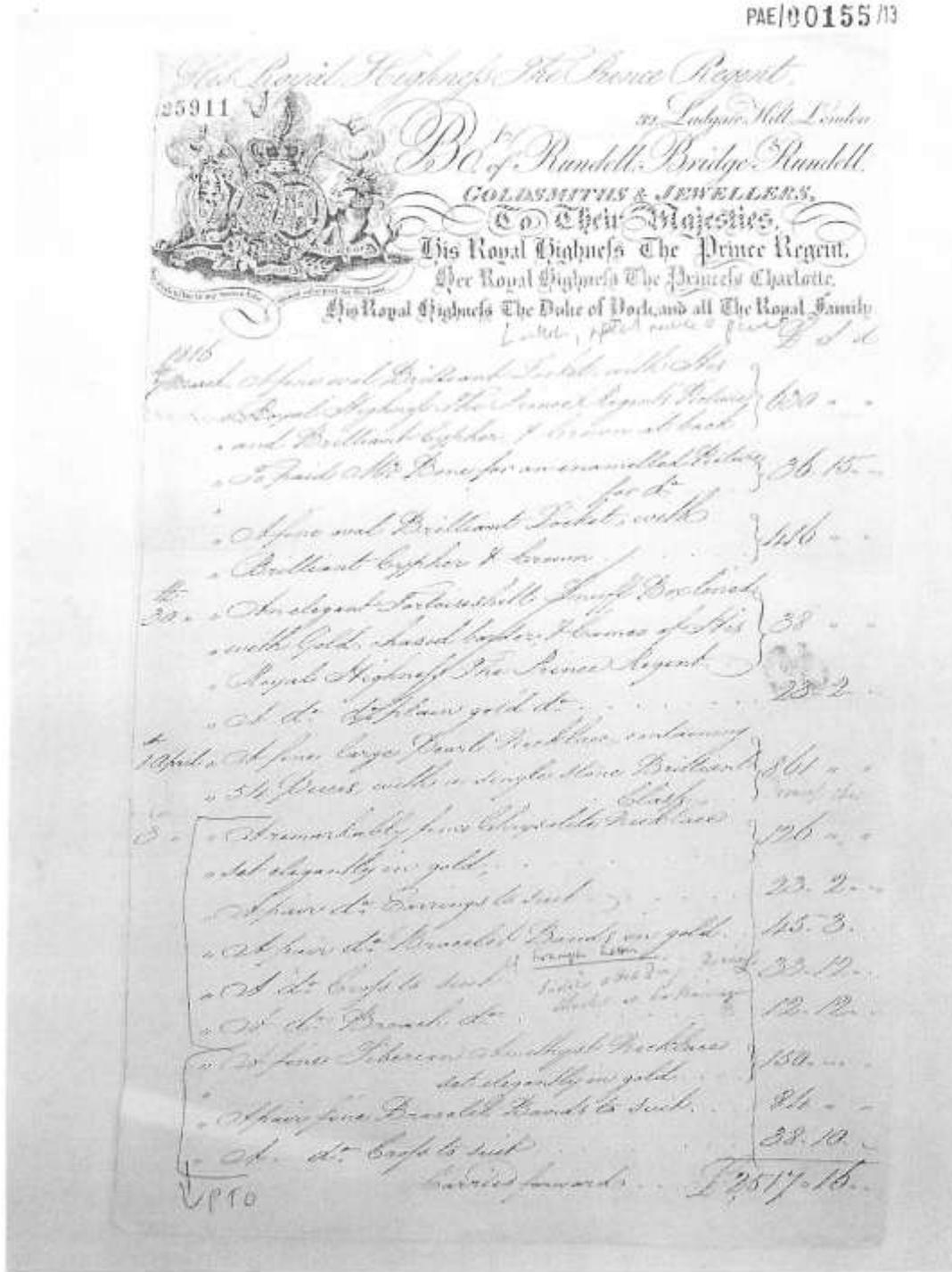


Fig. 5. Rundell's invoice, first page.

1816  
 Brought forward. £ 257 10 0  
 3 pairs fine Silver Amethyst drops } 26 5 0  
 Earrings to suit } " 6 6  
 " One enamelling the Horse upon a Star  
 " " Best Silver Star of the Guelphic Order,  
 " with Gold & Silver, Emeralds, & rubies } 26 5 0  
 " enamelled Horse for a Military Commander  
 " 1 large do. for a Civil Grand Croix Knight } " 23 2 0  
 " 1 do. for a Civil Commander. }  
 £ 2593 14 6

Received the 28<sup>th</sup> day of the  
 King Royal Highness The Prince Regent  
 The Right Hon<sup>ble</sup> John W. Maitland, Keeper  
 the Sum of two thousand five hundred  
 fourteen shillings & sixpence being the amount  
 Rundell

£ 2593 14 6

Fig. 6 Rundell's invoice, page two

Tramontana by fine City of Toledo	196 " "
Loganville in gold.	23. 2. "
From the Emeralds to steel.	45. 3. "
From the Emeralds to steel.	33. 12. "
From the Emeralds to steel.	12. 12. "

Fig. 7 Detail of invoice for chrysolites (peridots)