

For Immediate Release

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ROMANCE ISN'T DEAD AT CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

**Fine Printed Books And Manuscripts
Wednesday, 14 February 2007
Christie's South Kensington**



“Once cherished for their sentimental associations, antique valentines are today often expensive collector’s items – true works of art prized for their beauty, originality, design, and rarity.” – Frank Staff, *The Valentine & Its Origins*.

South Kensington - The Victorians have a reputation for being cold and unemotional, but three lots in Christie’s South Kensington’s upcoming book sale, appropriately held on 14 February, reveal their hidden romantic side. The sale includes approximately 100 cards within three lots, providing the perfect opportunity for the incurable romantic to stock up for years to come (estimates: £300-400).

Long before the era of Hallmark cards and Stevie Wonder, lovesick Victorians were in the habit of sending printed tokens to the objects of their devotion. And they weren't the simple cards that we send today. During these times, when a valentine token was made by hand, individuality, along with loving thought and care, went into its making. However, due to the current popularity of these cards in America, many thousands of old valentines tokens have crossed the Atlantic to be treasured and admired in collections there, making fine examples, such as these, scarce in Britain.

Most of the examples to be sold date from the 1870s, and are decorated with an assortment of fripperies, including fabric flowers, paper lace, fancy scraps and leaves. Several are even scented with perfume sachets. The valentines vary in form from a wooden heart decorated with flowers to a 'Bank Note of True Love' dating from 1847. Another, addressed to a Miss Bunting of Derbyshire, comes in its original postal box. Also included is the book *The Valentine & Its Origins* (1969), by Frank Staff. It is a fascinating collection for romantics everywhere.

Over the centuries, St. Valentine’s Day has kept pace with the gradual change in social customs, and although fashion and the trend of events have sometimes allowed its observance to lapse, it has always been able to revive again; in more recent years this is

doubtless due to the enterprise of greeting card manufacturers, who, by their efforts, have maintained the significance of this ancient holy day, symbolic of love and courtship. Buy your loved one something special this Valentine's Day.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's at www.christies.com

CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON

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Nearest Underground: South Kensington

Public Enquiries:

020 7930 6074 / www.christies.com

Opening Hours:

Monday: 9am – 7.30pm, Tuesday – Friday: 9am – 5pm

Weekends: 10am – 4pm

Christie's South Kensington is the first international auction house in London to offer regular weekend auctions.

Notes for Editors:

Christie's South Kensington holds eight sales of Books and Manuscripts throughout the year. There are four general book sales, two Travel and Natural History, one Modern Firsts/Children's/Private Press and one single owner sale. The sales often deal in manuscripts of historical interest. To date, the department's top selling lot is *Hours of Guyot Il Le Peley*, an illuminated manuscript on vellum, which realised £299,200 in June 2005. Book and Manuscript sales also include first edition copies of books. A letter from Winston Churchill (dated 1899) sold for £77,675 in 2003, setting a new world auction record for any Churchill letter. The market is also open to magazine collections and book-related memorabilia such as Ian Fleming's typewriter on which he wrote *Casino Royale* (which sold for £56,250 in 1995). In recent months the Books and Manuscripts department started holding Sunday sales at Christie's South Kensington.