

For Immediate Release

Tuesday 13 February 2007

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A 1950s CHILDHOOD AT CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON



Lunttoy

Bill and Ben The Flowerpot Men, circa 1952
Estimate: £200 – 300

Sacul & Wend-Al

Muffin the Mules, circa 1950
Estimate: £200-300

Pelham Puppets

Mickey and Minnie Mouse, 1960s
Estimate: £200-300

The Mike Williams TV Toy, Lead Figure and Game Collection

Christie's South Kensington

Monday, 26 March 2007, 10.30 am & 2pm

Christie's South Kensington's Toy Department is starting 2007 with the sale of a fabulous collection from the early 1900s to the 1950s, offered on Monday 26 March 2007. Consisting of some 300 lots, *The Mike Williams TV Toy, Lead Figure and Game Collection* offers a glimpse of long-forgotten childhoods, and provides a fascinating insight into how children played, particularly in the 1950s. It consists of toys, games, puppets, and lead figures, taking the onlooker back in a time machine to the cosy post-war era of BBC Home Service and only one channel on TV. Many of the lots are connected to the films, TV shows and comic strips of the day including *Dan Dare*, *Watch with Mother* and *Muffin the Mule*, with pre-war contributions from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *The Bruin Boys* and *Pip, Squeak and Wilfred*. Estimates for these early childhood stars will range from £100-300 to £500-800 per lot, making them the perfect affordable gift or memento.

Fans of older lead figures will find a significant collection of character and civilian figures of pristine quality, dating from the 1920s onwards also being offered. Created by the leading manufacturers of the day, they include examples by Britains, Cherilea, John Hill & Co, Segal, Pixyland Kew, Timpo and Crescent. Circus figures by Charbens and Britains are well represented, with zoo figures including *Polar Bear Ivy* and her cub *Brumas* and the famous *Chimpanzee's Tea Party*, represented by F G Taylor and a very rare Timpo *Tarzan* swinging in

from the jungle.

Highlights include:

Launched in 1950, Frank Hampson's **Dan Dare** was the most popular character in The Eagle comic. The memorabilia in the collection would have brightened up the days of many young boys in the austere post-war years of the early 1950s. Comprising a colourful array of stencil sets, jigsaw puzzles, ray guns, walkie-talkies, pocket-watches, games, a radio station, lead figures, and even secret ink and toothpowder, the collection sheds light on a much more innocent age when pocket money was in short supply and children had to be much more creative (estimates start from £200).

There are puppets, model figures and other memorabilia from all the shows in the **Watch With Mother** series, such as *Muffin the Mule*, *Andy Pandy* and *Bill and Ben the Flower Pot Men*. (estimates from: £200), with some of the more difficult to find early Pelham Puppets well represented, including *Davy Crockett* and *Archie Andrews*.

The sale includes three extremely rare lead figures of **The Bumblies** from the 1953 TV series which launched *Michael Bentine's* career, just after he left as the fourth member of *The Goons* (estimate: £300-500). From across the ocean, there are also the Wild West TV heroes *Buffalo Bill*, *Davy Crockett* and *Hopalong Cassidy*. Arriving on heavier horses are the famous *Timpo Knights* from the 1954 MGM epic **Quentin Durward**, as well as rare John Hill & Co *Knights in Armour* and Britains *Knights of Agincourt*, brilliantly sculpted by Roy Selwyn Smith, who died last year. The Cherilea Baronial Series is also in evidence with boxed examples of the *Black Prince*, the *Duke of Marlborough* and the *Gothic Knight*, as well as the Benbros *Robin Hood* and John Hill *Quo Vadis* boxed sets.

From the pre-war period can be found a rare boxed set of lead figures from *Walt Disney's* original **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**, 1938 (estimate: £400-600), a set of **Coco Cubs**, made by Britains for Cadbury's *circa* 1935 (estimate: £300-400) and lead figures of **Pip, Squeak and Wilfred**, the dog, penguin and rabbit characters from the popular and long-running *Daily Mirror* cartoon strip drawn by A B Payne, *circa* 1925 (estimate: £300-500).

Vintage board games are in abundance with rare and unusual examples from the early 1900s by J W Spear, with their beautiful lithographic artwork and hand-painted, metal playing pieces. Of particular note is the *Indian's Camp* (estimate: £300 - 500) with its articulated, colourfully embossed, models depicting Indian braves, ponies, tepees, etc which, when fully assembled on its wooden base, forms a stunning panorama of early Native American life. Additional games include early examples from Chad Valley, Glevum and H P Gibson.

Other notable lots include a 1930s Chad Valley *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* boxed set of dolls with original tags (estimate: £600 - 800) and a Sutcliffe tinplate *Bluebird II speedboat* (estimate: £150-200) in original box.

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's Web site at www.christies.com

CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON

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Public Enquiries:

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Opening Hours:

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

Weekends: 10am – 4pm

Notes to Editors:

Christie's South Kensington toy sales include traditional toys such as cars, trains and soldiers, as well as more commercial items, such as puppets from *Thunderbirds* and James Bond memorabilia. In 1997 a collection of toy soldiers from the Forbes Museum (Tangier) sold for £550,000, making it the most expensive collection of toy soldiers ever sold. In December 2001 the *Gardiner Märklin Gauge V* spirit-fired steam passenger train from around 1906 sold for £113,750 establishing a new world record for a toy train and becoming the most expensive single toy ever auctioned in Europe. Currently there are eight toy sales per year at Christie's South Kensington.

Christie's South Kensington is open seven days a week with regular sales on Sundays. The UK's busiest auction house, Christie's South Kensington offers more sales in more categories than any other auction house. With prices ranging from £200 to over £20,000, the average price at Christie's South Kensington is £1,000. Established in 1975 on the Old Brompton Road, Christie's South Kensington offers over 50,000 objects a year including works of art, furniture, paintings, prints and drawings, glass, ceramics, lighting, modern design, and silver. There is something for everyone and all you need to decorate your home or start a collection.