

For Immediate Release

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THE TEDDY BEARS AND TOYS SUMMER PARTY AT CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON

South Kensington – The storerooms of Christie's South Kensington are currently alive with hundreds of dolls, teddies, toy soldiers, Dinky Toys, Corgi toys, model aeroplanes and trains. Childhood memories will be evoked in four dedicated sales held throughout the summer months, with estimates ranging from £100 to £20,000. With two of the sales held on a Sunday, this is the perfect opportunity to pick up a gift with a difference.

The season starts with the **Dolls** auction on **Thursday 26 May at 2.00pm**. The sale is a superb opportunity to learn about the history of dolls, with fabulous and rare examples spanning from the 1790s up to the present day. The earliest doll offered is a rare English wood carved doll from *circa* 1794. Painted entirely flesh-coloured with a wonderfully detailed set of clothes and in her original box, she is expected to fetch between £15,000 to £20,000.

More recent examples include some 300 Barbie dolls from the 1960s, with estimates ranging from £100 to £3,000. Of particular interest is a rare first issue Barbie from 1959 which was originally purchased for \$2.97 by the vendor's mother from Johnny's Toy House in Oregon, America and is now expected to fetch between £3,000 to £4,000. Barbie was the brainchild of Ruth and Elliot Handler who took inspiration for the production of the modern doll from Ruth's observation of her daughter, Barbara playing with paper dolls, complete with clothes and accessories and whose name Barbie is taken from. The sale also includes examples of several Kens (Barbie's boyfriend), Barbie's best friend Midge and Ken's best friend Alan.

The **Fine Toys** sale on **Thursday 2nd June at 10.30am** offers some fantastic examples of beautifully preserved boys' toys from 1898 to 1970. The main highlight is a huge Märklin ocean liner from 1912 (estimate: £15,000-20,000). At an impressive 115cm long and with a real steam boiler, this would have provided hours of fun for its original young owner. When new it would have cost about 5 guineas (around £2,000); an impressive price for a toy by even today's standards. Another more recent highlight is an original Paul Travers puppet from the 1966 film *Thunderbirds are Go* (estimate: £12,000-15,000). The stars of the Dinky Toy collecting world, Mike and Sue Richardson are also parting with their beloved collection of die-cast and tinsplate aircraft, after moving to France. This veritable treasure-trove of a collection

(estimated at around £30,000) includes beautifully looked-after examples of Dinky, Meccano and FROG (Flies Right Off the Ground) aircraft. With individual estimates starting at £200, this is a perfect opportunity to acquire some of the best quality toy aircrafts on the market.

The first of the toy Sunday sales, **Toy Soldiers on Sunday 26th June at 11.30am** is led by the collection created by Charles Biggs, who was a Director at Britton's, the best-known producer of toy soldiers since 1893. Estimated at around £20,000, his collection features high quality examples from the early 1900s to 1950s (individual estimates range from £200 to £1,000). Other highlights of this sale include a coronation model of Queen Elizabeth II (estimate: £500-800) and a plaster cast of the baby from the Brittons' "Family" (estimate: £1,000-1,500). This set was produced just before World War II broke out, and is an exact replica of an Edwardian family. Highly collectable, these sets are extremely rare, and the plaster casts rarer still.

The first of Christie's South Kensington's popular bi-annual **Teddy Bear** sales for 2005 will be held on **Sunday 3rd June**, perfect for picking up a loveable present or companion. The sale offers a superb selection of quality Farnell, Steiff and Chiltern bears, as well as examples from many other popular makers. With estimates from £100, starting a vintage teddy bear collection couldn't be easier. A romantic highlight of this sale is a tiny World War I teddy, lovingly kitted out in a little helmet and sword (estimate: £300-500). Popular during the Great War, these bears were given to husbands and sweethearts as a mascot when they went off to war. In sad circumstances, the bear would return to the wife or fiancée alone, however this one returned complete with its owner; Gunner Tom McCarthy. Mr McCarthy and his tiny friend fought at Flanders together, and now the bear is being offered at auction complete with dog tags, service medals, and all correspondence from the front line to Kitty, Mr McCarthy's wife.

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Images available on request

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

Notes to Editors:

Christie's South Kensington is now open seven days a week with regular new 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.

Christie's South Kensington is also famed for its popular collectible sales including Toys, Teddy Bears, Cameras, and Costumes, Posters, Film, Football and Pop Memorabilia to name just a few! If you are looking for a little luxury from as little as £200, regular sales of Vintage Jewellery, Fashion and Fine Wines also regularly appear on the auction calendar. For those contemplating selling, Christie's expertise is also

available 7 days a week, free of charge, at the Valuation Counter to advise you on the current market value for your works of art.

In 2005 Christie's South Kensington will have the following opening hours:

Monday 9am – 7.30pm

Tuesday to Friday 9am to 5pm

And will be open for Weekend Shopping on:

Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm

The weekend openings will be throughout the year except for bank holidays.

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

Auctions:

- Dolls, Thursday 26 May at 2.00pm
- Fine Toys, Thursday 2 June at 10.30am
- Toy Soldiers, Sunday 26 June at 11.30am
- Teddy Bears, Sunday 3 July at 11.30am

Viewing Times:

Dolls: Saturday 21 – Thursday 26 May 2005

Fine Toys: Tuesday 31 – Thursday 2 June 2005

Toy Soldiers: Friday 24 June – Sunday 26 June 2005

Teddy Bears: Friday 1 July – Sunday 3 July 2005