

For Immediate Release

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THE WORLD'S LARGEST TEDDY BEAR COLLECTION TO BE AUCTIONED AT CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON THIS AUTUMN



Grandfather Bear
Estimate: £10,000-15,000



An early German Bear on Wheels
Estimate: £600-£800



A Steiff rod bear
Estimate: £8,000-12,000

The Teddy Bear Museum, Stratford-upon-Avon

Christie's South Kensington

Wednesday 19 September 2007, 2pm

South Kensington – Christie's will be offering one of the world's largest and most comprehensive teddy bear collections when the contents of *The Teddy Bear Museum, Stratford-upon-Avon* are sold at Christies South Kensington on Wednesday 19 September 2007. Personally put together by British TV broadcaster and politician **Gyles Brandreth**, the collection comprises around 2,000 bears, including many extremely rare and valuable items such as the earliest bear in the sale, *Growler*, a much-sought-after *Steiff* rod-bear, *circa* 1904 (estimate: £8,000-12,000). The sale will also include props, sets, scenery and artefacts from the Museum displays.

When Gyles Brandreth and his wife Michele, opened the Museum on 4th July 1988, CBS News said, "*It's world famous and deserves to be!*" Of the decision to sell, Brandreth says: "*The Museum has been visited by a million people and has come of age. It's been voted by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport as one of the icons of England. It's now time for us to find new owners for this unique collection. Our children are all grown-up and my work commitments mean that I simply don't have the time to give the bears the care and attention they deserve. We want to find new owners for our bears who will love them as much as we do.*"

Highlights of the collection include a good selection of *Steiff* bears (estimates from £300-8,000), rare British bears including a *Dean's Tru-to-Life* American black bear (estimate: £1,000-1,500), and a *Schuco* automata shop display of a teddy bear and a monkey (estimate: £3,000-4,000). A good range of bears from all periods, countries and manufacturers include an amusing miniature mascot bear made during World War I for sweethearts and troops as a good luck token. This particular example was originally sold off a barrow in the Old Brompton Road where Christie's South Kensington is now based, during the Great War. It was then later sold in these rooms and bought by Brandreth, and is now offered for the third time in South Kensington (estimate: £200-300). Interestingly many of the bears feature in one of the most famous teddy bear reference books, *The Teddy Bear Encyclopaedia* by Pauline Cockerill and Michele Brown's own book *The Teddy Bear Hall of Fame*.

A selection of bears which were loaned to the museum will also be lent by Brandreth to *The Polka Theatre* in Wimbledon, London, where they will be on permanent display to the public. These include the original *Muppet Fozzie Bear* and *Paddington Bear* both of which are the originals from their respective TV shows.

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Images available on request

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

Notes to Editors:

Gyles Brandreth is an author, broadcaster and former MP for the City of Chester. He currently appears on *Just a Minute* on BBC Radio 4 and his latest book is a Victorian murder mystery, *Oscar Wilde and the Candlelight Murders*. He is the author of a play about A A Milne (and was a friend of the real Christopher Robin) and has been collecting teddy bears since he was a child. A first Edition of *Winnie-the-Pooh* signed by the author appears in the sale (estimate £1,200-1,500).

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