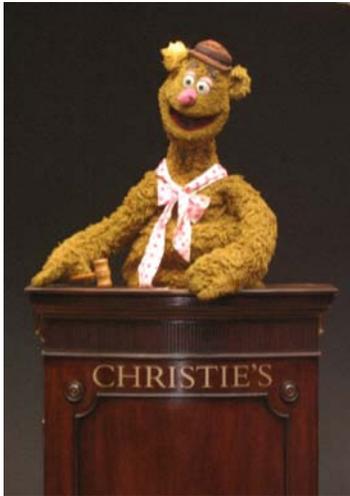


For Immediate Release

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THE WORLD'S OLDEST TEDDY BEAR MUSEUM TO BE SOLD BY PRIVATE TREATY AT CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON



The Teddy Bear Museum, Stratford-upon-Avon

South Kensington – Christie's are pleased to present, by private treaty, the sale of the world's oldest Teddy Bear Museum, based in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The award-winning museum was opened by self-confessed teddy bear enthusiast and well known broadcaster **Gyles Brandreth** and his wife Michele, on 4th July 1988. Since then, this popular little museum has gone from strength to strength in one of England's most celebrated towns. Stratford-upon-Avon attracts five million tourists annually and visitors to the Teddy Bear Museum have ranged from royalty to Tony Blair's bear, *Lynton*, who recently spent his summer holidays at the Museum. The collection, personally put together by Brandreth, numbers a thousand bears and related items. It is to be sold as a going concern, along with the Tudor building (once the property of King Henry VIII) that has been its home for the last 18 years.

"The Museum has come of age and it's now time for us to find new owners for the museum and its unique collection. Our children are all grown-up and my work commitments mean that I simply don't have the time to give it the care and attention it deserves. We want to find new owners for the Museum who will love it as much as we do and see it go from strength to strength." Said Gyles Brandreth

Highlights of the collection include several early *Steiff* bears, the earliest being *Growler*, a much-sought-after *Steiff* rod-bear, circa 1904. There is an extremely important range of bears from all periods, countries and manufacturers and also of much interest is the **Teddy Bear Hall of Fame** with famous bears and bears owned by famous people. Bears in this category include the original *Fozzie Bear* from *The Muppets*, *Paddington Bear*, *Sooty*, *Super Ted* and *Nookie Bear*.

Gyles Brandreth's Personal Favourites:

- 1) The original *Fozzie Bear*, given to him personally by Jim Henson, creator of the hit US TV show *The Muppets*.
- 2) Dame Barbara Cartland's bear who is called *The Prince of Love* and, according to Dame Barbara, believes he isn't a bear at all, but actually an Indian Prince
- 3) A German *Hermann* bear collected from East Berlin the year before the Berlin wall came down. He sits in the museum on an actual piece of the Berlin Wall.
- 4) A beautiful *Steiff* Bear from 1904, one of the oldest bears in the world. Gyles christened him Growler, even though he doesn't.

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**Images available on request – zschoon@christies.com /
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Notes to Editors:

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If a buyer for The Teddy Bear Museum is not found by the end of 2006, the Museum's contents will be sold by auction at Christie's South Kensington in the Spring of 2007.

Gyles Brandreth is an author, broadcaster and former MP for the City of Chester. He currently presents *Sound Advice* on BBC Radio 4 and his latest biography, *Charles & Camilla: Portrait of a Marriage* is now available in paperback. He is the author 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.

Christie's South Kensington holds two sales a year of teddy bears and other soft toys. The next sale in 2006 is on Monday 4th December. Closing date for entries is normally ten weeks beforehand. The colour-illustrated catalogue is available four weeks beforehand. Christie's South Kensington currently holds the world record for a teddy bear, which was for a *Teddy Girl, Cinnamon Steiff* which realised £110,000 in December 1994.