

For Immediate Release

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AN INCREDIBLE DOLLS' HOUSE



Dingley Hall

Estimate: £30,000-50,000

Mechanical Music, Automata, Dolls and Dolls' Houses

29 October 2003

South Kensington - The most important dolls' house to appear on the London market for over 20 years is to be offered during Christie's Dolls and Mechanical Music sale on Wednesday 29 October.

Known as Dingley Hall, this ten foot long dolls' house features 15 rooms jam-packed full of wonderful furniture, chattels and dolls. Put together in the 1870s by two school boys, Laurence and Isaac Currie, the house carries an estimate of £30,000-50,000. The Curries were a banking family who lived at

Minley Manor in Hampshire.

Probably the best equipped and furnished dolls' house remaining from the 1870s, the house has been handed down through the generations and has survived practically intact. It has been on view at the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood for over 40 years.

Made from two bookcases, it is ten foot long, five foot high and two foot deep and provides a unique view of life in a grand 19th century household. The dolls wear costume and uniform of the period and virtually every item amongst the huge variety of furniture and chattels is rare and often created on an unusually large scale.

Dingley Hall is perhaps the greatest contradiction to the misconception that boys don't play with dolls' houses. A consuming passion of the two young Currie brothers, the house is a mixture of Roman, Greek, Flemish, English and Italianate architectural details; the grand Mannerist façade bears the date 1877 and the initials of the brothers for whom it was made.

Most of the contents are German, with a few French items and Austrian dolls, apart from the Oriental room decorated with Japanese pieces. A colourful and elaborate Murano glass chandelier in the centre of the house is perhaps the grandest of all dolls' house chandeliers, and provides a delightful central focus to the house.

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*Images available on request
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