

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Zoë Schoon 020.7752.3121 zschool@christies.com

THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS: THE MULTIFACETED LIFE OF LEWIS CARROLL

“The more I read, the more impressed I became. The real testament to Carroll’s genius is that after a century and a half, he is still held in the highest esteem by an ever-growing audience of young and old, novice and scholar, logician and lover of nonsense”.

Nicholas Falletta

**The Nicholas Falletta Collection of Lewis Carroll Books and Manuscripts
Wednesday 30 November at 2.00pm**

South Kensington – One of the most considered and thoughtfully-assembled collections of Lewis Carroll material, **The Nicholas Falletta Collection of Lewis Carroll Books and Manuscripts** will be offered at Christie’s South Kensington on 30 November 2005. Comprising in excess of 120 lots, the sale illuminates the life and personality of this remarkable, many-talented man who wrote some of the best-loved childrens’ books in the English language. Featuring first editions, personal letters, original illustrations, books owned by Carroll, or given by him to his friends (both young and old), rare mathematical textbooks, and little-known games and puzzles, the collection is estimated to fetch in excess of £300,000.

Mathematical beginnings...

Lewis Carroll was born Charles Lutwidge Dodgson in January 1832. He graduated from Christ Church, Oxford in 1854 with a BA Honours in Mathematics and Classics. Elected to a life fellowship, he continued to lecture at Oxford and publish mathematical broadsheets to help his students. It was during this time that he created his famous pseudonym by taking “Charles” and “Lutwidge”, and inverting the latinised form to create “Lewis Carroll”. His particular hero was the Egyptian mathematician Euclid, whose text *Elements* has remained a cornerstone of western mathematics. One of the mathematical highlights of the sale is *Euclid and his Modern Rivals*, 1879, which Carroll wrote as a four-act comedy, combining his talents both as a wit and mathematician to present a forceful argument against anyone who meddles with Euclid’s texts (estimate: £1,200-1,800).

Alice...

During this period, Carroll also developed a passion and talent for photography, regularly photographing his students and the children of local families. It was this interest that led him to meet 4-year-old Alice Liddell in April 1856. A close friendship blossomed as Carroll

regularly photographed Alice and her sisters, and the tale of Alice was born in July 1862, when Carroll responded to the girls' eager pleas for "a story" whilst on a riverside picnic. Carroll, who worked standing at an upright desk (often for 10 hours a day), wrote out and illustrated *Alice's Adventures Underground* and presented it to Alice Liddell as a Christmas gift in 1864. Carroll decided to publish it the following year as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and some 25 years later, his original illustrated manuscript was published under its original title. The sequel, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* followed in 1872, and *The Hunting of the Snark* – considered "the longest and most revered nonsense poem in English" – appeared in 1876. All three of these titles are well represented in the sale, and highlights include:

- An impressive series of first editions of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, including the first British, first American, first German, first French, and first Italian editions, many bearing inscriptions to his friends and family (estimates range from £700-14,000).
- A first edition of *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found there*, 1872, with two original pencil drawings by illustrator, Sir John Tenniel. The drawings depict "Humpty Dumpty" and "Alice with a Fawn" and the book is inscribed by Tenniel "Ever yours / JT" (estimate: £20,000-30,000).
- A rare copy of *The Nursery Alice* – a special version of *Alice* re-written for younger children, 1890 (estimate: £3,000-5,000).
- Various early editions of *Alice* and *Through the Looking Glass* from Alice Liddell's own library, signed by her (estimates start at £600).
- Various rare first editions of *The Hunting of the Snark*, many inscribed by Carroll to his young friends – including one given to Winifred Holiday, the daughter of the illustrator – and some in specially-commissioned presentation bindings (estimates from £600–8,000).

Macmillan & A Mouse's Tale...

Carroll had an unusual arrangement with his publisher, Macmillan, whereby he paid the majority of the costs, thereupon retaining control and making all decisions about the production of the books. Consequently, he was able to suppress the first edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865 because its illustrator, Sir John Tenniel, was not satisfied with the printing of the illustrations. Carroll also suppressed the sixtieth-thousand printing of *Through the Looking-Glass* in November 1893, and the sale includes his own marked-up copy with his annotations indicating all the printing problems that led to its suppression (estimate: £35,000-45,000).

The sale also features the original printing block commissioned for the poem, "The Mouse's Tale", one of Carroll's most recognisable poems (estimate: £3,000-5,000). Commissioned by Carroll for the 1897 edition for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, "The Mouse's Tale" varied greatly in the printings from 1865 to 1897, and this block was the final version. The final form was important as the layout of the poem on the page was

intended to convey meaning as expressively as the words themselves and Carroll described it as “*very much better than it has ever been in previous editions of the book & it will be quite a feature in the new issue*”.

Letters and Illustrations...

Carroll’s letters, usually written in purple ink, were more than occasionally works of art. When addressed to his young friends he included poems, puns and pranks – he was even known to write letters backwards, so they had to be held up to a mirror to be read. One example is a postcard written in French to Edith Miller in mirror writing (estimate: £1,200-1,800). Also included in the sale are a number of beautifully-illustrated letters written by Carroll to various young friends and family members. One remarkable letter, from Carroll to Princess Alice (granddaughter of Queen Victoria) dated 10 August 1893, features a large, green, hairy spider embossed right in the middle of it. Carroll writes; “*How can one attend to one’s writing, you know, when a great hairy green thing is crawling all over the letter? I shouldn’t mind so much, if the thing would only keep STILL!*” (estimate: £10,000-15,000). In another letter to Gina Balfour, dated 12 January 1867, he writes; “*On receiving your violent and passionate letter this morning, I immediately telegraphed to my printer in London (who I thought must be to blame in this matter) the following message: O.W.H.H. (I need hardly tell you that those letters are understood by the Telegraph company to mean OFF WITH HIS HEAD!)*” (estimate: £2,200-3,500).

Games and Inventions...

Another little-known fact about Carroll was that he invented and published a cascade of puzzles and games, for both adults and children, including *Lanrick: A Game for Two Players* (1881), *Doublets* (1879), *Mischmasch* (1881), *Circular Billiards For Two Players* (1890) and *Arithmetical Croquet* (first published in 1953). Among those included in the sale is the first printed version of *Doublets* from 1878 (estimate: £1,200-1,800). *Vanity Fair* adopted the game and ran a series of competitions in the magazine in April 1879. Other games offered include an early version of *Lanrick: A Game for Two Players* (estimate: £1,200-1,300); a signed version of *Mischmasch* (estimate: £3,500-4,500) and *Circular Billiards For Two Players* (estimate: £800-1,200).

The Collector...

Nicholas Falletta began collecting Lewis Carroll in the mid-1970s. Like Carroll before him, he was a professional mathematician, and whilst writing a text about logic, began to struggle with a particular point about paradoxes. His research lead him to Lewis Carroll’s *Symbolic Logic, Part II* in which he discovered that Carroll and prominent Oxford logician John Cook Wilson had argued back and forth about the same point that had been troubling him, during the previous century. Struck by the elegance of Carroll’s approach to the problem, he began to collect Carroll, continuing unabated until the millennium.

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Notes for Editors:

Public Viewing Days:

Saturday 26th November through to Wednesday 30th November

Public Auction:

Wednesday 30 November, 2.00pm

85 Old Brompton Road

London SW7 3LD

Public Enquiries: 020 7930 6074 / www.christies.com

Opening hours at Christie's South Kensington:

- Monday 9am – 7.30pm
- Tuesday to Friday 9am to 5pm
- Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm

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Fine Printed Books and Manuscripts, including Travel and Natural History

Christie's worldwide Book sales totalled \$80 million in 2000 and established us as the undisputed market leader in the field. Each year, Christie holds 8 book sales at South Kensington and 9 book sales at King Street. Christie's holds world auction records in virtually every category, including Early Printed Books; English & Continental Literature; Exploration & Travel Art; Manuscripts & Archives; Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts; Natural History; Americana and Science & Medicine. Christie's also handles highly collectable books and manuscripts, ranging from children's books, livres d'artistes, sporting books, atlases and maps, to fine bindings, modern printing and first editions.