

Keeping Alive the Childhood

This Collector talks about her Garage Sale Buys



She never really meant to start collecting bears and old soft toys; she was going to garage sales with a friend for fun. One day she saw a book about teddy bears, more particularly the history of Steiff toys. “I paid \$10 for the book and just after that I found it was out of print and could be worth around \$100.” Her husband and family urged her to put it on eBay and sell it. “I was flipping through it to do just that when I became quite fascinated by the range of toys and the history of the Company. I never really got around to putting it up on eBay that week or the next.”

The week after that her friend again talked her into joining her for a round of garage sales. “I was fossicking through a table of soft toys while filling in time waiting for my friend and I picked up a puppet squirrel, when, to my shock, I suddenly realised it had a Steiff button in its ear! They wanted just a few dollars for it. I quickly paid the money and left. Again I was shocked when with a few enquires I found the toy was worth quite a deal more than that.”

Again her family urged her to sell the toy on eBay. “I just couldn’t do it, I felt really drawn to its face and while looking at what it could bring on eBay I suddenly found myself bidding on a Sooty puppet instead,” she laughs. “This was quickly followed by a Rupert Bear puppet; both characters I remembered from my childhood.”



While she does not actively look to buy the toys and rarely buys from eBay, this collector has started to attend bear shows. “I find I am not really all that drawn to modern bears, though I do like Lexie Haworth and

Balgowlah Bears. The really large traditional bears are much more my thing. I found even my garage sale buys tend to date from around the 1950s, and 60s - I really like the traditional look. I like the toys that

were really played with and loved, though I don’t really like the synthetic plush toys much and don’t generally look at them. I love the mohair toys.”

“Steiff would have to be favourite toys and I feel really lucky and





astonished that I have found them at garage sales. I've even found a Sucho, though I didn't know what it was at the time."

"The bear shows have started to educate me and I've found some books and magazines that have helped. I like to look at the traders who have the old bears and really awed at times at what some bears are worth. I'm learning all the time and it really makes my bargain hunting fun. I keep thinking that I won't find any really old bears as people are more aware now, but I do still find them, just not that often any more, although I have found lots of other types of toys like elephants and deer, as people don't seem to be as aware of them.

"I love the old toys as I feel they were loved and gave so much fun to kids. I think they deserve to have some back," she tells me.

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