

Teddy bears

Weekly Times Column

By Warren Joel

Like most items in your home there are collectors out there wanting them, and the teddy bear market is strong and thriving. As with just about every area of collecting there are certain elements that make the old bear a collectors' item.

At the very top of the tree will be who made the bear, and the name to look for is Steiff, and it is the quintessential toy bear collected the world over. Steiff bears originally entered the market in around 1895 from their German makers and are still produced today. Teddy bears, including Steiff are one area of collecting where condition is not of prime importance. In fact a beautifully loved, but looked after, bear is still highly desirable.

As the popularity, importance and value of the Steiff bear has grown over the last few years so has the incidence of fakes and forgeries. Before buying or collecting your Steiff bear, or in fact any collectable, my advice would be to do your homework. A quick browse on the Internet will reveal the correct marks for a genuine Steiff bear.

There are numerous other manufacturers, styles and sizes of bears that are still sought after in the market. The Steiff bear may have the highest commercial value but one area of valuation that we struggle with is sentimental value. At some of the antique discovery days I do from time to time Grandmother's 100 year old bear arrives dutifully wrapped and sitting up in the basket awaiting valuation. I then face the onerous task of declaring the bear not a Steiff, but nevertheless antique, but still only worth sentimental value. How can I value Grandma's favourite bear?

Next week: Dolls

Free Valuation for Weekly Times readers.

Byjoel will do a free valuation of your collectables via email. If you send a photo and description of your item to valuations@byjoel.com.au I will access the item and respond.

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Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.

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