

Figurines pay tribute to children's author

ATTIC Treasures

BY ROB REID

A sunny and happy summer to all. This group of figurines are all Royal Doultons. The Royal Doulton factory has produced china since 1867, with the introduction in 1913 of the first figurine called Darling, and numbered HN1. A little known fact is why all Doulton figurines have the HN designation before the number.

These letters refer to Henry Nixon, who was in charge of the figurine painting department when it started. The HN numbering system is still in use today, and the company has issued over 4,000 numbers.

Royal Doulton used illustrations by Kate Greenaway for an entire series of figures. All of these figures were modelled by Peggy Davies, who was an assistant modeller for Doulton before the Second World War. She set up her own studio in 1946 and produced figurines on a contract basis until her death in 1974.

Kate Greenaway was born in 1846 and had a successful career in the illustration of children's books. Her children were outfitted in frilly smocks, sunbonnets and mop caps that had a Regency appearance, but were actually entirely from her own imagination.

As her reputation grew, her books became very popular both in Britain and North Amer-



ica and it is interesting to note, even in the 1890s pirated versions of her books appeared, especially in America. Soon items like wallpaper, plates, scarves and dolls were being produced without permission. After her death in 1901, the copyrights were sold and to this day her books are still in print and her artwork has inspired a great deal of merchandise.

As can be seen, all of the girls are dressed in long dresses or smocks with frills, flowers and caps or bonnets. These figures were produced

for a limited time and while they only average about six inches in height, they each have a value of about \$400. The boy named James in the centre is the exception. He is the only figure with dogs and no frills or flowers and he has a value of at least twice that of the girls, or about \$900.

The Doulton figurine market is an active one with a wide range, both in style and price, to choose from. As with all ceramics condition is a major factor in pricing and, with Doulton

figures, scarcity, age and quality of decoration are also a consideration. Some of the earlier figures are painted with more attention to detail in their faces and costumes and often bring a premium over newer versions of the same model.

Rob Reid has been an antique dealer for many years. He would be happy to talk with you about old things at his shop, Reid's Antiques, 6397 Main St. Stouffville, during regular business hours, or on his website at reidsantiques.com.

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