



Early 20thC painted wood doll's house, form of a double fronted villa, 21 x 15 x 31in high, with a selection of home-made furniture. *Canterbury Auction Galleries*, Kent. Dec 03. HP: £3,100. ABP: £3,658.



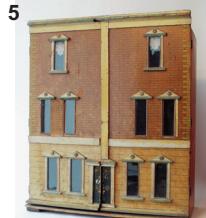
Late Victorian A G and J Lines painted double fronted wooden dolls house, known as 'Sheffield House', 3 stories, balconies, front opening, kitchen with original cooking range and fittings. *Gorringes, Lewes*. Mar 01. HP: £1,600. ABP: £1,888.



Moritz & Gottschalk dolls house on three floors and having pulley operated lift to one side, lithographed brickwork, window frames, original papers to walls and floors. *Gorringes, Lewes*. Mar 01. HP: £1,600. ABP: £1,888.



Early 20thC dolls house, as a George III manor house, door opening in two sections to reveal seven rooms, with real glass windows and the exterior with painted brick work finish, 4ft 9in. *Gorringes, Lewes*. May 09. HP: £1,500. ABP: £1,770.



Front opening Georgian Palladian style dolls house, 3 floors, paper 'brickwork' covered facade, 10 windows, 6 rooms, some original decoration, mixed period furniture, 87cm high, 77cm wide, 29cm deep. *Gorringes, Lewes*. Mar 01. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,298.



Late 20thC dolls house of large proportion, late 18thC detached town dwelling style, 4 stories, hinged roof opening to reveal 3 attic bedrooms, central section opening to a central stairway with landing opening into four similar sized rooms, lower section opening to reveal cellar stairs opening into 2 rooms, 2 door cabinet base and cut-out plinth, overall 92cm wide, 194cm high, 84.5cm deep. *Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury*. Dec 08. HP: £800. ABP: £944.



Victorian box back dolls house, single piece front with portico door and balustraded first floor, enclosing four rooms with some furniture and fittings, 23in. *Gorringes, Lewes*. May 09. HP: £800. ABP: £944.



Painted wooden dolls house being a copy of 'Clarendon House' at Austerfield, Bawtry, front opening, 30cm high, 67cm wide. *Gorringes, Lewes*. Mar 01. HP: £750. ABP: £885.

# The Dolls House

By Sophie Jackson

**T**he dolls house (dollhouse in America) is a relative newcomer to the antiques market. Early dolls houses were simple, a converted old drawer or cabinet would serve as a rudimentary home for a child's dolls. Full dolls houses, as we would understand them, were only available for the elite. The first record of such a house comes from 1558 when Albrecht V of Bavaria commissioned a miniature house for his daughter. When it arrived he liked it so much he decided to keep it in his art collection.

This was the fate of many early dolls houses. They held such a fascination for adults and were usually so lovingly and intricately crafted, that they rarely made it into the nursery. Even if they did they were not heavily played with to avoid damage. When it was given to a child the dolls house was considered an educational toy, an object that could teach them how to correctly manage and run a household, but rapidly the dolls house became more popular among adult women who could fill their miniature home with an array of collectible small objects. These adult toys were called 'Baby Houses' and were often built within a cabinet and took the appearance of a display of miniature curios. They obviously gave their original owners considerable pleasure collecting or making tiny items for them and those few that have survived and sit in museums show the passion these adult collectors had for miniatures.

For most of its history, therefore, the dolls house has been considered a novelty for adults, items crafted for it were expensive and usually precise copies of full-size objects. They were still very much toys for the élite and many items were unique commissioned pieces. This changed with the Victorian period. The nineteenth century invented the concept of 'childhood', at least for the offspring of wealthy families. Instead of childhood being a miniature adulthood with children treated and expected to act as their elders, it was now cherished as a free and innocent period prior to entering the world of grown-up worries. The dolls house played into this new trend and started to become a child's play thing at long last. Toy manufacturers began to mass-produce miniature houses. In general they were simplistic with two to four rooms, papered and painted in the fashion of the day with a single hinged door. There was little consideration of scale and many modern collectors find it frustrating when they realise their antique dolls house is completely out of scale with modern fittings and furnishings.

As a rough guide Victorian dolls houses fall into the 1/16th scale (1 inch to every 16 inches) but there is no hard and fast rule, especially as many were produced by local carpenters who used whatever materials they had available. Designs were basic and sturdy, decoration was limited and aside from an opening front door, fittings such as working windows were rare. The whole point was that they should be affordable.

Today finding a Victorian dolls house in original good condition is extremely rare. They were popular items and like all toys were heavily played with and passed down through a family. Examples on the market today usually show signs of being well-loved. Interiors tend to suffer the worst and early wallpapers have often either decayed, worn off or been painted over by an enthusiastic young owner trying to smarten up their dolls house. Houses often have spent time stored in attics or outbuildings between generations of child owners and have suffered the effects of damp to their walls and roofs. While this can be corrected, worse is the risk of woodworm which can rapidly destroy the thin wood of the house. If buying a Victorian dolls house expect to spend a great deal of time preserving and restoring it before being able to display it.

Two of the most important British toy makers to come out of this period were George and Joseph Lines, Lines Bros, who came to dominate the dolls house market with their mass-produced designs. After the First World War the three sons of Joseph Lines decided to branch out from the

formulaic older dolls houses and began producing more modern designs. These came under the name *Triangois*, eventually shortened to *Tri-ang*. *Tri-ang* houses matched the designs of contemporary houses and included attached garages for the new-fangled car. The most popular model was the mock Tudor house which mimicked the building trend of the time. From the 1930s to the 1960s *Tri-ang* dominated the dolls house market until their sudden and dramatic collapse in 1971.

The adult market for collectible dolls houses and miniatures had waned during this period and interest was only to return in the 1990s when a steady stream of artisans and manufacturers began recolonizing the adult market. With that resurgence has developed a fascination with old houses, especially *Tri-angs* which many of the modern collectors remember from their childhood. *Tri-angs* are a good buy for collectors wanting an old dolls house without having to embark on extensive restoration. Late 1930s *Tri-angs* can be found for as little as £135 and can still be discovered in free ads or on such websites as [www.preloved.co.uk](http://www.preloved.co.uk) being sold for tiny sums.

The one danger with *Tri-ang* is the electric wiring. Many of *Tri-ang*'s houses came with the novelty of electric lighting but in some cases this has corroded or become damp making testing the lighting hazardous and this usually means it has to be completely replaced. With the collapse of *Tri-ang* other toy manufacturers tried to fill the void. *Chad Valley* and *GeeBee* produced cheap and cheerful houses often from printed tin or cardboard. They fail to appeal to the current adult market and can be found for £50-£70, though as they become rarer due to their flimsier nature, they may provide a niche interest to the dolls house collector.

The collecting of old dolls houses is still a very affordable hobby for most people. Handmade dolls houses from the 1950s, while unbranded, can be obtained for as little as £60 in good condition making them an easy starting point. With a little hunting *Tri-angs* can be found on such websites as *eBay* for as little as £20. Go to a dolls house or antiques website and you will be looking at between £135 and £400. Restored houses always cost more, though it is debatable if they are worth it as often the restorers have had to use artistic license to return the house to what they believe was its former glory.

Victorian dolls houses are rarer to find and have far more variety in price and often require a good deal more care than later models. Even so they often have more charm than modern pieces even when tactfully restored.

Overall the antique dolls house market is still very new and it is quite easy to pick up bargains at car boots, dolls house fairs and in secondhand shops. Websites and free ads are worth scouring for those prepared for a little restoration work, otherwise the only limitation to a collector's enthusiasm is space for their miniature property portfolio.



19thC Regency style dolls house, front opening, four rooms, fitted fireplaces, hallway and stairs, early 20thC wallpaper and late 19thC fabric on walls, mixed period furniture and accessories, 79cm high. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.*  
HP: £750. ABP: £885.



Doll's house with first floor verandah enclosed by baluster turned balcony rail, four room interior, with furnishings.  
*Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.*  
HP: £700. ABP: £826.

The prices quoted are actual Hammer Prices (HP) followed by the Approximate Buyer's Price (ABP) which includes an average buyer's premium of 15% + VAT.



1930s Lines Brothers 'Queen Mary's' Dolls House in 'thatched' roof Tudor style, on green garden plinth, 4 rooms, hall, stairs, landing and fitted with 2 fireplaces, dresser, sink and tin plate cooker, wired for electricity and including a quantity of 1930s miniature furniture and accessories  
*Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 02.*  
HP: £700. ABP: £826.



Early 20thC dolls house with dolls and accessories. *Bourne End Auctions, Bourne End. Apr 08.* HP: £680. ABP: £802.



19thC Regency style dolls house, front opening, four rooms, fitted fireplaces, hallway and stairs, early 20thC wallpaper and late 19thC fabric on walls, mixed period furniture and accessories, 79cm high. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 09.*  
HP: £750. ABP: £885.



Victorian two storey doll's house, Rose Cottage, opening front and rear, four room interior with outside privy, 42.5cm high, 42cm wide.  
*Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.*  
HP: £560. ABP: £660.



Victorian doll's house, two first floor windows having spindle turned balconies, split opening front, four room interior including furnishings.  
*Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.*  
HP: £560. ABP: £660.



Early 20thC George III design dolls house, with single piece front enclosing two rooms, 19in. *Gorringes, Lewes. May 09.*  
HP: £650. ABP: £767.



Early 20thC painted wood dolls house, two storeys and an attic, with opening roof and front, dormers, bay windows, portico and fall pipes, 40in wide, 44in high.  
*Andrew Hartley, Ilkley. Mar 02.*  
HP: £620. ABP: £731.



Victorian Mansion House, painted wooden doll's house, hinged front opening to reveal four rooms with glazed windows, approx 78 cm high, with a large collection of doll's house furniture, figures, and accessories, a/f.  
*Rosebery's, London. Mar 06.*  
HP: £550. ABP: £649.



Large modern dolls house, in form of a four storey Georgian mansion approached by a double stairway, with painted decoration and a hinged front, 1.38m high. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 04.*  
HP: £620. ABP: £731.



J Sykes Family Grocer doll's house, half timbered building divided into shop and living area with a fully fitted interior equipped with furnishings, 71cm high, 55cm wide.  
*Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.*  
HP: £540. ABP: £637.



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Moritz & Gottschalk? front opening dolls house, c1900, pencil numbers to base 3580, pitched roof, central gable, two rooms, two floors, front and sides lithographed with shutters, windows, eaves and bricks. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.* HP: £540. ABP: £637.



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Edwardian Lines Brothers, flat roofed, 4 room dolls house having fitted staircase, butler sink, 4 fireplaces. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02.* HP: £530. ABP: £625.



23

Victorian style doll's house with balcony and turret, two room interior fully furnished. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.* HP: £520. ABP: £613.



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19thC painted wood dolls' townhouse, 3 storey, pitched roof building with brickwork facade, stepped doorway, eight windows and first floor verandah, enclosed rooms partially wall papered with Victorian stamps, 39in high, 19in wide. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 06.* HP: £500. ABP: £590.



Georgian style doll's house, front-opening with balconies, three storeys, with comprehensive furnishings, electrified, inventory supplied, 27in wide x 14.5in deep x 35in high. *Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Jul 04.* HP: £460. ABP: £542.



Good painted wooden dolls house, with four rooms, 34in high. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 01.* HP: £440. ABP: £519.



Dolls house, 19thC, a large selection of dolls house fixtures and fittings, incl. teaset etc. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Feb 06.* HP: £440. ABP: £519.



19thC pine dolls house, three storey building with traces of original paint, 118cms high. *Rowley Fine Art Auctioneers, Ely. Sep 08.* HP: £420. ABP: £495.



Good early 20thC wooden dolls house, with an opening roof, front and back, with some period wallpaper and furniture, 50in high overall. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 01.* HP: £380. ABP: £448.



20thC dolls house fashioned as a Georgian town house, spindle turned gallery, simulated slate roof, front opening to reveal 10 rooms on 3 stories, central staircase, with a large quantity of period style furniture and effects. *Locke & England, Leamington Spa. Sep 04.* HP: £300. ABP: £354.



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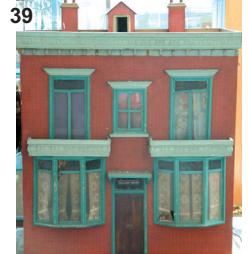
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Doll's house, Rose Villa, early 20thC, simulated brick-work front with panelled door, 2 room interior, furnishings. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.* HP: £380. ABP: £448.



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Early 20thC cream painted dolls house, as a Georgian manor house with paper lined tile roof, brick front and two door facade opening to reveal six rooms with a small amount of fittings, 35in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 09.* HP: £320. ABP: £377.

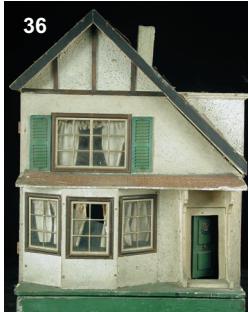
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Large late Victorian grey painted dolls house, removable front facade and roof, hinged sections opening at the back, enclosing thirteen rooms with fitted electrical wiring for lights, on painted base with chain balustrade, with a quantity of dolls house furniture, 52in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 09.* HP: £400. ABP: £472.



Gottschalk red roof dolls house, model No. 5463, with hinged facade opening to reveal four rooms, on green plinth base, 22.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 09.* HP: £400. ABP: £472.



Edwardian dolls house, with porch, 2 windows on hinged front, opening to reveal 2 bare rooms, 26 x 20in. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Dec 01.* HP: £300. ABP: £354.



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Three storey Victorian style doll's house, simulated brick front and slate apex roof, electrified, with furnishings, 29.5in wide x 15.5in deep x 38in high. *Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Jul 04.* HP: £240. ABP: £283.



1980s timber constructed doll's house, as a substantial Georgian country house, wired for electricity, with many fittings furniture etc, 62 x 95 x 58cm. *Locke & England, Leamington Spa. Nov 06.* HP: £240. ABP: £283.



1950s six room dolls house as thatched cottage, opening front, with some original furniture, 76cm. *Locke & England, Leamington Spa. Apr 03.* HP: £220. ABP: £259.



Late 20thC dolls house in pine and painted board, with dormered roof, two further floors, opening front, electric light, 34in wide, a scratch built lean-to garden hut, and full complement of furniture and equipment for all rooms, incl. hut. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09.* HP: £210. ABP: £247.



German dolls house, in the manner of Silber and Fleming, with hinged facade opening to reveal two rooms, 23in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 09.* HP: £200. ABP: £236.



Lines Bros Ltd stockbroker tudor dolls house, c1920s. *Orpington Salerooms, Kent. Jun 06.* HP: £190. ABP: £224.



Modern Kit Construction doll's house, in the form of a Georgian town house, 67cm wide. *Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Mar 08.* HP: £170. ABP: £200.



1920s dolls house produced from Hobbies of Dereham magazine plan, later garage extension, 21.5 x 32in. *Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Oct 01.* HP: £160. ABP: £188.



1930s Tri-ang Tudor style dolls house. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Sep 04.* HP: £160. ABP: £188.



19thC dolls house, stained wood construction, pitched roof with two chimney stacks, two storeys each with two rooms, fireplaces, staircase between, opening front (one panel missing), on separate stand, 53in high, 38in wide overall. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09.* HP: £160. ABP: £188.



G & J Lines Ltd Tri-ang 1930s Stockbroker Tudor dolls house, May Villa, having a bay window, 42cm high, 85cm wide. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Sep 04.* HP: £150. ABP: £177.



Painted wood doll's house, pitched brick-effect roof with chimney stack, opening front elevation with four windows and grained pine panelling door, three rooms enclosed, 25in wide, 28in high. *Gorringes, Lewes. Dec 04.* HP: £150. ABP: £177.



French 1930s dolls house on a green base, one room, original papered floor and walls, pitched roof, dormer window and verandah, 1ft 4in x 1ft 2in. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02.* HP: £150. ABP: £177.

Images are in descending hammer price order. The price range is indicated at the start of each section.



Early to mid 20thC dolls house, painted and brick papered construction with pitched roof hinged to reveal attic, two chimney stacks, two storeys, central staircase, removable back, front with fall pipes and soil stack, 26in wide, 26in high, quantity of later furnishings and equipment. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09.* HP: £95. ABP: £112.



Scratchbuilt wooden dolls house in the Georgian style with a quantity of various dolls house furniture. *Ambrose, Loughton. Mar 02.* HP: £85. ABP: £100.



Late 19th/Early 20thC painted doll's house, front door flanked by two bay windows, 54cm wide. *Charterhouse, Sherborne. Aug 07.* HP: £80. ABP: £94.



Modern Georgian style wooden dolls house, front and sides opening, 7 rooms, modern furniture, 50cm high. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01.* HP: £140. ABP: £165.



Painted wood doll's house, twin gabled roof, opening front, tin plate windows and doors, detached garage, 28in wide, and a smaller doll's house, 13.5in wide. (2) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Sep 08.* HP: £70. ABP: £82.



Painted wood dolls house, stucco finish with simulated pantile roof, front elevation enclosing one-up, one down, 23in. high, 17.5in. long, with quantity of furnishings. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 05.* HP: £65. ABP: £76.



Tin plate and plastic doll's house with a good quantity of doll's house furniture and accessories. *Aston's Auctioneers, Dudley. Aug 10.* HP: £80. ABP: £94.



Painted wood doll's house, twin gabled roof, opening front, tin plate windows and doors, detached garage, 28in wide, and a smaller doll's house, 13.5in wide. (2) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Sep 08.* HP: £70. ABP: £82.



Painted wood dolls house, stucco finish with simulated pantile roof, front elevation enclosing one-up, one down, 23in. high, 17.5in. long, with quantity of furnishings. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 05.* HP: £65. ABP: £76.



Triang doll's house, painted wood construction, hipped and gabled roof, part half timbered, tinplate window frames, opening front, two storeys, 27in wide, 16.5in high, quantity of furniture & equipment. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10.* HP: £65. ABP: £76.



Danish dolls house, c1900 and later, painted wood construction, stepped gabled roof, dormer, single storey below with scrolled window and door heads, sliding front door, quantity of associated furniture and equipment, 25in wide, 24.5in high. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09.* HP: £55. ABP: £64.