



G L Stampa illustration.



Staffordshire spaniels - pair c1880. £310. (Cottage Antiques at Devon County Antiques Fairs)

‘How much is that doggy in the window’

By Judith Clarke



Long-faced Sylvac matt-glaze dog, 5in high. £40-£50.

Whether you're a dog lover or a dog hater there's no denying that items with a canine theme enjoy an elevated status. Even fairly mundane pieces will sell on the back of a sentimental appeal or similarity to the buyer's own pet pooch.

Dogs have a long history - as early as the first settled communities and fulfilled many useful roles including hunting, protection and as man's faithful companion.

However, it wasn't really until Victorian times that canines began to be depicted in a more sentimental and appealing manner in the art and ephemera of the time.

Dogs took on a more domesticated role and interest in particular breeds and the welfare of dogs was given impetus by the establishment of Battersea Dog's Home in 1860 and the launch of Cruft's in 1886.

Their association with royalty has also kept their status high, whether it be King Charles spaniels, the present royal family's love of corgis or the recent 'sale of the century' demonstrating the Duke and Duchess of Windsor's polite obsession with pugs.

Items range from the highly desirable and usually highly expensive, for example paintings by Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-1873) or sculptures by well known artists or oriental 'dogs', to relatively inexpensive items such as greeting cards and postcards. Dog ornaments and figures have played a prominent part in the pottery and porcelain industry for many centuries and continue to do so.

Among the elite 'breeds' might be examples by Meissen, Lowestoft, Chelsea, Derby and Rockingham, easily commanding four figure prices. Pugs and hounds were some of the most popular canines featured.

Much more common and moving closer to our own time are Staffordshire figures. Dogs in particular were a favourite theme. Dogs are often found modelled as jugs and quill holders but commonest of all are pairs of Staffordshire dogs or sometimes a garniture of three designed to decorate the hearth or mantle. The most familiar type are spaniels whilst St. Bernards, dalmatians and poodles are more unusual and therefore more expensive. A pair of pugs from the late nineteenth century sold recently at auction for £850 but pairs of Spaniels can usually be found for anywhere between £95 to £300.

Prices vary according to age, condition, and elaboration. Some dogs have flower baskets in their mouths or are depicted with pups. A Staffordshire pottery dog and puppy c1855 would command between £750-£850.

Goss and crested china (enjoying popularity from 1880-1920) depicted numerous examples of canines, including comical dogs, scotties and bulldogs. This ceramic equivalent of the souvenir postcard spawned many English factories such as Grafton, Carlton and Arcadian as well as continental examples. Most pieces are priced between £20-£50. A crested china model of His Master's Voice dog and horn gramophone by Carlton c1925 with obvious cross-over appeal might command between £80 to £100 in today's current market.

There are very few commercial potteries of the twentieth century that have not devoted some proportion of their work towards the canine market. Among those having a significant output in this direction are Wade, Royal Doulton, Sylvac and Beswick (taken over by Royal Doulton in 1969), all of which have had numerous books and detailed production lists compiled on them.

The matt-glazed Sylvac animals have long been a familiar friendly sight at antiques fairs with the larger dog figures usually carrying a price tag of around £200 and possibly more for a particularly desirable colour such as pink.

Beswick's early production consisted mainly of comical/novelty dogs but by the 1940s they were producing a range of realistic models based on champion canines. Then there are Wade Whimsies and pet face dishes. A Pekinese might cost between £20 and £30.

COLLECTING & PRICING INFO

Byngo dogs with their distinctive spread-eagled, indignant looking postures also have their keen collectors as do Lladro puppies and dogs produced by Derby.

Occupying a general category of desirable items would be collectables such as chrome-plated car mascots, for example of greyhounds and bulldogs. A Lalique car mascot in the form of a racing greyhound would easily set you back a couple of thousand pounds.

There are the popular sleek greyhounds and scotties of the Art Deco period, kitsch nodding dogs from the 1950s, cigarette cards, cold-painted spelter figures, jewellery, compact cases, money boxes, vesta cases and prints, postcards and paintings by renowned artists and illustrators.

Names to look out for include Richard Ansdell, Arthur Wardle, Lionel Edwards, Arthur Thiele, Louis Wain and contemporary artists such as Michelle Pearson Cooper.

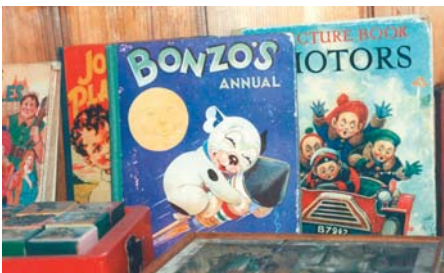
Another very popular category is that of fictional and advertising dogs which have their own cult followings. Among these might be the H.M.V. dog Nipper, Lassie, Dismal Desmond, the Black and White Whisky scotties, a Royal Doulton bulldog model advertising Guinness or the bumbling and lovable Bonzo created back in 1922 by George Studdy.

The image of Bonzo was manufactured in a multitude of forms including jigsaws, annuals, ceramics, toys, sweets and of course the Bonzo postcards which are at the cheaper

end of the Bonzo market. A Steiff musical Bonzo soft toy from the 1930s recently sold for £2,000.

In whatever form a dog appears, from jewellery and compacts to practical money boxes the addition of a canine theme makes these items more collectable and desirable.

Write-ups of auction reports like to use such phrases as 'howling success' or describe the prices as 'barking mad'. This sometimes gives the impression that devoted dog-lovers don't also possess good aesthetic and investment sense. However, the fact remains that canine items will be popular for as long as people regard the dog as 'man's best friend'. Make no bones about it!



Bonzo Annual. Published by Dean & Son Ltd.



A soulful looking nipper - papier mache figure.



Parisian Poodles. 1950s 'style'. £10-£12.



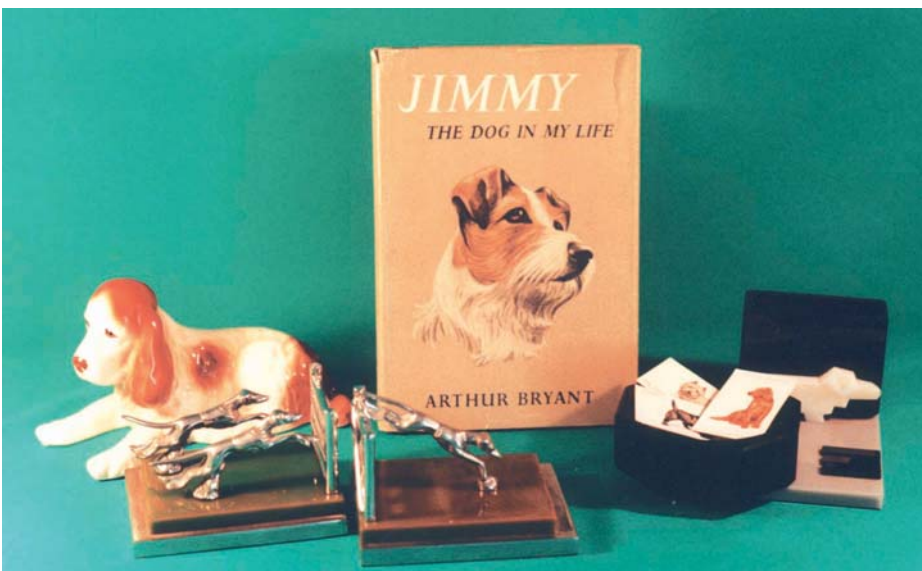
Staffordshire St Bernards with glass eyes c1900. (Cottage Antiques at Devon County Antiques Fairs)



Spelter dog, English c1900, 7in long. £80-£100.



Staffordshire greyhound quill holder c1860. £150-£200.



Selection of themed canine items, including Scottie dog deco ashtray, Sylvac dog and bookends.



Pewter snuff box. Retriever/Gun Dog c1900. £50-£80.