

The late Betty Cadbury built up a fine collection of early dolls and toys in her lifetime and became a leading authority on bygone juvenalia. In 1976 she wrote an informative book entitled *Plaything Past* and supplied articles on this subject for the Antique Collectors' Club and the Doll Club of Washington, USE. Betty Cadbury was the wife of Christopher Cadbury, a director of the famous British chocolate concern. Her book concentrates upon the early Plaything, but even squeezes in a mention of the Cadbury company's own entry into the world of collectable - the *Cadbury Cococubs* that made their appearance towards the end of the 1930s.

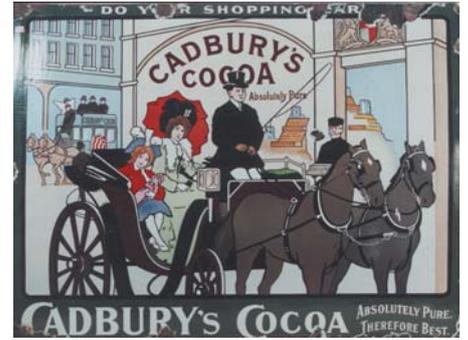
These lead figures of various colourful cartoon-style creatures were actually manufactured by William Britain's of London who were especially noted for their toy soldier production. The creatures included a pig known as *Mr Pie Porker* and a hen named *Mrs Henrietta Fussyfeathers*, a series devised to promote sales of the firm's drinking-cocoa. Today these have become very collectable, mainly because of their association with the long-established famous London toy soldier and lead figure manufactory of William Britain's.

Betty Cadbury's interest in old Plaything ranges from the very rare hard-to-find antique products to the Plaything of the 1930s. The Cadbury advertising *Cococubs* were not the only figures that appealed to her and she had in her collection at least two publicity soft toys of that era - *Sunny Jim* and *Betty Oxo*. *Sunny Jim* was long the trademark of *Force*, the breakfast cereal. *Force* is still available in the supermarkets but the custom of supplying *Sunny Jim* cloth dolls for packet tops and a small payment appears to have now disappeared!

Who made the *Sunny Jim* dolls I never discovered, but *Betty Oxo* was a character doll product of the Dean's Rag Book Company and, for a time, was available by sending wrappers from *Oxo Cubes*. Another Cadbury's advertising item was an old-fashioned tin-plate milk churn designed as a money box and marked *Cadbury's Dairy Milk Chocolate*. It came, originally, filled with chocolates. Many Plaything were used as advertising material and these included children's colour booklets and playing cards publicising anything from *Cow & Gate Children's Products* to *Coleman's Mustard*.

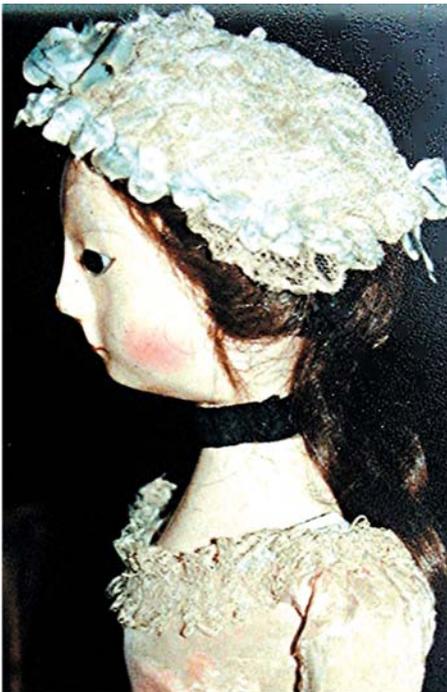


A Jacob's gypsy caravan biscuit tin c1937, 7in and a Cadbury's Dairy Milk Chocolate biscuit tin in the form of a churn, 5.5in long, which sold for a hammer price of £250 in June 2001 at David Duggleby, Scarborough.



A Cadbury's cocoa enamel advertising sign depicting a lady in a carriage outside a Cadbury's shop which sold for a hammer price of £1,800 in November 1999 at Peter Wilson, Nantwich.

Mrs Cadbury's Famous Collection



This early wooden gesso-decorated doll was one of Mrs Cadbury's favourites and dates from the eighteenth century.

by Jack Tempest



This is 'Batty Oxo', a soft doll issued as an advertising premium by the Oxo Company in the 1930s.



Another early eighteenth century doll from the Cadbury Collection.



Dolls houses could be purchased in the toy shops but were often home-made. Estate carpenters would often be called upon to make a dolls house for the children of wealthy families.



Many early toys are to be seen amongst all the dolls so there is plenty of interest for the serious collectors of toys and dolls at Sudbury Hall in Derbyshire.



Dolls of all kinds, including china, bisque, wood and celluloid are displayed throughout the Museum of Childhood at Sudbury Hall.

Sudbury Hall belongs to the National Trust and is situated in the Derbyshire hamlet of Sudbury on the A50, halfway between Junction M24 of the M1 motorway and Stoke-on-Trent.

and the Sudbury Hall Toy Museum

Many items collected by Betty Cadbury may now be seen preserved at Sudbury Hall in Derbyshire where there is an excellent Toy Museum based in what was once the building's seventeenth century stables and an adjoining nineteenth century wing built to house the mansion's many servants. The Cadbury Collection, introduced in 1984, dominates the exhibits that were joined by examples brought along by the Derbyshire Museums' Service. Many aspects of child-life in the past, covering the life of youngsters of both upper and lower classes, are presented. One interesting section is devoted to children's fashions from the past. Here the days of the mid-nineteenth century are recalled when it was fashionable for the young boys of wealthy families to wear dresses! There is no record of what the boys thought about this tradition!

The earliest dolls to be seen are from the eighteenth century and are formed from gessoed wood. They are pictured in Betty Cadbury's book but appear to have been carefully re-dressed since. They are around 20 ins in height and are the oldest dolls in the collection. There are plenty of dolls to see, large and small sizes, some even sitting around a child-sized table enjoying afternoon tea! The *Autoperipatetikos* has a mouthful of a name and originated from America in the 1860s. Basically their bodies are designed to conceal a clockwork motor that causes the legs to move and the doll to peripatetically hobble along automatically, as its name suggests.

These dolls come with different heads from different sources, porcelain, bisque, or cloth and stand about 10 ins tall. Their movement is cumbersome and the ladies do wear rather inelegant boots but they can walk quite well unaided, if in a somewhat ungainly manner!

The Steiner *Bébé Premier Pas* was another walking doll but needed its hand holding as it attempted to walk, otherwise it would fall over and wriggle on the ground until the clockwork mechanism ran down. Another doll, possibly by Steiner, could walk and also talk! It could only utter a limited *Mama* or *Papa*, and its skirts hid the three clockwork-driven wheels that allowed it to move around! This rare item is labelled *Cremers Game & Toy Warehouse, 22 New Bond Street* which was once a well-patronised London toyshop.

Mrs Cadbury was especially interested in the mechanical figures that are known as *automata*. These include figures of people and animals that have been designed to perform certain actions when their clockwork mechanisms were set in motion. The nineteenth century French-made *Monkey Artist* sits by his easel to perform the actions of a painter, including moving his brush and sitting back occasionally to admire his progress. No, he doesn't actually paint, just realistically pretends! Then there is the nineteenth century *Dancing Couple*, also from France, who gyrate to the music from a hidden musical box. Such musical box movements were often added to many of these animated items.

Not all toys were intended for children, especially the types that reflected the inventions of the Victorian Era. Adults would also get much pleasure from the toys that were of educational value to the children of the wealthy families able to afford them. These included live-steam railway engines, the magic lanterns, the stereoscopes, and the zoetropes that led to the eventual discovery of moving pictures we now enjoy regularly at the cinema or on the television. Poorer children had to make do with much simpler home-made Plaything that ranged from rag dolls to the dried-sculpted apple-headed dolls of America. Improvised wooden dolls, a doll made from an old shoe, dolls' houses, and furniture from the late Patrick Murray's collection are now preserved in the Edinburgh Museum of Childhood in Scotland.

Dolls' houses were often homemade, their quality being of course, dependent upon the skills of the maker. Wealthy families often had their estate handyman or carpenter make a dolls' house for their offspring. Dolls' houses could be bought along with all their necessary furnishings with miniature dolls being available to add the final touch of homeliness. One 1880s quality example from the Cadbury collection features thirteen rooms in all and all fully furnished. It is worth noting that contents may have changed by such houses serving different generations of children, all with tastes of their own.