



Collectables of the Future

Part I: If only I'd kept my....

By Simon Valentine

How many of you wished that you had kept your treasured Dinky toys from your childhood or perhaps looked after that *Hornby Dublo* train set a bit better? It's no secret that most of us in the antiques industry have had that 'if only I'd kept' moment when the market for a toy or collectable shoots through the ceiling and we're left scouring our attics for that rusty old box of *Meccano* that you vaguely remember mum chucking out while dad was at work. So what should we be hiding away to perhaps sell in the future? Looking back into the fads of my brief time on the planet, only one franchise comes to the forefront of my mind as the most popular and most successful, and that is *Pokémon*. It maybe a surprise to some of you to learn that *Pokémon* is one of the best selling video game based franchises of all time and still the second most lucrative toy in the market in the world, only bested by *Hello Kitty*. The *Pokémon* craze started off in 1995 and was created by the gaming giant *Nintendo*. Since its original release both children and adults globally have fallen in love with the fad's quirky characters and their 'Pocket Monster' companions. For those of you who have no idea what I'm talking about let me give you some background. The *Pokémon* Television series works on the narrative of a young boy called Ash, aged ten who leaves home to explore the world with his monster companion 'Pikachu' - his aim is to become a *Pokémon* master by both catching and battling *Pokémon* against each other. This simple premise had generated a huge dedicated fan base by 2002 making the franchise worth over \$26 billion. So how are we, in the UK going to benefit from this franchise?



An important part of the *Pokémon* revenue stream for the *Nintendo Company* was the release of the *Pokémon Trading Card Game* or TCG. As parents, many of you will have had your kids badger you for years about buying them the latest *Pokémon* Booster Card packs and you will have politely sat them on the naughty step for nagging! After all who could blame you - they are just worthless pieces of paper, right? What if I told you that there is a one single *Pokémon* card out there that has a value in excess of \$20,000? Yes you read that correctly. As a young dealer I know that it's important to realize the potential of items that others might see as worthless, as this provides an important edge when you are out investing in items and perhaps predicting what you should be keeping for the future. I see dealers every weekend rush past me at boot fairs to get to Granny's jewellery box in the hope that they might get a gram of gold for their trouble. Whilst watching the inevitable elbow barging and general scramble for precious metals, I gently glide by and seek out the porcelain, glass and most importantly the collectables. As we all know, the modern fads of today will be the collectables of future, and just like *Dinky*, *Schuco* and *Matchbox*, crazes like *Pokémon*, *Power Rangers* and *My Little Pony* are sure to re-appeal to the current generation later on in life. With this idea in mind, let's take a look at the *Pokémon* Trading Card Franchise as a current collecting craze and some of the cards in detail, examining both the top end of the spectrum and the cards that are more freely available. Believe me when I say that some of the prices I'm going to share are going to make you root through your sons and daughters box of trading cards!

With our first example, let's peruse the rarest *Pokémon* card in the world, known as the 'Pre-Release Raichu'. When this card was first printed, it is approximated that eight of the standard Raichu cards were created with a 'Pre-Release' text over the bottom right hand corner of the illus-

tration - a simple printing error. These cards are now so rare that only one real image of Pre-Release Raichu is actually available for viewing on the Internet. The whereabouts of the other seven cards are contested and for the most part remain unknown. This card, as with all items worth a lot of money these days, has been heavily reproduced and with an approx-



imate value of \$20,000, who wouldn't want to have a go at making a convincing Photoshop version? So what is the difference between a real card and a fake you ask? I can only give you tips based on other cards as I've never had the privilege of owning this Raichu card and probably never will. As with banknotes and other pieces of ephemera we must consider the quality of the paper the image is printed on, the quality and colouration of the image on the card and the attention to detail on the text alignment/spelling. The easiest method is to get a standard *Pokémon* card and do a side-by-side comparison - even the amateur eye will soon spot a fake. So if you'd like to take five minutes to have a rustle through a tin of cards your kids have hidden - please do, I won't be offended. If you think you have a genuine Raichu Pre-Release card, the likelihood is that it's a copy. However if you really are convinced that you're the lucky owner of this sought after collectable then send it off to www.psacard.com and they will grade and authenticate it for you for a token fee.

EDITION 1



First Edition Shadowless Charizard.
£120-£200 ungraded.
£200-£300 graded.



Standard base Set Charizard with Shadowed Box.
£20-£30 ungraded.
£50-£90 graded.

Moving into the realms of the slightly more realistic, let's examine the first series of *Pokémon* cards ever to be released known as *The Base Set*. The base set consisted of *Pokémon* cards from the original series of 151 monsters. At the start of a lot of TCG booster pack releases, cards are often marked with the *1st Edition* logo. The base set was no exception and many of the cards were released with what is now known as a 'Shadowless' border. The shadowed border came about at the end of the first edition release when the creators wanted to switch to a standard non-edition system for the cards. However it was quickly decided that without the first edition logo, the cards looked far too plain, hence this brought about the idea of a black shadow around the box in which the picture of the *Pokémon* was contained. This has made the early cards without a shadowed border very sought after. An example of this would be a good condition, First Edition 'Shadowless Charizard' card which in today's market would sell for around £120 -£200 ungraded. Whilst many *Pokémon* cards hold little value as so many were printed to satisfy the needs of a growing global market, there are those select few which, if you are in the know, can be a big pay off. It's no secret that there are collectors out there that want the best and will pay for the best, whether it's a drunken bricklayer vase, a Gallé table or a *Pokémon* card. Value is subjective to the collector and there is a collector out there for everything. So keep your eyes peeled for these little paper gems, you could be pleasantly surprised with what you get for them!

Featured on the left is a short Price Guide to wet your antique dealing appetites until the next edition - enjoy!

Short Hand Reference Guide:

- <http://www.psacard.com/>
- [http://bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net/wiki/1st_Edition_\(TCG\)](http://bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net/wiki/1st_Edition_(TCG))
- <http://www.ebay.co.uk/gds/What-are-SHADOWLESS-Pokemon-1000000000902805/g.html>
- <http://bmgf.bulbagarden.net/f283/unlimited-vs-modified-format-visual-difference-85029/>
- <https://uk.games.yahoo.com/photos/the-10-most-expensive-pokemon-cards-slideshow/pre-release-raichu-card-photo-1381522546332.html>
- <http://vgsales.wikia.com/wiki/Pokemon>



Full Art Mew Ex. Extra Fine Condition.
£50-£90 ungraded.
£100-£150 graded.



First Edition 'Red Cheeks' Pikachu Error Card.
£10-£15 ungraded.
£30-£40 graded.



PSA Graded First Edition Shadowless Zapdos.
£20-£30 ungraded.
£200-£300 graded.



Secret Rare Reuniclus Card.
£20-£40 ungraded.
£120-£150 graded.