



JAMES GOOCH

30, PURVEYOR OF CURIOS

Searching for pieces for his online venture Doe & Hope has introduced James Gooch to some unusual characters. 'I've sold one chap in Germany 20 ventriloquist dummies so far,' he says. 'He sends me photos of his daughter sitting among them and asks me if I can spot her.'

James had the idea for the business four years ago, when he received a small inheritance while working as a runner and researcher for TV production companies. Antiques was his first choice – he and schoolfriend David Walker used to bunk off lessons to watch *Bargain Hunt* – but 'I wanted a point of difference,' he says. So, together with David and Jade Marriott, now his wife, he settled on selling curios ranging from taxidermy to fairground memorabilia. 'After finding the object, the next best thing is researching it,' he says. 'I'm interested in what you can't see, rather than what you can.'

He thinks his relative youth can be a disadvantage: 'The older your eye, the better trained it is,' he says. But he hopes his enthusiasm for antiques will encourage other young people. 'I think dealing, at its best, is dramatic theatre,' he says. 'Once an object has spoken to you, you want to buy more and more. You'll truly have the bug.'

07729 213013; doeandhope.com

See the shortlist of the Young Guns of the Antiques Trade Awards at antiquesnews.co.uk. The winner will be announced along with the winners of the Homes & Antiques Awards 2013 at the Decorative Antiques & Textiles Fair, Battersea, on 25th April, as part of National Antiques Week.