

Best of British Bears

There were many other British makes many of them well made and well thought of like Chad Valley, Chiltern, Merrythought and Deans. The last two of which are still going to this day. I thought we could look at some of these.

Farnell was founded in London in 1840. It began to make Teddy Bears in 1906-8 and was probably the first British teddy bear maker. In 1910 Harrods produced a catalogue with Farnell bears in it. In 1925 Farnell registered the Alpha Toys trade mark. Typical characteristics of Early Farnell bears:-

- Eyes - large bears, clear glass - small bears boot button.
- Ears - large cupped ears either at the corners, or less usually, the side of the head.
- Muzzle - usually prominent and shaved.
- Nose - vertically stitched with long upward end stitches.
- Mohair - long and silky of very high quality.
- Pads - felt or cotton Claws - webbed paw claws. 5 stitches on both paws and pads.
- Hump - rounded. Arms - long and curved. Legs - thick legs with narrow ankles.
- Quite often big, long feet. Seam - Front final seam.

As with all these things there are many bears with only some of the above features and some with hardly any. It was generally accepted though that Farnell bears were of good quality with long soft silky mohair.

1910-15 Faraday

Faraday has replacement pads over carded feet. He is 13 inches with fabulous mohair in excellent condition with 100% coverage. He has 5 claws to his pads and his paws. He has boot button eyes and long tapering arms, with a shaved protruding muzzle.

He was listed in the Harrods catalogue of the time as TY365. All his joints work well. He is a truly fabulous bear with a wonderful face



1920 Sullivan

This is Sullivan a super 1920s blond mohair 18" Farnell. He has cupped ears sewn across the facial seams, glass eyes with painted backs and long arms with spoon shaped paws. He has card lined felt pads, a front final seam and a slight hump and a hoarse voice



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1920 Frampton

Frampton is a handsome bear with distinctive eyes. He has an excellent coverage of long luscious pale blond mohair. One of his carded felt pads on his long feet is a replacement but he has his original paw pads with very long claws. He's also had stitches added to his nose. A solid bear with a deep voice and a front final seam.



1930 Freddie and Winston

Freddie is the most magnificent huge long haired curly Farnell bear in a golden colour with black stitching and very large eyes. He is 26 inches tall with his long luscious coat in excellent condition. Altogether an incredible teddy bear

Winston is the most magnificent huge long haired curly Farnell bear in a light golden colour with black stitching and very large eyes with his label. He is 28 inches tall with his long luscious coat in excellent condition. Altogether an incredible teddy bear



Wind in the Willows

This is a magnificent group of characters from The Wind in the Willows. There is Moley, Mr Toad, Ratty, Badger, Otter and Weasel. All original beautifully made. Possibly made by Farnell soon after the book was published in 1908



Harwin

Harwin & Co. was one of the first British teddy bear manufacturers. They started their factory in 1914 at the Eagle Works in Finsbury Park, London, and produced many animals and dolls. The first bears were made in 1915, and at the London Fair in 1916 launched a series of mascot Ally Bears dressed in the uniforms of the allied forces of World War I. It ceased trading in 1930

Harwins all have six features that seem to run the same regardless of the quality, size or pattern, plus a large hump!

1. They always seem to have big hips! The legs are joined a little higher up than other bears making the crotch look low down and the hips look wide, wider than the shoulders.
2. They all have mouth stitching that is shaped like a 'W'.
3. They all have large feet and very slim ankles, and the upper leg is not very shapely.
4. They all seem to have hand paws that curve inwards at the wrist, so that they can almost sit with their tips of their paws touching, provided any new pads have not been put on too tightly.
5. Where the centre gusset of the head goes down to the neck, it doesn't go to a point like most bears, it has a squared off ending that is tucked under the joint.
6. The ears are tucked into the head seams then curved round down the side of the head making them 'cupped' ears.

1916 Nurse H

Nurse Harwin is a rare and wonderful antique teddy bear by British firm Harwin & Company. Very few of these bears survive.

Nurse Harwin measures 15" She is five way jointed, and has very long arms and a hump and a longish rounded snout. She has lovely, original oily glass eyes with painted backs and large black pupils,. Though not



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Omega

Omega was the trade name of the British United Toy Manufacturing Co. Ltd who manufactured soft toys from 1894 to the early 1980s and was one of the first to produce teddy bears along with J K Farnell, Terry, Deans, Chiltern and Chad Valley.

Omega's Identifying features:-

- earlier British designs often copied the look of German bears,
- quite often long,
- with thin bodies and limbs
- Large eyes with big pupils.

1918 Black Sam

Simply beautiful, antique teddy bear. All original. Measuring 16" from pads to tips of ears. Amazing large almost orange, painted back eyes with large black pupils, with unusual black mohair in excellent condition. Original felt carded pads. Retaining all original stitched clawing. Nose stitching is in good order. Hard woodwool stuffed. Magnificent.



Terry's

William Terry produced their first teddy bears in 1912. They made their first webbed claw bears in 1919 and produced their first kapok stuffed bear in 1921 called the Ahsolight bear. They ceased trading before the second World War in the 1930s.

Identifying features of Terry's bears:-

- large cupped ears set high on the head,
- large clear glass eyes with big black pupils and painted backs,
- webbed claws in some bears after 1919,
- a triangular shaped head with a long shaved muzzle,
- shield shaped vertically stitched black nose or horizontal stitching set high on the nose,
- large oval card lined cotton or felt feet.

1912 Bundle

Bundle is a Terry's moon eyed bear from 1912-15. He has an upturned shaved, not quite triangular, nose. He has clear eyes with painted backs with huge black pupils and a front final seam. He has webbed paws and is wood wool stuffed. A very handsome chap

Though not perfect, she is a rare bear and has the most wonderful expressive face.



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1914 Happy

Happy is a magnificent Terry's bear. He has long luscious mohair and 'Happy' written on his huge linen feet. He is stuffed with wood-wool. He is fully jointed with clear and black glass eyes with rather lovely white edges to his eyes. He has a vertically stitched nose on a shaved muzzle and an inverted V shape mouth stitching. A magnificent bear.

We are fortunate to be the custodians of these regal old ladies and gentlemen, made to give so many children so much pleasure and comfort and made to last by our great British teddy bear makers.

