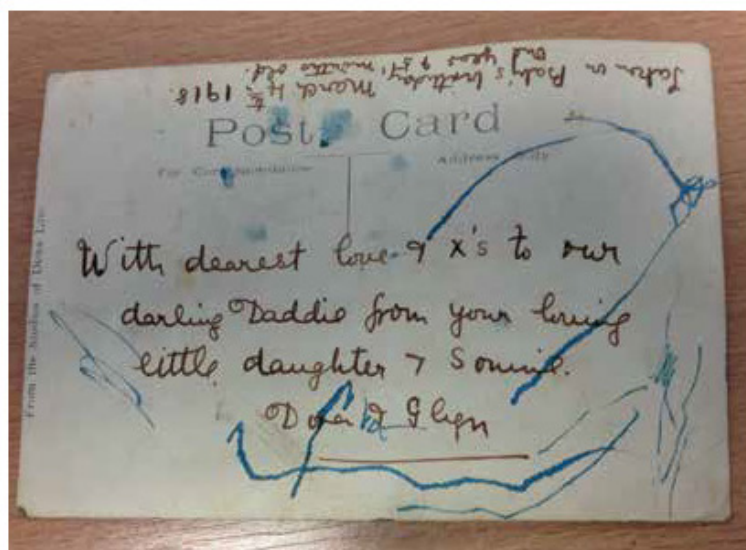


BRISTOL

THE STORY OF A LOST BEAR



The story started in February 2012 when staff at Bristol Airport found the antique bear, which has one eye and a floppy ear, in a bag with a frayed black and white photo (dated March 1918) of him being cuddled by two little children. The toy had no name tag but a message in faded ink on the back of the picture read: "With dearest love and kisses to our darling Daddie from your loving little daughter and sonnie Dora and Glyn."



TOP LEFT: The original post card found with Bristol.

ABOVE: Writing on the back of the post card from Dora and Glyn.

Christening the new arrival 'Bristol Bear', the Bristol Airport team sent out an appeal for help and were overwhelmed by the response both from the general public and a variety of ancestry forums. A number of expert family historians from Rootschat.com even stepped in to help with the search.

They were able to trace more information from the picture after they researched a second message on the photograph, which said: "taken on Baby's birthday March 4th 1918,

one year and five-months-old."

But, despite tracing who the children were they were unable to track down any living relatives. With so little information to go on, the assistance received from media, ancestry forums and teddy bear specialists played a vital role in filling in the gaps. Cyprus resident, Robert Glyn Baker, read about the story in a campaign by The Mature Times, a newspaper for the over 50s and recognised the bear as a family heirloom he lost while

travelling through Bristol Airport. He said: 'I was stunned when I got a cutting of the Mature Times in the post and saw my bear on the front page.'

'I thought it was lost forever, I was convinced it had been destroyed.' 'I'm an only child and my auntie Dora didn't have any children

either so I am the only person that could have got the bear,' Robert said.

'My mum gave him a different nose, he has pads on his arms too. I think I gave him a rough time when I was a kid!'

The bear was found in 2012 and staff spent 14 months trawling flight records to see if they could find any two passengers with the same names as those mentioned on the back of the picture.

When they could not they appealed for help from the public and a number of experts stepped forward to help with the search.

Robert is the only son of Glyn Baker, born in 1916, who is pictured with his sister in a photograph found with the bear. The card, which was found with the teddy, was written by Dora and Glyn to their father - Robert's grandfather - Nicholas Glyn Baker.

Nicholas was a baker by trade, but was stationed in Baghdad during the First World War, where he died from malaria in 1918 shortly after receiving the photograph.



It is thought the bear was originally bought by Glyn's uncle in Glenover in Pembrokeshire, where he grew up, and was a present to Kenneth, the brother of Dora and Glyn who died aged three years old. Robert, a retired policeman, is the only child of Glyn and Elsie.

ABOVE A 1918 troop postcard from "Mesopotamia" or modern day Iraq.

OPPOSITE: One of the publicity pictures of Bristol.



Jacqui Mills, Public Relations and Community Manager, Bristol Airport said:

"We were delighted when Robert came forward to claim 'Bristol Bear' as we always wanted to reunite him with his family. It was an accumulation of nearly two years work with very little information to go on.

"Finding out that the father in the photograph served in Mesopotamia (now Iraq) during the First World War and received the picture of his family shortly before his sad death, really brings these lost property items to life. The little bear has been on an amazing journey which will continue in December.

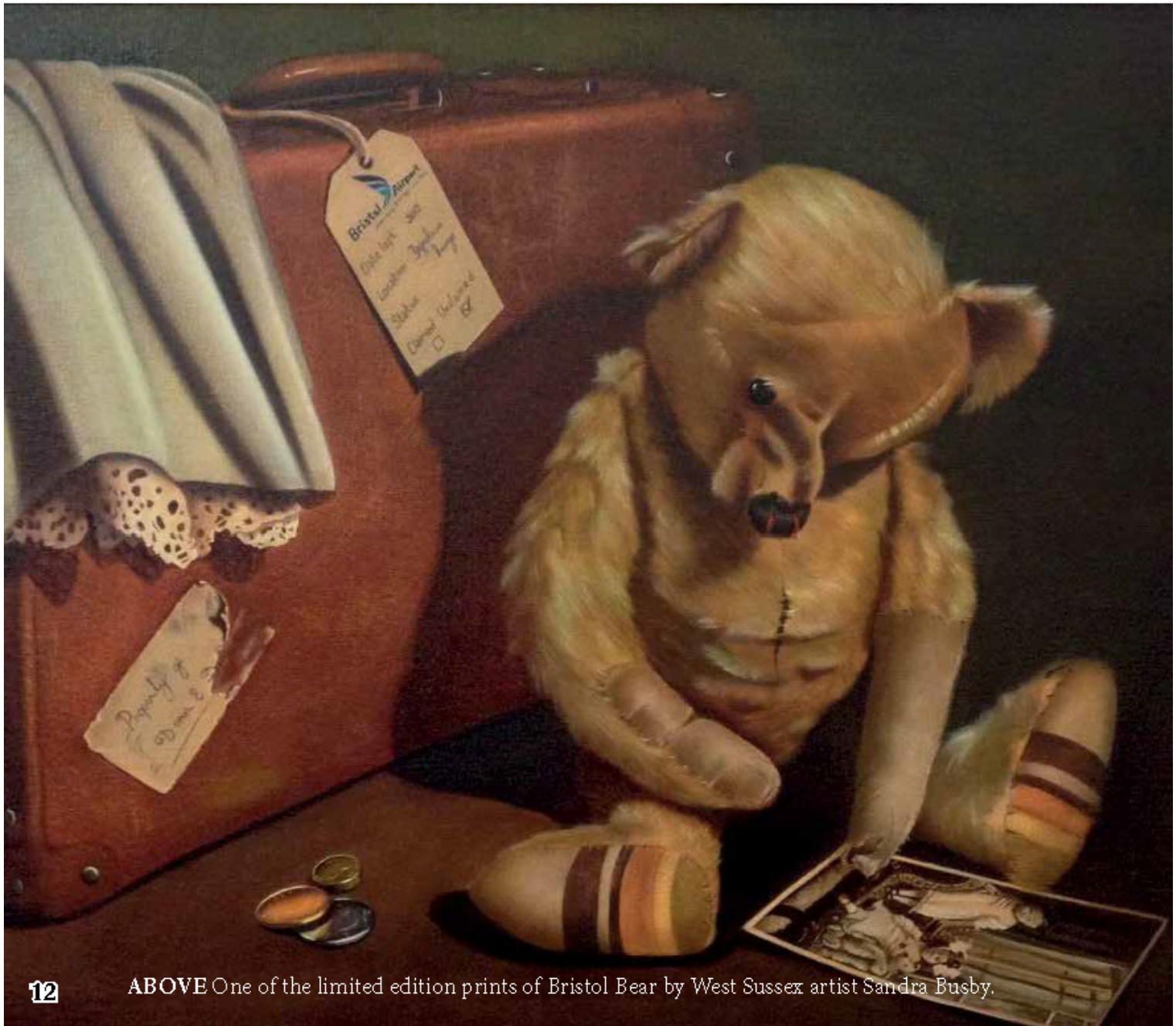
"As Robert does not have any younger members of the family to pass 'Bristol Bear' on to, he has made a decision to sell the bear at auction and help find him a new home." Daniel Agnew, teddy bear specialist at Special Auction Services, said although the bear is "very worn and tatty", having the original photo, the provenance and the airport story "adds value".

A donation from the purchase of 'Bristol Bear' was made to Children's Hospice South West.

During the two year search for the family, many offers of help were received including one from an artist from West Sussex wanting to tell the bear's story in a painting. A limited edition print of 'Bristol

Bear', with a suitcase, a lost property tag, World War One coins and a recreation of the photograph has been painted by artist Sandra Busby. One of the limited edition prints was donated to Children's Hospice South West, where the children and families at the hospice will be able to enjoy 'Bristol Bear's' fascinating story.

Ian Pout





Bristol Airport

Amazing journeys start here

The newest arrival at Teddy Bears of Witney is Bristol, a circa 1910 German bear, who was left behind at the departure lounge of Bristol Airport in 2012. After considerable efforts by airport staff the bear and Bob Baker, nephew of the bear's original owner, were re-united in 2015. In the meantime Bob's health had deteriorated, and so he decided to sell the bear. Ian remembered reading about 'Bristol's' story and was more than happy to become his new guardian when he appeared at Special Auction Services in December 2015. This somewhat battered but highly charismatic bear is usually on display in Witney but will have a rare outing on June 11th, when he will be exhibited at Woburn. Bristol is a more than welcome addition to the collection at Witney but as Ian says, 'no bear can replace Alfonzo'