

Dolls and figurines comprise a significant and fascinating part of the archive and provide an interesting representation of the world beyond the screen. In the very back cupboard, among an old zoetrope and extraordinary Chinese shadow ball,



lies the life-size (and scarily life-like) Shirley Temple doll from the 1930s (EXE BD 68268), modelling her yellow petticoat dress and conspicuous blonde curls, her eyelids closed...during the day, at least.

Stored in their boxes not so far away are the strange porcelain reproductions of Laurel and Hardy (EXE BD 68092/3), their china white faces sitting on top of limp doll bodies, smiling through the plastic that preserves

them. Equally as unnerving, the small bust figurines of Bela Lugosi as *Dracula* (EXE BD 48473) from Tod Browning's 1931 production and Boris Karloff as *Frankenstein's* Monster (EXE BD 48474) from James Whale's 1931 film, act as

embodiments of the gothic horror genre, the finely painted detail on these eerie characters determining that you certainly wouldn't want to experience them on a human scale.

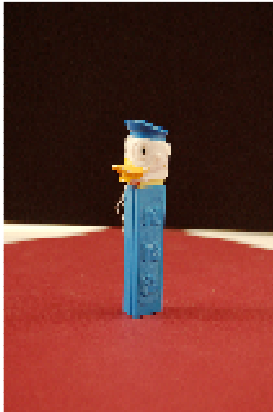


On the other hand, a delightful Barbie doll modelled on *Gone with the Wind*'s Scarlett O'Hara (EXE BD 55240) is a welcome change, presented wearing her New Orleans honeymoon ensemble, complete with a full white gown and black lace veil; she was produced as part of a Hollywood's Legends Collection and conveniently, lives in the neighbouring drawer to a weighty, ceramic bust of a somewhat generic-looking Marilyn Monroe (EXE BD 68370). A more detailed, painted plastic bust of Monroe (EXE BD 54650) is more recognisable; her curly blonde hair, full painted red lips and distinguishable beauty spot on the left cheek connote the splendour and stardom of perhaps the most famous Hollywood sweetheart to ever have graced the screen. From a more current period and representing the CGI generation, is an impressive, pristine-condition Buzz Lightyear talking action figure (EXE BD 39977) from Pixar's *Toy Story*, 1995. I am told that if you start his talking buttons, he won't stop, but the temptation to press all the gadgets at once still prevails.



Move along and you'll discover Disney paraphernalia in nearly every drawer.

My favourite finds were the Mickey Mouse roller skates (EXE BD 31570),



old painting tins with colourful

Disney characters (EXE BD 68193) and a Donald Duck Pez dispenser (EXE BD 74119), calling to mind a childhood holiday to Disneyland where I purchased a Minnie-Mouse version with my meagre pocket-money.



In addition, there are hundreds of jigsaw puzzles that

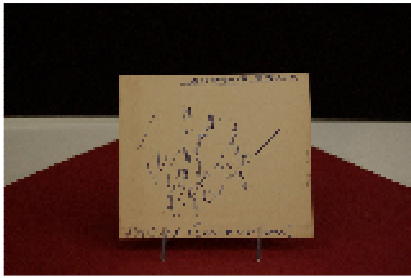
would satisfy rainy afternoons for months on end; from *Pinocchio* (EXE BD 67125) and *The Jungle Book* (EXE BD 67118) to an eclectic mix of *The Planet of the Apes* (EXE BD 67050), *Ben-Hur* (EXE BD 67057), *The Beatles* (EXE BD 67025) and the obligatory *James Dean* 500-piece masterwork (EXE BD 67001). Even *Baywatch* (EXE BD 69488) continues to survive as a 100-piece compilation of all the cast members.



Of course, if what excites your interest is something of a more sophisticated nature - the true movie star memorabilia - then look no further than a genuine American dollar bill signed by the gorgeous Lauren Bacall

(EXE BD 76941) dated 18th December 1978, a statement of American stardom and celebrity wealth (even if it is just one dollar...) from a landmark actress of the Golden Age of Hollywood.

Similarly, Elizabeth Taylor and Eddie Fishers' autographs are recorded, somewhat more modestly, on a slip of paper from the Shepperton Studios (EXE



BD 77796). This was the time when they were filming an adaptation of Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly, Last Summer* together in 1959, only a few months after they had been married; in four

years time, their marriage would inevitably be over and scandalously, Taylor and Richard Burton's romance would blossom when they started the filming of *Cleopatra* at Pinewood Studios. Of course, *Cleopatra* is also famously

chronicled as the first film that paid a Hollywood actress, Taylor, a \$1 million salary. Beautiful, colourful lobby cards from the lavish production depict images of the notorious lovebirds in character (EXE BD 77062-9).



Alternatively, if James Bond is more your taste, the attractive and charming Timothy Dalton's 007 signature lives on an old, plain paper plate (EXE BD 74185) – something of a paradoxical artefact, if ever I saw one. No fancy gadgetry there.

Miscellaneous items that appear to defy categorisation but are of worthy mention include a commemorative (but empty) wine bottle celebrating 100 years of cinema (EXE BD 74886), portraying a picture of the first ever moving image from the Lumière Brothers' *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* in 1895; a Sylvester and Tweety-Pie hot water bottle (EXE BD 34398); an imitation Oscar statuette (EXE

BD 2287) which seems to lure you to mockingly cradle and cry over it; a plump and colourful *Popeye* cushion (EXE BD 34324) with Popeye posing as the Statue of Liberty; and last but certainly not least, an original pencil



and ink caricature of Marilyn Monroe from *Some Like It Hot* (EXE BD 40548),



illustrated by *Punch* cartoonist Robert Sherriffs, depicting a very striking and attractive animation of the legendary star in a white dress holding a guitar. It really is worth a look.

The centre is, quite simply, a hidden gem. The oddities that I have selected are merely a handful of the 70,000 items that are housed here (the mind boggles) and the stories behind each of them are unique and fascinating. I'll wager that there is something in the vast treasure-trove that is The Bill Douglas Centre to explore for everybody, whether the appeal derives from the object itself or just from indulging in a nostalgic trip that is sure to evoke cherished memories.