

Notorious criminals' lives revealed in £25k collection



Pictures: WB MEDIA

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GANGSTER buff Rich Jones has Britain's largest hoard of Kray twins memorabilia.

He has collected £25,000 worth of items celebrating the creepy crime duo.

Office worker Rich not only owns Reggie's gold St Christopher necklace he also snapped up Ronnie Kray's dentures at auction.

He believes he has the largest private collection of Kray items including hundreds of letters, birthday cards and correspondence between the two East Enders.

Probably the strangest item is the denture imprints of Ronnie when he was in Broadmoor high-security psychiatric hospital in Berkshire.

He was serving 30 years for a catalogue of crimes and had the imprints taken in 1989, six years before he died from a heart attack aged 61.

They were passed on to a nurse along with a bundle of letters and cards sent to the gangland boss after he was diagnosed as insane.

In the same lot were Christmas cards exchanged with Reggie.

Rich, 37, also has an oil painting of a Christ-like figure on a cross painted by Ronnie in Broadmoor, a signed photo of the twins with boxing world champ Joe Louis, family cards, funeral programmes and touching letters from their parents Charles and Violet.

The twins were east London's crime overlords in the 1950s and 60s when their gang The Firm were involved in armed robberies, arson, protection rackets, assaults and murder.

As nightclub owners they became both feared and celebrated, rubbing shoulders with entertainers including Diana Dors, Frank Sinatra and Judy Garland.

But they were sentenced to life in prison in 1969.

Ronnie remained in Broadmoor until his death, while Reggie was released on compassionate grounds in August 2000, two months before he died of cancer.

Rich, from Hereford, became interested in the notorious duo as a boy but began seriously collecting items connected to them ten years ago.

He said: "When I was young I loved gangster films and discovered the Krays."

"I was interested in the history and the way they controlled east London."

"It was quite appealing to a little kid."

This year two films about the Krays are due to be released, including Legend starring Brit actor Tom Hardy, 37.

Rich added: "Interest in the Krays is at an all-time high. My letters show their real side. There wasn't much affection between them. It's a real insight."

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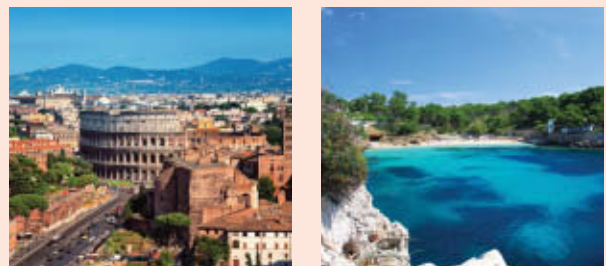
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