

levels; museum quality pieces. The smaller 1/144th scale requires that I use my super strong eye glasses!" She enjoys seeing the children's division as well because "their ideas are always very clever."

Occasionally, when time permits, you'll find Valerie creating room boxes depicting miniature scenes that bring her memories to life. "I especially love making a room box showing a particular travel scene. I get so much enjoyment out of making the items or locating pieces I need from a miniatures store. Miniature making is like assembling a 3-D picture and going on a scavenger hunt all rolled into one project."

When asked about her philosophy, Valerie said: "I've never been hindered by unfounded fears. We all should take risks daily and stretch ourselves beyond where we are. To succeed in business is a balancing act. On one hand, you must build a safety net and on the other hand, to reap the rewards, you must jump off the cliff! No matter what, you have to go out on the limb to grab the sweet fruit."

Future plans? "Should I retire? I don't think I can! I think to myself, 'how can I, when so many lovely people fill my galaxy with so much joy?' I have been connecting the artists with collectors for 34 years and it seems nearly impossible for me to stop that effort now."

Valerie says she could talk forever about all the happenings and adventures she has encountered over her 34-year career and concludes: "I wake up each morning pondering what's coming next and it's always followed by, 'I can't wait to find out!'"

And we will wait to see what's next for Valerie Rogers! **TBT**

## THE BEAR facts

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# celebrating 20 years OF ZANY ZOO

From being avid artist bear collectors, a mother and daughter team have now been creating their own bears for two decades

By Lorna Graham

**J** & L Zany Zoo creations are made by Jacqueline Graham (my mum, an ex-carpet designer) and myself, Lorna Graham (ex-graphic design student, now working in insurance). We have both made things for many years and started collecting artist bears 20-odd years ago, from what was then our local bear shop, Growlies of Scotland, based in Johnstone. Unfortunately this shop has now closed.

We fancied buying some mohair and having a go ourselves - we were hooked not long after. We sold our bears under a few other names before Zany Zoo took off.

We were living in Paisley, near Glasgow initially but moved to Stranraer in Dumfries and Galloway 10-12 years ago. Since moving, I have had my son Logan, who is now five, and we do live in a bit of a zoo, with five dogs, four chickens and two giant rabbits!

Mum and I have always loved experimenting with new materials, creating new patterns and thinking up new ideas. This year is our 20th anniversary as J & L Zany Zoo and we are arranging some special things to celebrate. We are offering one of our special anniversary bears as a giveaway for TBT readers and another bear as been made to raise funds for Yorkhill Children's Hospital in Glasgow. We are currently looking to see if we could get a sponsor to help cover the £40 license fee to hold a raffle at a few events.

This year we will be at Stranraer Agricultural Show and the Lowland Gathering Pipe Band Championships, plus a few other events. We will also have a few entries in the Teddy Bear and Friends



awards.

To see our latest bears, you can find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/jandlzanyzoo?ref=br\\_rs](http://www.facebook.com/jandlzanyzoo?ref=br_rs)

Unfortunately we don't have a website at the moment but we hope that is something that will come along in the future. If you are able to attend any of the events 'north of the border' then do come and say hello - we look forward to meeting you. **TBT**

## WIN

We have two cute anniversary bears to give away and if you'd like to be in with a chance of adding one to your hug, just send the answer to the following question to [editor@teddybearimes.com](mailto:editor@teddybearimes.com)  
 Which agricultural show can you see Jacqueline and Lorna at this year?  
 Good luck!