



SB STANLEY GIBBONS
BALDWIN'S
COLLECTABLES AUCTION HOUSE

**HORNBY
HOBBIES**



THE COLLECTORS REPORT 2025



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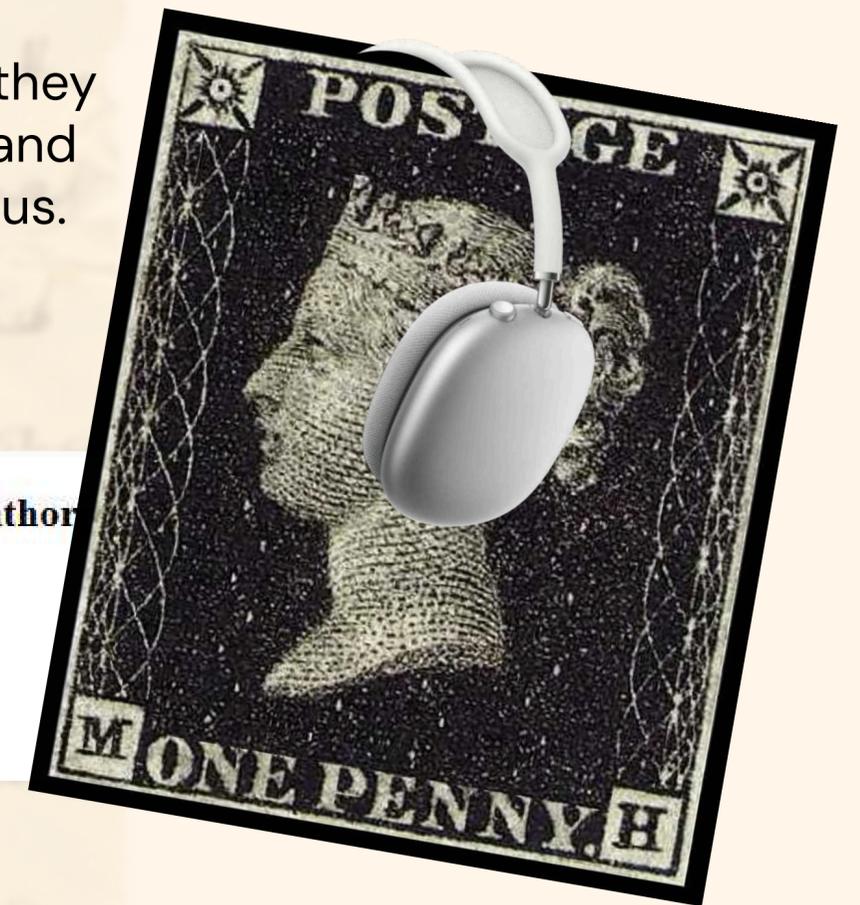
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Incomplete: A Complete Collector Podcast

Ever wonder what makes a collector tick? In this special episode, host Aaron Carter is joined by Guy Stainthorpe (Corgi) and ancient coin expert Dominic Chorney (Baldwin's) for a lively chat about the findings featured in this very report. From the first sparks of interest to lifelong obsessions, they unpack what drives collecting, and what our collections say about us.



Available on
Spotify, YouTube & Apple Podcasts.

FOREWORD

OVER 20% OF THE UK ADULT POPULATION ARE COLLECTORS!

 STANLEY GIBBONS
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**HORNBY
HOBBIES**



Welcome to The Collectors Report 2025, brought to you by Stanley Gibbons Baldwin's and Hornby Hobbies.

For generations, these iconic British brands have been synonymous with collecting; a hobby more than one in five UK adults pursue.

This report reveals **how nostalgia shapes our behaviour**, why certain objects captivate us, and looks at how collecting is evolving for new generations. With insights from over 3,000 collectors, we answer the age-old question:

— Why do we *collect*? —



THE COLLECTORS JOURNEY

"As a Corgi Collectors Club member, I feel like *I'm buying back my childhood memories.* I wish I hadn't given away my original Corgis in my teens, but I'm lucky now to be able to easily buy all the models I want"

- Hornby Hobbies Customer

THE COLLECTORS JOURNEY

Collecting isn't just a hobby; it's a journey. From first spark to focused curation, collectors evolve with their passions, priorities, and expertise. Collectors often start with a defining moment that sparks their interest, leading to a phase of growth where they refine their skills and enjoy greater disposable income.

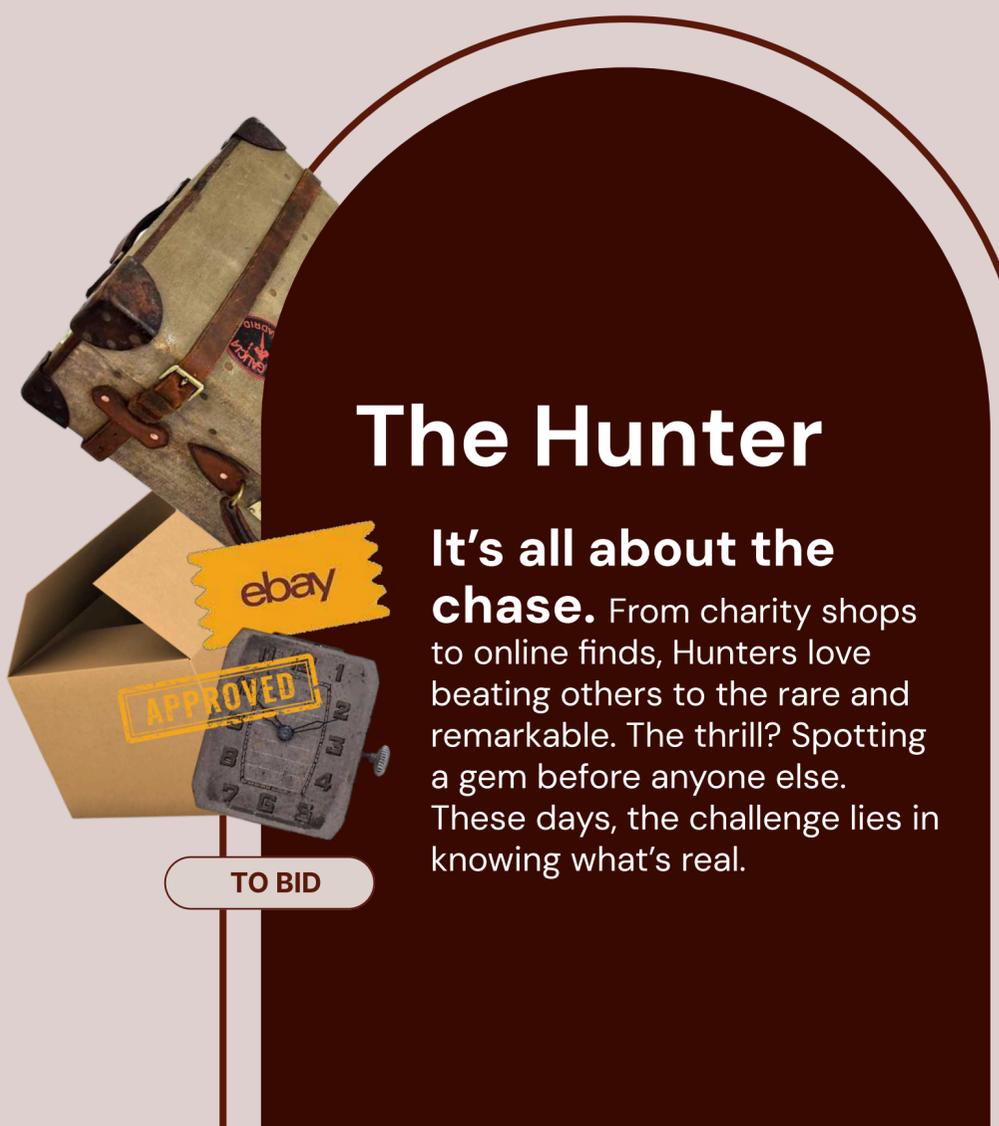
As their collection expands, a shift in focus often follows. Many begin refining their collections by exploring subcategories aligned with their evolving interests, letting go of pieces that no longer fit, freeing up space, funds, and time for more meaningful additions.



Time →

MEET THE COLLECTORS

Does this *remind you of anybody?*



The Hunter

It's all about the chase. From charity shops to online finds, Hunters love beating others to the rare and remarkable. The thrill? Spotting a gem before anyone else. These days, the challenge lies in knowing what's real.



The Gatherer

The thrill isn't the hunt, **it's the having.** Gatherers collect to keep, storing prized pieces like personal treasure. Selling? Never. It's all about preserving their collection, untouched and complete.



The Completor

Completing the set is everything. These collectors live for that final piece, the missing link. They're alert, detail-obsessed, and happiest when their collection clicks into place.

MEET THE COLLECTORS

Does this *remind you of anybody?*

The History Buff

It's all about the backstory. Every item holds a tale, and Buffs are driven by discovery. As their knowledge grows, so does their collection – often in new and unexpected directions.



The Socialite

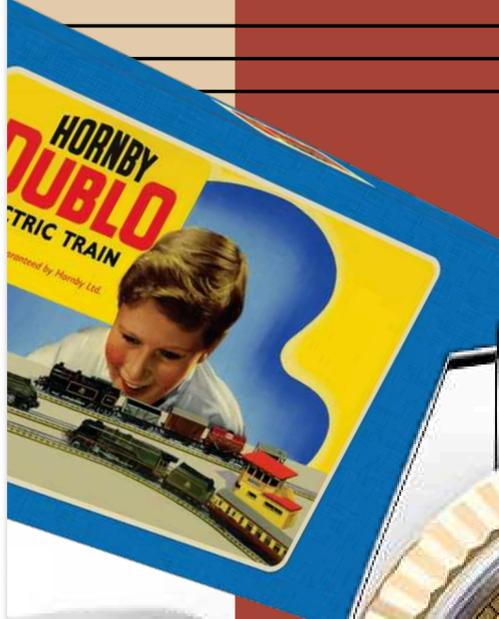
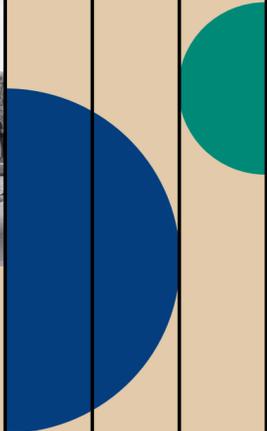
Community is the prize. For the Socialite, collecting is about connection – finding people who “get it”. It’s more about shared passion than the items themselves.



TO SHARE!

The Solitarian

Quiet, personal, and deeply fulfilling. The Solitarian collects alone, for themselves. Their joy lies in the process with no spotlight needed, just peace, curiosity, and time to explore.



THE TRIGGER

"The first watch in my collection was *my grandad's watch*, which he wore during the D-Day invasion"

- Collector

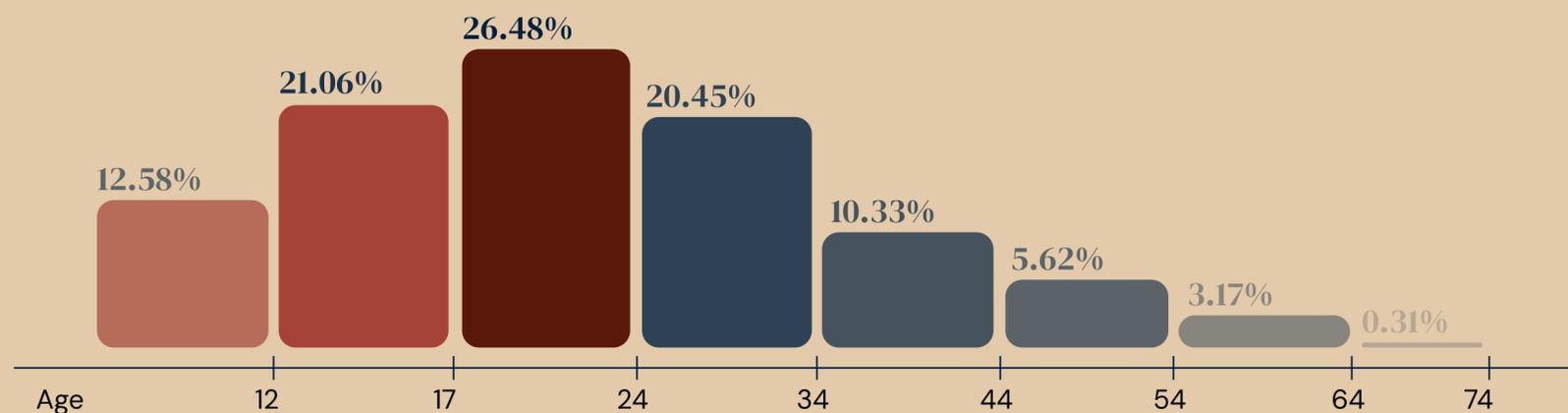


A MISSPENT YOUTH

NEARLY 60% OF COLLECTORS BEGAN THEIR JOURNEY UNDER 24 YEARS OLD.

It's often believed that collecting is inherent, and we can all think of a family member or friend with a constant drive to acquire items of interest. However, there is usually a **clear trigger**.

More often than not, it's an experience from childhood, creating strong feelings of nostalgia that stay with collectors throughout their lives.



Sins of the father



The overwhelming majority, *over 50% of Stamp collectors picked up the hobby before they turned 12*, often attributing this to their parents and specifically father:

I started collecting because my father was a postman. I stopped briefly in my 20s but kept the collection boxed up in my loft. I always intended to resume later in life. In 2013, I discovered eBay and what a difference that made! I'm now a keen buyer and seller, with a large and extensive collection.

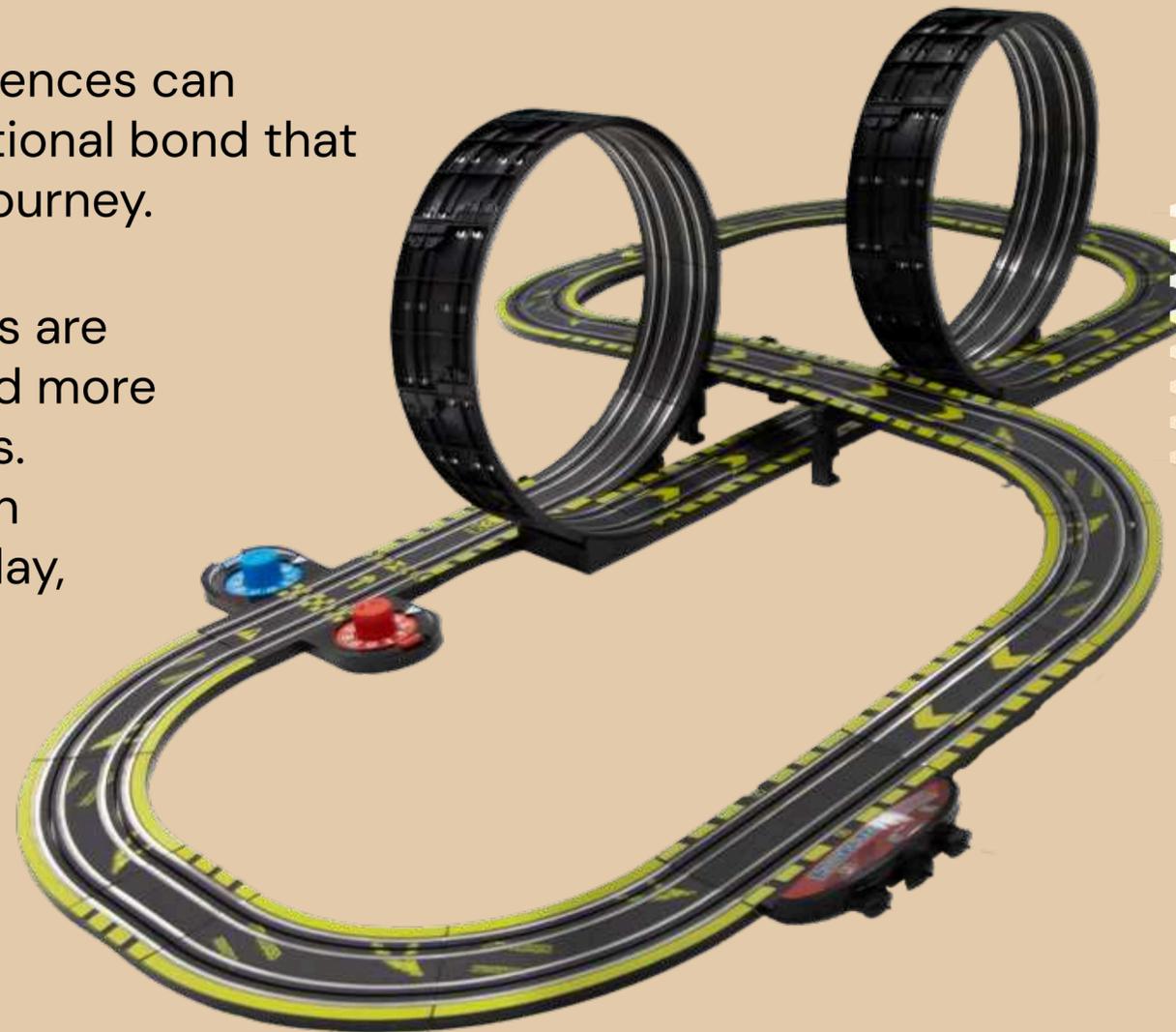
- Stanley Gibbons Baldwin's Collector

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

1/3 OF MEN AND 1/5 OF WOMEN EXPERIENCE AN EMOTIONAL TRIGGER

Certain items or experiences can create a powerful emotional bond that sparks the collector's journey.

Family, friends, and gifts are the driving force behind more than 50% of collections. This is especially true in categories related to play, like **Scalextric**.



How did you initially get started with your collection?

30.75%

Through an interest of mine

27.27%

Received as a gift

17.36%

Through a family member

14.81%

One particular object caught my attention

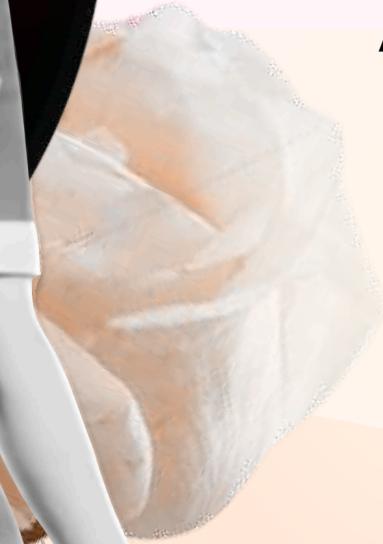
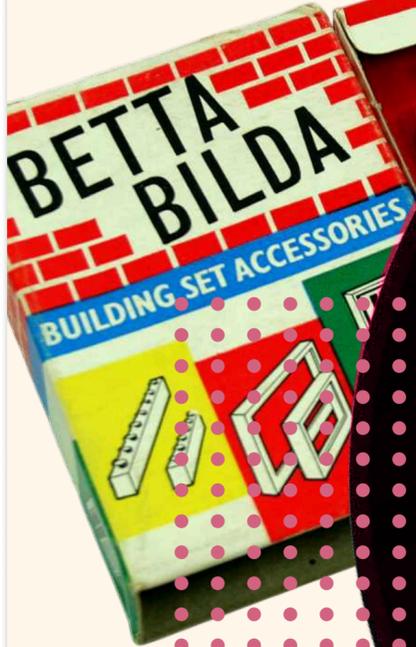
8.89%

Through a friend



My great-grandfather was the first Australian Stamp and Note Printer, and my grandfather was a senior stamp designer. I've inherited a deep appreciation for beautifully designed and engraved stamps.

- SGB Customer



THE BUG

"I Bought a vintage teapot for my grandma *when I was 15* from a market stall, it was her grandmother's, she had scratched EJ on the bottom with a lolly stick"

- Collector



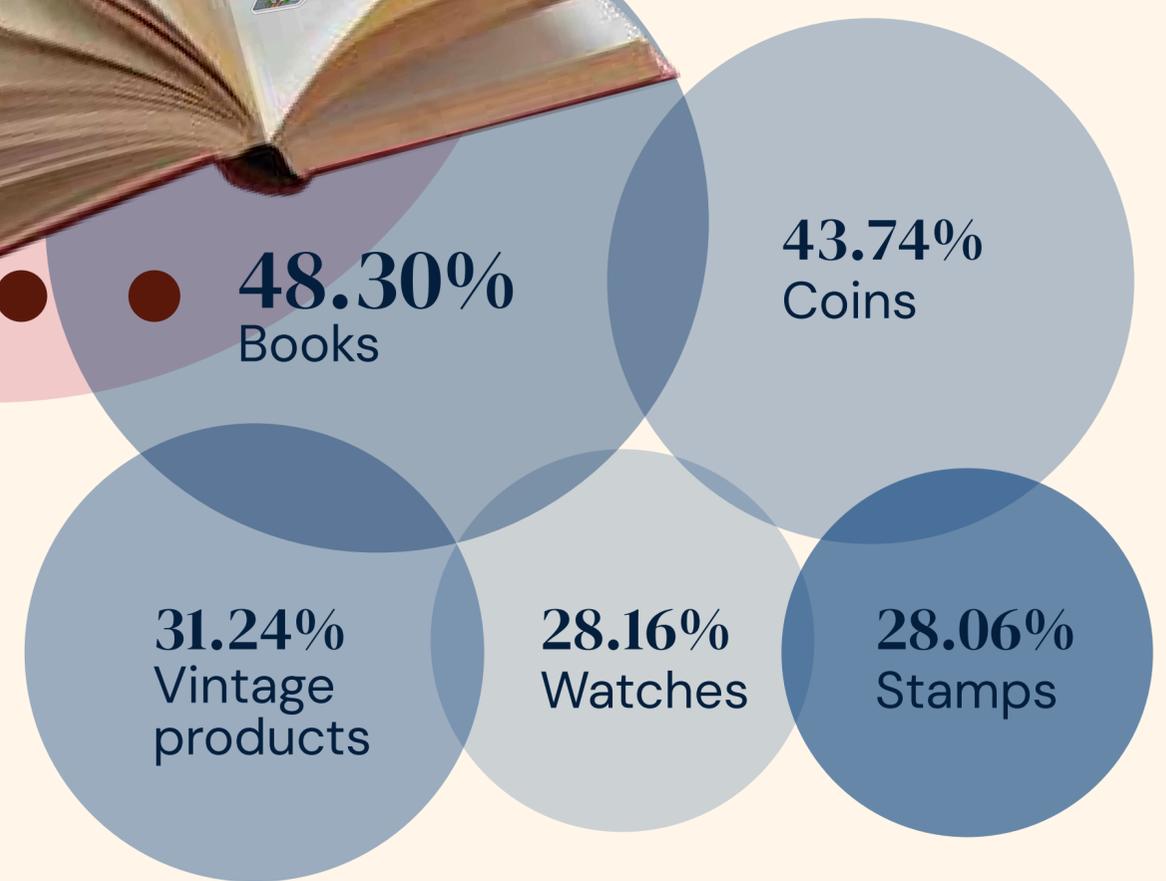
AN EMOTIONAL DRIVE

BOOK COLLECTORS IN THE UK WOULD FILL WEMBLEY OVER 56 TIMES!

The emotional trigger behind a collector's catalyst means the items they're drawn to can vary widely, from giant teapots to military medals; however, there are some standout categories.

Over 20% of the UK adult population are collectors!

- Women are significantly more likely than men to collect books
- Men are significantly more likely to collect watches or die-cast scale models



PRICELESS...BUT NOT REALLY!

ON AVERAGE, COLLECTORS SPEND £15,000 BUILDING AND MAINTAINING THEIR COLLECTIONS

Collecting isn't just a passion, it is an investment. While the average collector spends £15,000, coin collectors, especially those in the Stanley Gibbons circle, top £75,000. Whether the family knows is another matter...



“Some say too much, I say not enough.”
– Hornby Hobbies Customer



As collections grow, managing them becomes part of the hobby. A third of collectors rely on memory alone, a fifth use notebooks, and another fifth go digital. Then there's the 10% who prefer no system at all – blissfully unbothered!





THE JOY OF COLLECTING



When my younger brother discovered girls, he turned his back on his "toys" and abandoned them. I saved them from oblivion. Decades later, he asked, "Whatever happened to our Corgi and Dinky cars?" I told him I still had all mine. He asked, "Whatever happened to mine?" I replied, "Well, actually, I saved those too." "Great!" he said and asked for them back. Upset by this, but conscious that they were his, I reluctantly handed them over. "What are you going to do with them?" I asked. "I don't know, why?" "Sell them to me." "Nah." "Would you do some swappies?" "Maybe." So, we set about trading. My passion was sports cars and luxury cars. I asked to swap for his Jensen FF, his Lamborghini Miura, his Bentley Corniche, etc. He chose my Lady Penelope Rolls-Royce and my Avengers set, etc. Financially, he won that day.

- Hornby Hobbies Customer



A SIMILAR OUTLOOK

OVER 40% OF COLLECTORS PROUDLY DISPLAY THEIR COLLECTIONS AT HOME

Collectors often share a similar view of the world. Many value learning, time to themselves, and the joy of owning something special. One of the most uplifting findings from the survey is that their reasons go beyond age, country, or category.



My collection comes from my dad, who passed away. We used to look at it together when we lived together. He gave me a gold sovereign, which I loved, and I inherited the collection when he died.

- SGB Customer



In a screen-heavy world, collecting offers calm and reflection. Over 40% display their collections at home, and among stamp collectors, just as many have taken part in competitions.

Do you use your collection in any way?

I display items around my house	40.35%
My collection is largely stored away for safekeeping	34.37%
I do a lot of research related to my collection	29.72%
I physically interact with/examine items in my collection	26.42%
I 'play' with items in my collection	13.73%
I enter competitions or display for other to enjoy	7.02%

A SIMILAR OUTLOOK

TOP 10 REASONS WHY WE COLLECT?

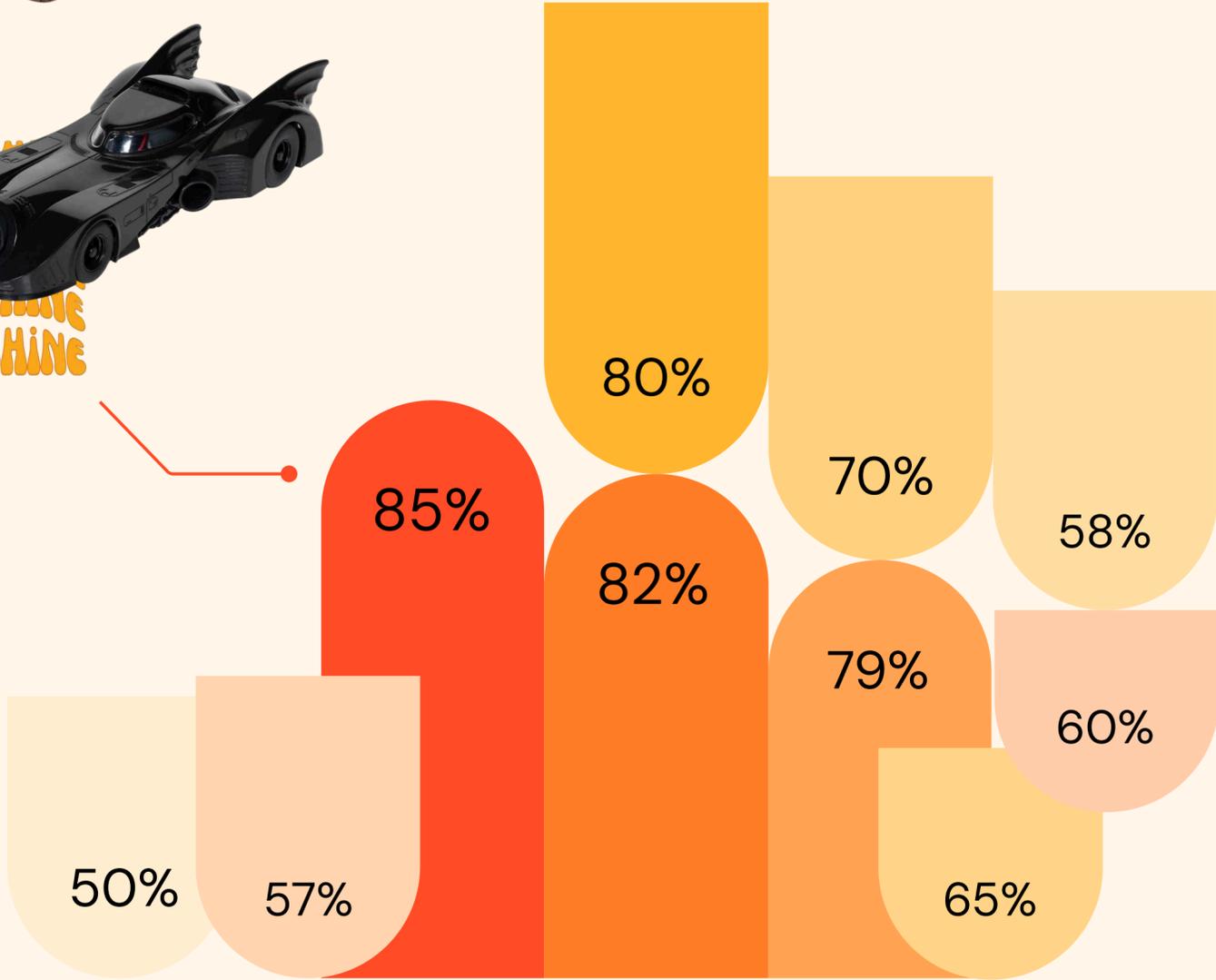
We asked collectors, "How important are these aspects in your collection?" and more than 85% told us that personal nostalgia was at the heart of why they collect. For many, it is a way of holding on to cherished memories and moments from the past.



PERSONAL NOSTALGIA

Why we collect?

- Personal nostalgia - 85%
- Originality - 82%
- Uniqueness - 80%
- Emotional connection - 79%
- Mental stimulation - 70%
- Personal historical stories - 65%
- Provenance - 60%
- Financial worth - 58%
- A link to historical events - 57%
- A social connection with other collectors - 50%

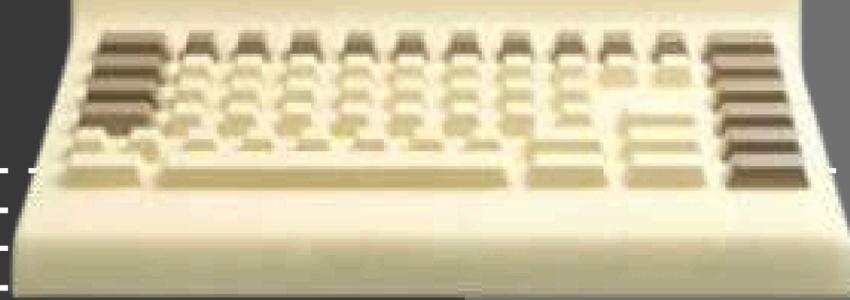
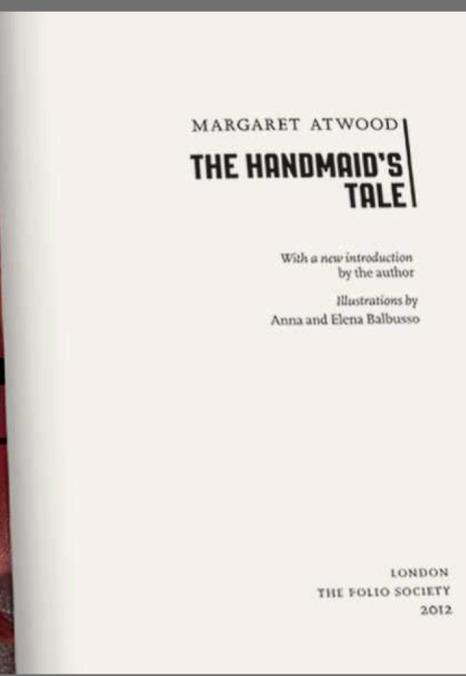




WHAT'S NEXT?

"One of the pairs of trainers in my collection used to belong *to Lady Gaga*"

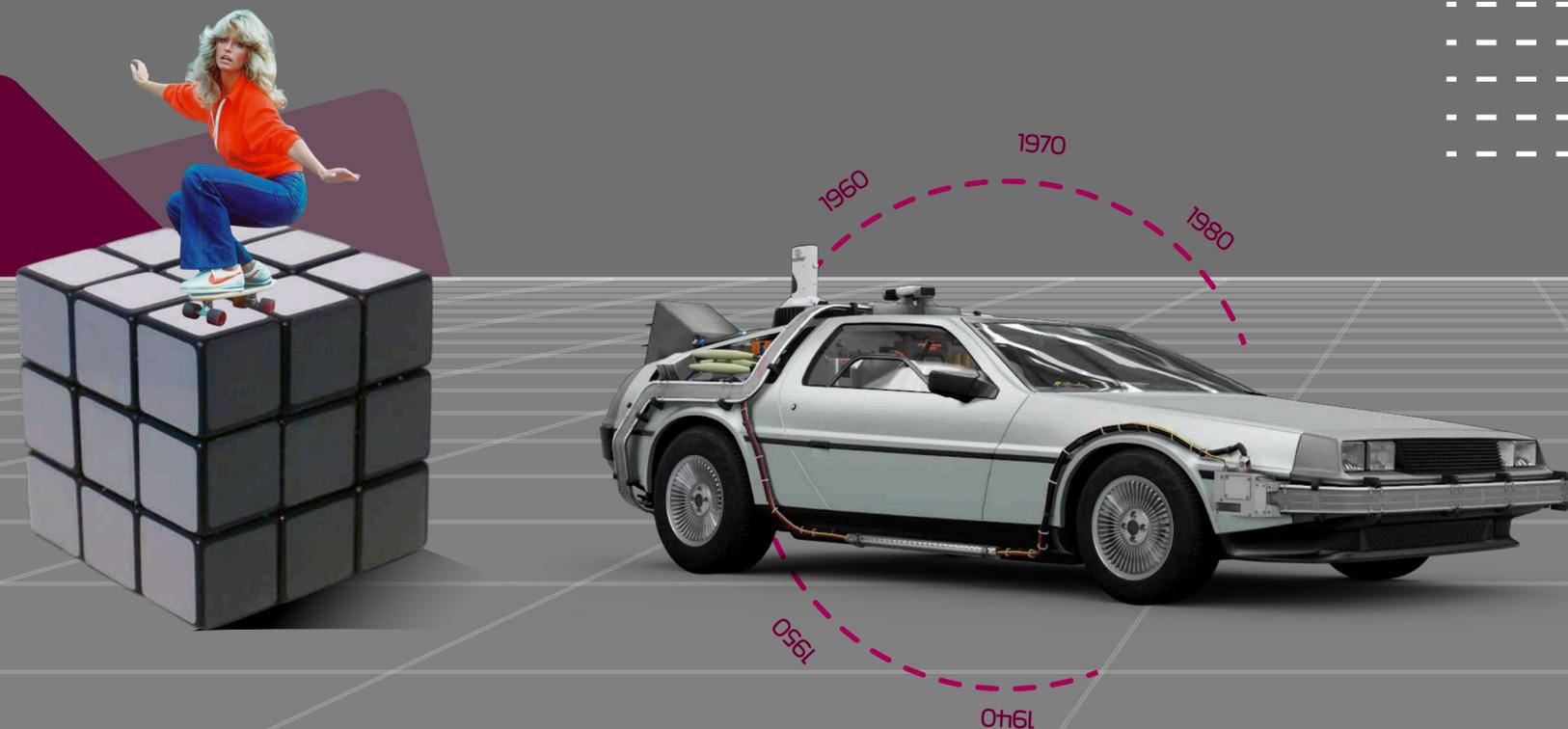
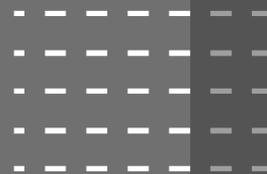
- Collector



WHAT'S NEXT?

COLLECTING IS HERE TO STAY

The collecting community remains diverse. While the popularity of categories may shift over time, the hobby stays strong across all age groups. Those already collecting show no signs of slowing down, and for the few nearing the end of their collecting journey, there's an opportunity for others to claim a piece of history and begin their own chapter.



Which of these best describes the stage your collection is at?

- 29.35% Growing rapidly (possibly with some tangential collections)
- 28.12% Becoming *a lot more selective* in what I add, possibly selling some less relevant items
- 26.89% Reaching a point where *it's hard to know what I have*
- 10.94% Getting started
- 4.70% Thinking of exiting/selling my collection

Thinking about next year, do you expect you will spend more or less money on your collection?

- 46.31% Expect to spend the same
- 24.69% Expect to spend less
- 18.65% Expect to spend more
- 10.35% Not sure yet

SUMMARY

THE ENDURING POWER OF COLLECTING

Collecting remains a thriving and deeply personal pursuit for a significant portion of UK consumers. Driven by nostalgia, emotional connections, and the quest for knowledge, collectors invest both time and money into their passions. Even in today's digital world, the enduring popularity of collecting demonstrates its continued relevance and appeal across generations. With strong spending commitments and an evolving digital marketplace, collectors remain a dynamic and engaged community, shaping the future of the hobby.

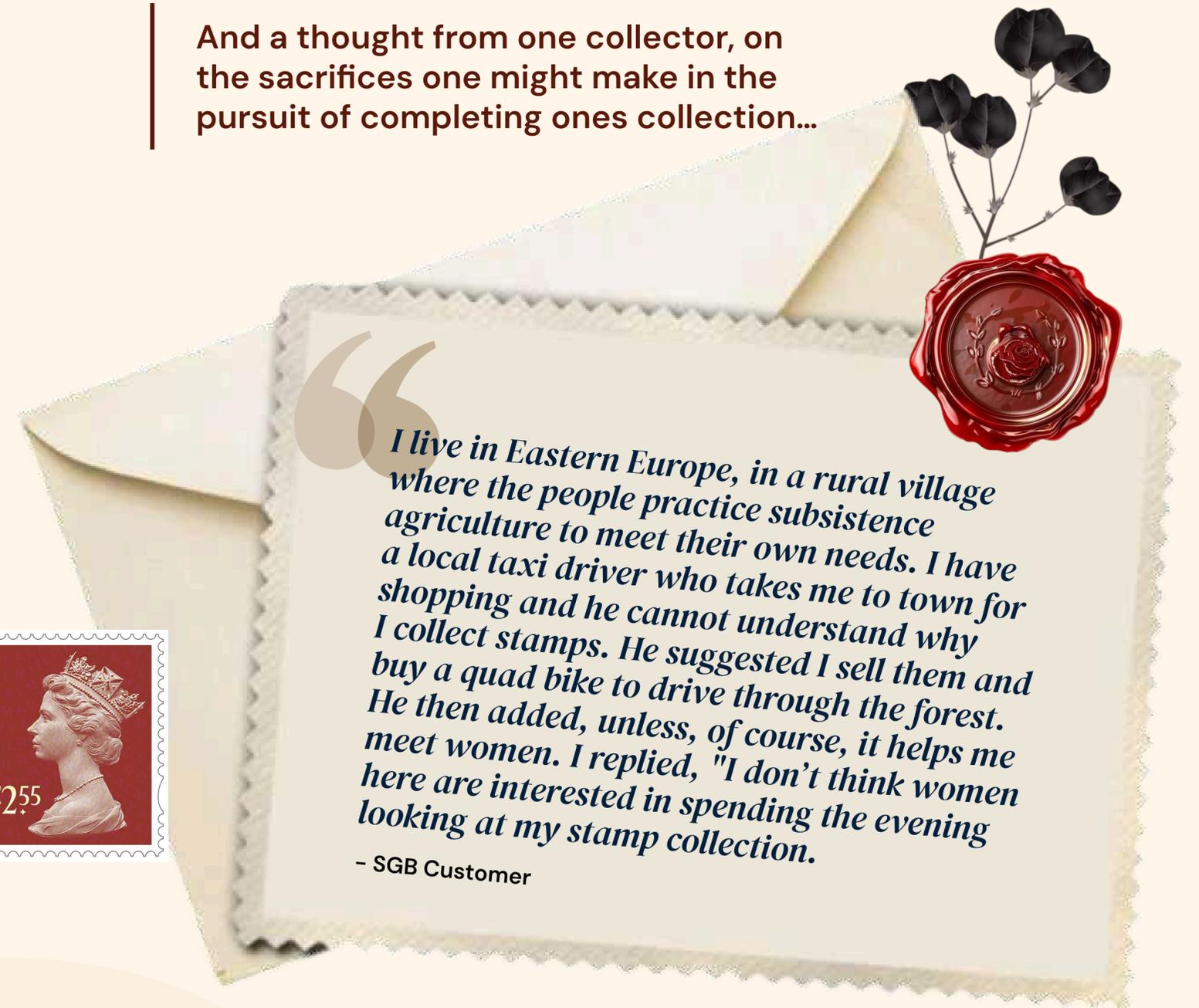


And a thought from one collector, on the sacrifices one might make in the pursuit of completing ones collection...



I live in Eastern Europe, in a rural village where the people practice subsistence agriculture to meet their own needs. I have a local taxi driver who takes me to town for shopping and he cannot understand why I collect stamps. He suggested I sell them and buy a quad bike to drive through the forest. He then added, unless, of course, it helps me meet women. I replied, "I don't think women here are interested in spending the evening looking at my stamp collection."

- SGB Customer



A DAY TO REMEMBER

NATIONAL COLLECTOR'S DAY

National Collectors Day is an exciting new initiative designed to celebrate the rich and enduring world of collecting. This special day will honour the passion, history, and community that collecting fosters, in all its forms. It will raise awareness of how collecting brings people together, preserves cultural heritage, and creates lasting emotional connections.

By recognising both the personal and economic value of the hobby, **National Collectors Day** will promote the joy of collecting and inspire future generations to explore and engage with this timeless pursuit.

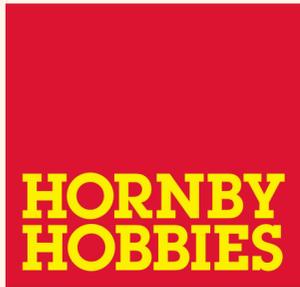
For more information head to [*INSERT URL*](#)



[COMING SOON]



ABOUT THE BRANDS



Hornby Hobbies is the world's most iconic hobby and model manufacturer, with a rich heritage spanning over a century. Home to beloved brands including Hornby, Scalextric, Airfix, Corgi, and Pocher, the company continues to inspire collectors and hobbyists of all ages.

From model railways and slot cars to die-cast models and scale model kits, Hornby Hobbies celebrates creativity, craftsmanship, and the joy of collecting. With a loyal community and a commitment to evolving with the times, Hornby Hobbies plays a leading role in keeping traditional pastimes relevant, meaningful, and accessible in today's digital age.



For over 150 years, the names Stanley Gibbons and Baldwin's have been synonymous with the finest in collecting. From rare stamps and historic coins to medals, militaria, and trading card games, they have helped shape collections that span generations and passions.

As home to one of the world's most respected auction houses, Stanley Gibbons Baldwin's connects collectors globally through expertise, authenticity, and an enduring love of the exceptional. Whether buying, bidding, or building, it remains the trusted destination for collectors who value legacy as much as rarity.

WHAT DID WE DO

METHODOLOGY

We launched 3 online surveys in December 2024 to 3 separate audiences.

The survey questions were consistent across all three groups, with the exception of profiling questions, which were tailored to suit each audience. However, the majority of the data presented in this report reflects responses from the general UK consumer group.

Hornby Hobbies Customers

👤👤👤 = 1374

A selection of customers who have made at least one purchase in the last - months from Hornby, Airfix, Scalextric, Corgi or Pocher

Stanley Gibbons Customers

👤👤👤 = 701

General UK consumers/ external sample

👤👤👤 = 980

Nationally, representative sample on age, gender and region in the UK, 18-74



**Hornby Hobbies and Stanley Gibbons customers aren't limited to UK only*

