

The very model of a hobby for us all

HAVING worked in the toy soldier industry for more than 13 years, I can't agree with Max Hastings that the hobby is full of 'white-haired men' (Mail). The antiques figure market may be frequented by the older age group of collectors, but this has more to do with the cost of the figures than anything else. The modern toy soldiers produced by W. Britain are much more affordable, aimed at old and young alike. I was at a toy show only a couple of

weeks ago when three boys aged around ten or 11 approached me and started discussing a W. Britain Zulu Wars display and the way it related to the Michael Caine film Zulu. Undoubtedly, children today are glued to video games, but as many reach adulthood (mid-20s onwards) they discover the modern toy soldier and become collectors. 'Who can imagine a modern toyshop selling Britains' old foxhunting set?' asks

Sir Max. In fact, this year W. Britain is offering a series of figures under the banner of The Hunt, to be available in numerous retail outlets. It won't appear in shops such as Toys R Us but it should be available, along with many other sets of modern toy soldiers, in High Street retailers such as Modelzone. There is a definite mainstream market for these products.

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Fighting talk: Mark Avery and his toy soldiers