

NEWS RELEASE - Immediate

Toy Retailers Association announces new administration

May 2018: Today the Toy Retailers Association (TRA) has announced that Derek Markie is retiring at the end of June from running the Association's Secretariat. Markie signalled his desire to retire at the 2017 Annual General Meeting and has assisted the process leading to a smooth handover of the reins of the organisation to his replacement, Natasha Crookes.

Derek has worked for the TRA for 14 years, representing the interests of members in discussions with stakeholders, running the TRA secretariat, fielding media questions and organising Dream Toys - the Christmas media showcase for the industry. For a number of years he ran the Annual Awards Dinner and co-ordinated the retail judging of the Toy of the Year awards each year.

"When I was fortunate enough to survive a heart attack in Autumn 2003 I did not expect to be able to resume a full scale new commission for my consultancy the following Spring. To be able to join such a friendly and supportive industry and team was the encouragement I needed. That support has continued throughout the years since and despite the decline in retail numbers since 2010 it has been great fun as well as challenging. I am grateful to everyone involved in the Association and its key public event, DreamToys. As they pass into Natasha's highly experienced and energetic hands, I wish you all every success in the future", said Derek Markie.

Alan Simpson, Chairman of the TRA said, "Derek has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Association for many years. He has shown passion and commitment to our industry and our retail community. He will be missed in his capacity at the Association, but also personally; we all hope he enjoys a happy retirement".

Derek will hand the reins over to Natasha Crookes from June 1st. Crookes has worked for the British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA) for 16 years, most recently as the Director of Public Affairs and Communications. She moved part-time in 2017 in order to move life to Cornwall but has found that she has time on her hands to be able to take on the TRA position. As well as continuing to work in her part-time capacity for the BTHA, Natasha will take over the administration of the TRA and will organise Dream Toys and the toy retail judging of the industry awards.

"I am delighted to be able to take over the work of the TRA from the excellent job Derek Markie has done over the years. I look forward to speaking to retail members and working with the excellent team of TRA members, toy suppliers, Blackberry Productions and Bastion PR that run Dream Toys so well each year, as well as my BTHA colleague, Matt Jones, on the Toy of the Year Awards".

The contact details for Dream Toys and the TRA will remain unchanged.

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Ends.

Notes for Editors

The Toy Retailers Association (TRA) was first established as the National Association of Toy Retailers in 1950 and changed its name first to the British Association (BATR) and then simply the Toy Retailers Association in 2005. It acts as both a watchdog and persuader to ensure fair play for toy retailers and represents the toy retail sector on government panels and safety organisations in the UK.

The TRA is a Company Limited by Guarantee and controlled by its Members who elect leaders from amongst themselves each year. All the Directors are volunteers and actively involved in the retailing of toys.

For further information please contact:

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