

MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO SECURE YOUR PLACE IN TOPLOTS



Welcome to TopLots eBay Auctions - a way for you to raise both funds and profile. Following an extremely successful pilot auction in October 2007, we're launching our 2008 series of auctions celebrating the breadth of UK arts, culture and heritage.

May:	Museums and Galleries
June:	Historic Houses, Castles and Gardens
June:	Transport and Steam
September:	Performing Arts
October:	All Heritage

Here's how it works. First, you complete and send us your organisation registration form, and we confirm that you can take part in the auctions. The main criteria are:

- You need to be a UK charity or have charitable status (or you may be able to fundraise through a 'Friends' or other affiliated charity)
- You must be involved with arts, culture or heritage in the UK
- You must be able to offer and deliver lots which can't be found anywhere else – things that are unique, bespoke and will be treasured by bidders
- You must agree to abide by the TopLots Terms and Conditions
- You must agree to promote your involvement in the auction/s to your organisation's key audiences

The next step is to let us have the full details of the lots you'd like to offer in any or all of the auctions. These must be special, legal (please make sure you've got any rights clearance you may need), deliverable and relevant to the auctions you want to enter them into. You can enter the same lot into more than one auction, but not more than once into the same auction.

We will then add your lots (subject to our final selection) to the TopLots website and into the relevant auction on eBay. We'll deal with all the pre-administration of the auction/s while you get on with making sure as many people as possible know about your lots and when they'll be live on eBay.

We will manage the online auction/s, sort out payment from bidders, and inform you of their details so that you can deliver each lot to its winner, again generating as much PR as you can (and they want). When the auction is over, and all the money has been collected, we will send you a cheque.

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Lots – some thoughts and ideas

We want to offer a real variety of lots, representing the fantastic breadth of the UK's arts and heritage. Every organisation has places, spaces, collections or people who are special. These are the building blocks for great lots. Think about:

- VIP events
- Privileged, behind-the-scenes access – people love meeting the experts
- Bespoke experiences
- Special performances
- Holidays / overnight stays with a difference
- Work experience – ‘spend a day with...’
- Specially commissioned artworks, crafts or performances
- Meeting famous families, experts, artists and performers
- Treats provided by sponsors and donors
- Work with others (attractions, hotels, transport companies, sponsors etc) to create a particularly special experience (and build relationships with business contacts)
- Create lots for couples, families, children and real enthusiasts
- Create lots that are low cost, high value. In other words, they shouldn't cost you too much to deliver them, but will be extremely valuable to those who bid.
- Be brave – start your lot at £0. This is eBay's advice and our pilot auction proved it right. Those who started lowest got the most bidders involved and often ended up with the highest prices.

PR, PR, PR.....

Your promotional activity is vitally important. Making full use of your own key networks makes a huge difference to the success of your lot/s. We suggest the following:

- **Websites** – put the buttons/banners we'll provide you with on your website to drive people through to www.toplots.co.uk. There they'll be able to look at your lots, browse through the whole auction, and register to be reminded when the auction is about to start.
- **Email-shots** to supporters, Friends, members, Trustees and other support groups in the UK & overseas. Don't forget corporate and group contacts – they might bid too.
- Use the **press release template** we give you to tailor your own press release and target supporters and local/regional/specialist press.
- **On-site posters and flyers** can work well
- Add information to **chat rooms and blogs** linked to your particular interest – get people talking about it online.

How much does it cost?

You're not charged anything at all for entering your lots in a TopLots auction, until you sell. Then, the final bid (less any direct charges from eBay and PayPal) is shared, with 80% going to you and 20% remaining with the Association of Independent Museums to cover administration costs.

PR again.....

Don't forget, TopLots provides you with several PR opportunities — when the lots go on the Toplots website, when the lots go 'live' on eBay, the end of the auction, and the actual lot event itself.

VisitBritain—spreading the word

Once again we're working closely with VisitBritain and EnjoyEngland to spread the word about TopLots around the world. 20% of site visitors to the pilot auction came from outside the UK, with the highest number coming from the US.

One winner from Alaska who organised her entire holiday to the UK around a tour of Ripley Castle with Sir Thomas Ingilby, and an overnight stay at English Heritage's Dover Castle, said 'I just wanted to let you know that TopLots UK was an incredible experience for me and my travelling companion. One we will never forget. And I will be bidding again next year!'

Who are 'we'?

'We' are Development Partners (DP), fundraising specialists, working in partnership with the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and eBay for Charity. DP manages the day-to-day administration of the auctions and generates national and online PR, whilst AIM acts as the key charity, collecting the auction takings and redistributing them to the participating organisations. eBay for Charity provides the eBay platform and marketplace, and gives us lots of advice on how best to sell your lots.