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DIECAST

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SOUND BARRIER** 
Chuck Yeager's Bell X-1



40+
NEW MODELS
REVIEWED
INSIDE

PICK UP

Solido's super-cool customised
VW heads a bumper crop of
great-value new releases

a bargain

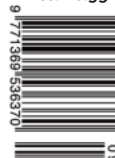


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Turn to page 7 to find out more...

News & Events

Here's a round-up of the latest hobby news and events.



NEW CHOPPER COMES IN TWO SIZES

AFTER the popularity of its original MkI Chopper releases over the last couple of years, Toyway, through its parent company, Bachmann Europe, has now tooled up the modified MkII Chopper. The new 1/12 scale model has been manufactured in the two colours that the real thing has just been re-released in: Infra Red (shown here, with the Editor's new full-sized version) or Ultra Violet.

The brilliant, newly-tooled No TW41700 MkII features a diecast metal frame and chrome plated plastic parts with working steering and pedal/chain movement and PVC vinyl black tyres with detailed tread pattern. Each of the two colours has an RRP of £23.95.

For more information and to order, contact your preferred Bachmann retailer, or visit <https://news.bachmann.co.uk/2022/12/chopper-mk-ii-bicycle-rides-in/>. There is a more-detailed review of the Infra Red version on page 13 of this issue. ■

MBC ANNOUNCES IT MOST EXCITING RELEASE SCHEDULE YET



FEATURING models exclusively-commissioned from NorthCord Model Company and Corgi Premiums, the Model Bus Creations line up for the latter part of 2023 has a really exciting look about it.

August sees the arrival of the long-awaited return of the classic, one-door Scania Omnicity casting from Northcord. For the first time, it is being produced in an all-white finish, allowing collectors to create their own versions. This will be a limited run of 204, priced at £65.00 each.

Further Northcord commissions include a pair of Enviro400 buses in Stagecoach liveries (£65.00 each) and another Enviro400 design in Go Ahead London Driver Training colours, again at £65.00. Another Scania Omnicity will be in Stagecoach all-over-red livery – details are yet to be announced for this one.

The first of the Corgi Premiums releases, in the stunning Brighton & Hove livery on a Wright Eclipse Gemini 2 shown, should be on sale in September. The second Corgi exclusive, in Go Ahead London Elizabeth Line livery, also shown, is due in November. Both are dual destination releases (500 of each) and are priced at £46.90 each (available as a twin pack at £85.00 for the Brighton bus and £90.00 for the London design). A third Corgi Premiums model should follow in December – a Wright Bus New Bus for London in "God Save the King" Go Ahead London TfL livery. Another dual destination release (500 of each version at £46.90 each, or £85.00 for a twin pack).

To find out more, and to pre-order any of these magnificent models, visit MBC's website at www.modelbus.uk. ■

LAUDORACING MARKS ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

TO celebrate ten years of high-quality resincast model manufacture, Laudoracing has released a detailed book for collectors, with text in French, Italian and English.

Are you curious to know how Laudoracing models was born? Do you think you know everything about all the models made over the last ten years? Do you want to be sure that nothing is missing from your collection?

Then don't miss this new Laudoracing book: 240 pages with production data, more than 1,400 photographs of every model, colour and variant ever made, including the history and some curiosities about the real cars and their scale reproductions.

All this is packed into a single bound volume, sized at 215mm x 215mm, and created exclusively to celebrate the company's first ten years. Note that this is volume #1, so there will presumably be another instalment in ten years' time!

Go to www.laudoracing-models.com to find out more and to order. ■



Welcome

A QUAD OF CRAVEN RTs ARRIVING SOON



IN the early post-war years, when coachbuilders Park Royal Vehicles and Weymann were at full capacity and unable to fully meet London Transport's enormous requirements for new RT buses, tenders to supply were sent to other manufacturers. Saunders Engineering of Anglesey and Cravens Railway Carriage & Wagon Co of Sheffield built 300 and 120 RTs respectively. Saunders RTs were similar to standard RTs in many respects, but Cravens RTs were quite different and many parts weren't interchangeable.

Under its Exclusive First Editions brand, Bachmann Europe's newly-tooled fleet of four 1/76 scale Craven RTs has been in the works for a while now, but the wait is nearly over for the following four livery releases:

- E40301 – Cravens RT1406 London Transport (green & cream) Route 345 Kingswood
- E40302 – Cravens RT1414 London Transport (green) Route 306 New Barnet Stn
- E40303 – Cravens RT1460 London Transport (red & cream) Route 15 Aldgate LT Stn
- E40304 – Cravens RT1493 London Transport (red) Route 63 Honor Oak

Priced at just £44.95 each, the four different liveries are all listed for "Summer '23" release. For more information and to order, contact your preferred Bachmann retailer, or visit <https://www.bachmann.co.uk/category/die-cast-and-readymade/efe-road/buses>. ■



▲ Rick Wilson, Editor

WRITE TO THE EDITOR...

If you want to write a letter for publication in *Diecast Collector*, you can contact us CollectingEditorial@warnersgroup.co.uk

Some of you may already know this, and many of you may have already guessed from my hints in this column last month but, after exactly 10 years since I first stepped into the editorial shoes here at *Diecast Collector*, this issue is my last as Editor. I took a step back in early 2016, but did continue writing articles, before returning to the hot seat in 2018. But what a journey it has been.

When I first became involved, I had a nice, simple collection of diecasts that filled a couple of shelves at home and I distinctly remember a conversation, fairly early on, with one of our regular contributors where he suggested that my collection might grow rather quickly. "Oh no," I retorted "I have everything I think I want, thank you". Well I have to confess that, whoever it was I was speaking with (sorry I can't remember!), you were so very right!

I think we all know how addictive this wonderful hobby of ours can be, but I seriously have to downsize it now, so no doubt I'll be seeing a fair few of you at toy fairs at some point soon, plus I am in the early stages of putting together a specialist sale at one of the auction houses that regularly advertise in these pages. Watch this space, as the expression goes.

Your new editor will be Cathy Herron and many of you already know her from many years at the helm of our sister publication, *Collectors Gazette* - so she certainly knows her stuff and, having worked closely with Cathy for the last decade, I know our magazine is in safe hands.

So, to everyone I have met along the way, spoken with, and those I now have the pleasure to call a friend, it has been an absolute blast. And thank you for all the emails, messages, letters, chats, model swaps, laughs and general shenanigans. Hopefully, I'll get to bump into you soon. Cheers!

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NEXT UP FROM THE CORGI MODEL CLUB

THE next model in the Corgi Model Club collection, which should have begun to arrive with early subscribers by the time that you read this, is No 358 HQ Staff Car. Based on Corgi's popular and well-used Oldsmobile tooling, painted in olive drab and given US Army markings, with the addition of a driver and three passengers, this is another great replica and yet another fantastic Corgi that featured in the 1966 catalogue.

The series of military vehicles didn't sell well at the time, despite in general being very popular in the 1960s and '70s. This is thought to be because of Corgi's rather blatant re-use of existing tooling, combining largely British vehicles with incongruous US Army liveries. They're highly desirable today, of course, the lack of sales increasing their value considerably. So this is a great chance to get one into your collection. Originals, in decent condition and with a box, sell for £175 to £250!

The Corgi Model Club also does a lovely reproduction of the iconic 1966 catalogue – available now from its online shop: <https://corgimodelclub.com/collections/gifts-accessories/products/corgi-1966>.

As ever, this latest model will be delivered to those who are up to date (i.e. those who



last received No 420 Ford Thames "Airborne" Caravan). For anyone who'd like to catch up and receive these latest models faster, you can find out more by calling customer services on **0333 030 77 44** or by emailing the team at enquiries@corgimodelclub.com. Even if you're not a subscriber, you can buy any of the releases so far (subject to stock) as a standalone purchase.

To find out more about the whole range, visit the club's website at www.corgimodelclub.com. ■

LOOK SMART ANNOUNCES FERRARI'S LE MANS WINNER



Photo: Rick Wilson

LOOK Smart has confirmed the future release of models of all the Ferraris that raced at the recent Le Mans 24 Hours. Both of the prototype 499Ps (including the race winning #51, of course) will be released in both 1/18 and 1/43 scales. All seven of the 488 GTE Evo entries will be modelled in 1/43 scale, with #21 and #83 also to be released in 1/18 scale.

For wholesale enquiries, contact John Ayrey's (www.ayrey.co.uk), or contact your preferred retailer. ■

CORGI'S NEW CAPRI IS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

CORGI has confirmed to Professionalmania, the company that has commissioned an exclusive new model of Bodie's Capri from the popular TV series, *The Professionals*, that it has been moved up the production line and should now arrive in the UK in August. The new model also has improved, clear plastic protective inner packaging, which is fully removable for display on the plinth in the box after arrival.

In addition to the impending new arrival, Corgi has confirmed to the company that it has accepted its commission of a twin pack. More details about this soon.

Scheduled for August arrival, numbers of the new Capri are limited – the previous Professionalmania commission sold out really quickly. To find out more, and to pre-order this magnificent model, drop Tony Buller an email at professionalmania@hotmail.com. ■



THE SAINT'S VOLVO RETURNS TO THE CORGI MODEL CLUB LINE UP

THE second version of the re-tooled Corgi Toys No 258 The Saint's Car Volvo P1800, from The Corgi Model Club, has now arrived in the company's warehouse. This new edition is officially licensed by Paramount Pictures and, differing from the initial release that mimicked discolouring on the originals, comes without the cream background to the logo on the bonnet. Find out more at www.corgimodelclub.com.

MORE NEW RELEASES FROM TRAX FOR 2023

FEATURING historic photos of the Thebarton Police Barracks, the 2023 Trax Club car is to be finished in the colours of the original S.A Police prisoner transport cart, the Black Maria. The 2023 Birthday Club model is a diecast Ford Falcon XE. Coming in October/November will be a customised 1966 Mustang Fastback in blue. Pre-order online, (www.topgear.com.au), or contact the office on (02) 9714 1000 to reserve your models.

NEW TOOLING FROM OXFORD DIECAST

JUST arrived, with a batch of new releases, is the latest new tooling from Oxford Diecast - No 76K2001 RASC Katy Western Desert Austin K2 Ambulance. In addition to this excellent new tooling, several models from Oxford's back catalogue have undergone a further production run, plus there is a whole list of new liveries from previously-released castings. Full details of the new tooling and the other new releases will appear in the October issue.

CORGI IS BRINGING THE MIGHTY CANBERRA BACK TO ITS AVIATION ARCHIVE RANGE

AFTER 16 years away, the much requested EE Canberra is returning to Corgi's Aviation Archive range. This brand new 1/72 scale release recreates a No 2 Sqn RAAF aircraft that fought during The Vietnam War. The production run will be limited, but the quantity to be made available is still to be advised. No AA34710, priced at £84.99, is now available to pre-order at corgi.co.uk, ahead of delivery later this year.

MORE CLASSIC FORMULA 1 RACERS COMING FROM MINI GT

JUST confirmed and now available to pre-order are a pair of Tyrrell P34s from the 1976 F1 season, complete with driver figures - #3 Jody Scheckter and 4 Patrick Depailler. For wholesale enquiries, contact Cleveland's Diecast (www.clevelandsdiecast.co.uk), or contact your preferred retailer.

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WHAT'S new

Our team of experts take a look at this month's model releases, including fine handbuilt replicas, scale construction and the latest in farm models.



PICK-UP A BARGAIN WITH SOLIDO'S EVOCATIVE CUSTOM 'ROOSTER SPEED' VW

1/18 scale

SOLIDO

1968 Volkswagen T2 Pick-up Custom - green

PRICE: £55.99 REF NO: S1809401

www.solido.com

SOLIDO'S first version of the marvellous Volkswagen Pick-up arrived in the original 'Splitty' form, in late 2021. Initially available in two colourways, one with a 'tilt' rear cover, both versions were reviewed by Stephen Paul Hardy in the December 2021 issue and came in for plenty of (totally justified) praise.

Given how popular these T1 releases proved to be for Solido, it was only going to be a matter of time before we saw the T2 'Bay Window' in large-scale diecast from the prolific French manufacturer. It comes in both the customised form you see here and also as a classic version, No S1809402, finished in grey on the lower half with a white upper. The classic one also features a vintage roof rack above the cab. But more about this in a future issue, as Stephen has it lined up for review.

Solido gives us the perfect introduction to this model on its website: "The Volkswagen T2, little brother of the T1, is an iconic van. Like many iconic and popular vehicles, it has had many customisations. Here, a garage had fun giving the T2 a low-rider look. With

this apple green, this pickup certainly doesn't go unnoticed!" But before we get stuck into the details of the model, a little history behind these wonderful, oh-so-iconic beauties.

The original T1 Camper, Transporter and Pick-up were, confusingly, initially designated as Volkswagen's "Type 2" when it was introduced in 1949, with the 'Beetle' deemed to be the Type 1. The "Type 2" design, with its wonderful split-screen front, hence "Splitty" in the popular vernacular, evolved, and was completely revised periodically with variations, retrospectively referred to as versions "T1" to "T5" (a nomenclature only invented after the introduction of the front-wheel-drive T4 that replaced the T3). Are you confused yet?

Solido's newly-tooled T2 is exquisite, based on a 1968 vehicle. The diecast body is a marvellous piece of model engineering and it even features opening parts – both cab doors open, revealing a neatly-detailed interior, and the rear tailgate hinges down by way of simply lifting a pair of catches atop the rear flanks, one on either side

– just reversing the procedure to put the tailgate back up, of course.

Attention to detail is excellent, especially at this larger scale and for this price, and the standard of finish is similarly impressive. The wheels and tyres look incredibly accurate too, helping the whole model to sit 'just right' for display.

As mentioned in Solido's website 'blurb', the customisation has included giving the vehicle a lowered stance and it will be interesting to compare this version with the standard release that Stephen is going to review, if only just to see how much lower this one is.

It does look great though.

The slightly metallic Apple Green paintwork is really eye-catching and suits the vehicle very well. Bearing allegiance to "Rooster Speed Motorcycle Custom Performance" (established in 1980, apparently) on both cab doors, the T2's job here was probably originally as a support and delivery vehicle, but now its job could be at shows, albeit again as a delivery/transport mule.

Interestingly, the number plate declares this to be a "Streetfighter". It certainly has plenty of street presence and it deserves to also be present in your VW collection. **DC**



THIS MONTH'S IN-DEPTH REVIEWS:

8 Solido's customised 'Rooster Speed' 1968 Volkswagen T2 Pick-up Custom in a vivid metallic green with opening doors and working tailgate

13 Raleigh's iconic Chopper Mk II Bicycle in Infra Red - a newly-tooled release from Bachmann under its Toyway brand

16 EDITOR'S CHOICE - Corgi's re-imagining of the original 1960s No 335 Jaguar 4.2-litre E-Type in blue



▲ The unmistakable look of the classic VW Type 2, with its more rounded front end.



► There are always opening and working features on Solido's large-scale diecasts.

▼ The side profile of Volkswagen's iconic Type 2 'Bay Window' Pick-up looks to be absolutely spot on and the exquisite shade of green really adds to the custom look, as do the chromed wheels and white walls.



CORGI MODEL CLUB
Ford Thames Airborne Caravan
SCALE: 1/43 PRICE: £35.99
REF: 420

www.corgimodelclub.com

The latest Corgi Model Club release is the wonderful Thames 'Airborne', complete with opening rear doors and a fully-fitted interior - just like the original Corgi!



SOLIDO
1969 Citroën Type HY - black and yellow - Los Tacos de la Muerte
SCALE: 1/18 PRICE: £55.99 REF: S1804819

www.solido.com

The ever popular H-type van looks stunning in this modern-day event food van, complete with opening serving hatch and fitted interior. Big value!



STAMP MODELS
1978 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz - red
SCALE: 1/43 PRICE: £125.00
REF: STM 78004

www.stampmodels.com

Very fine model and the colour suits it well, with the pure white vinyl rear panel adding to the effect. The plated trim and the white pinstriping are especially noteworthy.



BRITAINS
New Holland T6.175 Tractor
SCALE: 1/32 PRICE: £32.99
REF: 43356

www.britainsfarmtoys.co.uk

Based on existing tooling but sporting T6.175 branding this largely metal model has steerable wheels and working rear two-point linkage.

New Models



UNIVERSAL HOBBIES

Holaras Onion Haulm Topper UM 150-F and Windrower UR135 Set
SCALE: 1/32 PRICE: €159.95 REF: UH6476

www.hollandoto.nl

Beautifully-engineered and largely metal two-part set. Limited to just 999 sets, there are good levels of detailing on both models.



DIECAST MASTERS

Caterpillar 770 Haul Truck
'Weathered Series'
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: £TBA REF: 85756

www accuratediecast.com

Another release in the 'Weathered Series' from Diecast Masters is the Cat 770 off-road haul truck, complete with a display base and special packaging.



IMC MODELS

Scania S with Nootboom 6-axle Ballast Trailer "Tadano"
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €189.00 REF: 80-1032

www.tadanoeurope.shop

The ideal combination for moving heavy crane ballast and lattice boom sections. With a 10' detachable storage container, finished in Tadano's distinctive decoration.

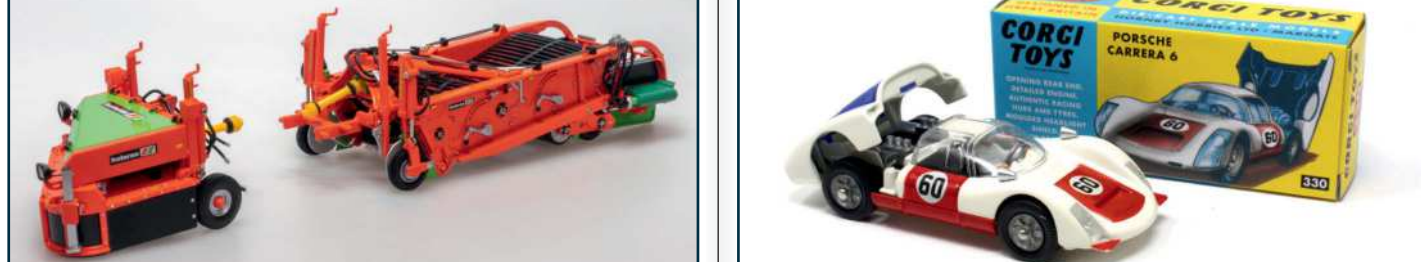


SOLIDO

2020 Dodge Challenger R/T Scat Pack
Widbody - gold and black
SCALE: 1/18 PRICE: £55.99 REF: S1805707

www.solido.com

The latest incarnation of Solido's brutishly-attractive Dodge Challenger. Opening doors, superb paint finish and crisp "Scat Pack" graphics.



CORGI

Porsche Carrera 6 - red & white #60
SCALE: FTB PRICE: £21.99
REF: RT33001

uk.corgi.co.uk

Recently released by The Corgi Model Club, Corgi has now released this beautiful recreation in the colour scheme that is was produced in the most back in the 1960s.



CONRAD

Liebherr LTR1220 Tracked Telescopic Crane "Membrey's"
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: £TBA REF: TBA

www.thedrakeshop.com

A stunning and colourful release of the well-known Australian operator and the perfect addition to the other Membrey's scale models that have been produced.



IMC MODELS

Scania XT with Nootboom 4-axle Semi Low Loader "Tadano"
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €165.00 REF: 80-1031

www.tadanoeurope.shop

Finished in the Tadano crane manufacturer colours, this Scania XT comes with a 4-axle Nootboom trailer that has an extending deck and folding loading ramps.



SOLIDO

Dodge Challenger - Demon Red
SCALE: 1/43 PRICE: £27.99
REF: S4310304

www.solido.com

Solido's smaller-scale Challenger is just as appealing, this time in sumptuous Demon Red. Excellent finish again, superb wheels and some good detail.



specialauctionservices.com

Toys and Trains

22 August, 19 September

Trains Galore

12 & 13 December



Rare streamlined Gauge One locomotives, record-breaking class rivals, by Bockholt and Aster for Fulgurex, sold for £13,900 in our Glorious Trains Part Two auction on 27 June

Glorious Trains Part Two on 27 June totalled more than 1,000 interesting lots, from dozens of Hornby 0 Gauge lots up to 7¼in. Gauge, and realised over £220,000. Our next special train auctions culminate in the large Trains Galore auction in December, when many new finds can be expected, with many toys on offer besides.

Please contact: Dominic Foster, Bob Leggett or Graham Bilbe
on + 44 (0)1635 580595 or mail@specialauctionservices.com

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New Models



ROS
Idrofoglia Turbo Active G5 Irrigator
SCALE: 1/32 **PRICE:** £96.99
REF: 602502
www.ros-srl.it

Smart, largely metal Idrofoglia-branded irrigator with moveable reel, flexible hose, rain gun on trolley and adjustable drawbar stand.



CORGI
Volvo P1800 - red
SCALE: FTB **PRICE:** £21.99
REF: RT22801
uk.corgi.co.uk

Another Corgi release of recent Corgi Model Club retooling, now released in plain red to reflect the box colours. Absolutely gorgeous and a bargain too.



CONRAD
Kobelco SK1300D Demolition Excavator with High Reach boom
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** £TBA **REF:** KOB1314
www.kobelcofanshop.com

Features a 4-piece high-reach boom system, fully modular in design with each boom section connecting together for a scale reach of up to 40 metres.



NZG
Yanmar B110W Mobile Excavator
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** £98.00
REF: 9741
www.nzg-shop.eu

Yanmar's new colours have been authentically replicated, now in a red and dark grey decoration that replaces the earlier yellow and grey design.



NZG
Mercedes-Benz Arocs 4x2 with Meiller 3-axle tipping semi-trailer
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** €149.00 **REF:** 1002/55
www.nzg-shop.eu

With camera mirrors, this updated Arocs 4x2 truck is paired with a Meiller 3-axle tipping trailer with adjustable landing legs, pivoting tailgate and a tipping dump body.



NZG
Mercedes-Benz Arocs 8x4 with Meiller tipper body
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** €109.00 **REF:** 1066/10
www.nzg-shop.eu

Available in a choice of colours, shown here is a metallic red finish with Mirrorcam side mirrors, steering front axles and a tipping body with pivoting tailgate.



MATRIX SCALE MODELS
1968-71 Triumph Vitesse Mk2 Convertible - white
SCALE: 1/43 **PRICE:** £95.00 **REF:** MX 41902-031
www.matrixscalemodels.com

Lovely model and all the correct details are there, including the Rostyle wheels, and a fully-detailed interior in black with woodgrain fascia and door cappings.



MATRIX SCALE MODELS
1968-71 Triumph Vitesse Mk2 Convertible - blue
SCALE: 1/43 **PRICE:** £95.00 **REF:** MX 41902-032
www.matrixscalemodels.com

The Vitesse in its other colour from Matrix. Black interior and, like the white model, is incredibly well-detailed and finished. Another beauty.

TAKE A TRIP BACK TO THE SEVENTIES WITH TOYWAY'S SUPER COOL RIDE

1/12 scale

TOYWAY

Chopper Mk II Bicycle - Infra Red

PRICE: £23.95 REF NO: TW41700

www.bachmann.co.uk

WHEN Toyway released its first 1/12 scale Chopper, teased at the Nuremberg Toy Fair in 2019 and then revealed at the same event in 2020, it had replicated the original bike from Raleigh, that would become known as the MkI, when the revised MkII was launched in 1973.

After the popularity of its original MkI Chopper releases over the last couple of years, Toyway, through its parent company, Bachmann Europe, has now tooled up the modified MkII Chopper. The new model correctly features a modified frame rear, new seat position (slightly further forward), rear rack and 'T-bar' gear lever.

Toyway's new 1/12 scale model has been manufactured in the two colours that the real thing has just been re-released in, Infra Red or Ultra Violet. The new 'real' version from Raleigh, launched at its showroom in Nottingham, sold out on the first day of release in June and a second (and final) batch will have just gone on sale as this magazine lands. Given the frenetic activity that surrounded the first batch, it is highly likely

that the same thing will happen again. More, in different colours, have been hinted at by Raleigh for release next summer. It is highly likely, therefore, that we'll see more colours from Toyway in the future too. Hurrah!

The brilliant, newly-tooled No TW41700 MkII features a diecast metal frame and chrome plated plastic parts with working steering and pedal/chain movement, and PVC vinyl black tyres with detailed tread pattern and red lining, just like the initial MkI issues from Toyway. The second version of the new MkII, in Ultra Violet, is shown to the bottom right of this page.

In addition to these two, wonderful new recreations, Toyway also has a rider figure available to display with these (it comes with another youngster on a Space Hopper for that really seventies feel), plus four colour versions of the MkI.

So, iron your flared jeans and lace up your Dunlop Green Flash, then just head on straight over to the Bachmann website to get yours! **DC**



▲ The changes made back in the day by Raleigh for the MkII are all correctly captured.

◀ The detail to the rear is not skimpy on either - the sissy bar springs are a real case in point here.



STAMP MODELS

1978 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz
beige/brown

SCALE: 1/43 PRICE: £125.00 REF: STM 78005

www.stampmodels.com

Excellent trim, especially on and around the bonnet, and fine pinstriping in brown. Matching beige vinyl rear panel and two-tone interior - it's a spectacular model.



TOYWAY

Chopper Mk II Bicycle - Ultra Violet

SCALE: 1/12 PRICE: £23.95

REF: TW41700

www.bachmann.co.uk

As mentioned above, the newly-tooled Chopper MkII is also available in the original Ultra Violet colour scheme. The perfect companion to the Infra Red.

Vectis

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Thursday 31st - Model Train Sale

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Tuesday 12th - General Toy Sale
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WIKING
Kröger Agroliner HKD 302 Trailer
SCALE: 1/32 **PRICE:** £104.95
REF: 077867
www.wiking.de

This black edition of its well-engineered Kröger trailer features a detachable cover, a three-way tipping body, opening side panels and working grain chute.



CORGI
Ford Mustang Fastback 2+2 - gold & black
SCALE: FTB **PRICE:** £21.99 **REF:** RT32001
uk.corgi.co.uk

The third of the four Corgi recreations just released. These exquisite re-imaginings are excellent value and are real quality recreations - perfect to fill those gaps.



REPLICARS
Hitachi ZX200-7 Tracked Excavator
SCALE: 1/50
PRICE: €109.99
www.hcmewebshop.com

The latest generation of Hitachi excavator, featuring an opening cabin door and a hinged upper engine cover with excellent detailing throughout.



DIECAST MASTERS
Caterpillar D5 LGP Fire Suppression Dozer
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** £110.00 **REF:** 85952
www accuratediecast.com

Fitted with cabin protection screens and ROPS, this dozer is specially developed for fire suppression duties, fitted with a rear winch and front PAT blade.



DRAKE COLLECTIBLES
Kenworth T909 with Aero Kit
"Drake Orange/Blue"
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** AU\$240.00 **REF:** Z01560
www.thedrakeshop.com

A striking, typical Aussie-style rig finished in the colours of Drake Trailers, ideal to hook up to the new trailer opposite. Features opening cabin doors and bonnet.



DRAKE COLLECTIBLES
BoxLoader Trailer + 20' Container
"Drake Orange/Blue"
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** AU\$280.00 **REF:** ZT09262
www.thedrakeshop.com

Fully functional, with a 20' container and has the ability to demonstrate self-loading and unloading using the built-in crane. Can accommodate two 20' or a single 40'.



MATRIX SCALE MODELS
1975 Jensen Interceptor Series III
Coupe - silver/black
SCALE: 1/43 **PRICE:** £100.00 **REF:** MX 41002-151
www.matrixscalemodels.com

Excellent finish and level of detail, as usual. The wheels are correct for this model, as is the raised front bumper. Interior is in black, to match the vinyl roof.



MATRIX SCALE MODELS
1975 Jensen Interceptor Series III
Coupe - blue/beige
SCALE: 1/43 **PRICE:** £100.00 **REF:** MX 41002-152
www.matrixscalemodels.com

This version is in dark blue with beige vinyl roof. Very classy-looking, with beige interior. Once again, all the detail is there, inside and out. Very, very good indeed.



SOLIDO
Venturi 400GT - yellow
SCALE: 1/43 PRICE: £27.99
REF: S4313402
www.solido.com

Another of the new tranche of 1/43 releases from Solido, the incredibly attractive Venturi is very nicely finished in this appealing yellow indeed.



SOLIDO
1994 Mercedes-Benz (W124) E60 AMG - black
SCALE: 1/43 PRICE: £27.99 REF: S4313201
www.solido.com

Finished in an alluring yet menacing black, the AMG version of the popular E60 looks every millimetre a Q-car. Another excellent value 1/43 release by Solido.

CORGI GIVES US A GOOD OLD 'E' WITH REAL SIXTIES STYLE

FTB scale

CORGI

Jaguar 4.2-litre E-Type - blue

PRICE: £21.99 REF NO: RT33501

uk.corgi.co.uk

CONTINUING the great work by The Corgi Model Club over the last few years, Corgi has released four of the 're-imaginings' that the club has reverse-engineered recently. Each of the four has been released in a different colourway to the club version, of course, making full use of the castings of these wonderful recreations.

Originally released in

1968 by Corgi Toys, the No 335 Jaguar 4.2 E-Type is a brilliant replication of the iconic British sports car in feature-packed toy form, with opening doors, bonnet and boot, and with tipping front seats and sliding rear seat in the interior.

The model is presented in a striking metallic blue paint job, in a replica of the original display packaging that cleverly allows the model to be safely

removed without damaging the pack itself.

The recent Corgi Model Club release was in red (and is still available from www.corgimodelclub.com), so this latest release from Corgi means that both of the original colour versions can be bought again 'as new' for very little money today.

The model is an incredibly close recreation of the original (it definitely stands up to

very close side-by-side inspection). The original opening features and details are all there.

The prices of the Corgi releases represent incredibly good value, especially when compared to how much mint originals go for. Check out the other three newbies on pages 10, 12 and 15, plus the latest club release on page 9. **DC**

DIECAST
COLLECTOR
EDITOR'S
CHOICE



◀ The packaging is a masterpiece and the model can be removed easily.



▲ A wonderful recreation of a really popular Corgi Toys release.

We really want your feedback! Do you agree with the Editor's Choice? Let us know your thoughts about this and the other releases at CollectingEditorial@warnersgroup.co.uk



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1:50 Scale

EMERGENCY! 1973 Ward LaFrance Fire Truck:
LACoFD - Engine 51



1:64 Scale

Peterbilt 385 Remote Refueling
Tanker: LA Co Fire Dept



1:43 Scale 1960 Ford C-Series Tractor

w/ Refrigerated Trailer: Howard Johnson's



1:43 Scale

1968 Flxible Dina Olimpico:
Continental Air Transport



1:43 Scale

GM TDH5303 Transit Bus:
RTD LA Bandit Scheme



1:64 Scale

KME Predator Fire Engine: LACFD
Engine 8, 16, 172 & No # Station



1:43 Scale Freightliner FLA COE

Tractor w/ Reefer Trailer: Monfort of Colorado



1:43 Scale

GM PD4151 Silversides
Coach: Southwest Transit



1:43 Scale

GM TDH 3610 Transit Bus:
New York Omnibus Corp



1:87 Scale

MCI D45 CRT LE Coach: Phoenix
- Vally Metro Transit System



1:43 Scale Peterbilt 352 Pacemaker

Tractor Trailer: Greyhound Van Lines



1:87 Scale

TEMSA TS35E
Coach: Gray Line New York City



1:87 Scale Flxible 53102

Transit Bus w/ Bat Wings:
Miami Dade Transit



1:87 Scale MCI MC-12

Coach: Grey Goose Lines



1:43 Scale 1974 Kenworth W900A

w/ 40' Refrigerated Trailer: Bandit Trucking



1:87 Scale

1966 GM PD4107 "Buffalo"
Coach: Military Police



1:87 Scale Prevost X3-45 Coach:

Greyhound Military Tribute Edition



1:87 Scale

1999 TMC RTS Transit Bus:
Las Vegas Transit



1:87 Scale

MCI Classic Transit Bus:
MTA New York City



1:87 Scale

Van Hool CX-45 Coach: The
Sunshine Flyer Walt Disney World



1:87 Scale MCI D4505 Coach:

Broward Express



1:87 Scale

1980 Grumman 870 Transit
Bus: Houston METRO



1:87 Scale

Proterra ZX5 Electric Transit Bus:
Alexandria Transit Co. / DASH

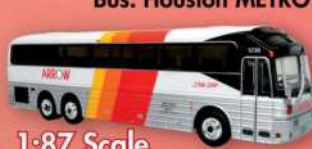


1:87 Scale Greyhound Canada
Tribute Set



1:87 Scale

NFI Xcelisior XN40 Transit Bus:
Long Beach Transit



1:87 Scale

1984 Eagle Model 10 Coach:
Arrow Bus Lines



1:87 Scale NFI Xcelisior XN60
Transit Bus: Lafayette, IN

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Sizzler from São Paulo

Stephen Paul Hardy travels to Brazil to discover the backstory behind one of OttOmobile's latest releases.

To say OttOmobile's SP2 is a significant release is an understatement. Whilst not totally unrepresented in toy and scale model terms, examples of the many and varied interesting products from Brazil's automotive industry are still far too scarce. This, the first high quality model of a Brazilian Volkswagen in 1/18 scale, in scale model terms, is a watershed moment.

AT THE HUB OF CHANGE

It would take half a dozen pages to do full justice to the significance of the backstory behind OttOmobile's SP2. Designed in-house at Volkswagen do Brasil and manufactured by Karmann-Ghia do Brasil SA, many air-cooled VW enthusiasts consider it to be the most beautiful and most desirable VW ever manufactured worldwide.

Based on the interesting Brazilian variations of the typ.1 Karmann Ghia, with an engine from the locally produced VW typ.3 1600 models, it had a traditional rear mounted, air-cooled engine. It was launched in two versions - the SP1 and SP2 - a model designation reportedly signifying its São Paulo origins. Although the common body styling was sizzingly hot, the SP1 was considered underpowered. The larger-engined SP2 fared better but, arriving on the eve of Volkswagen's 'new generation' water-cooled era, it was quickly earmarked for potential replacement by an SP3. This was rumoured to have been a mid-engined design based around a powerplant from the then new Passat.

Given the geographic spheres of influence of Volkswagen's factories, Brazilian production models (with some specific exceptions relating to Portugal) were never officially available in Europe. The closest



▲ Apart from the badge, very little else is visually recognisable as a Volkswagen.



▲ Its sizeable, sloping tailgate was one of its many unique features - and way ahead of its time.



▲ Another was a dashboard the like of which no other VW has ever had.

'export' market, where Brazilian models were sold, was the Middle East, where the SP2 found particular favour. However, even if export to Europe had been a possibility, the SP2 failed to comply with European type approval requirements because of, amongst other things, its ultra-low headlight height.

THE 'LEIDING LOOK'

Originally launched in 1969, the Brazilian VW typ.3 models quickly underwent a succession of what we would now call 'facelift' modifications, thanks largely to the influence of Volkswagen do Brasil's then chairman, Rudolf Leiding.

It was Leiding who also initiated the SP2 and its equally-desirable companion three door hatchback 'Brasila', both launched in 1972. A distinctive look on the SP2 and Brasilia, common to the final typ.3 models, was their double headlight surround. When Leiding left Brazil to become Volkswagen AG's third CEO in Wolfsburg, his wife took her SP2 back to Germany with her and he instigated the upgrading of the European VW411 into the VW412, inclusive of those 'Leiding look' headlights.

VW SP2 - 1972 (OT421)

An exceptional model of an exceptional car, OttOmobile's SP2 captures this era-bridging Volkswagen exactly. So much about the SP2 was, in VW terms, unique, as demonstrated by OttOmobile's 1/18 sealed resin beauty - everything from those headlights right back to the sizeable, sloping tailgate and a dashboard the like of which no other VW has ever had. If I had to cite just one authentic detail that stands out for me as representative of the authenticity modelled into this SP2, it would be the grille of the rear valance exhaust guard. Maybe a strange one to pick on, you might think, but it proves the point perfectly.

Now a word of caution to OttOmobile - you have opened Pandora's box with the SP2. Already there is strong clamour within the VW model collecting fraternity for a companion 2 door Brasilia as well as for the SP2 in the deep yellow frequently seen in contemporary brochures of the car. **DC**

▲ The SP2 has a very low body line. Its headlights were a hallmark of 1970s Brazilian VW styling and even influenced changes to the VW typ.4 range produced in Germany.



Take three

Stephen Paul Hardy turns the spotlight on a trio of new Ford models from OttOmobile that offer more than just passing interest for British fans of the marque.

With each month's batch of releases, OttOmobile usually announces one rally-themed model, and one of the latest is a stunner, both in terms of visual impact and the amount of detail it carries.

ESCORT COSWORTH GR.A - 1993 (OT994)

Another, most welcome model of a popular British motor sport competitor from OttOmobile. Unmistakable in one of the most distinctive and eye catching liveries seen on the international rallying circuit in the early 1990s, Malcolm Wilson's Ford Escort Cosworth Gr.A. is from the 1993 Network Q RAC Rally.

There is just so much excellent detail, from the white wheel rims, right through to the caged and harnessed interior. Needless to say, you just can't ignore this one thanks to its livery and that bank of rally lights. Surely a 'must-have' for British motorsport fans and Fords buffs alike, this one is just so good it makes a fabulous standalone display piece or essential addition to a themed collection with equal standing. A winner in all senses of the word.

I feel quite strongly that there are several issues that are common to both of the other two models in the trio and ones that touch back to comments I have made previously including in my review of OttOmobile's Ford Focus Mk.2 RS ('Sharp Focus' - March 2022 issue). They are both, as models, visual gems that capture the spirit of the cars they model - and the eras they are from - exceptionally well. For example with both we have the complex design lighting units now common on the majority of modern car housed under crystal clear covers. These are executed in exacting detail and, together with other similar, crisp, well-defined details, contribute to the superb overall impressions the models generate.

▶ The fully kitted-out interior of Malcolm Wilson's Escort Cosworth is a perfect example of the attention to detail on OttOmobiles rally models...



▲ ... as is the external detailing of the very visual, formidable, exterior.



▲ With high levels of authentic detailing and superb finish, OttOmobile's 1/18th sealed resin Fiesta ST...



▲ ... and Racing Puma are just so photogenic that you have to look very closely to see if these are shots of the models or the real cars.

▼ A trio to delight Ford enthusiasts, with the bonus for British collectors of two out of the three being right-hand-drive.



FORD FIESTA ST (MK. 7) - 2016 (OT403)

Representing a left-hand-drive version of the upmarket Fiesta ST, with an engine boasting 200 hp and claimed a top speed of 140 mph, OT403 is finished in flawless Spirit Blue Metallic with graphite rims. Interior detail, of course, extends to depiction of the ST touches that include logo seat upholstery trim. As with the Focus previously, and several other contemporary models from Ottomobile, the window tinting is very well done.

RACING PUMA - 1999 (OT428)

Moving back in time, to sit between the Escort Cosworth and Fiesta ST, comes this delightful representation of a right-hand-drive Racing Puma, resplendent in violet-tinged, deep metallic blue paintwork. As with the other two in trio, the finish it exudes is incredibly photogenic. And, whilst each of the three hold their own corners admirably, there is something about OT428 that, for me, places it as my favourite of the trio. I can't quite put my finger on what tips the balance so resoundingly in its favour, but it is most certainly another excellent example of just how charismatic 1/18 scale resincast scale models can be. **DC**



▼ Spoilt for choice - sealed resin 1/18 from OttOmobile (406) and diecasts from Solido in 1/43 and 1/18 (205s).



Competitive Peugeot

Stephen Paul Hardy tries out a trio of cars from the French manufacturer.

In addition to OttOmobile's regular release of a rally model each month, Solido has also evolved a similarly well-established back catalogue on the theme, which it frequently expands with new versions.

406 BTCC - 1996 (OT828)

One of OttOmobile's most recent releases is this dramatic green and gold Ultron-liveried Peugeot 406, as entered in the 1997 BTCC British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) by Motor Sport Developments (MSD). Carrying #12, it depicts the car driven by Tim Harvey to second place in the tense Thruxton leg of the championship that year.

This model is surely yet another 'must-have' for British motorsport fans. The dual colour paint finish is excellent, the decals very well applied and the base model, with its full detailing really, bears close inspection. As ever, a photoshoot often highlights attributes the naked eye passes over and, in this case, one of them is the filigree protection grille that is part of the totally fitted out competition-compliant interior. Like all OttOmobile models, it is a 1/18 scale sealed resin model, so all that fantastic internal detailing is only accessible by viewing through the window glazing.

205 GTI LOMBARD RAC RALLY - 1998 (S1801715)

So onwards to one of Solido's latest 1/18 rallying



▲ The second British-themed car from OttOmobile this month is Tim Harvey's Peugeot 406.



▲ And staying in 1/18, but this time diecast, Colin McRae's 1998 Lombard RAC Rally Peugeot 205.



▲ Ticking both the Peugeot and rally-themed boxes are Solido's 1/43 diecast 106 'Rallye' pair.

Peugeots, which illustrates an early chapter of Colin McRae's career in motorsport with his entry in the 1998 Lombard RAC Rally. Being a diecast 1/18 model, the detail of the roll-caged and rally-kitted interior is accessible through the opening doors. With its Peugeot/Talbot era RAC livery, this rallying version of Peugeot's classic 'hot hatch' 205 is an easy memory recall. And, with the minor exception of the omission of the yellow backing to the rear number plate, Solido's model is absolutely superb. A nostalgia-laden delight, with lots of colour, detail and a distinctly British connection.

106 PH.2 RALLYE BLUE - 1998 (S4312102)

Whilst Solido's increasingly popular range of new 1/43 diecasts doesn't (at least as yet) embrace motorsport rallying subjects, I felt that this pair of recent releases just had to get a look-in here.

Marketed as having "fewer frills, more thrills" with weight saving omissions to the equipment list, Peugeot's 106 Rallye was designed as a homologation special to compete in the 1,300 cc rally class. Finding favour with buyers as for both street as well as motorsport use, they were easily recognisable by the trademark white-painted steel wheels and distinctive Rallye colour flash decals. Details then that are naturally very evident on Solido's pair in Blanc Banquise (S4312101) and Bleu Santorin (S4312102). **DC**



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Ready for anything

There was a time when rally teams had specially-equipped vans, ready to service their cars wherever needed. **Francisco Mota** goes back to the seventies, eighties and nineties to discover some of these workshops on wheels. **Photos: João Carlos Oliveira**

If you visit a WRC event nowadays, you'll surely not want to miss what is referred to as the heart of the rally. The service park is where all the organisers are during the rally and where all the teams, big and small, have their service areas. In fact, teams are no longer allowed to service their rally cars outside the service park. All the regular maintenance that rally cars might need during the event happens here, as well as tyre changes and any repairs needed. Even if a car gets damaged on a special stage and urgently needs work to be done by the mechanics, it can only be performed inside the service park. The

▲ From the left: 1978 Fiat 242 Alitalia, 1986 Citroën C35 PTS and 1985 VW LT45 Audi Sport, all manufactured by Ixo.

driver and co-driver, using the tools and spare parts on board the rally car are the only ones that can do tyre changes, or any kind of adjustments or repairs needed outside the service park. FIA, the ruling body, made this rule with the intention of reducing growing costs for the teams, during the events. It is debatable as to whether this actually reduces, in any relevant amount, the budget rally teams spend on a full season.

What is sure is that, if a car is seriously damaged and cannot be repaired by the driver and co-driver on the spot, it will have to retire from the event – even if a small team of mechanics with the right



▲ The same scale model in two different liveries: Fiat 242 Phase 1 Alitalia, and the same painted in Olío Fiat colours - both made by Ixo and released by Altaya.



▲ Attention to detail is as good as on any rally car model produced by Ixo, particularly concerning the liveries.



▲ In the mid-seventies, Fiat 131 Abarth works cars were painted dark blue and yellow, like the service vans.

► Detail goes right down to the wheels and tyres, as well as small stickers.



tools could easily solve the problem by the side of the road. If only they were allowed to reach the rally car, that is. Today, everything is regulated, even the amount of time each team is allowed to work on a car in the service park. There's a clock running over each car in the service area, telling the team the time left to do what's needed before the car leaves for the next session of special stages and comes back again. Even the number of mechanics that can work on each car during servicing is regulated, as well as the number of tyres and the main mechanical parts that can be used by each car at each event and for the full season. The improvisation that was a considerable part of the sport in the old days has gone, mainly with aim of reducing costs as the reason for this. The need to have all under control is part of our way of living today, it is not restricted to motorsport, but affects it to a point where the very essence of it has changed substantially over the years. Rallying has been a clear target for this way of thinking and it goes far beyond the service park.

IN THE OLD DAYS

For those of us who remember going out to see rally stages by the side of the road in the past, it is clear that things were not always like this. Until the late 1990s, rally teams could build their own service teams more or less as they wished. Rally cars would be serviced and repaired by the side of the road. Not inside rally stages, obviously, where regular traffic was cut, but in road sections in between. Top teams had a special service plan, where the service points were pre-determined before each event and

were part of the roadbook that each team carried inside the car. These service points would be organised either by the side of the road, or in street squares where a few specially-equipped vans and mechanics would wait for the rally cars to arrive and start working on them.

The vans themselves were based on production commercial vehicles, from the same brand as the rally cars if possible, or from the same manufacturing group. Lancia would use Fiat vans, for instance. A complete workshop was fitted inside some of these vans, others carried spare parts, tyres and even fuel. A roof rack to load some of these parts was often attached, as well as spotlights and other illumination systems so the mechanics could work at night. With such big areas of metal, of course, the marketing people didn't miss the chance to paint the vans with the official sponsors, making them look very flashy.

There were also 'chase cars', usually smaller and faster estate cars, to reach any car that needed help before or after each service point. At some rallies, like the Safari in Kenya, top teams would even have helicopters with mechanics and engineers on-

RALLY SERVICE VANS



▶ Another pair of Fiat 242 vans, both with roof racks loaded with spare parts and toolboxes.

▼ Fiat France ran the 131 Abarths in the national championship and some international events, where they joined the works Alitalia team, both models by Ixo.

board. Just in case they needed some help. Watching mechanics working on a rally car by the side of the road, performing repairs that seemed impossible in such short timing, was a show within the show. Model manufacturers, with Ixo in the lead, have worked on those memories and launched, over recent months and years, several 1/43 reproductions of those rally service vans that many of us still remember. Before, this kind of model would mainly be of interest for those who like to build dioramas, reproducing rally scenes where a service van would be an essential part of the set. However, the variety of models now available, reproducing this kind of vehicle, created a new collecting theme of its own. Ixo released a few under its standard series of rally related diecasts and it also supplies Altaya with models for a collection focused on this subject, so there is a lot to choose from.

Most of the models reproduce vans used in the seventies, eighties and nineties, however, there are a few older examples and others from this century. We've selected some of the most interesting, both from Ixo's standard catalogue and from Altaya's releases, and also some from other model makers, just to show the wide choice we have in this collecting theme.

SCALE MODELS

We start with a pair of Fiat 242 Phase 1 vans, both manufactured by Ixo. The white and green Alitalia-sponsored van is an Altaya release and was used by the Lancia team in 1976. It looks close to standard, featuring all the sponsors the team had that year. It also carries a mention of the constructor's title achieved in the championship the previous year. The shape is not very complex and Ixo has made a nice job of it, if we look carefully. All the doors are engraved in the body, even if they are not opening parts. Next to this, we have another Fiat 242 Phase 1, this time a 1978 Olivo Fiat version in dark blue and yellow. Fiat Group had given up on the Lancia Stratos and were now campaigning the Fiat 131 Abarth. This one is a standard Ixo release and the shape looks very similar, wheels are painted black instead of light grey and, obviously, the sponsors are different.

The following pair features two further Fiat 242s. The Alitalia-sponsored van is another Phase 1 version from the 1978 and 1979 seasons. It features extra spotlights at the front, grey-painted wheels and a roof rack full of material. Two big toolboxes, and several Lancia Stratos spare wheels, plus



▶ Spare wheels and the spotlight pod are recognisable as Lancia Stratos parts.



▲ A complete Peugeot 205 T16 Evo rear body on the PTS van's roof, plus extra spare parts.



▲ The Fiat Ducato van, by Ixo, features a realistic Italian license plate.

▼ Citroën C35 and Fiat Ducato surely met each other on mid-eighties WRC road sections.



a four-light pod, also for the Stratos. Even if this one has big Fiat logos on the sides, it must be a van loaned to service a late Lancia Stratos entry. The other Fiat 242 is a restyled Phase 2, with a slightly different front grille design, where the indicators are positioned at each corner. It also features a big roof rack carrying two sets of five tyres. Looking at the wheel design we can see they are for the Fiat 131 Abarth. The car Fiat France entered in several French and some international events, painted the same red, white and blue as this van. One interesting feature is the ladder fixed to one of the rear doors, giving access to the roof rack.



► Audi Sport VW LT 45 van with a full load of spare tyres, for the group B Quattros to use in 1985 and, far right, a high-roof specification VW LT 35, as used by the Rothmans Rally Team in 1985, to service the 911 SC RS.

▼ Front on, the family resemblance between the LT 45 (Audi Team, left) and the LT 35 (Rothmans Porsche, right) is very obvious.



◀ Rear view mirrors are the most fragile parts on this type of scale model.



▲ Subaru equipped its service vans with awnings, to provide protection from the weather.



▲ Spotlights were useful for vans too, as can be seen on this 1979 Ford Transit MkII, by Ixo.

▼ Subaru's Mercedes-Benz 609D for 1993, with Ford's Transit MkII from 1979.

ICONIC COLOURS

In the mid-eighties, Lancia and Peugeot were strong rivals in the WRC, both on the stages and in their respective service teams. We gathered two of the most iconic liveries of that era with a Martini Racing-sponsored 1984 Fiat Ducato and a Peugeot Talbot Sport 1986 Citroën Jumper C35 Phase 2, both released by Altaya. The Ducato looks very nice due to the clean livery it has, the van features a high roof configuration, so the cargo volume is increased and the mechanics can walk inside easier. It also features a side exhaust pipe.

The Citroën Jumper, born out of a joint-venture

between PSA and Fiat, has the same basic shape as the Fiat 242 Phase 2. The PTS version looks great with an extra-long roof rack with four complete wheels, a big tool box and a complete rear hood for a Peugeot 205 T15 Evo. There's also a narrow ladder at the back, for easy access to the roof rack. The van also has a pair of extra spotlights, placed on the front bumper.

The following pair joins together two vans painted in yet more iconic colours. Rothmans Rally Team used the 1979 Ford Transit MkII in 1979, servicing the pair of Escort Mk2s entered by David Sutton in the WRC. It is an Ixo standard series release and reproduces a double rear track version, with black wing extensions over the rear wheels. It is a four-door version and features a livery very close to the rally Escort's, with extra spotlights on the front bumper and a very long roof rack, carrying six golden-painted minilite gravel wheels, the exact type used by the Escorts at the time. As many of the other models in this article, the rear view wing mirrors are the most fragile items so they are packed with extra care.

Next to the Rothmans Transit, we have a 1993 Mercedes-Benz 609D, as used by Subaru World Rally Team in 1993. Painted the familiar dark blue with yellow waves, it looks very good, even if the tobacco branding is absent, as it was mandatory in the rally cars at several events where there was a restriction to tobacco advertising. This is a big model, released by Altaya, and looks quite simple, before you start to look closer. It also features double track in the rear axle, but no roof rack. Instead, it has a grey bar on the top of the right side, from where an awning would unfold to create a protected area by the van. Here, mechanics could work in a rally car without been exposed to rain or strong sun. There's also three spotlights on the roof, to illuminate the working area. The rear doors have steps to help climb up to the cargo box.

German-based rally teams tended to use different variations of VW's LT series in the eighties. We have a pair of those here, one is an Ixo LT 35 in Rothmans Porsche Rally Team colours, featuring a very straightforward high roof, long wheel base configuration. It has two extra spotlights at the front and the rest looks standard, exactly as seen servicing the Porsche 911 SC RS group B car. The other one is an Altaya released LT 45, with low roof but equipped with a rack full of spare wheels and fuel cans. It was also seen in the 1985



RALLY SERVICE VANS



▲ Detailed roof rack for this VW Transporter, painted in Martini Porsche colours.



► Huge roof aerial to ensure the van was connected to the drivers in the 911 SC rally cars.



▼ VW Transporter T2, as used by Porsche Rally Team for the 1978 Safari rally, by Ixo.

WRC season, with the Audi Sport Team. Tobacco stickers are also missing. These are both very good diecasts, with exact wheels, door mirrors and bumpers. The Audi version even has a tow hook, a pair of spotlights over the rear doors and an orange warning lamp on the rear of the rack.

PULLING A TRAILER

The next two vans have something in common, as they both pull a trailer. The black BP-sponsored 1980 VW T3A is a PremiumX scale model, that comes together with a flat trailer, ready to tow a VW Golf GTI painted in the same colours, that entered rallies in France. It's a very nice replica, that can be completed with the missing Golf, released by Neo a few years ago.

The Altaya-released red Citroën Jumper 2.8 HDI saw service in 2001 with the Citroën Sport, in the days the French team rallied the Xsara WRC. The Jumper model is a high roof version in standard form, only the stickers make it look different. The closed trailer is made from plastic and the red top tilts forward, to let a Xsara WRC rally car in or out. Ixo produces a few that will perfectly match this set. The last rally service van is a 1978 VW Transporter T2 with Martini Porsche livery. This one was taken to that year's Safari Rally and features an empty roof rack, a pair of spotlights at the front and a roof aerial. It's painted white with a blue stripe around the waist line and features some stickers on the front doors. The shape is great and it really looks a little vintage compared to the others. There are more rally service vans to chase, if you feel inclined to follow this collection theme that seems to be growing among rally car collectors. **DC**

► Citroën's trailer had a cover to hide and protect the rally car during transport.



► Tow hook fits perfectly with the trailer on this PremiumX set.



▼ A pair of sets of van-plus-trailer - the red Citroën Jumper 2.8 HDI saw service in 2001, released by Altaya. The 1980 black VW T3A, in BP France colours, is a PremiumX set.



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Batman by Matchbox

Mike Pigott continues his regular series on super-hero models with a look at the Batman models produced under the Matchbox brand.

Matchbox is not a brand generally associated with character toys, and particularly not superheroes, which tended to be the domain of Corgi and Ertl. The Lesney company was very reluctant to pay any form of royalties, and only in its final years did it produce some character toys aimed at the pre-school market, notably the Disney and Popeye ranges. Later owners of the Matchbox trademark, such as Universal Toys and Tyco, were more receptive to licensed characters, resulting in ranges based on properties such as Thunderbirds, Stingray, Code Red and the James Bond films.

Tyco was acquired by Mattel in 1997, creating internal competition between Matchbox and Mattel's Hot Wheels brand. Mattel favoured its own line, and Matchbox was repositioned as a brand of diecast cars aimed at pre-schoolers, with new models being unrealistic and toy-like. Over the next few years, Mattel aggressively acquired character licenses, including DC Comics, Marvel, Star Wars, Cartoon Network, Disney, Star Trek, The Simpsons and many others.

MATCHBOX

Mattel often used its franchises across its whole range of products, and in addition to Hot Wheels vehicles, the licenses could also be applied to games, preschool toys, and action figures. However, it was something of a surprise when a new Batmobile casting appeared in the Matchbox range. Generally Mattel tended to keep the two ranges separate, with most of the 'cool' vehicles reserved for Hot Wheels.

▲ Batmobile by Matchbox in both colours - first release in grey and later version in blue.



▲ Matchbox Batmobile in blister pack.

Matchbox had made some DC Comics related models before, based on the TV cartoons Justice League and Batman: The Brave and the Bold. However, these were the weakest type of licensed toys, being standard models overprinted with character graphics.

Quite why this Batmobile was released into the Matchbox line, in 2012, rather than with all the others in the Hot Wheels line, is something of a mystery. It may have been an attempt to give some credibility to the neglected brand, or because it was a more 'kid friendly' version of the Batmobile.

BATMOBILE

As it turns out, this particular Batmobile was not based on a vehicle used by Batman in movies or comics, nor was it an original design. It was actually a scaled-down version of a large plastic car called the 'Total Destruction Batmobile' which was an accessory for Mattel's 'Power Attack Batman' action figure range. The Power Attack toys were aimed at younger children, and this may be why the smaller diecast car was included in the Matchbox series, which was also being marketed to juveniles.

Unlike the large plastic Batmobile, which was stubby and cartoony in appearance and fitted with oversize wheels, the miniature version has realistic proportions. In fact, it is actually a very good Batmobile design, and is fitted with the typical bat-head ram at the front and large rear fins. As with many versions of the Batmobile, it has a long, powerful nose, with the cockpit mounted above

the rear wheels. The forward wheels are semi-open, with the sides of the battering ram shielding the front edges. The profile of the car is tapered between the front wheels and the cockpit, with a series of five slashes on each side, echoing the car from *Batman Forever*.

The model is painted dark metal-flake blue, with details picked out in red. The interior is in silver-grey plastic, and includes the rear panel with a large turbine exhaust. A nice touch is the bat-shaped steering wheel in the single-seat cockpit. The blue-tinted glazing covers the whole cockpit and also incorporates the bonnet vents. The wheels are a five-spoked design with a red-chrome finish.

A recoloured version was introduced in 2013. This one was painted metallic grey, a rather atypical colour for a Batmobile. The bat-head ram was painted black with red eyes, and the bonnet top as far as the cockpit was also touched in with black paint. The cockpit canopy was in transparent red plastic, while the interior and exhaust pipe were in solid red. The wheels had red spokes and the base was black plastic. Despite the unusual colour scheme, it was quite a good looking model.

SKY-BUSTERS

Most readers would be familiar with Matchbox Sky-Busters, a range of diecast toy aircraft introduced in the 1970s. Initially, the line was composed of airliners, military planes, civil aircraft and helicopters, in fit-the-box scales at very reasonable prices. However, in the Mattel era, the Sky-Busters line degenerated into a series of generic, toy-like and unrealistic pseudo-aircraft painted in neon colours. So it was quite surprising to see a very realistic version of Batman's flying vehicle 'The Bat' turned up in the range in 2012.

THE BAT

The flying vehicle known as 'The Bat' appeared in the third part of the Dark Knight trilogy, *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012). Like the 'Tumbler' Batmobile which appeared in these films, The Bat was an unused military prototype. It was a single seater hover-vehicle intended for urban warfare, and could take off vertically and hover in mid-air in a way similar to a Harrier jump jet. The Bat features an overhanging cockpit flanked by a pair of very powerful machine gun pods. Despite its name, the craft actually has very little resemblance to a real bat, with more of a beetle-like appearance that, when viewed from below, looks more like a turtle.

The Matchbox model of The Bat certainly stood out among the Sky-Busters, being a detailed, black-painted model in amongst the other brightly-coloured, unrealistic items. Possibly the reason for its inclusion in the range was because Hot Wheels did not produce a line of aircraft, although there were two very similar Hot Wheels versions – a small one in the Mainline series, and a larger one in the 1/50 Batman range. The Matchbox Bat is mid-way between the other two in terms of size, measuring about 8cm in length. It has a plastic underside which incorporates the cockpit interior, machine gun pods and rear fins. The upper half is diecast and

► The Bat.

1 Batwing.



▲ Sky-Busters packaging.

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incorporates the upper 'wings', vents and the cockpit frame. The model is painted matt black, with clear cockpit glazing. It is a very detailed model, and very faithful to the 'real' Bat seen in the film. There was no stand included in the packaging.

BATWING

To tie in with the 2016 film *Superman v Batman: Dawn of Justice*, a second Batman-themed Sky-Buster was issued. This one was based on the new Batwing (sometimes called the Batplane) seen in the film, which took place in a separate continuity to the Dark Knight trilogy. This was a very different type of vehicle, being an unusual winged aircraft with VTOL capabilities. The design was unique, with the wings pointing inwards and being connected, with a powerful machine gun in the centre. The wings were hinged, and capable of folding inwards to pass through narrow gaps between buildings. Unlike The Bat, with its turtle-like appearance, the Batwing did have styling cues based on a real bat. The Batwing featured prominently in the film, notably when Batman rescued Superman's mother, but ended up being destroyed by the brutal Doomsday.

On first impression, the Matchbox Sky-Buster version of the Batwing appears to be an impressive model. It is quite large, accurately shaped and well detailed. However, what lets it down is the large amount of plastic used in its manufacture. Only the upper fuselage is diecast, which is a fairly narrow piece. Everything else is plastic, including the base, entire wing section and the chunky rear engines. There is no glazing, and the cockpit windows are solid. It is fitted with wheels – a tricycle landing gear arrangement with plastic axles and wheels. The diecast upper body is painted matt black, the rest is self-coloured plastic that is a glossier finish.

While these models are not widely known, and were not greatly publicised, they would make interesting additions to any collection of Batman vehicles. **DC**

Toy story



David Wright crosses the Atlantic and uncovers the story behind a vintage brand.

Model Leviathans don't come along every day, but Doepke did things in a big way! We all know that everything in the USA seems somehow bigger than its counterpart in the UK – is it because it's a bigger country, or because they think big?

Apart from Lines Brothers and its pressed steel trucks and buses, there were very few serious construction toys being made until after World War II. Certainly long before Tonka came along, two brothers in Oakley, Cincinnati, in the US state of Ohio, began creating construction toys.

During the war, the brothers were making munitions equipment for the military but, after it was over, their grandmother encouraged them to create toys that were not war-related.

As both Charles W Doepke and his brother Frederick had previously worked in the steel industry, they were quite aware of the wide range of construction equipment and cars that could be created in miniature. So it was that, in 1946, these two brothers founded Model Toys, in Oakley. By 1950, they needed larger premises, so production was moved to Rossmoyne, Ohio. Being so soon after the conclusion of World War II, many toys available at the time reflected a war theme. In contrast to this trend, the Doepkes were encouraged by the popularity of what had become known as Doepke Toys among children in the 1950s, which was likely bolstered by their uncanny realism. This appeal was not, however, limited to children. On many occasions, salesmen would carry Doepke toys with them to help with marketing the real vehicle.

A suburb northeast of Cincinnati, the Rossmoyne Fire Department gained fame as being the name on the Model Toys LaFrance Ladder, Pumper and Searchlight trucks. In 1946, the first construction model, the Woolridge Dump Truck was built in 1/16 scale.

Doepke (pronounced "dep key") made several different types of toys ranging from model cars, such as the MG TD and Jaguar XK120, a fire engine, trains big enough to ride on, and construction vehicles, including bulldozers, graders, loaders, earth movers, and cranes.

One of Doepke's best selling items was its steel crane, first manufactured in 1949. It was rugged enough to survive the rigours of outdoor use and had realistic details like rubber Goodyear tyres. The toy had two functional hand crank hoists, accurate rigging, a stamped steel open lattice boom and a



▼ Advertising for the MG TD.



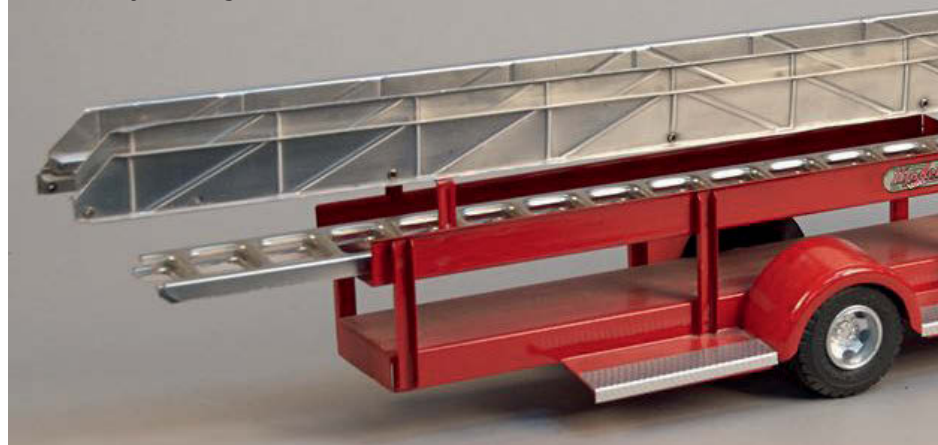
working clamshell bucket used for excavating. At the time, the toy was priced at US\$14.95.

In 1959, faced with increasing competition from plastic toys and experiencing production issues, the company went bankrupt and was dissolved.

Today, there are many collectors of Doepke Toys and the models are routinely offered for sale in online forums such as eBay. Judging by the number of Doepke Toys still in existence, some 60 years later, their rugged solidity and durability has been well proven.

The Doepke story is fully told in *The Doepke Collector's Guide*, published by Neil and Lois McElwee, in 1995. Reprints of these can still be purchased on ebay.

The Rossmoyne fire engine.





▲ The Doepke Toys D6 Caterpillar dump truck.

Both the brothers are now deceased. Fred, when he was 81 years old, whose role was primarily in sales, and his brother Charles, responsible for the manufacturing end of things, in 1987 at the age of 75. Taking a look at the models, we'll consider some of the construction toys first, then the cars.

Many of the construction toys were released from 1957, including the D6 Caterpillar tractor. Based on the success of this highly sought-after toy, a Pipelayer kit was created to allow collectors the opportunity to make this great toy even better. Designed to look as though it could have rolled off the factory line alongside the originals, this kit comes with everything needed to make the Doepke D6 into a fully functioning sideboom



▲ The Wooldridge Dump Truck – the first construction model made in 1946.



▲ The Adams road grader.



▲ The Doepke crane.

pipe-laying toy.

With a 14-inch long boom and fabricated steel assembly, features include dual hand crank winches with thumb brakes – just like the original Doepke UNIT crane – boom suspension with three-part line, a custom two-part line load block and brass sheaves. Completing the kit is a solid cast resin 'stacked plate' counterweight, complete assembly hardware, rigging and detailed assembly instructions. These stated "We have taken care of all the details to make sure you can have all of the fun."

That toy, first manufactured by Doepke in 1949, was one of the coolest stamped steel construction toys ever made. Rugged enough to survive the rigors of outdoor use and having realistic details like rubber Goodyear tires. Operating this toy requires its two functional hand crank hoists, accurate rigging, stamped steel open lattice boom and a working clamshell bucket. Collectors were able to obtain a Doepke badge, and a 'Collectors Licence' from the company as proof of their complete devotion to the company.

MG TD

Introduced in Spring 1954, the MG TD looked fabulous with true to life detailing, and it only

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: DOEPKE TOYS



came in kit form. Early kits included a body that came in primer, allowing the builder to do their own painting. Later versions came mostly with a red bodyshell, but there were also yellow and black versions, which are now extremely scarce. The production run was 1954 to 1956, with a scale of approximately 1/16. The chassis included in the kit, together with springs and rear axle, make a very realistic model.

JAGUAR XK120

Introduced in 1955, the Doepke Jaguar proved just as popular. It was offered in two colours, but original red ones are almost non-existent today. Baby blue is the predominant hue. Primed versions were not available, the car being solely marketed as fully built. They came in a plain brown box, similar to the Doepke construction toys.

With realistic sweeping curves, and accurate, albeit simplified looking, chassis details, the Doepke Jaguar must have been an enjoyable toy to steer around the floor. The cars have big rubber tyres moulded with the Doepke logo.

I acquired my own MG in a very tatty, but almost complete state. As it is now possible to obtain most of the parts for these cars, and indeed some parts for the construction toys, restoration is a very satisfying job. I took it one stage further and had all brightwork re-chromed.

I will leave a detailed examination of the construction and Fire Department toys to the experts, but suffice it to say that these two cars form a very respectable and important part of any British sporting car collection.

So, just 13 years of committed and dedicated work by two brothers, who gained much

▲ A complete kit in its box, with the car in primer.

1 Another complete kit for the MG TD, painted red.

2 The MG TD, as restored by the author.

► The Jaguar XK120 on its box.



▲ The chassis and steering on the MG.

satisfaction from making solid and unbreakable toys, encouraged by their grandmother. Their legacy is detailed toys that are now seriously collected by followers in the United States and, for the 2 cars, in the UK too. **DC**



▲ A Jaguar XK120 painted in racing colours.

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Sonic bullet

Chuck Yeager's impressive post-war efforts to break the sound barrier certainly make for an interesting story. Rick Wilson sources some miniature replicas to go with it.

The story begins in late 1944, when initial discussions got underway for the production of a piloted supersonic aircraft, capable of flying at 800 mph at 35,000ft for between two and five minutes. The Bell Aircraft Company was officially awarded the contract for three aircraft in March 1945 by the United States Army Air Forces

▲ A trio of Dragon Wings X-1s with Corgi's version strapped securely under a B-29 Superfortress.

▼ Close-up detail of Corgi's Aviation Archive AA48903 B-29 Superfortress with Bell X-1.



(USAAF) Flight Test Division and the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA).

Originally designated XS-1 (XS stood for Experimental Supersonic), the aircraft would eventually be known as the X-1 – the first of a series of experimental 'X-planes'. The design would break a lot of new ground as Bell's engineers strove to achieve something that had never been achieved before – breaking the sound barrier during level flight.

A turbojet engine was quickly dismissed as insufficient to meet the needs of the project, so rocket power came to the fore, although a combination of both was considered, but meant that the aircraft would be too large. Reaction Motors built its XLR11 engine specifically for the X-1, incorporating four separate chambers into one unit. Although the engine was not throttleable, each chamber could be turned on and off individually to alter the thrust on offer, simulating a four-step throttle process.

Swept wing technology was still not fully understood at the time, so the X-1 featured a conventional style of short, almost perpendicular



▲ Dragon Wings No 51021 Bell X-1 "Sonic Breaker".



▲ Comparing the more accurate Dragon Wings X-1 with Corgi's 'accessory'.



▲ This is the fully-plastic X-1 that comes with Corgi's B-29 'mother' aircraft.

► Corgi's B-29 and Bell X-1 set comes with a neat stand to display both aircraft at the point of release.



▲ Dragon Wings No 51025 Bell X-1 Last Flight.

wing. The tailplanes, following a transfer of intelligence from the UK's Miles M.52 project, were variable incidence, meaning the entire face of each plan would rotate rather than featuring complicated ailerons that might prove to be fragile at high speed. The nose of the aircraft followed the ogive curves of a .50-calibre machine gun bullet.

The X-1 was originally intended to be able to take off on its own, but the cessation of hostilities in Europe meant that the mighty Boeing B-29 Superfortresses were now available. One was selected for modification to carry the X-1, carrying the registration 45-21800.

The first to pilot the X-1 was Jack Woolams, who completed ten non-powered 'glide' flights, to test the aircraft's potential. Woolams was tragically killed in practice for an air race, in August 1946, so Chalmers Goodlin took over, making the first powered flight that December. Then Bell's chief test pilot, Tex Johnston made a flight the following May to confirm that the X-1 was ready for supersonic tests. The newly-created USAF then fully took control of the project.

The first supersonic flight was made on 14th October 1947, over the Mojave Desert, in California. At the controls was Captain Charles 'Chuck' Yeager, who had nicknamed the aircraft "Glamorous Glennis" for his wife, and this was famously immortalised on the side of the aircraft's nose for the event. Carried to 35,000 feet by B-29 521800, Yeager's X-1 reached Mach 1.06 (700 mph), gliding to land on the dry lake bed once the fuel had been exhausted. This was a top secret flight, but word somehow got leaked to the national press.

Notably, Yeager made the only conventional take-off of the X-1 in January 1949 and the X-1 would then become a supersonic flight research bed, with variations and developments until the programme's cancellation in 1958. A total of seven X-1s were built, including three of the original design. Three of the seven have survived, including Yeager's "Glamorous Glennis" at the Smithsonian Institution, part of the National Air and Space Museum, in Washington DC.

THE X-1 IN MINIATURE

Both Dragon Wings and Corgi, as part of its Aviation Archive series, have produced models over the last couple of decades (2011/12 and 2000 respectively) – all at 1/144 scale. Given the real aircraft's diminutive stature, this actually makes the models rather small and a 1/72 scale version would be most welcome in the future.

Both companies have provided special display stands for their respective releases. Corgi's B-29 and Bell X-1 set comes with a neat stand to display both aircraft at the point of release. The Dragon Wings 2-piece sets include a lovely little stand that allows both versions to be displayed side-by-side.

• Corgi Aviation Archive AA48903 B-29 Superfortress with Bell X-1

Commemorating that famous flight on 14th October 1947, a diecast B-29 521800 is paired with an all-plastic X-1. The 'little bullet' is held in place, nestled in the modified bomb bay, but can be released and mounted on Corgi's specially-modified display stand, by way of a clever, clear-plastic addition that holds the



▲ Dragon Wings No 51029 Bell X-1E Last Flight.



X-1 as if it has just been released for its flight. Whilst the Corgi X-1 is not as accurate as the following Dragon Wings examples, this combination on display is wonderful, and always makes me smile (it lives on display in my home studio).

• Dragon Wings No 51021 Bell X-1 "Sonic Breaker"

The Dragon Wings version of "Glamorous Glennis" from that famous day in aviation history. Each Dragon Wings release comes as a very pleasing 2-piece set, with a transparent variation of each version of the X-1 showing its internals. Behind the pressurised cockpit, you can clearly see the liquid oxygen tank, oscillograph, alcohol water tank and, at the rear, the rocket powerplant. Each of the aircraft comes with a separate airspeed head 'spike' for the X-1's nose, easily fitted by the purchaser.

• Dragon Wings No 51025 Bell X-1 Last Flight

A later development of the original X-1, it most obviously differs by the white tail and upper fuselage. This model replicates the final flight of the record-breaking X-1 and again features the separate airspeed heads.

• Dragon Wings No 51038 Bell X-1A First Flight Edwards AFB

The Bell X-1A was a fairly heavily-modified development, designed to go faster and higher than the original X-1. Longer (and heavier), the X-1A also dispensed with that ogive nose and now had a stepped canopy, for improved vision. This model depicts the new aircraft's first flight from Edwards Air Force Base on 14th February 1953.

On 12th December 1953, Yeager achieved an altitude of 74,700ft and a speed of 1,620 mph at level flight, which equates to Mach 2.44. The X-1A

▲ Dragon Wings No 51038 Bell X-1A First Flight Edwards AFB.

► Each Dragon Wings release comes as a very pleasing 2-piece set, with a transparent variation of each version of the X-1 showing its internals.

▼ The Dragon Wings 2-piece sets include a lovely little stand that allows both versions to be displayed side-by-side.



later broke the altitude record again, this time making it to 90,440ft in the hands of Major Arthur Murray, on 28th May 1954.

• Dragon Wings No 51029 Bell X-1E Last Flight

Our final model replicates the X-1's final incarnation – the X-1E. It was actually the reconstruction of the second of the original batch of three X-1s. The third of these had been destroyed by an explosion in 1951. Its predecessor, the X-1D had suffered a similar fate in the same year too.

Designed for the pursuit of Mach 3 flight, the X-1E first flew in December 1955. After its 26th flight in this configuration, during November 1958, structural cracks were discovered in the fuel tank wall, signalling the end of the programme. This last flight is replicated by Dragon Wings' release here.

This airframe survives, on display at Edwards AFB. If you remember the popular late-1960s TV programme *I Dream of Jeannie*, the X-1E is frequently seen as the programme was set and partially filmed there.

Thinking of my desire to see a larger 1/72 scale diecast, there have been plenty of plastic model kits released at this larger scale, and even a real beauty from Revell in 1/32. I just happen to have one of the latter in my pile of kits yet to be made. **DC**





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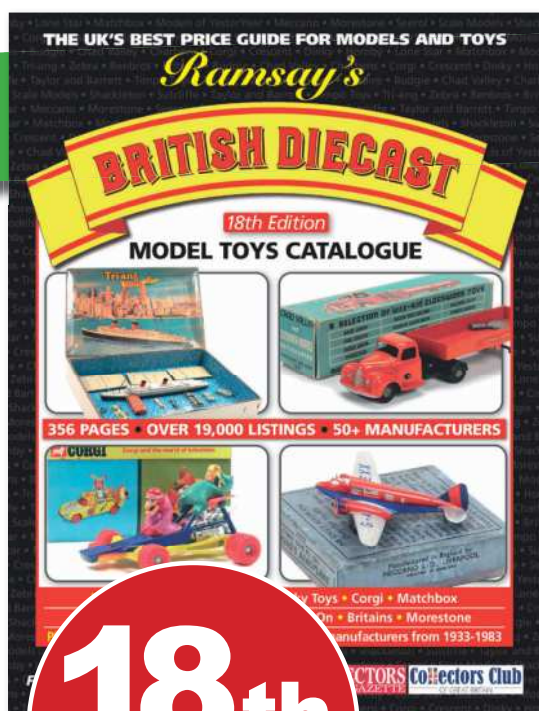
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Looney Tunes Pro Racers



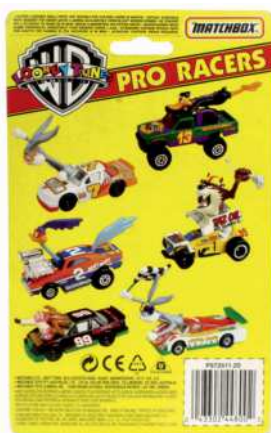
Rick Wilson gets to play with the product of a time when two of his favourite childhood brands came together, 30 years ago.

Looney Tunes, a series of animated short films by Warner Bros, was produced from 1930 to 1969, during a period that is considered to be the golden age of American animation. Alongside its sister series, *Merrie Melodies*, *Looney Tunes* originally showcased Warner-owned musical compositions through the adventures of cartoon characters. Later, *Looney Tunes* films introduced many popular cartoon stars, such as Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Foghorn Leghorn, Granny, Marvin the Martian, Pepé Le Pew, Porky Pig, Speedy Gonzales, Sylvester and Tweety Pie, the Tasmanian Devil, Yosemite Sam and, of course, Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner.

Both the names 'Looney Tunes' and 'Merrie Melodies' were thought up as parodies of 'Silly Symphonies', the name of Walt Disney's rival series of music-based short films that were popular at the time. After World War II, and all the way through to the 1960s, *Looney Tunes* and *Merrie Melodies* became the most popular short cartoons in cinemas, eclipsing the works of Disney and other popular competitors, like Paramount Pictures (Popeye), MGM (Tom and Jerry, Droopy, etc.) and Universal Pictures (Woody Woodpecker). As a result of its early successes, *Looney Tunes* has become a worldwide media franchise, spawning several television series, feature films, comics, music, video games, and even amusement park rides.

When Tyco Toys acquired Matchbox International, in 1993, it quickly looked for new ideas to make the most of existing castings and its various franchise licence arrangements. The idea of adapting existing Matchbox castings to accept rubberised character figures from one such arrangement was clearly deemed to be a good one. So here we have the *Looney Tunes* Pro Racers...

▲ Bugs Bunny aboard his brightly-liveried Chevrolet Lumina stock car.



▲ Rear of the worldwide-released backing card (USA releases were slightly wider and carried the characters names by the respective models).

► Three differing packaging styles – from left to right: 1993 USA, 1994 worldwide and 1995 USA.

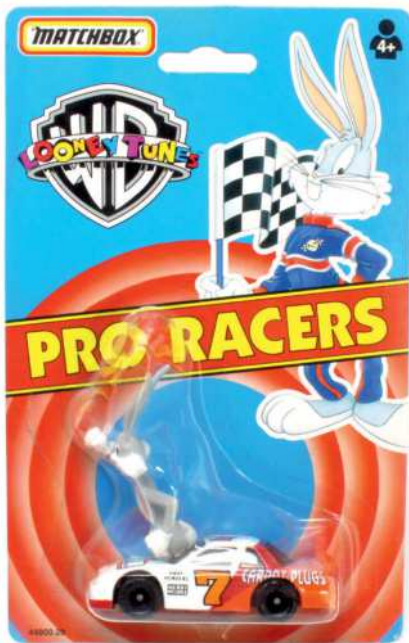
CHEVROLET LUMINA – BUGS BUNNY

No 54 Chevrolet Lumina first appeared in 1990 and this was one of the last variations to be produced. Bugs Bunny is posed triumphantly raising his right paw, whilst his left holds onto the steering wheel. The car itself is in a very colourful scheme of white with orange and red, plus an orange racing number 7, sponsored by "Carrot Plugs".

CHEVROLET LUMINA – WILE E. COYOTE

The second outing for the No 54 Lumina, presumably to make the most of a casting that was being retired (the final 1-75 range release was in

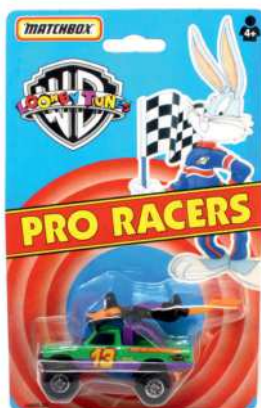




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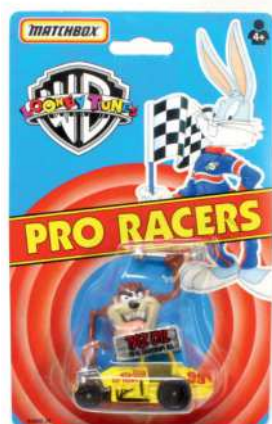
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2 Chevrolet Lumina – Wile E. Coyote.

3 4x4 Open Back Truck – Daffy Duck.



▲ Sprint Racer – Tasmanian Devil.



▲ Group C Racer – Bugs Bunny.

◀ Cosmic Blues (Big Banger) – Road Runner.

1 Chevrolet Lumina – Bugs Bunny.

1994). Painted white with green lower sides (the artwork on the rear of the packaging showed a black/green version for all three years that the range was sold), racing number 99 appears on both sides and the roof, with “Acme Anvils” (bonnet) and “Coyote Cams” (rear flank) sponsorship. Wile E. Coyote was shown wearing racing goggles on the packaging, but the model version came without these.

COSMIC BLUES (BIG BANGER) – ROAD RUNNER

Introduced to the 1-75 range as No 26 in 1982, Cosmic Blues or Big Banger (depending on your country’s location) was the chosen ride for Road Runner, inevitably to be pursued by that pesky coyote in his Chevy Lumina. Road Runner’s long neck protrudes from the front screen, with his tail ‘flowing’ from the rear window. Painted mainly orange, the bodywork also features blue and white striping, with racing number 2 in white. The graphics include “Beep! Beep!” on either rear flank and “Acme Tar & Feather Co.” on the rear deck.

4X4 OPEN BACK TRUCK – DAFFY DUCK

4x4 Open Back Truck had a long life in the range, first appearing in 1982 and lasting until 2001. No 13 in the USA and 63 for the Rest of the World, this version was finished in purple and green with our ‘hero’ clinging onto the roof as it speeds along. Carrying race number 13, it is sponsored by “Daffy’s Diner” and carries his catchphrase “You’re despicable” on the sides of the rear body.

SPRINT RACER – TASMANIAN DEVIL

Sprint Racer (No 34 in the USA, No 72 Rest of World) first appeared in 1990 and lasted until 1995. For Taz’s car, it was painted yellow with silvered front and roof-mounted wings – Taz is sitting atop the latter, wearing his usual maniacal expression and brandishing some sort of metallic weapon. “Taz Oil” adorns the side of the roof wing and, confusingly, it is also numbered 99 (as well as Wile E. Coyote’s Chevy).

GROUP C RACER – BUGS BUNNY

Bizarrely, but perhaps given his immense popularity, Matchbox chose to ignore all the other Looney Tunes characters available and issue a second model that featured Bugs Bunny, albeit in slightly modified form. Taking the 1984 Group C Racer (No 66 in the USA, No 46 Rest of World) casting as a base, Bugs now had his left paw raised and held a chequered flag in his right. The car is white with the centre section and roof in orange, with a green rear wing and carrot graphics down the upper surface of either side. Bugs’s trademark phrase, “What’s up doc?” features on the nose and both sides carry “Looney Tunes Racing”. **DC**



The Dinky way

Rick Wilson spends some time getting to grips with a road system playset.

In 1977, Dinky Toys brought out a really wonderful set that included four of its current range of diecast models and matched them with sections of cardboard roadway, very much in the style of the awesome Roadmaker sets that had been sold through newspaper advertisements a few years earlier (I remember these well and had one of the very first versions). The interlocking design was different to that of the Roadmaker version, but the Dinky set included plenty of sections to make a sizeable play area anyway.

The sections made up roughly 20ft of cardboard roadway, complete with T-junctions, curves and a mini-roundabout. Also included were components that could be folded to support a flyover, for extra play value. Plus, there was a bumper set of twenty road signs too, moulded in plastic and accompanied by a sticker sheet for home application. Called “Dinky Way”, the set released for the UK market carried the number 240. All the road sections were correctly marked as per UK roads, and a roll of yellow tape was even included to add yellow-line parking restrictions, if so desired.

No 240 included the following four diecasts: No 412 Bedford CF Van AA Service in yellow, No 255 Police Mini Clubman, No 211 Triumph TR7 Sports Car in red and No 382 ‘Convoy’ Dumper Truck in red with either a grey or black plastic-

▲ Dinky Way No 237 export version, with correct export-issue vehicle set.

► The Minis differed, with the UK version featuring No 255 Police Mini Clubman instead of the Mini saloon.



moulded tipper body. But there was also room on the production line for an overseas version.

Numbered 237, naturally the export-version road sections were altered for any left-hand-drive markets, with appropriate markings replacing the UK RHD versions. The box artwork was also simply flipped in the main part to reflect the correct road markings. This also gave the impression that the models were the correct LHD versions too, which they weren't, of course, as that would have required expensive retooling of the interior components.

What Dinky did do for this export version,



1

however, was to replace the two UK-specific vehicles in the set up. The TR7 and the dumper truck remained as they were, but the AA van was replaced by a plain yellow Bedford CF, without the AA roof beacon, and the Police Mini became the standard No 178 Mini Clubman Saloon in metallic bronze. I bought this set for a bargain £60 at Vectis Auctions in June 2021, with a bundle of eight other boxed Dinky cars, including the Police Mini shown here (and some of the others included in the sale can be seen over the page, in the following article).

A good way to compare these two sets directly

has thankfully been provided thanks to another recent sale at Vectis of both versions in one lot (see above), on 10th January 2023. With all the models described as generally good plus to excellent plus in generally fair to good carded lift off lid boxes, these were estimated to fetch between £60 and £70, but the auction closed at an impressive £180.

It brought back great memories of me playing with my Roadmaker set many decades ago, and I have to confess that the playtime continued for a fair while after the photoshoot. It's a great little set, and one of my favourite Dinky Toys releases from those final years. **DC**

◀ The export set on left-hand-drive road pieces.

1 Export set (left) and UK market set (right) differed with the main box artwork flipped and the vehicles corrected.

Photo: Vectis

Numbered 237, naturally the export-version road sections were altered for any left-hand-drive markets, with appropriate markings replacing the UK RHD versions. The box artwork was also simply flipped in the main part to reflect the correct road markings. This also gave the impression that the models were the correct LHD versions too, which they weren't, of course, as that would have required expensive retooling of the interior components.



Solido's Airfix Dinkys

Rick Wilson highlights a range made in France after the closure of the factory in Binns Road.

When the famous Dinky Toys factory on Binns Road in Liverpool finally closed its doors in November 1979, London-based Airfix Products Limited attempted to resurrect the brand name for a short period before it itself went bust in 1981. Dinky Toys survived in France thanks to the production of models made in Spain and, in 1980, an agreement was reached between the Airfix-run Dinky Toys operation and Solido to produce a series of miniatures.

Announced in the Spring 1981 issue of *Meccano Magazine*, the article led with the claim that "Dinky Toys will go into 1981 with the largest new product release schedule ever undertaken by the company". The models of particular interest here were described further as "a range of constant 1/43 scale models featuring popular European cars".

The first six of nine planned models were released at the end of January 1981 and were numbered 500 to 505. These were actually just repackaged versions of Solido's budget Cougar range, although the number cross-referencing gets more than a little confusing – more about that shortly. All six models were good representations of the real thing, with brightly-coloured and accurately-cast diecast bodies mounted onto plastic-moulded baseplates, with plastic interiors and cheap, but fast-running wheels. The name Airfix Products Limited was shown on the bottom of all the UK Dinky Toys packaging.

The range was short-lived, however, due to the bankruptcy of Airfix later in the year. As a result, the three further releases announced at the beginning (and proudly displayed on the rear of the UK packaging) never happened in the UK, but did in France.

▲ All six of the Dinkys made by Solido that were released in the UK.



▲ Rear of the UK Dinky packaging, showing the planned initial range of nine models.

DINKY TOYS NO 500 CITROËN 2CV

The 2CV came in either open (soft top rolled down) or closed versions and can be found in both green and orangey-red, with tan and grey interiors respectively, and usually with a duck graphic on the doors. The baseplate was confusingly numbered as Dinky France No 1401.

DINKY TOYS NO 501 FIAT STRADA

The Strada, or Ritmo as it was known in the rest of Europe, was also produced in two colours. The metallic blue version (shown here) has a yellow base and interior, whereas the metallic bronze/copper variant is complemented by dark cream plastic mouldings. The baseplate shows Dinky France No 1403.

DINKY TOYS NO 502 BMW 530 RALLYE

Another with two colour variations, BMW 530 Rallye bears Dinky France No 1404 on the base. The diecast body can be found painted either metallic purple (shown here) or metallic green, with dark grey and black interiors/baseplates respectively. The purple version has a flame graphic to the sides, but the green variant has cougar motifs.

DINKY TOYS NO 503 ALFA ROMEO ALFETTA GTV

Wearing a green shamrock decal on the bonnet, this model can be found in either red or yellow. Showing Dinky France No 1405 on the base, these are coloured tan on both, as are the interiors.



► Baseplate variations. Top row: Solido Cougar No 1309 Renault 14, Dinky France No 1402 Citroën Visa (boxed as No 504 in the UK), Dinky France No 1403 Fiat Ritmo (Strada and No 501 in the UK) and Dinky France No 1404 BMW 530 (UK No 502). Bottom row: Solido Cougar No 1305 Alfetta GTV, Dinky France No 1406 Peugeot 504 (UK No 505), Dinky France No 1405 Alfetta GTV (UK NO 503) and Dinky France No 1401 Citroën 2CV6 (UK No 500).

1 A Solido leaflet showing its Cougar range that could have been sold in the UK as Dinkys.



▲ Solido Cougar Renault 14 – planned to be released as a Dinky too.



▲ Dinky UK-release packaging.

▼ Both colourways of the UK releases of the Citroën Visa.



DINKY TOYS NO 504 CITROËN VISA

Coloured either metallic red or metallic green (both shown below), the Visa bears Dinky France No 1402 on the base. Baseplate and interior colours are grey and cream respectively.

DINKY TOYS NO 505 PEUGEOT 504

With Dinky France No 1406 on the base, this bucked the normal trend of the rest of the short series by coming in three different colours. These are metallic gold (dark brown interior and dark tan base), metallic blue (light blue) and metallic purple (light blue). The gold version features the cougar motifs to the sides, but the blue and purple variants have flame graphics.

PLANNED, BUT NEVER RELEASED

The three models shown on the rear of the Dinky Toys UK packaging that never made it across The Channel



were the Alfa Romeo Alfasud (No 506), Renault 14 (507) and Ford Fiesta (508). Clearly Airfix's troubles were the reason for this and unsold stock of the whole range is reported to have been reclaimed by Solido and reworked for resale in Europe.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

The Solido Cougar range leaflet shown to the left shows what might have been in the future, had Airfix survived and carried on with its Dinky Toys range. At the top is a rather nifty car transporter (No 3101) and there are a further four releases that may have eventually made their way to the UK as Dinkys, as they were all fairly familiar sights on UK roads – Talbot Tagora (No 1307), VW Golf (1314), Peugeot 104 (1316) and Renault 5 (1317).

As mentioned earlier, the number cross-referencing between the Dinky UK and Cougar releases is a little confusing, so I've collated this into a small table (below) to help here. These may have been cheap-looking budget diecasts, but they definitely have a certain charm and I've found them to be rather collectable, as you can see! **DC**

DINKY TOYS BY SOLIDO NUMBERING		
Model	Dinky UK (on base)	Solido Cougar
Citroën 2CV	500 (1401)	1301
Fiat Strada *	501 (1403)	1303
BMW 530	502 (1404)	1304
Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV	503 (1405)	1305
Citroën Visa	504 (1402)	1302
Peugeot 504	505 (1406)	1306
Alfa Romeo Alfasud	506 **	1310
Renault 14	507 **	1309
Ford Fiesta	508 **	1313
Talbot Tagora	N/A	1307
VW Golf	N/A	1314
Peugeot 104	N/A	1316
Renault 5	N/A	1317

* named Fiat Ritmo in Europe

** announced, but never released in the UK



Funkymobiles!

Mike Pigott introduces us to a bizarre range of toy vehicles from the swinging seventies.

Following on from the Hallmark Road Rovers (August issue), we're now going to look at a very similar series. The Funkymobiles were another range of cartoony, anthropomorphic toy vehicles, but made by Wallace Berrie and Co, of Van Nuys, California in the mid-1970s. I can't speak for Mr Berrie, but his company was a West Coast based importer of toys and collectible novelties. Most of its products were sourced in the Far East, and were usually sold in gift stores and card shops.

The Wallace Berrie Company hit the big time when it obtained the exclusive license to market Smurfs in the USA. At the time, Smurfs were seen as fairly quaint, obscure, continental collectibles. But not long after, Smurf-mania hit America, with TV cartoons, films, songs and, of course, figurines. This made Wallace Berrie a very rich man, and his company a major player. However, prior to this it produced a line of colourful, cartoonish vehicles called Funkymobiles.

DEFINITELY FUNKY

Funkymobiles are a range of twenty vehicles that are almost identical in size and design to Road Rovers. The main difference is that Funkymobiles are not diecast, but plastic. Yes, I know that we don't often deal with plastic models amongst these pages, but these are so similar to Road Rovers that we just had to show them both. There was a fairly wide range of

▲ Crasher Dasher, Flamer Tamer, Copper Bopper and Sir Drag-a-long.

vehicles released, incorporating several types of cars, trucks and emergency vehicles. Despite being plastic, they are actually heavier than many diecast vehicles of a similar size. This was because the plastic body mouldings are quite thick, as well as the fact that none of the vehicles have clear windows. All of the windows are solid and details are just painted on.

Funkymobiles are rather lumpy looking, and most are quite wonky in appearance, as if they have been left in the sun and started melting. I get the impression that the masters for them had been made out of clay that hadn't quite hardened. The boxes claimed the models were hand-painted, and they do have an imperfect, handcrafted look about them. All have the windows, doors and other indented lines filled in with black paint, while the self-coloured bodies are touched in with one or two other painted colours. They are given human characteristics or 'faces', with the lights or windscreen wipers painted to look like eyes, and several of the bumpers turned upwards to effect 'smiles'!



▶ Scrubmobile, Haulin' Harry, Garbage Guzzler, Dirty Dumper, and Razzamagas.



The first twelve Funkymobiles were produced in Hong Kong, while the next eight were made in Taiwan. As all of them are dated '© 1976', I don't know if there were two distinct series, or if they were just contracted out concurrently to different subcontractors. There are no real differences, other than the Taiwanese ones all have slightly different wheels with thick whitewalls.

FUNKY PACKAGING

The series were packed in very attractive, five-sided boxes with an open front face, and covered with a clear acetate sleeve – similar to Tri-ang Minix cars from the 1960s. The boxes were decorated with cartoon scenes inside and out, in the retro-cartoon style that was popular in the 1970s. For example, the fire engine 'Flamer Tamer' had a box with a comical fire-fighting scene on the outside, and an inner view of a firehouse on the inside. The classic roadster 'Razzle Dazzle' box showed 1930s era people playing in the park.

FUNKYMOBILES VS ROAD ROVERS

Funkymobiles and Road Rovers are just so similar that somewhere along the line one just had to have copied the other. The styling, wacky names and vehicle types are just too close to be a coincidence. They also have similar sounding names, most of



▲ Funkymobiles packaging.

Funkymobiles are rather lumpy looking, and most are quite wonky in appearance, as if they have been left in the sun and started melting. I get the impression that the masters for them had been made out of clay that hadn't quite hardened.

which are rhyming or alliterative. However, I suspect that the Funkymobiles were the copies, given that early Road Rovers packaging is marked "© Hallmark Cards 1974", while the bases of the Funkymobiles are all dated 1976. You have to wonder why someone didn't sue! However, early Road Rovers were sold on blister packs, while the second series were in small, five-sided boxes, very much like Funkymobiles. So the copying may not have been totally one-sided.

THE FUNKYMOBILES

Okay, let's have a look at the individual models. We'll start with the Hong Kong produced models.

- **Copper Bopper** – As the name implies, this is a police car, moulded in black with white painted grille, windows, doors and bumpers. The dome light, headlights and stars on the doors are touched in red. Copper Bopper is very similar in shape and finish to the Hallmark's 'Fuzzmobile'.
- **Flamer Tamer** – This fire pumper appears to have a great big smile across its grille. Predictably coloured red, it has the ladders, hoses, axes and windows touched in with yellow. This is also pretty similar to a Road Rover; in this case 'Firey Fred'.
- **Crasher Dasher** – The third emergency vehicle is a type not made by the opposition – an ambulance. It's all white, with two large red dome lights and big red crosses on each side.
- **Rumble Roadster** – One type of car not represented in the Road Rovers is the classic car – there are several in the Funkymobiles range. Rumble Roadster is a Model-T Ford era car that appears to have a convertible roof and a vague representation of a cramped rumble seat at the rear. It is moulded in a very bright red-orange colour with tan windows and trim.
- **Brown Bomber** – This appears to be a 1940s era coupe, although possibly the most misnamed vehicle in the series. It should really be called 'light yellow with brown trim bomber'. Well, I guess 'Brown Bomber' does sound a bit snappier, but why was it painted yellow?

UNUSUAL DIECASTS

1



2



• **Ramblin' Wreck** – Well, here's another 1940s car – it's brown, and it's a bomb – but it was called Ramblin' Wreck. It's actually an old woody wagon, complete with woodgrain lines engraved on the doors. It is coloured a dark chocolate brown with light brown doors and trim.

• **Golden Gooch** – I have absolutely no idea what the name means, but Golden Gooch is a classic limousine with a long bonnet and black roof. The grille, pipes, windows and landau irons are all trimmed in orange. Rather strangely, this car has three spare tyres!

• **Mighty Mo** – Mighty Mo is an old blue pick up truck with a very narrow cab and a great big smile on its front bumper. The windows, grille and bumpers are painted maroon, and the front and rear lights are touched in with yellow.

• **Gallop-in' Grape** – This is the most modern-looking vehicle in the range, a custom panel van of the type popular in the 1970s. Presumably the name 'Gallop-in' Grape' comes from the colour, although it is more of a bright fuchsia colour than a grape-purple. The windows and bumpers are painted a mid-green, and there is a yellow sunrise motif printed on each side.

• **Dirty Dumper** – Now onto the heavy stuff. Actually, Dirty Dumper is quite a clean dumper. It is in grass green with light blue windows and trim. The tipper bed is stuck in a permanent semi-raised position.

• **Haulin' Harry** – Old Harry is a large pantechinon, in light blue with green highlights. His company name, Move-It, is etched onto his sides.

• **Double Decker** – I'm pretty sure you can guess what type of vehicle this is just from the name! It's a red London-type bus with a big smile and a rather wonky roof. Painted red, naturally, it has cream

1 **Ramblin' Wreck, Razzle Dazzle, Hoodmobile, Golden Gooch, Rumble Roadster, and Brown Bomber.**

2 **Pupil Packer, Double Decker, Gallop-in' Grape, Mighty Mo, and Maxie the Taxi.**

windows, lights and bumpers, and a rather simplistic destination board reading 'bus'. It has no front doors, and just a driver's type door on the rear, making it look more correct viewed the wrong way around.

• **Razzamagas** – This and the remaining models are all made in Taiwan. Razzamagas is a vintage petrol tanker with a big arched grille. It is an unusual maroon colour with black and white trim.

• **Garbage Guzzler** – A rubbish truck, painted a strange khaki brown colour, with light blue highlights that include the trash in the back. It is very similar in design to Hallmark's 'Flash the Garbage Eater'.

• **Sir Drag-a-long** – Somewhat more original is this tow truck, with a very regal-sounding name. An old-fashioned looking truck with a very short wheelbase, it is painted a very vivid red with light blue windows and jib.

• **Pupil Packer** – We've had Double Decker, now here's a single deck bus. As the name implies, it's a school bus, in a very bright yellow with lots of light blue trim and four red lights on the back.

• **Scrubmobile** – Possibly the most unusual vehicle in the range, this is a street sweeper – a type of vehicle rarely modelled in any scale. Painted mid-blue, it has beige trim and a big orange dome light. However, the whitewall tyres may be slightly over the top!

• **Hoodmobile** – I don't know if we can use the word 'realistic' when talking about Funkymobiles, but this is probably the least cartoony of the lot. A handsome black limousine with windows and trim in silver, it is the type of car favoured by gangsters in the 1930s, hence the name 'Hoodmobile'.

• **Razzle Dazzle** – Also from the 1930s is Razzle Dazzle, a supercharged sports roadster with the top down. It's coloured cream, with trim touched in with silver and brown – although the brown windows don't look too convincing.

• **Maxie the Taxi** – A New York yellow taxi with black checks across its sides and orange windows. It's certainly the happiest looking of the bunch, with the bonnet and grille curled into a big cheesy grin.

COLLECTING FUNKYMOBILES TODAY

Originally, Funkymobiles sold for about US\$1.49, although they are likely to cost a good bit more that that today. They are difficult to find, even in the USA, and finding a complete set isn't easy. However, being self-coloured plastic, they're less prone to scratches and chips than the diecast metal Road Rovers, especially when found unboxed. They are not as sought-after as Rovers, either, mainly because Hallmark collectibles have a huge cult following.

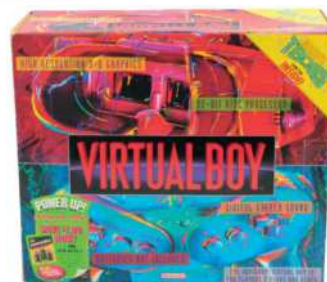
I'm sure that Funkymobiles are not to everyone's tastes – they are certainly children of their time, the psychedelic seventies. But hopefully you've enjoyed seeing them here in all their fluorescent glory. **DC**

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CORGI THROUGH THE YEARS

Rick Wilson continues his series of year-by-year articles from the beginning of the brand in 1956. We continue the series with the models released during the first half of 1968.

1968
PART 1



Early in 1968, Corgi Toys introduced an exciting new gimmick on a few of its models, some new and some reworks of existing releases. The first of these was released in March but, before then, there were a couple of very interesting models that went on sale.

No 109 Pennyburn Workmen's Trailer was quite a small item, but it was a very good replication of the real thing, produced by Pennyburn of Londonderry. It was clearly going to work well with the many suitable towing vehicles that had already been produced too. The chassis was painted yellow, with a red plastic towhook, and the main trailer body was painted blue. Both sides of the lid were hinged and lifted to reveal a red inset, filled with chromed tools – very much in the style of the No 490 VW Breakdown Truck, albeit arranged in a different way. It was withdrawn in 1969, but still managed to sell well

over 200,000 in this short time.

February again only brought us one new item, but what a success it would prove to be. No 270 James Bond Aston Martin DB5 was a much-revised version of the incredibly popular car of 007. This time painted the correct silver, the casting was slightly longer, but considerably wider than the earlier No 261. It kept the ejecting baddie, rear bullet shield and forward-facing guns features of its predecessor, but it also now had rotating number plates, front and rear, and tyre slashers to the rear wheels that could be pulled out by hand. It would last in the range for 10 years and sell well over the magic one million mark.

And so, onto the new range – 'Take-Off Wheels', which would also become affectionately known as 'Golden Jacks', due to the main component of the new idea. Replicate those roadside moments when a wheel needs to be changed. A golden-coloured lever is pulled down and acts as a jack to keep the

▲ No 275 Rover 2000 TC (with No 1351 spare wheel pack), No 341 Mini Marcos 850 GT (in box) and No 276 Oldsmobile Toronado.



▲ No 341 Mini Marcos GT 850.



▲ No 275 Rover 2000 TC showing its spare wheel mounted on the bootlid.

car off the ground. This action simultaneously releases the specially-flanged wheel.

The first model to appear with this functionality was No 341 Mini Marcos GT 850, in March. Painted a rather sumptuous dark metallic red, the model was a very good replication of the funky Mini Marcos. It also featured opening doors and bonnet. Only lasting for two years, the Mini Marcos nevertheless amassed a very healthy number of sales during this time.

The following months would see the Rover 2000 TC (April) and Oldsmobile Toronado (June) reworked to accept this new feature, both receiving new paint jobs at the same time – metallic green (a small number were painted

▲ No 270 James Bond Aston Martin DB5. Photo: Vectis

▶ 1968 advert for the new 'Take-Off Wheels' range in the Valiant comic.

◀ No 109 Pennyburn Workmen's Trailer. Photo: Vectis



CORGIT TOYS 1968 JANUARY TO JUNE RELEASES

No	Title	Scale	Released	Withdrawn	Sales
109	Pennyburn Workmen's Trailer	-	January	1969	228,000*
270	James Bond Aston Martin DB5	1/45	February	1978	1,172,000*
275	Rover 2000 TC	1/46	April	1970	428,000*
276	Oldsmobile Toronado	1/51	June	1972	400,000*
335	Jaguar 4.2 Litre 'E' Type 2+2	1/43	June	1970	398,000*
341	Mini Marcos GT 850	-	March	1970	636,000*
348	Pop-Art Mustang Stock Car	-	June	1969	163,000*
506	Police Panda Sunbeam Imp	1/43	May	1969	211,000*

Source: The Great Book of Corgi 1956-1983 * + 1969 sales (figures lost in fire)

CORGIT TOYS 1968 JANUARY TO JUNE RELEASES PRODUCTION COLOURS

No	Title	Colours produced
109	Pennyburn Workmen's Trailer	Blue on yellow chassis with red interior
270	James Bond Aston Martin DB5	Silver
275	Rover 2000 TC	Metallic green, or white
276	Oldsmobile Toronado	Metallic dark red
335	Jaguar 4.2 Litre 'E' Type 2+2	Red, or metallic blue
341	Mini Marcos GT 850	Metallic dark red
348	Pop-Art Mustang Stock Car	Lilac body with psychedelic labels
506	Police Panda Sunbeam Imp	White/ black, or pale blue/white

Source: The Great Book of Corgi 1956-1983



▲ No 335 Jaguar 4.2 Litre 'E' Type 2+2. Photo: Vectis.



▲ Later colourways of No 506 Police Panda Sunbeam Imp. Photo: Vectis.

white) and dark metallic red respectively. Sales for both were again healthy, proving the new idea a success. The Rover lasted until 1970 and was replaced by its Whizzwheels counterpart the following year. Oldsmobile Toronado lasted a couple of years longer.

Between these two releases, in May, No 506 Police Panda Sunbeam Imp was unleashed, initially with a livery as per the box artwork – white with black panels on the doors and bonnet. A slight reworking of the earlier Imps, it was also released in white all over except for a black roof, and pale blue with white doors and part of the roof. It was another fairly short-lived model, but it still sold well in this period.

The final two releases for the first half of the year were released in the same month as the Toronado – June. No 335 Jaguar 4.2 Litre 'E' Type 2+2 was a very popular release indeed. Painted either metallic blue or red, the car came mounted in a very eye-catching blister pack.

It lasted until 1970, when it was replaced by a version fitted with Whizzwheels. No 348 Pop-Art Mustang Stock Car was a quick re-imagining of

the earlier Ford Mustang, this time painted a pale lilac and adorned with red, orange and yellow psychedelic labels in a very fitting style for the time. It would only last until 1969, but still sold well.

For the next instalment, we'll take a look at the releases for the second half of 1968. See you in the October issue! **DC**



▲ No 1351 12x 'Take-Off Wheels' spares pack.



▲ No 506 Police Panda Sunbeam Imp Photo: Vectis.



▼ No 348 Pop-Art Mustang Stock Car. Photo: Vectis.



Ford Puma Rally1,
G.GreenSmith, J.Andersson, Rallye Monte Carlo, 2022
Nr. 256721 **39.95 €***



Hyundai i30 N, 2021
Nr. 254914 **64.95 €***



Audi Coupe GT, 1980
Nr. 259728 **64.95 €***



Exclusive
BMW Alpina B10 4.6,
World, Basis: E34, 1994
Nr. 255542 **64.95 €***



Fiat 126 Abarth-Look, 1972
Nr. 260097 **64.95 €***



Ford Capri MK I RS 2600, 1973
Nr. 252648 **64.95 €***



Ford Escort MK II RS 2000, 1977
Nr. 259164 **64.95 €***



Ford Escort MK II RS 2000, 1977
Nr. 254226 **64.95 €***



Ford Escort MKIV RS Turbo S2, Tuning, 1990
Nr. 255557 **64.95 €***



Ford Granada MK II 2.8 Ghia, 1982
Nr. 259689 **64.95 €***



Exclusive
Lincoln Continental Mark V, 1978
Nr. 259692 **64.95 €***



Mercedes 300 E (W124), 1984
Nr. 260033 **64.95 €***



Mercedes 600 (W100) Pullman, 1969
Nr. 238395 **69.95 €***



Mercedes Typ Nürburg 460/460 K (W08), 1928
Nr. 257245 **69.95 €***



Opel Kadett C Coupe GT/E, 1975
Nr. 238396 **64.95 €***



Opel Kadett D GTE, 1983
Nr. 255545 **64.95 €***



Porsche Old & New 997, Rothmans, Basis: 911 (997), 2020
Nr. 259470 **69.95 €***



BMW 320 Gr.5, Sachs, DRM, H.Ertl, Nürburgring, 1978
Nr. 254277 **69.95 €***



Brabham BT20, Formel 1, GP Mexico, J.Brabham, 1966
Nr. 252303 **64.95 €***



McLaren M23, Formel 1, Mass, GP Deutschland, 1976
Nr. 252308 **64.95 €***



Porsche 935 J, DRM, R.Stommelen, Spa-Francorchamps, 1980
Nr. 254275 **69.95 €***



Tyrrell P34, Formel 1, GP Schweden, J.Scheckter, 1976
Nr. 253520 **64.95 €***



Ford Escort MK I RS 1600, T.Makinen, H.Liddon, 1000 Lakes Rally, 1974
Nr. 263358 **72.95 €***



Ford Escort MK II RS, A.Vatanen, T.Harryman, Rallye Schweden, 1982
Nr. 261883 **72.95 €***



Lancia Delta S4, Totip, D.Cerrato, G.Cerri, Rally San Remo, 1986
Nr. 259671 **69.95 €***



Peugeot 205 T16, B.Darniche, A.Mahe, Rally Ypres, 1985
Nr. 259673 **69.95 €***



Renault 5 Turbo, Calberson, B.Saby, D.Le Saux, Rallye Monte Carlo, 1981
Nr. 256777 **69.95 €***



Citroen C3 Rally2, WRC2, S.Lefebvre, A.Malfoy, Rally Ypern, 2022
Nr. 261783 **39.95 €***



Ford Fiesta R5 Rally2, WRC, J.Huttunen, M.Lukka, Rallye Estland, 2022
Nr. 260608 **39.95 €***



Ford Puma Rally1, S.Loeb, I.Galmiche, Rally Monte Carlo, 2022
Nr. 256719 **39.95 €***



Hyundai i20 N Rally1, O.Solberg, E.Edmondson, Rallye Monte Carlo, 2022
Nr. 256728 **39.95 €***



Skoda Fabia Rally2 EVO, M.Marczyk, S.Gospodarczyk, Rallye Polen, 2022
Nr. 260602 **39.95 €***



Freightliner FLA, 1993
Nr. 263394 **32.95 €***



International Harvester DCOF-405, 1959
Nr. 258783 **32.95 €***



Kenworth Bullnose, 1950
Nr. 263399 **32.95 €***



Mack B 61, 1953
Nr. 258784 **32.95 €***



Mercedes SK II 1850, 1994
Nr. 263401 **32.95 €***



Ford Escort RS Cosworth, 1993
Nr. 257793 **27.95 €* 16.00 €***



Lancia Stratos HF, 1975
Nr. 261637 **27.95 €***



Land Rover Range Rover, 1970
Nr. 262703 **27.95 €***



Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33), 1997
Nr. 262704 **27.95 €***



Toyota Celica XX, 1978
Nr. 260139 **27.95 €***

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Oxford Diecast - Cars

NEW



87BS36006 Buick Special Convertible 1936 - Junkyard Project - rusty condition NEW... £7.50

NEW



87CE57004 Cadillac Eldorado Brougham 1957 in Sandalwood beige NEW... £7.50

BARGAIN



87OR50002 Oldsmobile Rocket 88 Coupe 1950 Crest Blue/Black (RRP £8.95) BARGAIN... £6

OO Gauge (1:76 Scale)

Atlas Editions - Buses

BARGAIN



JB04 AEC Q1 3 axle trolleybus - "London Transport" (RRP £29.99) BARGAIN... £5

BARGAIN



JB03 Bedford OB - "Wallace Arnold" (RRP £29.99) BARGAIN... £4

BARGAIN



JB12 BMMO CMST - "Midland Red" (RRP £29.99) BARGAIN... £4

BARGAIN



JB02 Bristol Lodekka FS open top - "Southdown" (RRP £29.99) BARGAIN... £4

BARGAIN



JB18 Burlingham Seagull - "Ribble" (RRP £29.99) BARGAIN... £5

BARGAIN



N620X-BP Scania Metropolitan d/deck bus "Black Prince Coaches" (RRP £33) BARGAIN... £23

NEW



ES21B Scania Omnidekka in Arriva Southern Counties green & cream - 101 to Gillingham NEW... £57

NEW



76CUS003 Ford Transit Custom in RAC orange NEW... £8



ES20A Scania Omnidekka in Metrobus - 420 to Whitebushes - Ltd Ed of 200 (RRP £64.99) BARGAIN... £44

Corgi - Buses



OM46411 Caetano Levante in East Yorkshire gold & blue £42.50



OM41415B Daimler ROE Grimsby "Cleethorpes Transport, 9 Barnoldby Le-Beck" (RRP £36.99) BARGAIN... £26

EFE - Buses



34113 AEC RT Bus London Country N.B.C. (RRP £29.95) BARGAIN... £23



76AUS007 Austin 1300 in Limeflower green black roof NEW... £6.50



76ACF006 Austin Cambridge in Fern green and snowberry white NEW... £6.50



76RN004 Renault 4 in Marron Glace bronze NEW... £7.50



76RE004 Riley Elf MkIII in Damask red Whitehall beige roof NEW... £6.50



76KG002 VW Karmann Ghia in black Lotus white roof NEW... £7



76CUS003 Ford Transit Custom in RAC orange NEW... £8



76CUS003 Ford Transit Custom in RAC orange NEW... £8



76CUS003 Ford Transit Custom in RAC orange NEW... £8

Public Service vehicles



76VE0001 Volvo FL Emergency One Pump Ladder in West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue red... £26



76SCT006 Scania Car Transporter - ECM (RRP £36.95) BARGAIN... £25



76SNG002 Scania S Series Curtainside in Pollock Ltd red and blue NEW... £25.50



76STOB017 Volvo FH 'Eddie Stobart' Box Trailer (RRP £21.95) BARGAIN... £15



76SEN001 Sentinel Flatbed in LMS maroon NEW... £15



76STOB017 Volvo FH 'Eddie Stobart' Box Trailer (RRP £21.95) BARGAIN... £15



76STOB017 Volvo FH 'Eddie Stobart' Box Trailer (RRP £21.95) BARGAIN... £15



76ACD003 Aveling Barford Dumper Truck in Royal Engineers green... £19.50



76VWB012 VW Beetle - WRAC Provost - British Army of the Rhine green NEW... £6.50



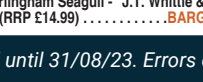
76SC004 Scooter in gold UK flag emblem NEW... £6



76SC004 Scooter in gold UK flag emblem NEW... £6



76SC004 Scooter in gold UK flag emblem NEW... £6



76SC004 Scooter in gold UK flag emblem NEW... £6

Corgi - Aircraft - military



AA27206 Avro Vulcan B2, XM597 'Black Buck 6' (RRP £239.99) BARGAIN... £173



AA38509 Messerschmitt Bf110D VJ-HQ, Rudolf Hess, Eaglesham, Scotland, 10th May 1941. (RRP £84.99) BARGAIN... £56



AA29102 Supermarine Spitfire MkIXc MA408/CG, Wg Cdr Colin Falkland Gray, RAF No.322 Wing, 'Operation Husky' - July 1943 NEW... £53.99



72HOR001 De Havilland Hornet in RAF Far East training squadron RAF Seletar/Butterworth 1955 (RRP £33.95) BARGAIN... £23



AC112 Fiat G55 Cantaurus Montefusco-Bonnet Squadron 1944 NEW... £17



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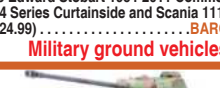
AC112 Fiat G55 Cantaurus Montefusco-Bonnet Squadron 1944 NEW... £17

1:50 Scale

Corgi - Commercial vehicles



CC99203 Edward Stobart 1954-2011 Commemorative Set (Scania 4 Series Curtainside and Scania 111 Tractor Unit) (RRP £124.99) BARGAIN... £83



CC60215 Panther tank - Panzerkampfwagen V Panther Ausf D, Northern Bavaria, April 1945 (RRP £59.99) BARGAIN... £44



RT32001 Ford Mustang Fastback Coupe - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99



RT22801 Volvo P1800 in red - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99



RT33001 Porsche Carrera 6 - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99



RT33001 Porsche Carrera 6 - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99



RT33001 Porsche Carrera 6 - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99

Other Scale

Corgi - Cars



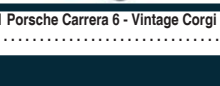
RT32001 Ford Mustang Fastback Coupe - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99



RT22801 Volvo P1800 in red - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99



RT33001 Porsche Carrera 6 - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99



RT33001 Porsche Carrera 6 - Vintage Corgi Toys range NEW... £17.99

A decade in diecast

As he hands over the editorial reins, Rick Wilson shares some favourites from the many memories of his 10-year journey with *Diecast Collector*.

When I sign off this issue in just a few days' time, on the 18th July 2023, it will be four days short of exactly 10 years since my journey officially began here. On 22nd July 2013, I was properly introduced to my team and sat down in the editorial chair for the first time. I did take a short sabbatical from the chair between January 2016 and September 2018 but, during that time, I was still writing articles and model reviews and was only missing for one issue.

Returning to the hot seat for nearly the next five years (where has the time gone!), this has been the most fun I have ever had during my long working life. I hope you'll forgive me for this short piece of self indulgence, but I would like to take this opportunity to share just a handful of the amazing memories of my time here.

2013 VISITING CORGI HQ

Having spent my entire childhood (and most of my adult life since) playing with and collecting Hornby model railways, Scalextric and Corgi diecasts new and old, making Airfix kits and painting with Humbrol products, imagine my delight when, on 6th September 2013, I visited the iconic headquarters of all these brands down at Margate, in Kent.

We were there, of course, to focus on the new Corgi releases planned for 2014. Once that was



▲ Just one of the many wonderful truck models seen at the Corgi preview photoshoot.



▲ Another Corgi preview day memory, and one where two of my favourite worlds collide – heritage railways and diecasts.

▼ My first glimpse of the fabled Hornby HQ, in Margate, home of many of my favourite childhood brands.



done, I managed to blag a quick tour of the whole set up – wow! It was like all my Christmases had come at once.

2014 MY FIRST TIME AT THE NUREMBERG TOY FAIR AND DC'S 200TH ISSUE

If I'd been enthralled with my visit to Corgi HQ, I almost literally exploded with excitement when I went to the Nuremberg Toy Fair for the first time, in January 2014. All the major brands were there in one place and, although we couldn't buy any, we got to see and handle many of the future releases before almost everyone else.

Then there was the matter of *Diecast Collector*'s 200th issue, for June 2014.

▶ Shooting the cover image for the 200th issue of *Diecast Collector*.





We very much enjoyed putting that together and I've had just as much fun going through 10 years of issues to research this article.

2015 LONDON BUS MUSEUM AND A HUMBLING DORNIER EXPERIENCE

I was invited down to the amazing London Bus Museum twice during 2015. Based at the old Brooklands Circuit, in Surrey, the location is simply stunning. The museum has an incredibly evocative collection of old vehicles, but also has a wonderful model section.

Back in 2013, just as I was taking the reins here, an old Dornier Do17 was being recovered just off the Kent coast. Transported to RAF Cosford for cleaning and future care, Corgi produced a model of the aircraft as it was during the war. Visiting the airframe, or what remains of it, was a truly humbling experience, particularly when I was told that I was allowed to climb inside the fuselage.

2016 MODEL MOSQUITO PROTOTYPE MEETS THE REAL THING

By now you may have gathered that I have 'a thing' for historic aircraft. Anything de Havilland really appeals to me and I already had Corgi's lovely replica of the prototype. The original aircraft survived (rare for prototypes) and had recently been restored. Located at the de Havilland Aircraft Museum, at London Colney, I was allowed to introduce the model to the real thing for a photoshoot and an article. Then the engines were fired up and the aircraft rolled out! What a day.

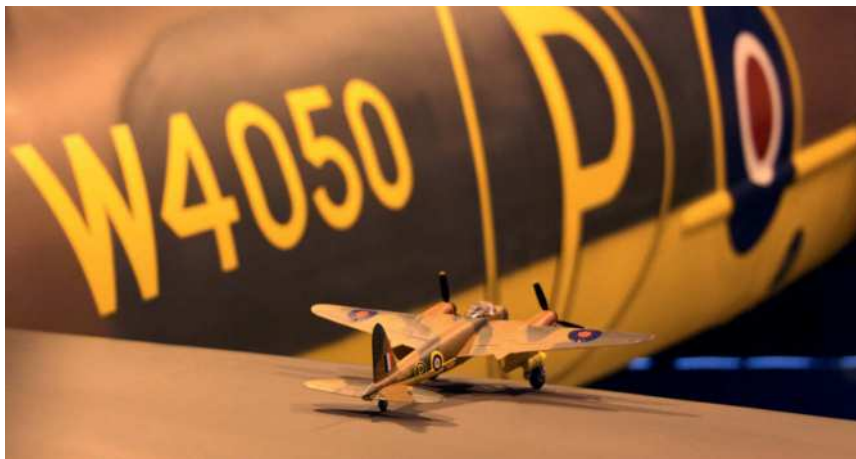
2017 THE FIRST PRODUCTION ROUTEMASTER

But it's not just aircraft, vintage buses work for me too. And one Routemaster in particular, as I used to ride on it as a youngster out of my local bus garage at Sidcup, in Kent – the first production example, No RM8. Thanks to the wonderful, late Phil Willson, I was afforded the opportunity to take the controls of the restored real bus and that was the catalyst for an article that even led to me creating a 'never wazza'. Corgi had planned to release a 1/50 scale model of RM8 in 2015, but it got cancelled. So I made my own Code 3 to go with my SunStar 1/24 and Oxford 1/148 examples.



▲ Corgi's model of the Dornier Do17 that was recovered off the Kent coast in 2013.

▲ A wonderful model scene at the London Bus Museum, Brooklands.



▲ Corgi's 1/72 scale model of the Mosquito prototype sits on the tail of the real thing at the de Havilland museum.



▲ At the controls of the first production Routemaster, RM8 – a bus I rode on so many times as a youngster.



▲ Three scale models of RM8 – SunStar's 1/24, a Corgi 1/50 Code 3 (modified by me) and Oxford's 1/148.

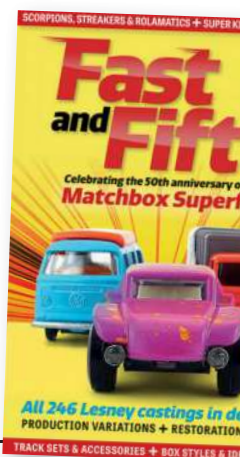
2018 UNIMOGS AND MAKING FRIENDS

When I was a lad, a Corgi Toys release that was always one of the first out of my toybox each day was one of its Unimogs – the one with the gooseneck dumper trailer. More recently, I picked up a snowplough version, complete with the inner polystyrene tray in mint condition. When I wrote my article about the Corgi Unimogs, for the November 2018 issue (my first back as editor), the snowplough image shown here (across to the lower right, on the page opposite) didn't make the cut.

This was also the year when I finally properly met up with the fantastic bunch at the Coventry Diecast Model Club, during the club's celebration of Hot Wheels' 50th anniversary. It was a great excuse to break out many of my collection too.

2019 FAST & FIFTY AND HOVERINGHAM FODENS

Something I had been planning for many years finally came to fruition in September 2019. It was called *Fast & Fifty* and was a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the introduction of Matchbox Superfast models. My collection has grown rather large, with many bought especially for this publication. Using all my own models, and leaning heavily on Mike Pigott's articles in DC, it was something I am still very proud of.





▼ I'd always wondered what two of my favourite Regular Wheels Matchbox models would have looked like with Superfast wheels – so I made it happen.



▲ My Warhol-esque 15 minutes of fame began in 2021, when I was filmed for The Yesterday Channel's *Scouting for Toys* TV series, filmed by the BBC.

◀ Making friends at the Coventry Diecast Model Club – here I'm comparing Hot Wheels with Stuart Sumner.

▶ I thoroughly enjoyed playing with the 900 series military models by Corgi as a youngster, so I loved putting this collection together for an article.

◀ The wonderful Unimog Snowplough on its 'inner', by Corgi Toys, finally makes the magazine, having missed the cut for an article in the November 2018 issue.



2020 MINIATURE MILITARY MEMORIES

Another strong, positive childhood memory was playing with the Corgi Toys 900 military series and, to coincide with the modern brand moving back into the military arena, with its Military Legends, I revisited the 1970s range. It meant purchasing every one again though – such a hardship!

2021 15 MINUTES OF FAME

Early in 2021, I became aware of a new series that was going to be filmed around Vectis Auctions, by the BBC for The Yesterday Channel. Offering some background advice, should it be needed, I was then



At the same time this was hitting the shops, the October issue cover sported a pair of Matchbox Hoveringham Fodens with a twist – they both had Superfast wheels! I'd always wondered what two of my favourite Regular Wheels Matchbox models would have looked like with Superfast wheels – so I made it happen.



▲ The model I bought at Vectis during filming for *Scouting for Toys* – it wasn't cheap!

RETROSPECTIVE

► The scale of 1/64 is my favourite to collect, so writing my 4-part Small World series was a real treat for me.



propelled into the spotlight for what turned out to be an almost 15-minute slot in episode 6! The film crew visited me at my home studio and then I visited Vectis itself as I'd submitted some models for sale in an October auction. I also bought a Superfast model I had been after for a long time – all captured by the cameras of course. The series aired in 2022 and can still be found on the UK TV Play catch-up service.

2022 SMALL SCALE COLLECTING AND A FLEET OF FIAT VANS

Two articles that I really enjoyed working on in 2022 covered my favourite classic van, Fiat's 238, and my preferred collecting scale – 1/64. Both were part of two short series, one on classic Italian light vans and another on the scale that is growing in popularity very quickly. Small samples of each of these parts of my collections are shown above and right.

2023 BUILDING A BATCAVE AND THAT BIG IXO RACER

A particularly enjoyable aspect of my remit as editor, was to come up with some cover ideas. They didn't always make the final issue design, but I had great fun building them. One such case was the April 2023 cover. The wonderful Corgi Batmobile was covered in this issue as part of the Corgi Years series, so I went all out using a pre-bought terrain mat by Jarvis, which was backed by some sturdy card that had stone chippings from the garden glued to it to create a rock face and modelling lichen added for foliage, plus a lump of lava from my recent visit to Mount Etna!

And talking of building things, you can't have failed to notice that epic 1/8 scale Porsche 917 that I've been putting together from an Ixo Collections kit. The last packs of parts have only just arrived, but the July issue showed it nearly finished (right).



► I still covet a real Fiat 238 but, for now, my model collection has to suffice – here are just six of 25 1/43 scale models that proudly sit on a shelf in my home studio.



▲ I made a Batcave diorama for the April 2023 issue cover, but it turned out to be too gloomy to be used – it was a day very well spent though.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES!

"So now, the end is near, and I must face the final curtain" as a certain song goes. It has been an absolute joy to help to keep you all entertained, but I couldn't have done it without the wonderful team over at DC Towers. Worthy of particular mention is our designer, Cathy Herron, who not only does all the layouts, but is also the Editor of *Collectors Gazette* (and its designer too!). She is also to be your new DC editor, so you're going to be in safe hands. See you at a toy fair soon, hopefully! **DC**



▲ The final parts have literally just arrived for the mighty 1/18 scale Porsche 917 by Ixo Collections – this is how it appeared in the July 2023 issue.

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Desert Island Diecasts

Imagine you're stranded on a remote island and had only taken a handful of your collection favourites on that fateful trip, which five would you want it to be?

Ray Trellis is this month's castaway hero.

Born and bred in a certain part of North Wales, and still a resident today, I would be devastated to be stranded away from my homeland. But should this ever be the case, it would be some comfort to me if five of my locally-themed diecasts were tucked away in my rucksack, assuming it had made it ashore with me, of course.

The island of Anglesey is my particular home corner (Ynys Môn in Welsh), but I spent most of my working life nipping back and forth across the Menai Bridge to ply my trade in and around the north coast of mainland Wales from Llandudno to Rhyl. So, you won't be surprised to read that my five choices all have links to these home and work-related areas.

CORGI TRAMLINES 97242 DOUBLE-DECK TRAM - LLANDUDNO

I'm old enough (just!) to remember the original Llandudno and Colwyn Bay Tramway, which closed in 1956. When Corgi released its Tramlines series, in the early nineties, I simply had to get one of these in particular, which depicts the Llandudno Pier to Colwyn Bay route via Rhos-on-Sea. With destination boards showing Colwyn Bay, it also features advertising for the famous Catlin Follies show, which ran for many years at the Arcadia Theatre in Llandudno.

The Tramlines range came in attractive packaging, with the tram model on a plastic plinth, which had a cobbled road surface and tram tracks moulded into it. This was backdropped by a very pleasing watercolour street scene printed onto card. I've always displayed mine as it came out of the box on this set up – and it has always attracted comments from friends and visitors to this very day.

OXFORD DIECAST 76PB004 COMMER PB MINIBUS - CROSVILLE

The first of two Oxfords in my rucksack is the rather cute, but still accurate, Commer PB that was operated by Crosville to replace rail services in the sixties. With a



▲ Corgi Tramlines 97242 Double-deck Tram - Llandudno.



▲ Oxford Diecast 76PB004 Commer PB Minibus - Crosville.



1



2

destination of Ynys Station, near the Menai Bridge, it is a reminder of an occasional daily commute..

CORGI OM 45503 BMMO C5 COACH – MIDLAND RED

When I travelled further afield, I remember occasionally travelling on the incredible-looking BMMO C5s operated by Midland Red. I'd pick them up from Llandudno and this is the destination shown on my chosen model by Corgi. There have been a couple of partworks of these buses recently, but this one is spot on for me.

LLEDO LP6024 MODEL T FORD VAN – TALYLLYN RAILWAY COMPANY

And now a nod to one of my favourite pastimes – heritage railways. I've visited the stunning Talyllyn Railway so many times over the last five or six decades and bought this lovely little Lledo at some point in the gift shop, although I've no idea exactly when!

We do still have an operative railway line on Anglesey, but the main branch line to Amlwch was closed quite some time ago. There is plenty of track still down, however, and there are moves to reinstate a good portion of this as a heritage line. You can find out more at www.leinamlwch.co.uk.

OXFORD DIECAST 43LR3S003 LAND ROVER SERIES III SWB

I couldn't be stranded away from my home without a model of the iconic vehicle design that has a very strong link to my little home island of Anglesey – the Land Rover. Some might think (me included) that I have saved the best until last.

The origins of the Land Rover have been well-covered in this magazine fairly recently, by David Lynn, so I won't go into detail here, but a certain Maurice Wilks had a farm not too far from my family home, at Red Wharf Bay. His Rover-powered Jeep conversion was the very beginning of the Land Rover story and it cut its (gearbox) teeth around the island.

There are so many Land Rover diecasts to choose from, particularly by Oxford Diecast, that I have plenty to pick from in my display cabinets. I have Oxford's wonderful replica of the first pre-production prototype, HUE 166, in both 1/76 and 1/43 scales. Also, given that three of the previous four choices are 1/76 scale, it would have been easy to pick from the same scale



▲ Corgi OM 45503 BMMO C5 Coach – Midland Red.

1 Lledo LP6024 Model T Ford Van – Talyllyn Railway Company.

2 Oxford Diecast 43LR3S003 Land Rover Series III SWB.

here, but my favourite Landie diecast from Oxford is a certain 1/43 scale Series II SWB.

The model that makes the final cut is actually a very close replica of a vehicle that an almost lifelong and very dear friend, Gareth Jones, owned for many years. I even got to drive it back from the pub on many occasions when the dear chap had visited the top shelf in our local a little too much. If I had work the next day, I was 'usually' within limits, if you know what I mean. Sadly, I can't actually recall the registration number of Gareth's, and he is sadly no longer with us to ask, otherwise I would have had custom number plates made to more closely replicate it. **DC**

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP FIVE DESERT ISLAND DIECASTS?

Fancy having some fun and sharing your choices? Just email the editor photos of your five choices, together with about 125-150 words on each, including your reasons for choosing, to rick.wilson@warnersgroup.co.uk.



Superfast 1969-1982

Rick Wilson charts the evolution of the Matchbox Superfast range during the Lesney years, from 1969 to 1982.

No.
38



Number 38 during the Lesney-era Superfast range comprises a Regular Wheels carryover (Honda Motorcycle with Trailer) a custom chopper motorcycle, a realistic military vehicle, a short-lived leisure wagon and finished with easily the most prolifically-produced Matchbox model ever.

HONDA MOTORCYCLE WITH TRAILER Catalogue: 1970-72 Box Styles: G

An incredibly popular release, considering it is a trailer. Along with No 9 Boat & Trailer, it was an excellent seller.

Initially maintaining its regular wheels colours, the motorbike changed to purple for its final catalogue appearance in 1972.

Also, like Boat & Trailer, it then had a very successful stint in the Two Packs, usually in orange

▲ **Honda Motorcycle with Trailer, Stingeroo, Armoured Jeep, Camper and Model A Van**, all with their respective initial release boxes (and the second type of Armoured Jeep box, bottom right).

and paired with a similarly-coloured Field Car, although the labels still had a yellow background.

STINGEROO Range: Choppers Catalogue: 1973-76 Box Styles: I

The Choppers were a small range of three custom motorcycles introduced into the Matchbox series in 1973. They were quite different, with painted metal bodies and coloured or chromed plastic parts, but no riders. The first of the three Choppers was Stingeroo, a wild three-wheeler with angular forks and handlebars that had an orange plastic insert in the middle and a thick plastic wheel, while the large rear wheels were normal Superfast types. Early examples had chrome forks, whilst later versions had unpainted plastic ones that varied in shade.



ARMOURED JEEP

Catalogue: 1977-80
Box Styles: K, L

Armoured Jeep was a modified version of the recently superseded Jeep Hot Rod, with a realistic closed bonnet. It was now in a less-vivid colour scheme of olive drab, with black seats and base. The windscreen was modified with a notch in the top centre for the gun barrel to rest on. Early versions had stickers with a white US Army motif that had a lighter green infill. Later versions had a pair of numbers either side and were see through decals, so the body colour was the infill.

There was also a version of Armoured Jeep without a bazooka, but this was exclusive to the 'Two' Packs range, towing a gun trailer. It also appeared in the 'Two' Packs range painted yellow, again without the gun, paired with a yellow-based glider trailer.



▲ Front row: Camper as a later version, without the back body amber window unit, later-stickered variant of Armoured Jeep, 'Two' Packs version of Armoured Jeep, without the bazooka but with a gun trailer, and the pre-Superfast Regular Wheels version of the Honda trailer. Next row: 'Two' Packs pair, featuring the later-coloured Honda trailer with purple bike variant, plus the yellow 'non-bazooka' Jeep and glider trailer. Back two rows: Model 'A' Van post-Lesney variations (both standard range issues and promotionals).



▲ Model A Van featured in Royal Mail livery as part of a special set commissioned by Promod.



▲ One of literally hundreds of on-pack offers and special promotional versions of Model 'A' Van – this example was produced for Dairylea cheese.

CAMPER

Catalogue: 1981
Box Styles: L

Camper was a Ford Courier pick-up with a demountable camper body. It was painted bright red, with a bare metal base and dark green cab windows. The camper section was in cream plastic, and early examples were fitted with amber windows, although this feature was soon withdrawn to cut costs. There was no interior in the cab or the rear, and a lug connecting the cab roof to the camper could clearly be seen through the front window and the skylight.

MODEL 'A' VAN

Catalogue: 1982
Box Styles: L

This was, without a doubt, the most popular model ever produced by Matchbox. Over the years, it has been produced in literally hundreds of different designs, so many that there have been books compiled to list all the different variations. It was one of the most successful promotional models of all time, and was widely collected by children and adults alike. Model 'A' Van models were offered as on-pack premiums for all sorts of products. It also featured in several specially-themed 6-pack box sets (more details about these can be found on pages 62 & 63, over the page).

It shared the grille, wings and plastic sub-chassis with the similar No 73 Model 'A' Ford that had been released in 1981. It was released right at the end of the Lesney era, initially advertising Champion Spark Plugs – little did Lesney know what it had started!

From the next issue, showcasing the models released under the catalogue number of 39 onwards, the format of this series will be changing to a single page, as previously published in "Fast & Fifty". **DC**



Model 'A' Van box sets

Never lost for things to talk about, Rick Wilson shares another selection from his collection.

By way of a postscript for the preceding pages, I felt it appropriate to use these pages to detail a fair few more of the incredible amount of variations of the No 38 Model 'A' Van. The total number runs into the hundreds, thanks to all the promotional versions that have been produced since the casting's first appearance in 1982, so it would be impossible to detail them all here. According to the Matchbox Wiki Fandom page (matchbox.fandom.com/wiki/Model_A_Ford_Van), the casting carried on until 2007, when the last documented regular range version was released.

In addition to all the promotional and regular range releases, Matchbox also made full use of the casting by manufacturing special-liveried versions and selling them in themed six-packs. I've acquired five of these over the decades, released in consecutive years between 1991 and 1995, and here are the brief details of the companies behind each model, set by set...

THE FLAVOURS OF AUSTRALIA (1991)

Milo – Nestlé's tasty beverage, claimed to help build up a strong and healthy body – today marketed as an energy drink. Uncle Tobys – the Imperial Manufacturing Company's rolled oats brand, established in 1893. IXL – a jam manufacturer and fruit shipping pioneer, Henry Jones's motto was "I will excel" – hence the brand name. Billy Tea – with its origins reportedly going back to the Australian Gold Rush, Billy Tea is still a popular 'campfire brew' today. Aeroplane Jelly – still family-owned today, and



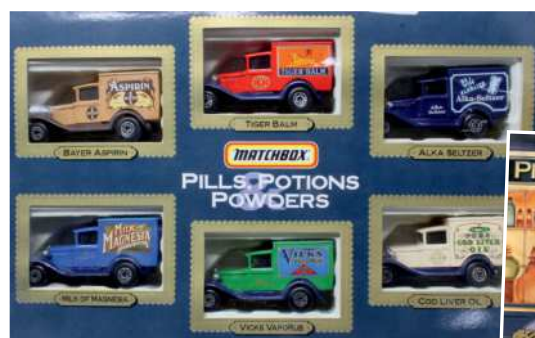
▲ The Flavours of Australia (1991).



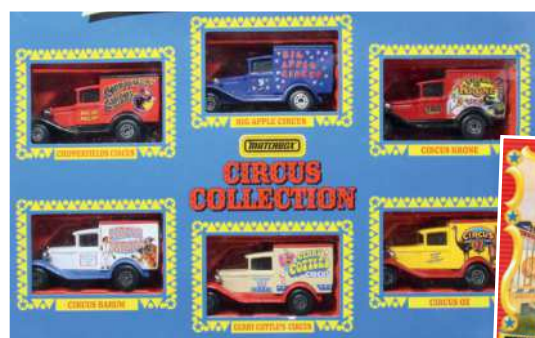
▲ The Australian Vintage Collection (1992).



▲ A selection of Matchbox No 38 Model A Van variants – one from each of the featured box sets.



▲ Pills, Potions & Powders (1993).



▲ The Circus Comes to Town (1994).



▲ Post Vehicles of the World (1995).



as popular as ever, Aeroplane Jelly is so-named as its founder, Herbert Appleroth, wanted his product to be seen as “above the rest”. Violet Crumble – a chocolate-coated honeycomb bar, similar to Cadbury’s Crunchie, and a brand today owned by Nestlé.

THE AUSTRALIAN VINTAGE COLLECTION (1992)

Tyrrell’s – produced its first vintage in 1864 and Tyrrell’s is still making great wines today. McWilliam’s – its classic, rich sherries and ports have been around since 1912. Yalumba – premium wines from the heart of the Barossa Valley since 1849. Houghton – synonymous with the production of premium table wines on the west coast since 1859. Penfolds – originally founded by a doctor, Penfolds has been in production since 1844. Hardy’s – founded by Thomas Hardy in 1883, Hardy’s is now one of the largest winemakers in Australia.

PILLS, POTIONS & POWDERS (1993)

Bayer Aspirin – in 1897, Felix Hoffman, working for Bayer, created the formula whilst searching for an anti-rheumatic drug to assist his father. Tiger Balm – a ‘re-discovery’ of a natural ointment, sold by touring the Far East with a tiger as a symbol of its potency. Alka Seltzer – has its origins in an old remedy mixture of Aspirin and bicarbonate of soda. Milk of Magnesia – a simple suspension of magnesium hydroxide in water, taken to settle indigestion. Vicks VapoRub – dating back to the 1890s, today it is one of the most widely-used cold medications. Cod Liver Oil – an inexpensive way to get a daily dose of vitamins, taking this in liquid form is an unforgettable experience.

THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN (1994)

Chipperfields Circus – the Chipperfield family has entertained for more than 300 years, albeit only intermittently these days. Big Apple Circus – formed in the mid-1970s in New York. Circus Krone – founded by Carl Krone in 1850, in Germany. Circus Barum – another German circus, dating back to 1878. Gerry Cottle’s Circus – first appeared in 1970 and became the most travelled around the world. Circus Oz – formed in 1978, with influences that include Aboriginal culture, Chinese opera, acrobatics, politics and slapstick.

POST VEHICLES OF THE WORLD (1995)

Canada – in 1763, Britain extended postal services from the USA then, in 1784, Canada had its own Postmaster General. United States – the first mail service was established in 1673. Australia – a postal service existed as early as 1803. Germany – after the disruption of World War II, postal services were formally re-established in both East and West in 1949. Belgium – received independence from Holland in 1830, but its postal origins go back as far as 1500. Guernsey – a postal service was first established in 1794. **DC**



Mystery Spanish Devon

Andrew Ralston continues his travels and this time he finds himself in Spain.

The Austin A40 Devon was a classic British post-war family car, but it is significant that it first went on display in New York in September 1947 – an indication of the priority given to export in that era. In due course, the Devon became a familiar sight on UK roads too. By 1949, Meccano Limited was beginning to refresh the Dinky range with new post-war models and the Devon was an obvious subject, introduced as No 40d in January of that year and remaining in the range until 1960, after receiving a new and more colourful two-tone look in 1956. These models were examined in detail on Michael Driver's page in the May 2023 issue.

Dinky was not the only contemporary toymaker to model the Devon. There's a Tri-ang Minic with plastic body and clockwork motor and another version, pressed out of tin sheet and powered by a friction motor. This was made by Dibro which stands for Dickinson Brothers of Liverpool, and clearly follows the lines of the Dinky. Also influenced by Dinky, but much more difficult to find, is another diecast by the little-known Swedish brand, Lemeco.

Now yet another obscure Devon has emerged, this time from Spain. It is very slightly shorter (0.5 cm) than the Dinky and slightly differently proportioned, with the rear wheels being a bit too far back and a ground clearance which gives the car an even more upright stance than the real thing. The body and chassis are in plastic and there is some hand-applied silver detailing to the bumpers though, curiously, the grille is left unpainted which makes the toy look as if something is missing. The car exists both with or without window glazing and it has been seen in yellow or blue, though other colours may well exist.

It is not entirely surprising that a Spanish

- ▲ The two Devon's are similar in size but proportions and stance are different.
- The Spanish toymaker painted on a thick silver bumper, but didn't bother about the grille.



▲ Familiar Dinky Austin Devon (left) beside the more obscure Spanish version.



toymaker would choose the Devon, as the car was exported worldwide and some are known to have been sold in Spain. But the identity of this toymaker remains a mystery. There are no identification marks under the model, and even the Spanish model car expert Juan Mauri Cruz has not been able to identify the anonymous maker. What can be established is that the Devon belongs to a small series of contemporary cars, the others being a Renault 4CV, Simca Plein Ciel, Ford Vedette, Panhard Dyna, Citroën 2CV (both car and van), Volkswagen Beetle, Porsche 356, Mercedes 190SL, Seat 600 and, finally, a Seat 1400 of 1960 (the poorest likeness of them all). They did come boxed, in a simple white carton with red end flaps, marked with the name of the car and no picture, and on the box of the Austin the name is wrongly spelt as 'Devan'. These are likely to have been cheap toys made for sale at places like markets rather than in toy shops and the maker had no real interest in establishing a brand identity.

The blue example shown turned up some years ago in a shop in Alicante, so you might be lucky and find one at a flea market next time you're on holiday in Spain! **DC**



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Plymouth Stock Car

DTCA Chairman, Michael Driver, picks another vintage favourite by Dinky.

In my younger days my visits to the cinema allowed me to see films that showed American cars and vehicles. These were somewhat different to those I saw on our streets and roads. My collection of toy cars by various makers, including Dinky Toys, did include American car models. The early Dinky Toys range had several American cars of the pre-war period and of course later more modern versions joined the series. As the years passed larger American car models arrived with extra detailing and features.

The Dinky Toys Plymouth Stock Car arrived in 1979 and is featured in the *Dinky Toys News* (October *Meccano Magazine*). The model is in navy blue with the racing number 34 on the boot and doors plus 428 C.I. and GoodYear decals on the body. The interior is in red plastic and there were also large silver diecast racing wheels. The black plastic base indicates it is by "Dinky Toys, Meccano Ltd, made in England" and is a "PLYMOUTH GRAN FURY".

This model used the casting of the Plymouth Police Car (No 244) and it was also the basis for the Plymouth Yellow Cab (No 278). The Police car is black with a white bonnet, roof and boot which has a grey plastic aerial. On the roof are red plastic warning lights and a grey siren. On the off-side rear window is a grey plastic speed camera. There are "POLICE" decals on the front doors and on the boot.

The Yellow Cab of course is yellow and there is a black plastic interior. It has a plastic cab roof sign with "YELLOW" decals and the boot carries a grey plastic aerial. The doors carry decals for the "YELLOW CAB Co". All the above models were sold in hanging window boxes with the Plymouth

▲ Dinky Toys Plymouth Police Car No 244 and Plymouth Yellow Cab No 278, with the Plymouth Fire Chief's Car prototype model.

1 Dinky Toys Plymouth Stock Car, No 201, with racing wheels.

2 Dinky Toys Plymouth Detroit Cab No 278 (an unreleased model). Photo: Vectis Auctions

3 Another proposed model – Dinky Toys Plymouth Sheriff's Car No 244. Photo: Vectis Auctions

FURTHER INFO

The later Dinky Toys space models are very collectable but more details about them are needed. Your help could add some further information about them. Why not become a member of the DTCA? - contact the website at www.dtcawebsite.com.



Stock Car having new style graphics on the box.

At the time, in 1979, little did we know that Meccano would close, but it was still preparing for the 1980s with a Trade Catalogue entitled "Into the '80s". It illustrated a 'New Sheriff's Car (No 244), which was finished in blue and white with "980" on the roof, "POLICE" on the doors and a city badge on the bonnet and the plastic roof warning lights. There was also to be a New Plymouth Detroit Cab (No 278).

The casting was also used for a further prototype model of a Fire Chief's Car in red, with a red plastic interior. This incorporated the details of the earlier police car using the roof sign, speed camera and aerial and the front doors had "FIRE SERVICE" labels. It was not allocated a number, but no doubt it would have been in the fire vehicles group.

The Plymouth cars were part of the Chrysler company and the model made by Dinky Toys was based on the Plymouth Fury. The original cars had started out in the mid-1950s. This later car was from the mid-1970s, with the Plymouth name finishing in the 1980s. **DC**

PriceGuide

55
AUCTION
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▲ **Corgi Toys No 57 Massey Ferguson 65 Tractor with Fork**, beige, red including plastic hubs, silver steering wheel, arms and forks, correct plastic figure driver with tow hook. Excellent in excellent blue and yellow carded picture box. **£120, Vectis Auctions, June.**



▲ **Corgi Toys No 403 Bedford Daily Express Delivery Van**, blue body, silver trim, flat spun hubs. Excellent plus in fair to good blue carded picture box. **£200, Vectis Auctions, June.**



▲ **Corgi Toys No 403m Bedford KLG Plugs Delivery Van**, red body, silver trim, flat spun hubs, mechanical motor. Good plus in good blue carded picture box. **£240, Vectis Auctions, June.**



▲ **Corgi Toys No 404 Bedford Dormobile Personnel Carrier**, dark metallic cerise, silver trim, flat spun hubs. Excellent plus in fair to good blue carded picture box. **£300, Vectis Auctions, June.**



▲ **Corgi Toys No 404M Bedford Dormobile Personnel Carrier**, blue body, silver trim, flat spun hubs, mechanical motor. Excellent in good blue carded picture box. **£170, Vectis Auctions, June.**



▲ **Corgi Toys No 404 Bedford Dormobile Personnel Carrier**, yellow, light blue ribbed roof, silver trim, spun hubs. Good plus in good blue and yellow carded picture box. **£150, Vectis Auctions, June.**



▲ **Corgi Toys No 405 Bedford Utlecon AFS Tender**, green body, silver trim, black metal clip and ladders. Near mint in good plus blue carded picture box. **£150, Vectis Auctions, June.**



▲ **Corgi Toys No 405M Bedford Utlecon Fire Dept Tender**, red body, silver trim, black metal clip and ladders, flat spun hubs, mechanical motor. Excellent in fair blue carded picture box. **£260, Vectis Auctions, June.**



▲ **Dinky Toys No 514 1950-52 Guy Van**, in Slumberland livery. Very good in good box. **£80, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ **Dinky Toys No 504 Foden 14-Ton Tanker**, dark blue with light blue wheels, side flash and tank body. Very good in good box. **£60, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ **Dinky Toys No 513 Guy Flat Truck with tailboard**, dark green with light green wheels and back. Very good in good box. **£55, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ **Dinky Toys No 531 Leyland Comet Lorry**, red with yellow wheels and back. Very good in good box. **£50, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ **Dinky Toys No 25x Commer Breakdown Lorry**, dark tan cab with red wheels and a green back. Very good in good box. **£65, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ **Dinky Toys No 561 Blaw Knox Bulldozer**, red with green tracks. Very good in fair to good box. **£40, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ **Dinky Toys No 981 Horse Box**, maroon with red hubs, "British Railways Express Horse Box Hire Service" decals. Fair plus in fair plus blue and white striped lift off lid box. **£45, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ **Tri-ang Spot-On No 289 Morris Minor 1000**, light blue. Mint in good box. **£110, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Tri-ang Spot-On No 280 Vauxhall Cresta PB, red over white. Mint in good box. **£90, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Tri-ang Spot-On No 280 Vauxhall Cresta PB, white over dark blue. Mint in good box with original leaflet. **£80, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Tri-ang Spot-On No 286 Austin 1800 Saloon, dark blue. Mint in fair box. **£75, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Tri-ang Spot-On No 287 Hillman Minx De-Luxe, red with roof rack and suitcase. Very good in poor box. **£80, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Tri-ang Spot-On No 280 NSU Prinz Saloon, light blue. Mint in poor box. **£75, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Tri-ang Spot-On No 274 Morris 1100, light blue with roof rack and canoe. Mint in fair box. **£85, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Tri-ang Spot-On No 270 Ford Zephyr Six, light blue with lady driver and dog passenger. Near mint in poor box. **£80, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Tri-ang Spot-On No 217 Jaguar E Type Coupe, light blue. Fair to good in good box. **£100, British Toy Auctions, July.**



▲ Lone Star Roadmaster Impy Super Cars No 12 Chrysler Imperial, pale metallic blue with cream interior. Excellent to near mint in good plus box. **£30, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Matchbox Superfast No 55c Hellraiser, white body without nose label, clear windows, ivory interior, silver painted base. Excellent plus, unboxed. **£660, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Matchbox Superfast No 55a Mercury Park Lane Police Car, pre-production colour trial black body with early Police Shield hood label, red roof light, ivory interior, bare metal base with thin axle braces & factory hand punched rivets, 5-spoke wide wheels. Near mint to mint, unboxed. **£560, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Matchbox Superfast No 45a Ford Group 6, rare flat green body with racing number 7 nose label, clear windows, ivory interior, chrome engine, bare metal base with factory hand punched rivets, 5-spoke wide wheels. Good in excellent Type F3 transitional box. **£950, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Matchbox Models of Yesteryear Y11 1938 Lagonda Drophead Coupe, issue 1 with metallic yellow-gold body, black grille & seats, metallic purple chassis, front & rear bumpers with model number cast but without raised tabs. Excellent in good purple/yellow Type F window box. **£260, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Matchbox Regular Wheels unreleased No 59d Mercury Park Lane Fire Chief Car, pre-production colour trial red body with hood label, door shield decals, blue roof-light, clear windows, ivory interior, bare metal "1968 Mercury" base with factory hand punched rivets, chrome hubs with black plastic tyres. Good, unboxed. **£1500, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Matchbox Regular Wheels No 62c Mercury Cougar, pale yellow body, clear windows without rear view mirror & without windscreen wipers cast, ivory interior, bare metal base, chrome hubs with black tyres. Good plus in poor "New" Type E4 box. **£3400, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Matchbox Regular Wheels No 13d Dodge BP Wreck Truck, green cab & type A crane jibs with narrow base ends, silver trim to grille, headlamps & front registration plate, turquoise green windows, red roof-light, lemon yellow rear body & base, BP decals. Good in good plus to excellent Type E3 box. **£2600, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Matchbox Regular Wheels No 55a DUKW Amphibian, gloss black base, 18-tread black plastic wheels. Excellent in good late-issue Type D1 box. **£1400, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Hot Wheels (Mattel) Redline No 6220 Custom Volkswagen (Beetle), metallic dark aqua, without sunroof. Good with tinplate button/badge. **£850, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Hot Wheels (Mattel) Rrrumblers No 5947 Bold Eagle, rare issue finished in green body with orange rider and black helmet. Excellent plus, without guide. **£160, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ Lone Star Flyers No 7 Vauxhall Firenza, dark tan-brown, narrow Speedwheels. Near mint in good plus to excellent carded picture box. **£150, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Lone Star Flyers No 7 Vauxhall Firenza**, metallic blue, light beige interior, narrow Speedwheels. Mint in good plus plain lift off lid box. **£120, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Models of Yesteryear Y7 Leyland "W&R. Jacob & Co Ltd" Delivery Van**, brown body, cream roof, silver grille, 3-line side decals, with knobbly black plastic wheels and rounded axles. Excellent in excellent Lesney carded box. **£900, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Models of Yesteryear Y6 Bugatti Supercharged type 35**, French blue, black seat and base with white dash, gold radiator and grille, racing number 6. Excellent plus in good Lesney carded picture box. **£200, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Regular Wheels No 47b Commer Ice Cream Van "Lyons Maid"**, blue body, white interior and figure, silver trim, type B roof decals, 24-tread grey plastic wheels. Mint in near mint type D colour picture box. **£360, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Regular Wheels No 53a Aston Martin DB2/4**, metallic red body (darker shade), silver trim & headlights, 24-tread black plastic wheels. Near mint in good plus type B4 Moko box. **£200, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Regular Wheels No 56b Fiat 1500**, sea-green body, silver grille & headlights, red interior & tow-hook, black plastic base & wheels, luggage finished in pale yellow with one cast into base. Good in good type E colour picture box. **£220, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 14b Mini Ha-Ha**, red body and rare windows, flesh-coloured figure with brown helmet. Near mint in mint Type J "New" box. **£800, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 29b Racing Mini**, burnt orange, 5-spoke wheels - extremely rare issue with "BOAC" door labels. Excellent in mint Type I box. **£320, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 33a Lamborghini Miura**, metallic darker gold body, red interior, narrow 5-spoke wheels. Mint in good plus to excellent Type F box. **£280, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 53a Ford Zodiac**, metallic light blue body, clear windows, ivory interior, narrow 5-spoke wheels. Mint in excellent correct Type F box. **£580, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 75a Ferrari Berlinetta**, metallic green body, ivory interior, narrow 5-spoke wheels. Excellent plus in excellent Type G "New" box. **£300, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Corgi Toys No 267 "Batman" Batmobile**, late issue finished in black, blue tinted windows, with Batman figure, grey plastic aerial, wide wheels, yellow missiles attached to sprue. Near mint to mint in good box. **£190, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Super Kings K44 Berliet Articulated Bridge Layer**, Burnt Sienna bridge sections, complete with all bridge components, instruction leaflet & unused sheet of labels. Near mint to mint in good blue window box. **£90, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 20a Lamborghini Marzal**, metallic red body, amber windows, ivory interior, bare metal base, 5-spoke narrow wheels. Near mint with near mint Type F2 tgransitional box in Good rare 1969 copyright Fred Bronner Factory Sealed U.S. issue blister pack. **£100, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 6e Mercedes 350 SL**, dark yellow body with black roof, rare clear windscreen, pale yellow interior, bare metal base, 5-arch wheels. Mint in excellent plus "New" Type I box. **£60, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 20b Range Rover Police Patrol**, metallic desert sand body with "Security - Rallye Paris - Dakar 83" side labels, clear frosted windows, red spinner and roof light, gloss black base, Maltese cross wheels. Excellent to near mint in good plus to excellent Type J box. **£35, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 38b Stingeroo Chopper Motorcycle**, metallic light purple frame, rare light blue handlebars. Excellent to excellent plus in excellent to near mint "New" Type I box. **£160, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 46a Mercedes 300 SE coupe**, metallic orange-gold body with opening doors & boot, clear windows, white interior, bare metal base, 5-spoke narrow wheels. Excellent to excellent plus in good "New" Type G box. **£80, Vectis Auctions, July.**



▲ **Matchbox Superfast No 56b Hi-Tailer**, white body with racing number 5 labels, blue driver, bare metal base. Near mint in excellent "New" Type I rare "Not recommended for children under 3" box. **£200, Vectis Auctions, July.**

EVENTS

TOYFAIR TIMES

FAIRS

10 AUGUST

- Theydon Bois, Joe Lock, 07866 641215

12 AUGUST

- Exeter Matford, Bulldog Fairs, 07379 578083

13 AUGUST

- Worthing, SRP Toy Fairs, 07739 998012

20 AUGUST

- Oxford, Richard Atkins Toy Fairs, 01869 347489
- Orpington, SRP Toy Fairs, 07739 998012

28 AUGUST

- Houghton le Spring, Jim Corr, 07504 035955

29 AUGUST

- Garstang, Kevin Wright 07908 494097
- Elsecar, Newcomen Toy Fairs 01226 744425

3 SEPTEMBER

- Spalding, J & J Fairs, 01522 880383
- Malvern, Stu Vowles, 01373 452857 or 07917 125641
- Midhurst, SRP Toy Fairs,

07739 998012

10 SEPTEMBER

- Orpington, SRP Toy Fairs, 07739 998012
- Walsall, Transtar Promotions, 01922 643385

AUCTIONS

1 AUGUST

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

3 AUGUST

- Online, Vectis, 01642 750616

5 AUGUST

- Kings Langley, Excalibur Auctions, 02036 330913

8 AUGUST

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

10 AUGUST

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

22 AUGUST

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

24 AUGUST

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis,

01642 750616

25 AUGUST

- Bury St Edmunds, Lacy Scott & Knight, 01284 748625

29 AUGUST

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

31 AUGUST

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

1 SEPTEMBER

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

5 SEPTEMBER

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

7 SEPTEMBER

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

10 SEPTEMBER

- Stockton-on-Tees, Vectis, 01642 750616

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OR WRITE TO US The Editor, Diecast Collector, Warners Group Publications plc, The Maltings, West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH.

IXO'S FIAT RITMO GLAZING PROBLEM

I wonder if anybody else has bought the new 1/43 Ixo 1979 Fiat Ritmo Abarth Gr2? This is an excellent model, as there are very few models of the 105/125TC Abarth, so this fills an important gap in a Fiat collection. However, there are some annoying inaccuracies that I feel are unacceptable at this level. First of all, the model is labelled as a 1979 car, but the model is of a 105TC, which didn't come out until May 1981, and it wasn't badged as an Abarth, which this model is. The first Abarth badged Ritmo was the 125TC, which appeared later on in 1981. The recessed spotlights are a nice touch but the non Fiat alloy wheels, though looking good, still look a little out of place. As far as I know, all competition Ritmos were based on the more powerful 125TC, which led to the awesome Abarth 130TC based on the Ritmo2, which was basically a competition car for the road. Perhaps Ixo has modelled a particular privateer racer, because this model is a bit of a mish mash, the company would have been better off modelling the Abarth 130TC, a classic that hasn't been made in 1/43, apart from some obscure white metal kits. But the oddest thing with this model are the side windows... what on earth is going on there? On both sides the rear side windows have gained an extra 'pillar' and on the drivers' door the glazing extends beyond the door opening...bizarre! I have emailed Ixo as to why it has done this, but had no reply yet. Does anybody have any ideas about this?

Kevin Brock, Isle of Wight

ED Wow, that is the most bizarre treatment of the glazing unit! I don't have any direct contact with Ixo, but will attempt to report back as well. I guess a little tinkering could sort that, but you shouldn't need to.

ANOTHER SHOUT FOR 1990S CARS

I write after reading the letter of Paul Walshe in the May 2023 issue, and I guess I can add myself as another one frustrated by the notable lack of bread and butter models of cars in diecast form, with particular reference to Austin Rover/Rover Group models, and Japanese family cars from this era. I feel quite strongly about this suprising gap in the market, as a child growing up the 1990s, it is pretty disappointing to not be able to get many cars that I was used to seeing on the road, or cars owned by mine or my friends' parents at this time in model form, considering how well represented 1960s and '70s family cars were. Maybe if this became a recurring subject in magazines like *Diecast Collector*, it might provoke some of the model makers into fulfilling the wishes of similar collectors. Oh, and here is my wishlist of cars that I would love to see in around 1/43 or bigger: Rover 200/400 R8, Rover 213/216 SD3, Austin Ambassador, Morris Ital, Austin/MG Maestro (better than the SMTS casting), Austin/MG Montego, Austin/MG Metro, Rover Metro/100, Rover 800, Rover 800 2nd Gen, Rover 600 & Honda Accord, Rover 400 & Honda Civic 5dr, Rover 200 & 25, Proton, Nissan Bluebird, Nissan Micra Mk1, Vauxhall Astra Mk1, Vauxhall Carlton Mk1, and plenty more which I can't list otherwise this would take up an entire page. Here's hoping!

Simon Haynes, email

ED You are definitely not alone, Simon. I'll add my name to the list too, though I'm not sure I can add anything to your comprehensive wishlist. It's a conversation I've had with a couple of manufacturers recently and it's definitely something that they are both aware of. Here's hoping indeed!



TINY RENAULT 4S & CORGI LAND ROVERS

IN the July issue, regarding the plastic Norev 1/86 Renault 4 on the letters page - here are a couple more with a 5p coin for scale. Mementos from French holidays at the end of 1960s when I was a nipper in short trousers. My dad packed Mum, my sister and I



into the back of his Imp and we had a 2-day slog down the autoroutes to the Med, and I was given these to keep me quiet in the stifling heat and the confines of the back seat piled high with luggage. There was a reasonable range of these teeny delights in lots of bright colours - I've also still got Citroën 2CV and Ami 6, Simca 1500 and 1000, Panhard BT24 and a Renault 16, and they're all delightfully detailed. Being plastic they didn't scratch like painted diecasts, so survived toybox tumble to still look fairly pristine - fortunately I kept them in their plastic display cases when not being played with.

Minor comment from a couple of issues ago about the reissued Corgi Land-Rover breakdown trucks - the Club 417 is a Series 1 107", the parallel 417S is a Series 2 109" - different castings if you compare the height and profile of the front wings and the base of the door windows. From memory Corgi did the same revision for the 1960s originals, so the re-issues honour this evolution.

David Lynn, Glasgow

ED Many thanks, David, your input is, as always, invaluable. And great spot on the Corgi differences, I genuinely hadn't noticed.

ACCESSORIES WORTHY OF MERIT

A late response to Olivier Weyl's letter in the May issue of DC. The Merit OO accessories are now marketed as Peco Modelscene. The goods depot, however, is part of the main Peco range. I have a Merit example as well as old Merit figures.

Bill Dickie, email

ED Many thanks, Bill. I have a fair few of the old Merit boxes filled with accessories and figures. So evocative. Nice to know that they live on through Peco.

REMEMBERING THE DINKY ALVIS

I was very interested in Michael Driver's article on the Dinky Alvis Sports Tourer in the July issue of *Diecast Collector* on page 64. It took my mind back to the early 1950s and then, at age 15, I can recall my elder brother, my only sibling, bringing home a brand new Dinky Alvis Sports Tourer. I was in awe of it as it was the first new Dinky that I had ever seen. Back in the war years, the few Dinkys that we did have were very playworn, if not damaged in some way, but we played with them anyway and were grateful just the same. Not only was it a new Dinky, but a 'sports car' – few and far between as real cars on the roads back then. Ours was the green version and I can still see it in my mind's eye even now. Why I haven't made an effort to buy an example to add to my collection has only now been prompted by this article. Strange that, in later years, following my RAF service, I should leave my southern roots and come to live in Coventry, home of the Alvis factory. Now that I have read the article and am better informed about the model and the car, I shall be on the lookout to add this model to my 'Dinky Derelicts'.

Will Roe, Coventry

ED Nice memories there, Will. And you've hit the nail on the head as far as a reason to collect goes – so many of us (me included) use the 'cars we've owned or I remember seeing' reason for collecting. It certainly brings back happy memories for me.

THEY'RE HAVING A GIRAFFE

AFTER reading the letter from Bob Allen, in the July 2023 issue of *Diecast Collector*, I thought you might be interested to know that Chipperfields Circus did have giraffes in its circus, they use to ride them in the same way as they did horses around the ring. (There's a video on YouTube.) Other animals would be part of the circus, but only in the zoo area, which was a separate admission area. I hope this helps solve the question.

John Gittings, email

ED Brilliant, thanks John, your information is much appreciated. I'm off to search for that video right now...

REPAIRS TO PEWTER MODELS

I would be grateful for some help and advice. I have a collection of about 50 pewter model cars (Danbury Mint). Sadly during a house move, a few of them were damaged (headlights and wheels mainly). I need to repair them, or get someone to do it who knows what they are doing – I am 85 and not as flexible as I used to be! If you could point me in the right direction I would be much obliged.

Michael Kirk, Cirencester

ED Many thanks for getting in touch, Michael. I have to confess that I have no real knowledge of the pewter Danburys, so I'm posting this here to see if we can hopefully garner some responses.

MODELS OF MODERN CARS AND EVs – THE DEBATE CONTINUES

STEPHEN Paul Hardy's recent article about whether or not we (or future) collectors will want to collect models of EVs made me think about why I collect model cars. My interests span British and European cars of the 1930s to around 2000, with a few exceptions at either end. Generally, however, they represent cars I either had as toys, or those that I can remember on our roads from the 1970s onwards. I have then also collected by marque, extending my collections forward and backwards from the core years to capture historical vehicles of those marques. So it's nostalgia and history that drives me. My extensive collection also captures a slice of social history related to transport in miniature. And here's the thing, when I was a child in the 1960s & '70s, a car was still something that many people had worked hard for and cherished. The car was almost a member of the family and it facilitated many memorable family times – day trips and seaside holidays were the times when the car came into its own. A car had a personality with which we could emotionally connect as humans. These days, cars have lost their character – they are homogenous in terms of design, driven by legislative and safety requirements, they are reliably boring and frankly bland. They no longer demonstrate the designer's flair. Some classic cars are simply works of art on wheels, demonstrating the designer's craft in terms of shape and form down to the tiniest of details – think of the E-Type, the DB's and the Ferraris of the 1960s for a start, but even the tail lights on an Austin Seven or Mk1 Cortina. EVs have even less attraction in that many are 'quirky', they make no noise to speak of – certainly nothing that awakens the senses and stirs the emotion – and they are unengaging to drive – all you need to do is control the power and steer – many even park themselves. Function has trumped form.

I grew up in an era when Dinky and Corgi toys were hugely popular and I spent many happy hours 'driving' many scale miles around the living room and dining room. Cars were an aspiration, a dream and fired my imagination. Children of today simply do not have toy cars on their Christmas lists. Many may never even wish to own a real car and the way our politicians are taking us seems to be demonising the private car as a means of transport, whether electric or not, as they are increasingly restricted in cities in favour of the bike and the bus. We have reduced cars to the same status as white goods – a box on wheels to get us from A to B and as bland and unexciting as a washing machine. I have no desire to collect 1/43 scale models of washing machines and sadly I feel the same way about modern cars – especially EVs!

Also, I am pleased to see that Desert Island Diecasts still features in your magazine from time to time – I came up with the idea in *Model Collector* and was the very first castaway!

Ian Thurley, Pontefract

ED Many thanks, Ian. You are not alone in your thoughts as I know there are many that feel the same way. As I've said in previous replies to letters on this subject, everyone's collecting tastes are different, albeit with common traits sometimes. A new collecting theme for me, well, maybe not new, but definitely expanding exponentially at the moment, is cars that have been support vehicles for the Tour de France cycle race. So that includes many modern vehicles as they always carry bright and engaging liveries that disguise the seemingly faceless boxes on wheels. I also have a penchant for French cars in general and thankfully Citroën continues to add a little extra styling to each of its cars, so much so that I've just bought a real one to replace my ageing Peugeot estate.



JUST reading about the new Discovery from Oxford Diecast. It's a lovely model, as always, but the registration number, unless it depicts a real car with a private plate, is completely wrong. The first Discoveries in 1989 were G registered, the G...WAC prototypes are well known in Land Rover circles. Also a 1998 model would in fact be a P or R registration. Such a shame especially from a manufacturer which is usually so on the ball!

Ian Thurley, Pontefract

ED Good spot, Ian! And I should have picked up on this when doing the review last month. The image shown here is the photo on the Oxford Diecast information page for the model and, I believe, shows the actual car that was 3D scanned. Unfortunately, we can't see the number plate. I had a small fleet of F-prefixed cars when I used to own a courier company in London, in the late 1980s, so I really should have noticed. I have samples of both the 1/43 and 1/76 scale releases, and can confirm that the 1/43 example is particularly lovely.



LONE STAR LOVELIES

I much enjoyed the Lone Star Kiwi connection, in the August 2023 edition, being a fan of the Lone Star 1/50 models. I was first introduced to these in 1963, in a street market in Woolwich, where a batch of motley, unboxed white Sunliners were being sold off cheaply – these were forerunner Tootsietoys and had metal seats as opposed to the later plastic one, and chromework as befits an American car. The styling of the long Sunliner captured my imagination compared with the contemporary and fussy looking Thunderbird Open Sports as modelled by Corgi. When Woolworths started to sell the tweaked Lone Star versions, sadly in flimsy clear plastic boxes, I acquired a smart Rambler Ambulance (or ‘Ramblulance’ as the real ones were called) and then the Rolls-Royce, ideal for recreating TV episodes of Burke’s Law. Of course, few of the Rolls survive now with the Spirit of Ecstasy intact. Dinky had produced the 1960 Chevrolet El Camino Pick-Up, but the Lone Star version had the benefit of the drop-down tailgate, suffering often the same fate as the Rolls’ mascot. Early Roadmasters had chrome and black rubber tyres, later grey plastic with white plastic tyres and added light brown interior detail. Dinky modelled the 1961 Cadillac, but Lone Star got there with the classy 1960 ‘flat top’ Cadillac. The Corvair (“unsafe at any speed” according to Ralph Nader) appeared in various guises, but this was the base Corvair 500, unlike the 700 DeLuxe modelled much better by Corgi. Various guises on the sporty Dodge Polara too, with a rich metallic blue on the Woolies version. Lastly, the difficult to find odd choice of a Citroën DS, which, although big and softly sprung and exported to the US, could not be called an American car, being quintessentially French.

Patrick Hogan, Beaconsfield

ED Great stuff! Thank you for sharing, Patrick. Unfortunately, we didn’t have room to include all six of your images here – but the models all look superb.

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR HOBBY IS FOR EVERYONE

I am a young female collector, who loves anything supercar and Le Mans-related. I also like collecting soft top cars – my favourite is my Maisto BMW Z4. I love real cars, but don’t care about engines and stuff, it’s the shape I like. Anyway, I was at a collector sale the other week and got chatting to some male collectors about our hobby and commented on how cars and other models are so more expensive nowadays, when one of the guys, in his seventies, looked at me and said “What would a girl know about collecting cars?” He emphasised “girl” as though I am stupid. In a male-dominated hobby like this, us girls are shunned and mocked – not all of us lasses are into shoes and makeup! Please guys, don’t dismiss us girls’ knowledge and interest in models.

Xanthe, Redcar

ED A very valid point and thank you so much for writing in and sharing this, Xanthe. Your letter is very timely because, as if to prove a point, by now you may have already read in this issue that I am about to hand over the editorial reins to Cathy Herron. Please don’t be put off, diecast collecting is very much for everyone. If you can find a copy of the June 2021 issue, you’ll be able to read all about a very talented young lady by the name of Natalie, who not only collects diecasts, but makes her own out of old scrap models.

WHITBREAD DENNIS TRUCK MODELS, PLEASE!

IN a recent issue, I was surprised to see an article about a Dennis Pax lorry. I think this is the first model of a Dennis lorry I have seen. Then I started to search through my hundreds of photos for a Whitbread Dennis



dray, which my late father drove (see photo, Dad on the right). I believe this was 1953, the ‘other’ coronation year. Would you agree this Whitbread dray would make a super diecast model, with brown bodywork and gold leaf lettering along with the Royal Coat of Arms, as in the day. I know Corgi has made some Whitbread vehicles, but never a Dennis Pax with a hind’s head mascot on the radiator. My dad completed 44 years service with Whitbread and I also did 30 years with the brewery.

Terry Fletcher, Hertfordshire

ED Wow, what a lovely photo! Thank you for sending the original to us for scanning, this should be safely back with you now, along with the one that we didn’t use. I agree about needing more Whitbread truck models – I have a few (see *From the Editor’s collection* in the June 2019 issue), but we could certainly do with plenty more.



AUSSIE WONDERS

FOLLOWING reader Rob Kaczmarek’s letter, about 1/64th Aussie models, here is a photo of my small collection of them, all of which I’ve had for a long time, some as much as twenty years. They are a small part of a collection of around two hundred Australian diecasts, in 1/64th, 1/43rd and 1/18th scales, including in 1/43rd, every winner of the legendary Bathurst event, from 1963 to 2020. The tiny 1/64s, by Bianté Minicar and Classic Carlectables, are excellent copies of those of similar models in the two larger scales, and represent the fierce rivalry between Holden and Ford. The downside for prospective collectors of these fine models is that prices have risen sharply in recent years, many costing more than 1/43rd scales and some more than 1/18ths. I consider myself lucky to have got them when the prices were very reasonable.

Mick Haven, email

ED Ooh nice! As a fellow 1/64 collector, there are some real beauties in there, Mick. It’s a shame we never got your Bathurst winners article into the magazine, but drop Cathy a line for inclusion in a future issue perhaps.

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A Darracq kind of longing

Stephen Paul Hardy goes back to the very early days of motoring.



▲ Stephen Paul Hardy.



Following on from last month, another event at the Beaulieu National Motor Museum, with a strong scale model connotation, opens just a few days after this issue is published. Running from 7th August to 20th October “Icons of Motoring: Genevieve and the Spyker” reminded me of Reader’s Letters page contributions from Chris King, Patrick Hogan and Andrew Ralston last winter.

The event celebrates the 70th anniversary of that wonderful British comedy film, *Genevieve*, by having both 1904 vintage stars from it on display in the museum ahead of their participation in the London to Brighton Veteran run in November. I am still amazed that we have had precious few models of both cars ever released – the legendary Darracq offering that was part of the earliest days of Airfix appearing in Woolworths, and the equally legendary Matchbox Yesteryear Y16 Spyker. These of course are supplemented by the Lone Star ‘Roadmasters’ model of Genevieve.

Given that both cars are part of the Louwman Museum collection in the Netherlands, modern scanning and scale reproduction is, theoretically at least,

eminently plausible. Unabashed by my admiration for AutoCult and given how exquisite its previous Lohner-Porsche, Miele K1 and Dixi R8 6/14 PS Doppelphaeton have been, I’d love to see a paired set as ‘Exclusive’ or ‘Masterpieces’ models.

As for the film itself I have fond memories of watching it as a child (and again in my early teens) in black & white as an old film on TV, enthralled equally by the veteran car theme and footage of Southern England as it was the year before I was born. In a linked context way I have similar fond memories from the early 1960s of a family trek over to stand at the kerbside, somewhere in mid-Sussex, and watch the BBCs *Blue Peter* team participate in the London-Brighton run.

I look forward to paying homage to both cars during this year’s Beaulieu International Autojumble at the beginning of September, before scouring the stalls for automotive diecast and related ‘treasure’, whilst also reflecting on penning this column over the past three years. Maybe I’ll even make a pilgrimage in November to see Genevieve and the Spyker arrive in Madeira Drive, Brighton. **DC**

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A small piece of trouble



Brian Gower treasures an almost life-long friendship.

A few evenings ago, I was on the telephone to my old friend Roger. Having recently taken delivery of a Corgi Buick Riviera, found for me and beautifully restored in gold by Steve Flowers, I was asking Roger if I was right in remembering he had an identical model on the mantelpiece in his childhood bedroom, albeit sometime into his late teens.

He struggled with this for half a minute then, using the "gold" as a stepping stone, confirmed that he once had (and possibly still has) a Studebaker Golden Hawk – the Dinky version.

A few weeks back, he wouldn't have gone astray over my question. There would have been an instant "yes", coupled with where he bought it, or who gave it to him (perhaps his niece) and mentioned the novelty of the Trans-o-Lite system.

This failure in communication was caused by what was left of a recently removed brain tumour, effectively destroying his primary functions. He knows all this, but has yet to find out which bit packs up next. This is no time for guessing games. It seems there isn't much time for anything. His neurosurgeon gives him a few months of diminishing competence.

I can think of many ways to express my feelings about his imminent departure, but what I said when he told me, apart from the immediately available expletive, was "What a swizz." After years of robust health, something the size of a small marble left enough trouble to polish him off in stages very rapidly. So, "What a swizz" was about all I could say to a friend I have valued since we were both 11.

I don't think I can usefully add anything further to that account, except to confirm, as Roger can no longer do, that a gold Buick Riviera did sit on the mantelpiece in his bedroom, alongside a De Tomato Ghia Mangusta that I gave him in 1969.

▲ Corgi Toys No 245 Buick Riviera in gold – restored by Steve Flowers.

► Those white-wall tyres are non-standard for the Corgi release.

1 Corgi's Trans-o-Lite system is a simple but effective way to give the impression of having working lights.



He still sounds his usual cheerful self and is making decisions with his wife and daughter for their future without him. Various possessions are being offloaded and I expect his grandson will be the new owner of a box of diecasts, which Roger collected in the 1950s and '60s – the parallel collection to my one.

My newly acquired Buick Riviera will inevitably remind me of a long friendship, even though it has the added embellishment of white-wall tyres, something that Roger never went for on his models. He liked things to stay as they were. But they don't, do they? **DC**

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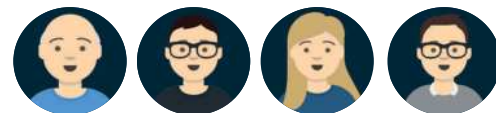
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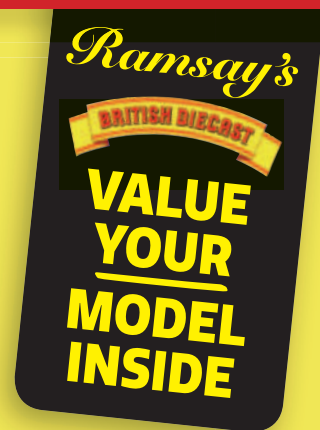
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50 years on and still going strong

When those first adverts started appearing in my comics during the summer of 1969 announcing the arrival of Superfast wheels that would transform the Matchbox 1-75 series, just like the one shown above, my impressionable five-year-old self was hooked. Look to the right and here is me the following year posing with my newly-released and just-purchased No 23 VW Camper - clearly a very happy boy!



Starting with those three first releases, No 56 BMC Pininfarina, No 5 Lotus Europa and No 20 Lamborghini Marzal, little did we know how the range would grow and that it would still be around to mark this impressive milestone, albeit under different ownership.

I've been planning this publication for years and, thanks to my connection with *Diecast Collector* magazine, have been afforded the opportunity to share my collection with you by way of celebrating those early Superfast years under Lesney.

So this focuses on the years from 1969 to 1982, when Lesney sadly went bankrupt, and concentrates entirely on the British releases. Think of it as an overview as it would be impossible to be exhaustive, but I touch on many of the accessories such as track sets, Matchbox Motorway and the pop-up roadways, and side ranges, such as Streakers, Rolamatics, Super Kings, Speed Kings and Scorpions. I even take a look at the catalogues and box styles.

The core of this publication though is the 1-75 series database and each number in the range has its own page detailing each release with production dates, catalogue years, box styles and variations.

Where each number in the range started in 1969 with regular wheels, this is not included until it becomes a Superfast or gets replaced by a new model that is, but if a non-Superfast appears during the timeline, replacing a Superfast model, it is included - I hope that makes sense! Every UK-released Lesney era casting is included and that totals 246!

It's been quite a task getting this lot together and my collection has expanded significantly as a result - all the models photographed are mine, including all the accessories and sets - it's been a real labour of love! If you enjoy reading this just 1% as much as I have putting this together then you're in for a fabulous ride.

Rick Wilson
Editor and Author



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The five decades of Superfast have seen quite a few changes.

Right: The chrome effect big V8 engine block was widely re-used – back row from left to right: No 13 Baja Buggy, No 64 Slingshot (with two of them!), No 62 Rat Rod Dragster and No 8 Wild Cat Dragster, front row with a slightly bigger version: No 61 Blue Shark, No 36 Draguar and No 2 Hot Rod.



Keeping it Simple

Lesney got up to lots of tricks to make the most out of its tooling.

With such an extensive catalogue of 75 models and a need to refresh this range on a fairly regular basis, it was perfectly sensible from a commercial point of view that models evolved and parts got re-used or modified to keep the series appealing. Following are specific examples pertaining to the photos here but these tricks were widespread throughout the range.

Component re-use was a good way of keeping costs down, probably none more prolific than the chrome effect big V8 engine block, although this came in two sizes. We have a good selection here of examples of this on seven models: No 2 Hot Rod, No 8 Wild Cat Dragster, No 13 Baja Buggy, No 36 Draguar, No 61 Blue Shark, No 62 Rat Rod Dragster and No 64 Slingshot.

Casting variations accounted for a quick fix a lot of the time but several models sadly lost opening features during the change to Superfast wheels, the gorgeous No 22 Pontiac Grand Prix

illustrates this well. Not so obvious from the photo is that the Superfast wheels increased the ground clearance so it also lost its low rider look, but it did gain that rather fabulous metallic purple paint job after a short run of red transitional models.

Also during the transition from regular wheels, No 58 Girder Truck lost its cast-in

load steady bars and these were replaced by a one piece plastic “H” affair – this was exactly the same case for No 10 Pipe Truck. Incidentally, the girder truck kept its regular wheels white paint job for the early Superfast issues before the change to the wonderful, if unrealistic, metallic olive green.

When No 5 Lotus Europa got its fat-



Above: No 22 Pontiac Grand Prix lost its opening doors but gained ride height and a fabulous paint job.



Above: Beach Buggy variations, from the left – first release features white tanks and interior with short exhausts, then orange tanks/interior with short exhausts, and finally with longer exhausts and a larger engine unit. Note the subtle artwork differences to the ever-present type H box.



Above: No 5 Lotus Europa with later wide wheels and early skinnies.

Left: No 1 Mod Rod with standard and red wheels, plus two different 'big cat' stickers.

tyred upgrade, rather than modify the baseplate, Lesney opted to modify the body casting to accommodate the new wheels – this is much more noticeable on the rear wheels than at the front.

Changes to No 1 Mod Rod were very limited and a short run with some rather natty red wheels is probably the most obvious of these. Take a look at those bonnet stickers though – two different types of big cat designs. A few even left the factory with stickers from the Scorpions range.

A good example of re-use and evolution of a casting can be seen when comparing No 6 Pick-up, No 50 Kennel Truck and No 57 Rola-matics Wild Life Truck. The casting was modified from Pick-up for Kennel Truck, with the rear deck puffed out a bit, but this was insufficient when the latter was upgraded to the wider wheels so the baseplate was modified to accommodate most of the extra width. This arrangement then carried over for Wild Life Truck. Another great example of the evolution of a casting was the changes

made between No 30 Beach Buggy, No 13 Baja Buggy and No 47 Beach Hopper. These were three great individual releases that shared a common front end.

No 30 Beach Buggy is painted in a fabulous metallic deep-pink with random yellow paint spatter, ensuring no two models look alike. The very first releases had a white plastic interior and fuel tanks and earlier versions also had less pronounced exhausts (these lasted considerably longer than the white interiors and tanks though so are easy enough to find). Lasting for seven years in the range, it was only ever released in the type H box, but with variations to the artwork.

Released two years later, No 13 Baja Buggy retained the nose of its sibling. The sloping roof was gone though, replaced by a squarer version, presumably inspired by the roll cages found on many of the buggies adapted for use on the famous Baja Rally. However, the engine was completely unrealistic as it featured a high mounted exposed V8 – it does look



Top: No 50 Kennel Truck, No 57 Rola-matics Wild Life Truck, and No 6 Pick-up.

READ THE FULL FEATURE HERE



What's in a Number?

The 1-75 series laid bare from 1969 to 1982 on a whole page per number.

During the Lesney era, there were exactly 75 models on sale at any one time. These would not change at the same time as each year's line up was revealed in the relevant catalogue, instead there would be a smaller number of upgrades and new models to keep the range's appeal fresh in the eyes of the eager young collectors. This obviously had positive implications for the production loading as it would be impossible to change every one of the 75 at the same time!

In the early years, however, there were many of the regular wheels models still continuing in production – these were either eventually upgraded with a new chassis to carry the Superfast wheels and axles or replaced with a new Superfast model completely.

A good place to start is with the various No 1 releases during the Lesney years – these are a perfect example of the diversity of subjects that would change



Top: The 1-75 series during the Lesney Superfast era produced an incredibly varied crop – I hope that this section clears up a few mysteries for you!

Above: A few models confused the issue by disappearing from the range only to reappear slightly modified a year or two later but under a different number – No 36 Formula 5000 (left) and No 28 Formula Racing Car being a good example of this.

to reflect perceived trends. Starting with a truck, this changed to a make-believe car then turned to a real American muscle car, which eventually evolved itself - see the opposite page for more details.

Sometimes though, models were

popular enough to just keep going and there are several numbers that only had two releases during the 1969-1982 Lesney period – No 23 is an example of this with the Volkswagen Camper eventually giving way to Atlas Tipper Truck. The original regular wheels Trailer Caravan had been kept for 1969 but the incredibly popular Superfast VW took over the No 23 slot in 1970 and continued in the catalogue for a total of six years before giving way to the tipper truck in 1976 and this persisted for the remainder of the period that we are covering here.

Where each number in the range started in 1969 with regular wheels, this is not included until it becomes a Superfast or gets replaced by a new model that is, but if a non-Superfast appears during the timeline, replacing a Superfast model, it is included - I hope that makes sense and gives you an insight as to the workings of this comprehensive database section. ☺



Mercedes Truck

Production: 1970–71

Catalogue: 1970–71

Box Styles: G

The Mercedes Truck was an existing regular wheels model and continued as such for both 1969 catalogues.

For the 1970 range, as would happen with most of the existing castings when they were upgraded to Superfast, the body colour was changed to add some extra appeal to the new version. In the case of the Mercedes Truck, which had been green with an orange plastic canopy for the rear section, this was now gold with a golden yellow canopy.

First appearing in this guise for the 1970 catalogue, it only lasted one more year after that but would live on as a Two Pack favourite with a red body and a yellow canopy bearing the legend "Transcontinental Haulage Co." and in the Military Two Pack series in green.

Mod Rod

Production: 1971–75

Catalogue: 1972–75

Box Styles: H, I

A complete fantasy vehicle, and a sure sign of the future direction for some of

the range, Mod Rod was nevertheless a very appealing car.

Strangely it was made as a single-seater but the striking yellow contrasting with the deep amber glass is a suitable distraction. The high-mounted mid-engined and exposed V8 engine sports rather extravagant exhaust pipes.

Later in its production, for the 1973 catalogue, it sported bright red wheels making it the only Lesney Superfast issue ever to wear anything else other than black.

The design of the leopard's head sticker on the nose changed during production too and, occasionally, when these may have run out temporarily, other stickers were used instead, the Scorpions roundel being one of these.

Dodge Challenger

Production: 1976–81

Catalogue: 1976–81

Box Styles: J

One of the most well-known of the American muscle cars from the 1970s era is the Dodge Challenger.

A new casting for 1976 replicated this fabulous car rather well and proved to be an instant success, sporting a rather fabulous bright red paint job with a white roof. A rather fancy chrome-

effect interior and two similarly adorned bonnet scoops really added to the model's appeal.

It stayed this way for most of its production run but for its final year in the catalogue, the body changed to mid blue and the interior/scoops to red plastic.

Dodge Challenger

Production: 1982

Catalogue: 1982

Box Styles: L

For 1982, if the 1981 red, white and blue colour scheme wasn't quite patriotic enough to appeal to the US market, the original casting got a new paint job and underwent a serious revamp. Gone were its two bonnet scoop apertures, replaced by a single bonnet bulge, and the base was altered to accommodate much larger rear wheels, adding side-exit exhausts into the bargain. The rear wheel arches had to be made bigger too, to allow for the bigger rear wheels.

Now painted in a bright orange with a sky blue roof, the bonnet and boot were adorned with blue stripes that were highlighted by white stars, and the sides of the car now bore the name "Revin' Rebel". In this form (but later in different colours), the model lasted well beyond the Lesney years.

1-75 SERIES BY NUMBER (1969-1982)

2



Mercedes Trailer

Production: 1970-71

Catalogue: 1970-71

Box Styles: G

As per its partner, the No 1 Mercedes Truck, the trailer underwent an identical makeover, losing its green body colour for gold and its orange plastic canopy for golden yellow. Together they continued to make a very popular pairing for 1970 and 1971.

Similarly, the trailer would also later appear in both Two Packs liveries of red body and yellow canopy (again with a "Transcontinental Haulage Co." sticker) and in military green - the truck and trailer combination was an obvious one for this pairing initiative.

Jeep Hot Rod

Production: 1971-76

Catalogue: 1972-76

Box Styles: H, I

First appearing in the shops towards the end of 1971 and then the 1972 catalogue, Jeep Hot Rod, as it was called on the box (but Hot Rod Jeep in all the catalogues during its run, strangely) was, like Mod Rod, giving a glimpse of the future of the range with its rather outrageous exposed

engine with its dramatic flared black plastic exhausts. Incidentally, this unit would begin to appear widely throughout the range, a good cost cutting exercise as it spread costs significantly.

With a hot pink body and various shades of green bumpers (from lime to mid green), it was another model shouting for attention. For its final catalogue appearance the body colour changed to a dark red and the bumpers were white. The interior plastic remained a creamy white though.

Despite being replaced for the 1977 catalogue, the basic casting would be revamped many times over the coming years to make new models.

Rescue Hovercraft

Production: 1976-81

Catalogue: 1977-81

Box Styles: J

Becoming the second hovercraft in the range (the very popular No 72 SRN 6, a good replica of a real hovercraft, was still going strong). It used the base of its older sibling for the skirts but the rest of the model was totally fictitious.

Painted a metallic lime green, the rear spoiler features a sticker confirming its job, in case you hadn't picked up on the name on the box and the window unit

has a dark amber tint, with chromed accessories on the roof.

Wearing a different "2000" sticker to the rear spoiler and a lighter metallic green colour, Rescue Hovercraft made an additional appearance in the 1979 catalogue with the announcement of the arrival of the K-2005 Command Force set to the Adventure 2000 range. Also included in the set, from the 1-75 series, were similarly painted versions of No 58 Planet Scout and No 68 Cosmobile.

S-2 Jet

Production: 1981-82

Catalogue: 1982

Box Styles: L

One of two new aircraft to appear in the catalogue for 1982, S-2 Jet is obviously a pretty crude replication of the mighty Blackburn Buccaneer and sports totally oversized (for the model) wheels from the larger-scaled Skybusters range.

The most notable feature is the folding wings, just like the real Buccaneer's did for duty on aircraft carriers, and goes quite some way to compensating for those out-of-scale wheels underneath.

Initially painted black and yellow, during the post-Lesney years this would change to a far more realistic metallic light blue and white.



Mercedes-Benz 'Binz' Ambulance

Production: 1970-73
Catalogue: 1970-73
Box Styles: G

This was an original regular wheels casting that eventually received its Superfast upgrade in time for the 1970 catalogue.

A hugely popular model with its lifting tailgate and plastic passenger on a stretcher, this no doubt took part in many carpet-based emergency situations and led to its good run up to and including 1973.

A good replication of the real vehicle, it is finished simply all over in a plain white with red cross stickers embellishing the forward doors on both sides.

Due to its popularity and extreme play value, it is hard to find one of these in mint condition nowadays and this is reflected in its value, particularly if the patient and original box are still present - expect to pay a high price if this is the case.

The Binz ambulance is one of many 1-75 series that had a larger version in the Super Kings range - an obvious choice given the excellent play value - and the larger scale means that the forward doors open too on that one.

Monteverdi Hai

Production: 1973-78
Catalogue: 1974-78
Box Styles: I

In an period when a fair few of the new models were fantasy creations, the arrival of the Monteverdi Hai, a real Swiss supercar, was a breath of fresh air.

Designed by Peter Monteverdi, a German-speaking Swiss racing driver, it was intended to rival the likes of Ferrari and Maserati, but only two were built (although two more were built many years later from spare parts).

The new Superfast was painted a fabulous orange and, despite the box art suggesting otherwise, always had the striped bonnet sticker displaying the number three. The interior was cream throughout the production run and the base was originally black but later versions were left unpainted as cost-cutting measures were introduced later in its life.

Despite its popularity, the model was replaced by a more famous supercar for the 1979 catalogue. But the casting would be revived for a later US-only release and a modified version used for the budget Super GT range a few years further down the line, another post-Lesney era money-making initiative.

Porsche Turbo

Production: 1978-82
Catalogue: 1979-82
Box Styles: L

From one supercar to another, although this one is obviously a lot more well-known and sales would prove that to be a wise move.

The iconic Porsche Turbo, the first car by the mighty German manufacturer to appear in the Matchbox range, was initially released in metallic dark brown with a creamy-lemon interior and was deemed to be an important enough model to feature on the front cover of the 1979 catalogue, officially announcing its arrival.

It features the bulging wheel arches and whale-tail spoiler of the real thing that adorned many a teenager's bedroom wall back in the seventies so it will come as no surprise to learn that this particular casting lasted well beyond the Lesney era, until 1994 in fact, making it one of the best selling Matchbox models of all time.

The colour schemes changed in each catalogue with 1980 seeing a silver body with red interior, 1981 green with deep yellow and, for the last Lesney catalogue, in 1982 it appeared in bright red with racing numbers, stripes and the Porsche emblem on the nose.

