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NEWS

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DIECAST

COLLECTOR

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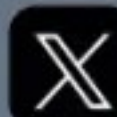


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NEWS

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NEW MODELS JUST IN FROM OXFORD DIECAST

NEWSFLASH! Just as we were preparing to go to print, Oxford Diecast surprised us with a fresh batch of new releases—and we couldn't resist sharing a few highlights ahead of our full coverage in next month's issue.

Collectors and enthusiasts, take note – Oxford Diecast has announced a tantalizing selection of new and returning models sure to stir excitement across the hobby community. While we'll dive into the full range in our August edition, here are a few standout highlights you'll want to keep your eye on:

Bond Bug Returns – 76BUG002

After the roaring success of the first release, the quirky and iconic Bond Bug is back—this time in a crisp White finish. If the previous version is anything to go by, expect demand to be high and stock to move fast. A must-have for fans of unique British motoring history.

A Lifesaving Comeback – 76MA004 / NMA004

Back by popular demand, the Scottish Ambulance makes its triumphant return in both 1:76 and 1/148 scale. Previously discontinued, this sought-after model has been a long-time wishlist item for many, and its re-release is sure to be welcomed with open arms.

Scottish Livery Spotlight – 76AMT001

Continuing the Scottish theme, the Alexander M Type bus returns in its classic regional livery. Stock will be limited, so we recommend placing your orders early to avoid missing out on this charming piece of transport nostalgia.

Heavy Hauler Highlight – 76LTR001

The Rover Transporter rolls back onto the scene, capable of carrying up to four Land Rovers (pair it with item



76LAN180005, already in stock). A dynamic and detailed addition to any layout or collection, this model brings a touch of rugged realism.

Don't miss our full report on all the upcoming Oxford Diecast releases in our August issue. But in the meantime, if any of these gems caught your eye—act fast. They won't be around for long! ■

THE ULTIMATE TINTIN THEMED MODEL?

THE Tintin Shop in London has just announced a whopping 1/12 scale sealed resin model of the Chrysler Imperial to Nankin from the book *The Blue Lotus*.

Initially published in black and white in French in 1936, later colourised in 1946, and finally released in English in 1983, *The Blue Lotus* is a tale of Tintin's journeys from Egypt to China amidst the war with Japan. In addition to his usual faithful companion Snowy Tintin is teamed up for the story by Hergé with the young boy Chang Chong-chen.

Quite a few of the automobiles that appear in *The*

Blue Lotus have been released previously firstly in the 1/43 series from Atlas and more recently in 1/24 by Hachette/Moulinsart. That later series including this blue Chrysler Imperial as number 15. The portrayal is exactly as in that previous 1/24 model inclusive of Tintin, Snowy and Chang but as a massive 1/12 model of limited to 1,250 pieces worldwide.

Released in the prestigious range of Resin Models range (that has famously included the equally massive yellow Arado floatplane and Moon Rockets) rather than the Model Car range this, at a correspondingly

massive £1,295.00 price tag, is although a fabulous looking model undoubtedly aimed at the Tintin connoisseur rather than scale model auto collectors!

For more information visit

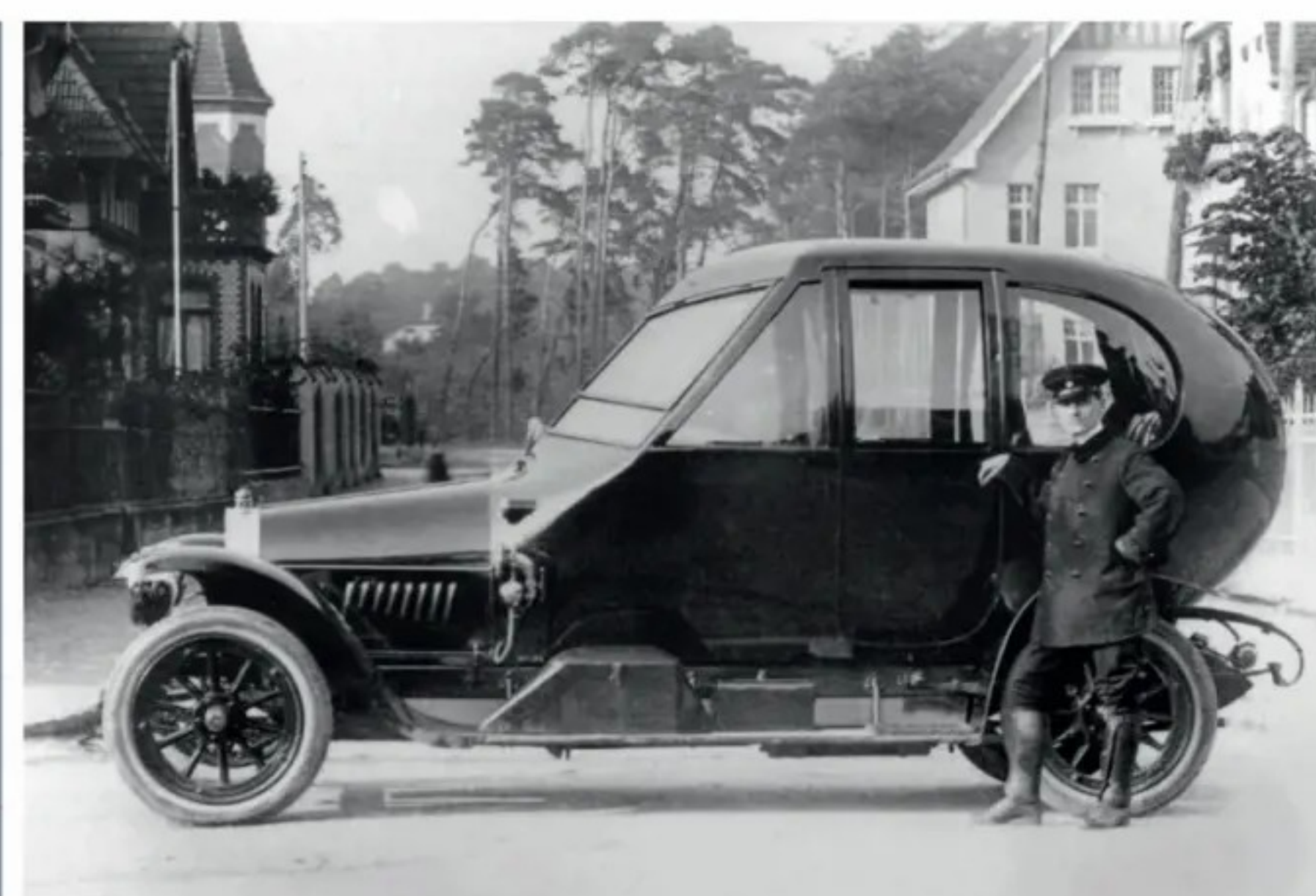
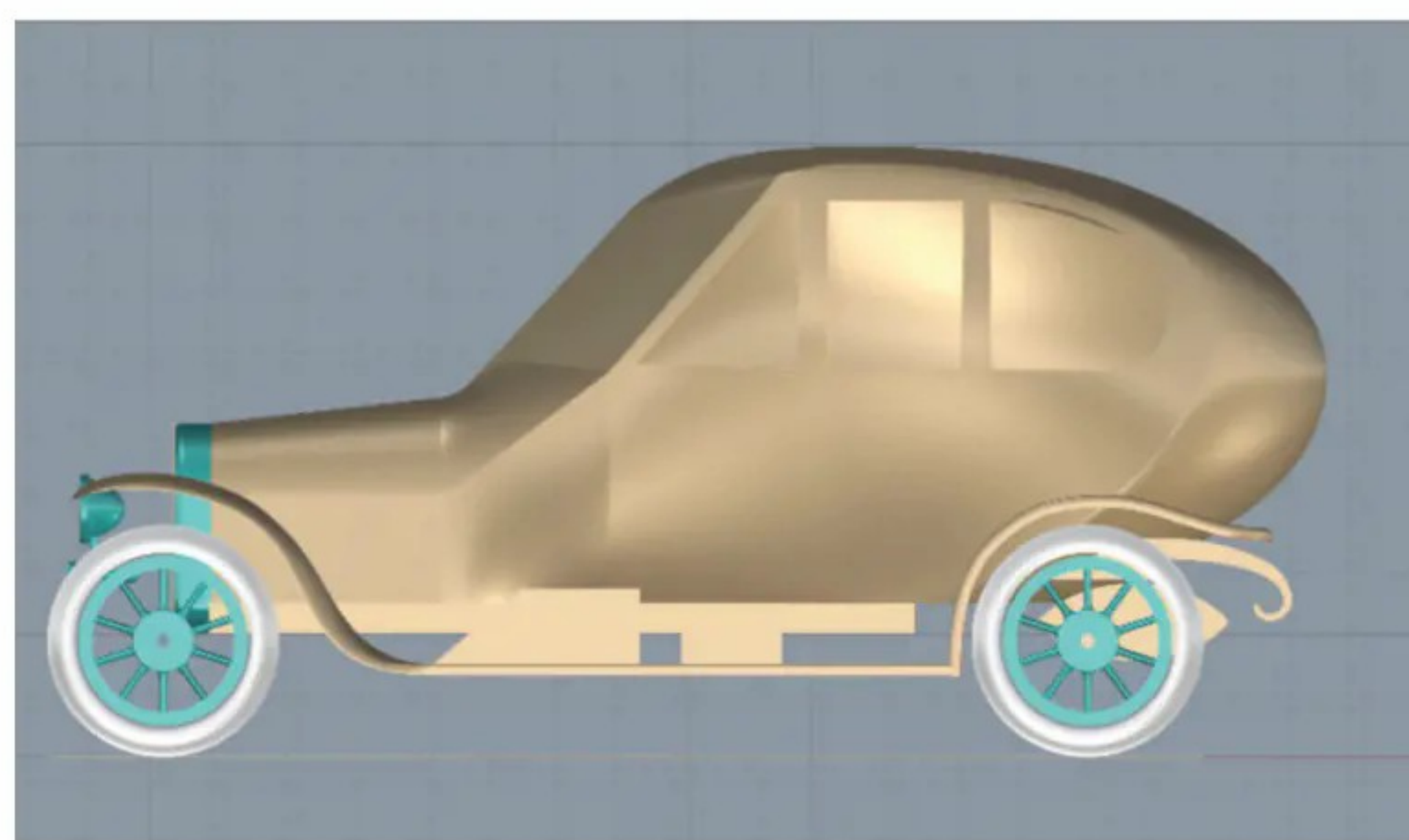
<https://thetintinshop.uk.com/shop/112-scale-model-of-the-chrysler-imperial-to-nankin/>. ■



1912 OPEL EI STREAMLINER FROM AUTOPIONEER

HOT on the heels of last month's "Into Summer" feature Thorsten Sabrautzky tells us that Autopioneer's latest model, announced appropriately at Easter, will be of the very interesting Opel Ei (Egg) from 1912. Due for release at the end of the year the model is the result of Herr Sabrautzky extensive, and ongoing, research about this very early venture by Opel into aerodynamic design that predates the work of Paul Jaray and other popularly accepted exponents of the 'Streamliner' design movement by a decade.

Designed by Max Lochner the Opel Ei was one of many early experimentations in automobile design influenced by the fledgling aircraft industry and against a contemporary prejudice



against all enclosed car bodies on safety grounds.

As with some of the previous Autopioneer releases this Opel brings forward a model of yet another vehicle about which most of its story has been lost over time. Its development at Opel between 1912 and 1914 as a fully working prototype was abruptly terminated by general mobilisation in Germany at the

outset of the Great War and the car's confiscation by the Imperial Automobile Corps after which it lost out of sight and knowledge. The dearth of information has very likely been exacerbated by fact that the French military used Lochner's villa twice as a military post during the war during which it is highly probable that existing photos and technical documents of the design were

destroyed.

The release of the model widens the ongoing debate about the origins of "Streamliner" design in Europe and who can validly be considered the originator of the concept.

For more information <https://autopioneer.de/1912-Opel-Ei-streamliner-by-Max-Lochner>. ■



NEW FROM CULT!

A new 1/18 scale model is set to delight collectors this year. Cult Scale Models will release a detailed replica of the 1988-89 Rover 827 Vitesse Fastback in Q2. The model will be available in three colours: Targa red, Pulsar silver, and metallic dark green. British Heritage Models is offering these collectibles at

£174 each, which includes UK postage and packaging. This release is expected to appeal to classic British car enthusiasts and scale model fans alike. For more information or to order, contact BHM at 01244 320761, email bhm-uk@talktalk.net, or visit www.britishheritagemodels.co.uk. ■

RELIANT SCIMITAR SE5A GTE FROM MATRIX

MATRIX Models has just announced the release of a new 1/43rd scale model based on the iconic British car, the 1971-1975 Reliant Scimitar SE5a GTE. This miniature reproduction pays tribute to one of the most popular variants in the Scimitar lineup.

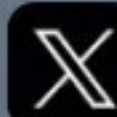
Collectors will be able to choose from three distinct colour options: white (MX41702-022), orange (MX41702-023), and blue (MX41702-021). While pricing details have yet to be confirmed, the models are slated for release in the third quarter of 2025.

The blue edition replicates the Scimitar presented to Princess Anne as a joint 20th birthday and Christmas gift from HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. Registered as 1420 H to honor her role as Colonel-in-Chief of the 14th/20th Hussars, the car was finished in RAF Blue and featured a 2994cc Ford Essex V6 engine, capable of reaching a top speed of 120mph.

The models will be available through British Heritage Models, Spa Croft Models, or your preferred retailer. ■



NEWS

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ESVAL RESCHEDULE NEW RELEASE PROGRAMME

ESVAL Models, manufacturers of high-quality resin models, have rescheduled their ambitious programme of new releases and new versions of existing models.

The new models, two versions of the 1952 Bentley R-Type Continental with Abbott coachwork, four versions of the 1950 Talbot-Lago T25 Record Convertible, and – a new announcement – two versions each of the 1957 Nissan Skyline saloon and Skyway station wagon, are now scheduled for release around May/June. The summer months of July/August should bring us seven variants of the 1961 Buick Le Sabre sedan, coupe and convertible, along with five of the 1929 Austro-Daimler ADR 8 Torpedo Roadster.

Of the host of new variations on current models, now available are the 1937 Humber Super Snipe as an RAF staff car, police car and three different taxis, one

new colour for the 1960 Peerless GT, one for the 1953 Allard K3, and there is the 1947 version of the Invicta Black Prince saloon.

The 1934-36 Adler Trumpf Junior can be had as taxis for Berlin, Vienna and Frankfurt, there are two new versions of the 1934 Hispano-Suiza J12 Fernandez & Darrin Cabriolet, and the 1933 Ford Model 40 can be had in New York Police colours. Also, there are two new versions of the 1935 Delage D8-85 Clabot Cabriolet and one of the 1949-50 Delahaye 135M Guilore coupe.

Fans of fire vehicles will like the 1951 GMC Pickup in Philadelphia Fire livery, and other new colours are available for the 1930 Pierce-Arrow Model B Roadster, 1952 Maverick sports, 1953 Victress Roadster, 1947 Cisitalia cabriolet and 2010 Devon GTX.

As well as the new releases

above, June is down to bring us the Warwick GT variant of the Peerless coupe, and two new colours for the 1947 HRG 1100. The 1952 Kaiser Carolina comes in Police and Fire liveries, the 1956 Chevrolet panel van and station wagon also come in police liveries, whilst the 1936 Mercedes-Benz 290 W18 Cabriolet gains no fewer than six additional variants, and the 1941 Packard 180 limousine will be available as a Franklin D Roosevelt parade car.

The plans for August/September include 2 new colours for the 1948 Delage Autobineau saloon, and five police, ambulance and taxi versions of the 1958 Edsel station wagon. The 1963 Osca GT comes in two new colours, and the 1947 Delahaye 135 Chapron coupe in one. The 1933 Ford Model 18 gains three new variants, and the 1956

Chevrolet station wagons and panel van come in five police and ambulance liveries, plus as a Coca-Cola delivery truck. The 1951 GMC pickup has four new versions, the 1953 Allard, the 1921 Pierce-Arrow and the 1934-36 Adler Trumpf Junior each gain one new variant.

Finally, November should bring us the 1959 De Soto Firedome in police, fire and ambulance colours, and the 1941 Packard 160 limousine as three different sedan-ambulances, and as a New York Police car.

Collectors should note, though, that all of these new models and new variants will be limited to a production of 125 examples each, so it's better to place your orders sooner rather than later.

As always, your chosen supplier will be able to keep you informed, and of course *Diecast Collector* will bring you the latest developments. ■

NEXT MONTH AUGUST 2025

Issue 334



Majorette Alpine A110

There are certain cars that cause a bit of excitement amongst collectors... Is the current Alpine A110 one of them?

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MGT01048 - 1/64 KICK SAUBER C44
#24 GUANYU ZHOU
2024 CHINESE GP



MGT01049 - 1/64 KICK SAUBER C44
#77 VALTTERI BOTTAS
2024 CHINESE GP



MGT00728 - 1/64 ALFA ROMEO C43
#24 ZHOU GUANYU
2023 AUSTRALIAN GP



MGT00729 - 1/64 ALFA ROMEO C43
#77 VALTTERI BOTTAS
2023 AUSTRALIAN GP

MINI
GT



MGT00999 - 1/64 ASTON MARTIN
AMR24 #14 FERNANDO ALONSO
2024 BAHRAIN GP



MGT01001 - 1/64 ASTON MARTIN
AMR24 #18 LANCE STROLL
2024 BAHRAIN GP



MGT00550 - 1/64 ORACLE RED BULL
RACING RB18 #1 MAX VERSTAPPEN
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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.

TAKE TO THE SKIES WITH A TRIO OF EPIC SWEDISH JETS BY AVIATION 72

As jet fighter technology developed after the end of World War Two, Sweden foresaw a need for a supersonic fighter that could intercept bombers at high altitude as well as engage other fighters. It had to be flown by a single pilot, yet be capable of conducting combat operations under all weather conditions, night or day, while operating from even the most basic of airstrips (including the ability to operate from reinforced public roads), carrying all the equipment needed to neutralise modern jet bombers.

Development of the Saab J-35 Draken (Draken has a double meaning and translates as both Dragon and Kite) started in 1948, making its first flight in 1955 and ceasing production in 1974. Designed as a fighter, the innovative but unproven double-delta wing led to the creation of a smaller-scale test aircraft, the Saab 210 (unofficially nicknamed "Lilldraken"), which was produced and flown to test this previously unexplored aerodynamic feature prior to full type approval for the Draken.

Propulsion was provided by a single Svenska Flygmotor RM6B/C turbojet engine, a licence-built model of the Rolls-Royce Avon engine. The Draken was the first Western European-built combat aircraft to enter service that could achieve true supersonic speeds and be deployed with this feature. With its distinctive double delta wings, the Draken was capable of incredible manoeuvrability and saw service with the Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Austrian air forces.

The Draken functioned as an effective supersonic fighter-interceptor aircraft of the Cold War period, although it was never used in conflict. It was considered to be a very capable dogfighter for the era and, in Swedish service, it underwent several upgrades. By the mid-1980s, the Swedish Air Force's Drakens had largely been replaced by the more advanced Viggen fighter, while the introduction of the more capable Saab Gripen fighter was expected in service within a decade. As a consequence of cutbacks and high maintenance costs, the Swedish Air Force opted to retire the Draken during December 1999.

A total of 651 Drakens were manufactured by Saab. Sweden's Draken fleet comprised a total of six different versions, while two additional models of the Draken were offered to prospective export customers. Austria was the last country to have the Draken in



ABOVE
Saab Draken Austrian Air Force Dragon Knights 2005 (AV7241010, top), Saab J35 Draken Swedish Air Force Yellow (AV7241009, middle) and Saab J35 Draken Swedish Air Force Splinter Scheme (AV7241008, bottom).

AVIATION 72
Saab J-35 Draken
Swedish Air Force
Splinter, Swedish
Air Force Yellow and
Austrian Air Force
Dragon Knights

SCALE: 1/72
PRICE: £69.99 each
REF: AV7241008,
AV7241009 and
AV7241010

www.clevelands
diecast.co.uk

active military service – the first of the refurbished Draken J-35Ö's was handed over to the Austrian Air Force by 1987. In 2005, these AAF Drakens were retired. In the United States, the National Test Pilot School operated six Drakens that were formerly in Danish service. They were retired in 2009.

The three latest versions of Aviation 72's impressively heavy casting feature two Swedish Air Force liveries and the famous Austrian Air Force 'Dragon Knights' scheme. With undercarriage fixed in deployed mode, each model comes with an array of ordnance. Also supplied is Aviation 72's premium stand, which is incredibly sturdy. The packaging has also been beefed-up as both model and stand make for quite a hefty package. Numbers of each model release are limited too (420 of the Splinter and 360 of each of the other two).

The aircraft shown here are pre-production samples, with some modifications to the cockpit canopy and pilot's position still to be made prior to production. Expected to land in the UK during June, make sure you get your pre-orders in at supersonic speed! ■



STAMP MODELS
1942 Cadillac Sixty Special 4-door Sedan – Black
SCALE: 1/43 **PRICE:** £115 **REF:** STM 42213

www.stampmodels.com

Great model of this classic "Caddy", very well-detailed with the plating contrasting well with the black coachwork. Mid-grey interior, limited run of 129 examples.



CORGI MODEL CLUB
The Beatles Yellow Submarine
SCALE: 1/36 **PRICE:** £39.99
REF: 803

www.corgimodelclub.com

Based on the cartoon submarine from the *Yellow Submarine* film, this model has surprise figures hidden under hatches that flip open by pushing side buttons.



REPLICARS
Hitachi ZX490LCH-7 Tracked Excavator
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** €TBA **REF:** n/a

www.hcmewebshop.com

The latest generation of machine featuring a host of features including opening cabin door and engine bay revealing the fine details within.



WSI MODELS
Scania 3 Series Torpedo 6x2 Tractor
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** €109
REF: 04-2228

www.wsi-models.com

A smart looking tractor from the 'Premium Line'. Finished in black it really does hit the mark, packed with small details that stand out. A must have!



WSI MODELS
Volvo FH5 Globetrotter 6x2 with 3-axle Brick Trailer
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** €169 **REF:** 01-4610

www.wsi-models.com

This pairing has been finished in the colours of Int. Transporten Croonen. Crane is functional and the tractor has a steering axle and pivoting fifth-wheel plate.



WSI MODELS
Scania S Highline 6x2 with 4-axle Flatbed Trailer
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** €174 **REF:** 01-4430

www.wsi-models.com

Finished in 'Give' decoration the overall red paint work is accentuated with white striping and company markings that catch the eye.



WSI MODELS
Liebherr R9150 Tracked Excavator "High Cab Version"
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** €209 **REF:** 64-2014

www.wsi-models.com

This tracked excavator has now been produced with a raised cabin to give a better view of the surroundings, complete with a perforated side platform and ladder.



WSI MODELS
Liebherr R9150B Tracked Excavator "Taavura Decoration"
SCALE: 1/50 **PRICE:** €209 **REF:** 61-2011

www.wsi-models.com

One of the more interesting decorations is this Taavura design expertly applied to the Liebherr R9150 B tracked Excavator. The yellow contrasts well with the white!



WAS THIS COMBINE WORTH THE WAIT?

Although collectors have had to wait two years for Universal Hobbies to release its Massey Ferguson 760 combine, after first showing the prototype at Nuremberg in 2023, it has definitely been worth the wait!

Weighing just over 1.1kg the beautifully engineered combine has good levels of detailing. It has a detachable 15ft grain table, moulded in a high-grade plastic and provided with crop dividers, drives, knife, feed auger and reel. There are two rams to set the height of the freely rotating reel. The feed elevator is supported on two rams, there's also the flotation spring, and has the drive detail. There are wing mirrors and good-looking lights provided on the engine cover and fully glazed cab. While there's no access to the cab interior it's provided with operating levers, foot pedals and red and white driver's seat.

Both the air cleaner and exhaust are detailed on the engine cover and there's a small window at the front of the grain tank. Inside the tank the feed elevator and auger are detailed. While the unloading auger swings out from its transport when unloading. Under the tank on the left-hand side there's the fuel tank and toolbox detailed. While on the right-hand side there's the re-threshing unit. The combine has steerable rear wheels, clevis draw and on the rear hood there are tail lights and a Slow Moving Vehicle sign. While under the hood the straw walkers and sieves are detailed. ■

**UNIVERSAL
HOBBIES**
**Massey Ferguson
760 Combine**

PRICE: £120

SCALE: 1/32

REF: UH6329

**www.accurate
diecast.com**



WIKING
Fendt 726 Vario Tractor
SCALE: 1/32 **PRICE:** £119.95
REF: 77872

www.wiking.de

Wiking's latest Fendt 700 series tractor features dual crop wheels and is supplied with both North America and European signage.



WIKING
Krampe Kipper 650 Trailer
SCALE: 1/32 **PRICE:** £84.95
REF: 77871

www.wiking.de

Sporting rhinoceros decals this black edition trailer has detachable silage extensions, sprung rear axle, steerable rear wheels and a ram for body tipping.



WEISE-TOYS
SAME Virtus 135 RVshift Tractor
SCALE: 1/32 **PRICE:** £90.60
REF: 071585 (SDF: MO9S020)

www.same-tractors.com

Well-built and detailed, largely metal tractor provided with working linkages and steerable wheels. Doors, rear window and roof panel all open.



ROS
Kuhn GF 13003 T Gyrotedder
SCALE: 1/32 **PRICE:** £110.58
REF: 9401223

www.kuhn.co.uk/kuhn-shop

Well-built and detailed model with piped rams, 12 rotors and transport wheels. It folds smoothly into its transport position.

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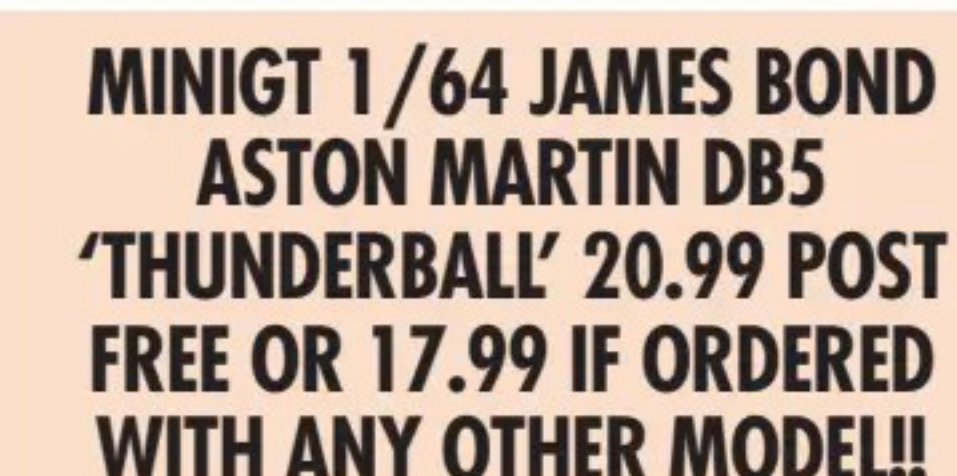
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Autobianchi was an Italian manufacturer, created jointly by Bianchi, Pirelli and Fiat in 1955. It produced only a handful of models during its time, which were almost exclusively small cars. Its products were priced higher than Fiat models of similar size and the brand was used by Fiat to test innovative concepts that could later be found in mainstream Fiat vehicles.

One of the most well-known Autobianchi models is the A112, launched in November 1969 as a small hatchback. Production of the A112 ceased in 1986. It was developed using a shrunken version of the contemporary Fiat 128's platform and the mechanicals of the A112 subsequently underpinned the Fiat 127.

The A112 proved very popular in Italy for tuning and racing, so it was somewhat inevitable that a certain legendary Italian company would get involved. This performance version of the A112 represents the last hurrah of Abarth as an independent company prior to being absorbed into the Fiat empire, basically becoming a marketing brand for the Italian automotive giant.

In the late 1970s, the A112 underwent its fourth round of styling modification, and the fifth generation duly arrived in July 1979. It received a large black plastic panel as cladding to the rear, surrounding new rear lights, and new side trim and bumpers. The grille was also new, and the extractor vents behind the rear side windows had also been made larger.

Solido's superb 1/18 scale diecast replica of the Abarth A112 has already proven to be a popular model and this is the sixth version released from this tooling. As with the previous incarnations,

SOLIDO
1980 Autobianchi
A112 Mk5 Abarth -
Green

SCALE: 1/18
PRICE: £58.99
REF: S1803806

www.solido.com



RIGHT
The impressive bank of four Cibie spotlights really highlights the performance of Abarth's version of the A112.



ABOVE
The body shape of the cute A112 has been really well executed by Solido.

both doors open and the body shape is very well executed. This model is another to carry the impressive array of four rally-style spot lamps to the front and its performance look is further enhanced by the inclusion of a half rollover cage in the rear of the interior.

It's another great release of this incredibly attractive little car. Fast back in the day, it is sure to be just as quick off the shelves. ■



LEFT
The fifth generation A112 received a large black plastic panel as cladding to the rear, surrounding new rear lights, and the extractor vents behind the rear side windows were also made larger. The opening doors reveal a nicely-detailed interior.



ROS ENGINEERING
Sennebogen 683E Telescopic Crawler Crane
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €169 REF: n/a

An update to the original model commissioned by Sennebogen. It is fully functional, featuring extending track frames, working winch and jib.

www.sennebogen.com/shop/en



ROS ENGINEERING
Sennebogen 728E Tree Felling Excavator
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: £€139 REF: n/a

A wheeled undercarriage with working outriggers, telescopic arm and elevating cabin are just some of the operational features on this 1/50 scale model.

www.sennebogen.com/shop/en



IMC MODELS
Hyundai HX35Az Mini Tracked Excavator
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €89 REF: 18-1014

Very impressive details that include a fully modelled cabin interior, tracked undercarriage and front end equipment which has a good range of movement.

www.imcmodels.eu



CAVALLINO
Scania S Highline 6x2 with 3-axle Low Loader
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €106 REF: 20-1287

An interesting truck and trailer combination, with working loading ramps paired tractor in the striking 'Green Transport BV' decoration.

www.cavallino-store.com



CAVALLINO
Mercedes-Benz Actros 4x2 Tractor "Mammoet"
 SCALE: 1/18 PRICE: €399 REF: 30-1202

Fans of the big scale trucks will be delighted with this model. It has opening cabin doors, a fully furnished interior and tilting cabin revealing the engine bay.

www.cavallino-store.com



REPLICARS
Hitachi ZX890LC-7 Tracked Excavator
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €TBA REF: n/a

With a general-purpose boom rather than the ME boom of the TMC Scalemodels version. Features include an opening cabin door and a fully replicated interior.

www.hcmewebshop.com



CORGİ MODEL CLUB
Citroën ID19 Safari
 SCALE: 1/48 PRICE: £37.99 REF: 436

With a two-piece opening tail-gate and fold-down rear seat (operated via a thumb wheel on the baseplate), and two figures sitting inside the car.

www.corgimodelclub.com



OTTOMOBILE
Fiat Punto Evo Abarth Esseesse
 SCALE: 1/18 PRICE: £120.99 REF: OT460 UV1

A sleek and clean looking replica of the performance-focused version of the Fiat Grande Punto, known for its high-performance engine and styling.

www.otto-models.com



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Latest releases from Corgi

The sun is out and as is now something of a tradition for Corgi fans, it is accompanied by the unveiling of the latest model range. Here we see models that will arrive over the next few months...



Hawker Hurricane Mk.I, P3383/UF-E, P/O WML 'Billy' Fiske, 'B Flight', RAF No.601 Squadron, Tangmere, 11th August 1940

PRICE: £59.99 SCALE: 1/72 REF: AA27609 RELEASE: June 2025

B-17F Flying Fortress, 'Royal Flush' 42-6087, LD-Z, 100th BG, Lt Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal, 8th Air Force, October 10 1943

PRICE: £189.99 SCALE: 1/72 REF: AA33322 RELEASE: August 2025





Handley Page Halifax MkV, DK186 ZL-L, 'London's Revenge / L for Lana',
RCAF No. 427 Sqn, RAF Leeming, 1943
PRICE: £169.99 SCALE: 1/72 REF: AA37210 RELEASE: September 2025



Junkers Ju87B – 1 Stuka, S2+LM – W.Nr 5600, Uffz Pittroff and Uffz Scubert,
4/StG77, 8th August 1940, Attack on Convoy CW9 Peewit
PRICE: £64.99 SCALE: 1/72 REF: AA32520 RELEASE: August 2025



Westland Puma HC-1, XW231, RAF 230. Sqn, NATO Tiger Meet livery, Royal
International Air Tattoo, July 2005
PRICE: £74.99 SCALE: 1/72 REF: AA27006 RELEASE: June 2025



Messerschmitt Me109E-4/B Wk-Nr 1106 'Yellow 1', Oberleutnant Walter
Rupp, Manston, 17 October 1940
PRICE: £59.99 SCALE: 1/72 REF: AA28009 RELEASE: September 2025



Supermarine Spitfire MkI, ZD-D P9443, Flt Lt. Douglas Bader, RAF 222Sqn,
Duxford, 1 June 1940
PRICE: £59.99 SCALE: 1/72 REF: AA39216 RELEASE: June 2025



NEW MODELS



Ford Focus Mk3 ST, Performance Blue

PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA15307 **RELEASE:** May 2025



Ford Capri Mk2 3.0S X-Pack, Signal Green

PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA15405 **RELEASE:** August 2025



Ford Focus Mk3 RS Heritage Edition, Deep Orange

PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA15306 **RELEASE:** May 2025



Ford Cortina Mk5 1.6 GL, Terracotta

PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA15006 **RELEASE:** June 2025



Ford Escort Mk2 1300 Sport, Jupiter Red

PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA12623 **RELEASE:** May 2025



Ford Fiesta Mk2 1.1 Popular Plus, Maritime Blue

PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA14402 **RELEASE:** June 2025



Ford Fiesta Mk2 XR2, Rosso Red

PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA14401 **RELEASE:** June 2025



MG ZT, Caledonian Blue

PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA09307 **RELEASE:** June 2025



Star Trek – Klingon Bird of Prey 'HMS Bounty'
PRICE: £39.99 **SCALE:** FTB **REF:** CC96612 **RELEASE:** August 2025



Ford Transit Custom Leader, Shadow Black (Richard Hammond's *The Smallest Cog*)
PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA15105 **RELEASE:** May 2025



BMW E30 325i M-Tech 2, Brilliant Red
PRICE: £37.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VA13406 **RELEASE:** August 2025



Aston Martin DB10 - James Bond 007 – Spectre
PRICE: £39.99 **SCALE:** 1/36 **REF:** CC08003 **RELEASE:** September 2025



Ford Heritage Capri Collection - Ford Capri Mk1 Green, Ford Capri Mk2 Olympic Blue, Ford Capri Mk3 280 Brooklands
PRICE: £119.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** VC01303 **RELEASE:** August 2025



Triumph Scrambler 1200XE - *No Time To Die* (Norway)
PRICE: £89.99 **SCALE:** 1/12 **REF:** CC08403 **RELEASE:** August 2025



Screen Stars - Ford Capri Mk2 2.0S Diamond White, and Jaguar XJ6 Series 2 Silver
PRICE: £79.99 **SCALE:** 1/43 **REF:** CC91992 **RELEASE:** June 2025



The name is...Esprit!

This year, the Lotus Esprit celebrates a half century since its launch in 1975. Time for **Francisco Mota** to gather a few 1/43 scale models that tell the story of this iconic sports car. Photos: João Carlos Oliveira

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT
From left to right S300
from Le Mans 1994 (Spark),
1996 V8 (AutoArt) and
1990 St. Tropez convertible
(Autocult).

Fifty years after it was launched, the Lotus Esprit still makes heads turn when it passes in the streets. The Giorgetto Giugiaro wedge-shaped design was so ahead of its time in the seventies that it still looks great today. With just one major restyling through its life, and a few minor body updates, the Esprit stayed in production from 1976 until 2004 in Hethel, Norfolk. A total production run of 10,675 cars were delivered to customers, in several consecutive special series.

Giugiaro was responsible for the first version, the Series 1, and the first minor changes in 1978 that led to the Series 2. Between 1982 and 1988, the Series 3 brought a few more detail changes and the Turbo Esprit was launched in 1980 with an aerodynamic package, both also penned by the Italian stylist.

From here on, a series of famous stylists took

the job of renewing the Esprit. The first significant restyling occurred in 1988 and was made by Peter Stevens, who also did the McLaren F1 road car styling. The Esprit got overall softer lines and was known by its project number X180. In 1994, an official Series 4 Esprit was launched, this time styled by Julian Thomson, with further rounded shapes in the lower part of the car. This would last until 2004 and was the most long-lived Esprit series. Before the production closed, a last few changes were made by Russell Carr in 2002. If you put the first and the last Esprit side by side, it is obvious the essence of the original design and proportions remained the same. It is not so easy to find another car that achieved this, not even the 911 which grew in size considerably along the years.

The Esprit project started in 1972 with a first prototype presented at Italdesign's Turin Motorshow



booth, which generated strong positive reactions both from the public and Press. The styling was like nothing else seen before; incredibly low, wide and with the windshield angle almost the same as the wedge-shaped front bonnet. Apart from the shocking looks, the Esprit was not so impressive in terms of mechanicals. It used a new version of Lotus's backbone chassis under a synthetic bodywork and a four cylinder mid-mounted engine. This was a proper Lotus-designed 2.0 litre, four cylinder, engine with double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder and entirely made from aluminum. This Type 907 unit was born in 1966 and developed since, including being used in the Lotus Elite. However, that long gestation period was not enough to iron out all the reliability problems it had. The Esprit production version was launched in the 1975 Paris Motorshow and was not very different from the first mock-up. The windshield was slightly more upright, all chromed parts were removed and Speedline wheels had a new design. It had a colourful interior, covered with fabric and non-adjustable backrest seats. Maximum power was 160bhp at 6200rpm for a total weight of 900kg. Maximum speed was 138mph and 0-60mph acceleration was made in 6.8 seconds, according to Lotus. Production would start in 1976 and the price for a new Esprit was £5844.

In July 1977 (07/07/1977 to be precise!), *The Spy Who Loved Me* premiered in cinemas. It was the 10th movie in the 007 - James Bond saga and the third featuring Roger Moore. It was also the first with Lotus as the supplier of the James Bond car - a bright white Series 1 with chromed wheels. The script gave the car a protagonist role, starting with a succession of car chases in the roads of Sardinia. Obviously the highlight was when the Esprit plunged into the sea and transformed itself into a submarine. This feature film gave the Lotus Esprit a world awareness that no advertising campaign could ever replicate. At the end

of 1977, total sales had reached 580 units. It doesn't look much, but it was the best year of the first eleven years of production. In 1978, the Series 2 brought a few changes: new wheels, mirrors and rear lights. Also new cluster, new integrated front spoiler and better handling at high speeds. Then comes the S3, a more profound rethink of several mechanical parts, including an increased engine capacity to 2.2 litres, keeping the maximum power unchanged. More relevant to the story was the introduction in 1980 of the Esprit Turbo, with 210bhp and much better performance, reaching 152mph and accelerating from 0 to 60mph in 5.5 seconds. James Bond got his second Lotus Esprit, naturally a Esprit Turbo painted bronze that featured in the 1981 movie *For Your Eyes Only*. It still featured some gadgets, but



ABOVE RIGHT The Esprit revolutionised Lotus, even in the type of lettering used for the new car.

RIGHT Corgi Vanguards' model has moveable headlights that can be easily operated via a small rod under the front.

BELOW This is a replica of Colin Chapman's personal Series 1, with early type wheels and wide spoiler.



ABOVE Corgi Vanguards captured the lines and proportions of Esprit Series 1 very well.



ABOVE Two different views of a pair of scale models that replicate the same type of car. The orange model is by Minichamps and the yellow one is by AutoArt. Difficult to decide which is best...

the appearances in this episode were much more discreet. In fact, there was a first white Esprit Turbo that appeared early in the movie in a static scene that ended with the explosion of that car.

The following year, Colin Chapman died from a heart attack at the age of 54. The company sees Toyota and BCA (British Car Auctions) enter the capital with 20% and 29% respectively. The Esprit continues to be developed with new technologies that never get to production, like active suspension, ABS, CVT transmission and V8 engine. In 1986, General Motors acquires the majority shareholding of Group Lotus and the Esprit gets a new version, called the Turbo HC, with more 5 bhp. But the priority now is project M100, the front wheel drive Lotus Elan. One year later the original Giugiaro designed Esprit ceased production with a total of 5829 sales. A new generation (with a more rounded body shape by Peter Stevens, still keeping the same chassis/body arrangement) is launched and keeps the Esprit alive. The following year, the Esprit Turbo SE is introduced with 280bhp. In 1993, Group Lotus is sold to Romano Artioli, the leading man of Bugatti at the time. Esprit S4 is launched into the market with slightly body changes, 300bhp and reaching 168mph and doing 0-60mph in 4.6 seconds. In 1996, Group Lotus is bought by Proton and the Esprit V8, a Colin Chapman old dream finally turns into reality with a bi-turbo 3.5 litre engine delivering 350bhp with a price tag of £58,750. Production ends in 2004.

THE SCALE MODELS

For a sports car that stayed in production for 28 years it is surprising how few 1/43 scale quality models can be found. If you want to have a collection of all

the Series, evolutions and special editions, it will be hard work to find them, either as diecasts, resincasts or even white metal or resin kits. I started my Esprit collection decades ago and only found the models you can see in these pages. Nevertheless, it is a good cross section of what was the Lotus Esprit evolution since 1975 to 2004.

The first model is a fine diecast by Corgi Vanguard, replicating an early Series 1, Chapman's first personal car, painted silver, right hand drive and featuring the license plate VEX 299X. It has the early style Speedline wheels and a wraparound front spoiler, that would be part of the Series 2. Moving a lever under the model you can display it with headlamps up or down. Overall shape is good and the detail level also good; two examples are the rear lamps design and the detailed interior.

The next pair joins the orange 1978 Series 2 and a 1979 Yellow Series 2. The first one is a diecast by Minichamps, while the second is another diecast, by AutoArt. They follow the lines of the original car so closely that they seem to be the same diecast in two different colours. Looking carefully, we can spot a few differences, like the wheels, which are chromed in the orange car and aluminium in the yellow. AutoArt's example features more realistic rear lamps with black surrounds and the front wheels steer; while Minichamps model has license plates. Both have right hand drive and detailed interior, plus two mirrors



ABOVE Through the open window we can see a little of the excellent work Minichamps did modelling the cabin.



ABOVE This AutoArt model has steering front wheels so you can display it in different positions.



ABOVE James Bond's submarine Esprit in road guise and as a underwater weapon, both by Minichamps.

BELOW The three 007 Esprits launched by Minichamps feature the two submarine versions and the Turbo with skis. They all look great.



ABOVE The submarine Esprit with its four propellers is very well modelled.





ABOVE The Esprit also had an international racing career, namely at the Le Mans 24 hours race. The white car is from the 1993 edition, while the magnificent green and yellow livery belongs to the pair of cars entered the following year. Spark launched all this resincasts with their usual attention to detail.



ABOVE Perfectly reproduced rear wheel, ride height and rear wing in this Le Mans 1993 car.



ABOVE The 1990 Esprit PBB St. Tropez convertible was the work of an independent car converted. Autocult did a great job with this one.



ABOVE A nice view into the cabin of the St. Tropez featuring all the details of the real car.



each. Series 1 only had one.

A Lotus Esprit collection would not be complete without the most relevant 007 cars. Luckily, some years ago, Minichamps released a collection of the best Bond cars, featuring three Lotus Esprit. This is the golden age of Minichamps at the 1/43 scale, so this trio is really exceptional. They have the pair of white 1977 Series 1 Esprits, the standard PPW 306R car and the submarine version. The last one is a static model, there are no working devices, but it looks just perfect. The window protections are in closed position, there is a roof antenna, plus a mirror and another larger device, maybe a sonar. Wheels are covered and have a moveable flap each. The most impressive features are the four propellers at the rear, with vertical flaps in each extremity. The third Bond car is a 1980 Esprit Turbo painted bronze and featuring a different body shape, with the correct BBS large offset wheels. The open driver's door window allows a peek inside the light tan painted cabin, complete with that iconic instrument panel, ball gear knob, sports seats and sports wheel. On the outside, there's two pairs of snow skis on the rear window that has the black window shades. It is a great looking Esprit Turbo, 007 or not.

For the next pair we have the Esprit with a longer name, it's called the Esprit PBB Saint Tropez Convertible. There was never an official open top Esprit, however, there were a few unofficial transformations. The St Tropez was one of the best, a conversion designed and made by Paul Bailey, someone with a lot of experience while working for 15 years in a company that did conversions in Mercedes, Rolls Royce and Range Rovers. He established his own company PBB Design in 1987, based in Bristol and started working in Jaguars. He made a few Esprit St Tropez based on Series 2 and Series 3 donor cars. This blue car was the second he did, based on a Series 3 Esprit Turbo. Autocult, always in search of obscure subjects, modelled this as a

resincast and it looks very good. It follows the shape of the original car very well, with a different engine cover, five spoke wheels, and detailed cabin.

Next to this rare specimen, we have a 1996 Esprit V8, a diecast by AutoArt that shows how much the Esprit changed to this second generation. Much more rounded shapes, while still keeping the same basic wedge shape. The scale model features rounded bumpers, big size mirrors, six spoke wheels and wide rear wing. It also features a small antenna on the roof and discreet wheel arch extensions. It has different rear lamps and two separated exhaust pipes. The cabin looks as close to original as possible, at this scale.

The Lotus Esprit also had a motorsport career, both in Britain and internationally. The highlight was the two entries in the Le Mans 24 hours race, in 1993 and 1994, with two cars each time. The base car was the Esprit S300 four cylinder turbo, reinforced and featuring race suspensions and brakes and power raised to 430bhp. The cars which were entered faced serious technical problems at Le Mans 1993 and did not finish the race. They were back the following year, with a new green and yellow livery and were better prepared cars, but the result was no different. Spark reproduce all the four cars, three of those are featured here, one of the white 1993 S300 and the pair of 1994 cars. Shapes and details are similar. There's a battery of four spotlights inside a Plexiglas cover in the middle of the front bumper, only one exhaust pipe under the rear bumper, lowered suspension and five spoke racing wheels. There's also NACA ducts in the roof and antennas in the 1994 cars. The racing cars look great, unfortunately in 1994 they had no luck: one lost a wheel, the other got involved in an accident during the race.

The Esprit is a relevant part of the Lotus story, surely the car that introduced the Lotus brand to more people around the world than any other model. Maybe it's time for the Esprit to come back, with or without Mr. Bond. ■



ABOVE On the left, we have the Autocult 1990 Turbo St. Tropez convertible, on the right the AutoArt 1996 V8, two eras of a car launched in 1975 that lasted in production until 2004.



A farewell to the RAF Puma

After more than 50 years in service, in March this year the RAF retired the last of its Puma helicopters. To mark the occasion **Jarrold Cotter** looks at the Corgi 1/72 scale model of the Puma HC.1

On 26/27 March 2025 personnel at RAF Benson waved off Puma helicopters for the last time, as they embarked on their farewell flights in a series of flypasts around the UK.

The Puma is a twin-engined medium helicopter and has been a workhorse of the Royal Air Force (RAF) for over five decades, having been introduced into service in 1971. The Puma quickly became a key asset, known for its agility, speed, and versatility. Over the years, it has been deployed in numerous operations and humanitarian missions around the world.

In recent history it has seen service in Kenya, from 2009 to 2011, where these helicopters supported UK exercises and in Afghanistan from 2015 to 2021. It has also provided support in the Caribbean as a part of *Operation Ruman* after Hurricane Irma in September 2017. Right up until its end in RAF service, the Puma has been involved in enduring operations in Cyprus and Brunei.

The Puma HC.1 was a sound, reliable helicopter with a spacious main cabin. It could carry up to 16 fully equipped troops or 20 unencumbered passengers. In the aeromedical role it could carry up to six stretchers and six seated casualties. While some supplies could be

carried in the cabin, bulky loads, such as a 105mm Light Gun, would be slung underneath the fuselage.

ROLES OF THE PUMA

Since 1971 the Puma has been a versatile and reliable asset for the RAF. In that time it has been utilised as a battlefield aircraft (both in times of conflict and for peacekeeping), a Search and Rescue (SAR) asset, it has provided Military Aid to the Civil Authority (MACA) including firefighting and has been deployed as a humanitarian aid for disaster relief.

The primary role of the Puma was as a battlefield-focussed support helicopter. The main use of such an asset was the tactical deployment and recovery of troops. The later Puma Mk.2 could carry up to 16 passengers or 12 fully equipped troops and could defend itself when fitted with two 7.62mm General Purpose Machine Guns. While not as large as a Chinook, the Puma was perfectly equipped for the management of smaller or more specialist infantry troops, with the ability to land in tighter confined areas with a smaller noise footprint and fewer issues arising from downwash. The Puma has been used extensively in this capacity across its entire service life.

The other component of support helicopter

ABOVE Highlighting how the Puma could operate in the most hostile environments, this example is caught stirring up the desert dust. Image credit: RAF/Crown Copyright



RIGHT This is AA27002 which represents XW214/CL of 33 Squadron circa 1972. This Puma model comes fitted with two pilot figures in the cockpit.



ABOVE A head-on view of the Corgi model.



ABOVE On the Corgi model the starboard door can be slid open to reveal a loadmaster figure.



ABOVE The box art for Corgi model AA27001 which models XW219 of 230 Squadron. Image credit: Corgi

operations is the carriage of freight, either internally, underslung or a combination of both. It is hard to state exact performance and capability for a support helicopter, because many factors affect the equation as it's a sliding scale of weight and range. However, we can say that a Puma could reliably deliver a car sized object 100 nautical miles away in an hour. The Puma has been continuously used to transport supplies, ammunition, and equipment to remote and challenging locations around the globe, ensuring that troops have the resources they need to complete their missions.

As previously mentioned, the Puma can be fitted with up to six stretchers, allowing it to transport injured personnel from the front lines to medical facilities. This capability has been vital in saving lives during combat operations and humanitarian missions. When fitted with a rescue hoist the Puma could perform SAR duties, as it has done in Cyprus since replacing the Griffin HAR.2 in 2023. While primarily focussed on the recovery of fast jet aircrew following ejections, the Puma has performed dozens of SAR operations for the civilian and military population of Cyprus.

It was unique in the RAF's fleet, in its ability to be deployed inside a C-17 Globemaster – two Pumas could be flown to RAF Brize Norton, stripped and loaded in just 4 hours. The C-17 would then transit anywhere around the world and deploy the two Pumas which could be rebuilt and airborne 4 hours after the C-17 touched down. This, and its ability to operate in harsh environments, has made it invaluable in responding to natural disasters and providing assistance to affected populations.

KEY DEPLOYMENTS

The Puma was extensively used during the conflict in Northern Ireland, this being the first operational employment of the type, providing mobility and support for British forces.

During the conflicts in the Balkans, the Puma was deployed to support NATO operations, transporting troops and supplies and conducting medical evacuation missions.

The helicopter saw significant action in Iraq and Afghanistan, where it was used for troop transport, medical evacuation and logistical support. During *Operation Toral* in Afghanistan, the Puma flew 12,800 hours, transported 126,000 passengers, and moved

660,000kg of freight.

The Puma helicopter's adaptability and robust performance have made it a critical component of the RAF for these last 54 years.

The Puma HC.2 helicopters have been stationed in Cyprus since April 2023 and flown by 84 Squadron, RAF. They replaced the Griffin HAR.2 helicopters, also flown by 84 Squadron, at RAF Akrotiri. These helicopters were part of the British Forces Cyprus and played a crucial role in various operations, including emergency response, military support and firefighting.

The Puma helicopters were equipped to handle firefighting tasks effectively. They could carry large water buckets, known as "Bambi Buckets", which were filled with water from nearby sources and dropped over fire-affected areas. This capability is particularly important in Cyprus, where wildfires can be a significant threat, especially during the hot and dry summer months.

The Pumas also offered enhanced operational capabilities compared to their predecessors. They could carry more personnel and equipment, operate at night, and provide a more robust response to emergencies.

No.230 Squadron, RAF, had been operating the Puma HC.2 helicopters in Brunei since 2022 when they replaced the Bell 212 helicopter operated by the Army Air Corps. The helicopters, operated on behalf of British Forces Brunei, undertook several tasks including troop transport, operational support and humanitarian missions

FAREWELL FLIGHTS

The Puma's final flights were organised to honour its remarkable service. "This flight route is via various locations of significance," explains Wing Commander Nick Monahan, Officer Commanding 33 Squadron and Puma Force Commander. "Each place reflects the rich history and contributions that the Puma has made during its time in service. The aircraft has been a cornerstone of global defence operations for more than five decades. We want to celebrate its contribution to supporting our people around the world over the past 54 years."

To name a few, the farewell tour took the Puma to several key locations:

1. RAF Benson: The home base for the Puma fleet, RAF Benson, has been the heart of operations and



LEFT
Model reference number AA27004 represents XW220 in Gulf War paintwork. Image credit: Corgi



LEFT This Puma is seen at work in the snow of Norway during an arctic training exercise. Image credit: RAF/Crown Copyright



ABOVE Note the impressive tiger paintwork on the model of XW224 (AA27003). Image credit: Corgi



ABOVE A close-up of the tail rotor on the Corgi model of XW214.

training for these helicopters. The farewell flight's first and final stop was a tribute to the countless hours of service and training conducted here.

2. Northern Ireland: The Puma played a crucial role during the Troubles, providing essential support and transport. The visit to Northern Ireland was a poignant reminder of the helicopter's contributions to peacekeeping efforts.

3. Kensington Palace: To honour Prince Michael of Kent's distinguished connection to RAF Benson and the Puma fleet.

4. Cranwell, Halton, Honington, Shawbury and Stanta training area: All sites of significance for the aircrew that have intertwined history with the helicopter.

5. Boscombe Down and Airbus Kidlington: Sites of significance for the maintenance and operational capabilities of the fleet.

As the helicopter flew over these historic sites, it symbolised the end of an era and the beginning of a new chapter for the RAF. The Puma's retirement marks the transition to newer technologies, but its legacy will continue to inspire future generations of aviators. For those who have flown and engineered it for over 50 years this is a poignant moment and a chance to reflect on their dedication and service.

"We recognise and celebrate the dedication of everyone who has served on or supported Puma operations over the last five decades," said Wing Commander Alice Tierney, Station Commander at RAF Benson.

The Drawdown of Puma is part of the Ministry of Defence's mission to transform capabilities and modernise platforms to be best placed to face the evolving threats of today and for the future. Six new H145 helicopters, which will be known as Jupiter HC.2, will enter into service in Cyprus and Brunei from 2026. To support the transition of Puma to the Jupiter HC.2, two Chinook helicopters will deploy to Cyprus to support the firefighting capability there.

In the longer term a new medium helicopter will be designed to replace the Puma's capability of medium

lift to land forces. The contract for this is still in the negotiations phase.

CORGI'S PUMA

The Corgi model of the Puma HC.1 is very pleasant and well detailed. It features numerous aeries and rails, rotating rotor blades, sliding doors, underside shackle for loads, optional undercarriage up or down and three crew figures, two pilots and a loadmaster. The paintwork is nicely applied and the printing neat.

Five models are known to have been released to date. AA27001 represents XW219 of 230 Squadron, RAF Benson, circa November 2009. It is painted in an all-over green with modern RAF branding on the doors and a 230 Squadron tiger badge on its forward fuselage.

AA27002 models XW214/CL of 33 Squadron, RAF Aldergrove, Northern Ireland, circa November 1972. It is painted in grey/green camouflage on its topsides with black undersides. There is a 33 Squadron stag's head badge on the forward fuselage. Note that this model features the early style of engine air intakes.

AA27003 represents XW224 of 230 Squadron as it was at the Tiger Meet, RAF Upper Heyford, in 1990. It has a black forward fuselage with a large tiger painted all along the rear fuselage. The paintwork on this model is particularly impressive.

AA27004 models XW220/CZ of 33 Squadron as it was during the First Gulf War of 1991, when it was based in Kuwait. This model is painted in desert 'pink' with a 33 Squadron stag's head badge on its forward fuselage.

Finally AA27005 represents XW220/AC of 72 Squadron, RAF Aldergrove, Northern Ireland, circa 1997. This example features black/green wrap-round camouflage with a 72 Squadron swift badge on its forward fuselage.

The models are frequently available on the second-hand market, though AA27001 and AA27005 are a little rarer to see for sale. Expect to pay around £100-plus for a mint model, possibly a bit more for an example of either of the two scarcer models. ■



ABOVE Photographed on 27 March 2025, this Puma is seen flying over London on the final day of operations before retirement. Image credit: RAF/Crown Copyright



ABOVE A Puma HC.2 on the ground at RAF Benson ready to take-off on one of the final farewell flights in late March 2025. Image credit: RAF/Crown Copyright



ABOVE A pair of Puma HC.2s flying out of RAF Benson on 26 March 2025 during their series of farewell flypasts. Image credit: RAF/Crown Copyright



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Diecast copies

In part one of this study **Andrew Ralston** examined how diecast models were copied in the UK. This second instalment looks at how the practice of copying was carried out in other countries in Europe.

ABOVE
The Ford Fordor from Lemeco of Sweden (right) has sometimes been described as a reissue of the Dinky (left).



ABOVE
Question: when is a copy not a copy? Answer: When it's a bona fide reissue. This was the case with the River Series made by Jordan and Lewden of London, who passed on the tooling to Israel where the models were improved in finish and sold under the Gamda name. The two versions of the Ford Prefect are shown here.

Making copies of diecast toys is something that knows no national boundaries. We saw last time how diecast lookalikes of toy vehicles from the USA, Belgium and Germany were made in the UK and the same thing happened in many other countries. The process is by no means confined to the distant past and, in spite of tighter legal protections, more recent 'clones' can still be found. This is a vast and fascinating subject but in this article we'll limit the discussion to a selection of diecast models copied in Europe, in particular in Spain, Portugal, France and Scandinavia.

At the outset, though, it is important to distinguish between copies and reissues. A copy generally results from a toy company getting hold of an existing product and replicating it, presumably without permission, whereas a reissue is made from original tooling which has been loaned or sold on for reuse elsewhere, usually in a country with a less developed diecast toy industry. Sometimes the distinction isn't entirely clear, and collectors often talk about reissues when they are really copies, and copies when they are in fact reissues! As an example of genuine re-issues we might examine the fate of the River Series, a small range made by Jordan and Lewden of London in the mid-1950s. This company was primarily involved in industrial castings and tried toymaking as a sideline. When this venture ceased, existing business links with Israel enabled Jordan and Lewden to sell their tooling to Gamda who upgraded

the finish of the toys and adapted them to the tastes of the local market by applying Israeli military and civilian markings. Similarly, when certain Dinky Toys ceased production Meccano Limited supplied the tooling to S. Kumar and Company of Calcutta, India where the models re-emerged under the Nicky Toys name. What we're looking at in this article, however, are not reissued diecast models but what might be described as unauthorised replicas – diecast models which smaller companies copied from the bigger brands.

LEMECO (SWEDEN)

In some cases, the story is relatively straightforward when the similarities between copy and original source can be clearly identified. One example would be Lemeco, an obscure brand founded in 1948 in Hägersten, Stockholm and little known outside Sweden. As is often the case with toy companies, diecast cars were only a small part of Lemeco's output and there can be little doubt where Lemeco got their inspiration for the handful of vehicles they made. There's an open sports car that resembles the Dinky Frazer Nash-BMW, though the Lemeco is described on the base as a Bristol. The WWII military Jeep, Austin Devon saloon and American Ford Fordor were also modelled by Dinky, but unlike the Dinky the Lemeco Ford also came in numerous different guises such as Fire, Police ('Polis') and Taxi. All these Lemecos are superficially identical to the Dinky castings and have sometimes been taken to be reissues, but close inspection reveals many minor



ABOVE Numerous minor differences (to the wheel arches and bottom of the doors, for example) suggest the Lemeco is a copy rather than a reissue.



differences which indicate that the Swedish models were made from different tooling. All are thought to date from between 1950 and 1954.

INVICTA (SPAIN)

More obscure still is Invicta, founded in the 1930s in Zarauz, a coastal town in the Spanish Basque Country, not far from San Sebastián, by a German immigrant called Enrique Keller. Initially his toys were of wood and his top-selling line was a toy harmonica advertised as 'el piano de bolsillo' (i.e. 'the pocket piano'). Invicta later diversified into model railways and also made metal toys based on German Schuco and Gama designs used under licence – a convenient means of getting round high tariffs which made the importation of toys from other countries uneconomic. But it was around 1957 that the Invicta story really became interesting. Having noted the increasing popularity of diecast cars, the company decided to venture into this field, as there were few competitors in Spain. Only six models were made and these closely resemble models made by a variety of French manufacturers. The proximity of the Basque region to France may explain why the majority of subjects were copied from models obtainable across the border.

The least successful of the six is a Peugeot 403, possibly influenced by the French Dinky though it looks a bit too elongated. A closer resemblance with Dinky Toys exists between three of the other Invictas, the Citroen DS 19, Renault Dauphine from the French range and the familiar British Dinky Volkswagen Beetle. The other two subjects were Mercedes Benz cars: a 300SL based on the French Quiralu model, and a 220 saloon pictured here which is influenced by another French maker, CIJ. When the two are placed side by side one curious detail becomes apparent: CIJ got the three-pointed star badge upside down, whereas on the Invicta it is pointing the correct way up! This ephemeral

ABOVE Lemeco's US Army Jeep is another model closely inspired by a Dinky Toy. Image credit: Gary Cohen



ABOVE As explained in the text, the relationship between Tekno and Vilmer trucks from Denmark is quite complicated. Image credit: Vectis



ABOVE Vilmer trucks are very similar to the Teknos but note that on the examples pictured the bars of the grille on the Tekno are vertical but horizontal on the Vilmer. Image credit: Vectis



ABOVE Mercedes by CIJ of France (left) reinterpreted by Invicta of Spain (right).



ABOVE Invicta corrected CIJ's error and got the three-pointed star badge the right way up!

group of diecasts is now of legendary rarity and it is very seldom that a boxed example surfaces. A Mercedes 300SL sold at a UK auction in 2016 for £580 but the Volkswagen that fetched 2,400 Euros in France in 2018 must surely be a record.

JADALI (FRANCE)

The stories of minor brands like these throw up surprising links between different companies and countries and one of the most fascinating is surely that of Jadali of France. A man called Leon Gouttman spent time in Britain during World War Two and made some contacts within DCMT (Die Casting Machine Tools) which allowed him to produce some of their toy guns and other cowboy items under licence. Later, his son Jacques created a new brand name, Jadali, an acronym made up of the first two letters of the names of each of his three children. He went on to sell a new series of Matchbox copies under the name 'Minivoiture Jadanette', packed in boxes which imitated the style of French boxes of matches. A contemporary Jadali catalogue shows a group of six early Matchbox miniatures which are virtually identical to the originals: Bedford Compressor, Road Roller, ERF Tanker,



ABOVE French Jadanette Matchbox-lookalikes may have been made by arrangement with Matchbox, or may simply have been copies. Image credit: Vectis



Dumper Truck, Muir Hill Dumper and Excavator. The history of Jadali/Jadanette is well-documented online (see reference under 'Further Reading') and the author of this site suggests that, as Monsieur Gouttman established business links with DCMT he may also have received permission from Lesney to copy the Matchboxes, but no evidence exists either way.

TEKNO AND VILMER (DENMARK)

So far, it has been clear enough who was copying whom but in the case of some other brands, the picture is not so clear cut. One of the most complicated stories of this type comes from Denmark and concerns the relationship between Tekno and Vilmer who both made a series of very similar American-style trucks. Based on the fact that Tekno was a big company and Vilmer a small one, collectors have often jumped to the conclusion that Vilmer copied from Tekno. Research carried out over many years by Karl Schnelle of the USA has disproved this theory. It appears that the founder of Vilmer, a trained toolmaker called Kaj Christiansen, worked for a Danish company called Langes Legetøj which had an arrangement to make models for Tekno to market under their own name. Christiansen designed the tooling for Tekno's Dodge trucks but Christiansen and Langes fell out over how the profits from the Tekno deal were to be divided between them. This ended up as a court case which Christiansen won and the settlement he received enabled him to set up his own toy company under the Vilmer name. Years later, when Vilmer itself closed down, some tooling went as far afield as Chico in Columbia.

Incidentally, neither Vilmer nor Tekno were above replicating products from other companies. Vilmer's Electric Truck with standing driver is easily recognisable as a copy of the familiar Dinky BEV truck. Even Tekno, who offered so many original variations of Volvo and Scania trucks in the 1960s, copied a Dinky Supertoy when they wanted to create a car transporter. Though superficially very similar to the long-running Pullmore trailer – it even comes with the same type of tinplate ramp – an examination of the construction shows that Tekno completely redesigned the model, splitting it into upper and lower castings whereas on the Dinky the whole body is one casting with the lower floor being made separately. Hence, the Tekno is effectively a hybrid, the overall shape being a Dinky copy but the design being original.



ABOVE One of Vilmer's most original models was this Ford Thames Trader. Image credit: Vectis

METOSUL (PORTUGAL)

That brings us to what might be described as 'grey areas' where models might be copies or might be reissued from second-hand tooling. This question certainly arises in connection with Metosul of Portugal whose origins lie in a plastics firm founded in the 1930s in the city of Espinho by brothers Manuel and Arthur Henriques to cater for the growing tourist industry. They made various fittings for hotels like door handles but also found a ready local market for plastic toys and costume jewellery. The original plastics company was called Luso Celluloide and when the Henriques brothers decided to branch into diecast production in the 1960s, they reversed the letters of Luso and added 'met' to create a new trade name: Metosul.

Over the years, there has been much discussion as to whether Metosul reused redundant tooling from other manufacturers or whether they simply created their own copies. It seems the latter explanation is more likely. While many of the models bear a strong resemblance to other manufacturers' products, they generally exhibit minor differences and collectors can amuse themselves by trying to identify their original inspiration. The Leyland Atlantean double deck bus, for example, is an obvious copy of the well-known Dinky Toy, albeit a back-to-front one, with the entry doors on the opposite side as on a left-hand drive vehicle. Metosul trawled Europe to find suitable subjects: the Alfa Romeo Giulietta sports is closely based on a French Solido model, the Mercedes 200 on a German Gama, while the old-fashioned looking caravan trailer is a scaled-down version of a 1950s CIJ from France. The Volkswagen Beetle is very like the long-running Dinky Toy, though updated with interior

LEFT The Vilmer Thames Trader was subsequently reissued by Chico of Columbia. Image credit: Vectis



ABOVE Familiar Dinky BEV Truck.



ABOVE Vilmer model seems closely based on the Dinky.



ABOVE Metosul Volkswagen immediately recalls the long-running Dinky version.



ABOVE Close examination of the shape of the windows and details such as bumpers and indicators reveal many minor casting differences.



ABOVE Ford Fiesta was another of Pilen's 'Dinky Toys'.



ABOVE Metosul's Atlantean bus is an obvious copy of the Dinky – except that the doors are on the other side.



ABOVE Cement Mixer by Joal of Spain is very close to the Dinky Supertoy.



ABOVE Dinky was not Joal's only source of inspiration. This Foden Dumper is based on a Matchbox King Size model.



ABOVE This Simca Matra Bagheera was a Pilen casting issued as a Dinky Toy after the French Dinky factory ceased production.



ABOVE One of the numerous civilian versions of the Vilmer truck, usually taken to represent a Dodge. Image credit: Douglas R. Kelly

RIGHT

Joal's Jaguar E Type incorporates all the working features of the Danish Tekno model but the finish and fit is not quite as good.



fittings, but the main source of inspiration seems to have been Corgi Toys, such as the Renault Floride, Citroen DS and the Volvo P1800 (which Corgi issued in white as 'The Saint's Car' from the 1960s TV series starring Roger Moore). As is common in the diecast industry, Metosul made as many different versions of each model as they possibly could, in police, taxi and other liveries until production ceased around 1990.

JOAL AND PILEN (SPAIN)

Spanish diecasts are another of these 'grey areas' between copies or reissues. Spain had an active diecast car industry in the 1960s and 1970s and a whole article – if not an entire book – could be written tracing the origins of Joal and Pilen diecasts back to originals by Tekno of Denmark, Mebetoys of Italy and French Dinky. Two of Joal's commercial vehicles, the Albion Cement Mixer and Foden Dump Truck, look identical to the Dinky 960 Supertoy and Matchbox K5 King Size. However, in an article published some twenty years ago, Nigel Robertshaw compared these models and came to the conclusion that "they are very good copies of the originals but are not manufactured from the original tooling." One of Joal's most familiar car models, the Jaguar E Type, is clearly based on the Tekno which was remarkable at the time for combining so many working features including opening doors, bonnet and boot and 'proper' steering in the sense that the front wheels turned in parallel rather than the whole axle. But again, one collector who has made an in-depth comparison of the Tekno and Joal versions managed to spot as many as twenty-three minor casting differences which, he says, "puts me in the 'copy camp' instead of the 'original mould' camp." Even a superficial look shows that the Joal lacks the finesse of the Tekno, particularly in the gaps round the opening panels.

Pilen, founded by Enrique Climent Gisbert and his wife Pilar (hence the name made by combining the letters 'Pil' plus 'En'), operated in the same manner as Joal, with models based on many different brands including Corgi, Mebetoys, Tekno and Politoys. Managing to acquire original tooling from so many different sources may seem unlikely but it is not impossible when we bear in mind that diecast companies often had mutually beneficial contacts with each other. Tekno, for example, had arrangements with

Solido of France and Mercury of Italy which allowed these ranges to be distributed in Denmark, and some tooling from Mebetoys, Politoys and Norev later found a new lease of life in Russia. As far as Pilen is concerned, things become clearer after 1974 when, following the closure of the French Meccano factory at Bobigny on the outskirts of Paris, certain moulds were transferred to Pilen and continued in production in Spain. Finally, by a twist of fate, in 1980 a selection of original Pilen models, including the Volkswagen Scirocco, Ford Fiesta and Opel Ascona went on sale branded as Dinky Toys.

CONCLUSION

This study has taken us from a consideration of minor post-war London-based diecasting firms in Part One to something of a tour of Europe covering Denmark, Sweden, France, Spain and Portugal. Obviously, we have only been able to give a broad overview of such a vast subject and many other examples could be given if the discussion was extended further afield – Marusan of Japan copied British and French Dinkies, for instance, and even in the 1990s some Lledo and Corgi Classics models were copied in China (by which time the originals were being made there too!). In spite of the fact that many of the toys discussed here were made over sixty years ago, it is quite amazing that research by dedicated collectors is still shedding new light on the hidden corners of diecast history and more revelations of this kind are likely in future. If any one conclusion emerges from this study, it is surely that collectors have been too ready to assume that similar looking models must be reissues, when in most cases closer examination suggests that they are more likely to be copies. ■

FURTHER READING

- Karl Schnelle's unravelling of the complexities of the Tekno/Vilmer story can be found in several instalments at www.maronline.org.uk
- See www.maronline.org.uk/tekno-wossat/ for an analysis of the similarities and differences between the Tekno and Joal Jaguar E Types.
- <http://pilen.jimdofree.com/> explains the connection between the Spanish Pilen brand and other makers.
- See <http://supersafir.wifeo.com/jadali-history.php> for the history of the connections between Jadali of France, Lone Star and Matchbox.



Pontiac Trans-Am

In which **Steve Coles** compares models of the same car... but in a variety of differing sizes and scales!

One of my favourite car-based films growing up in the 1980s was the first *Smokey and The Bandit* film, starring Burt Reynolds. It was originally released in May 1977 and was the second highest grossing film globally of that year. This month's *Little and Large*, then, is heading for the silver screen. And that's a Big 10-4!

For 1977 Pontiac gave the Firebird a bold new front. A sharp nose with quad headlights gave it a more aggressive and muscular appearance. It was this new look that caught the eye of director Hal Needham who knew instantly this was the car The Bandit would drive in his new film. A deal was struck with Pontiac who provided the cars, which were actually 1976-model cars with the new 1977 front end grafted on. The combination of black paintwork and gold pin striping and wheels have made this car a true movie icon.

Whilst on holiday a number of years ago, I came across a 1/18 version of the Pontiac Firebird Trans-Am from the first (and in my opinion the best) film in the Bandit trilogy, and I knew I had to have it in my collection. This model, made by Ertl as part of their 'Joyride' series, was first released back in 2002 and although it is still available online, it now usually sells

for considerably more than I paid for it! With this are Corgi's 1/36 rendition from their TV and Film related period of the early 2000s, a 1/43 from DeAgostini's recent American Car Collection part-work series and a 1/64 release from Greenlight. It is also worth noting that Ertl themselves also produced a vast range of *Smokey and the Bandit* themed toys during the late 1970s and 1980s, but the focus of this feature is on 'collector's models'.

Let us start by exploring the overall appearance of all four cars. The large and notably heavy Ertl has captured the shape of the Trans-Am really well. The sharp 1977 front looks good, as does the ducktail rear spoiler and carefully replicated T-bar roof, which allows a great view of the interior; more of that later though. This model also boasts opening doors and bonnet. The fine twin gold pinstripes that run around the edges of the windows, wheel arches and bumpers are very finely executed, as is the signature gold Firebird emblem on the bonnet and proud '6.6 litre' badge on the central air shaker scoop. The gold spoked 'Snowflake' wheels look ok, but need either a back wash of black or actual holes in them to make them more convincing. The white Good Year tyre lettering does go some way to make up for the rather mediocre wheels.

ABOVE Front to back: 1/64 Greenlight, 1/43 DeAgostini, 1/36 Corgi, 1/18 Ertl all wear the black and gold livery with style and have modelled the rear ducktail spoiler well.



ABOVE Top to bottom: 1/18, 1/36, 1/43 and 1/64 scale all have correct gold coach lines around the edges of the windows and over the roof and boot lid.



ABOVE Protruding through the bonnet is the air scoop, complete with 6.6 Litre badging.



ABOVE The design of the 'Snowflake' wheels have been well modelled but are let down by the lack of holes through. The white tyre lettering is a nice touch though.

RIGHT The interior of the Ertl displays the sort of detail you would expect at 1/18. I particularly like the dash mounted CB radio.



ABOVE It may be tiny, but the 1/64 Greenlight packs in might details; the air scoop 6.6 Litre badge is clear as well as the wing 'Trans-Am'. The wheels are the least accurate of this set of models.



ABOVE The rear of the Corgi shows the good representation of the rear lights and the inaccurate number plate.



ABOVE Perhaps a little tall, the tail lights are also a bit bright. The horizontal bars across them are visible though.



Only the smallest Greenlight wears the correct 'Ban-One' rear number plate. The Ertl is the only one with heavily tinted rear lights but the 1/43 DeAgostini is the most accurate, closely followed by the Corgi.



Corgi's rendition is from their TV and film related period of the early 2000s. Like the majority of TV and film related models from this period, this model is made to the now rather curious 1/36 scale (although the same as their large scale toys from the 1970s and 80s – some of which were reissued as part of the TV and film series). While clearly a lot smaller than the Ertl model, and missing the opening features (and door mirrors) this is still a good sized and detailed model. The gold pinstripes are present, albeit a single rather than the correct twin line. The gold Firebird logo and 6.6 litre badge on the air scoop are there and while the (curiously solid) T-top roof panels are still in place; the side windows have at least been omitted. Despite it being to 1/36 scale, the headlamps have been painted silver unlike the clear plastic lenses fitted to the larger Ertl. Unlike the majority of Corgi's 1/36 TV and film cars, this one doesn't suffer the indignity of the generic wheels they used on all their toy cars and vans throughout the 1/36 period. No, this one has a really decent attempt at the gold Snowflake wheels.

Greenlight produced a really good 1/43 model of the Bandit's Trans-Am but I have so far been unable to track one down. So for this size (as I'm still a huge fan of 1/43 scale), I've cheated a little with an identical (bar the BAN-ONE number plate) car from DeAgostini's American Car Collection. The shape is good but what really impresses me about this model is the detailing. The gold pinstripe is correctly two very thin lines. The inside of the spoked parts of the Snowflake wheels have real depth to them. Even the tiny triangular Pontiac

badge on the front of the bonnet and the Pontiac lettering next to the headlight are clear. The bonnet scoop on this model reads, despite the small size, T/A 6.6 (the decal on the scoop depended on which engine specification the car had. And like the Corgi model, this one has the T-top panels in place. However, these are correctly translucent, being tinted 'glass' unlike Corgi's solid metal.

Moving onto the smallest of the group, the 1/64 Greenlight. The first thing that strikes you when you pick it up is, like the Ertl, this is a heavy model. A solid metal base helps see to that. While the shape appears to be good, there is something a little odd looking about this. When placed with the other three, this one is perhaps too long; making it look a bit squashed and stretched. On the plus side, the Firebird bonnet logo is crisp and the gold pinstripe (admittedly a single line but that can be forgiven at this scale) is neat. The wheels, however, are not. They bear no resemblance to the Snowflake and look like oversize aftermarket spoked wheels. To finish on a positive, there are both tiny Pontiac badges on the front and a '6.6 Litre' on the scoop that even my eyes can read.

If we look inside the models, there are some notable similarities. All have the black bucket seats up front and the three spoke steering wheel. The Greenlight, as you might expect at this size, is a bit on the simple side. The interior of the Corgi is, well, very black. Detail is hard to pick out beyond the steering wheel and bucket seats. The real delight though comes from the 1/43 part-work model. The steering wheel spokes are correctly painted gold and there is a gold finish to the fully detailed dashboard. These details are replicated, as you would expect, on the Ertl with the dashboard dials having actual depth to them. The seats have some representation of the fabric texture, the T-shifter for the automatic gearbox is there as are door trim details and a silver ashtray in the centre console.

Do I have a favourite? Of course, although it's a close call between the large 1/18 and the much newer 1/43. I love the levels of details the 1/43 offers but for me, the Ertl just scrapes ahead. And now it's time for me to go and fill up on go-go juice while I watch out for Smokeys. Catch you on the flip side! ■



The Range Rover reaches 55!

In this first of a three part series, Range Rover owner and enthusiast **Steve Coles** explores small scale models produced of the Range Rover Classic since its introduction 55 years ago.

The 17th of June 2025 marks the 55th anniversary since the launch of the original Range Rover. What better way to celebrate this occasion than with an in-depth look at many of the toys and models that have been produced since 1970 of this now iconic car.

After 8 years with virtually no investment for any major developments, a new company was formed in 1978 that brought new management, a new determination to succeed and most importantly, money for investments. The original Range Rover morphed throughout the 1980s into a genuine alternative to a Mercedes, BMW or Jaguar. Sure, you could still fit a pig in the back (one of the criteria of the designers when they drew up the original designs in the late 1960s) but the question was, would you really want to? Towards the end of the original Range Rover's life there were two significant developments. The first came in 1992 in the shape of the longer wheelbase Vogue LSE model. This new top of the range model gave the Range Rover air suspension for the first time. Then in 1994, about a year before the next generation was to be launched, a totally new dashboard, inspired by the Discovery's, was introduced. The truth was, both these elements were to prepare the loyal customers for the new model, which

would seem rather radical by comparison to the design that still looked much like the 1970 launch cars.

My obsession with the original Range Rover started with a magazine advert for, the then new, Vogue LSE model back in 1992. The advert showed a side shot of one finished in Plymouth Blue and 14-year-old me wanted one. Fast forward a smidge over 30 years and I am now the proud owner of a (standard wheelbase) Plymouth Blue Vogue SE. By the time I acquired mine, I had already amassed a large number of scale examples, both modern models and contemporary toys. I don't consider myself a 'completest' collector and there are some rarer examples I have not yet acquired, so this celebration should not be taken as a complete list of every example every produced. Instead, it should be seen as a window into the world of small scale versions of the Range Rover classic. In an attempt to create some order to this three-part feature, I have opted to focus on scale. This first part will start with the smallest examples, the second will focus mid-size and the final part will deal with the larger scales. In each case, the contemporary (toy) examples will be separated from the modern ones.

The distinctive shape and market position of the Range Rover made it a tempting proposition for toy manufacturers from the mid-1970s.



Three variations of the Corgi Juniors Range Rover, modelled on an 'emergency' vehicle rather than a civilian road car; Coastguard, Rescue Team and Police.



MATCHBOX ROLAMATICS

This was launched in 1975 as Matchbox No.20 'Police Patrol' and being a Rolamatics toy has the added bonus of a rotating 'light' in the roof mounted dome. Curiously, this was initially never marketed as a Range Rover, despite clearly being one. It was produced in a number of liveries over its 11-year life, including specific police liveries for the USA and Japan. Prior to 1981 the base and front grille were unpainted metal, after 1981 they were painted black (to mirror the real cars perhaps as black bumpers were introduced in 1980). All releases had frosted or smoked windows which hid the geared mechanism inside that operated the spinning roof light. 'Interiors', which weren't really visible, can be usually found in orange or, on later cars, blue.

CORGI JUNIORS

Corgi's first Range Rover released in the Juniors range was an emergency response car, modelled on an early real vehicle produce by the 'Special Projects' team which was aimed at all emergency services whereby the side windows were replaced with roller shuttered side lockers for equipment and a large roof top structure was fitted that contained signs, floodlights and blue flashing lights. The Juniors version has blue tinted windows that also include twin roof top lights; although, curiously the large front and rear 'Police' signs are also blue tinted glass, giving a rather odd look of a second, high mounted window. White 'Police', orange-red 'Rescue Team' and blue 'Coastguard' are the common releases. A version without the roof top structure, but keeping the shuttered lockers was also produced. This version is usually seen with yellow tinted windows and is either plain red, white or yellow, or red with 'Mountain Rescue' written along the sides and a roof rack.

A second Corgi Junior Range Rover was produced to tie in with the release of James Bond's *Octopussy* film. This was a two door convertible finished in brown, that towed a horsebox style trailer that contained a small

ABOVE RIGHT

The Lone Star Range Rover was a new casting for their budget range, aimed at cheap imports. The heavily tinted windows removed the need to cast any kind of interior.

LEFT

The first Matchbox 1-75 Range Rover was one of their 'Rolamatics' toys, with the roof beacon that turns as you push it along.



ABOVE

The base of Matchbox's 'Police Patrol' car. Despite being very clearly a Range Rover, there was no reference to this on the base or on any of the early packaging.



ABOVE

Hotwheels original Range Rover rides on slightly oversized wheels but is still very distinctly a later four door Range Rover. The wing mounted side repeater light location suggest this is modelled on a late 1980s car.



ABOVE

Wiking have produced a number of variations of their 1/87 plastic Range Rover. These recent releases are nicely detailed with badges and correct wheels.



light aircraft. This appears a totally new casting, which also appeared as a solo car in dark red without the 'Bond' branding.

LONE STAR

By the late 1970s Lone Star's Impy toys were looking expensive compared to cheaper imports. Their response? To launch a cheaper range called 'Impy Super Models' in 1976 which were re-releases of existing castings but with black windows and therefore reducing cost as no interiors were needed. In 1978, four new models were introduced, including a Range Rover finished in green. Whilst maybe a little long and thin, this is a decent casting that included the 'Range Rover' tailgate lettering cast in. This has also been released as a police, fire or ambulance car plus an RNLI lifeboat tow car.

MAJORETTE

French manufacturer Majorette produced two smaller scale Range Rovers, although curiously neither are standard road cars. The first was released in 1978 as number 246 and described as 'Range Rover Rescue Unit'. This had an unusual design to the rear of the vehicle, from the doors backwards. The slightly taller roof and open sides give it an odd looking appearance. This taller rear part of the body sometimes contains several seated figures. The second release, also 246, came 10 years later and was initially labelled 'Range Rover Rescue Team'. This is a conventional Range Rover, but with the rear side windows filled in and blue lights on the roof as part of the blue glazing. A number of non-Fire versions have also been released of this casting but these are rarer and harder to track down.

HOT WHEELS

Hot Wheels first Range Rover casting arrived during the mid-1980s and modelled a four door example. Cast in details are minimal, with only the side repeater indicators and door mirrors of note. The whole front is part of the base so the headlights, indicators, bumpers and grille are all black. It also rides on oversized wheels, giving it the impression of a jacked-up off roader. My white example along with an identical black one are possibly the most realistic looking compared to several other releases that feature wild or fantastical paint jobs.

SIKU

Siku produced a number of variations of their version through the late 1970s and well into the 1980s. Like the majority of toy examples, this is a 2-door car. The silver metal base also provides the silver bumpers. A black plastic grille and headlight surround is lifted by silver



LEFT Three of the newer Hotwheels, based on a Dakar rally car. The centre one here was a US store exclusive. The yellow one rides on different wheels with real rubber tyres.



ABOVE Tomica produced a very delightful 1/64 example long before 1/64 became the 'hot' collector scale of today. Despite being sold as a toy, it was the first scale example to feature the revised fuel filler position introduced in 1991.



ABOVE This dark metallic red 1/64 from BM Creations, like the Tomica, modelled the post 1991 Range Rover. So far the only modern scale model of a post 1991 Range Rover.

headlights. This immediately gives the toy an element of realism and a superior quality. Like the Lone Star, the words Range Rover are cast into the tailgate. My metallic green example is missing the surf board and rolled up sail that should live on the white roof rack. Other releases as well as the red seen here include plain cream, orange (produced for the Brazilian market) and a rarer metallic blue version plus a fire car complete with roof mounted blue lights and aerial.

HERPA AND WIKING

These models, both marked as 1/87, are currently the smallest Range Rovers in my collection. Both were primarily designed to be model railway accessories rather than models in their own right. The slightly smaller is made by Herpa and, although captures the shape well and does have Range Rover cast in front and rear, it suffers from generic wheels that are too small making the whole car seem to sit too close to the ground. This was available in a number of colours, although my two examples could be taken to be in Sahara Dust and the metallic blue used on the first 'Vogue' limited editions. The larger is by Wiking and my examples are recent releases, designed to be more accurate models as well as being HO gauge railway accessories. To this end, painted lights, printed on Range Rover lettering as well as correct Rostyle wheel design are all present. My two look to be Masai Red (with correct cream wheels and silver bumpers) and maybe Tuscan Blue, albeit with an incorrect combination of black bumpers and body coloured 'C'-pillar. This Wiking can also be found in a number of different colours, especially on the older and less detailed releases.

TOMICA

Japanese manufacturer Tomica started producing small toy cars in 1970 and was created to meet a desire to see Japanese children playing with Japanese toy cars of Japanese car manufacturers. The original Range Rover, like many iconic British cars, was popular in Japan so it is hardly surprising to find a Japanese model of one. This was released as number 54 in 1995, the final year of Range Rover Classic production, and produced until 2001. It was only ever produced in a dark metallic blue and is so far only one of two models (of any size) to be produced of the post 1991 Range Rover with the revised fuel filler cap position. Painted head and tail lights give a little detail while opening front doors and working suspension add play value. It is however



A pair of Siku Range Rovers; each a very slightly different casting. The green one has holes in the roof to fit the roof rack in.



LEFT A These tiny 1/87 Herpa were produced primarily as a railway accessory so detail is minimal. The metallic blue looks very similar to the paint used on the early 'In Vogue' special editions of 1981 and 1983.

produced to the now popular 1/64 scale.

HOT WHEELS

Hot Wheels second Range Rover Classic was first seen in 2021 and depicts the type of modified Range Rover that entered (and twice won) the Paris-Dakar Rally in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Several main line releases have appeared in the Hot Trucks or Mud Studs sub-ranges (including an exclusive white version for US electronics chain GameStop), along with a highly detailed Car Culture release and Speed Graphics plus the very rare unpainted (ZAMAC) release.

MATCHBOX

After their earlier Rolamatics release, it took Matchbox until 2022 before they released another small scale 1975 Range Rover Classic. This is part of their 'Moving Parts' series and features an opening bonnet. Lots of great details on this, such as badging and lights, despite it being primarily a toy. Bahama Gold and Warwick Green have been the main colour releases so far, plus a 'Super Chase' limited edition in Orange and a Mattel Creations 'National Parks' in metallic mint green with added detail. A blue (labelled as Sky Blue but looking quite like Tuscan Blue) is due for release during 2025. As





ABOVE Oxford Diecast have so far produced three 1/76 Range Rovers based on restored or preserved examples. Their London Fire one (not pictured) is currently on a SORN, so may or may not still exist.

1 Mini GT's 1/64 Range Rover is well proportioned and comes with some superb details. The Darien Gap one is particularly delightful in terms of detailing (bar the incorrect blue roof).

2 SNNO64 have produced two Range Rovers that took part in the 1982 Camel Trophy; one clean look and one that appears dirty. The addition of the kit laden roof rack is a lovely touch.

3 The three civilian releases from INNO64. The green and white ones also wear accurate number plates. The level of fine details on these is sublime for 1/64. Only the slightly small looking wheels let this one down.

to be expected, this is a massive improvement on their original release.

BM CREATIONS

Hong Kong based BM Creations are one of the new breed of manufacturers that focus on the increasingly popular scale of 1/64. Their model, like the Tomica, models the post-1991 Range Rover with the repositioned fuel filler cap. Initially produced in dark shades of red and green, a white one quickly followed and most recently an almost turquoise colour and what is best described as a dirty minty green (these are possibly meant to be Tuscan Blue and Lincoln Green from the 1970 launch). These models feature opening doors and come with a second set of oversize off-road wheels and tyres that owners can swap the standard three spoke alloys for. Lots of the sorts of detail you would expect for a modern 1/64 model are present; lights and badges are particularly impressive. Unusually, these are also available in right hand drive versions too. If only they produced a Plymouth Blue example!

OXFORD DIECAST

First released in 2017, and the first 'modern day' small scale Range Rover Classic to be produced. Oxford have so far released four versions of their 1/76 Range Rover Classic, with a fifth 'AA' liveried one due later this year. The Lincoln Green and Masai Red ones are modelled on real cars; the red one appears to be the restored prototype Range Rover that was badged 'VELAR' to disguise the true identity. Oxford have however chosen



to use their standard Range Rover badging on this. The Darien Gap release is superb; with the complex sponsors logos carefully printed and the roof rack and modified front bumper arrangement carefully modelled. The London Fire Brigade release appears to be a later 1986 Range Rover, with correct black bumpers and 'B' and 'C'-pillars. Just the bonnet mounted rear view mirrors are incorrect, being replaced with door mounted ones in 1980. These are still readily available.

MINI GT

Mini GT have created a huge following worldwide for their highly detailed 1/64 cars. The majority of their output is of racing or highly modified, and usually, Japanese cars. So the inclusion of a 1971 Range Rover in their range is somewhat unusual. The initial release was finished in Bahama Gold, followed by a Davos white road version. Camel Trophy and British Trans-American Expedition (Darien Gap) liveries have also been released plus due for release later this year is a red 1971 International Hillrally winner. Chase versions exist for those who seek all possible releases. All are well detailed models and I believe are excellent value for money.

INNO 64

Like the Mini GT, these INNO64 releases are superb. It's almost hard to believe so much detail can be packed into such a small model; these shame many 1/43 models. Green, white and yellow road cars, plus Camel Trophy versions are available. Careful attention has been paid to make these as accurate as possible and it really has paid off.

Next month, we will look at those Range Rovers, both old and new, made around 1/43 scale. ■

A trio of Matchbox's current 'Moving Parts' 1975 Range Rover. The metallic green and white on the right is a Mattel Creations edition and features superior detailing and real rubber tyres on realistic wheels compared to the two standard releases.



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Lionel Century Club

Mike Pigott looks at this exclusive range of diecast locomotives, made by American model railway company Lionel.

ABOVE
A real EMD F-series locomotive. Image credit: Mike Pigott.

Way back in the March 2014 issue of *Diecast Collector*, we looked at a line of diecast model locomotives called the Lionel Classic Series. Produced in 1998, this range consisted of six famous American engines that were very finely modelled in 1/120 scale (TT gauge). The six locos included pioneer era 4-4-0 The General, a powerful 4-6-4 Hudson of the New York Central, a massive streamlined J-class 4-8-4 of the Norfolk & Western Railroad, a GG1 electric engine of the Pennsylvania Railroad, plus two EMD diesels: an F3 Streamliner, and a GP9 hood-type locomotive. The popularity of these models led to a pair of spin-off ranges, the F3 Series and the GP9 Series, which featured the two diesel models in the liveries of six different railway companies each.

However, Lionel also produced another range of diecast TT gauge locos, although these were only available to members of the paid-subscription Lionel Century Club, so remain much less well-known.

LIONEL

The Lionel Corporation was founded in 1900 by Joshua Lionel Cowen, and initially manufactured electrical goods. However, a few years later the company began producing model railways, which were enormously popular at that time. Initially producing very large models, Lionel later standardised on 0-gauge trains running on three-rail track. Over the next few years, Lionel became the leading model railway brand in the USA, and at one point was the largest toy manufacturer in the country. Despite several changes of ownership, today Lionel remains a major player in the industry.

In the USA, there are two schools of model railway hobbyists. Some like the modern, super-detailed, state-of-the-art models. Others prefer 'classic' type electric trains, which are toy-like models from the post-War era that run on tinsplate three-rail tracks. Lionel produces models that cater for both types of enthusiast.

In 1998, Lionel initiated the Century Club, a series of five reproductions of classic post-War



ABOVE
The full set of Century Club models.

locomotives with old-fashioned, toy-like bodies, but fitted with up-to-date, high-tech mechanisms. This was aimed at railway modellers who preferred the traditional type of toy trains, but wanted modern, reliable performance, and new innovations such as the Command Control operating system.

Century Club models were very expensive (American 0-gauge model trains are not cheap), but were manufactured in the USA and were of excellent quality. In fact the Century Club was a true club with a one-off \$100 membership fee, and only members were able to purchase the models which were made to order. In addition to the five locos, club members were able to buy other exclusive products, including wagons and boxcars in special liveries. Also offered were Century Club branded merchandise including coffee mugs, T-shirts, tie pins and paperweights. Club members also had the opportunity to buy the set of five locomotives as 1/120 scale diecast models.

CENTURY CLUB SERIES

The five diecast models were an extension of the earlier Classic Series, and three of them re-used existing tooling, with the other two being new castings. The choice of TT gauge was quite an unusual choice, given that TT was very much a niche market in the USA (as it was in Britain, until its recent reintroduction by Hornby). However, 1/120 scale proved to be an ideal size for diecast trains, as it was possible to achieve very fine detailing without the bulk that metal HO gauge models would entail. Certainly, other manufacturers also found this to be the case, with TT gauge models from Siku, Corgi and – more recently – Tiny City of Hong Kong.

The Lionel models were based on the same

locomotives as the 0 gauge electric ones, but were much more accurate; the old-style locos were shorter and stubbier than the real engines so they would be able to run on small-radius curves. The series included three big steam locomotives, one electric and a diesel set.

NEW YORK CENTRAL HUDSON

In 1927, the New York Central Railroad introduced the J-class locomotive, the first type to have a 4-6-4 wheel arrangement. The class was developed to haul heavy passenger trains at high speed without stopping, and to do this they required longer boilers with enormous fireboxes. To support the large firebox, the engines required a two-axle trailing bogie, hence the 4-6-4 arrangement. As the trains mostly ran along New York's Hudson River Valley, they were designated as 'Hudson' locomotives. New York Central ordered 274 Hudsons from the American Locomotive Company (Alco), with the last 10 being fitted with streamlined casings. They

BELOW
The Century Club packaging, with the metal tin enclosed in the outer card box.





TOP
Broadway Limited
cigarette card.

ABOVE
20th Century Limited
cigarette card.



were used to haul crack express trains, including the 20th Century Limited and the Empire State Express. Unfortunately, all the Hudsons were scrapped and none exist today.

The NYC Hudson used the same tooling as the earlier Classic Series model, and was essentially identical except for the fleet number, which was 773 rather than 5405. However, it was still an excellent model, being based on the un-streamlined J-3a version. A heavy model for its size, it was painted all black, like many American steam locomotives. The leading and trailing bogies both rotate to a small degree, and all wheels are flanged. The big driving wheels rotate and the connecting rods move, but the pistons and valve gear are fixed in place and do not move. The railings that run along the side from the front pilot to the cab are made from very fine wire. A light with a clear lens is fitted to the front of the boiler, together with a tiny red 'New York Central' badge. The tender is also a large, heavy item and is fitted with a pair of turning six-wheel bogies. It has the railroad name printed on the sides in white, plus fine wire railings and a ladder at rear, together with a discrete 'CENTURY' printed in gold on the back.

PENNSYLVANIA GG1

During the 1930s, the Pennsylvania Railroad electrified many of its major routes, and needed powerful electric locomotives to haul its express passenger trains over these lines. The GG1 locomotive was developed for this purpose, and featured motive power by General Electric and streamlined, symmetrical bodywork designed by Raymond Loewy. The GG1 was an enormous double-ended loco with a central cab and a pantograph mounted on each end, with a 4-6-6-4

wheel arrangement. GG1s were used to haul famous trains such as the exclusive Broadway Limited that ran from Chicago to New York. After the Pennsylvania Railroad went broke in the 1970s, the GG1s were used by Amtrak on New York commuter services well into the 1980s, and fortunately several have been preserved.

While the Century Club model used an existing casting, it was presented in a completely different livery. The Classic Series GG1 was in the 1950s livery of Tuscan Red – a dark, murky maroon colour – with a large PRR 'Keystone' logo in the centre and a single gold pinstripe along each side. The Club version was in the original livery of Brunswick Green – a dark, murky olive-green colour – with a small red 'Keystone' on each side and five gold stripes along the sides. A heavy model, it was quite impressive with four pivoting bogies. The cab was glazed, there were clear headlights and marker lights at each end, plus six tiny red lanterns under each buffer. The pantographs were single piece units in silver plastic in the folded position, but would have been more effective if made of metal wire. 'CENTURY' was printed in small gold letters on each nose.

NEW YORK CENTRAL F3 A-A

The E-Series passenger diesel was developed in 1937 by Electro-Motive Division, the locomotive-building subsidiary of General Motors. Taking cues from GM's car and truck divisions, the E-Series diesels were handsome, round-nosed machines that were also known as 'carbody' locomotives or 'streamliners'. They were designed to haul exclusive passenger trains, and were usually matched with long consists of luxurious, stainless-steel carriages on named express services. The diesels proved to be much more reliable and economical than steam locomotives, and as they were standard 'off the shelf' products, most railway companies in the USA bought them to lead their flagship express trains. By the 1950s, the EMD streamliners were the most common locos in the USA, and were also produced in Canada and Australia (where they can still be seen in revenue service today). Railway employees usually referred to EMD locomotives as 'A Units', because the company also produced a cabless





'booster' engine called a 'B Unit' that ran behind an A Unit, or in-between two of them.

During the war, production of passenger locomotives was halted, and EMD adapted its streamlined engines for freight haulage; this type being known as the F-Series. These differed from the E-Series in that they had more powerful motors, four-axle bogies (rather than six-axle ones used on passenger trains) and larger fleet number panels on the nose. After the war, some railroads opted to use F-Series locos on passenger trains, particularly those like New York Central which ran long trains along level routes.

Lionel's model was described as 'F3 A-A', because it included two A Units in the box, based on the 1946 F3 series. While it was good to get two locos for the price of one, the two units were identical, including the fleet numbers. It might have been a bit more interesting if a B-Unit was included instead. Again, this was not a new casting, and re-used tooling from the Classic Series. In fact, it was not even a new finish, as New York Central had been one of the six liveries used in the F3 Series. The only difference between the Classic Series and Century Club models was that the latter had 'CENTURY' in small letters on the nose, gold horns, and a different fleet number. However, it was still an impressive model, being painted dark grey with light grey and white 'zig-zag' stripes along the sides over New York Central branding, and a small red NYC logo on the nose. The profile was very accurate, and both bogies could pivot. The cab was glazed, and there were clear inserts for the headlight, fleet number indicators and side portholes. The couplings were accurate, and allowed the two A Units to be clipped together – they normally ran back-to-back rather than 'elephant style' (nose-to-tail).

LIONEL LINES BERKSHIRE

The Berkshire locomotive was introduced by the Boston & Maine Railroad in 1925, and was the first to have the 2-8-4 wheel arrangement. Built by the Lima Locomotive Works of Ohio, they were called 'Berkshires' because they ran through the Berkshire Hills between New York State and Massachusetts. Like the New York Central Hudsons, the Berkshires were intended to give greater power and range than 2-8-2 locomotives, and needed a 2-axle trailing bogie to support the huge firebox. It proved to be a very successful loco for the Boston & Maine, and several other railways adopted the type, including the Erie Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio. Several Berkshires were preserved, including two that are still operating on heritage railroads.

The Lionel Century Club model was a completely original casting. Like the Hudson, it was heavy, well detailed and finished in all-over black. The eight-coupled driving wheels roll and the coupling rods move, although the pistons were fixed in place. The single-axle leading bogie turns, as does the trailing bogie. There was a thin wire handrail on each side going from the steps over the front pilot along the walkway to the cab. A gold bell was mounted in front of the funnel, and a light with a clear lens and three fleet number plates was on the front of the smokebox door. There was even a detailed cab with un-glazed



ABOVE
New York Central Hudson.



ABOVE
Pennsylvania GG1 in Brunswick Green Livery.



ABOVE
Pennsylvania Turbine.



ABOVE
New York Central F3 A-A set.



ABOVE
Lionel Lines Berkshire.

windows and '736' on the side.

The tender was also an impressive item, with a pair of pivoting three-axle bogies. The sides and top showed the heavily rivetted surface, and there was a load of imitation coal in the bunker. There were wire railings along the top and corners, plus wire ladder handrails at the rear. 'Lionel Lines' was printed in white along the side of the tender, with 'Century' being printed in gold at the rear. Unfortunately, this was the only fault with the model, in that it was



decorated in a fictitious livery. It was common for electric train manufacturers to produce models in fantasy liveries (such as Tri-ang in the UK which often had locomotives and rolling stock branded as 'Tri-ang Railways'). As the 0 gauge Century Club models were recreations of 1940s toys, the Berkshire engine was issued with the original 'Lionel Lines' markings, and the diecast model mirrored this. However, it would have looked much nicer in the correct Boston & Maine livery.

PENNSYLVANIA TURBINE

The Pennsylvania Railroad's S2 class was an experimental steam turbine locomotive built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1944. It was intended to be the 'ultimate' steam engine that would be more efficient and technically advanced than diesels. Both the PRR and Baldwin had an interest in keeping steam alive, as Pennsylvania was a coal-mining state and much of the PRR's freight traffic involved hauling coal trains, while Baldwin was the largest steam locomotive manufacturer in the USA. The concept behind the S2 was to incorporate modern steam turbine technology – as used in the marine industry – into railway engines. The S2 was massive, and was the only locomotive ever built with a 6-8-6 wheel arrangement. PRR intended to build a whole fleet of turbine engines, but due to wartime shortages only one was ever built. The S2 was fitted with a Westinghouse direct-drive steam turbine that powered the two central driving axles. The exhaust was fed through a unique quadruple funnel, and the loco was nicknamed 'The Big Swoosh' due to the unusual swooshing sound it made. In service, the S2 was extremely powerful and capable of maintaining a speed of 160 km/h. It was very fuel efficient when travelling at high speeds, but at low speeds it was extremely inefficient. As trains had to stop at stations and signals, the S2 proved expensive to run compared with diesels. It was removed from service in 1949 and unfortunately scrapped in 1952.

ABOVE
Lionel Century Club
catalogue cover.

//

Like the New York Central Hudsons, the Berkshires were intended to give greater power and range than 2-8-2 locomotives, and needed a 2-axle trailing bogie to support the huge firebox.

//

Despite being a one-off locomotive, the Pennsylvania Turbine was modelled by Lionel after the war and became one of their best-selling items. It was the second original diecast model in the Century Club series. Unsurprisingly, it was a massive model; with the tender it measured over 30 cm. Like the other steam locomotives, it was painted satin black and had pivoting front and rear bogies. The eight-coupled driving wheels could roll, with a working connecting rod, although there were no pistons as turbine engines didn't need them. There was a wire handrail on each side, a clear headlight lens, and a red keystone-shaped badge on the nose. Other unique features of the S2 were well represented, including the ducting and pipes along the side, a boxy radiator at the front, the four smokestacks, and a semi-enclosed cab with detailed firebox. The tender was also very large and heavy, with smooth sides and a pair of pivoting four-axle bogies. It had a wire ladder at rear and a load of fake coal. 'PENNSYLVANIA' was printed in white along the whole length of the tender.

The Pennsylvania Turbine is possibly the most spectacular diecast locomotive ever produced; if not, it comes a close second to the Norfolk and Western J-class loco from the earlier Lionel Classic Series. The only fault of the S2 is that it has the fleet number '671' on the cab sides, which was the number used on the original electric train (it was the Lionel catalogue number). The real locomotive was numbered '6200'.

PACKAGING

The Century Club models had probably the most elegant packaging of any diecast models. The little locomotives were in silver tin boxes with vac-formed inserts flock-lined in blue. The tins were then enclosed in bright orange 'chocolate box' type outer cartons with lift-up flaps, made from thick cardboard. The underside of the lids had information on the real locomotives. There was even a strip of ribbon glued to the inside of the box so the tin could be lifted out without damaging the box.

Although the range was described on the packaging as 'Series 1 – 1999', there were no further diecast models. While Lionel did introduce as Century Club II a few years later with five different electric locomotives, there were no TT-gauge diecasts to accompany them – possibly they didn't sell well enough to justify the tooling costs.

The Lionel Century Club diecasts are very rare models and when they turn up, are generally quite pricey. This is understandable, as they were available to club members only, and very few were probably sold outside the USA. However, together with the earlier Classic Series, they are brilliant models and must rank as the greatest diecast locomotives ever made. They are certainly better than Corgi's Rail Legend series, which were static models without rolling wheels, and much more interesting than the Tiny City range of mostly urban metro trains (*we will look at these in an future issue - Ed*). Lionel's diecasts are far superior to the toylike efforts by companies such as Siku, Tomica and Diapet.

If you collect diecast model trains, the Lionel Century Club series are top quality and well worth having – if you can find them! ■

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Superfast 1969-1982

No.
60

Charting the evolution of the Matchbox Superfast range during the Lesney years, from 1969 to 1982.

TRUCK WITH SITE OFFICE

Production: 1970-71

Catalogue: 1970-71

Box Styles: G

A slightly lighter blue cab and chassis accompanied the relaunch of this model with Superfast wheels, although some examples with the original darker blue still sneaked onto the production line.

Always a popular release the simple inclusion of the all-plastic site office made all the difference and was a must for any miniature construction site.

LOTUS SUPER SEVEN

Production: 1971-75

Catalogue: 1972-75

Box Styles: I

The iconic Lotus Seven kit car had been around since 1957, so it's surprising that it took until 1972 for one to be included in the 1-75 series. The version eventually modelled was the fibreglass-bodied Series 4 "Super Seven" that had angular features and sweeping, full-length wings.

It was a fairly good model, although the headlights were left off – they should have been mounted inside the front wings. It was painted orange with a bare metal base and a black interior. A separate clear windscreen was plugged into a slot in front of the dashboard. A very distinct label was stuck on the front; a vampire bat rising from a cauldron of flame.

LOTUS SUPER SEVEN

Range: Streakers

Production: 1975-77

Catalogue: 1976-77

Box Styles: J

No.60 Lotus Super Seven was now painted yellow and gone was the vampirey flaming sticker on the bonnet, replaced by a red chequered scheme over the top surfaces punctuated by a blue stripe to the centre that pointed towards a red roundel bearing the number 60.

The Lotus had always been a popular model and, first appearing as a Streakers release in the 1976 catalogue, it made it into the 1977 catalogue too but was dropped for the following year.



// But in 1981, the colour was changed to a more accurate glossy red. The red version was sometimes fitted with olive green motorbikes... this may have been to use up stocks of khaki plastic from the discontinued military models.

HOLDEN PICK-UP

Production: 1977-82

Catalogue: 1978-82

Box Styles: L

Holden Pick-up was the first Australian model in the Matchbox series, and was probably included at the request of the Aussie distributors. As Holdens were little-known outside of Australia and New Zealand, this model proved somewhat difficult to market in some regions. To maximise its appeal, it was given a special load – two removable, one-piece plastic motorcycles were mounted on the pick-up bed.

Early versions were painted metallic magenta, with an unpainted base, yellow interior and motorcycles, amber windows, and a bonnet label with the number "500" over a checked background. But in 1981, the colour was changed to a more accurate glossy red. The red version was sometimes fitted with olive green motorbikes... this may have been to use up stocks of khaki plastic from the discontinued military models. In 1982, the colour scheme was changed again – this time it was off-white, with red interior and bikes, and 'Superbike' decals on each side.

Despite being a fairly accurate model, and a good seller in some parts of the world, it was too obscure a model in other regions, so was marketed according to the various country's interpretations – a special version was made for France in 1981, in metallic mid-blue with a 'Paris-Dakar Rally' sticker on the bonnet.

It was withdrawn in late 1983, but the casting was quickly modified into the off-road truck Ruff Trek, introduced in 1984. ■





A-Z of diecast

It's time for O and P, writes **Alwyn Brice**.

Every *Diecast Collector* reader will know a little about Oxford Diecast, I reckon. Aside from the ubiquitous 1/43 scale offerings, this manufacturer has seen fit to cater for rail layouts up and down the land (in 1/76), as well as producing vehicles in 1/87, 1/120 and the minute 1/148, or N scale, to those in the know. It also has espoused the large, well-detailed 1/18 scale – its Bubblecars are worthy of note here.

Go to any swapmeet and you'll see dozens and dozens of the 1/43 miniatures for sale: they are simply everywhere. After all, Oxford Diecast has formulated almost 20 different categories of vehicle, thereby assuring something for (nearly) everyone. Arguably Oxford has seized the crown latterly worn by Dinky and Corgi, and thanks to parent Hornby, the company has achieved enormous success within the aforementioned world of model railways. Well made and colourful, with an historic appeal which is down to the modelling of older vehicles, both passenger and commercial, the company has swept the board; added to this has been a competitive pricing structure.

It all began back in 1993 in Swansea,

ABOVE
In 1/43 scale, this Oxford Diecast milk float brings back some memories. We'll overlook the wipers on this occasion.



ABOVE
It could only be Benetton. Riccardo Patrese in the Onyx 1/43 model.

at the time Corgi was winding up its operation. As time went on, so the facilities were moved to China and Hong Kong, with a warehouse operation staying in Swansea. The bigger scale models were gradually complemented by increasingly smaller scale offerings, with the TT scale range only appearing quite recently (2022). A Collector's Club has been a novel twist on the part of the marketing arm, and limited editions have frequently appeared. In the main prices are extremely modest, and pristine second-hand examples can be picked up for a song. Don't expect too much in the way of opening features – at these prices, we're talking largely one-piece castings.

A DAY AT THE RACES

Onyx came to the party a little later than Oxford, in 1998 to be exact. Majoring in racing cars, this manufacturer (a brand of the Portuguese company Minibri) produced mostly 1/43 cars from the British Touring Car Championships, the World Touring Car Championships, the 24 Hours Le Mans race, Formula 1, FIA GT, the Indy series and others besides.

In its search for authenticity, Onyx utilised details of the official sponsorships and liveries for every model. The F1 series, in particular, is well worth hunting down: this 1/43 range spanned the years 1988 to 1999, when the high performance cars were a little less fussy in design detail, yet colourful withal. Onyx also produced F1 racing cars in 1/24 scale and offered motorcycles in this large scale format, too.

Quality-wise, the range improved as the years rolled by; if initial production was a little toy-like, this was rectified in later issues. The company appears to have ceased production around the millennium, although there is little in the way of history on the Internet that I've been able to uncover.

Because of this there is a flourishing second-hand market; and even if these models were mass produced, some examples have started to creep in price.



LEFT
The unmistakable Messerschmitt KR200: this Oxford model is in 1/18 scale.



ABOVE
Onyx Honda Accord all set for rallying in its 1998 livery.

RIGHT
Once a familiar sight on British roads, the InvaCar in typical pale blue. This is the Oxford Diecast version.



ABOVE
Our very own London bus - treated to free-wheeling hubs by Playart.



ABOVE
Premium X's Triumph Herald police car is only let down by its painted bumpers.

RIGHT
Oxford's take on the trusty Bedford OB coach shows great detail in this 1/120 scale example.



A Mercedes concept car (the C111) from Playart in 1/64 scale.



It's Brummy Nigel Mansell!
Another F1 gem from Onyx.

MADE IN HONG KONG

Model cars in 1/64 were manufactured by PlayArt between 1965 and 1983 at a factory in San Po Kong, in Kowloon. The brainchild of one Duncan Tong, the little models, which came blister packed, are perhaps best described as competitors to Mattel's Hot Wheels or our good old Matchbox. These interesting diecasts were, apparently, often based on rejects from other local manufacturers; but they certainly caught the Zeitgeist, for they were often retailed under the label of Peelers or Freewheelers, a nod to their freely-rotating, low-friction wheel arrangement. Some packaging bears the rubric of "Fastwheel"; after all, it was an era of "Superfast" and "Hot Wheels" and "Flyers". There were limits to what the marketing department could dream up in terms of nomenclature, one suspects...

Models chosen varied enormously in marque, from those possibly pirated from other manufacturers to models that no-one else had seen fit to market. It is generally accepted that just under 50 models were produced in 1/64 and that certainly some are hard to identify, since the parent company moniker was not applied to either packaging or the model itself. A few models were released in 1/43 and the company would later embrace plastic as the build medium.

For aircraft devotees, there was the Fastwing series; mostly diecast, these were available in two scales, either 1/148 scale or 1/215. Here, both wartime (World War Two) aircraft and commercial airliners were modelled.

Finding the Playart 1/64 range today isn't easy and I doubt that many at all found their way to these shores. Try that well-known auction site if the bug bites; or hunt over in the USA, where I believe a fair few ended up.

AT A PREMIUM

A brand name from the IXO stable, itself a subset of Premium and Collectibles Trading, Premium X has something of a heritage. The parent company was established in Macau in 2000, although its founder, a Frenchman by the name of Bernard Peres, had been involved in the sector since the 1970s.

As a viable alternative to the likes of Minichamps or Spark, the Premium X range is smaller but trades on a high quality end product. While its 1/43 scale is popular, and there is a huge variety of car types, both modern and classic, you could also investigate the company's impressive 1/8 scale offerings: models as diverse as a Citroen 2CV, a Mercedes 300SL coupe and a Bulldog tractor have been issued in this sub division.

Detail and precision seem to be the bywords in this range, and the company makes use of both resin and diecast materials in the construction process. You can expect to find European, as well as American car models, here; and whilst road cars of all types and ages are served, the company has also tooled up for some rally versions and Le Mans entrants. From what I can see, editions do sell out because of limited production numbers; so if there's something that catches your eye, you might need to act quickly if you want to add to your collection. ■

TOP VINTAGE MODEL

DTCA Chairman, **Michael Driver**, picks another vintage favourite from Dinky...



10-Ton Army Truck

Back in the golden age of Dinky Toys, in the 1950s, a friend and myself avidly collected the new military series to add to our pre-War military models which had been re-released after World War Two. We were also familiar with seeing the real army vehicles on our roads. Although the scales of the Dinky Toys models varied it did not interfere with our battle scenes played out on his garden lawn. Alongside our models there were also some of the Britains models and some of their soldiers.

In *Meccano Magazine* of May 1954 the Dinky Toys 10-Ton Army Truck number 622 was one of the 'NEW models ready during May' and shown in the black and white advert. The advert describes it as 'A fine companion for the Dinky Toys Army

Covered Wagon, Centurian Tank and Scout Car. Measuring 5 and 1/8 in, in length this six-wheeled vehicle is fitted with detachable cover' and the price was 6/9. The review of the model was in the June 1954 *Meccano Magazine* where it states the two May models were the Dinky Toys No. 470 Austin Van "Shell-BP" and Dinky Toys No. 622, 10-Ton Army Truck. It continues 'By now most keen collectors will have seen them in their local Dealers' windows and many will have added them to their collections'.

The model is finished in service green and carries the Royal Armoured Corp transfers on the front of the cab and tailboard at the back. There is a tinplate tilt and when this is removed it reveals in the back seating for army personnel. There is a towing hook and it was fitted with Dinky Supertoy tyres. The first models were without a driver but one was then in later models. The model came as a Dinky Toys model in the stripped Supertoy lift off lid boxes. The next boxes were Dinky Supertoy boxes illustrated the different grey Supertoy tyres. These were followed by yellow illustrated Supertoy lift off lid boxes. These later models were also finished in a gloss service green and had the later Supertoys black tyres.

The 10-Ton Army Truck was illustrated as a Dinky Toys model in the Dinky Toys catalogue of 1954. The

ABOVE Dinky Supertoys 10-Ton Army Truck no.622 one without a driver and showing seated Army Personnel and the other with a driver and another finished in a gloss service green.

BELOW LEFT *Meccano Magazine* advert May 1954 part image.

following catalogues show the model with a driver. In the 1957 catalogue it changed to being a Dinky Supertoys model. A further change came in the 1963 catalogue as it was then renamed as a Dinky Toy. It was finally deleted in 1964.

The Dinky Toys model is based on the real Foden FG which was introduced in 1948 and used the S18 cab which had a concealed radiator. The Foden company started out in 1856 using the name Hancock and Foden. Originally, they were engineers and then went on to produce agricultural machinery. Then came steam traction engines followed by steam lorries for over 30 years and were followed by diesel vehicles. The company continued with various take-overs and being part of Leyland to produce heavy duty vehicles through to the 1990s. ■



The Dinky Toys Collectors' Association

The Dinky Toys military models are very collectable including the later issues. They often feature in the DTCA Journal with illustrations. You can find out more or join by visiting the website www.dtcawebsite.com.

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SALE RESULTS

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From collectables of the future to old favourites, online auctions will always manage to produce some interesting finds... and occasionally, even more amazing prices! We visit auction houses and sites for this month's results.



- **Item:** Shackleton David Brown Trackmaster
Condition: very good for its age, clockwork motor in working order, chimney is bent
Sold for: £775.22 (13 bids)



- **Item:** Corgi No.28 Carrimore Car Transporter with tractor and cars
Condition: previously owned with signs of age wear and use
Sold for: £225 (15 bids)



- **Item:** Matchbox Lesney 75b Ferrari Berlinetta
Condition: near mint and with a complete original box, rare red variation
Sold for: £460 (37 bids)



- **Item:** Pocher Ducati 1299 Panigale S Superbike
Condition: near mint, with original stand – a lovely addition to your collection
Sold for: £380.19 (9 bids)



- **Item:** Mebetoys Lancia Flavia
Condition: mint in original outer box
Sold for: £373.92 (20 bids)



- **Item:** Lone Star Impy Super Cars in display box
Condition: used, box worn and ripped in places, door damage seen on one car
Sold for: £291 (21 bids)



- **Item:** Matchbox K-22 Dodge Charger
Condition: mint and boxed with rare factory error, no interior packing
Sold for: £260.72 (1 bid)



- **Item:** AutoArt 80141 Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VI 2001 Rally Monte Carlo, Tommi Makinen
Condition: excellent and rare model, some marks to front door glass
Sold for: £219.12 (2 bids)



- **Item:** Corgi Gift Set 41 GS41 Transporter Set
Condition: excellent with original outer packaging, rare in this condition
Sold for: £509.20 (19 bids)



■ A limited edition Citroen SM in 1/12 scale by Otto. This is car number 460 of only 999 made in this size. It measures approximately 41 cm long and appears in ear mint condition, it is slightly dusty from display and comes with its original box. **Sold for £65, British Toy Auctions, April.**



■ A boxed 1/6 scale 1932 TE Lawrence Brough Superior SS100 # 062135500. This large scale model appears mint in a very good box. **Sold for £280, British Toy Auctions, April.**



■ A boxed 1/18 scale Porsche 356 T5 B 001 made exclusively for Porsche Club GB members. The car appears near mint (one windscreen wiper missing) in a display case in its original Porsche Club packaging. The outer box has some storage creasing and small tears on the corners. **Sold for £50, British Toy Auctions, April.**



■ A limited edition 1/18 scale 2018 Porsche 911 GT2 RS, one of only 504 produced # 155068310. The model appears near mint, slightly dusty from display in a very good box. **Sold for £50, British Toy Auctions, April.**



■ A limited edition Citroen SM Proto racing car in 1/18 scale # OT054UVI. The car is number 587 of only 1500 produced and appears near mint, slightly dusty from display in its original packaging. **Sold for £50, British Toy Auctions, April.**



■ A boxed Corgi #48 Jean Richard Circus Set. The vehicles and accessories appear to be in very good - excellent condition. The set is contained within a poor very dusty box with scuffs and fading plus some surface marks to cellophane window. The set is unchecked for completeness. **Sold for £22, British Toy Auctions, April.**



■ Corgi Classics Heavy Haulage diecast model set featuring the Wynns Diamond T Tank Transporter with Boiler Load & Escort Vehicles. All models are in excellent condition and come boxed. **Sold for £55, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Classics Heavy Haulage diecast model set featuring the A.L.E. Scammell Contractor with Nicolas Trailer and Slug Catcher Load. All models are in excellent condition and come boxed. **Sold for £50, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Classics Heavy Haulage diecast model set featuring the A.L.E. Scammell Contractor with Nicolas Trailer and Slug Catcher Load. All models are in excellent condition and come boxed. **Sold for £50, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Classics Heavy Haulage limited edition model set featuring the Scania T King Trailer with Tower Crane Load - Thomas Herron. All models are in excellent condition and come boxed. **Sold for £75, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Classics Heavy Haulage limited edition model set featuring Scammell Contractor x2 with Girder Trailer, Bogies & Sheeted Load - Eddie Stobart Ltd, Carlisle. All models are in excellent condition and come boxed. Box does have some storage wear. **Sold for £55, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Classics Heavy Haulage set comprising Wynns Diamond T Ballast and Girder Trailer etc. Excellent in box. **Sold for £60, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive World War II diecast model featuring the Avro Lancaster I 'Admiral Prune', 106 Squadron, Syerston, November 1942 (Guy Gibson). Excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £60, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive World War II diecast model featuring the P-51D-10NA Mustang 'Old Crow' - Captain Clarence 'Bud' Anderson, 362nd FS, 357th FG, 1944. The model is in excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £45, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive diecast model featuring the Avro Lancaster – R5508/KM-B, No. 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron, RAF (1942). The model is in excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £70, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive World War II diecast model featuring the Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress 'Memphis Belle', 324th BS, 91st BG. The model is in excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £55, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive Military Air Power diecast model featuring the Boeing B-52D Stratofortress – 56-0689, American Air Museum, Duxford. The model is in excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £36, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ A limited edition Corgi Aviation Archive diecast aircraft set titled "70 Years of the Spitfire", featuring three Spitfire models: Mk.I, Mk.Vb, and Mk.IX Spitfires (Perth Memorial). The set is in excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £40, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ A Corgi Aviation Archive 1:32 scale die-cast model of the Supermarine Spitfire Mk.IIA P7966, DB-O, Tangmere (Wing Commander Douglas Bader) from the World War II Europe & Africa series. The model features a fully detailed engine cover, moveable control surfaces, and authentic RAF markings. In excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £45, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive limited edition diecast set from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight series. This 1/72 scale set includes: Avro Lancaster – PA474 Supermarine Spitfire Mk.IIA – P7350 Hawker Hurricane – PZ865A highly detailed commemorative set celebrating iconic aircraft of the Battle of Britain. All models are in excellent condition and come boxed. **Sold for £60, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive limited edition World War II Blitz die-cast model set in 1/72 scale. This boxed set includes: Heinkel He 111H-3 – 2 Staffel, KG 100, 1940/41 Messerschmitt Bf 109E-3 – 5./JG 3, Hornu, 1940 Supermarine Spitfire Mk.I – X4231, 54 Sqn, RAF Hornchurch, 1940. All models are in excellent condition and come boxed. **Sold for £50, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive limited edition diecast model from the Eighth Air Force Collection in 1/72 scale. Model: Consolidated B-24D Liberator – 448th BG Assembly Ship "You Cawn't Miss It". Excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £50, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive limited edition 1/72 scale diecast model. Vickers Wellington Mk.Ic – R1162 AA-Y, 75 (New Zealand) Squadron, RAF Feltwell, Norfolk, 1941 Soda Syphon Bomber. Model is in excellent condition and comes boxed. **Sold for £65, M&M Specialist Auctioneers, April.**



■ Corgi Fairground Attraction Carters Steam Gallopers Merry Go Round, boxed 1:50 scale CC20401, with packaged fittings and flag, appears unused but untested, good to excellent, box very good. **Sold for £50, Special Auction Services, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive 1/32 Scale DH Mosquito, boxed AA34601 DH Mosquito Moncton Express III, 692 Sqn, No.8 group 1944, appears undisplayed, very good to excellent, box very good. **Sold for £60, Special Auction Services, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive 1/32 Scale D-DAY 60th Anniversary DH Mosquito, boxed AA34602 DH Mosquito No 544 Sqn RAF Benson 1944, appears undisplayed, with certificated stand, very good to excellent, box very good. **Sold for £60, Special Auction Services, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive 1/72 Scale WWII Pathfinder Set, boxed, AA99133 Europe & Africa, Pathfinder Force two model set, Avro Lancaster 635 Sqn and DH Mosquito 109 Sqn, appears undisplayed, with certificate, very good to excellent, box very good. **Sold for £90, Special Auction Services, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive 1/72 Scale WWII Blitz Three Model Set, boxed, AA99127, three plane set, Heinkel HE 111, Messerschmitt 109E and Spitfire MK1, 611 Sqn P.O. Pegge, Rochford 1940, appears undisplayed, with certificate, very good to excellent, box very good. **Sold for £80, Special Auction Services, April.**



■ Corgi Aviation Archive 1/72 Scale WWII Battle of Britain Three Model Set, boxed, AA32602 Battle of Britain Memorial Flight set, appears undisplayed, Avro Lancaster Mickey the Moocher, Spitfire Mk.IIA and Hawker Hurricane, minus certificate, very good to excellent, box very good. **Sold for £70, Special Auction Services, April.**



■ **Corgi Aviation Archive 1/48 Scale English Electric Lightning**, boxed, AA28401 EE Lightning F6 RAF No 11 Sqn, Binbrook, appears undisplayed, with certificate, box lid with dent, very good to excellent, box good to very good. **Sold for £80, Special Auction Services, April.**



■ **Corgi Aviation Archive 1/72 Scale Avro Vulcan**, boxed AA27201, appears undisplayed Avro Vulcan, B2 XH558 Vulcan To The Sky, Return to Flight 2007, with certificate, box with knife score to one side, with outer dispatch box, very good to excellent, box good. **Sold for £130, Special Auction Services, April.**



■ **Corgi Aviation Archive Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Set**, boxed AA32602 1:72 scale comprises Avro Lancaster Mickey the Moocher, Spitfire MKIIA, Hawker Hurricane, light scratch on Lancaster right wing, otherwise VG-E, with certificate and stands appears undisplayed, good to excellent, box very good. **Sold for £90, Special Auction Services, April.**



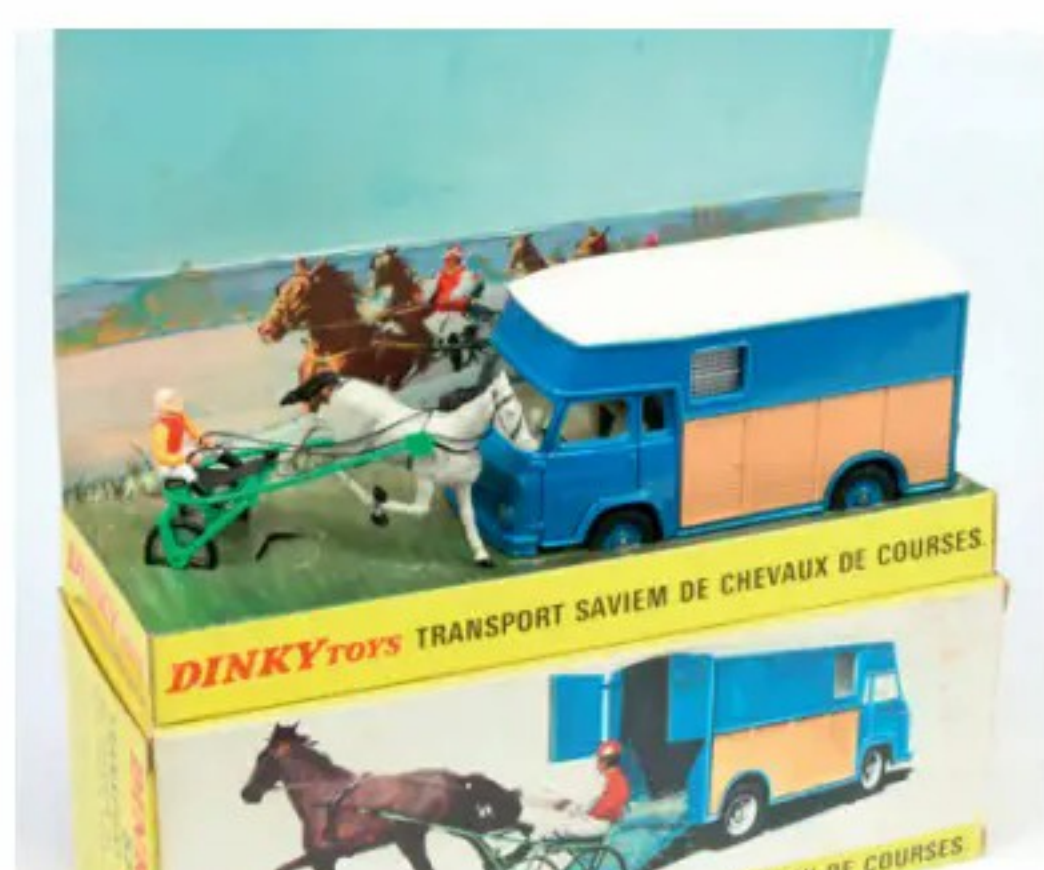
■ **Corgi Toys 226 Morris Mini Minor**, rare promotional issue "Jensens" - blue body, red interior, silver trim and spun hubs. Original labels may have been applied later. Excellent in a excellent plus blue and yellow carded picture box with collectors club folded leaflet **Sold for £280, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 472 Austin Van "Raleigh Cycles"**, dark green body, yellow rigid hubs and silver trim. Excellent plus in a fair to good yellow and red carded picture box (one inner flap is missing) displays well. **Sold for £90, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Dinky Toys 570A Peugeot J7 Van "Autoroutes"**, orange body, grey interior, silver trim, red roof light, and concave hubs (black aerial and roof sign separate in bag). Excellent in a good to good plus carded picture box with accessories and instruction leaflet. **Sold for £200, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Dinky Toys 571 Transport Saviem "De Chevaux De Courses"**, blue body and concave hubs, light beige side panels complete with "Sulky" and driver. Near mint in a excellent plus inner pictorial stand, outer carded picture box is good plus to excellent still a lovely bright example (missing decals). **Sold for £240, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Dinky Toys 572 Berliet Tipper**, red cab and chassis, yellow plastic tipper and hubs, grey interior and silver trim. Near mint in a good plus yellow and red carded picture box with road sign in sealed bag. **Sold for £90, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Dinky Toys 1408 Renault Sinpar 4x4 "Michel Tanguy"**, drab green including concave hubs with white, orange and blue stripes, 2 figures. Good to excellent including inner pictorial stand, carded picture box is good with instruction leaflet. **Sold for £130, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Corgi Toys 270 "James Bond" Aston Martin DB5**, silver, red interior with "James Bond" figure, Tyre slashers, gold bumpers. Excellent overall in a good plus striped window box with secret instruction pack containing folded leaflet bandit figure, lapel badge and number plate sheet. **Sold for £110, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 987 "ABC TV" Mobile Control Room**, blue and grey with red flash, silver trim and roof panel, plastic hubs with camera, lead and figure. Good to good plus in a good (slightly grubby) yellow lift off lid box with detailed picture (arm on figure broken). **Sold for £120, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 601 Military Austin Para-Moke**, green including plastic platform, grey canopy, black speedwheels, complete with parachute. Excellent plus to near mint (front right lift stanchion broken) in a good bubble pack (very light discolouration) with a excellent carded base. **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 948 "McLean" Tractor and Trailer**, red cab and plastic hubs, light fawn trailer. Good plus nice bright example (one back door detached) in a good (slightly grubby) blue and white striped lift off lid box. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Corgi Toys 305 Triumph TR3**, green, cream seats, silver trim, flat spun hubs. Excellent (windscreen loose) in a good plus to excellent blue and yellow carded picture box. **Sold for £120, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Corgi Toys 322 Rover 2000 "International Rallye Finish"**, white body, black bonnet, red interior, cast hubs, racing No.21. Good plus (poor paint finish) in a good blue and yellow carded picture box with correct flash (some discoloration to flash). **Sold for £100, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Corgi Toys 53 Massey Ferguson 65 Tractor with Front shovel**, cream body, arms and shovel with silver inner, red sides and engine cover, orange plastic hubs front and rear, silver seat. Good to good plus (broken mechanism) in a good plus blue and yellow carded picture box. **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Corgi Toys 267 "Batman" Batmobile**, black body, chrome Whizzwheels, harder-to-find clear windows, "Batman and Robin" figures, aerial and gold tow hook. Overall condition is excellent (one front wheel has split and came off axle) in a good plus striped window box also with secret instruction pack containing folded leaflet and lapel badge. **Sold for £130, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Corgi Toys GS40 Gift Set "The Avengers"**, to include "John Steed's" Vintage Bentley - red, black, wire wheels, with "John Steed" figure and 2 X original umbrellas and "Emma Peel's" Lotus Elan S2 - white body, black interior and spun hubs, with "Emma Peel" figure (does have some paint-touch-ins). Otherwise conditions are generally good plus to excellent (some touch-in to one vehicle and rust/corrosion to exhaust pipe), inner pictorial stand is excellent with a good plus to excellent crisp blue and yellow carded picture box. **Sold for £170, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 512 Guy (Type 1) Flat Truck**, blue cab and chassis, red back, silver trim, mid-blue Supertoy hubs with black smooth tyres, tow hook. Condition is excellent plus (minor factory flaws) in generally good box with paper label "Hudson Dobson" label to side. **Sold for £110, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 980 (581) Horse Van export issue "Express Horse Box Hire Service"**, maroon body, red supertoy hubs, silver trim. Condition is generally excellent still a bright example in good plus (label faded) box with "Hudson Dobson" label to one side. **Sold for £140, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 981 Horse Box "British Railways Express Horse Box Hire Service"**, maroon, silver trim, red Supertoy hubs with black treaded tyres. Condition is excellent in generally good plus but grubby box with "LF" sticker to one end. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 501 Foden (Type 1) 8-wheel Diesel Wagon**, red cab, chassis and rigid hubs, grey back, silver trim and side flashes, tow hook. Condition is good plus still a nice example (minor paint chips and marks) in generally good but grubby box. **Sold for £150, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 501 Foden (Type 1) 8-wheel Diesel Wagon**, red cab, chassis and rigid hubs, grey back, silver trim and side flashes, tow hook. Condition is good plus still a nice example (minor paint chips and marks) in generally good to good plus box. **Sold for £160, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Dinky Toys 36A Log Carrier**, orange Cab, yellow trailer, convex and concave hubs, silver trim with log load. Condition is excellent in generally good but grubby box. **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 991 AEC Monarch Thompson "Shell Chemicals" Tanker**, red, yellow including Supertoy hubs with black treaded tyres. Condition is excellent (minor paint chips) in generally good box. **Sold for £100, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 511 Guy (Type 1) 4-Ton Lorry**, fawn cab and back, red chassis and rigid hubs, silver trim, with tow hook. Condition is excellent still a nice example in good plus box. **Sold for £100, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 30w Trade Pack Electric Articulated Lorry "British Railways"** containing 3 examples, all finished in maroon, maroon ridged hubs with smooth tyres, all have metal tow hooks. Conditions are fair to excellent (some tyres have flat spots or cracked) in good to good plus box with dividers. **Sold for £70, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 430 Commer Breakdown Lorry**, tan cab and chassis, mid-green jib and back with black "Dinky Service" Lettering, silver trim and red rigid hubs with black smooth tyres. Condition is good plus to excellent still a nice example in good plus box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Dinky Toys 567 Mercedes Unimog With Snow Plough**, yellow cab, body and concave hubs, brown plastic roof and canopy with yellow and black front blade. Condition is generally excellent still a nice example in fair to good (sun faded) box. **Sold for £70, Vectis Auctions, May.**



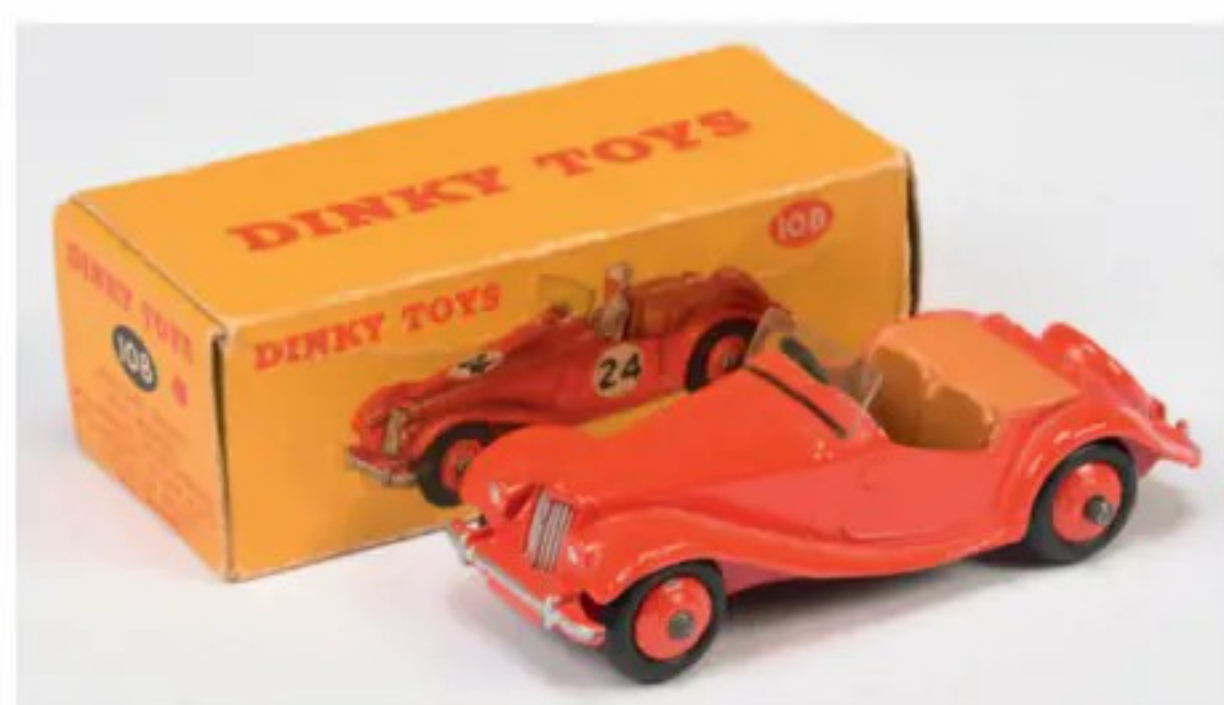
■ **French Dinky 597 Chariot a Fourche (Coventry Climax) French Dinky 597 Chariot a Fourche (Coventry Climax)**, orange, black mast, yellow forks and convex hubs with black tyres, light tan figure driver. Condition is good to good plus in good plus to excellent box with insert. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 281 Fiat 2300 Station Wagon "Pathe News"**, black body, red interior, cast detailed hubs, with cameraman and camera. Condition is excellent to excellent plus in fair box. **Sold for £110, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 254 Austin "Taxi"**, blue body, black base, interior and figure driver, silver trim, mid-blue ridged hubs with smooth tyres, without baseplate number lettering. Condition is good plus (minor marks and paint chips) in fair but complete box. **Sold for £160, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 129 MG Midget Sports Car US export issue**, red body, tan interior and tonneau with correct figure hole, ridged hubs with smooth tyres, silver trim (108 Base Plate). Condition is excellent still a nice bright example in fair to good incorrect numbered (should be 129) box with correct colour spot. **Sold for £140, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 129 (108) MG Midget Sports Car US export issue**, off white, maroon seats and tonneau, without figure driver but has correct hole slot, silver trim, red ridged hubs with smooth tyres. Condition is good to good plus still a nice example. **Sold for £100, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 38a Frazer Nash-BMW - Immediate 1946 Post-War Production**, dark blue, mid-blue interior, black smooth hubs with black smooth tyres and thick axles. Condition is generally good still a nice example. **Sold for £30, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 30b Rolls Royce**, fawn, black base, black smooth hubs with black smooth tyres and thick axles, Type 3 chassis. Condition is generally good still a nice example. **Sold for £25, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 30c Daimler**, green, black base, black ridged hubs with black smooth tyres, Type 4 chassis. Condition is fair to good plus still a nice example. **Sold for £20, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 30d Vauxhall Saloon**, blue, black base, black ridged hubs with white smooth tyres, Type 5 chassis. Condition is fair to good (some paint chips, tarnishing to grill). **Sold for £30, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 36c Humber**, brown, black base, black ridged hubs with black smooth tyres, Type 5 chassis. Condition is good plus still a nice bright example. **Sold for £20, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 36f 4-seater Sports Car**, green, black base, black ridged hubs with black smooth tyres, Type 5 chassis. Condition is fair to good plus still a nice example. **Sold for £30, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 30b Rolls Royce**, dark blue, black base, black ridged hubs with black smooth tyres, Type 4 chassis. Condition is fair to good (one headlight broken off, paint chips, tarnishing to grill). **Sold for £20, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 151b Medium Tank US export issue**, semi matt military green, black tin baseplate, wire aerial, chains. Condition is generally excellent (some minor paint chips). **Sold for £140, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 151b 6-wheeled Covered Wagon US expert issue**, military green, green tilt, green ridged hubs, figure driver, tow hook. Condition is good plus still a nice example. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Dinky Toys 25bm Covered Wagon South African**, green, green metal tilt, green ridged hubs with smooth black tyres, tow hook, silver front lights. Condition is generally excellent (marks mainly to tilt, slight crack in one tyre). **Sold for £220, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Hornby O Gauge No.5 Station Figure Set**. Condition is good to excellent in good to good plus box. **Sold for £70, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Hornby O Gauge No.10 Station Figure Set**. Condition is good to excellent in good plus box. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **Corgi Toys 478 Forward Control Jeep with Hydraulic Tower**, green, red grille, lemon interior, silver trim, spun hubs and with figure. Condition is excellent to excellent plus in good box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, May.**

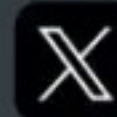


■ **Corgi Toys 481 Chevrolet Impala "Police Patrol" Car**, two-tone white and black, lemon interior with figures, chrome trim and flashes, red roof light grey plastic aerial and spun hubs. Condition is excellent still a bright example in good box. **Sold for £130, Vectis Auctions, May.**



■ **French Dinky Toys 35a Citroen Breakdown Truck**, red body, black tinplate jib with original hook, complete with spare wheel, 35a baseplate, red concave hubs. Condition is good plus to excellent in generally good to good plus box. **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, May.**

Dear Editor

FOLLOW US AT  @ccofgb  @CollectorClubGB  CollectorsClubOfGreatBritain  CollectorsClubofGB

CAN YOU HELP?

■ THIS is, unashamedly, a plea for a model to complete my collection of Jensen built models.

After creating superb models of the Austin counties series of cars, vans and woodies, Pete Kenna was persuaded, by myself, to adapt his pattern for the Austin A70 Hereford and create the little-known prototype model of the Austin Hereford Countryman. The real thing was commissioned by Austin, but as a connoisseur of Jensen motors, I knew that Jensen had built this vehicle.

After some discussions, Pete went ahead and made the necessary changes, and effected a lovely pattern for the Countryman, as the image here shows. This was released around 2014, which happened to coincide with my hospitalisation for heart surgery, and subsequent recovery over a 6 month period. Not surprisingly, by the time I was back on the hunt for model cars, this model had sold out. Pete was pessimistic about its sales, and while the box declared it to be 1 of 400, it is possible that only around 100 were made.

Produced in a range of colours, its acquisition remains elusive to me. If any readers have one that they would like to part with, do please contact me via the Editor.

The reader who agrees to sell me his example of this model will receive a free copy of my book – *British Sporting Cars in Miniature*.

David Lynn, email

ED If anyone can help David, please get in touch with us using the information below!



REKINDLING MEMORIES

■ HAVING subscribed to *Diecast Collector* since issue number 1 (November 1997 – I still have them all!) and I was inspired to add my thoughts to Ed Karswell's *Toy Tales* in the June 2025 issue.

Having collected and built models since the 1950s I have always considered that the connection between the model and the real thing is so vital. In fact, in the current issues of *Maronline* I have been creating a similar conversation with my "The model and its inspiration" series of articles that takes one specific model in detail and follows with an equally descriptive section of the real vehicle on which it is based, that I owned and ran at the time of its currency.

Maronline is the current version of an original magazine, *Model Auto Review*, that ran in paper form from summer 1982 to December 2013 after which it went online. It was the creation of its original Editor, Rod Ward, who had run a model shop in Leeds called Modelauto (of course) for many years previously.

An additional coincidence was that Ed Karswell mentioned with affection the Spot-On Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire in that same article and asked how many have we seen lately? Well, I must admit that I haven't actually seen any lately but my memories of them are more than distinct as in the early 1960s I was in charge of the parts department at a long defunct garage in Hull who were Armstrong Siddeley specialists (as well as BMC) so I was involved with them regularly. Thanks for inspiring those memories!

Donald Vickers, Leeds



DINKY USA POLICE CAR

■ DTCA Chairman Michael Driver each month introduces a new old model and interesting facts pertaining thereto. *Diecast Collector* June

2025 issue and it's the USA Police Car, Dinky number 258. Michael tells us the third version is the Ford Fairlane now with solid red roof lights but otherwise like its predecessors, with their white plastic interiors. But lo, I can tell you this third version also can be found

with red interior. Indeed, the red Fairlane interior crops up in the civilian cars as does the white and I enclose a photograph. Similarly red and white interiors can be found in the later civilian Cadillac, but I've yet to see a red one in a 258 just white. My interest in the Fairlane prompted by my father having a real one back in the day, albeit it blue with silver and blue upholstery.

Patrick Hogan, Buckinghamshire

ED Thank you Patrick!

EMAIL YOUR LETTERS AND QUESTIONS TO CATHY AT:
CollectingEditorial@warnersgroup.co.uk

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





COLLECTION OF BENTLEY'S FOR SALE

■ I am writing to inform your readers that I am offering for sale my extensive collection of 1/43 scale Bentley miniatures. This unique and carefully curated collection consists of approximately 800 models, including:

- A wide range of commercial releases (approx. 80% NB)
- Rare and handcrafted models by RAE, Ban Seng, Feldkamp Models, Manoir Miniatures, Ilario, Marmande, Shelford, Model Assemblies, Bentley Classic Models, Crewe Models, MR Models, Kahn Models, Milestone Miniatures, and Miedema
- Premium limited editions such as Top Marques (35), Dubois Créations (20), and FYP (20)
- Around 100 original and one-of-a-kind models, many handmade or customised, including Bentley models from the 1920s to 1960s, presented in high-end display cases. Some feature leather interiors, openable doors, and even custom creations like hot rods and tow trucks

- 10 illuminated display cases and 8 additional display cases available

The total face value of the collection is estimated at €78,000, but I am offering it at a negotiable price of €40,000. The collection includes a MR GT Zagato in an exhibition box, Modelkit Kit Flying Star, Minichamps Mulsanne, Kyosho F Lying Speed, a limited edition Minichamps Continental Super Sports GTC 2009, Minicamps Continental GT 2008, Welly Continental Super Sports, De Agostini Continental GT and many, many more!

Pickup and transport will be at the buyer's expense. Photographs and a more detailed description are available upon request. Interested parties may contact me at patrick.grumillier@wanadoo.fr.

Dr. Patrick Grumillier

ED If anyone would be interested, please get in touch with Patrick directly!

YOUR MODELS



◀ Graham Newman

I've been collecting models since 1976 and my 1st bus was from Devon. I try and go to as many swapmeets as I can, and I like to collect Corgi, Matchbox and Lledo models. It's not just me who collects as my wife is a Corgi Club member.

This month's
WINNER!



Send us a photo and a little bit about your collection for your chance to be included and win a brand new diecast model worth at least £10*. Submit yours to CollectingEditorial@warnersgroup.co.uk.

*Ts&Cs Apply - Not affiliated with any manufacturer. See <https://ccofgb.uk/submityourcollection> for details.

TOYFAIR TIMES

FAIRS

8 JUNE

- **Stonehouse**, Steve Clements Fairs, 01380 725322/07732 330305
- **Liphook**, David Parsons, 07742 609865

10 JUNE

- **Hook**, Steve Clements Fairs, 01380 725322/07732 330305

12 JUNE

- **Theydon Bois**, Joe Lock, 07866 641215

14 JUNE

- **Maidstone**, Mike Spencer, 01622 298159/01732 840787

15 JUNE

- **Rainton**, Jim Corr, 07504 035955
- **Steyning**, David Parsons, 07742 609865
- **Swindon**, Steve Clements Fairs, 01380 725322/07732 330305

17 JUNE

- **Wootton Bassett**, Steve Clements Fairs, 01380 725322/07732 330305

21 JUNE

- **Oswestry**, Jackson & Jackson Events, 07967 681080

22 JUNE

- **Bromley**, KRJ Vintage Toy Fairs, 07977 646386/07889 901729

28 JUNE

- **Brentwood**, J & J Fairs, 01522 880383

29 JUNE

- **Midhurst**, KRJ Vintage Toy Fairs, 07977 646386/07889 901729
- **Newton Abbot**, Ray Heard, 07717 278420

5 JULY

- **Brecon**, Jackson & Jackson Events, 07967 681080

6 JULY

- **Rayleigh**, KRJ Vintage Toy Fairs, 07977 646386/07889 901729
- **Ashington**, David Parsons, 07742 609865

8 JULY

- **Hook**, Steve Clements, 01380 725322/07732 330305

AUCTIONS

6 JUNE

- **Canterbury**, The Canterbury Auction Galleries, 01227 763337

7 JUNE

- **Canterbury**, The Canterbury Auction Galleries, 01227 763337

9 JUNE

- **Runcorn**, British Toy Auctions, 01928 579032

10 JUNE

- **Newbury**, Special Auction Services, 01635 580595

11 JUNE

- **Online**, C & T Auctions, 01233 510050
- **Rayleigh**, Stacey's Auctioneers & Valuers, 01268 777122
- **Leeds**, Oberon Auctions, 0113 5133355

14 JUNE

- **Kings Langley**, Excalibur Auctions, 02036 330913

16 JUNE

- **Runcorn**, British Toy Auctions, 01928 579032

20 JUNE

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

23 JUNE

- **Runcorn**, British Toy Auctions, 01928 579032

24 JUNE

- **Newbury**, Special Auction Services, 01635 580595

25 JUNE

- **Sedgemoor**, Greenslade Taylor, Hunt, 01823 332525

- **Bourne**, Golding, Young & Mawer, 01778 422686

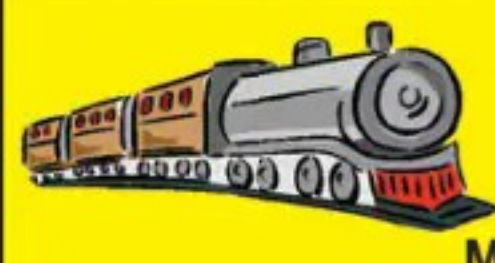
- **Leeds**, Oberon Auctions, 0113 5133355

30 JUNE

- **Runcorn**, British Toy Auctions, 01928 579032

1 JULY

- **Newbury**, Special Auction Services, 01635 580595



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A FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

Hazel Ralston considers the world of model collecting, through different eyes...

Road safety in miniature

In the 1960s and 70s there was, I would say, a greater emphasis on 'Road Safety' in primary schools than there is today. I can clearly recall brown-covered exercise books with the rules of the Green Cross Code printed on the front. I am not sure if any child actually read them – I know I didn't!

Then there was the Tufty Club for younger children, a campaign run by RoSPA (the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) which many remember from that era, though in fact it dates from as far back as 1953. This really took off in the sixties when a network of 'Tufty Clubs' was set up and by the 1970s as many as two million children were members of these. The main character in the Tufty stories was a squirrel – an animal many motorists may consider to have been a strange choice, given the number of squirrels that fall prey to moving cars!

RoSPA also worked with the publishers of the popular *Ladybird* series to produce a book about *Road Sense* in 1977, which today is chiefly of interest to car fans because of the pictures of road scenes with Cortinas, Capris and Allegros – not to mention the teenagers wearing ultra-fashionable flared jeans and trouser suits.

All this emphasis on road safety was important as in 1977 two children per day lost their lives on the roads, and more

LEFT
1977 *Ladybird* 'Road Sense' book aimed to teach children to take care crossing roads.



ABOVE
Pedestrian Crossing set from A. Barrett and Sons recreates a 1950s traffic scene.

than 1000 were injured every week. According to the *Road Sense* book, a child under the age of seven was unable to judge distance and speed. That meant the 'Stop-Look-Listen' mantra had to be driven home by every means possible. Remember, too, that in these days children had more freedom outdoors, playing on the streets and often walking to school or being sent down to the shops on their own, whereas many today are chauffeur-driven by their parents.

Toys could be roped in to convey the road safety message. Some classrooms had play mats with roads marked on them and there were even demonstrations of the rules of the road in the playground, sometimes by a police officer, when children would be allowed to bring their own bikes to join in.

An important person in raising awareness of safety when crossing a road was the school lollipop lady/man and one of my favourite vintage toys relating to this theme comes, not from one of the big companies, but from a smaller firm called A. Barrett and Sons who, sometimes in the 1950s, marketed a 'Pedestrian Crossing set' made of what was described as 'unbreakable polythene'. This little set appeals not only because of the contents but because of the clever packaging. Take off the lid and the lower part of the box

ingeniously folds out into a pavement and pedestrian crossing diorama with six figures and Belisha beacons. Waiting to cross on one side is a lady with two children, perhaps returning home from school as the boy is carrying his cricket bat. In the middle stands the crossing patroller with her sign.

The origins of A. Barrett and Sons lie in the pre-war makers of lead toys, Taylor and Barrett. After WWII the partners went their separate ways and continued toy production either as F. G. Taylor and Sons and A. Barrett and Sons. Like many other toymakers, Barrett gradually changed from metal to plastic and supplied yet another firm, A. Barton and Company, with furniture for dolls' houses. By the early 1980s Barton had bought over Barrett.

The Pedestrian Crossing set must have been one of Barrett's most attractive products and it isn't easy to find today with the figures still neatly tied on to the card. ■





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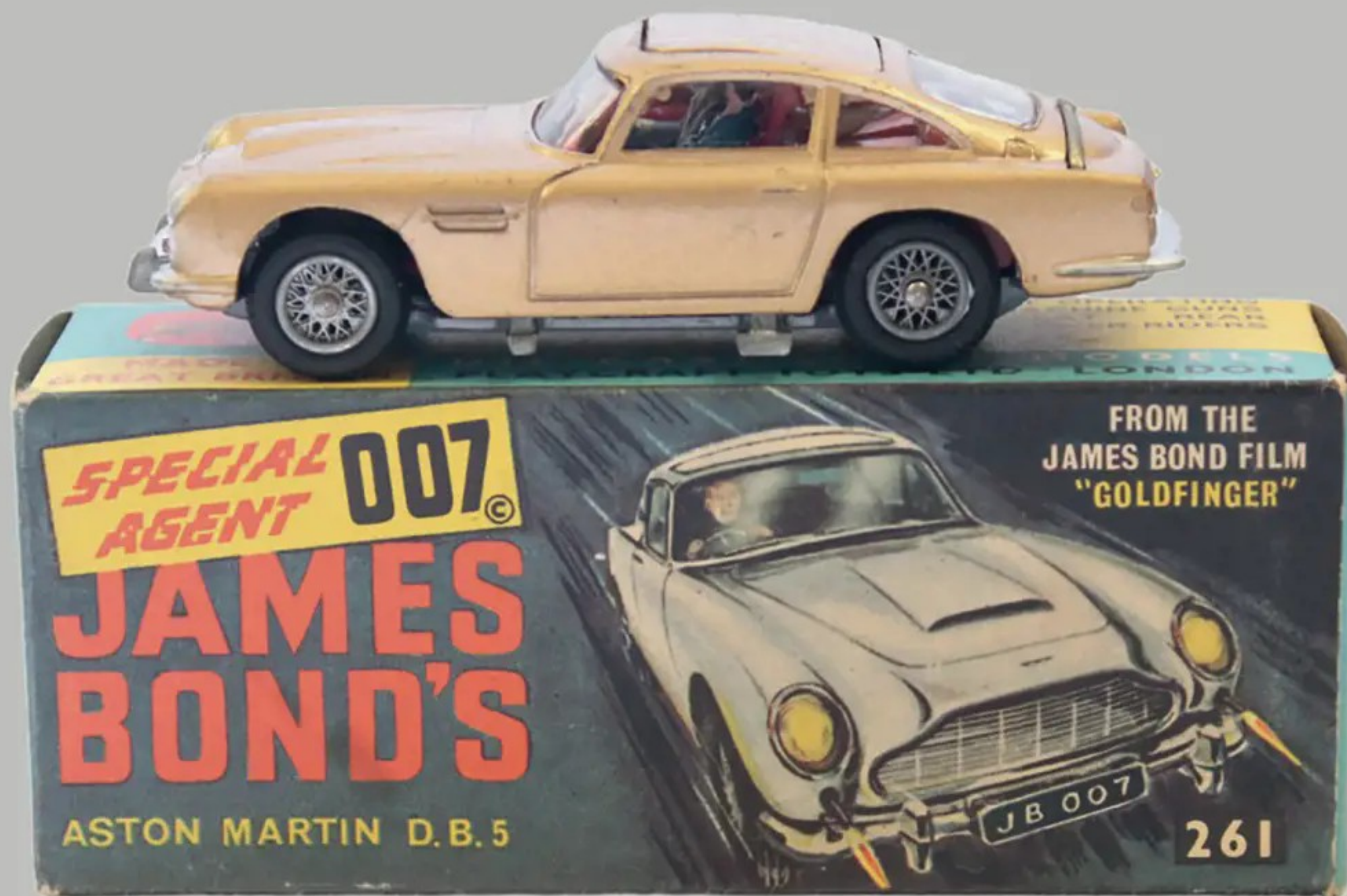
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