



# DIECAST

## C O L L E C T O R

Collectors Club  
OF GREAT BRITAIN

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The UK's only diecast magazine!

### REVIEWS

# NEW MODEL RELEASES

We round up a selection of the latest models from **MINI GT**, **Solido**, **Britains**, **Corgi Model Club**, **NZG** and **Conrad**...

**PLUS!**  
THE LATEST  
COLLECTING  
NEWS



### INSIDE...

**RANGE ROVER  
REACHES 55!**

Exploring replicas  
produced in 1/43 scale



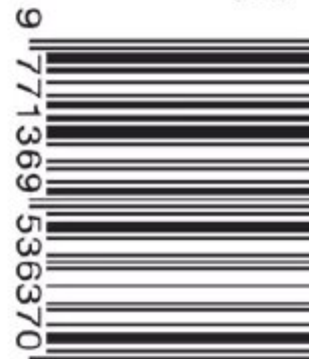
### » WORKHORSES FROM AUSTIN MORRIS

Looking back at the J2 and Omni Series vehicles produced

### » THE FIAT 850 SALOON IN MINIATURE

An in-depth study into the many guises of this 1960s classic car

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# DIECAST COLLECTOR

## EDITORIAL

**Publisher** Claire Ingram  
claire.ingram@warnersgroup.co.uk

**Group Editor** Cathy Herron  
cathyh@warnersgroup.co.uk

## Regular Editorial Contributors

David Pullen, Richard Carlson, Steven Downes, Francisco Mota, Michael Driver, Mike Pigott, Rick Wilson, Charles Barnett, Alwyn Brice, Keith D'Souza, Jarrod Cotter, Steve Coles, Ed Karswell, Andrew Ralston, David Lynn, Stephen Paul Hardy, Hazel Ralston

## MARKETING

**Marketing Manager**  
Sophie Thornton Tel: 01778 395085  
sophie.thornton@warnersgroup.co.uk  
**Marketing Assistant**  
Rebecca Abbott Tel: 07799 695722  
rebecca.abbott@warnersgroup.co.uk

## ADVERTISING

**Advertising Manager**  
Kristina Green Tel: 01778 392096  
kristina.green@warnersgroup.co.uk

## Advertising Production

Kay Cotterill Tel: 01778 395065  
k.cotterill@warnersgroup.co.uk

## NEWS TRADE DISTRIBUTION

Warners Group Distribution Ltd  
Tel: 01778 391150

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## CONTACT

**Write to us at:**  
Diecast Collector, Warners Group Publications plc,  
The Maltings, West Street, Bourne, Lincs, PE10 9PH.  
**Email us at:**  
[CollectingEditorial@warnersgroup.co.uk](mailto:CollectingEditorial@warnersgroup.co.uk)

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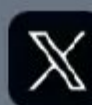
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# NEWS

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## CORGI'S NEW THE PROFESSIONALS CAPRI IS ON SALE NOW

**FOLLOWING** on from the success of his previous three releases, all commissioned from Corgi, Professionalmania's Tony Buller has taken delivery of the next release in his series of cars from *The Professionals* TV show – Bodie's Capri Mk2 3.0 Ghia in Arizona Gold. Originally intended to coincide with the programme's 50th anniversary in 2027, Tony decided to release this one early to follow neatly on from his other commissions.

Tony is a massive fan of the show and runs a company called Professionalmania Ltd. This latest release is a limited edition of 1,000 models of the famous car, complete with the correct registration number (PNO 580R) and a replica GB sticker on the boot lid.

These are going fast, just like the cars in the show, so to make sure you get yours, drop Tony an email at [professionalmania@hotmail.com](mailto:professionalmania@hotmail.com). ■



## FIRST PAGANI MODEL KIT FROM POCHER

**AFTER** more than two years in the making, Pocher, known for its premium 1/8 scale model kits, has launched its first Pagani model kit, the Utopia Coupé. Horacio Pagani's Utopia Coupé represents the pinnacle of automotive artistry and innovation, and this new complete diecast model kit embodies the beauty and engineering of the legendary hypercar and offers around 30 hours of building.

A must-have for collectors and supercar enthusiasts alike, this luxury kit features:

- Over 556 precisely designed parts crafted from premium, lightweight materials, along with over 200 screws
- Working elements such as opening doors, steering, and suspension
- The same exquisite artistry and innovative design for which Pagani is known including the intricacies of the V12 engine, to the elegant interior, and aerodynamic bodywork.

The Pocher Pagani Utopia Coupé is available to order now for RRP £879.99 at [uk.pocher.com/products/pagani-utopia-coupe-rinascimento-lucido-hk120](http://uk.pocher.com/products/pagani-utopia-coupe-rinascimento-lucido-hk120). ■

## THE 2025 SILVERSTONE FESTIVAL MARKS 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



**THIS** year's 3-day Silverstone Festival of Historic Motor Racing promises something special, in that it marks the 75th anniversary of the Formula One World Championship. The British Grand Prix, held on 13 May 1950, was the first race where points were awarded toward the championship, one of the pinnacles of motor sport

achievement. As such the Festival promises plenty of special events and displays to celebrate this milestone. Held over the weekend 22 – 24 August, it will once again be a memorable weekend with plenty to see, do and collect for all the family.

More details can be found at [www.silverstone.co.uk/events/silverstone-festival](http://www.silverstone.co.uk/events/silverstone-festival). ■





## GLM UNVEILS NEW LINEUP IN HAND-BUILT RESIN

**COLLECTORS** have something to look forward to this summer, as GLM announces the upcoming release of three new meticulously hand-built resin car models. The latest additions to the brand's growing collection will feature iconic American classics from the 1960s and 70s, each available in multiple colour variants.

Leading the new lineup is the 1964 Lincoln Continental 4-door

Convertible, offered in both open and closed roof options. Collectors can choose from three stunning finishes: metallic turquoise, black, or red. This elegant model captures the sleek lines and bold presence of one of Lincoln's most celebrated designs.

Joining it is the 1968 Chrysler 300 2-door Coupe, a symbol of late-60s American automotive style and muscle. It will be available in two standout colours:

metallic green and metallic blue—both offering a premium look in resin form.

Rounding out the trio is the 1972 Lincoln Continental Mk IV Sedan, which showcases the long, commanding presence of early 70s luxury sedans. Colour choices for this model include red, black, or metallic green.

GLM, known for its attention to detail and high craftsmanship in resin modeling, continues

to cater to enthusiasts seeking authentic representations of classic automobiles. With these upcoming releases, the brand further cements its reputation in the premium collectible space.

All models are due for release in August and will be priced at about £90 each. Collectors are advised to pre-order early, as quantities are expected to be limited due to the hand-built nature of each model. ■

## LOOK SMART UNVEILS REPLICAS OF ICONIC 1967 LE MANS FERRARIS

**MODEL** maker Look Smart has announced a new series of 1/43 scale replicas, celebrating

Ferrari's entries in the 1967 24 Hours of Le Mans. The highlight of the quartet is the #24 Ferrari 330 P4, which secured a podium finish in third place, driven by Willy Mairesse and Jean Beurlys.

The other three models represent Ferrari 412Ps, each with its own story of mechanical misfortune. The #22 car, driven by Jean Guichet and Herbert Müller, retired due to a failed



piston. Pedro Rodriguez and Giancarlo Baghetti's #25 also bowed out with engine trouble. Lastly, the #23 of Richard Attwood and Piers Courage ended its race early with an oil pump failure.

Each detailed replica is priced at £105.00 and caters to collectors and motorsport fans alike. ■

## CULT ANNOUNCES NEW 1973 AUSTIN ALLEGRO

**COLLECTORS** of classic British car models have a new release to look forward to this summer, as Cult Models unveils its latest 1/18 scale creation: the 1973 Austin Allegro 4-door saloon.

Known for its quirky design and distinct place in British motoring history, the Austin Allegro has long been a nostalgic favourite. Cult's detailed 1/18 resin model captures the character of the original vehicle with remarkable accuracy and craftsmanship. It will be available in three authentic period colours: Glacier White, Harvest Gold, and Brazil Metallic.

The model is scheduled for release at the end of June or early July, with a retail price of £174. Interested collectors can place their orders or make enquiries by contacting BHM via telephone on 01244 320761, by email at [bhm-uk@talktalk.net](mailto:bhm-uk@talktalk.net), or by visiting the [www.britishheritagemodels.co.uk](http://www.britishheritagemodels.co.uk). ■





# NEWS

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## WHANGANUI TOY FAIR REPORT

**THE** 4th annual Whanganui Toy Fair went off without a glitch, reports Steve Brown in New Zealand. All week a cloud had literally been hanging over the event. The forecast for Sunday was for heavy rain! I was worried it was going to be a washout but, in the end, only a couple of light showers showed up.

I opened the doors a little early so people wouldn't get too wet waiting. Again, the first four hundred people through the door got one of our button badges as proof of entry. There are now four different button badges to collect.

Once through the doors you were confronted by a large stadium full of over 140 tables of collectable toys for sale! Toy heaven! I was told by stall holders and punters alike that we had a far bigger range of toys this year.

We had our stall holder competition for the "Best Table

In Show". This was won by Retro Nerd. Stall holders got a free pad and car pen. These have not only proved very popular but very handy for stall holders to write down what they have sold.

The Scouts were back with their sausage sizzle as was Ice Queen, with ice creams and drinks for sale. Star Wars characters were milling around amongst the crowds ready for photo opportunities. Cam was back with a Saturday set up, live podcast and filming the event on Sunday. Check out the Whanganui Toy Fair on YouTube.

The lucky dip proved popular again as did the event souvenirs where you could buy trucks, cars, commemorative envelopes and the popular car pens all decked out in the Whanganui Toy Fair logo. The vintage car display was back and as any showers were very light, they were able to stay until 1:30pm.



Talking to one stall holder, he'd been having a very quiet day until someone came and bought \$1,000 worth of toys from him.

Everyone I spoke to said they had had a very good day so bring on next year's Whanganui Toy Fair. I can't wait. ■

## NEXT MONTH

SEPTEMBER  
2025 Issue 335

### PLUS...

- Safari Rally in miniature
- Coventry Diecast anniversary
- A-Z of diecast collecting
- Models 'Little & Large'
- Auction results
- All the latest news
- Extensive selection of new model releases
- And much more...



### Cars and other pastimes...

David Wright looks back at his life of cars and driving, brings each to life, and shows us how they look in 1/43 scale!

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*Please note: These  
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SOLIDO 2022 PANDEM TOYOTA 'ROCKET BUNNY' WHITE 27.99



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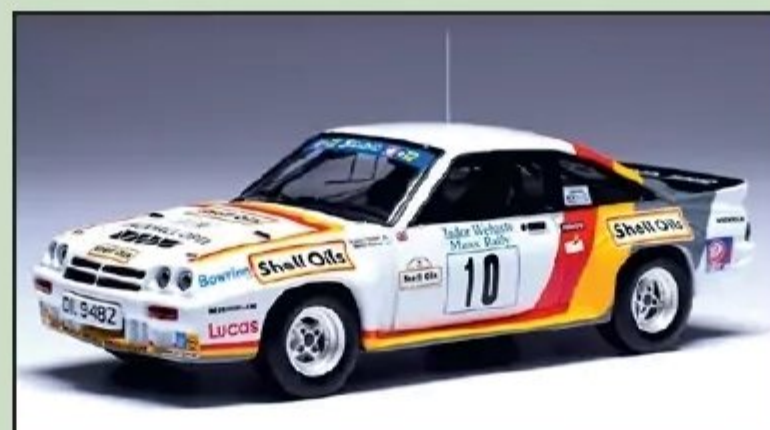
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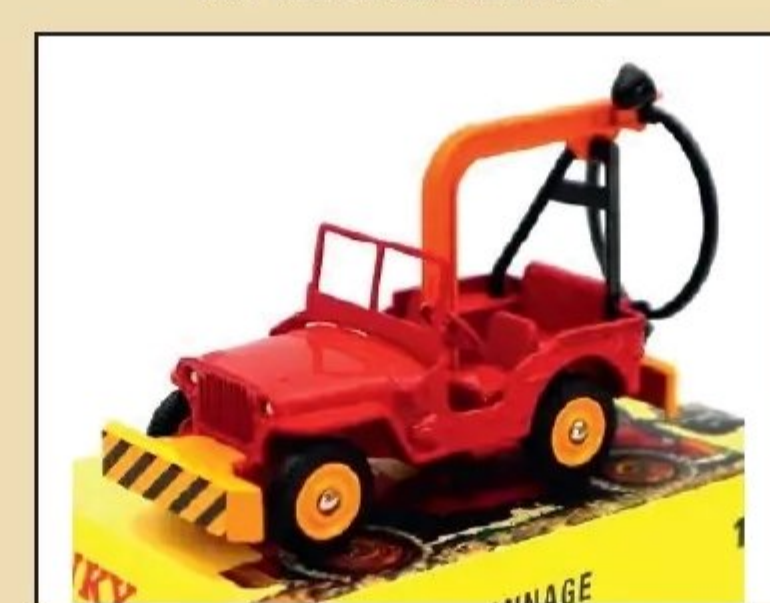
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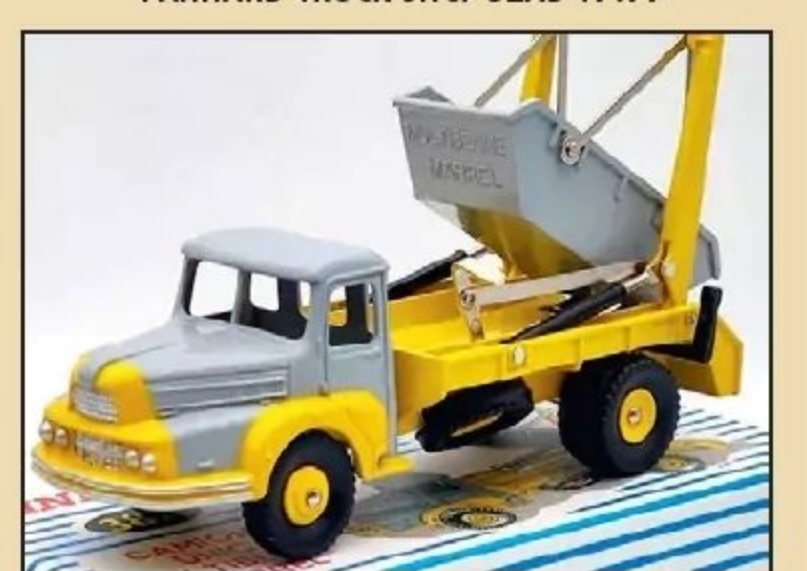
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# What's new...

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.

## DOES CORGI MODEL CLUB TAKE CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG RIGHT BACK TO 1968?

First seen on the big screen in 1968 and loosely based on the 1964 novel by Ian Fleming (yes, the same chap who wrote the James Bond novels), the undoubtable star of the film Chitty Chitty Bang Bang was the magical flying car that the movie was named after.

When, in 2019, Corgi released its much-anticipated, but delayed, 50th anniversary recreation of its iconic, 1968-released No.266 Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, there were a couple of obvious quibbles – namely the lack of bonnet strap (replaced by a printed representation on the engine cover) and using the same wheels for both front and back. So, when the Corgi Model Club announced it was going right back to the 1968 model and correcting these errors, and packaging the model in a faithful recreation of the original box, hopes were very high indeed. Examples have started to arrive with club members and Chitty is now available for non-members to buy as a standalone release.

Just as the original No.266 all those years ago, the wings pop out when the external handbrake is pushed forward and the car contains all four characters from the original film (now fixed in place, presumably to meet safety regulations regarding small objects). The front and rear wings are removable so the car can be displayed in normal road going guise but, let's face it, Chitty looks best with full wing deployment. All the details are there from the original and the bonnet strap and wheel design have both been corrected, as promised.

As for the model being championed as a faithful recreation of the original 1968 release, sadly this



ABOVE

The Corgi Model Club's re-tooled Chitty has its flaws but, if you don't compare it too closely to an original, it's actually rather a nice model.

**CORGI MODEL CLUB**  
**Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**

**SCALE:** 1/45  
**PRICE:** £42.99  
**REF:** 266

[www.corgi-modelclub.com](http://www.corgi-modelclub.com)

ABOVE RIGHT

The casting has been very nicely recreated, but the painting detail lets it down somewhat. The 'gold' is missing entirely from the serpent horn and the main boat hull is too glossy and not quite the right shade either.

LEFT

The box is rather nice, complete with the plastic cloud insert. But, the artwork on the header is a little faded and not entirely faithful to the original.



is definitely not the case. The poor choice of paint colour rather than the plating on the original for the 'gold' parts (and the lack of 'gold' on the serpent horn), the plastic rather than diecast baseplate, the colour of the skin on the figures (it looks like they've been sunning themselves in Benidorm for a couple of weeks) and the shade/finish of paint on the 'boat' body section are the general faults observed. The model specific faults on our review example are headlights that point inwards a little and a blemish to the passenger-side running board. Also, the parcel box used was too shallow to safely transport the model and there is a slight crushing to the box. The box itself is nicely done, especially the plastic 'cloud' base insert, but the header printing seems to be a little faded compared to an original.

If you don't compare it too closely to an original, it's actually rather a nice model. But is it worth the inflated price compared to the usual club models? ■





**CONRAD**  
**Schwing S36X Razor Concrete Pump**  
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €159  
 REF: 78260/0

[www.conrad-modelle.de](http://www.conrad-modelle.de)

One of two releases for Schwing, the S36X Razor is based on a 3-axle Mercedes-Benz Arocs chassis with working outriggers and a working boom.



**NZG**  
**Schwing S43SX Hybrid Concrete Pump**  
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €195 REF: 1114

[www.nzg.de](http://www.nzg.de)

All the main features of the original are operational on the model, from the placement boom to the extending outriggers with lowering jacks.



**CONRAD**  
**Kobelco SK500LC-10 Tracked Excavator 'Bauma 2025 Design'**  
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: \$TBA REF: 2210/05

[www.kobelcofanshop.com](http://www.kobelcofanshop.com)

For the Bauma 2025 show Kobelco have released the SK500-10 in a striking blue decoration with Munich skyline printing down the sides of the body.



**CONRAD**  
**Avant 650 Wheel Loader**  
 SCALE: 1/25 PRICE: €74  
 REF: 2447/02

[www.conrad-modelle.de](http://www.conrad-modelle.de)

Updated Avant wheel loader, now decorated as the 650. Comes with both bucket and pallet forks, with articulating steering and a telescopic boom.



**CONRAD**  
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 REF: 78262/0

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**IMC MODELS**  
**Jekko SPX328 Spider Crane**  
 SCALE: 1/18 PRICE: €200  
 REF: n/a

[www.jekko-cranes.com](http://www.jekko-cranes.com)

One surprise release at the Bauma is the Jekko SPX328 spider crane. A very impressive model, accurately captures all the features and functions of the original.



**NEIB CO**  
**Hyundai HW210V Wheeled Excavator**  
 SCALE: 1/60 PRICE: €92.50 REF: 18-1015

[www.imcmodels.eu](http://www.imcmodels.eu)

While the scale is a surprise, the detail and use of metal handrails is great to see. The model really captures the aesthetics of the original well.



**WSI MODELS**  
**Palfinger FLS 25 Truck Mounted Forklift**  
 SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €39 REF: n/a

<https://shop.palfinger.com>

An impressive release, packed with small details and fully functional. The model comes with different adaptors which can be fitted to a range of WSI brand trailers.



# BRITAINS PRESTIGE JOHN DEERE 9RX ON SALE

Britains' newly tooled 9RX 830 model hits the shops as John Deere's new 913hp 9RX, the biggest, most powerful and expensive tractor to go into series production becomes available to UK farmers. Released as part of Britains' Prestige collectors range it's a well-built, detailed model with metal chassis and plastic body parts.

The model has good-looking decals on the bonnet, European red and white warning boards front and rear, along painted work lights. In front of the cab and detailed on either side of the bonnet are the black exhaust and air cleaner stacks. The fully glazed cab has John Deere's latest GPS receiver detailed on the roof panel, folding driving mirrors, and on the rear window a wiper and a 40-speed limit decal. There are detailed access steps to the cab but the cab door does not open. Finished in light tan the interior has ribbed floor matting, passenger seat and driver seat with detailed armrest. There are also a red foot pedal, black brake pedals and a black monitor detailed.

The main drive and idler wheel bolts are highlighted on each track unit and is fitted with freely rotating flexible tracks. There are two steering rams at the pivot and the pivot also allows the model to be displayed on an uneven surface. At the rear there are work and tail lights on the rear mudguards, a colour-coded hydraulic block, pto with cover, extra weights and clevis drawbar detailed. ■

**BRITAINS**  
**John Deere 9RX**  
**830 Tractor**

**PRICE:** £79.99  
**SCALE:** 1/32  
**REF:** 43399

**www.britains**  
**farmtoys.co.uk**



**WEISE-TOYS**  
**DEUTZ FAHR 6135C RVshift Tractor**  
**SCALE:** 1/32 **PRICE:** £90.60  
**REF:** 071586 (SDF: MO9D131)

**www.deutz-fahr.com**

Newly tooled and detailed model, provided with working linkages front and rear and steerable wheels. There's good access to the detailed cab interior.



**ROS**  
**Kuhn FC 1360 RA Trailed Mower Conditioner**  
**SCALE:** 1/32 **PRICE:** £123.12 **REF:** 9401222

**www.kuhn.co.uk/kuhn-shop**

Well-built and accurate model provided with many realistic working features. It folds for transport and has a hitch that fits many model tractors.



**REPLICAGRI**  
**Kuhn Kosma M 4 Precision Seed Drill**  
**SCALE:** 1/32 **PRICE:** £37.90 **REF:** 9401338

**www.kuhn.co.uk/kuhn-shop**

Largely metal model provided with stands, warning boards, freely rotating support wheels and four detailed seeding units. It's provided with a linkage adaptor.



**REPLICAGRI**  
**Kuhn Kosma TS 6e Micro Precision Seed Drill**  
**SCALE:** 1/32 **PRICE:** £61.75 **REF:** 9401337

**www.kuhn.co.uk/kuhn-shop**

Detailed six row drill equipped with fertiliser hopper, granulator hopper and bout markers. Outer seeding units slide out into their working position.





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# MINI GT'S OUTRAGEOUS SILVIA S15 SHOW CAR DISPLAYS SOME REAL FINESSE

The Nissan Silvia was a series of small sports cars produced by Nissan, of which the S15 was the final variant – manufactured from January 1999 to August 2002. Production of the Silvia was ended amidst Nissan's efforts to reduce its myriad of platforms and the S15 Silvia was the last Nissan-developed sports car to use a true front-engined, rear-wheel-drive (FR) layout. The S15 and earlier S12 models have become hugely popular amongst the custom car and drift fraternities.

Auto Finesse, an Essex-based company, have taken a single, highly-modified S15, fitted with an outlandish Liberty Walk body kit, and produced a series of three stunning show cars. Auto Finesse started its journey in 1999 as a 'man with a van' car valet service and was founded by James Batty. In 2005, Batty rebranded to Auto Finesse, to coincide with the move to more in-depth detailing services, and the company has become a real global powerhouse in the supply of products.

The SEMA Show, held in Las Vegas every November, is a trade-only event that enables automotive speciality equipment manufacturers to display alongside automotive manufacturers to debut new, innovative products, and connect with industry buyers from all over the world.

For this latest version of its outrageous S15, Auto Finesse stripped the car's V2 wrap and resprayed it white, with the roll cage in Hot Pink. The new livery was custom designed by Blackfish Graphics in Germany and applied by Identity Wraps in Kent. It was then time to strap the car securely into a shipping container and send it Stateside, ready to wow the crowds at SEMA 2023. And it most certainly did.

MINI GT's recreation of this incredible-looking car is absolutely wonderful. The Liberty Walk S15 is not a new casting, but this amazing colour scheme just demands attention, with some excellent attention to detail. Although it's a shame that the roll cage isn't wearing that fabulous Hot Pink, but that's something that can easily be rectified as the model comes apart by removing just two base screws to gain access to the interior. But be quick as demand is understandably really high for this one. ■

**MINI GT**  
Nissan Silvia  
(S15) LB-Super  
Silhouette Auto  
Finesse SEMA  
2023 RHD

SCALE: 1/64  
PRICE: £17.99  
REF: MGT00781

[www.clevelandsdiecast.co.uk](http://www.clevelandsdiecast.co.uk)

**RIGHT**  
For the third version of its outrageous S15, Auto Finesse stripped the car's V2 wrap and resprayed it white, with the panel accents in Hot Pink.

**BELOW**  
MINI GT's recreation of this incredible-looking car is absolutely wonderful. The Liberty Walk S15 is not a new casting, but this amazing colour scheme just demands attention, with some excellent attention to detail.







**WSI MODELS**  
Palfinger PK19.001 SLD5 on  
Mercedes-Benz Arocs MP5 Chassis  
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €159 REF: 04-2213

<https://shop.palfinger.com>

The smaller PK19.001 knuckle boom crane has been modelled, fitted to the rear of a Mercedes-Benz Arocs chassis with sided loading area. Fully operational.



**WSI MODELS**  
Palfinger PK24.001 SLD5 on Iveco  
S-Way Chassis  
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €159 REF: 04-2214

<https://shop.palfinger.com>

This PK24.001 knuckle boom crane model from WSI features the crane mounted at the front of the Iveco S-Way rigid 6x2 truck chassis, complete with outriggers.



**WSI MODELS**  
Palfinger PK370 TEC on Scania G XT  
Chassis  
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €179 REF: 04-2215

<https://shop.palfinger.com>

An interesting material transport solution, with the low sided skip detachable and the crane fully operational, complete with a clamshell loading grab.



**WSI MODELS**  
Palfinger PK480 TEC on MAN TGX  
XXL Chassis  
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: €189 REF: 04-2216

<https://shop.palfinger.com>

Transporting a 20' shipping container, this MAN 8x4 rigid truck is one of four brand new models from WSI, featuring a flat platform body with detachable sides.



**MINICHAMPS**  
Mercedes Benz 280 SE 3.5 Cabriolet  
(W 111) Blue 1970  
SCALE: 1/43 PRICE: €37.95 REF: 940038131

[www.minichamps.de](http://www.minichamps.de)

Adorned with plentiful plated brightwork, other points of detail are equally as satisfying. An excellent tribute to a timeless Mercedes design.



**CLASSIC CARLECTABLES**  
Ford XA Falcon GT RPO83 (Summer  
Gold)  
SCALE: 1/18 PRICE: AU\$279 REF: 18822

[www.classiccarlectables.com.au](http://www.classiccarlectables.com.au)

With a raft of opening features and intense attention to detail presented, this model justifies the price point and your decision to include it in your collection.



**OTTOMOBILE**  
Nissan Skyline GT-R R33 V-Spec  
Midnight Purple 1995  
SCALE: 1/18 PRICE: €69.90 REF: OT1138

[www.otto-models.com/en](http://www.otto-models.com/en)

OttOmobile do dabble elsewhere around the globe, bringing their R33 V-Spec to the diecast table and re-affirming their ability to create first class models.



**OXFORD DIECAST**  
Bond Bug - white  
SCALE: 1/76 PRICE: £9.95  
REF: 76BUG002

[www.oxforddiecast.co.uk](http://www.oxforddiecast.co.uk)

Classed as a microcar this wedge-shaped three wheeler, with its characteristic frog-eye headlights, only lasted in production until 1974 - simply delightful!



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# TUNE IN WITH SOLIDO TO THE LATEST NEWS ON THE 356 WAVELENGTH...

**A**s a marque theme Solido's coverage of Porsche is wide ranging as past reviews in *Diecast Collector* have, on many occasions, illustrated. From its 2025 additions to that growing back catalogue comes this latest colour variation of the 356 from the early years of Porsche's production history.

The very early 356s were hand crafted with aluminium bodies and built in Gmünd, Austria between 1948 and 1950. At that point Porsche turned to one of Germany's long established coachwork companies, Karosseriewerk Reutter, Zuffenhausen, Stuttgart for series production of the steel bodied 356s between 1950 and 1965.

Successive updating came with the 356 A in 1955, the 356 B in 1960 and finally the 356 C in 1964. The version Solido has modelled sits in the Pre-A period of 1950-1955, recognisable by its windscreen with a distinct vertical central crease contrasting with all the subsequent models which had curved windscreens.

Solido specifically captures the 1953 model, by which time the 1500cc engine had been introduced, bumpers with overrides were separated from the bodywork and the early two piece windscreen with central frame support had been replaced by one of single piece glass still retaining the central crease. And it is a great representation in 1/18 diecast with nice bodywork proportions and authentic detailing, including the Karosserie Reutter badge on the front nearside (right) wing between the wheel arch and passenger door leading edge. Other super little details include the correct for year Telefunken ID 51 / ID 52 Radio in pride of place centrally on the dashboard and the Porsche crest on the steering wheel boss.

This latest release brings Solido's 356 Pre-A line up to seven models, including four representing factory fresh cars in 1950s era paint colours. Of

**SOLIDO**  
**Porsche 356 - 1953**

**SCALE:** 1/18  
**PRICE:** £TBA  
**REF:** S1802810 Beige

[www.solido.com](http://www.solido.com)



**RIGHT**  
Immediately recognisable as a late series Pre-A version by the single piece creased windscreen Solido's latest colour variation on the 356 theme exudes a very era reminiscent feel.



**ABOVE**  
A host of nice detailing defines this 1953 version including the 1500 badging, updated bumpers with overrides and revised rear lights. The latter are superb little individually lensed fittings, supplemented by equally impressive separate reflectors. Whilst interior detailing includes a commendable representation of Telefunken's ID 51 / ID 52 Radio.

these the aluminium silver is probably the first, almost automatic reaction, choice of most Porsche fans. But having said, that the latest version in beige prompts a rethink of that instinctive preference. It, and the preceding dark blue and primrose yellow, all also suit the car equally from an enthusiasts point of view.

Understandably successive colour variations of this sort make economic sense from a manufacturer's point of view. Especially so for companies like Solido which looks not just to serious collectors but to a range of other markets including the 'mass market' type of outlets as wide customer bases. With the smaller scales - from 1/43 downwards - collectors have traditionally had an inclination towards collecting models in numerous colour variations. When it comes to 1/18 (and larger) however a conundrum kicks in: should one wait and see if an absolute "die for" colour variation will come along later or grapple with the challenges to display space (and hobby budget) brought on by multiple versions?

A conundrum highlighted by all four of Solido's 356 Pre-A released so far. Silver was the first choice but that beige is really attractive... as was the dark blue... and in a different way the primrose yellow. "Joie de vivre" or "C'est la vie"? ■

**BELOW**  
Good, tight, shut lines to the opening doors are hardly wider than the engraved lines of the non opening bonnet and boot on this well proportioned casting. The Karosserie Reutter badging is readily visible in this shot...





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# 1934-35 Rover 12hp

**Mike Coupe** talks you through a lovely new release by Matrix Models...

**C**ollectors of British cars, particularly those of the 1930s, will be delighted with the recent model from Matrix Scale Models; the 1934-1935 Rover 12hp. The name Rover Twelve was given to several medium sized cars from the Rover car company between 1905 and 1945, the first 12hp being the fourth model produced by Rover, following the 6hp, 8hp and 16hp.

Rover first produced cars in 1904, having previously manufactured bicycles the first being a tricycle. Motor cycles were also part of the Rover portfolio but poor sales brought to an end to their production in 1924 and Rover just concentrated on the manufacture of motor cars. During the 1930s, the company wasn't very successful with substantial losses between 1923 and 1928, in which year Frank Searle was appointed Managing Director to supervise recovery. On Searle's recommendation, Spencer Wilks was brought in from Hillman as General Manager. Searle and Wilks began reorganising the company and moving it "up-market" to cater for customers who wanted something more superior than Fords and Austins.

In 1930, Maurice Wilks, Spencer's brother and who had been an engineer at Hillman, joined the company. After profitable years in 1929 and 1930, a downturn was experienced in 1931, but in 1933, Rover returned a profit. Searle left the board in 1931.

Building on successes such as beating the Blue Train for the first time in 1930 in the "Blue Train Races", the Wilks Brothers established Rover as a company with several European royal, aristocratic, and governmental warrants, and upper-middle-class and star clients.

The Rover 12hp, later known as the P1, was introduced as a new range by the Wilks brothers at the end of August 1933. The range also included a 10hp and a 14hp and was available as a 6-light saloon, a sports saloon, a 2-door coupé and an open 4-seater, the subject of the Matrix Model. The bodies were traditionally built with steel panels fitted to a wooden frame. It was

**ABOVE** A selection of Matrix replicas.



**ABOVE** A full size Rover 12 on show. Credit: Wikipedia



**ABOVE** The beautifully designed dash board. Credit: [www.brightwells.com](http://www.brightwells.com)



**ABOVE** Leather seats for the driver and passenger. Credit: [www.brightwells.com](http://www.brightwells.com)



**ABOVE** ...And the model version!

powered by a 1496 cc ohv straight 4 and cost £288 with 5,775 being built. It was succeeded by the P2 in 1937 which remained in production up to, and after the Second World War.

The Matrix Model which is available in three colours; maroon with matching interior, white (tan) and British Racing Green (pale brown), the latter being an exclusive for John Ayrey diecasts and is a limited issue of just 100 models of each colour.

It is a welcome addition to the range of British cars now appearing from Matrix and is an excellent rendition in 1/43rd scale of the real car. The headlights and spotlight have clear lens and accompanying the spotlight on the front bumper bar is the horn. Small separate details include the bonnet catches and hinge, side lights, door handles, hinges and petrol filler cap. There are bumpers front and rear, the latter incorporating number plate and rear lights. The matt black tonneau cover has seven separate studs which would attach the cover to the body, and similar small studs are present on the bonnet which would act as protection for the paintwork when the bonnet is open. The running boards are also a separate piece with plated trim attached to the side. The wheels are wonderfully executed fine "wire" wheels with plated hub caps. Finally, the exhaust tail pipe is present on the underside.

The interior is not devoid of added detail which includes window winders, door grab handles, handbrake, gear lever and a correct three spoked steering wheel. The dashboard is an accurate representation of the one on the 1:1 car together with the correct instrumentation. The windscreen is an etched brass piece with a driver's mirror on the off side. The rear view mirror is mounted on the dashboard. There is just one windscreen wiper (on the driver's side) which was very often the practice in those days.

The P1 Rover is a fine companion to the P2, a Somerville Model of several years ago, and the more recent P3 from BHM, and a great addition to any collection of 1930s or British cars. ■





# A never ending story

Several years ago we published a story about the Safari rally, featuring most of the 1/43 scale models available at the time. Over the next two issues, **Francisco Mota** updates this collection... Photos: João Carlos Oliveira

**ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT**  
A trio of Safari rally entries from the first half of the seventies: 1974 Fiat 124 Abarth, 1973 Ford Escort MKI and Alpine-Renault A110 S, all in 1/43 scale models by Troféu.

**W**hen we published our Safari Rally story in 2017, the event had been out of the World Rally Championship (WRC) since 2003, with no hint of when, or if, it would be back to the leading series of the sport. The process that led to the Safari being banned from the WRC started with a difficulty to adapt this special event to the then 'new' standard format that all rallies had to follow. It was immediately obvious that the roughness of the roads and the endurance challenge would be very hard to keep with the new schedule. Political instability in the region did the rest and the rally, considered by many as the toughest in the world, was out of the world championship.

It would take a further 19 years before the Safari was back to the WRC, for the 2021 edition. This time with a completely new breed of rally cars; very different from the early WRC machines, still derived from standard cars, even if fully reviewed and transformed. Colin McRae and his Ford Focus RS WRC 02 (Ixo released it) were the last to win the Safari before the event was thrown out of the championship.

The return edition of 2021 saw the organisers and the ruling body, the FIA, getting a compromise between the traditional values of this unique event

and the needs of a modern rally, namely an adequate service area, spectator's safety all around the route and enough roughness to keep with the Safari Rally tradition. The new formula has been perfected in recent years and the Safari regained its position in the World Rally Championship calendar.

## NEW BREED OF CARS

Concerning the cars, the new generation of WRC Rally1 machines are tough enough to last a Safari at full swing. Made from a tubular steel space frame, common to all teams, it has high rigidity and is very safe for driver and co-driver. Obviously, the performance increased considerably in nineteen years, and the stages are shorter than they used to be. So the approach to the new age Safari Rally is very different from the past. Now it is a sprint in most of the stages, demanding different skills from drivers and machines. It still features challenges not seen anywhere else in the championship, however the endurance factor is much less relevant than in the old days.

For the last two years, the FIA allowed the teams to add snorkels and protection bars to the cars entered in the Safari, just in case they had to cross a small river or to avoid dust entering the engine. Or to protect the car in case of an unavoidable encounter with Kenya's





wildlife. Some say this is as much to give modern rally cars a different look when rallying the Safari, something reminiscent of their ancestors. For us, collectors this is very welcome, of course.

Either in real form or as 1/43 scale models, the Safari cars always had a special appeal about their looks. All the accessories needed in this rally, like all those protection bars, special mud flaps, increased ride height, extra searchlights and many others, make these scale models stand out in any shelf dedicated to rallying. That's the reason why there are so many collectors interested in this theme and manufacturers who take notice and release these special versions. Either classic or modern, they all look special.

## EIGHT YEARS AFTER

Since our last take on this subject, many Safari scale models have been released and there are enough to look into. So, let's call this a "continuation" article from the original: *Safari Rally – Part 2*. We've loosely organized this new bunch of scale models by year, starting with the oldest we found, launched after 2017. It is the Ford Capri 2600, entered by Ford Deutschland and driven by Rauno Aaltonen, a driver from the original group of "flying Finns" who loved the Safari. He tried to win it with different cars over the decades, but never succeeded. This time, the Capri with door number 3 was one of many DNFs. The scale model was released not long ago by Troféu as one of the most interesting variations of a new set of parts. It features a searchlight on the right side of the bonnet and a bullet shaped mirror on the other side. There is a large sump guard under the front and three spotlights on the bumper. Around the rear, we can find long mud flaps and a pair of foot stands on the bumper and two hand grabs on the

roof. The idea was for the co-driver to stand over the rear, increasing the weight over the rear driving wheels and giving the car a better chance to find grip and get out of muddy sections. This Capri also features the standard chromed window surrounds, door locks and bumpers with the same finish and a set of excellent Minilite wheels.

## FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

In theory, the Porsche 911 had what was needed to do well in the Safari Rally: rear wheel drive and engine also at the rear, giving it optimum traction in low grip surfaces. So, the official team and several privateers tried the African enduro with a "nine-eleven", however with not much success and not a single win. For the 1973 edition, the works team, also known as Porsche System, entered a pair of yellow Bosch sponsored 911 RS. The cars looked great, with their Fuchs alloy wheels and duck tail rear spoiler, something more common at Le Mans than in Kenya. Considerable ride high increase, four extra spotlights and protection bars for the front and rear bumpers where the main exterior differences, perfectly reproduced by Troféu. There's also protection for the front underfloor and rear engine, plus the foot stands and hand grabs at the rear. The models look great side by side, featuring all the standard car's parts, like chromed wing mirror and window surrounds. Rear lamps, rear double exhaust and photoetched wipers. Looking inside we can see racing seats and seatbelts, several additional instruments and a roll cage. Drivers Zasada and Waldegaard had no luck and retired, from an accident the first time out and with engine trouble the second time.

Maybe small coupés wouldn't be the most adequate type of car to go rallying in Africa, but that was what Fiat and Alpine-Renault had developed for the WRC in the early 1970s. So, it was natural to see a team of FIAT 124 Abarth Rallye and Alpine-Renault A110 at the start of the 1974 and 1975 Safari edition, respectively. Maybe their hopes of a good result were not big, but if such a thing happened, that would give terrific advertising.

## COUPÉS IN KENYA

Local driver Robin Ulyate, driving the orange and yellow 124 Abarth finished 10th place overall after a grueling edition. Not bad, but 3h55m away from



**ABOVE Typical Safari Rally accessories: extra large mud flaps, feet stands on the bumper and spotlight as a reverse light.**



**ABOVE Moveable searchlight on the co-driver's side could be very helpful while rallying in the dark or to be seen by wild life when travelling fast.**



**ABOVE**  
This is a 1970 Ford Capri 2600, as driven by Rauno Aaltonen in the 1970 edition. Scale model by Troféu.





**ABOVE**  
The Porsche armada for the 1973 Safari Rally entered this pair of gorgeous yellow 911 RS, sponsored by Bosch. Note the increased ride height, extra spotlights and underfloor protection.



**LEFT**  
Troféu made an excellent replica of the 1973 Safari 911 RS, complete with bumper black tubular protections, front and rear.



**ABOVE**  
From this angle we can see the shape of the rear protection and the gap to the bodywork.



**ABOVE**  
Extra spotlights are a must for the Safari, not only for the driver to see, but also for the car to be seen at distance.



**ABOVE**  
Alpine-Renault had extra mud-flaps ahead of the front wheels, to protect the headlights while crossing small rivers.

Joginder Singh's winning Mitsubishi Lancer GSR. The following year, Jean-Luc Thérrier on board the A110 1800 did no better, retiring due to engine malfunction.

Troféu recently released two 1/43 replicas of these Safari cars. The Fiat features a higher than normal suspension with narrow Cromodora wheels and mud flaps for the rear wheels only. There's a strong-looking tubular protection at the front, leaving the spotlights behind. A generous sump guard can also be seen. In the rear, there's a black tube that acts as a reinforced bumper, two fuel fillers and an antenna in the middle. Looking inside the cockpit, racing seats, instruments, fire extinguisher and roll cage can all be seen. The Alpine-Renault A110 1800 does not have a tubular protection at the front, maybe because the engine is in the back, naturally protected against any frontal impact. What we can find is a pair of mud flaps ahead of the front wheels and under the headlamps. There's also a searchlight on the right side, for the co-driver to operate if needed. The rear features a pair of hand grabs but no foot stands, besides the two parts bumper. This version of the A110 looks great due to its enlarged front and rear wheel-arches in the shape of a bubble.

## SEDANS DO IT BETTER

Conventional two door sedans were much more adequate to deal with Africa's dusty and muddy roads, driving position is higher, increasing visibility, which is paramount in the Safari. Two of the best that succeeded in rallies around the world in the 1970s were the Ford Escort MKI and the Fiat 131 Abarth. Both cars were entered by factory teams, but while Ford was able to win once with this car, Fiat never did the same. Troféu has a huge number of variations of these two models, we found two more to add to the Safari Collection: the Fiat driven by Munari in 1979 and the Escort MKI driven by local driver Bhachu in 1973. The 131 Abarth features a lower tubular protection on the front end, plus two mud flaps ahead of the front wheels. It features the usual six headlamps front end and adds a searchlight on the co-driver's side. The rest is standard 131 Abarth by Troféu, wide a cabin easy to look into and complete with race seats and seatbelts, instruments and fire extinguisher, plus a complete roll cage. It features a long roof aerial, four mud flaps and a tubular protection working as a rear bumper. The Alitalia livery looks great, as ever.



**ABOVE**  
Face-to-face Fiat 124 Abarth and Alpine-Renault A110 S, showing that small coupés were not afraid to tackle the roughest rally in the world.





ABOVE

Two of the best rally cars ever, the Fiat 131 Abarth and the Ford Escort MK1. The Alitalia sponsored works machine was driven in the 1979 Safari by Sandro Munari. The Blue Oval's car was a privateer entry by local driver Bhachu in 1973.



ABOVE

White mud flaps ahead of front wheels were as good a spot as any other to place sponsor's stickers.



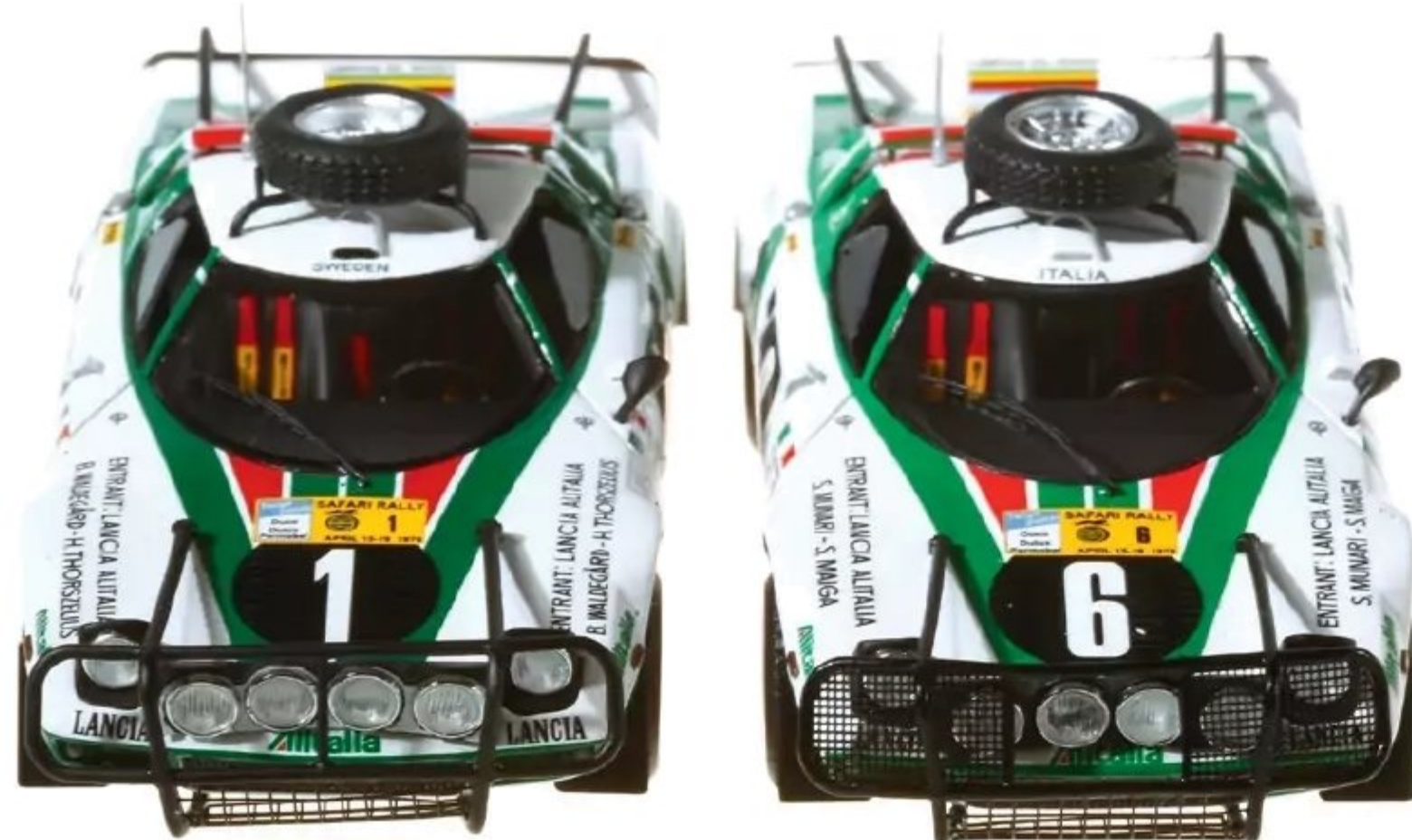
ABOVE

A pair of leather grab handles for the co-driver, or a volunteer spectator, to hold on to while sitting on the trunk's lid to give extra traction and extract the car from muddy terrain.



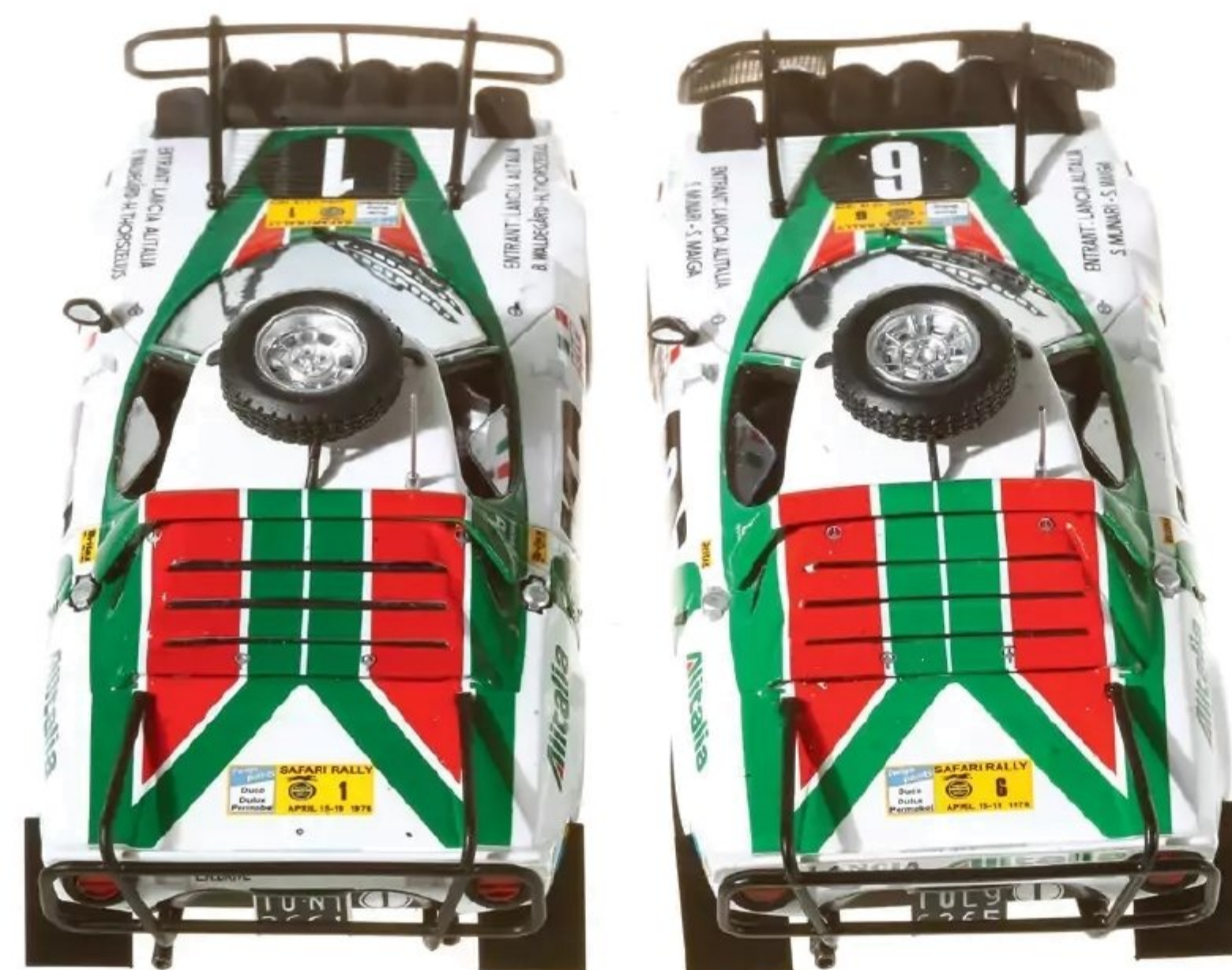
ABOVE

Lancia Stratos HF was carefully tuned for the Safari rally, but it never won in Kenya. Excellent resincast by Spark.



ABOVE

Front end completely protected by a large "bull-bar" with small differences between number 1 and car number 6.



ABOVE

Extra spare wheel on the roof and rear protection bars where specific to the Safari Rally Stratos.

The Escort MK1 also looks good, painted a vivid yellow with matt black bonnet to kill any sun reflection that could temporarily blind the driver. It also features a tubular protective structure that covers the entire front and holds three spotlights. There's a search light on the co-driver's side and the cabin can also be seen, featuring a pair of sun shades, complete roll cage, racing seats and all. On the rear window there are a pair of leather straps so the co-driver, or a courageous spectator, could hold on while standing on the rear chromed bumper. The car also featured four mud flaps. The Escort did not finish the rally, while the 131 finished 10th overall.

## THE RALLY ICON

To end this Rally Safari feature, what better car than the iconic Lancia Stratos HF, a true prototype made for the rally stages, with a Ferrari sourced V6 mid-mounted engine, short wheelbase and low front end with a wraparound windscreen? This was a machine able to win on every kind of surface, from dry to wet tarmac, ice, snow, gravel and rocks. It was also believed it could win the Safari, especially with the hugely competent Lancia Rally Team behind. Probably the most serious attempt was held in 1976, when the team entered a pair of meticulously prepared Stratos HF sponsored by Alitalia. The cars had several add-ons, like a secondary spare wheel on the roof, a huge tubular structure at the front, part of it complete with mesh, underfloor protection plates, and extra mud-flaps ahead of the front wheel to avoid water splashing too much in front of the driver and ruin visibility while crossing a small river. The suspension is higher than normal for the Stratos and the wheels are of the narrow type. Both scale models, released by Spark, also have four mud-flaps behind the four wheels and a second tubular structure to protect the rear area. Each scale model features a radio antenna on the roof. The cars are almost identical; differences are the bronze coloured rear wheel rims in car number 1, extra mesh on the front of car number 6 and, of course, different rally numbers and crew names. The end result was far from what Lancia had planned, with both Waldegaard, in car number 1 and Munari, in car number 6 retiring with engine problems. They would be back, as we will. Do not miss Safari Rally Part 3 in the next issue of *Diecast Collector*. ■





# Majorette Alpine masterclass

Alex Winson takes a look at the new Alpine A110 model.



**ABOVE**  
If these were real vehicles this would be one heck of a traffic stop!



**ABOVE**  
The law-enforcing Alpine was one of my favourite diecasts of 2024, making it to my Lamley Group 'Best of' roundup!



**ABOVE**  
Despite the colour difference, the Gendarmerie livery is well replicated on the Majorette miniature. And as one has come to expect from Majorette, decals are sharp and easily legible.

There are certain cars that give me that James May “fizz” just looking at them. The current Alpine A110 is one of them. I get a child-like excitement when I see one, often accompanied by a form of automotive Tourette’s that makes me point and exclaim “ooh, Alpine!”

So when Majorette released their take on the A110 towards the end of last year, there were no second thoughts about adding to my collection, and no second thoughts about sharing my thoughts in *Diecast Collector*.

The legendary A110 moniker was revived with Alpine’s re-birth in 2017. The original A110 was produced between 1963 and 1977 and made the Alpine brand famous thanks to a string of rallying successes. A revival of the model had been toyed with for years by parent company Renault and several concepts were produced only to quietly disappear soon after. The seeds of the new A110 were sewn in these early studies however, and in 2016 the Alpine Vision concept was revealed in Monte Carlo. The virtually identical production car arrived a year later at the brand re-launch at the 87th Geneva Motor Show.

And the new A110 has proved to be an incredibly capable sports car. Accolades from the motoring press arrived fast and deservedly so. The low kerb weight of just over 1100kg means the 250bhp provided by

the Nissan sourced, 1.8 litre turbocharged Inline-four is more than adequate. The focus with the A110 isn’t about power and top speed figures, but on handling and driver feedback. And considering Gordon Murray is an A110 fan I’d say the folks at Alpine HQ in Dieppe have done a very good job indeed.

But for folks wanting a little bit more shove, there’s the A110 S model, and then the even more concentrated A110 R. Generous use of carbon fibre parts brings means the R weighs in at 1082kg. Throw in a larger turbocharger and a free flowing Akrapovic exhaust system and the result is a 290bhp, 177mph capable rocket ship. There’s also an improved suspension set up with adjustable shocks, and uprated Brembo brakes provide ample stopping power. There’s exterior tweaks too; with a re-designed bodykit featuring a rear spoiler, carbon fibre bonnet and splitters.

I first saw Majorette’s take on the A110 R back in April 2024 at the firm’s influencer event and I was immediately taken with the prototype that was on display. The production version that arrived later in the year had some differences, but all in the way of added realism. Majorette’s design team had ditched the gloss paint, giving the model a matt finish mirroring Alpine’s “Matt Racing Blue”. Also gone were the 8-spoke wheels, replaced with multispoke items akin to the 18 Inch “GT Race” wheels from the Alpine options list.





**ABOVE** Alpine have had a close relationship with the Gendarmerie that has lasted over 50 years. Image from [oppositelock.com](https://www.oppositelock.com)



**ABOVE** The Majorette wheels seen here haven't been entirely well received by collectors, but here I think they work very well indeed.

And for a mainline diecast with an RRP of under a fiver, Majorette have produced something very special indeed. There's a separately moulded rear spoiler, clear front lights and the almost omnipresent Majorette fixtures of working suspension and opening parts. The doors open to reveal pleasantly detailed interior and rather curiously the plastic rear hatch is removable, though no hidden detail is revealed by doing so.

The A110 R casting also forms the basis of one of my favourite Majorette's of recent times, a replica of the A110s used by France's Gendarmerie. The Gendarmerie are the law enforcement agency in charge of small towns and rural areas in France, with the Police Nationale taking care of the bigger urban areas and cities. In 2021 they signed a deal with Alpine to provide 26 A110 police cars, continuing a relationship with the brand that has lasted 50 years.

The A110s are used by the Gendarmerie's "Rapid Intervention" teams and (according to the French Ministry of the Interior) help to "enable law enforcement to carry out interventions on motorways involving cars breaking the rules at high speed, as part of road safety or judicial police missions." In other words: chasing bad guys in fast cars. The first two units to receive their A110s were the Châteauroux and Salon-de-Provence forces and the Alpine has been a valuable tool for the "Maréchaussée" ever since.

A law enforcing Alpine was always going to make an interesting subject, and Majorette have produced a very pleasant miniature. The wheel choice will



**ABOVE** Alpine brochure shot from [www.alpine-cars.co.uk](https://www.alpine-cars.co.uk).

**BELOW** Old and new combining together beautifully. Credit: Marc Des Pouy

**ABOVE** A110 R brochure shot from [www.alpine-cars.co.uk](https://www.alpine-cars.co.uk)







**LEFT** Whether in working uniform or civilian guise the Majorette Alpine is a very neat addition to the brand's range.



**ABOVE** The A310 came in a variety of police and medical car liveries. Credit Damian Nicholas



**ABOVE** The original crime fighting Alpine A310 entered the Majorette range in 1979 and lasted until 1985. Credit Damian Nicholas

**LEFT** Majorette have captured the aggressive yet handsome lines of the A110 R perfectly.



**ABOVE** The early A110 R prototype from the Majorette Influencer Event in April 2024 - the differences are clear!



**ABOVE** The plastic spoiler on the A110 R is separately moulded and all the better for it.

obviously be completely Marmite on this car (for the non-UK readers, put simply it means you'll either love them or hate them) but they seem to suit the casting, colour and livery really rather well. But speaking of the livery, in what I can only assume is a cost saving measure, the paint doesn't match the shade of blue worn by the real cars; an Alpine colour known as "Abyss Blue". But in a roundabout sort of way it is still faithful to the real car. The Gendarmerie have in the past specified their Alpines in special paint finishes not available to the public. This time around they chose a normal finish in an effort to keep costs as low as possible, so I guess Majorette have been as accurate as possible here!

The Gendarmerie A110 also makes a neat modern follow up to the A310 emergency vehicle casting that

was a fixture of the Majorette line up between 1979 and 1985. Along the years the A310 was finished in several English language "Police" scripted variants as well as doctors cars, And at this point I must thank my wonderful friends Marc and Damian from the Majorette France and Majorette Australasia social media pages for the photos of the vintage A310s accompanying this article.

The two Alpines make a very neat pair and the Gendarmerie version took me that much it resurfaced in my Lamley Group best of 2024. With Majorette slowly becoming available at more outlets now in the UK (Asda and The Entertainer to name the most prominent stockists), and with the brand making some serious moves in the diecast world in 2025 already, this is a great time to be a Majorette collector. ■

*The Gendarmerie A110 also makes a neat modern follow up to the A310 emergency vehicle casting that was a fixture of the Majorette line up between 1979 and 1985.*



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# The 1964 Fiat 850 Saloon

Having already driven 630,000 miles in testing this car hit the market running. **Kevin Brock** picks up the story...

**ABOVE**  
1/43 850 Special from  
Solido and Norev.

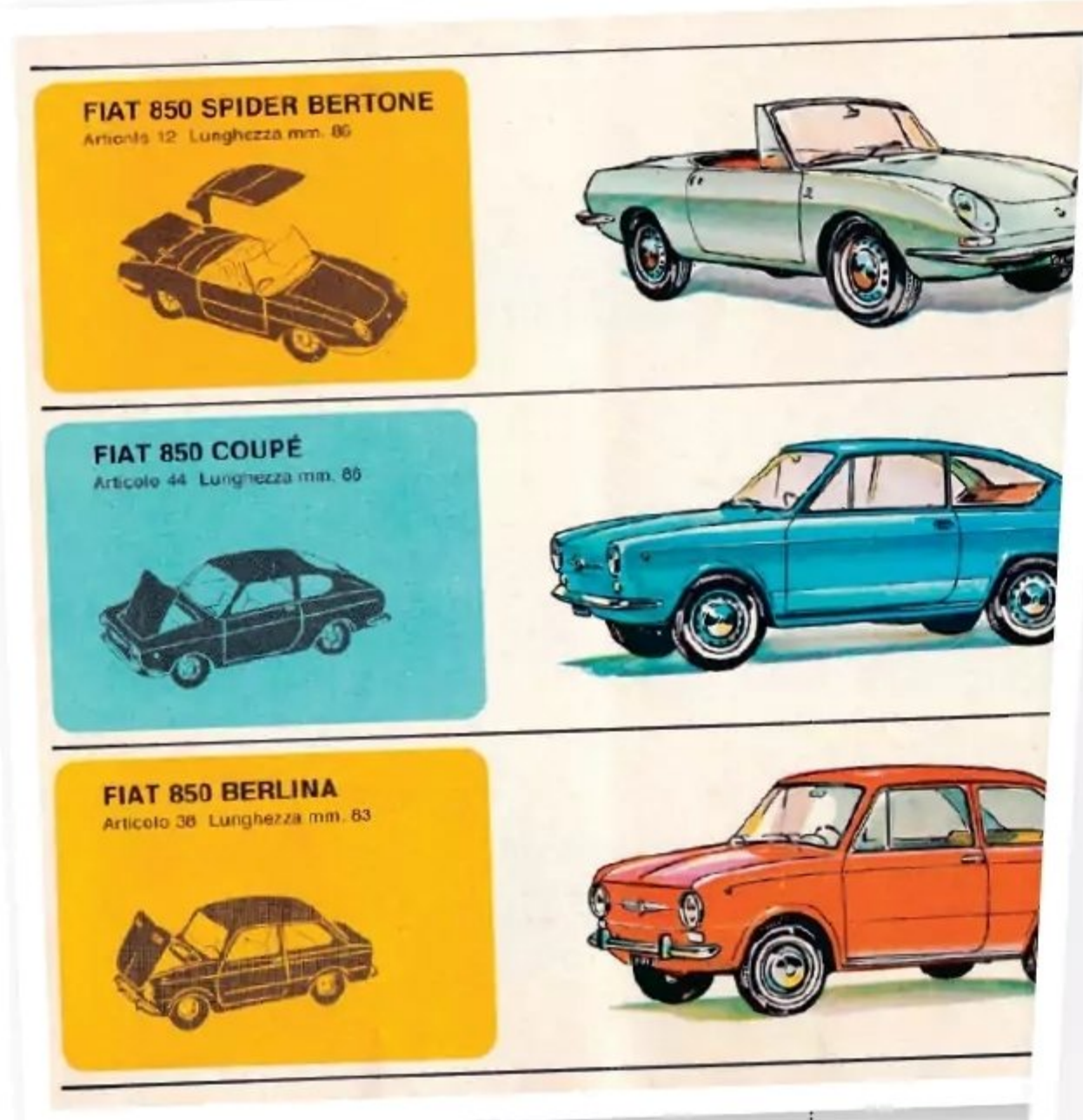
**BELOW LEFT**  
Mercury Fiat 850.

**BELOW RIGHT**  
Fiat 850 Saloon press  
photography.

**T**HE NEW FIAT ARRIVES - *the hard way!* claimed the press ad for the 850 Saloon when it landed on UK shores in autumn 1964. Referring to the 630,000 miles driven over three continents that Fiat's test drivers had covered to prove the reliability of the 850, so important was the new model to Fiat's future. First appearing to the motoring press in May 1964 it was a development of the successful 600 featuring a four-cylinder 843cc water cooled engine based on its 600 sibling and

mounted at the rear like all small Fiats. Originally intended to replace the 600, the 850 slotted into the range just above the 600 and both cars were produced side by side until 1969. Although successful straight away the 850, code number Tipo 100G, had a long drawn-out development with Fiat's top brass rejecting dozens of designs before agreeing on one. The designer, the great Dante Giacosa was quoted as saying he hated the 850's final design but one of his rejected prototypes did go into production wearing Simca 1000 badges due to Fiat's relationship with their former French subsidiary. The 850 was a

revelation for Fiat, spawning a whole family of cars with a Coupe, Spider, minibus and van appearing over the years. In 1968 they introduced the 850 Special which boasted an increase in power, new luxury interior with very smart wood rimmed steering wheel and exterior changes included sports wheels, chrome trim, bigger front badge and new paint colours. There was also a short lived semi-automatic version called the Idromatic which had no clutch pedal, to change gear the driver depressed the gear lever to change. Sounds great but it was a complete lemon, disappearing within a







couple of years.

The 850 also got the attention of Carlo Abarth who used it as a basis for a number of lairy racers including the Abarth OT850 and OT1000 which could be purchased to special order in the UK through Radbourne Racing and the spectacular OT1600 prototype which was basically an 850 Saloon bodyshell with a 1600 twin-cam engine stuffed in the back which propelled the little car to 140mph!

By the time Italian production had ended in 1971 (to make way for the new 127) 2,203,380 had been built, making it one of Fiat's best sellers.

However, like most Fiats, the 850 was also produced under licence outside of Italy. Spanish subsidiary Seat built it from 1966 to 1974, in Austria Fiat-Steyr and in Germany Fiat-NSU built 6,620 850 Saloons, badged as the Neckar Adria at their factory in Heilbronn between 1965 and 1969, identical apart from Neckar badges. For super rare versions though the winner has to be the Pirin-Fiat 850 Saloon which was assembled from CKD kits between 1966 and 1967 in Lovech, Bulgaria in a little-known collaboration between Fiat and the Bulgarian government.

**ABOVE** Pocher Fiat 850 box artwork.

**ABOVE RIGHT** Press ad from *Autocar* 23 October 1964.



**ABOVE** This 1/18 Laudoracing 850 looks real!

**BELOW** 1/18 resin Laudoracing 850 with great box art.



Seat's Barcelona built 850 was identical to its Torinese sibling apart from badging and was as popular in Spain as it was in Italy. But the Spanish went one stage further, they also built a unique four-door version for the home market called the 850 E Lujo based on a 4-door version that Italian coachbuilder Francis Lombardi had built a few years before. Spain's 850 outlived Fiat's by a couple of years with production eventually ending in 1974 after a total of 664,346 cars had rolled out of the Barcelona factory. Its successor was the 133, a unique to Seat design which was basically an 850 with modern bodywork resembling Fiat's 127. In a final twist, Fiat started to sell Seat 850s badged up as Fiats in certain markets including the UK between 1973 and 1975 as there was still demand for the old car. I remember my father running a couple and recall them being much better built than the Fiats with all the luxury trim from the Special model. I myself owned a Seat/Fiat 850D in the 80s and loved its sporty wood rimmed steering wheel and rorty exhaust and that it would outrun most of my friends old Escorts and Minis. Many of the 850s that survive in the UK today are Seats, the only exterior clues (apart from a later registration) being a small triangular vent at the base of the rear side window and FIAT COSTRUZIONE SEAT badging at the front.

The first 1/43 diecast model of the 850 came from Italian company Mercury who made a deal with Fiat to supply official publicity models for them, the models release coinciding with the real car. Art.38 appeared in eight different colours with either red, brown or yellow interiors so there's plenty to find. The box had a picture of the model on it with a very small round window so you could see what colour was inside, orange being the rarest. A well-proportioned model, the only detail which lets it down is the lack of a separately moulded steering wheel. Mercury also used this casting a year later to produce Art.42, the very attractive Abarth OT1000. This came in white or silver with Abarth graphics and the front panel casting altered to accommodate the outline of an Abarth emblem and jewelled headlights which completely changes the look. I think it's a great shame the standard version didn't





**LEFT 1/24 Plasticos**  
Albacete Seat and Salvat  
Fiat.



**ABOVE 1/13 scale Pocher**  
850 from 1964.



**ABOVE 1/13 scale Pocher**  
Fiat publicity model 1964.



**ABOVE 1/43 resin Rapide**  
128 right hand drive 850.



**ABOVE EKO SEAT 850**  
Saloon.

**BELOW**  
Abarth 1600OT from  
Laudoracing and Metro.

have jewels as well.

Pocher, an Italian company who also had close ties with the Fiat factory produced fantastic 1/13 plastic publicity models which could be found in every Fiat executive's office. Their 850 is wonderful with steerable front wheels and a place for batteries in the base to power it around the office floor! Usually found in blue it's one of the rarer Pocher models and commands high prices now. There was also an 850 in Pocher's lesser known 1/87 range which is even rarer and I have never actually seen one.

Another model which has eluded me is the 1/20 scale plastic model from FD Toys from 1964. All I know about them is that they made a range of simple two-piece toys of mostly Italian cars with the 850 being one of them. The only example I've seen was a yellow bodyshell with a blue base, no interior or glazing, separate grey bumpers and one-piece wheels.

Politoys released their 850 the following year as no.81 in their 1/41 plastic range and later as no.513 in their popular 1/43 metal M series. A very pleasing model but suffers from the loose flappy doors that affected some Politoys. It's an accurate model though why Politoys chose to paint it a horrible metallic brown is beyond me; it would look great in a better colour.

French Dinky added the 850 Saloon to their range in 1966 as number 509 in red, yellow or white. It has French style yellow jewelled headlights and red jewels for the tail lights and a very crisp casting with perfect proportions. The recent Atlas reproduction is identical, along with the great box artwork, just a shame the wheels on the Atlas look cheap and flimsy.

Edil Toys were a Milanese toy company who produced a range of models in 1966 with more detail, opening features and play value than their rivals to try to attract kids away from the popular Mercury, Mebetoys and Politoys. On the Mercury 850 only the luggage compartment opened, with Mebetoys it was the doors and with Politoys it was front boot and doors, but on the Edil Toys everything opened, including the rear engine cover. Their 850 model easily outdid the competition and looked great in bright red, even if it did have rather large panel gaps. The boxes were also colourful and attractive but two years later their rivals had caught up and Edil couldn't afford to compete and packed it in. Nowadays all Edil Toys are extremely rare and command eye watering prices whenever one appears

at auction or on ebay, and no, there isn't one in my collection unfortunately! If you are putting together a line-up of Fiat 850 models then the Edil Toys version is the holy grail.

1967 saw the release of an 850 Saloon from Mebetoys in an uncommon scale of 1/42 as ref. A1 in their range. It's very similar to the Mercury with a near identical base but slightly different proportions. Early ones had jewelled headlights and a rear numberplate sticker which changed to cast in lights and rear numberplate which aren't painted. Early disc like wheels with rubber tyres also changed to a realistic steel wheel design which was a standard pattern across the range. Thankfully the 850 didn't make it past the Hot Wheels take-over so was spared the terrible transition to 'whizzwheels' or whatever Mebetoys called them. To me, the front is a bit gawky but it has character even if the slightly bigger scale makes it look awkward in a 1/43 display. It was released in a myriad of colours, none of which were real Fiat shades.

Czechoslovakian firm Smer, best known for their plastic aircraft kits, produced their basic plastic 1/42 scale 850 in 1970. Although clearly an 850, it's very crude with only a vague indication of detail and the base has no information on it at all, no make, no country of origin, but I've been assured it's by Smer and Edoardo Massucci's excellent book, FIAT







**ABOVE** 1/43 plastic Smer and Chiqui Cars.



**ABOVE** Both Italian and UK versions of the Tel Model 850.



**ABOVE** 1/43 plastic Chiqui Cars Seat 850.

**BELOW** 1/32 SCX Fiat Abarth slot car.



MODEL CARS 1899-1985 sort of confirms this.

There's been a few models of Seat's version, the contemporary ones all coming from Spanish firms though it's always puzzled me why Auto Pilen didn't tackle the 850, especially as they produced an excellent 1/43 850 Spider.

Smallest one is Eko's 1/87 HO scale plastic model first appearing in 1967 and I believe is still available, as is most of the Eko range of mainly old Seat cars. For its size and simplicity it's an accurate model with a clear Seat winged badge on the front panel but no details on the base. I have it in various colours as well as yellow which I think is a copy of the Eko as it has solid wheels cast as part of the base, no glazing and looks like something out of a Christmas cracker.

Chique Cars was the name that Nacoral called their range of 1/43 plastic cars. Their Seat 850 is a gem and looks like the plastic Norevs of the time but with sturdier construction and wheels that resemble early Politoys. Beautifully made with screws holding the base on, jewelled headlights and a fine interior with chrome steering wheel, I have seen this in blue, white and red but few have survived the years without damage to the brittle plastic and the attractive but lightweight boxes are also scarce.

Spanish toy firms Paya, Riko and Plasticos Albacete also released desirable plastic models of the 850 in the mid 60's. I like the yellow headlights and indicator lights on Paya's plastic 1/20 850 which contrast well with the light blue, fawn or grey body. Other nice details are the half open windows on both sides and white-wall tyres. The base is tin and houses a friction drive motor on the rear wheels which makes it quite heavy. The 1/20 scale Rico is very similar in appearance but is a 'remote control' toy, the ones that had a wire going from the model to a battery box with a steering wheel enabling the user to steer the car.

Italian toy firm Ellegi made a similar model in 1/10 scale, looking like a smaller Pocher model, the excellent box artwork referring to it as a 'remote command' toy, very popular at the time.

Plasticos Albacete did a whole range of mostly Spanish cars in plastic during the 70s in various scales, their 1/24 850 being one of the best. A simple one-piece moulding with blue glazing, no interior and a friction drive motor on the rear wheels, my example is in the livery of a garage service vehicle. The front is superb with a perfectly moulded replica of Seat's fancy winged badge, similar to the one from the cheaper 1/32 Paya range which had one piece moulded bodies with clear glazing and interiors.

Solido's 1/43 offering in the 90s as ref.1856 in their Yesterday series represents a 1969 model. It's beautifully proportioned capturing the feel of the real car perfectly. Many model 850s get the wheel size wrong, usually sitting too low, but the Solido is perfect. Although not credited on the base or box, this is a model of the 850 Special with very nice replicas of the sports wheels, the deeper Fiat winged badge at the front and chrome strip down the sides. A detail that I like is the rear which doesn't have a number plate but shows the bare rear panel like a car straight from the factory. This model also featured in the Solido/Corgi 'A Century of Cars' partwork and also popped up in Seat guise, identical apart from the baseplate wording. I've only seen them in pale yellow, a popular colour on the real car.

Norev's example is similar to Solido's and replicates the 1969 850 Special, it first appeared in The Fiat Story partwork series in blue before being part of





their normal range. Norev also made an interesting model of the standard 850 for a Spanish part-work series in the livery of the Union De Centro Democratico party from 1975. This same casting has recently appeared labelled as a 1964 Fiat 850 Sedan in red or white with white-wall tyres in a plastic case.

Ixo make many partwork models which also feature in their own ranges and their 850 is no exception. A good accurate model with a particularly good front, but it has an awkward stance, the rear sitting far too high though this can be solved with a bit of altering. It first appeared in dark green in an Ixo branded box but has since been issued in various collections in red, blue, yellow and white. Inevitably one of these is a Seat, different only by having the small triangular vent at the base of the rear side windows, the only 1/43 model of the Spanish 850 which has this feature as far as I'm aware. Recently I found a very interesting version of the Seat in a rusty, weathered finish resembling a barn find with some great detailing such as old dealer stickers in the rear windows. A really fun model and a refreshing change to the norm though I have no idea what series it originates from as it came in a mysterious plain white box.

Ixo are also responsible for the excellent 1/43 model of Seat's 1966 4-door 850E from a Spanish partwork series on the history of Seat. A hard model to find now but if you're after a 1/43 850 4-door then Dutch model maker Rialto have recently announced they're releasing 1/43 resin models of the Lombardi Fiat 4-door 850 and the Seat version in both standard and 'Lujo' versions as well as a model of the very rare 1964 850 Giardiniera (estate) by Carrozzeria Caprera. Models which I'll be looking for in the near future. Another small Dutch modelmaker Autodrome brought out a resin 1/43 850 Saloon which I think was originally sold in kit

**ABOVE**  
Minilauda 1/64 Fiat 850.



**ABOVE**  
Ixo Seat 850 E from a Seat partwork.



**ABOVE**  
Mercury Art.38 Fiat 850.



**ABOVE**  
Press photograph from Fiat 850 launch 1964.

**RIGHT**  
Mercury 850 Saloons publicity models.

form but that's all I know about it.

Italian model maker Tel Models made a whole range of 1/43 resin 850 Saloons in Polizia, Carabinieri and Viglia Urbani guises including a standard one and an Abarth based on Mercury Art.42 with exactly the same Abarth decals. This is an old school hand-built resin model, a bit clumsy in places but captures the 850 stance perfectly, even if the wheels with rubber tyres are a bit wonky. It seems that the base and interior have been replicated straight from the Mercury but the bodywork although similar is bigger. I've also got an interesting Code 3 version by Rapide 128 whose address is Modelauto of Leeds who produced the excellent Model Auto Review magazine for years. It's the same model but converted into a UK-market car with right hand drive and a pale grey interior, mine being number 1 out of 6 models made. It pairs nicely with the Italian version.







Partwork manufacturer Metro produced a very good series of 1/43 models for the Abarth Collection series a few years ago and one of them was the Abarth OT1600, the racer based on the 850 Saloon. A very good model of this rare car really capturing the real car's aggressive look with its huge wheels at the rear like a hot rod. Spark's being the only other 1/43 model of this. Not sure if slot cars have a place in this magazine but I thought I'd mention the excellent 1/32 Fiat 850 Abarth by Spanish slotcar producer SCX. There are various racing liveries, mine's in standard Abarth colours and badged as a Fiat though it's been modelled as a Seat.

Salvat, Hachette and Leo Models all recently made 1/24 1964 Fiat 850 Saloons for a partworks series called Auto Vintage. It's the only 1/24 850 Saloon that I'm aware of and whoever made the original casting has done a good job, my only quibble being the slightly odd shape of the front wheel arches and



**TOP**  
**Ixo 1/43 Fiat 850 pair.**

**ABOVE**  
**Ixo 1/43 Seat 850 with 'barnfind' wreck.**



**ABOVE**  
**Pocher and Eko, biggest and smallest!**



**ABOVE**  
**Salvat 1/24 1964 Fiat 850 Saloon.**



**ABOVE** Norev 1/43 Seat 850.

the rear lights which are too small. The interior seems spot on though it's a shame you can't really see it properly as both doors have full glazing and don't open. The Hachette version is in classic Fiat red with a black interior, Leo models have opted for another Fiat paint colour of the day, light blue with red seats and list it as a 850 Super but the Salvat one I have is in a striking yellow with a red interior. I don't think any 850 Saloons ever rolled out of the factory in this colour but it looks great in the cabinet. All three variations are available online.

The most recent 850 models, and by far the best, are the resin models from Italian modelmaker Laudoracing. 2023 sees them celebrating ten years of making mostly Fiat and Alfa classics in 1/18 scale with quite a few 850 Saloons included. The first 850 they reproduced in 2016 was the 1968 Special in white, beige, blue and red. A glorious model absolutely perfect even down to the smart polished wood rimmed steering wheel and beautifully delicate 850 Special badge on the rear panel which led to the Seat sister car in the same colours but with Especial badges. The same year they made the very desirable OT850, OT1000 and OT1600 Abarths all in limited numbers like the Special. These were so popular they sold out almost immediately and I missed out on a OT1000, one of my favourite Fiats but I managed to secure an example of the brutally fast OT1600 which I chose as one of my Desert Island Diecasts a little while ago. Altogether they released the OT1600 in five different versions including the original Prototype and historic racer. Laudoracing then released the standard 1964 Saloon in 2022 in four period paint shades again in limited numbers. These are stunning models with beautifully accurate interiors and although they have full glazing it's still possible to appreciate the detail through the crystal clear windows. They've also recently released model No.1 in their new resin 1/64 Minilauda range which just happens to be a 1964 Fiat 850. These are meant to capture the feel of simple models of the past doing away with glazing and made up of just two resin pieces, body and interior, a metal base with the bumpers and wheels separately cast. It comes in ten different colour combinations in a great retro box.

All in all a varied line up of models, both old and new of the Fiat 850 Saloon, a little car which enjoyed much success in its day and is deservedly well represented in the world of miniatures. ■





# The J2 and Omni Series Vehicles

Corgi and Oxford Diecast were in direct competition with their BMC light commercials – and each available in two scales. **Nigel Robertshaw** compares these ranges before venturing back to the 1950s and 1960s to see what other similar toys and models were available when these vehicles plied their trade across Britain.

## ABOVE

The predecessor to the Morris J2 was the traditionally built J-Type. The familiar Dinky Toys Royal Mail version (left) is joined by two ultra-rare die-cast examples by Marusan of Japan and Triang New Zealand.

**T**he two biggest vehicle producers in the land, Austin and Morris, amalgamated in 1952 to create the British Motor Corporation (BMC). In 1956 the business launched its first all new forward control unitary-constructed range of small commercials with a van, a minibus and a pick-up (plus a chassis/cab option).

The extensive dealership networks for both Austin and Morris were not directly involved in the merger and continued to satisfy their loyal customer base, be it with Austin or Morris motor vehicles. It was therefore necessary with the new jointly developed ranges to establish a badge engineering initiative where essentially the same vehicles, built on the same production line, were given different appearances with distinct identities and badging to meet the Austin or Morris dealership, and subsequent customer, preferences and requirements.

The Morris version of the new van, which began to replace the traditionally built J-Type, was designated

the J2 and was available as the J2Van, Pick-up and Minibus. The Austin version, with its differently styled front panel and grille received a less distinctive model name and was generally marketed as the Omni Series, replacing various car-derived light commercials in the old Austin line-up. Therefore there was the OmniVan, the OmniTruck and, rather than a Minibus or Omnibus, with Austin there was the OmniCoach. It seems that these Austin names were not as well received and sometimes the J2 designation was used across both the Austin and Morris ranges.

The J2 and Omni range was long-lived, starting in 1956 and lasting until 1967 by which time they had been joined by the slightly smaller stable mate, the J4. The range was replaced to a large extent by the Sherpa and the unusually styled ugly duckling that was the BMC 250 JU.

Given the success of the Austin Morris J2 range it's not surprising that many toymakers of the day included a version in their various line-ups. However we'll start this review with the modern collectables





available from the two competing brands that were going head to head. With two manufacturers (Corgi and Oxford), two scales (1/43 and 1/76), two makes of vehicles (Morris and Austin) and two variants (van and minibus) there is certainly scope for some interesting and unusual models, and collectors won't be disappointed. Interestingly there is no Pick-up version from these manufacturers although we'll definitely see a few classics in part 2. Let's start with the long established Corgi brand and its larger size model.

### CORGI 1/43 SCALE

The Corgi version is available as a standard panel van or as a minibus with side windows. Both Austin and Morris alternatives are modelled and to confuse things a little, (although it appears to be correct), one version



**ABOVE** This vintage sales brochure clearly shows that a Morris-badged version was available with a front panel and grille more associated with the Austin model.



**ABOVE** These 1/43 scale models from Oxford also illustrate Austin and Morris examples together with a further Austin-style van carrying a Morris badge.

carries the Austin front-end but displays Morris badging. The boxes can also be confusing with regard to Austin or Morris branding with some boxes showing Morris J2 references but containing an Austin model, which presumably is an error.

The underside lettering on the model tries to cover all the bases by showing "Morris/Austin J2" with the earlier versions branded as Vanguards although more recently the models have been marked as Drive Time and are packaged in Road Traders boxes. The model has been used by other distributors, notably Atlas in its Best of British Police Cars.

The models are finely detailed, with suspension, wing mirrors and wipers and are finished in some great liveries including classic Post Office Telephones green and Royal Mail red, so evocative of the period when these vans operated. Let's move on to the rivals.

### OXFORD DIECAST 1/43 SCALE

This range mirrors the Corgi offering with van and minibus options and with both Austin and Morris front panels and related badging. It can also match the



**ABOVE** These 1/43 scale Corgi models display the classic Austin and Morris front panels and grille with appropriate badging. To confuse matters the model on the right has the standard Austin front-end but displays a Morris badge.



# >>> LITTLE WORKHORSES FROM AUSTIN MORRIS

unusual Corgi version as it too has a version with the Austin front panel but carrying a Morris badge.

The Oxford models don't have as much detailing and can therefore be handled more robustly than the Corgi alternatives with their fragile embellishments. Again there are some classic and some unusual liveries although the self-promoting "Oxford Christmas" and "Oxford Platinum Member" are less impressive. There's a more recent pleasing addition of a Camper Van with a roof mounted spare wheel and simulated elevating roof. In addition both Oxford and Corgi produce rather appealing versions of the van with roof-mounted displays and signage.

These larger Corgi and Oxford models are both promoted as 1/43 scale although the Oxford version is very slightly longer and sits on bigger wheels, making it noticeably taller. The Morris grilles are a little different in shape with the Oxford version extending higher up towards the windscreen.

It's worth highlighting how difficult many of these Corgi and Oxford models are to extract from their packaging? Just when you think you have finally removed all the fixing screws you realise that you have lost a couple of washers and have gripped the model so tightly that a wing mirror has broken! Don't even mention trying to reverse the process to get the models back in their boxes!

Let's have a brief look at the smaller scale versions.

## CORGI 1/76 SCALE

The smaller Corgi van is also available with both Austin and Morris front panels and badging although a little disappointingly the minibuses simply use the van casting with the necessary window detailing printed on the side panels. Once again there appear to be some confusing cross-over models although



**LEFT** Artwork from an original brochure shows the low rakish bodywork as captured by the smaller Corgi model.

**BELOW LEFT** A rather nice preserved Austin Omnicoach with a raised roof and camper van conversion.



this time some have the Morris front end but display Austin badging. There are some interesting and eye-catching liveries again including the classic Post Office Telephones and Royal Mail vans.

## OXFORD DIECAST 1/76 SCALE

Oxford has one main casting in the form of a Morris minibus complete with accurately detailed side windows. A little surprisingly there is no panel van variant and also no Austin alternative although (to confuse matters) the odd model with the Morris front grille does carry an Austin badge and occasionally the



**ABOVE** The Tri-ang Minic Morris Minibus from 1957 was available separately or as part of this striking six vehicle Minikit complete with motors, wheels and paint for additional detailing.



**ABOVE** The Morris versions from Corgi and Oxford stand side by side for comparison. The grille extends a little higher on the Oxford example (right).



**LEFT** Perhaps the most striking versions to date are those with roof mounted displays and signage. Here are examples from both Corgi and Oxford Diecast.





**ABOVE** There are two distinct castings for the smaller Oxford models: a Morris Minibus (sometimes with painted windows to create a panel van) and a rather nice Austin Camper Van.

**RIGHT** Competing models from Corgi and Oxford show that the Oxford version has larger wheels and an overall higher stance.



**ABOVE** Morris Minibus versions from Corgi and Oxford are compared here. The Corgi is noticeably longer and sleeker than its competitor.



windows are blanked-out (rather unconvincingly) to create a standard panel van.

There is a completely separate Oxford casting for the Austin variant, modelled as the rather appealing Paralanian Camper Van. This is an excellent model but it does restrict the number of variations although a colourful Chipperfields Circus version has been added recently.

These smaller size models are built to 1/76 scale but the Oxford example is now noticeably shorter than the Corgi version and again has larger wheels and sits higher than the competitor's offering. Accordingly the Corgi example is a shade longer and sleeker and looks a little more like the original brochure illustrations from the 1950s and 1960s which had a touch of artistic licence.

Let's turn the clock back over 60 years and have just a taster of the toys and models that were around when our Austin and Morris light commercials were hard at work performing all manner of tasks. The first vintage model appeared in 1957, hot on the heels of the real thing.

#### MINIC MORRIS MINIBUS

Tri-ang Toys (the main brand name of Lines Bros. Ltd.) used its subsidiary Minic brand primarily for its various ranges of road transport toys. It produced

a great model for our line-up and if you take the specific Tri-ang range and add the model name you arrive at the impressive "Minic Minimus Models, Morris Minibus", a real tongue twister!

This Minibus arrived in 1957 and was available individually (within a series of 12 Minimus Models including a rather nice Armstrong Siddeley and a Vanguard Estate Wagon) or as part of a six piece Tri-ang Minikit. Here within the "gay presentation box" an "assembly parts store" provided the wheels and a push & go motor for the purchaser to fit, together with paint vials for the addition of fine detailing to the self-coloured one-piece body. The model was available with the main body colours of red, blue, green or yellow and maybe more.

Tri-ang was clearly impressed by these models and enthused with "each model is a true scale reproduction of the real thing". In size the Morris lines up almost exactly with the smaller scale Corgi 1/76 model.

Let's pull over for a break at this point (not that driver's hours affected these vehicles). Next time we'll move on from this Tri-ang Minic rarity and "pick-up" our story with a much better known vintage model! We'll then deliver a wealth of further Austin and Morris J2 light commercials (including my favourite!) produced around the World during the 1950s and 1960s golden age of toy making. ■

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# The Range Rover reaches 55!

Range Rover owner and enthusiast **Steve Coles** continues to explore scale models produced of the Range Rover Classic since its introduction 55 years ago. In this part, he focuses on those produced around 1/43 scale.

**ABOVE**  
A trio of Dinkys. The rarer yellow release, the modified 'customized' version and the common bronze version.



**ABOVE**  
Two bronze Dinkys showing two of the wheels and interior variations that can be found.



**ABOVE**  
This VSD Dakar Rally liveried Bburago is one of seven key liveries, each with a number of variations.

**T**his June marked the 55th anniversary since the launch of the original Range Rover and last month we discovered many of the smaller scale toys and models produced of this iconic car. This month sees us explore the examples that are around 1/43 scale (or the 'medium' size). Just as before I am going to separate the cars roughly by age.

## DINKY

First released in 1971, Dinky's Range Rover appeared in a number of different colours and liveries during its 11-year lifespan. As well as the common bronze seen here, there are yellow and black versions plus fire, police and ambulance liveries. There are a number of variations to be found; interior colour, wheel type and jewelled headlights or solid lights are the most common, with the bronze being the most affected by these. The high riding 'Customised' version uses the same body casting with a heavily modified base. Like all the best toys we remember, this one has a full spectrum of opening features, including the Range Rover's signature split tailgate. I particularly like the fact the doors have their upper window frames and quarter lights, included. One niggle I have with this is that the rear number plate should be mounted

centrally on the lower, folding down, part of the tailgate. Dinky omitted this completely, instead casting a number plate size and shape oblong in to the middle of the (cast in) rear bumper.

## CORGI

Corgi's first larger scale Range Rover was released in 1972 with number 481 as 'Range Rover Vigilant' in Police livery. This emergency response car was modelled on an early real vehicle produced 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 split opening tailgate is present, as are the sliding open side lockers for added play value. My ambulance version (released as number 482 in 1975) differs in a couple of ways. Firstly, the roof box is a different type, with just two blue lights mounted on top. Secondly, the side locker roller shutters are translucent and no longer open.

## MATCHBOX

Matchbox's first larger scale Range Rover first appeared as K64 in 1978 as a Fire Control vehicle. This featured a roof mounted ladder and opening lower tailgate.



**RIGHT**  
Corgi's 'Ambulance' was based on their earlier Vigilant Police car but with a different roof arrangement.

**FAR RIGHT**  
Matchbox also took the emergency vehicle route with their Range Rover. Like the Corgi, it featured an oversize roof addition.



**ABOVE**  
Corgi included the Range Rover's signature split tailgate on both this Ambulance and the earlier Vigilant Police releases.



**ABOVE**  
Matchbox, rather curiously, only included the lower part of the split tailgate; omitting the upper part altogether.



**ABOVE**  
Guiloy's Range Rover has some lovely details cast in, but suffers from wheels that look too small.



**ABOVE**  
The rear of the Guiloy shows the Range Rover lettering and Land Rover oval fitted to the early cars.

**RIGHT**  
Range Rover milestones from IXO; 1969 Velar prototype, 1970 2-door, 1981 'In-Vogue' and 1982 4-door complete with three-spoke alloys.



Curiously the upper tailgate was omitted altogether. Next came K89 'Forestry Set' and featured a yellow Range Rover with a very similar roof rack and ladder as the Fire version. This one also has clear rear side windows. The final release was a year later as K97 Range Rover Police Set. This had a large roof box complete with blue lights and the later Superkings style wheels. Only the Fire version has any significant variations to track down.

## BBURAGO

First appearances suggest Bburago's Range Rover Classic from their ever-popular and vast 1/43 range is quite simplistic. Look closer and it is a really charming and well-proportioned model. Released in the early 1980s as part of their 4100 series, there have been seven different liveries produced over the years. Although for each livery, there have been a number of variations produced. These range from a totally different paint colour for the same stickers set, to slightly different shades of paint or window tint. Quite a challenge for the completest collector!

## PLAYART

Hong Kong manufacturer Playart produced a charming toy that sits slightly smaller than 1/43 but fits better in this group than last months. Chrome bumpers, separate front grille piece that contains clear headlights flanked by clear orange side/indicator lights plus separate red rear lights are delightful details. Opening doors and bonnet give this surprisingly weighty toy real play value. As well as my play worn red example, this was available in white and green.

## GUILOY

Spanish diecast manufacturers had, perhaps naturally, a strong representation of Spanish cars in their ranges.



When they ventured further afield for their subject matter the results were usually very good. Their, roughly 1/43, Range Rover dates from around 1977 and is a pleasing model. There is plenty of detail in the casting itself, even if none of it is picked out in colour. The Range Rover script on the tailgate is neat, as is the oval shape to represent the Land Rover badge fitted to the early Range Rovers. The rear side windows are a single piece with no attempt to show the split and the plastic base has a couple of very obvious black tabs below the bumper, which makes the rear view a little odd. As well as the red seen here, a VSD inspired Dakar livery was also available.

## SOLIDO/VEREM

I've long been a fan of this Solido casting of the Range Rover. For me, the shape is good. The casting is crisp and is nicely detailed with Range Rover neatly cast into the bonnet and lower tailgate. The only obvious error is the door handles; Solido have cast the Morris Marina ones used on the four door Range Rovers instead of the correct tall, thin vertical handle. Unusually for a European toy manufacturer, it is also right hand drive. It was first released in dark green as number 1817 in Solido's 'Yesterday' range for older cars, before appearing in a white UN livery as well as a red Fire Department. It appeared a few years later in a rather fetching 1970s shade of brown as part of the 'Century of Cars' part work that utilised castings from both Corgi and Solido. Verem used the tooling from Solido to create a number of 'emergency' and 'action' versions, which, despite the age of the casting, are nicely detailed and make a most attractive set.

## IXO

IXO were the first model manufacturer to produce what we think of as a true collector's model. They





have, in fact, plotted the early history and development of the Range Rover in four models. The first to be released was an off-white/cream, registered PXC433J, which was one of the first production examples. This has the correct seats front and rear, a spare wheel in the load area, correct pattern rear lights and accurately, no rear wiper. A green, French registered left hand drive example was released at the same time. By the early 1980s the Range Rover was starting to move a little upmarket. Three special edition 'In Vogue' editions were produced, which helped start this process. The first, from 1981, was a two door finished in a very fetching shade of metallic Denim Blue and it is this first 'In Vogue' that IXO have modelled. This differs over their first release with the addition of a rear wiper and heated rear screen elements are fitted. Door mirrors, as opposed to the wing mounted ones of the very early cars, are fitted. Inside, there are new seats with head rests in the front, as well as a central cubby box/armrest and a higher backrest for the rear seat. This one even has the wooden door cappings present. Next comes the four door - totally new tooling but retaining the charm and accuracy of the earlier models. This one represents a post 1982 car as the now famous three spoke alloy wheels are fitted but is it missing the front spoiler introduced in 1986. The interior looks like that from a post 1988 four door, and looks very much like the one in my 1991 Vogue SE. Next in release terms is the red 1969 'Velar'. A pre-launch prototype that wore the Velar badge to throw people off the scent of this new car. Sadly, IXO have not done a good job of this one. It wears nice 'Velar' badges front and rear but they've given it the front wing mounted 'Range Rover' plinth badges of the early cars, which weren't used on the real Velars. It also has a rear wiper, not introduced until 1973 and it has the tall backed seats from the 'In Vogue' (making me think their tooling for the interior was irreversibly modified. The most recent, pale blue release (which wears the YVB153H plate of the Tuscan Blue example now at the British Motor Museum at Gaydon), also suffers the incorrect interior. This one, at least, has correctly omitted the rear wiper! Also produced are several police liveries and a Camel Trophy one. All are now scarce to track down and command a premium over their original selling price.

## SKID

Utilising IXO tooling, the Skid branding was used for specialist motorsport models. Several Dakar Rally Range Rovers have been produced, including the popular liveried VSD from the 1981 Dakar Rally. Taking the already excellent IXO casting, this version adds additional spot lamps up front, a roof aerial and a couple of small roof mounted lights. The rear side windows have been replaced with a blanking panel that has the rally number (212) on. The complex livery has been well applied without losing any of the casting details. The additional vents and quick release catches for the bonnet are cleverly done as part of the overall decal. Like the parent IXO models, this one is getting harder to find.

## IXO PRODUCED PART-WORKS

Range Rovers have been featured in a number of part-works and so far all have utilized the IXO tooling.



**LEFT** IXO's first Range Rover Classic is superbly accurate in terms of details and models one of the very first production cars.



**ABOVE** The large gear-lever, small transfer lever, central ashtray and door release handles are all visible in the interior of IXO's first Range Rover.



**LEFT** Chassis detail on IXO's Range Rover is excellent, especially considering the age of the tooling. Chassis outriggers, differentials and the full exhaust system all present.



**ABOVE** The interior of IXO's 'In-Vogue' shows the revised steering wheel and centre console. Also visible are the wooden door caps of the 'In-Vogue'.

**LEFT** Front mud flaps, door mirrors, side repeater lights and black bumpers of the 1981 Range Rover, plus the side stripes of the 'In-Vogue' special edition.

Perhaps the most distinctive was produced for the Eaglemoss James Bond Collection, released between 2007 and 2017. Issue 99 was the brown Range Rover convertible used in *Octopussy*. This has the regular IXO base and chassis details plus a large front bull bar. The interior has the manual gear lever and smaller transfer level present plus the correct four spoke steering wheel. In place of the rear seat and load area are two side facing bench seats, similar to those fitted to Series 2 and 3 Land Rovers. Only the rear lights let this one down with incorrectly printed lenses. There has been a Range Rover as an advertising vehicle from the Pinder's Circus part work collection. This is also the only model produced so far that is identified as a Turbo Diesel, as this one wears a neat 'Turbo D' badge on the rear as worn by 1989 to 1992 VM diesel engine versions. The blanked out rear side windows on this appear blanked from the inside, with the divide for the sliding part of the window still visible. Being modelled on a much later two door (as these were available in mainland Europe into the 1990s) this one has the revised front bumper endcaps and the small headlight washers mounted on the front bumper. Only the really pale tail lights let this one down in terms of details.

I also have another two door part work model. Once again this uses the familiar IXO tooling and looks to be a 1980s European model. This blue one, which is an



**ABOVE** SKID, the motorsport arm of IXO, did a superb job of utilising the tooling to make the 1981 Dakar Rally winning car by adding spot lights and roof aerial plus extensive decals.







**ABOVE** IXO produced the convertible Range Rover from the 1983 James Bond film *Octopussy*. This part work release features Bianca behind the wheel.



**ABOVE** IXO's 1969 pre-production Velar features unique 'Velar' badges front and rear. Sadly, the interior, rear wiper and front scuttle badges are wrong.

**RIGHT** Based on their two door casting, IXO tooled up this modified example. The large front bull bar is also unique to this IXO based release.



**ABOVE** This un-named plastic toy, an eBay bargain, is very well proportioned, full of charm and is very clearly a two door Range Rover.

**BELOW** Whitebox two door and four door releases. Utilising the IXO tooling, these two share much of the casting detail with their parent models. A bit of a mish-mash of other details leaves them wide of the mark overall.



**A trio of Almost Real Range Rovers.** As the name implies, the level of detail is superb. Here you can see the posable front wheels.



odd shade, has the correctly mounted rear wiper and wears the larger door mirrors that were only fitted to two doors after 1988. It also suffers the same pale tail lights as the Pinder's. In a similar vein was a red four door produced for French car magazine *Auto Plus*.

## NOREV

Despite not producing a road going Range Rover Classic, Norev have been responsible for what I have so far found to be two examples. My first is another Dakar Rally car, this time from 1979 and represents car No.162. The real car was bought second hand in France and prepared by a Parisian mechanic and Mini specialist. The preparation was simple, installing three racing seats, adding an extra fuel tank and a front winch, which was reportedly never used. Norev's model is a cracker though. The basic casting is very similar to IXO's, but this one goes further. The quick release catches for the bonnet and tailgate are nicely cast in details. The front of this model also features an impressive bush bar and light protector set up. A standard looking interior is completed by a load area mounted spare wheel, albeit on the wrong side. A 1981 VSD sponsored car (identical to the Skid model) was also produced.

## WHITEBOX

The majority of Whitebox models are produced using IXO tooling for Model Car World, the German model specialist. So I had high hopes for these Range Rovers. The yellow two door is labelled 1970 Range Rove 3.5. Using the IXO tooling is always going to be a good start. It shares many of the finer details already described, such as the excellent badging and correct colour and shape seats (unlike IXO's more recent two door releases). It is missing the spare wheel, but designed for a lower price point, this can be forgiven. There are two gripes with this model however. First off is the rear wiper; a rear wiper didn't become an optional extra until the end of 1972 and secondly it was mounted at the top of the rear window not the bottom. What is perhaps more curious is that the original IXO releases of the 1970 Range Rover correctly didn't have a rear wiper at all. My second gripe is the front mud flaps. These, like the rear wiper, became optional extras from 1972, whereas rear mud flaps (missing from this release but included in other IXO releases) were standard on the Range Rover from launch. The metallic blue four door is a little more convincing. The lack of front spoiler makes this a pre-1986 model but the lack of front door quarter lights means its post 1984. A deliberate choosing to make a 1985 model? I doubt it! Nice none the less. The cream coloured interior features the taller front seats and head rests and covered spare wheel of the later cars.

## ALMOST REAL

Our final set of models at this scale come from Almost Real. As their name suggests these models are sublime in terms of details. First off is the body shape. This is spot-on, and by far the most accurate seen here. Pposable front wheels add a dimension to 1/43 models rarely seen. The chassis and underbody detail on these are so accurate, you could be looking at the underside of my 1:1 Range Rover. The bonnet and tailgate badges are separately attached 3D letters, just like the real thing and there is even a retractable radio aerial on the front wing. The interior is so good it could be mistaken for the real thing while peering through the crystal clear side windows. Almost Real have also produced a Davos White 1970 example, plus a pair of the 'Darien Gap' British Trans-Americas Expedition vehicles.

And there we are. Next month, in the final part, we will look at those Range Rovers, both old and new, larger than 1/43 scale. ■



# Ford Fiesta Mk1

Steve Coles continues his series comparing vintage models with their present day counterparts.



**T**he original Ford Fiesta Mk1 was launched to the general public across Europe in September 1976, although in the UK we had to wait until February 1977 for it to be available.

The Fiesta was Ford's answer to the rising popularity of small front wheel drive hatchbacks. Project 'Bobcat' had to take on and beat more established competition from Fiat and Renault, while sticking firmly to Ford's values. Although front wheel drive (a first for Ford), the vast array of engine and trim level combinations available ensured they had a sales success. By the time it was replaced in 1983 by the restyled Mk2 version, Ford had sold over 2 million Fiestas worldwide. Although I only owned my Mk1 Fiesta for 6 months, the fascination and interest has stayed with me. The Fiesta, primarily in its original Mk1 guise, has formed the basis for collecting for more years than I care to remember. The Mk1 Fiesta was also the subject of my very first published ramblings about model cars.

I was personally delighted when Corgi announced another Mk1 Fiesta release as part of their January to April 2025 schedule; particularly as it wasn't another XR2 but an unusual yellow Ghia. After seeing a regular contributor on social media post photos of his Ghia when it first arrived, I commented about comparing it to the Detail Cars yellow 1300S from the 1990s as a *Then and Now* feature and here it is... a double helping of custard!

After a number of toys of the Mk1 Fiesta, it was Italian manufacturer Detail Cars that created what many consider the first true scale diecast model of

**ABOVE** It is hard to believe the Detail Cars 1300S Fiesta (rear) is over 25 years old.

**BELOW** The overall profile of both models is instantly recognisable as the Mk1 Fiesta. The detail differences between the 1300S (left) and Ghia (right) are easy to spot.

the first generation Fiesta. They produced a 1977 version but released in 4 different trim levels, each with correctly represented wheels and bumper trim. There were two 'L' specification models, each with standard pressed steel wheels and chrome bumpers, mirrors and door handles. The red 'L' version even boasts correctly patterned seats. Next came a Signal Yellow 1300S, complete with accurate graphics. This had black bumpers and handles (as all late 1970s sporting Fords had) and alloy wheels. The fourth and final road version came in the form of a top of the range Ghia. This boasted metallic paint and black vinyl roof, chrome bumpers and the same alloy wheels as the 1300S.

First impressions are favourable. The casting is reasonably crisp and looks most striking in this Signal Yellow and black 1300S version. Despite its age,







**ABOVE** Nose to nose and the difference in height becomes more obvious. Both wear the same style alloy wheels; the Detail Cars (left) have actual holes in.



**ABOVE** When viewed head on together, the differences in size and shape of the fronts are really obvious.

**LEFT** The 1300S wears correct black bumpers whereas the Ghia has chrome ones. Both models have a separate rear wiper; the Corgi (right) being a thinner affair.



**ABOVE** Despite not quite being the same shade of yellow, this pair of models look truly striking together. Hard to believe there are 25 years between them.



**ABOVE** Both models have nicely detailed badges. The Corgi (right) looks more realistic.

being released in the late 1990s, it has a wealth of detail. The front and rear wipers are separate plastic parts for example, as are the door handles. The oval Ford badges front and rear are sharp and well done. The 'Fiesta S' badge on the boot is also present. The lack of number plates leaves both front and rear looking a little naked, but you need to remember this was more normal over a quarter of a century ago.

Inside looks very 1970s, with lots of brown trim! The seats, dash and even the steering wheel are brown. Black gearstick and seat belt holders provide a token respite from the brown, as does a nicely detailed silver dashboard instrument binnacle. All in all, then, this is a really tidy little model.

Moving on to the newcomer. VA12513 is the 13th release of Corgi's Mk1 Fiesta tooling and is the first time a Ghia spec has been produced. First impressions are good. The overall quality is certainly an improvement over some of Corgi's recent Vanguards releases. The angular shape of the Mk1 Fiesta has been captured well, and although the front end (lights, grille and lower valence) and rear

lower valence are separate parts (allowing for the differences the Supersport and XR2 have over the regular models) the joins are nowhere near as obvious as some models where the tooling is clearly getting a little tired.

Being the top of the range Ghia, there is plenty of chrome on this model. The bumpers, complete with overriders and door mirrors are lovely and shiny. The chrome trim around all the windows and for the door handles is neat but is a matte finish silver paint, looking slightly at odds with the shiny chrome. The first owner of this particular Ghia added a couple of attractive options when they ordered the car back in 1977. Up front are a pair of spotlights like the ones you'd find on the later Supersport and XR2 plus the smart Ghia alloy wheels which looked the same as those fitted to the much larger Granada Ghia of the period. Whilst the casting of the wheels is crisp, they are lacking the black detailing in the holes that run around the edge of the rim. Corgi managed to include this detail on the wheels fitted to the Cortina 80 Ghia and Mk2 Granada releases. And for me, it is one of those details that once you've seen it, it's hard to unsee it! Moreover, the Detail Cars 1300S wheels have actual holes around edge of the rim.

The wipers front and rear are, like the Detail Cars model, separate parts but these are much finer, as you would expect with a much more modern model. I love the 'Go Perrys' sticker in the rear window – a lovely detailed touch. The 'Fiesta 1.1 Ghia' badge is particularly good, being silver and outlined in a very thin black to give it a true 3D appearance. The Ghia crest badges on the front wings are also a tiny marvel. Inside, things are a little disappointing. Although accurately black, the inside is just too dark to make any detail out, bar the correct four spoke steering wheel that was fitted to the Ghia.

It is only when you sit the two side by side does something odd become apparent. When viewed from the front individually, they both look accurate. But when placed side-by-side, the Detail Cars model looks too flat and low and the Corgi looks far too tall. Try the same from the rear and both look about the same height and about right.

So, do the 25 or so years between these two show? In my opinion, not really. There are some areas where the age gap is more obvious and each 'outscores' the other in certain areas but overall they are very similar. So there we have it, a double helping of custard. Now, where did I put that cake... ■





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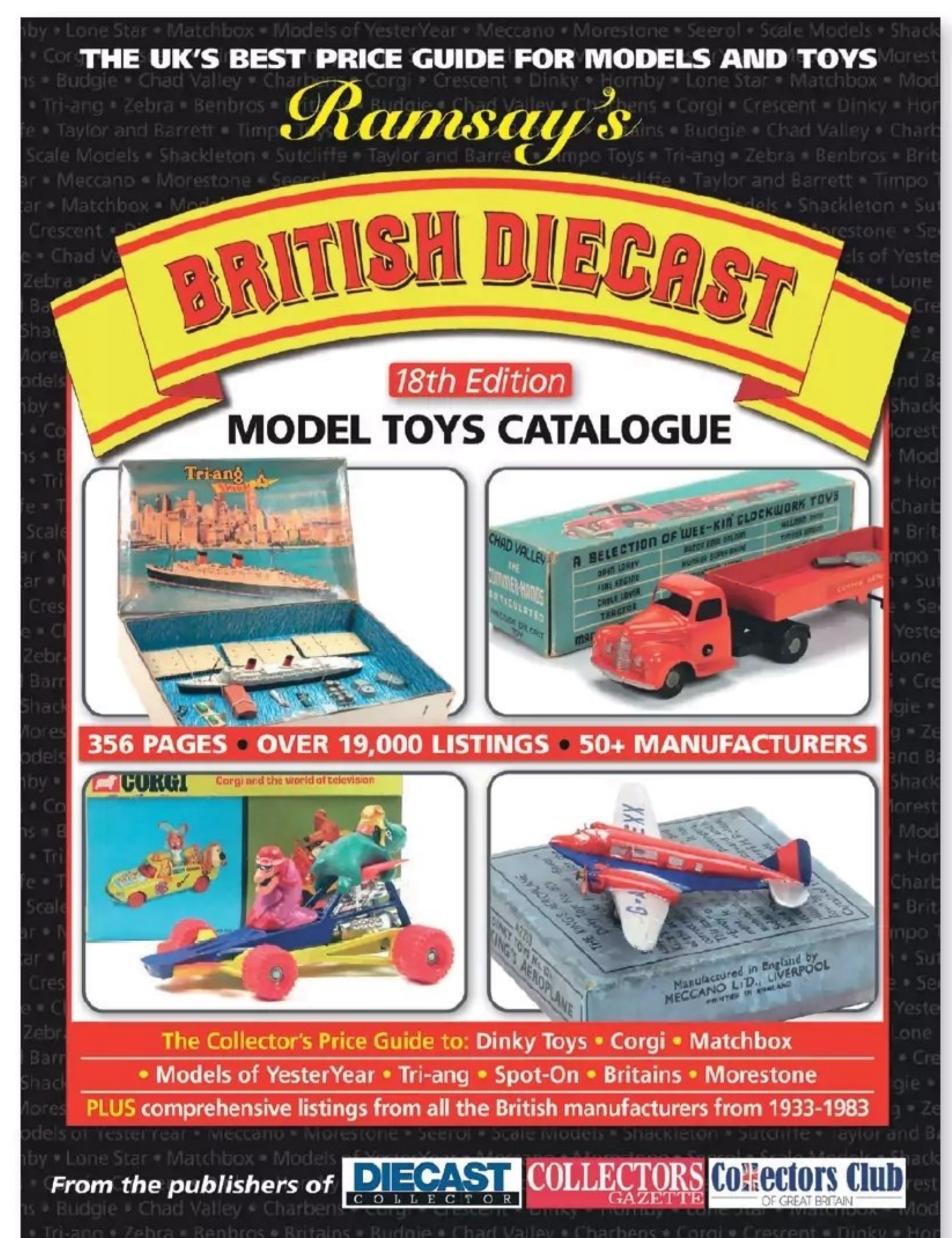
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# Superfast 1969-1982

No.  
**61**

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

## BLUE SHARK

**Production:** 1972-78

**Catalogue:** 1972-78

**Box Styles:** I

The No.61 slot was late being filled by a Superfast version as the incredibly popular Alvis Stalwart took some time to shift due to its excellent sales figures.

When it was finally bumped from the pages of the 1972 calendar, it was for a model that has become quite a legend over the 50 year history of Superfast.

Blue Shark was a fictitious Can-Am style racing car. Painted a lustrous dark blue, it had an exposed rear engine and prominent headlights housed in the extended front wings. The base was bare metal, while the small windshield could be either clear or amber-tinted. The engine was the stock Matchbox V8 block, which was also used in Jeep Hot Rod, Gruesome Twosome, Baja Buggy and many others; the white plastic driver was likewise a stock part used in several other open racing cars.

It was usually fitted with an orange "86" sticker on the nose, although Scorpion and "69" labels, the latter from its sibling No.69 Turbo Fury, have been found. There were no major variations except for a very rare batch which was erroneously given both the metallic red finish and stickers from Turbo Fury.

It has long since been a favourite to wheel out for Superfast specials by Mattel, notably the 2006 Streakers revisit and for the 2019 50th anniversary.

## WRECK TRUCK

**Production:** 1978-81

**Catalogue:** 1979-81

**Box Styles:** L

Wreck Truck was a range replacement for the futuristic No.74 Toe Joe. It had a more realistic Ford Transit cab but used the same layout as the earlier model, with twin towing booms that rotated through 180°. In fact, the booms and hooks were the same components used in Toe Joe.

Wreck Truck was painted a light red colour with black metal base and grille, white booms and red hooks. The windows and dome lights were in amber, and were frosted to disguise the lack of cab interior.



//

*It had a more realistic Ford Transit cab but used the same layout as the earlier model, with twin towing booms that rotated through 180°.*

//



In 1982, the colours were changed to yellow with green booms and red hooks. Wreck Truck was very briefly used in the Two Pack line, again in red with white booms, but with white tampos printing reading "24 Hour Towing – Radio Dispatched".

## PETERBILT WRECKER TRUCK

**Production:** 1982

**Catalogue:** 1982

**Box Styles:** L

This was the second Peterbilt big rig and it shared the chromed base, grille, interior, exhaust pipes and amber-tinted windows with the Peterbilt Cement Truck. The body was a new casting and featured an open back with a pair of swing-out towing jibs. The truck body was painted dark orange, with broken white stripes printed on the bonnet sides and "Eddies Wrecker" printed on the doors. ■





# A-Z of diecast

Alwyn Brice continues to progress with his lexicon.

To conclude with the letter P we have Paragon. Well, that's not strictly true, since Jadi Modelcraft is the name behind the brand – but since we've passed the letter J, we'll cover Paragon here. Please bear with me!

In terms of output, 1/18 and the popular 1/43 scales are entertained but there are also releases in 1/64 for those for whom space is at a premium. This latter scale covers the widest range of vehicles and within certain marques, such as Audi, there is a choice between road and race car variants. Most of the smaller models depict modern types although there is a de Tomaso Pantera thrown into the mix.

The 1/43 range is much narrower but then you'll probably be seduced by the biggest scale, which has allowed the manufacturer to incorporate opening features and much more detail. In particular, the John Lennon Phantom V really stands out, gloriously irreverent in its garish colour scheme. Other classics get a look-in (Daimler and Jaguar, for example) and the quality of these models, it has to be said, is notable. On that basis, the biggest scale isn't too cheap; and you'll find that even pre-owned examples command high asking prices. (Whether these are achieved is another matter entirely, of course). Of note is the fact that Jadi is an accredited supplier of models to the motor trade, which simply underlines the quality of the product.

## ALUMINIUM ARTEFACTS

From P to Q is but a step: and naturally, we must take a look at Quiralu. Emile Quirin was the brains behind this French enterprise, which was based in Luxeuil (situated in Bourgogne-Franche-Comté), back in 1933. Quiralu will be well-known to sister publication *Collectors Gazette* readers, as it was originally a manufacturer of aluminium toy soldiers; a strange material, perhaps, for manufacturing purposes, but one that has stood the test of time extremely well.

**ABOVE**  
Quiralu's famous Etoile Filante, modelled on the real car.



**ABOVE**  
A useful range of quirky road signs was a Quiralu trademark.

Quiralu branched out into diecast model cars in 1955, utilising two scales, those of 1/35 and 1/43. Early output included models of economy vehicles like the Messerschmitt and Isetta bubble cars.

A competitor to Dinky, although possibly not much of its range found its way to British shores, it folded in the early 1960s, at a time when Corgi was in the ascendant and making its mark. However, that wasn't the end of the story, for rather like Dinky (and fellow French manufacturer Solido), re-releases began to appear (in 1991) in line with popular demand.

Quiralu vehicles have a charm all of their own and hark back to a simpler age, one that predated glazing and vast amounts of detailing. Typically running on cream or white tyres, these miniatures span French and other countries' manufacturers, ensuring quite a wide appeal. Don't expect opening features – but do expect some of the more unusual marques to be modelled. An interesting aside is the fact that Quiralu also saw fit to model road signs, many of which feature foliage to add to their realism.

Because of the huge numbers of re-released models, it's fair to say that the Quiralu collector on a budget is

Paragon's BMW M4 in 1/18: so well detailed and photographed, it could be the real thing. Image: [www.livecarmodel.com](http://www.livecarmodel.com)



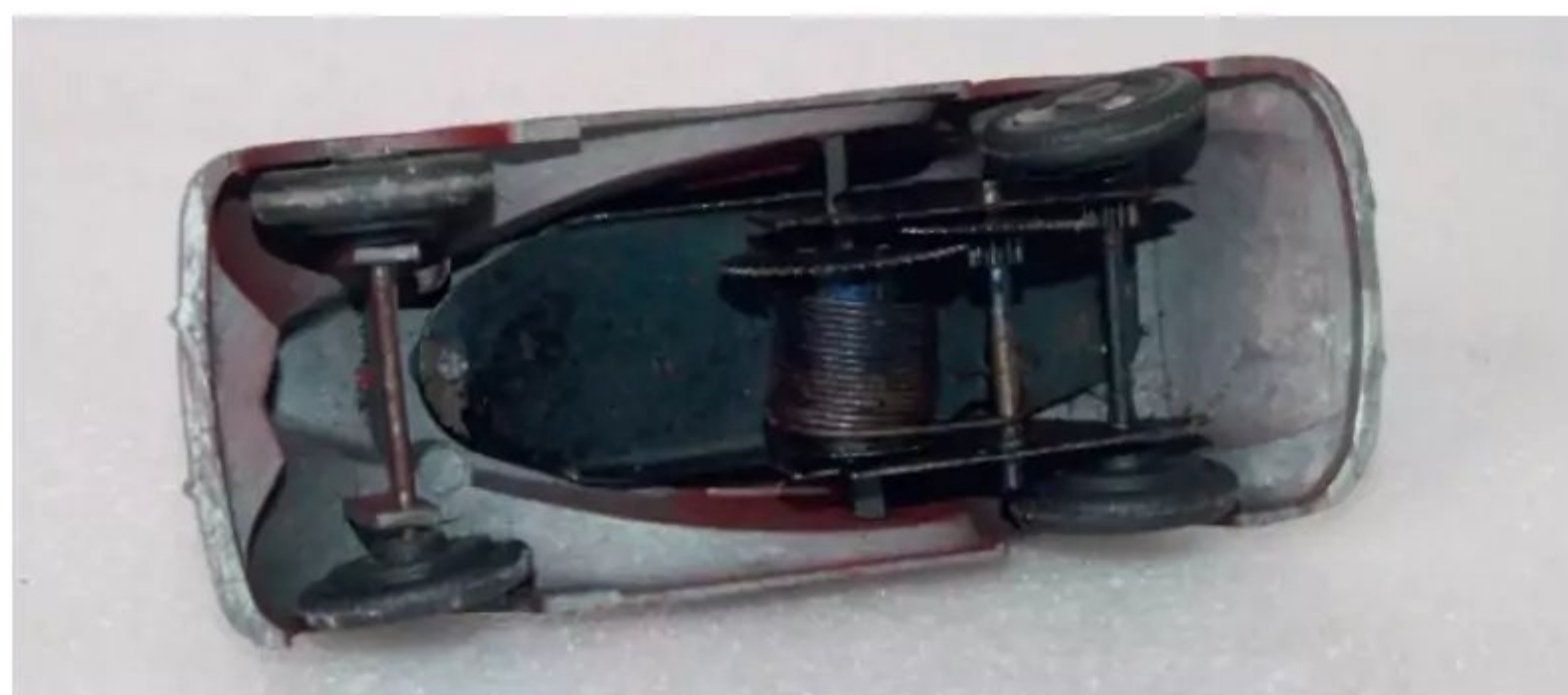




**ABOVE**  
A rather more restrained version of the Rolls Royce Phantom V from Paragon: plenty of operating features to delight the collector. Credit: paragonmodelstore.com

**RIGHT**  
Not so common clockwork version of a Robin Hood model: simplicity rules, ok?

**FAR RIGHT**  
Modern Saloon Car from Robin Hood. Gaily coloured? Well, it's light blue, at any rate.



today well served; indeed, an impressive collection can be assembled for a modest outlay. Where originals are concerned, though, many will sell for three figures if boxed and in excellent condition.

#### GREEN CREDENTIALS?

Under the letter R there are several manufacturers of note but without doubt, the accolade of the oddest moniker has to be awarded to that of Robin Hood (Toy Products). Why on earth would you name your range after the hero of Sherwood Forest? Well, I guess there would have been less panache attached to launching a line dubbed "The Sheriff of Nottingham"...

Toy Products was based in the Midlands, in Walsall, and thus had only putative links with the rather more idyllic glades of Sherwood Forest. From what I've dug up, this enterprise appears to have commenced manufacture during the war years, in the 1940s. By around 1955 it was dead in the water, though, possibly through growing competition, the need to evolve or maybe because of materials shortages, something that dogged the diecast manufacturing fraternity at that time.

An interesting, albeit limited, range was produced, in scale somewhat larger than the (by then) familiar Dinky Toy products. Possibly the most common example (and common is a relative word, for these



Robin Hood's Midget Sports Car was simplistic: note the steering wheel cast on to dash.



models don't surface too often) is the dodgem car-looking, rather dumpy, Midget Sports Car. The jury is out on whether this was based on a real car or not: the Austin A40 could well have been the original idea in this instance, though. The Modern Saloon Car (which the utilitarian box describes as "gaily coloured") is reminiscent of a Standard Vanguard, although there are also strong trans-Atlantic overtones present.

There are other models out there, including a two-door sports coupe (some believe this to be an Allard), a Streamline Coupe, a US-inspired Shooting Brake as well as a Rolls Royce and a Sports Car. In terms of commercials (if you're making cars, then you might as well cover these too), a tipper truck, a fire engine, a petrol tanker, a furniture van and a lorry were all produced. Some of these were equipped with clockwork motors: these latter examples ran on metal wheels with rubber tyres for traction, whereas the push-along variety made do with simple metal wheels. Scales do vary when it comes to Robin Hood output and certainly the commercial vehicles do not sit too happily with the passenger transport when placed side by side.

The other snag with these miniatures is one of identification, which can be quite a problem here. Helpfully, some have ROBIN HOOD embossed on their undersides; whilst others have the familiar MADE IN ENGLAND rubric, something, alas, that can be found on many small companies' products of the era. Annoyingly some, though, lack either of these clues. In consequence, collecting the complete set might take quite a while, if indeed, it can ever be achieved at all. ■

**BELOW**  
The majestic Rolls Royce from Quiralu. Many vehicles in the range are now to be found as re-releases.

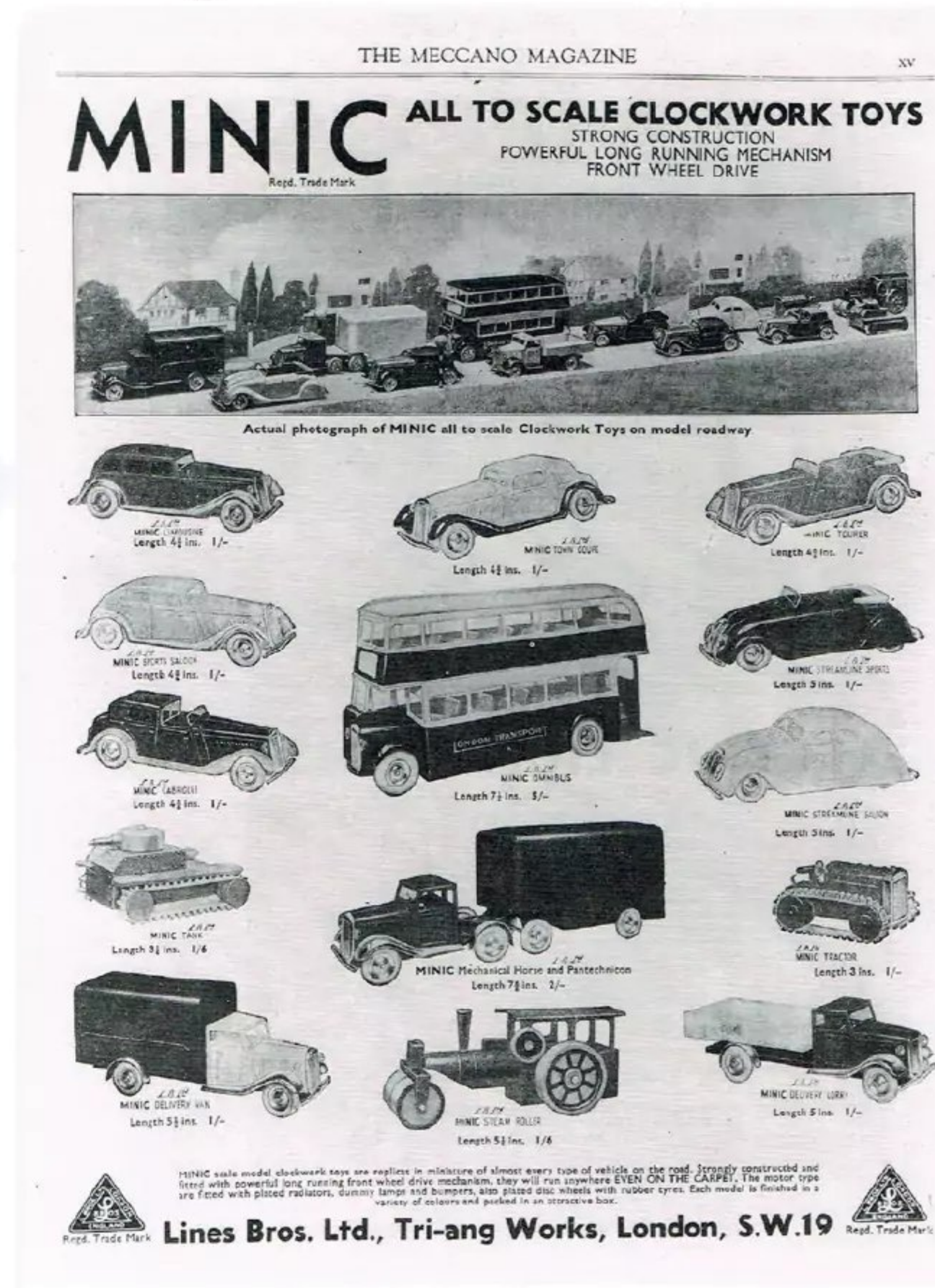






# Tri-ang Minic

Ian McDermott takes us back in time with a range of classic models



**ABOVE**  
Tri-ang were not above out sourcing parts when needed as displayed by this fine tourer fitted with Taylor & Barrett figures accompanied by a pump by the same maker.

**ABOVE RIGHT**  
A Tri-ang Minic advert dating from 1935.

**B**efore Tri-ang introduced their Minic range, tinsplate vehicles often tended to be either cheap caricatures or expensive replicas of road going vehicles. Added to this, their comparative scales were often incompatible even within their own manufacturers range. Tri-ang, being an already established manufacturer of pressed steel and wooden toys, seemed have looked to Meccano for inspiration. Meccano's recently introduced Dinky toys presented a homogenous world and a successful one at that.

## LAUNCH

Tri-ang launched their Minic range in 1935. Initially it was a small but varied selection of road vehicles. The vehicles were painted, rather than lithographed tinsplate, making them appear quite realistic in comparison with other makes. Every model was fitted with a strong running clockwork motor, a feature of the range. Added to this, the advertising extolled that they were, 'all to scale clockwork toys' and in this they weren't too far off the mark. Cars were indeed relatively in scale to the buses etc. Whether it was coincidence or not they were also roughly in scale to the then popular O gauge railways, which couldn't have done sales any harm. Meccano didn't consider them direct competition and Tri-ang even advertised them in the *Meccano Magazine*!

What shouldn't be overlooked either is the engineering master class that Minics represented.

From an extreme economy of parts, many variations of vehicle types were yielded. The decision to use slot and tab construction enabled this, even if it called for more labour-intensive hand construction. The lack of 2D lithography also demanded 3D detail. Here Minic excelled themselves, from wooden seats to individual dash surrounds with separate steering wheels. The quality is there too, with barely a sharp edge to worry little fingers.

To top this off the finishes were very attractive with much use made of chromium plating combined with a wide range of rich enamel colours all topped off with detachable white rubber tyres. Judging by the number of survivors around today they were very successful.

## MODEL OVERVIEW

The range started with a basic line up of generic cars, lorries and buses etc. Like Dinky there were also the odd item like a single tank and the steam roller. Later the range expanded quickly with such delights as the learner's car or Police car; all made possible by this multiplicity of shared parts. Occasionally something would call for a special pressing such as the jelly mould body styles of the streamlined saloons and convertibles or the small Ford cars and vans. Later developments included modifying the car tooling to produce a line of Vauxhalls in the same format. Around this time small Shell petrol cans started to appear on the running boards of the cars and lorries.

If one had the funds, there was also a selection of





**ABOVE** A post war No.11 Minic garage albeit harbouring pre war vehicles. Tri-ang's range of garages was comprehensive and they often supplied them unbranded to other suppliers such as Marks & Spencer.

**LEFT** The first issue of the minic post office van, No.3m was introduced in 1936. It bears the 'ER' cipher for King Edward VIII, who abdicated the throne the same year.

more exclusive cars available. Rolls Royce, Daimler and Bentley variants of saloons, tourers and cabriolets, all fitted with plastic seating. Some were also available with electric lights, such luxury! For some reason they are also the only Minics that wind up on the opposite side to everything else!

## PACKAGING

When it came to packaging, Tri-ang were for the most part, very conservative. Many of the boxes featured a generic road scene illustration and not much else. The only concession to the box's contents being a separate label stuck onto the end flap. The quality vehicles were given lift-off lid boxes however and were very attractive indeed, with some charming period artwork. There were presentation sets available too, but they were quite generic, and I suspect retailers used them to shift stock as no two seem to ever have matching contents.

## BUILD YOUR OWN

Having already noted that construction was mainly by hand then the next logical step is surely to supply a child with the opportunity to build their own models. The construction set contained five models in knockdown form replete with transfers, factory paint and everything else to finish a model. Quality was largely down to the skill of the builder and in some cases it must have been hard to tell a home build from a factory one. Today these sets are highly sought after, though hard to find complete.



**ABOVE** The component parts which in this case constitute a traffic control car.

## FILL HER UP!

Tri-ang were very adept at producing wooden toys so to supply a range of garages and service stations was a natural move. They ranged from a tiny single pump, one car set ups to some truly magnificent structures, many of which were fitted with electric lights. Miniature tinplate advertising signs like those used by Bassett Lowke adorned the exterior walls. Taylor & Barrett supplied the oil bins and the petrol pumps. Incidentally Taylor & Barrett supplied the passengers for a few of the cars and produced a range of 40-millimetre figures compatible with the Minic range.

## DEVELOPMENTS

In a few short years Tri-ang Minic's had been incredibly successful. When the clouds of war gathered over Europe, Tri-ang like many other toy makers, reflected this in their output. Tri-ang introduced camouflaged paint finishes to some of its range with some being more successful in others. There were also some new models such as the six-wheeled lorry and the balloon barrage set which was highlight. The tankers duly received their pool livery as government decrees took effect. Before long the economic climate took its toll. Gone with the white tyres, the Shell cans and even the chrome parts started to be supplanted by chemically blackened ones. Production limped on until 1942 when the selling of new toys which were forbidden.

## POST WAR

When production resumed after the war it was all change. Many models were re-issued, and old parts and pressings being used up. The colour palette was now severely restricted with harsher shades of green, blue or red with black wings being the norm. Nice details such as the rolled headlamps on Vauxhalls





**LEFT** Minic steamroller, No.33m. Pre-War issues had painted wooden wheels. This post war issue shows the change over to plastic.

**FAR LEFT** A pre-War boxed delivery lorry No.21m. This is a 2nd series issue, the first issues carried no advertising on the sides.

**BELOW LEFT** A Minic Pantechnicon, No.30m, ably displays Tri-ang's expertise in sheet metal pressing.

**BELOW RIGHT** This Minic Rolls Royce Sunshine Saloon, No 47m, shows off the amazing colour palette employed on pre-War production.

gave way to sharp unfinished edges. In time pressings became worn and the sharpness of moulding lines and other details began to fade.

They were however still highlights to be had. A modern forward control cab was introduced for the lorries and the 'arctics'. In the late 1940s set of railway vans painted in the four liveries of the then private railway companies broke cover. They were sadly short lived as the railways were nationalised shortly after. There was also the delightful Watney's barrel lorry; a lovely promotional vehicle and still fairly easy to find.

What was rapidly changing were real vehicles. Cars were no longer separate bodies sat on separate chassis but were now unitary construction with full width modern body work. Standard's Vanguard saloon was a perfect example of this and shortly after its launch Tri-ang started to release cars with plastic bodies and tinplate bases. Plastic could translate the smooth flowing shapes of the new cars better (and for cheaper) than tinplate. Slowly but surely the tin toys were phased out. By the late 1950s tinplate was starting to look a bit old fashioned. The last to leave production was the Double Decker bus around 1959. This was around the same time Tri-ang introduced its Spot-On range. A similar concept for the modern era!

## COLLECTING

There's no doubt collecting Minics can be a fascinating hobby. They defy have the 'tick box' mentality of other collectable ranges; their handmade construction throws up all sorts of anomalies that you just don't fit into any price guide check list. However, with experience a collector should be able to tell if something is factory finished or not. Look and handle as many Minics as you can to get a 'feel' for them. It's far too easy to end up buying a pre-war model with

a post war base...they are out there!

So, what is the biggest thing to watch out for with Minics? It's rust! Rust will destroy paint, chrome, motors and even the boxes they're stored in if damp gets to them. Many Minics can however be made good with a sympathetic clean and some careful maintenance. You'll need good quality car wax, cotton buds, silver polish and a fine cloth. Oh, and patience, plenty of patience. Many Minics have already been apart too, either from a dad mending a jammed motor to a recent collector, so watch those tabs as they only bend backwards and forwards so often!

You can restore Minics, and I've seen some great restorations using enamel paints as per original and these can look incredibly authentic. The tab and slot construction also means no unsightly new rivets etc.

## SPARES

There are lots of parts available for Minics, many in their original material such as the plastic roof speakers for the police patrol car. There are some high-quality transfers available too, together with some not so good ones, so you may have to do a little detective work to track everything you need. Many collectors cannibalise scrap Minics to source original parts and it can be an excellent route to getting working motors, missing seats or just anything else that you can't get from spare suppliers. If you're missing a box, there are some really good quality ones available for the main range both for the early issues and the later ones. Restoring Minics is a slightly different skill set to diecast but equally rewarding.

This ends our brief dip into the world of Tri-ang Minics, but I hope it's enough to get to pique your interest and maybe start collecting. ■

*What was rapidly changing were real vehicles. Cars were no longer separate bodies sat on separate chassis but were now unitary construction with full width modern body work. Standard's Vanguard saloon was a perfect example of this and shortly after its launch Tri-ang started to release cars with plastic bodies and tinplate bases.*





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# TOP VINTAGE MODEL

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



## Atlantean City Bus

**A**s a school boy I had an interest in buses as I used them to get to school and some of them were war time Guy utility buses. Then new buses began to appear on the city bus routes. All these buses had rear open platforms which allowed you to get on or off the bus. You could use this even if the bus was not at a bus stop. Perhaps not totally safe but at times rather convenient despite warnings from the conductor! When the front entrance buses arrived, you had to wait for the driver to open the doors. The Sheffield fleet had front entrance Leyland Atlanteans and Daimler Fleetlines from the late 1960s. Up to the 1970s, most of the Dinky Toy buses had been the rear open platform type models.

The Dinky Toys Atlantean City Bus 'YELLOW PAGES' appeared in the October 1973 *Meccano Magazine* as model number 295. It is described as a superbly-detailed casting with glazing, seats, and a driver. It is finished in yellow with blue plastic upper deck seats and Yellow Pages label adverts on the sides, front and rear of the bus. It was sold in a card-based blister pack and was deleted in 1976.

The next Atlantean City Bus number 291 arrived in April 1974 and is shown in that month's *Meccano Magazine*. It states it is based on the existing 'Yellow Pages' casting with

a new livery. The new labels are for KENNING CAR, VAN AND TRUCK HIRE on the sides and KENNING MOTOR GROUP on the rear. The model is in orange with a blue plastic upper deck and a driver and the rear engine cover is in blue. It comes in a card-based blister pack before deletion in 1978. The model also came in red with 'Esso Safety Grip Tyres' adverts on the sides and 'London Transport' labels on the lower sides. At the same time the model was released as the Atlantean Bus kit (No.1018) with white paint and transfers for the 'NATIONAL' bus company and the number '242'. It was deleted in 1976.

To commemorate the Silver Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth 2, Dinky Toys issued the Atlantean Bus in silver as number 297 with 'NATIONAL BUS COMPANY' labels and 'THE QUEEN'S SILVER JUBILEE 1977' labels on the sides. There is also a version for Woolworths with 'WOOLWORTHS WELCOMES THE WORLD' labels on the sides. A further version came as far as can be confirmed for Manchester transport with an 'M' logo label on the lower sides. They were all only available during 1977 and they came in a



**TOP** The 3 versions of the Atlantean City Bus for Esso, Kenning and Yellow Pages.

**ABOVE** The Jubilee models for Woolworths, National Bus Company and Manchester Transport.

special silver card hanging window box with commemorative message on the back.

The Leyland Atlantean was manufactured by Leyland Motors between 1958 and 1986. With the creation of British Leyland in 1968 Daimler merged with Leyland, bringing the two front entrance buses together as the Atlantean. Later the Daimler name then became a Leyland and production of the bus continued up to 1983. ■

### The Dinky Toys Collectors' Association

Dinky Toys buses have always been popular with the later ones having more details and liveries. They are often discussed and illustrated in the DTCA Journal. You can find out more or join by visiting the website [www.dtcawebsite.org](http://www.dtcawebsite.org).



# SALE RESULTS

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■ **Dinky Pre-War Hornby Series Modelled Miniatures 22c Motor Truck**, blue cab and chassis, red dropside body, tinplate radiator surround, wheels have silver-green colour wash. Condition is good to good plus. **Sold for £190, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 23g Cooper-Bristol Racing Car**, green body and ridged hubs with black treaded tyres, white figure driver and racing number 6. Generally good in good to good plus box. **Sold for £35, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 23h Ferrari Racing Car**, blue, yellow nose and rigid hubs with grey treaded tyres and racing number 5. Condition is good plus in good plus to excellent box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 23j HWM Racing Car**, pale green, mid-green ridged hubs with black treaded tyres, silver trim, yellow racing number 7, figure driver. Generally good but crushed box. **Sold for £35, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 23n Maserati Racing Car**, red including ridged hubs with grey treaded tyres, white flash, figure driver, racing number 9, silver trim. Condition is good plus to excellent in excellent box. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 230 (23K) Talbot Lago Racing Car**, mid-blue including rigid hubs with grey treaded tyres, silver trim, yellow racing Number 4, figure driver. Good plus to excellent in fair to good (incomplete) dual numbered box. **Sold for £20, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 107 Sunbeam Alpine Sports**, cerise body, grey interior with figure, silver trim, light beige rigid hubs with black smooth tyres, racing number 34. Generally excellent in good to good plus but crushed box. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 108 MG Midget Sports Car**, red body and ridged hubs with black smooth tyres, tan interior and tonneau, figure driver, silver trim and racing No.24. Good plus in fair to good plus but creased box. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 109 Austin Healey Sports Car**, yellow body, mid blue rigid hubs and interior with figure, silver trim, racing No.21. Condition is good plus in generally good plus box. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 110 Aston Martin DB3 Sports**, green body, red interior, red rigid hubs with black smooth tyres, figure driver, silver trim and racing No.22. Condition is good plus in excellent box with correct colour spot. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 133 Cunningham C5R Racer**, off white body with blue stripes and racing number 31, tan interior with light blue figure driver, blue ridged hubs with black smooth tyre. Condition is generally good plus in good plus to excellent box. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



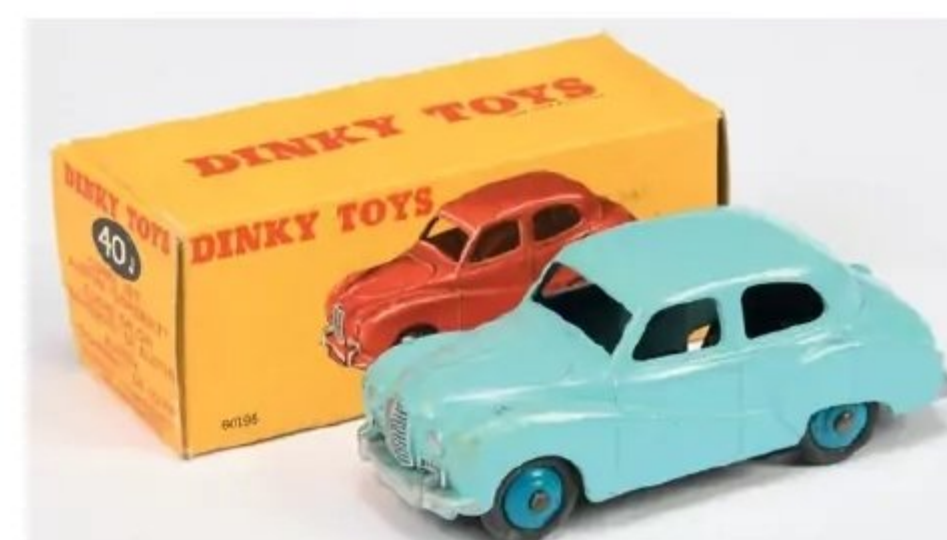
■ **Dinky Toys 236 Connaught Racing Car**, light green body with racing number 32 decals, black nose stripe, red interior with white driver, mid-green rigid hubs with black smooth tyres. Excellent to excellent plus in good plus to excellent box. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 237 Mercedes Racing Car**, white body, red interior and rigid hubs with treaded tyres, light blue figure driver, silver trim, racing No.30. Condition is good plus to excellent (could be better if time spent cleaning) in good plus to excellent box. **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 238 Jaguar Type D racing Car**, turquoise body, mid-blue rigid hubs and interior with figure driver, black front vent. Condition is generally excellent in good to good plus but creased box. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**

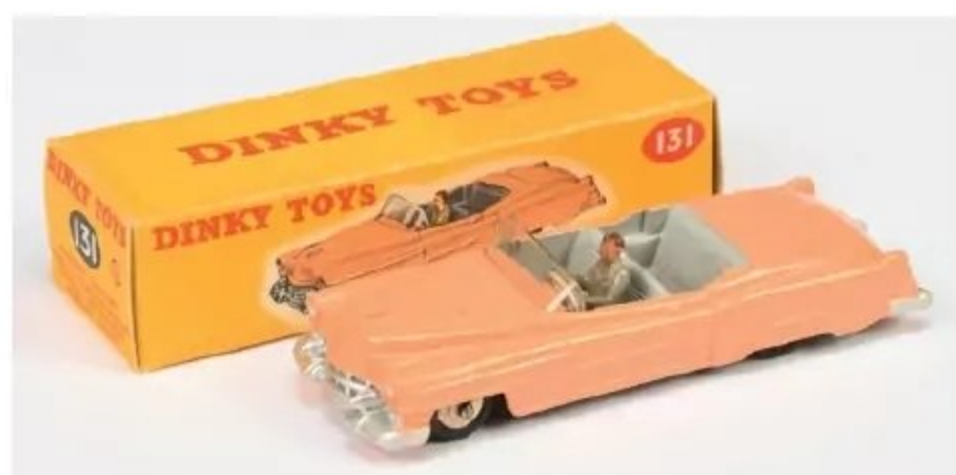


■ **Dinky Toys 40J Austin Somerset Saloon**, light blue body, mid-blue rigid hubs and silver trim (correct 40J baseplate). Condition is good in good plus to excellent box. **Sold for £35, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 132 Packard Convertible**, green, red interior and rigid hubs, figure driver, silver trim. Condition is generally good in excellent box with correct colour spot. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**





■ **Dinky Toys 131 Cadillac Tourer**, peach body, grey interior, figure driver, silver trim and light beige rigid hubs with black smooth tyres. Good plus to excellent in good but crushed/creased box. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 157 Jaguar XK120 Coupe**, yellow body with silver trim, yellow ridged hubs with black smooth tyres. Good to good plus in excellent box with incorrect colour spot. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 162 Ford Zephyr Saloon**, two-tone cream and green, silver trim and light beige rigid hub. Generally good plus in generally excellent box. **Sold for £35, Vectis Auctions, June.**



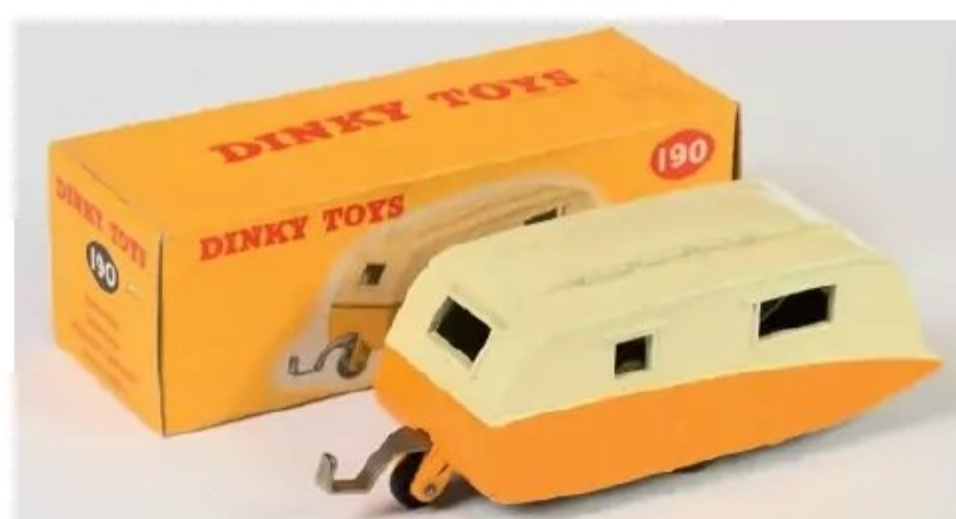
■ **Dinky Toys 164 Vauxhall Cresta Saloon**, two-tone green and grey including rigid hubs, silver trim. Excellent to excellent plus still a bright example in excellent box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 172 Studebaker Land Cruiser**, mid-blue body, silver trim, fawn ridged hubs with black smooth tyres. Excellent to excellent plus in good plus but slightly crushed box. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 181 Volkswagen saloon (Beetle)**, green body, mid-green rigid hubs with black smooth tyres, silver trim. Condition is good to excellent in generally excellent box. **Sold for £80, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 190 Caravan**, two-tone cream and yellow, light beige rigid hubs with black smooth tyres, chrome draw bar and black metal jockey wheel. Condition is generally good plus to excellent (could be better if time spent cleaning) in good plus but slightly grubby box with correct colour spot. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 255 Land Rover 'Mersey Tunnel Police'**, red including rigid hubs, silver trim and with tow hook. Condition is generally good plus to excellent (flat spots on two tyres) in good plus to excellent box. **Sold for £35, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 260 Morris Commercial 'Royal Mail' Van**, red body and ridged hubs with black smooth tyres, black roof panel, silver trim. Condition is excellent to excellent plus in good to good plus but crushed box. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 261 Morris 'Post Office Telephones' Service Van**, green including ridged hubs with black smooth tyres, black roof panel with silver ladder. Condition is excellent to excellent plus still a bright example in generally good plus box but slightly crushed in one corner. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 283 'BOAC' Duple Roadmaster Airport Coach**, dark blue body, white roof, silver trim, mid-blue rigid hubs with smooth tyres. Condition is generally excellent in good plus but slightly creased/crushed box. **Sold for £35, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 301 (27n) Field Marshall Tractor**, orange body, silver trim and hubs, tan figure driver, metal tow hook. Condition is generally excellent in good but crushed dual numbered box. **Sold for £35, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 470 Austin 'Shell/BP' Van**, two-tone green and red including rigid hubs with black smooth tyres, silver trim. Condition is excellent in generally excellent but slightly creased box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 480 Bedford 'Kodak' Van**, yellow, red rigid hubs with black smooth tyres, silver trim. Condition is good in fair (incomplete) box. **Sold for £25, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 905 Foden (Type 2) Flatbed with Chains**, green including supertoy hubs with grey tyres, tow hook. Condition is fair to good plus in fair to good plus harder to find dual numbered box. **Sold for £70, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 934 Leyland Octopus Wagon**, yellow, green including front and side panels, silver grille, red Supertoy hubs, tow hook. Condition is good plus to excellent in good plus but grubby box. **Sold for £80, Vectis Auctions, June.**

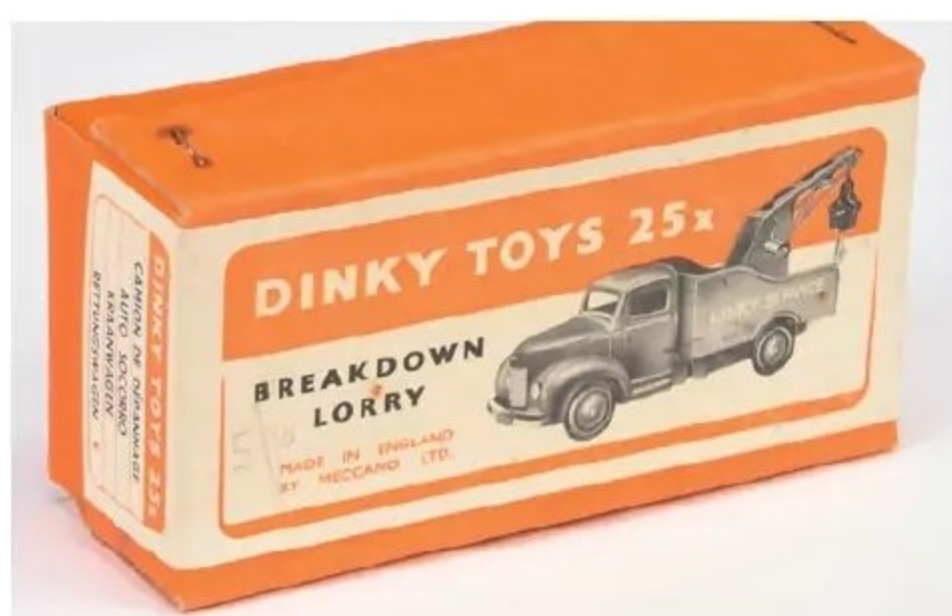


■ **Dinky Toys 582 Bedford Pullmore Car Transporter**, light blue cab and trailer with grey platforms, mid-blue ridged and Supertoy hubs. Rare variation with 3 x rivet sides. Condition is generally good in excellent box complete with 994 Loading Ramp. **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, June.**





■ **Dinky Toys 581 Horse Box "British Railways Express Hire Service"**, maroon body, maroon Supertoy hubs with grey treaded tyres and silver trim. Good plus in good plus to excellent box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 25x Breakdown Lorry empty box only.** Condition is generally excellent (staples are corroded). **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **French Dinky Toys 32AB Panhard Articulated Truck and Trailer "SNCF"**, blue including metal tilt and convex hubs, silver trim and metal tow hook. Condition is generally excellent in good plus box. **Sold for £90, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys Military 642 "RAF" Pressure Refueller**, greyish-blue body and supertoy hubs, tow hook. Condition is good to good plus in good plus to excellent box. **Sold for £70, Vectis Auctions, June.**



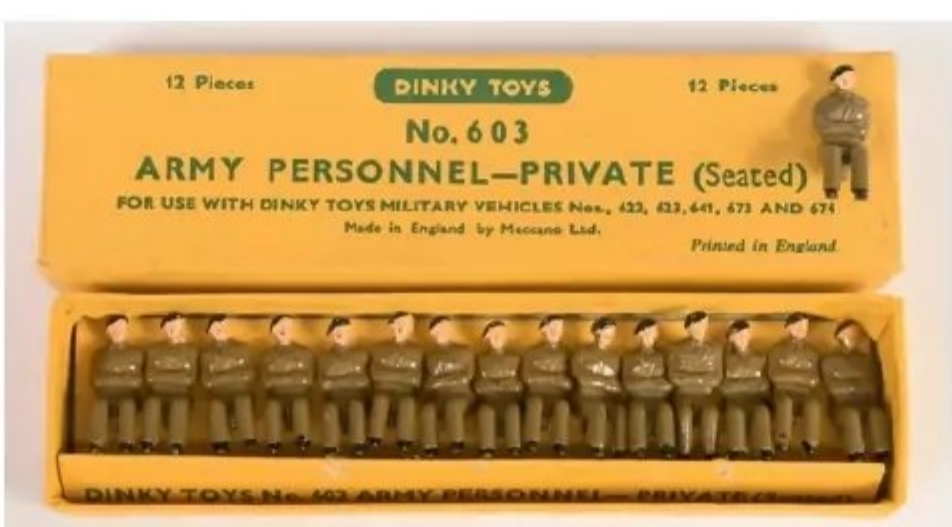
■ **Dinky Toys Military 660 Mighty Antar Tank Transporter**, green including supertoy hubs with figure driver. Generally excellent in good to good plus later issue box. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 49 Petrol Pumps & Oil Bin Set**, pumps finished green, blue, red, brown and yellow bin. Condition is fair to good plus in good to good plus box with sleeve. **Sold for £30, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 781 "Esso" Petrol Pump Set**, cream base, red, blue and white sign & Petrol pumps with yellow leads. Condition is good to good plus in good to excellent box with some crushing/creases. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 603 Army Personnel "Private" (seated)**, 12 diecast figures, khaki uniform with black beret. Also includes 4 extra figures. Conditions are good to near mint in good to good plus box. **Sold for £100, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys 40d (152) Austin Devon Saloon** - rare variation, red body with silver trim, maroon ridged hubs with black smooth tyres (small baseplate lettering). Condition is generally good still a nice example of this hard to find issue. **Sold for £90, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys Pre-War 16 "Silver Jubilee" Train Set**, to include "LNER" Locomotive - finished in silver, red, smooth hubs with white tyres with 2 x matching Carriages. Fair to good plus in generally good box. **Sold for £90, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys Pre-War 16 "Silver Jubilee" Train Set**, to include "LNER" Locomotive - finished in silver, red, smooth hubs with white tyres with 2 x matching Carriages. Fair to good in generally good box. **Sold for £120, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys Pre-War 15 Railway Signals Set**, to include 6-Pieces. Also include 2 extras. Conditions are poor to good plus in good to good plus box. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **French Dinky Toys (Meccano) No.19 Electric Passenger Train Set**, to include Electric Diesel Locomotive finished in two-tone green along with 3 coaches. Fair to excellent in good to good plus box with "Meccano" labels to top and bottom. Very rare set. **Sold for £750, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys (Meccano) No.20 Passenger Train Set**, to include 0-6-0 Steam Locomotive finished in maroon and black along with 2 coaches finished in maroon and red. Good in poor to good early marble issue box. **Sold for £110, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Dinky Toys (Hornby Series Modelled Miniatures) Pre-War No.21 Hornby Train Set**, to include Locomotive finished in maroon and black along with 4 Goods Wagons. Please note models are French and England issues. Fair to good plus (one axle on Locomotive is bent) in generally good later purple marble box. **Sold for £110, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast MC804 "Circus Circus" Gift Set**, boxed. Includes Articulated Truck, Bi-plane, Land Rover with Caravan, Horse Box & Ford Model A (Clown Car). Although unchecked for completeness condition generally appears to be excellent in a fair to good box. **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Verem (France) 4 Piece "Pinder", boxed Gift Set, Circus related.** Although unchecked for completeness condition generally appears to be excellent in a good box. **Sold for £30, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Auto Art Millennium, a boxed 1/18 Scale Ford Sierra Group A 1987.** Although unchecked for completeness condition appears excellent within good to good plus box. **Sold for £190, Vectis Auctions, June.**





■ **Corgi Heavy Haulage CC13203 DAF XF Super Space Cab King Trailer & Locomotive Load "Allely's Heavy Haulage Ltd", boxed.** Generally appears to be excellent in a good box and good inner packaging. **Sold for £140, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Tekno 1/50 scale, Malcolm Group R 580 Truck, "Braveheart", film related, boxed.** Generally appears to be fair to good (minor repair needed) in a good box. **Sold for £320, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Spark Minimax Planex Collection Mini Moke "Gold Leaf" Trailer & Lotus Europa Transporter "Team Lotus Silverstone" 1968, boxed.** Generally appears to be excellent in a good rigid Perspex case and good outer slip case. **Sold for £100, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **British Heritage Models Excalibur EXC 3: 1978 Vauxhall Cavalier Mk 1 1900GLS Coupe, boxed.** Generally appears to be excellent in a good rigid Perspex case and good outer slip case. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Somerville Models Saab 95 Estate, boxed.** Generally appears to be good in a good box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **AutoArt Jaguar XJ 13, 1/18 Scale, boxed.** Generally appears to be excellent in a good box and good inner packaging. **Sold for £110, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **Corgi 335 Jaguar 'E' Type 4.2 Litre 2 + 2.** Although unchecked for completeness condition generally appears to be Excellent in Fair packaging. **Sold for £70, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **A boxed Tekno 851 Scania CR 76.** Although unchecked condition appears excellent within excellent box. **Sold for £40, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **A boxed Tekno 815 Sprite Musketeer Caravan.** Although unchecked for completeness condition appears excellent within excellent box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **A boxed Siku V.288 "Aral" Petrol Tanker.** Although unchecked for completeness condition appears excellent to excellent plus within good to good plus box. **Sold for £90, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **A boxed Corgi 436 Spider-Man Spidervan.** Condition appears excellent within good to good plus box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **A boxed Corgi Toys No.271 James Bond 007 Aston Martin DB5.** Condition appears good to excellent within good to good plus box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, June.**



■ **A Corgi Toys Diecast Model Car No. 345, "MGB G. T. Competition Model",** with black over yellow body, spoked wheels, black interior with gold steering wheel, luggage, four no. 7 transfers, in original box. **Sold for £70, Canterbury Auction Galleries, June.**



■ **Four Dinky Toys Diecast Model Cars, comprising -** No. 179, "Studebaker President Sedan", with lemon yellow body with blue highlights, spun hubs, in original box, No. 192, "De Soto Fireflite Sedan", with red over grey body with red detailing, spun hubs, in original box. No. 440 "Tanker Mobilgas", with red body with Esso transfer, red spun hubs, and No. 161 "Austin Somerset Saloon", with powder blue body, blue spun hubs, both in original boxes. **Sold for £100, Canterbury Auction Galleries, June.**



■ **A Triang Spot On Diecast Model Car No. 271, "Jaguar S Type",** with metallic blue body with silver detailing, spun hubs, red interior, in original box, and a Triang Spot On Diecast Model Car No. 287, "Hillman Minx 1600", with pistachio green body, spun hubs, red interior, in original box. There are no yellow card inserts in the boxes. **Sold for £80, Canterbury Auction Galleries, June.**



■ **A Corgi Toys Diecast Model Car No. 214, "Ford Thunderbird",** with cream over pale green body, spun hubs, in original box. **Sold for £90, Canterbury Auction Galleries, June.**



■ **A Corgi Toys Diecast Model Car No. 239, "Volkswagen 1500 Karmann Ghia",** with cream body, shaped hubs, red interior, spare wheel, luggage, in original box with Corgi Model Club insert. **Sold for £110, Canterbury Auction Galleries, June.**





■ **A Corgi Toys Diecast Model Car No. 230, "Mercedes-Benz 220 SE Coupe",** with black body, shaped hubs, lemon interior, spare wheel, in original box. **Sold for £110, Canterbury Auction Galleries, June.**



■ **Corgi Toys No. 233, "Heinkel Economy Car",** with pink body, spun hubs, red interior with grey steering wheel, in original box with Corgi Model Club insert. **Sold for £100, Canterbury Auction Galleries, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 5a Lotus Europa Made in Bulgaria Issue** blue body, pale turquoise green windows, pale yellow interior, silver base, dot-dash wheels. Near mint, unboxed. **Sold for £45, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 33a Lamborghini Miura, Made in Bulgaria issue,** metallic blue body with high arches, clear windows, red interior, silver painted base, dot-dash wheels. Near mint unboxed. **Sold for £200, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 33a Lamborghini Miura, Made in Bulgaria issue,** metallic blue body, clear windows, yellow interior, dot-dash wheels. Near mint unboxed with chip to front corner of roof. **Sold for £340, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 33a Lamborghini Miura, Made in Bulgaria issue,** blue body with high arches, clear windows, yellow interior, silver painted base, dot-dash wheels. Mint unboxed. **Sold for £300, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 51b Citroen SM, Made in Bulgaria issue,** green body, clear windows, light yellow interior, silver painted base, dot-dash wheels. Near mint unboxed with a couple of tiny pin size chips to front bumper. **Sold for £60, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 56d Peterbilt Tanker, Made in Brazil issue,** red cab & chassis with white door tampo print, silver-grey plastic tank, 8-spoke wheels. Excellent in fair box with print date of 11/87 incorrectly labeled for Dodge Caravan. **Sold for £140, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 31c Caravan, Made in Brazil issue,** green body with dark yellow plastic opening door, dark amber windows, pale yellow interior, silver painted base with "Made in England" ground away, dot-dash wheels. Excellent to excellent plus unboxed. **Sold for £110, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 68c Chevy Van "Ridin' High",** metallic lighter green body with white "4x4" & black horseshoe hood tampo print, blue windows, bare metal base. Near mint unboxed. Possible Pre-Production Trial model for 44d 4x4 Chevy Van. **Sold for £110, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 13b Baja Buggy,** metallic lime green body with rare shield hood label (from 55b Mercury Commuter Police Car), red engine exhausts, orange interior, bare metal base. Near mint with usual factory assembly mark to engine air intake. **Sold for £45, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 16a Badger Radar Truck, Made in Brazil issue,** orange body, pale yellow radar scanner, dark green windows, bare metal base with patent number, mid grey type 2 axle clip with the holes for the "Fab Z.F. Manaus" clip but please note this is missing, Maltese Cross wheels. Excellent Unboxed with a few paint chips. Striking colour which displays well. **Sold for £100, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 35b Rola-matics Fandango,** red body with racing number 35 nose label, rare purple windows, ivory interior with light blue fan, bare metal base with Patent Number. Mint apart from label applied slightly off centre during factory assembly, in excellent a little creased at 1 corner "New" Type J Box. **Sold for £50, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 45a Ford Group 6,** metallic green body with racing number 45 nose label, clear windows, ivory interior, rare pink base, 5-spoke wide wheels. Excellent plus (glue starting to show through label which is discoloured, in good plus box. **Sold for £50, Oberon Auction, June.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 54c Army Personnel Carrier,** military green body, lighter tan soldiers & gun, dark green windows, matt black base, rare chrome dot-dash wheels. Near mint with a couple of tiny chips to base & right hand front headlamp, in excellent plus "New" 1st Issue Type K Box. **Sold for £30, Oberon Auction, June.**



# Dear Editor

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## FORGOTTEN FORDS

**I HAVE** just finished reading James Robertshaw's interesting article about Lone Stars Forgotten Fords (*Diecast Collector* June 2025 issue).

Way back in July 2004 I sent a letter with photographs of the Ford GT40 prototype to your magazine.

Back in the 1970s I worked for Grand Prix Models, then based in Radlett, Hertfordshire. Radlett not being far from Lone Star in the Hatfield area we used to get some employees popping in. This is how I was fortunate enough to end up with a prototype GT40 that had been rejected. The chap who gave it to me knew I liked GT40's so he thought I would appreciate it.

It was hand painted in white and really didn't stand out so I repainted it as you now see it above. Had I realised way back then the significance of the model I would have left it original.

I have supplied you with some more photos plus the original article as I thought some newer readers may not have seen the article from 2004. I actually intended to sell it around a year ago, supplying all the details to a very well-known auction house but they never followed it up so it's just sitting in my display cabinet still.

I hope this throws a bit more light on the forgotten Fords.

**Peter Ingles**

**ED** Thank you Peter, your information is very useful!

## LAST MONTH

**I AM** writing to share my thoughts on the July issue of *Diecast Collector*. As a long-time enthusiast and reader of your magazine, I found this edition particularly enjoyable.

The feature on the *Farewell to the Puma* and its diecast models was both informative and nostalgic. The depth of research and the quality of the photography truly brought these miniature pieces of history to life.

I am also intrigued by the ongoing spotlight on modern 1/64 scale brands gaining traction among younger collectors. It's encouraging to see the magazine acknowledging shifts in the collecting landscape while still respecting the older brands that many of us grew up with.

A few suggestions if I may... I would love to see more content on display techniques and creative storage solutions in future issues, especially for collectors working with limited space.

I also wonder if you would consider including more content on emerging brands or lesser-known manufacturers from Asia and South America. Many collectors today are expanding their collections globally, and coverage of these models would be a welcome addition.

Thank you for your continued dedication to this hobby. The magazine remains an essential read for collectors of all ages and levels of experience.

**Barry Lee, email**

**ED** Thank you for your comments, and your suggestions! You never know what future issues will bring...

## OXFORD CORRECTION

**I AM** sure that the gap between preparation and publishing explains the outdated information about Oxford Diecast in July's Issue.

Oxford Diecast is no longer part of the Hornby Group having been 'bought out' by EKD Enterprises in November

2024 as recorded in *Diecast Collector* at the time. EKD is owned Lyndon Davies and his family so it effectively makes Oxford independent again under its existing management team.

**Maz Wooley**

**ED** You are, of course, correct!



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.





# TOYFAIR TIMES

## FAIRS

### 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

### 13 JULY

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

### 19 JULY

- **Blackpool**, Jim Corr, 07504 035955

### 20 JULY

- **Lincoln**, J & J Fairs, 01522 880383
- **Port Sunlight**, Jackson & Jackson Events, 07967 681080
- **Potters Bar**, Joe Lock, 07866 641215/07810 513576
- **Bromley**, KRJ Vintage Toy Fairs, 07977 646386/07889 901729
- **Wickham**, Steve Clements, 01380 725322/07732 330305

### 27 JULY

- **Gateshead**, Jim Corr, 07504 035955

### 3 AUGUST

- **Musselburgh**, Jim Corr, 07504 035955
- **Rayleigh**, KRJ Vintage Toy Fairs, 07977 646386/07889 901729

### 7 AUGUST

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

### 10 AUGUST

- **Harrogate**, Dalesman Diecasts, 01943 873420
- **Ashington**, David Parsons, 07742 609865

## AUCTIONS

### 1 JULY

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

### 7 JULY

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

### 14 JULY

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

### 16 JULY

- **Warwick**, Warwick & Warwick Ltd, 01926 499031

### 21 JULY

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

### 23 JULY

- **Leyburn**, Tennants Auctioneers, 01969 623780

### 26 JULY

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

### 28 JULY

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

### 29 JULY

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

### 1 AUGUST

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

### 2 AUGUST

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

### 4 AUGUST

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

**TOY, TRAIN & SCI FI FAIR**  
**NEW VENUE - BLACKPOOL SPORTS CENTRE**  
 West Park Drive, Blackpool, Lancs. FY3 9HQ 10.30am-3pm  
**Saturday 19th July**

- Admission: Adults £4.00, Children/Senior Citizens £3.00, Early Bird £7
- Buy, sell and swap trains, diecast cars, buses and trucks, soldiers and more!
- Free parking, working exhibitions and cafe facilities

Interested in selling your collection or want a table to sell your stock?  
 Contact Jim on **07504 035955** or email: [jim\\_corr73@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jim_corr73@hotmail.co.uk)

**TOY, TRAIN & SCI FI FAIR**  
**GATESHEAD STADIUM**  
 Neilson Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 0EN 10.30am-3pm  
**Sunday 27th July**

- Admission: Adults £4.00, Children/Senior Citizens £3.00, Early Bird £7
- Buy, sell and swap trains, diecast cars, buses and trucks, soldiers and more!
- Free parking, working exhibitions and cafe facilities

Interested in selling your collection or want a table to sell your stock?  
 Contact Jim on **07504 035955** or email: [jim\\_corr73@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jim_corr73@hotmail.co.uk)

**TOY, TRAIN & SCI FI FAIR**  
**MUSSELBURGH SPORTS CENTRE**  
 101 Newbigging, Musselburgh EH31 7AS • 10.30am-3pm  
**Sunday 3rd August**

- Admission: Adults £4.00, Seniors/U16s £3.00, Early Bird Entry from 8am £7 Adults £4 Seniors.
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## TOY TALES

Ed Karswell ponders the wonderful world of model collecting.

# The sound of the underground

A collector friend and I were reminiscing recently about when we started collecting vintage toys. It's sometimes easy to forget how new this hobby was some forty odd years ago. It's also a sobering thought that many of the 'vintage' models we are collecting were only first around 30 years old.

My interest in old diecast started around 1980 and at that time there was very little media presence surrounding toy collecting. The number of books on the subject were few and toy fairs were mythical events that always seemed to be held outside my orbit. All was not lost however as there was a newly opened shop in town selling second-hand railways and diecast. My interest wasn't a thing I routinely shared with friends as, although no one would be really negative, some people just didn't get it. The shop gave me a chance to meet like-minded people – it was a God send.

I am being a little disingenuous here as I would readily divulge my hobby if I thought it would be advantageous to the cause. Generally, the feeling was that if they had any old toys lying around in cupboards then I was more than welcome to them. Hence donations of Matchbox and Tri-ang Spot-On's routinely coming my way. These brands are noteworthy as by then the man in the street had cottoned on to the idea that Dinky cars could be worth money. It's just they didn't know to whom?

As for reading material, I first encountered *Collectors Gazette* (sister publication to *Diecast Collector!*) at the aforementioned shop and was amazed that 'we' had our own newspaper, albeit quarterly and in glorious black and white. The fact was that it portrayed a whole scene that was slightly covert, gave it a bit of a

'buzz' to coin a contemporary term. I think I must have re-read each issue a thousand times, soaking it all in.

I also spent more time in that collector's shop than was healthy, ruminating over toys and nostalgia for what in retrospect was the recent past. It did however feel a long way from 1960 to 1980 at the time as society had changed so much. Toys provided a tactile and tangible link with the values, design and sensibilities of people's childhoods. It differs over time, but it was true of that moment.

Amongst other things *Collectors Gazette* featured a whole gamut of professional toy dealers, some of whom are still around

on you would not be able to get these prices now. Aside from fashion, the other reason values shifted was the arrival of the internet. The hobby was now truly opened to all. This was a good thing as toys once unknown, or deemed out of reach, could now be acquired thus firing up interest in both new and old collectors. There's myriad of internet auctions, resource sites full of valuable information and forums to interact with collectors worldwide.

What a contrast from my early collecting days when my total knowledge of early Matchbox reached as far as the box full of models I had in front of me. I remember stumbling across a couple of 1950s Lesney's

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*My interest in old diecast started around 1980 and at that time there was very little media presence surrounding toy collecting. The number of books on the subject were few and toy fairs were mythical events that always seemed to be held outside my orbit.*

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today. Although as a hobby it did not feel mainstream, no one could have predicted how things would change in a few short years. Toy fairs really took off and on any given Sunday there would be several to choose from.

In 1983, entrepreneur Jeffrey Levitt appeared with his 'mint and boxed' brand of marketing. This strategy involved elevating toys to the status of a popular art form, with values and media exposure to match. Next, a few well-publicised collections came to auction. Many of these featured pre-War Dinky toys which realised prices that made national headline news. It seemed for toys and their values, the sky was the limit. But like all booms, it couldn't last and it's a sobering thought that 30 years

at a local car show and being over the moon with my rare finds. Looking back, I'm a little envious of how pleased these little wins made me feel considering what's on offer now.

I may have passed through many phases in my collecting life, be it diecast, tinsplate, makers etc and travelled all over to toy fairs but nothing captures the excitement you feel when you start out. Saying that, I did manage to get a pre-War Minic coupe I'd been looking for and that did give me a 'buzz' so maybe there's hope yet!

I'd like to think that you too have certain models that evoke a time or place. It may be childhood, a real vehicle or even a long-gone Christmas. Whatever it is, long may it continue! ■





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