

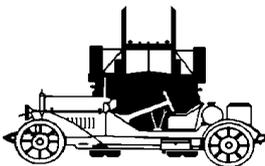
Miniature Auto

A publication for and by collectors and builders of model vehicles



Corgi US55705 Kenworth W925 and Rock Crusher Load

April 2002 Issue 197



Miniature Auto is the bi-monthly newsletter of
The New Zealand Model Vehicle Club (Inc)

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Please address all correspondence to the Secretary.
Magazine articles and related correspondence to the Editor.
Change of address to the Secretary.

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EDITORIAL

Many years ago, the makers of Dinky Toys published a magazine called the Meccano Magazine. In every (monthly) issue they advertised the latest Dinky Toys. Often, the very latest British made car was featured, the very cars that were in the showrooms and were soon to be seen on the streets of British towns and cities. No wonder that kids became collectors of models. Two new models every month, and often the very latest cars on the market. I suppose that in reality, these 'models' were actually toys, and it was very clever marketing to produce toys that little boys liked, and therefore wanted more. I doubt that Meccano planned to make model collectors out of those kids that nagged their parents for the latest toy, but that is what happened. Many a collector started with some Dinky Toys.

If you examine the models that are produced these days, the quality of reproduction is so much better. Dinky toys were crude; modern diecast models are so much finer in construction and considerably more detailed. They are made for display (or putting away for investment!) and not rough kids play. But the really interesting thing is that they are made for those same kids that started with Dinky toys, forty or fifty years ago.

Nostalgia rules. Corgi make as many models of 1950s/1960s commercial vehicles as they do of current vehicles. Vanguard's are the Dinkies of the 1950s and 1960s, with cars and vans that are so reminiscent of the vehicles Dinky chose to model all those years ago. Matchbox (whoever owns them) do the same, with American cars and pick-ups, 'vintage' fire engines and the like. Of course, not every manufacturer concentrates on the classic of the past. Grand Prix and high performance saloon racers are well catered for, often with multiple variations for different individual drivers or sponsors. But collectors of these are often a little older also.

So what is there for the average ten year old? Can you find a reasonably priced model of all the average cars that Dad might drive? The Holdens, Fords, Toyotas, Mazdas, Hondas, Mitsubishi's, or whatever's. Little wonder that the club finds it difficult to recruit new young members! Speaking of new members. An incredibly large number of collectors are out there that are not, and have never been members of the club. Do you know any of them. If you do, why don't you invite them to the next meeting you attend. The best way of promoting anything is by personal invitation and/or recommendation.

blessings,
Carville

PRESIDENTS PIECE

You will have read Carvilles report on the AGM in the last issue of MA so I will not bore you with too much more from there other than to comment on how expensive it was for me. My collection being increased by a Mercedes CLK GTR in original teile paint scheme, two Mazda RX7s and a 49 Cadillac Coupe de Ville.

I would like to thank Ian and the Cousins family for their efforts in making sure we had a smooth-running weekend that was enjoyed by all those who attended.

Much of the discussion, as Carville has already reported, was on the clubs future and how to better cater to the needs of our members. To this end you should find enclosed with this issue of MA a questionnaire. Please answer the questions and return it in the enclosed envelope. The executive need this input from the members to find out where we are and plan the best way ahead for the club. If you do not respond then I suggest you keep very quiet if you do not like that direction.

I have also just received the latest membership list and have, as is my wont, been looking at the numbers. We have had 10 new members join the club since the same time last year, along with 5 previous members who have rejoined. Unfortunately those who have left mean the net increase for the year is 1 new member. Otago have the biggest increase with 7 of the 10 and only Marlborough missing out among the other branches.

A 14% gain in new members is certainly a good 'catch' for a club our size. The challenge for the club now is to stop them leaving. After all a 14% gain is no good when accompanied by a 13% loss of existing members. Hence the importance of the questionnaire.

I would like to see all the Branches rise to the challenge of doubling their number of new members (that means two new members for most of you) while not losing any members. This may mean someone finding out why members left, making an extra effort to ensure new members do gain benefits from joining the club, buddy/mentor programs, point them towards other members with their interests etc.

Above all lets ensure that all members enjoy the club experience.

Lee Tracey

DEAR SIR,

Re your club news book, it seems to me that the only thing people have in this club is die cast models news, do you have any body that builds kit sets of all sorts in the club, if so why is there not more news about these.

What I would like to see in the club news book is ideas about how to do things such as spray painting or hints on brush painting. Even hints on how to build kit sets, photos of such kits that members have built. But the only articles that seem to be placed in the news is die cast sets all the time, I'm sure that there are members out there that would welcome ideas of all sorts so as to help in building kit sets so we can all improve on our knowledge and build better models.

I have nothing against people who collect die cast models, but to me they are models that you buy in shops, stick them in a glass cabinet and that's it, to me there is no fun in doing that, no pleasure in knowing that you built the model.

I would be very pleased to hear from members that could give me better ideas to further improve my building knowledge and painting knowledge so as when they are on the cabinet on display I can say to myself that's better and I'm going to get better still thanks to people sharing their knowledge to me and others.

I do have an email address if people want to contact me in this way to share knowledge,
Warrenandfely@xtra.co.nz

I await your reply or anybody's reply to improve my work.

Thank You
Warren Tyson

*Warren,
You are not the first person to bring this topic up. I have editorialised on the lack of articles from not just kit builders but ALL special interest groups within the club. While I try to keep kit builders in mind when compiling the That's News section the twin problems of lack of new releases and my interests mainly lying in other areas. Every time I bring up the subject of kit builders when talking to other members of the club I am told how many there are in this Branch or that. BUT the only Proof in this magazine is that we have two kit builders Maurice Boyles and Ben Dillon. Nobody else has contributed there have only ever been two*

other kit building articles in my MA collection, one member is no longer with us and the other is your Branch Delegate. Over the years Maurice has contributed many articles containing helpful hints and tips as well as build descriptions so has earned a rest if he wishes to take one.

Ian Cousins is however trying to collate all these hints so that they may eventually be reprinted in future editions of MA. However Ian is a busy man trying to run his own business so the hobby must fit around that so it may take a while. In the meantime what models have YOU built? What tips have you found, even if the hard way? Have you ever considered writing any sort of article for MA? It is up to every member to ensure their area of interest is not under-represented in the club. After all a little contribution from many members will create a lot of info for all.

Editor

Dear Sir,

Could you please correct our meeting time to 7.30pm, not 8.30pm as in last MA.

Thanks to the Wellington branch for the AGM and can you confirm where the 2003 AGM will be held.

In an attempt to get more members to enter the competitions would it be possible to hold an annual competitions day in Christchurch as it has more population and is central, separate to the agm as that rotates between branches.

Also our branch had a display at the recent 'Artragiuous' day held at Polard Park, it attracted a fair amount of attention, but no new members. 20 different arts were on display in the grounds.

Regards
Barry Voss.

Barry,

The venue for the 2003 AGM has not as yet been finalised as The secretary has only recently sent the invitation to Southland to host it. (They are next in the rotation). We await their answer.

With regard a separate National competitions weekend this has been discussed before but not received a lot of support. Southland branch currently host an Open modeling competition in (I think) August and all Otago competitions are open to all members. Ed.

COMPETITION

The only correct entry by cut off date was that of first time entrant Dick Marquand. He therefore takes away the Ferrari F355 Targa.

The correct answers were

1. 1:18 scale 1996 Ferrari of Michael Schumacher
2. Mattel
3. Chris Amon
4. Ferrari 348
5. British American Racing

This Month Garry and the team at Acorn Models (37 Manchester St Christchurch Ph.03374 6000 & 381 Gt North Rd Auckland Ph. 09 360 0233) have given us a model of the McLaren MP4/7 as driven by Gerhard Berger in 1992.

The Questions

1. What is Gerhard Berger's current involvement in F1?
2. Who was Gerhard's teammate in 1992?
3. What was the name of the McLaren organisation before McLaren International?
4. The termination of the longest sponsorship deal in F1 saw Marlboro replaced by what other cigarette brand?
5. Which of the MP series McLarens has Tamiya modelled in 1:12 scale?

Entries should be addressed to The Editor (PO Box 5453, Hamilton) to arrive by 16 May. All correct entries will go into the editorial hat from which the winner shall emerge.

Good Luck

MODEL SCRUTINEER

CONRAD 5425 1:43 MERCEDES BENZ TYPE 010000 (1938)

A real "super bus" for Dave Jones?

A very impressive model in 1:43 being 30cm long and weighs 1 Kg!

Features: Opening: wing bonnet, front and rear doors and luggage compartment. Motor casting a mere metal block. Clear windows, grey plastic seats and white plastic roof rack and ladder (the only plastic pieces used in the model, except wheels and tyres). Steerable front wheels. Paintwork, although "solid", is quite heavily applied and a little "orange-peel" finish. Overall red with white roof and window surrounds also picked out in white.

Hinges on doors seem a bit fragile, although this is a "collectors model" (not a toy.) indeed it is a limited edition of 2,000 pieces. Why? There seems no reason to make this a special issue. However, it sure makes a mockery of the manufacturers claiming "special collectors models don't pay". At 2,000 ex-a-die would seem uneconomic, but Conrad do it not only with this issue, but with most of their vast range and they are still in business. They do also have another version which is substantially the same - a 1936 010000 M.B. Bus. I didn't "buy" this model as an investment - but because I liked it. U.K. price £89.' I would guess it would have been more like £30 if it hadn't been a "limited" issue.

As I said, why make it limited anyhow? In some ways a deliberate limiting is more obnoxious than "scalping". All it does is force a high initial cost, then even higher later. How limited is limited? I see the new Matchbox Set is "strictly limited to 50,000" Wow! By the way in Matchbox advertising they claim they produced 35,000 YY.3 Tankers (Zerolene?) someone must be sitting on a lot of them. How many serious Matchbox collectors are there, anyhow? -"caveat emptor"

Reprinted from Vol16/6 Jan 85

A HISTORY

I think that it must be my grandparents that are responsible for my interest in model cars. Not those on my father's side. My mother's parents had emigrated from England in 1920. They had left Coventry with my uncle a tiny baby but my mother was born in New Zealand.

My mother seems to remember me having a toy jeep when I was two or three, but I cannot remember this and nor can I find it in any of my baby photos. However, it was my grandparents that gave me my first 'Made in England' Meccano product – a Hornby clockwork train set. There was just a circle of track with a green 'tank' type locomotive, coal tender, and a couple of open goods wagons. I think I must have had it before I was five years old and it was great! It was treasured, and always returned carefully to its box after use. There is a little doubt as to when the first Dinky Toy arrived. We know that it was given to me after a trip to hospital, but we are not absolutely sure whether it was after an eye operation when I was five, or after the tonsils operation when I was six.

There is no doubt as to what it was though - a Dinky Supertoys Leyland Octopus Wagon - green and yellow - and I remember 'driving' it down the drive, along the footpath and up the neighbour's drive to show off my marvellous new toy. The fact that there were no vehicles like it on New Zealand roads was of no consequence. Meccano sets began to arrive as Christmas gifts shortly after, and this began a crane building period which lasted for several years.

My grandfather began to give me a subscription to the Meccano Magazine as my Christmas present about this stage. What a fabulous magazine. Not only did it show off all those Meccano products, particularly Dinky toys, but it showed off the technological advances and inventions of the British Empire. It was unashamedly conservative, loyal, royalist, mildly sabre rattling (remember it was the time of the cold war and the Korean war) and thoroughly patriotic and was bound to appeal to any boy with an interest in technology at a time when the Empire was still basking in the glory of the War won and colonies to exploit, that is, assist in their development. I loved the articles on giant walking excavators, Foden dump trucks, new bridges that were longer or better than any other in the world, new dams and power stations in the colonies, new ships launched and the latest jet fighter aircraft.

Naturally, it was unashamedly a trade magazine, so Meccano, Hornby clockwork

and Dublo electric trains and Dinky Toys were always featured. "The Toyman" wrote the article on the recently issued Dinkies, and his style was rather condescending, but the pictures in his article, and the coloured advertisement on the back cover which also featured the latest releases filled me with desire. And of course, that was a problem. Not only were Dinky Toys rather expensive by the time they arrived in New Zealand, but they were not very easily available. After the war overseas funds were not to be squandered on luxuries, so import controls and heavy duties were imposed on toys. Those shops that did have licence spent a great deal of time to ensure that every penny of their licence was used on the once a year shipment, usually planned to arrive just before Christmas.

The place that I remember as the major Christchurch supplier was a shop on Colombo Street near the Tuam Street intersection called E.A. Gay, Optician. Mr Gay had started working in another long established family firm of opticians called Proctors. They had a good import licence and were the local suppliers of Meccano products - Meccano itself, Hornby clockwork and electric trains and Dinky Toys. How they happened to have the licence I do not know, but when Mr Gay decided to go out on his own, he was able to procure the licence from Proctors. And as soon as I was old enough, my grubby noseprint and fingerprints joined the many others on Mr Gay's window as I stared at those marvellous Dinky Toys. I don't know if my Leyland came from E.A. Gay's, but I am certain that some of the first Dinkies I owned did so. Of course, E.A. Gay was not the only supplier. I recall that The Farmers, DIC and Whitcombe & Tombs had some, but nowhere as many as E.A. Gay. I assume that the others obtained theirs through Models Limited of Fort Street in Auckland, as they were the New Zealand agent.

I vividly remember one other store that sold models, and its not so much because of the models they stocked, but because of the fact that they sold mainly china. Minsons was a long narrow shop on Colombo Street north of the Square, that sold good quality china, cutlery and glassware - probably the best range and quality in the city. At the back of the store they had some glass fronted cupboards where they kept their Micro Models. Everyone knows that Micro were not as good as Dinky - certainly not in the mind of this little boy. They were made in New Zealand by Lincoln Industries from dies largely sourced from Australia, and the idea was to supply the toy market without having the import restrictions imposed that limited the supply of imported toys like Dinky. Their Commer trucks did appeal to me, as these were very commonly seen in Christchurch. In fact, a local contractor, Ryan Brothers, had a fleet of Commers. The Ryan Brothers dump trucks and low-loader were very similar to the Micro versions and were held in high regard alongside my Dinkies. The Micro low-loader carried the Micro bulldozer just like Ryans. They were very realistic. Now what was special about

Micros at Minsons? Well Minsons kept a great deal of their stock on island displays alongside a central aisle that ran down the length of the store. The floor was wooden, and when you walked down that very long aisle, every piece of china on every one of those island displays rattled alarmingly. It sounded as if every piece of expensive china was going to fall off and break into a thousand pieces - quite terrifying for a shy little boy who just wanted to see the Micro Models at the back of the store.

In about 1960, a family friend went back to England to visit relatives. He was given, if my memory serves me correctly, £20, (a very significant sum at the time) to spend on Dinky Toys for me. The selection that came back was quite eclectic, but from that time on I was a collector! The Wayne School Bus, McLean tractor/trailer, Foden dump truck, Garage kitset, 4 berth caravan, 150 Rolls Royce were amongst some of the models that arrived.

Two other things happened at about this time. The first was that I discovered that you could buy Dinky Toys from Meccano direct (Meccano Limited, Binns Road, Liverpool 13). Sure it was not very easy. You had to collect 5 shilling British Postal Orders - the only way to purchase sterling currency. You were only meant to get one per day, but by planning a trip around the city you could call in quite a few Post Offices (yes, they did exist in every suburban shopping centre in those days) and get one at every PO. Then you had to wait up to ten weeks for the surface mail to arrive - and then you had to make a trip into the Customs Office to have the duty assessed - but it was still all worthwhile and part of collecting in those days.

The second thing discovered was Hobdays. Hobdays were a model and cycle shop located at the top end of Colombo Street, very close to the Century Theatre. What is special about the latter you ask? Well my parents had purchased the sweet shop in the theatre (in 1960) and I was naturally employed as a 'sweet boy'. I sold sweets off my tray before the film started, and then sold ice creams off my tray during the intermission (sixpence each). If Hobdays were open, I would kill the time in between my duties covetously looking at their Micro and Spot-On models. They also stocked Matchbox, but there were very few to look at. Import restrictions still applied, and Hobdays also got their main shipment just before Christmas. A huge queue of customers waited for them to open when the shipment arrived, only to have the models rationed out to them. They were all sold in no time.

About 1962 Hobdays imported their first shipment of Corgi Toys, and immediately there was a new brand for me to dream about. I helped them unpack the very first shipment, which made the desire worse. They were "the ones with windows" and made Dinky look rather amateurish. My first Corgi catalogue came from Hobdays,

and still has the original New Zealand prices written in my immature hand alongside the models that Hobdays stocked in that first shipment. It is the 1961 catalogue, but it may have been 1962 when it/they arrived here. You may be interested in some examples, with the New Zealand price in shillings and pence:-

207	Standard Vanguard	5/11
216	Austin A40	5/11
218	Aston Martin DB4	8/6
219	Plymouth Suburban	8/1
220	Chevrolet Impala	8/6
224	Bentley Continental	14/6
230	Mercedes Benz 220	11/3
231	Triumph Herald	9/6
234	Ford Consul Classic	9/3
420	Ford Thames Caravan	12/6
1101	Carrimore Car Transporter	34/6
1102	Euclid tractor with blade	34/6

This is only about half of that first shipment, and I've still got some of them!

Getting information about models was quite difficult in the sixties. The Meccano Magazine began to falter, and the only other magazine was called Model Cars. As slot cars were fashionable at the time, they featured strongly in the magazine, but there was always a section which showed off the new models, and a few advertisements from the early 'real' model shops - such as Auto Models of Finsbury Pavement or Atkinsons of Swansea - gave information about brands from countries other than the UK, such as Solido, Rio and Tekno. A completely new world was beginning to open up!

I remember seeing a classified advertisement in one issue from a collector in New Zealand and through some fast correspondence I discovered that there were other mad collectors in New Zealand. Clive Geary in Auckland, Maurice Woolley in Palmerston North, Ron Ford in Upper Hutt, Ron Welford here in Christchurch and Eric Brockie in Dunedin. Eric began to talk of the possibility of a club, which I recall was not received with great enthusiasm by the other five. We didn't really think that there were sufficient collectors apart from ourselves for such an idea to be viable. However, Eric persisted, sending us long letters asking for our opinions on how such a club should be formed, how it should run and what it should be called. While this was going on a few more collectors were discovered and an inaugural meeting was held in Christchurch in 1969 followed by the 1st Annual General Meeting a year later.

At that stage, the Canterbury Branch contained a balanced mixture of collectors and kit builders. An annual competition was held for the kit builders, with trophies being obtained for a variety of classes. There was always rivalry between the Canterbury and Otago branches at this stage, with each branch thinking that it had the best competition and the best judging forms. The presentation of trophies was a big affair, sometimes combined with a Christmas party type end of year function. Models were displayed, quizzes were held, gifts were given to the children and a huge supper was arranged. Some thirty people would attend; they were quite a grand occasion.

Thanks to a friendly retailer, 500 models from my collection were displayed in the shop window of Lace Web Furnishers, Colombo Street, and I recall that prize winning kitsets in the current branch competition, with trophies and certificates were also displayed in this window on at least one occasion.

John McDonald's name comes to mind here, as he, spurred on by some competition with Ron Welford, showed us the extent of extra detailing that could be



Above: 500 cars, all in one window. Carville's display in Lace Web's window for Modelrama 77.

Facing: Christchurch Press ad 10/7/67 for display in Lace Web window.

500 MOTOR CARS

All in one Show Window

"LACE WEB" FURNISHERS LTD.

COLOMBO STREET.

NOT FOR SALE An Exhibition of a collection by Carville Stewart

Cadillac Eldorado
Fiat 2300 Station Wagon
Bentley Continental Sports
Ford Mustang
Triumph 1300
Cooper Bristol
M.G. Midget
Lotus Elan S.2
B.M.C. Moteo Carlo Mini Cooper
Rolls Royce Phantom V
Ford Consul
1 Ton Army Truck
Armoured Car
Blazer Spreader
Land Rover and Trailer
1950 Bugatti Royale
1910 Daimler
1938 Ford Model T
1951 Ford Model T
1910 Benz Limousine
Aston Martin DB5
Volkswagen 1200
Cadillac G2
Plymouth Fury Convertible
Triumph Vitesse
Hillman Imp
Vauxhall Viva
Ford Cortina '64
Austin 1800
Plymouth Fury
De Soto Fireflite
James Bond DB5 Aston Martin
Shudebaker President
Ferrari
Austin Healey
Mercury 1800 St.
Ford Zodiac
Holden Pick-Up Van
25 Iber Field Gun
7.2 Howitzer
Field Marshall Tractor
Farm Tractor
1909 Chalmers Detroit
1928 Mercedes SS
1910 Renault
1915 Ford Model T
1911 Daimler
1911 Maxwell Roadster
Aston Martin DB5
Triumph 2000
Dodge Royal Sedan
Chevrolet El Camino
Jaguar E Type
M.S.B. Sports Car
Volkswagen 1500
Jaguar Mk10
Ford Anglia
Porsche 356A
Triumph TR2
Rambler Estate Car
Rolls Royce Silver Cloud
Ford Cortina
Fiat 1300
Hulk Rambler 2
Chevrolet Corvette
Mercedes 300 SL Roadster
Hudson Hornet
Jaguar 3.4 Litre
Renault Florida
Ford Consul Capri
Shudebaker Golden Hawk
Singer Vogue
Humber Super Snipe Estate Car
Consul Consul
Morris Mini Countryman
Hudson Sedan
Vauxhall Cresta
Austin Healey Spitfire
Saab 96
Holden Special Sedan
Vaux 1225
Rolls Royce Phantom 5
Riley
Daimler 2.5 Litre
Packard Convertible
Chevrolet El Camino
Cadillac 62
Hillman Minx
Haskell Bobbie Car
Triumph Herald Coupe
Mercedes Benz 220 SE
M.G.A.
Morris Oxford
Alfa Romeo
Ford Thunderbird
Singer Gazelle
Vauxhall Victor Estate Car
Austin A105
Volkswagen Sedan
Austin Seven
Aston Martin DB4
Jaguar XK126
Packard Clipper
Rover 75
Ford Fairlane
Ford Consul Convert
Chevrolet Impala
Plymouth Plaza
Dodge Capitan
Citroen Safari Station Wagon
Ford Lincoln Continental
1927 La Mans 3.4j Litre Bentley
Canadian Fire Chief's Car
American Police Car
Police Dog Van
Australian Police Car
Rac Patrol Van
American Ambulance
Australian Ambulance
English Taxi
English Minicab
M.G. Record Car
Speed of Wind Racing Car
Mercedes Benz Racing Car
Connaught Racing Car
B.R.M. Formula 1 Grand Prix Car
Alfa Romeo
Land Rover
Dixie Harrow
German Patrol Tanker
Krupp Truck
Fire Engine and Extension Ladder
Heavy Duty Trailer
Foden Flat Truck
Foden Dump Truck
AEC Articulated Lorry
Bedford Car Transporter
Control Box Van
1913 Morris Oxford
American Firechief's Car
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Car
English Police Car
German Police Car
Australian Traffic Car
A.A. Patrol Van
English Ambulance
American Test
London Taxi
Australian Taxi
Jaguar O. Type Racing Car
Ford G.T.
Lotus MK Le Mans
Vanwall Racing Car
Talbot Lago Racing Car
Maserati
Triple Gang Mower
Hay Rake
Volkswagen Bus
Fire Engine
Mobile Crane
Albion Cement Mixer
Bedford Pallet Van
Euclid Dump Truck
Ruston Bucyrus
Coca Cola Truck
American Articulated Truck
Thornycroft Mighty Antar
Gay Flat Truck
Leyland Lorry
Massey Ferguson Bulldozer Tractor
Jeep
Dairy Van
Atlas Van
International Box Van
Veza Major Luxury Coach
Touring Coach
Ford Transit Van
Muir Hill Front End Loader
Muir Hill Dump Truck
Platform Servicing Truck
Corner Breakdown Truck
E.R.F. Flat Truck
Bedford Refuse Wagon
Gay Snow Plough
Fire Engine Merryweather
Blow Knot Bulldozer Tractor
Country Climax Fork Lift Truck
Ice Cream Van
Compressor Truck
Ford Covered Truck
Bedford Tip Truck
American Bus
Leyland Patrol Truck
David Brown 990 Tractor
Massey Ferguson Tractor
Foden Ferry
Trojan Van
F.R.F. Dump Truck
Cororan
BOAC Coach

and many more.

"LACE WEB" FURNISHERS LTD.

Corner Colombo and Tuam Streets.

After finishing my degree I went to teachers Training College, and it was during that year (1971) that I visited Palmerston North. A teaching section at Palmerston North Boys' High was the main reason, but coming a close second was the opportunity to visit Maurice Wooley at Bunnythorpe. What an incredible collection, not just for its size, but also for its quality. Maurice had a huge number of obsolete models, as well as highly desirable French Dinky, Solido, Tekno etc. There were so many, and many of them I had never seen before. What an eye-opener. I visited Ron Ford in Upper Hutt about this time also, and once again, I was so impressed by the size, variety and quality of his collection.

Even at this time, the only way to get models was to buy overseas. I purchased my first Solido, Tekno and Rio from Auto Models of Finsbury Pavement in London. For collectors that were used to Micro, Matchbox, Dinky, Corgi and Spot-On only the opportunity to obtain models like this was fantastic. Not only was the type of vehicle modelled so much greater and so much more exotic, but the standard of casting, finishing and detailing was often beyond anything we had seen before. As the British manufacturers competed with each other and slowly but surely lost quality, the newly found ranges were getting better and better. I was fascinated by the fact that makers like Mercury, Solido, Tekno, etc had histories that were just as long as Dinky. How was it that we had never heard of them? I suppose it was our British origin - the home-country connection that had kept these delights from us.

While the exotic were difficult to get, and had to be imported directly, The ordinary were still difficult to get. Most of my Dinky and Corgi came through the co-operation of overseas collectors who would send quite substantial parcels to me, declaring them to our advantage when we collected them from the Customs Department. Many collections expanded through the good grace of these overseas contacts, who must have got quite sick of buying, making up parcels and sending them around the world to grateful kiwis. What did they get for it? Nothing - apart from establishing 'pen' friends around the world.

It was always a great delight when the opportunity arose to meet these fellow collectors. For me, that opportunity arose when I had a teaching spell in England, from January 1975 to October 1977. I was based in Cambridge, a wonderful university city 57 miles to the north east of London. Outside my study/bedsit was a large double doored cupboard which served as my model store. A few Micro (first re-issue) models from New Zealand were slowly exchanged with lovely CIJ, JRD, French Dinky etc, and examples of the early Gescha, Conrad and NZG were added when discretionary income allowed. There were not any good model shops in Cambridge, but Modeltime, in Croydon, south of London was flourishing at this stage, and I was able to do a deal with the owner which re-

sulted in a good number of models coming back to fellow collectors in New Zealand. Mike and Sue Richardson of Mikansue fame hosted me on several occasions, showing me their retail shop, their superb collection and looking after me at the famous Mainenhead swapmeet. I visited David Pinnock down in Poole, Geoffrey Leake in and was shown how the rubber moulds for white metal kits were made by Barry Lester. These visits were special, as I was meeting those that I had corresponded with in the past, and, I was able to see collections of absolutely superb quality. I had never seen as many obsolete Dinky Toys in my life before, and probably never will again.

Lots of travel took place, not just in the UK, but also to Europe – from Scandinavia and the USSR to Spain and Italy in the south. It was not always possible to buy the models seen on the way. Transporting them was a huge problem when restricted to carrying everything in a back-pack, and there was so much to spend on travel related exploits. The Triumph Dolomite Sprint's arrival was also planned, so money had to be put aside to replace the heavily rusted '66 Ford Cortina Estate (reg EVE 347D) that served well until stolen - by of all people, a house-breaker, using it as a get-away vehicle! This was even more amazing when the usual difficulty in getting it to start was taken into account.

When it came time to return to New Zealand, three large packing cases were filled with all sorts of goodies that had been purchased over nearly three years, from furniture, to books, hi-fi, clothes, gifts - and models. The largest packing case could not be lifted off the ground by four men. It was so heavy that it was gently turned end over end to get it down the steps out of the building and into the truck to start its journey home. The Triumph arrived safely, occupying its own container about a month after I did. What a shame that the regulations did not allow one to put all possessions in the car and in the remaining space in the container. However, I should not complain too much as those same regulations did allow me to export the car from the UK without paying VAT (their equivalent of GST) and to import it into New Zealand without paying customs duty.

I recall attending the first Annual General Meeting after returning to New Zealand, it was the 9th, held in Dunedin. I proudly displayed many of those models that came back from England, including quite a few that had never been seen in New Zealand before. The club seemed to be thriving at this stage, but it had not always been that way. I had missed the AGM when I departed for England, but I had left a motion for the meeting to discuss "that the club should be wound up". The motion obviously failed, but it did seem to clear the air after some internal bickering had left some very disillusioned. That's right - it has happened before!

My last stay in the UK was in 1988/89 when I had a year on exchange at Harrow

School. The exchange rate was rather as it is now, and as I was still being paid my New Zealand salary, I had to be careful with money. Models were certainly obtained, but not so many. I enjoyed going to the Toy Fair at Earls Court, as a Press Representative for Miniature Auto; that's right, our magazine. My Press Pass got me in free, as well as giving me a package of press releases and catalogues.

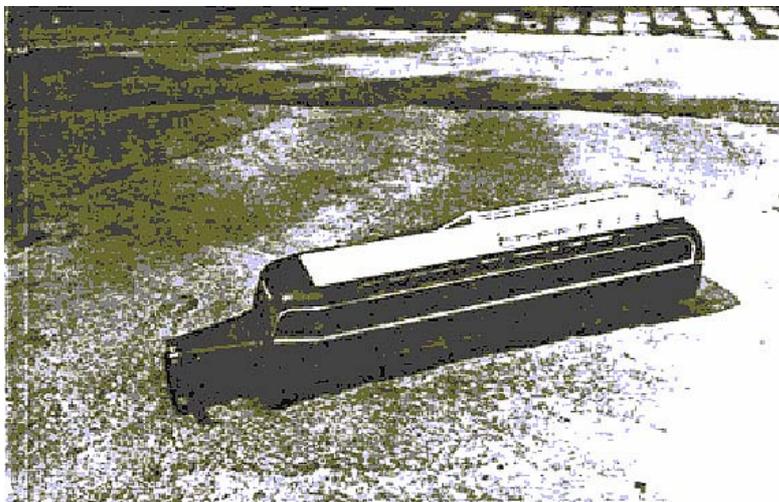
I made a visit to a notorious model shop called 'Mint & Boxed'. Every collector was amazed that models were as valuable as this shop claimed them to be, but high prices certainly brought models out of the woodwork, so the shop was worth a visit just to see the huge number of highly sought after models on display. After a good look I noticed a particular model - a Triang Minic 'tinplate' clockwork Luton van in 'Winstones' livery. I had only seen two of these models before - both in New Zealand. One was in my own collection. When I asked the young man serving how much it was, he told me it was the only one that they had ever seen. I asked for the price again, to be told that it was very rare. For the third time I asked for the price again. The answer came this time. Two thousand pounds. My laughter was not greeted warmly, but when I said "well I suppose it is in slightly better condition than the one in my collection" I have never seen a face drop so far, so quickly. I have since sold the model at auction in England, where I received six hundred pounds, which was a fair market value for a rare model.

I saw a lot of other models while I was there, many of which I would have loved to add to my collection, but the price was prohibitive. The Dinky Fodens and Guys that I needed to complete my collection were selling at about four hundred pounds each, and I realised that I would never be able to own them. In fact, I realised that my collecting would have to be curtailed in some way, and on return to New Zealand I spent months looking at my models trying to decide what I would do. Once the decision was made it was quite easy. I decided that the continental models would go. Rio, Tekno, Mercury, CIJ, JRD, Solido, Tekno, Conrad, NZG and others would all go. Dinky, Corgi, Spot-On, fire engines, small vans and others would stay, and from that point on, I would only add models of British vehicles to the collection. So on the fateful day, I walked into the model room and began to remove models. It took a day to select and remove over four hundred models, and I was able to do it quite dispassionately. It took weeks to find the boxes for these models, and to decide how they were to be disposed of, but I did it with no regrets at all. The difficulty was making the decision; putting it into practise was no problem at all. I suppose that I had realised I could still get as much pleasure from a much smaller collection (and possibly some memories of other models once owned) and that continues to be the case.

The last act was to pack the remaining models when I moved from my school ac-

commodation to the peace of my North Canterbury retreat. Five years later renovations are not complete, but the room where I have finally decided to display my models is close to completion. Soon the models will be on display again and I'm beginning to get excited by the prospect.

Carville Stewart



Above: Conred 5425 1938 Mercedes Benz Type 010000 Bus. See Page 9.

TOY COMPANY TALE

The following excerpts are from an article reprinted in the NZ Herald of 18 August 1972, which was originally published in the London Observer. Reprinted here in edited form here I think this story makes interesting reading given the state of the diecast toy market these days.

“We are budgeting for our turnover to rise this year and this should produce a better profit” was the message given to shareholders by Lesney Products, the Matchbox toy firm. On the face of it, there was nothing exceptionally inspiring in such a modest proclamation but it belies a remarkable story of corporate survival. What really lies behind this is the story of the spectacular rise of a one-product business, its subsequent crash, and the way it pulled itself up by its cor-

porate bootlaces in the nick of time.

“We went to bed in the sky and woke up on the ground” says Jack Odell, who with Leslie Smith forms the key partnership in this cautionary tale of capitalism at work.

In 1969, at the height of its golden period, the company that Odell and Smith created with a £600 war gratuity was worth £130 million, and each of the founders could count on a staggering personal fortune, admittedly in paper rather than hard cash, of more than £30 million. Just two years later, they had to go cap in hand to the city for £1½ million to tide them over a financial crisis, and they were lucky to get the money.

The idea that set the pair on their way to a fortune was a miniature diecast model of the coach and team of eight horses that were used in the Coronation procession in 1953. It proved to be the most successful toy since the yoyo. Odell and Smith were quick to repeat the formula with other miniature vehicles. Lesney conquered the world. The miniature models became the first choice of children in 140 countries.

Lesney's biggest triumph was in America where at one time two million Matchbox models were sold every week. The US market accounted for 40% of all Lesney's sales, which in 1969-70 were more than £20 million, or more than one quarter of the entire United Kingdom toy industry. Most weeks as many as 18 40-foot containers left Lesney's main Hackney factory bound for America. “The stuff used to go out still warm and with the paint barely dry” says Smith.

At its height, it had no fewer than 15 factories dotted in and around London and plans in hand for a further 50% increase in capacity. “No matter how fast we expanded our production the order box extended further into the future”.

Everyone had their sights on the sky-high returns that Lesney was getting on capital employed. In the four years up to 1969, Lesney managed consistently to earn 60% or more on its capital, while its pre-tax profits exploded from £1,359,000 to £5,558,000. The Lesney men, however, always believed they could take the competition in their stride.

What they did not expect was that someone would come up with a completely new concept in diecast model cars – minimum friction wheels – and that children would take to them in their droves despite the fact they were much more costly. An American innovation these freewheeling cars were introduced by Mattel at the New York Toy Fair in 1968. Mattel spared no expense or effort to establish “Hotwheels”. It proved deadly effective, and in less than a year Mattel was not only running all over Matchbox in America, but making impressive inroads in Lesney's other territories –

including the UK where it blazed the trail with a £250,000 TV advertising onslaught.

The Lesney men's first reaction to "Hotwheels" was scepticism. They opted for a wait-and-see strategy for six months. When their worst fears were confirmed, they found themselves with a range that was obsolete. Even to this day no one has kept a precise tally of how much it cost Lesney to convert to making friction wheel die-cast cars. "It is too painful a subject" says Smith, although when pressed he admits the cost was well over £1 million. It was an agonising 18 months before Lesney developed a product that incorporated friction wheels and established a production line.

Even by 1971, when Lesney had its own friction wheel models in production, it was still struggling to retain a foothold in America. Losses of £700,000 piled up in 1970-71 alone. Overall Lesney ran up losses of £1,226,000 in 1970-71, posing immense financial problems. The company had always relied on its cash flow to finance its expansion, rather than having large bank facilities. "We were running at a loss yet had to find £2 million to pay for taxes incurred on profits earned in 1969-70."

Although they are now firmly back in the black (profits of £756,000 in 1971-72) they feel it will be at least another year before Lesney will again be flexing its corporate muscles. Certainly the rekindling of stock market confidence in Lesney is not going to be a quick affair. In their 1968 heyday the Ordinary shares touched the dizzy heights of 545p, a far cry from today's humble 52p.(1972 –ED)

On the basis of the Matchbox model boxes being 2in wide x 2in high x3 in deep calculations on a 40ftx8ftx8ft container gives a total of 368,640 models per container multiplied by 18 containers gives a total of 6.635.520 models PER WEEK. There must however have been either a lot of waste space or unsold models as they were only selling about 2 million a week in America out of a total production of about 5 million per week. Whichever it is certainly a far cry from the state in 2002.

NB. Matchbox Platinum models are currently being heavily discounted in the US as Mattel have decided to cease production of that line. Where now for the 'Greatest Name in Die Casting'? It is my belief that the acquisition by Mattel is the worst chapter in Matchbox history. The 1-75 (or 1-100 or however many it is this year) are just another offshoot of Hot Wheels while the adult collectible ranges have been killed off by lack of thought regarding the target market. Many of the 'old' yesteryear collectors were turned off by the change to American Muscle Cars and Pickups, while the intended new market (USA) is not sufficiently interested in the scale of-

Lee

THAT'S NEW? THAT'S NEWS!

Recent Arrivals at TOYMOD (NZ)

Autoart Holden GTS 300kW Black 1:18
Bianche Torana A9X Bathurst 77 Brock Ixo 1:24
RAB005 Yamaha YZR500 Abe 01
RAB008 Honda NSR500 Barros 01
RAB010 Yamaha YZR500 Haga 01
RAB015 Suzuki RGV500 Roberts 01
RAB018 Yamaha YZR500 Checa 01
Ixo 1:43
Mitsubishi Lancer EVO7 Road 2 cols
LMC006 Jaguar XJR-9 LM88 #1

Torana SLR5000 Bathurst 76 Brock
RAB007 Honda NSR500 Capirossi 01
RAB009 Yamaha YZR500 McCoy 01
RAB013 Honda NSR500 Criville 01
RAB017 Yamaha YZR500 Biaggi 01
STB004 Yamaha YZF-R7 OW-02
LMC002 Jaguar XJR-9 LM88 #2 1st LM
LMC007 Jaguar XJR-9 LM88 #22

Anson 1:18 Diecast China

30302 Lamborghini Muira
30402 Audi 100 Coupe
30401 Mercedes Benz 230SL Rallye

Autoart 1:18 Diecast China?

Alfa Romeo 1750 GTV 2 cols LHD &RHD
78731 Toyota 2000GT James Bond
72811 Mustang GT350 'Bullitt'
72801 68 Mustang GT390 Red
71001 59 Corvette Stingray
88301 Audi Quattro LWB Works Rally

Autoart 1:43 Diecast China?

Mitsubishi Lancer EVO6 Road 3 cols
'01 Subaru Impreza WRX Wagon 2 cols
VW Polo 6 colours
60192 Subaru WRC Solberg Port01
60112 Ford Focus McRae MC01
66596 Chaparral 2 GP65 #66
'56 Jaguar XKSS 2 cols
'01 Subaru WRX Sedan 2 cols
60191 Subaru WRC Burns Port01
60111 Ford Focus Sainz MC01
60151 Lancer EVO7 Makinen GB01
65387 Jaguar C Type LM53

Autoart 1:64 Diecast China? New 'Junior' range

20011 Honda S2000
20061 PT Cruiser
20081 BMZ Z8
20111 Mercedes Benz SLK AMG Rdster.
20131 Porsche 996 Cabriolet Silver
20151 Corvette C5 Convertible
20171 New Beetle
20191 New Beetle RSi
20021 New Mini
20071 Lamborghini Murcielago
20091 Porsche 996 Cabriolet Black
20121 Porsche 996 Coupe
20141 Corvette C5 Coupe
20161 BMW Z3 Roadster
20181 New Beetle 'Dune'

Hasegawa Plastic Kitset Japan

9417 Mess. Bf109K-4 'Red Tulip' 1:48
 9419 F/A-18 C Hornet 'Top Gun' 1:48
 296 F4u-1D Corsair Royal Navy 1:72
 297 F-4E Phantom II IDF 1:72
 10638 AC-130H Hercules Spectre 1:200

9418 F4U-5 Corsair 'Cag Bird' 1:48
 9420 F-15A Streak Eagle 1:48
 298 KI-67 Type 4 Heavy Bomber (Peggy) 1:72
 299 Tornado IDS 'Tiger Meet' 2001 1:72
 8132 Spitfire Mk Vb 'Night Fighter'

Tamiya Plastic Kitset Japan

20051 Ferrari 312T3 Clear Cowl
 20053 Tyrrell P34 Monaco 77
 61082 Messerschmitt Me 262 A-2a 1:48
 24248 Opel Astra Coupe Holzer 1:24
 35253 Panzer DVU 'Frontline Recon. Team'

20052 Ferrari F2001 1:20
 36204 King Tiger Prodn. Turret Motor. 1:16
 89582 Tamiya Bus Diecast Pull Back Action
 24250 Subaru Impreza WRC GB 2001

Code 3 USA 1:64 Diecast

La France Pumper Violetville MD (6)
 Bell 412 Helicopter NYPD (4)
 Mack CF Pumper HazMat FDNY (4)
 Mack CF Pumper Violetville MD (6) 12894
 12932 Sutphen Tower Ladder Pt Chester

La France Rear Mount Ladder Patriot (6)
 Frieghtliner Pumper Baltimore Co. (5)
 Mack CF Pumper E-45 FDNY (4)
 Pierce Dash SM Pumper Princeton NJ
 12358 Mack CF Pumper Mapleton PA

Eagle Collectibles China 1:18 Diecast

UNHV3915 Porsche 917K #1 Kyalami UNHV4417 Land Rover British Rail

Eagle Collectibles China 1:43 Diecast

UNHV3711 Prowler Mulholland Ed. UNHV1418 Dodge Charger Daytona 'Marcis'
 UNHV1608 Porsche 911 #1 Safari Rally UNHV3715 Porsche 911 SC 3L #6 MC82
 UNHV2309 Porsche 934 Turbo #87 LM UNHV3752 '72 Saab Sonnet III Emerald Green

Ebbro Japan 1:43 Diecast

'72 Toyota Corolla Levin TE27 2 cols
 '68 Subaru 360 Young SS
 '02 Honda That's 6 cols
 43323 '01 Mugen Honda S2000

'73 Toyota Celica L/Back 2000GT 3 cols
 '02 Honda NSX
 43301 '01 Nissan Skyline GTR V Spec II Blue
 43324 '02 Mugen Honda S2000

Lledo UK 1:43 Diecast

VA4106 Cortina Mk2 Super Red (6)
 VA7300 Ford Cortina Mk1 Green (5)
 VA316 Austin A40 'Thames Valley' (6)
 VA610 Transit Mk1 Lancs. Constab. (6)
 VA7000 Sunbeam Alpine Mk2 Red (6)
 VA7800 Mercedes 300SL Open (4)
 VA5505 '70's Ford Consul Grey/Red (5)
 VA 7900 Porsche 356 Soft Top Blue (5)
 VA5204 Mk1 Granada Police Saarland(3)

VA7400 Triumph Herald Conv Damson (5)
 VA414 Anglia Van Stratford Blue (5)
 VA120 Anglia Police Liverpool & Bootle (5)
 VA5003 MGA Open Chariot Red(5)
 VA6609 Transit Mk1 Hidden Treasure (5)
 VA1205 VW Split Screen
 VA7700 Saab 96 Saloon Beige (4)
 VA8100 VW Camper Red/Chestnut (6)
 VA8000 VW LT1 Transporter Police Hessen (4)

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