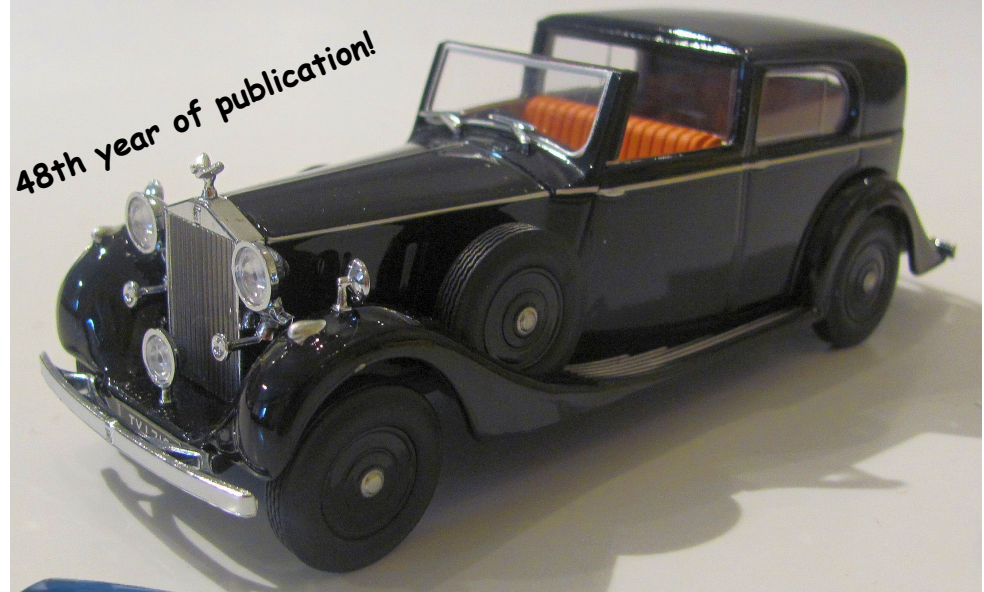


# Miniature Auto

Issue 260

**NEW ZEALAND**

48th year of publication!



Oxford Automobile Company  
1:43 Rolls Royce Phantom III

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

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**ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO MA NOW!!**

## EDITORIAL

Earthquakes, floods, gale force winds – forces of nature that can affect our hobby. Here in Wellington, we had all three in two days. Winds and floods are ‘usual’ around here. Indeed, my hobby room is built with plenty of clearance under the floor to let any passing flood go through. And it is strong enough to withstand up to a hurricane (I hope). Earthquakes (plural) are other hazards that are so unpredictable. It isn’t just the main event but the hundreds of aftershocks – some of which are quite heavy and much closer than the Kaikoura event.

I am not aware of any collections near the epicentre but there are further to the north in the Blenheim region. A few items fell off the shelves here, but no damage, fortunately.

Thanks to those who have contributed to Miniature Auto for this issue and over the year.

There has been quite a lot of discussion about the expenses in the Club. It is not normal for the Editor to make comment about the running of the Club, but since Miniature Auto is one of the major expenses, perhaps there are ways around the problem. Of course, there is the option of send-

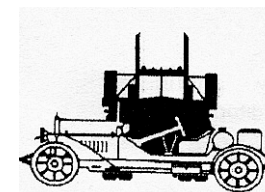
ing the magazine via e-mail which is almost zero cost, but to be effective; it would need to be 100% of the Members receiving it this way.

Looking at the historic side, it is interesting to note that when the Club was set up, the fee was \$3:00 (can Eric confirm this?) plus an enrolment fee of \$3:00. The \$3:00 is equivalent to \$48:00 in today’s terms using the inflation calculator on the Reserve Bank website. Another comparison is a Matchbox Yesteryear that in 1969 was exactly the same \$3:00 price. There are no equivalent in the shops at present, but the nearest would be an Oxford Diecast 1:43 classic car model such as the Rolls Royce Phantom III at about \$55:00. Another facet outside the control of the Club is the postage rate – now at \$1:00 per item.

If you use pictures from the internet; please acknowledge the source and better still, get permission from the owner.

All that aside, have a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year from the Executive of the Club.

*Ron*



### IN THIS ISSUE:

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Carville's Capers</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Branch News</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>DeAGOSTINI</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Luck of the Draw</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Obsolete Toy Copies</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Why I collect Kevin Horne</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Letter from Eric Brockie</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Advertising on Dinky Toys</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Model Shops R.I.P?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Castle Art</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Tailpiece</b>	<b>20</b>

## BRANCH NEWS

### Southland

Report by Fred Hawkes

Boy what a great spell of weather we are having at present. Warm cloudy and sunny weather or for a change we have warm sunny and cloudy. The only down side is the lack of rain - I notice the water carriers are busy but not "flat-out".

Our last meeting was held at our chairman's new pad in Clifton (Just up the road from the Historic Church and probably a bit closer to the nearest pub).

#### Competition Results :

Kitsets No entries

Diecast Large:

1st David Peipi 1951 Ford  
2nd Sam Findlay 1959 Chevrolet  
3rd Sam Findlay Chevrolet Wagon  
Diecast Small

1st Fred Hawkes Chrysler  
2nd Fred Hawkes 1939 Chevrolet  
3rd Sam Findlay Chevrolet Camaro  
Our next meeting was held at Malcolm and Noeline Shaw's on what was a lousy (weather-wise) night on the 19th October.

#### Competition Results :

Kitsets:

1st Fred Hawkes Fokker DR-1 Triplane  
2nd= Malcolm Shaw Scratch built Harvester

2nd= Sam Findlay Red VW Beetle  
3rd Fred Hawkes Fokker D-VII Aircraft  
Diecast Large:

1st Malcolm Shaw EB Airlines  
2nd Sam Findlay PT Cruiser  
3rd David Peipi Bad Medicine Dragster  
Diecast Small:

1st Malcolm Shaw Donald Duck Dune Buggy  
2nd Malcolm Shaw Mickey Mouse Fire Engine  
3rd Sam Findlay Moto Guzzi Motorcycle

### Otago

Eric Brockie Reports:

Field Trip 16th October, 2106

Unfortunately we finished up having to postpone our field trip because on our arranged timetable to see the HAYES Engineering works operating in the morning was not possible.

We would have had to alter our whole programme for the day, so the decision was made to postpone the whole trip.

It will now be held on Sunday the 2nd April 2017.

*Although this was printed in the Otago Autominology, it is repeated here in case Members outside Otago might want to tag along—Ed.*

At the August Club Night, the Members' choice went to Marcos Moni with a 1:24 model of a 'Jail Bar' pick-up towing a trailer with a 1955 Ford as the load. Marco's smaller model was a 1:76 drag-car. The 'Jail Bar' was a very nice model from Danbury Mint and the drag-car was from Racing Champions..

The Danbury Mint model of the Jail Bar is a very nice model and miniatures of it are very hard to find.



## THE LUCK OF THE DRAW

In about April last year, an Otago Branch member, Kevin Horne, received one of those 'Not at Home' cards left by the couriers. It advised him that if he did not uplift the parcel within 10 days, it would be returned to sender.

Kevin thought it was not for him because he had not ordered any models, so was not waiting for anything to arrive. Kevin's partner, Ngaire was in town on the 9th day (after receiving the card) and called at the couriers to let them know it was not for them. However, since it was addressed to Kevin, she took it home.

It turned out to be a 1:43 Corgi model in the Vanguard range of a Ford Escort RS2000 and although Kevin remembered either looking at the model or a photograph of it; he was sure he had never ordered it.

Kevin's memory returned and he recalled he had been looking at a classic car magazine in the Automobilia section

some time before and they wanted to know the factory name for the colour of the car. Kevin then went on-line and claimed the colour was VISTA ORANGE and lo and behold, Kevin was either the first to be correct or the lucky one out of the draw.

Congratulations to Kevin!

**Eric Brockie.**

*Yes, well done Kevin. You have to be in to win!*

*Strangely enough, when I did a search on the internet to find an illustration of the Corgi Vanguard Ford Escort; I came across the actual competition from the March 2015 issue of New Zealand Classic Car magazine.*

*It did not have the winner though, just a note to say the competition had closed!*



*New Zealand Classic Car photo.*



## WHY I COLLECT

Eric has queried me about how and when I started to collect models, so I had to put my thinking-cap on for a while, because when you have been doing something for 40 to 50 years, one does not tend to think about those early days. I think it was probably in the 1960s I was given Matchbox Toys for Christmas and birthdays along with some Kingsize and Dinky Toys at some time as well.

In those early days, I managed to get hold of a Matchbox catalogue and like all of us, I guess I wanted some of the models (toys!) from the catalogue. Then it was off to the Post Office to collect enough Postal Notes to send to England to buy the models and wait for what seemed like forever for the parcel to arrive.

In 1965, I seem to remember making roads in a clay bank under the house and in the garden outside to play with the cars.

In 1970, I made a few kitset aircraft and then AMT kitset cars arrived, so I switched from aircraft to cars and then to full-sized cars, so the model side slowed up somewhat.

About 1985, I started to build Tamiya radio controlled cars and while I enjoyed this side of the hobby, they became very expensive, so I knocked that on the head!

I still buy kitsets and have a large collection, but all are unmade.

In the 1990s, I probably started in earnest to collect diecast cars such as Franklin Mint models and utes in the Matchbox range.

I would say in about 2008 I attended one of the Otago Branch's Model Expo. Then I joined the New Zealand Model Vehicle Club

(Inc.) and bought more diecast cars and now I guess the disease is out of control!

I guess I have been into model cars all my life and while I have no particular theme as I just collect what I like (*the only way to do it. Ed*), but have to admit to having quite a number of Land-Rovers, Escorts and Rally Cars. Now looking back, I guess the models have given me a lot of pleasure over the year.

### Kevin Horne

Otago Branch Member

*From Autominology November 2016*



## SNIPPETS

### Censorship in the toy cars world?

I have noted several examples of the original Dinky Supertoy #919 Guy Van "Roberston's Golden Shred" on eBay with the firm's logo covered up..



Yet, the Dan-Toys replica has no such qualms. With their reproduction.



**While on the subject of Dan-Toys** (as if there hadn't been enough already!), Their eBay account (dantoy87) has a warning about the 'Dan-Toys' DAN-217 Citroen Presidentielle models being sold from China/Hong Kong are 'counterfeit'. I suspect that they are simply unauthorised products from the original tooling. The joke is that the ex China ones are dearer than the Dan-

Toys from their shop at €42 Euro (£36) with the Chinese ones starting at £42 upwards, although they usually have free postage (i.e included in the price).

See page 19 for comparisons. Yes, I fell for it!

**Faded red paint** is a problem on older toys. Some can even fade away to a light pink. There are several methods of dealing with this including a repaint. I have tried a few methods and have come up with a technique that may help. If Cutting Compound is used, you run the risk of removing the paint on the high spots, etc.

My method I am trying is firstly lightly rub over the surfaces with acetone nail varnish remover. This will soften the paint surface, so caution is advised. Let the surface dry, then apply a generous coat of Turtle Wax Color Cure Car Polish. In this case, the red one "Blends With All Shades of Red". Leave polish on for 24 hours and buff off.

See the photo below. Unfortunately, I am not skilled enough photographer to bring out the difference between the left side (treated) and right side (untreated), but it is quite significant.





# ADVERTISING ON DINKY TOYS

We see much advertising on models of commercial vehicles and we probably don't take much notice of the printing other than to comment on how the model looks good.

While reading a 1957 issue of the Meccano Magazine that I picked up recently I came across something that would certainly raise a few eyebrows in today's world. The two Dinky Toy releases for March 1957 were; number 164, Vauxhall Cresta and number 465 Morris 10cwt van. Nothing surprising about this you might think. The Morris 10cwt van ('puddle jumper') had proved its worth for light delivery work of all kinds and was a familiar sight in nearly every community. However, the new version of the Morris carried the well-known (at the time) "CAPSTAN CIGARETTES" advertising on an attractive two-tone blue livery.

Could you even imagine a model now appearing on the market with cigarette advertising?

**Eric Brockie**

*Thanks Eric, of course Meccano were not the only ones with un-pc advertising to children. Didn't Matchbox have 'Players Please' on their 5B bus? Then there all the now forbidden tobacco sponsorships of motor racing where new models have to have the cigarette decals supplied separately for the owner to fit.*

*Strangely enough, the Capstan van has been reissued by Atlas Editions (UK), and it seems to be identical to the original in as far as the advertising goes.*

*Another strange phenomenon induced by political correctness is the Lots on eBay where the seller has covered up the offending logo on the Golden Shred Marmalade*

MA260 p8



Guy Vixen van, yet Dan-toys version is freely available uncensored.



Atlas Editions Morris Van

Continuing with the theme of advertising on models or rather advertising models on real vehicles.

## ADVERTISING ART

Advertisers in Britain have taken the old notion of using public buses as billboards and given it a new twist, as these photos show. Instead of merely placing signs on the buses, they're now getting their messages across by hiring artists to paint the sides of the doubledeckers with colourful and intricate designs. A custom painted bus costs the advertiser about \$12 000 for the first year in most parts of the country — and at least double that in London. The artists take about two weeks to complete a bus — and longer if the designs are very complicated.

**Look! a real Dinky Bus!** Visitors from all over the world are amazed to see a real Dinky bus driving through London's heavy traffic. Painted on the body of the bus are pictures of Dinky Toys, Dinky Kits and Meccano models. And aren't people thrilled to discover they can buy Dinky Toys in their own countries! Although you can't buy one like this, you can buy your own Red Routemaster London Bus—see page 12



The nearest Meccano did come to issuing the bus was with a press release gift that was finished in gold not blue.



Eric found this piece in the Motor Trade News, December 1973 issue:

The irony is that Meccano itself did not offer their #289 Routemaster buses in that livery. In the blurb from the No.10 catalogue : "Although you can't buy one like this, you can buy your own Red Routemaster London Bus..." I assume there must have been a licencing problem with London Transport.



MA260 p9



## CASTLE ART PRODUCTS

Gaiety Toys was a trading name used on a small range of toys produced by Castle Art Products Ltd., a die-casting company. Castle Art Products Ltd was incorporated on 05 Mar 1946. The company's current status is listed as "Dissolved" and it had one director at the time it closed. Castle Art Products Ltd does not have any child companies. Its trading address was given as Prospect House, Tyseley Industrial Estate, Seeleys Road, Birmingham, England but such an address apparently does not exist now. Its registered address is given on the company check details as 97-117 Lombard Street, Birmingham B12 0QX.

At this stage I have only come across a few items by the company. The range of vehicles appears to have consisted of three different sized "Brooklands" racing cars, a Morgan 3-wheel sports car and, possibly, a fire engine which I found reference to on the internet.

The Brooklands Racing Car models are a nicely detailed, one piece casting, with holes drilled through the body for the metal axles onto which are fitted the metal wheels. I have seen auction listings (Vectis and eBay) showing these race cars with two different types of plastic wheel and with and without clockwork mechanisms. They had no baseplate and most items I have by this company, have "Gaiety Toy — A Castle Art Product" cast into the underside of the body together with the company's castle trade mark image. Produced in 3 different sizes, they are something to look out for when trawling through the boxes at the nearest junk shop!

Large: 130mm in length, with wind-

screen, steering wheel and head and shoulders of the driver cast into the cockpit.



Medium: 100mm in length?, driver and co-driver cast into the cockpit?

Small: 82.5mm in length, windscreen, steering wheel and head and shoulders of the driver cast into the cockpit.

CastleProducts-Gaie-



The Morgan sports car was produced at 120mm in length, without driver within the cockpit and it came in various colours as well as chromed.



I also have a small cast locomotive and railway carriage buried deep somewhere that I believe to be a Gaiety Toy also. From memory it is much too small to be one of the electric items mentioned below.



The racing cars and the Morgan 3-wheelers, were produced in both free running and clockwork models and were sold in a simple thick "grey" cardboard box with a coloured line-drawing label.

Also produced under the Gaiety name by Castle Art Products was a range of electric ietyToys "OO" gauge railway locomotive models which came in a plain card box with a simple printed black and white label. Apparently you could also purchase the locomotive body shell only and fit it with your own chas-

sis. The body shells had "British Railways" cast into the side tanks and came in a plain, thick grey cardboard box.

**Photos:** toyze.com

And Rogers Antiques and Collectables.



**Ian Cousins**





## CARVILLE'S CAPERS

"Britain's Toy Car Wars" subtitled "Dinky vs Corgi vs Matchbox" is a book recently released and written by Giles Chapman. I suspect that there is not a great deal of new information in the book, but it does tell the story of the beginning, the golden era and the demise of the three legendary British toy making enterprises under one cover. The story of each maker is well told, and the book is well illustrated with both photos of

version of low friction fast running axles, 'Whizzwheels' was also introduced in 1969. Corgi also took on 'Hot Wheels' directly with the introduction of 'Corgi Rockets'.

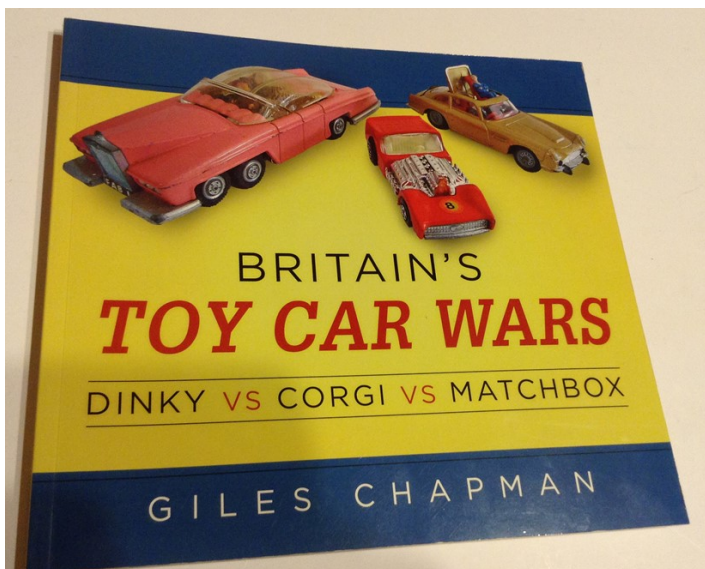
Dinky Toys were seen as old fashioned, heavy and more expensive. Dinky responded with 'Speedwheels' in the same year, and although Meccano was rescued by Airfix, the veteran pioneer of die-cast toy cars was already living on borrowed time. In 1979 Airfix decided to shut down the Meccano/Dinky factory at Binns Road. An ugly and bitter worker sit-in lasted until April 1980 when former employees were evicted.

Matchbox was declared insolvent in 1981. The assets were sold to Universal Group of Hong Kong. Corgi seemed buoyant as it entered the 1980's, but by October 1983 the receivers had been called in.

The Dinky name is now owned by Mattel, and as

of 2015 the name is licensed out to collectible company Atlas Editions. Matchbox is also owned by Mattel, and runs as a parallel line to Hot Wheels. Corgi too was to fall under Mattel ownership – a depressing hat-trick of acquisitions by the very company that had triggered the demise of all three of the great British names.

Subsequently Corgi has gone through several changes of ownership, eventually ending up in the hands of Hornby Hobbies, whose portfolio includes Hornby Trains, Humbrol, Scalextric and Airfix.



models and catalogue pages.

It is fascinating to read of the part that the American giant toymaker Mattel had in the story. The introduction of their 'Hot Wheels' in 1969 had a huge impact on Matchbox. Sales, profits and the share price plummeted. Lesney's response, the introduction of 'Superfast' took a full eighteen months to get under way.

In the same year, a fire at Mettoy (Corgi) destroyed the warehouse and sent a full year's stock of Corgi Toys up in smoke. They were also hurt by Mattel, and their

The account is well detailed, and I would recommend the book to anyone whose interest includes Dinky, Corgi and Matchbox.

Fate has a habit of repeating itself. It has been well reported that Hornby Hobbies has experienced financial difficulties in recent times. Hornby announced an annual loss of £13.5 million for the year ending March 31, 2016. Their CEO said "Last year was difficult and disappointing, as we faced significant challenges during the continued turnaround and improvement of the business. We are pleased with the progress made in modernizing many of our systems and processes, but much of the change last year resulted in substantial unplanned disruption, which had a significant adverse impact on trading performance."

He goes on the talk positively of the core brands and future expectations, but having seen it all happen before, I cannot be as confident.

By way of contrast, Oxford seem to be unstoppable. Their most recent release programme announced over 150 models with over 40 new toolings. Described as exciting and affordable, their range, although not actually manufactured in Britain is now Britain's most prolific die-cast range. However one does hope that they have read Mr Chapman's book. Can this pace be maintained? Is the market big enough for all the 1:76 models? Is the market big enough for all the casting/colour variations produced? It would be so sad if what happened to Dinky/Corgi / Matchbox was also to happen to what appears to be a well run and successful brand.

The latest Ruby Toys is of a cute little Jowett Bradford van in Esso livery. Up till now Ruby have modeled larger lorries, so this is a departure from the norm. It has the feel of the Odgi 'Toys of Yesterday' range made by John Hodges in the late 1970's. In fact, once I had found a picture of the latter, you will see a remarkable similarity and I have now

confirmed that they are the same.



The real Jowett Bradford



When the Odgi model was first released – about 1982 – there was some criticism that the shape had not been captured very well. The following pictures would suggest that there was some justification to this claim.

## Carville



DeAgostini are a producer of part-work magazine series and many have been available in New Zealand over the years. Unfortunately, the NZ agent apparently sold out to another magazine distributor and since then, they have practically disappeared from the market.

I was subscribing to the Taxis of the World series where a 1:43 model came with each fortnightly edition. In April this year it all stopped, and nothing has appeared since.

New Zealand seems to be on the tail-end of most part-work distributions and run the risk of missing out on some of the issues. An example is The Ferrari part-work which was stopped after 50 issues, but the whole collec-

tion was 80 models

DeAgostini is actually part of the Atlas Editions empire and so were offering the 'Classic Dinky Toys Collection' part-work in a small region in England. They often trial new products in small regions of a country to 'test the market'. In this case, only about 5 or 6 issues came out before it was suspended. I doubt if it was lack of sales as many hundreds were bought up to resell on eBay and the like.

There were no new items as such – just different finishes from the Atlas Editions ones. I just bought #2, Bedford 10cwt van 'Kodak' which came with the magazine.

What is interesting is that a New Zealand contact is given @ (09) 308 2871, so there must have been plans to release them in New Zealand? It is interesting to note that the cover shows only French Dinky Toys apart from the featured model. Apparently,

the part-work has started in Italy. When you go on to the website [www.classicdinkytoyscollection.com](http://www.classicdinkytoyscollection.com), you get the Italian page only.

Ron





## OBSOLETE TOY COPIES

I think the basic attraction of Dinky Toys and their contemporaries is that the so called toys were usually quite accurate models; albeit a bit basic. That attraction seems to be reflected in the desirability of the old toys which has led to them being copied many years later. Initially it was in the 70s, with white metal or resin being used for the construction. While the offerings were reasonable, they lacked the fine detailing of the originals.

Perhaps it was Corgi Toy's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary recreation of their original 'The Ones with



Windows' issue #200 Ford Consul (Mk.1) that sowed the seeds of the idea of making a toy to the original specifications as opposed to a reissue using the original tooling. Prior to the Atlas Editions breaking into the market, Dan-Toys of Paris had several copies made of original French Dinky Toys if fully tooled diecast format like the originals. Made in China, of course. It seems the Dan-Toys have been made through the technical facilities of Norev, who have also released many of the toys as CIJ (another long established toy maker in France) in different colours not matching the originals.

Norev, to add to the confusion, also has reissued some of the original CIJs and Quiralus (yet another long established French toy car maker) made from the original tooling. In addition, Norev has also reissued some of their own 50s toys in plastic, also from origi-

nal tools.



Atlas Editions got into the act – also working through Norev and Mattel (who owns the Dinky Toy 'name') started a series of nostalgic reissues of French Dinky Toys (mainly although there were a few English ones featured) in 2008. This posed a problem for collectors who wanted to pursue the series outside France and Atlas Editions only sell by subscription and only to citizens of France at the rate of one subscription for each household. This meant that collectors outside France have to rely on the secondary market and the increased costs. Obviously, Atlas Edition's policy is not strictly policed as many sellers have more than one available at a time (one had at least 40 of the one type!) and many sellers are outside France.

However, reportedly, the first series of French Dinky Toys is complete after 80 separate toys being made with many coming in alternative colours (including exclusive South African issues). A second series of later Dinky Toys with opening parts etc., has been started.

Atlas Editions UK also has done a series based on the English Dinky Toys, but it has been a half-hearted affair with many being originally French Dinky Toys in origin; many of which were never sold in England. They also tried a magazine part-work series under the DeAgostini brand, but that was only in a limited area of the UK and stopped after a few editions came out. The toys were the same as the Atlas Edition ones but in different colourways. The lorry series seems more successful, but once again they have sneaked in a few French issues not familiar to the English market.

Now you would think that if two different 'brands' offered the same toy, then they would be exactly the same, but this is not so, suggesting that separate tooling was made for each. An example is 589A, the Berliet GAK tow wagon in the orange Autoroutes finish. The



number plate, etc.) The lettering has a yellow in-fill instead of gold and the box is wrong as it belongs to later issues only.



first one out was branded CIJ and is different from the original in the way the baseplate is formed and attached to the cab. The Atlas Editions one is identical to the original complete with 'Crash Truck' and 'Dinky Toys 434' cast into the base. The interior casting

is wrong on the CIJ and also on the Atlas Editions one. There are a number of minor differences as well.

Another example is the Guy Vixen van "Lyon's Swiss Roll" that Dan-Toys released in all the versions that Dinky Toys did plus a "Heinz" one (reviewed by Carville). Atlas Editions UK has also done the Guy van in "Lyon's" livery. In this case, the Atlas Editions one is 'spot-on' with the Dan-Toys version being a lookalike only. Firstly, D-T had the later version of the cab (reinforced

The difference in height of the van is just the angle of the photograph.

**Ron**

## LETTER

I was interested in your comments in regards to the prices of the New Zealand fire models that have recently appeared in the Oxford range.

It often seems to be the case that models with New Zealand liveries appear to have a higher price tag and sometimes for no reason at all. Is it the importer or retailer who think they can get more for a model that bear a New Zealand logo??? Or maybe any model they think will be a good seller in New Zealand.

In the case of the F8 Dennis Fire Appliance, I had been retailing all the Dennis F8 models at \$36:50 prior to the arrival of the New Zealand Fire Service 'Christchurch Fire Board' release at \$39:80, still a difference of \$3:30 for the same model. It may only be because of the exchange rate at the time of the importers purchase.

In the case of the Land-Rover Carmichael with FT6 bodywork; I was retailing this model at \$24:80 for all the Land-Rover Carmichaels before the arrival of the Temuka model, however, the Temuka version I was retailing at the same price of \$24:80, so no difference in the retail price of this model.

### Eric Brockie

Miniatures of Transport.



*Thanks Eric. Obviously, the lesson to be taken from this is to buy your models from Eric's "Miniatures of Transport" PO Box 1356 DUNEDIN, phone (03) 488 9808.*

*However, I assume the increase has been generated at the wholesale level in New Zealand, for the UK£ has depreciated since Brexit. Of course this would be reflected in the UK price (upwards) which would cancel out the advances the NZ\$ has made against the UK£. Therefor the price in NZ should remain the same as previous issues.*

*The same local effect has also been noted on Oxford Aviation 72DR011, De Havilland Rapide N.A.C ZK-AHS "Mokai" which is £33:95 on the Oxford website but is on sale here for between \$99 and \$120. Most DH Rapides are £32:95 with the newer ones being £33:95 which probably reflects the devaluation of the GB£. In other words there is no premium for the N.A.C version in the UK.*



Oxford Diecast illustration.

## MODEL SHOPS, R.I.P?

The local model shop is closing down. Such sad news but not surprising. Like all such shops, it was not only a model shop, but a magazine seller, a souvenir and gift shop. I think it was the last such shop in the whole Hutt Valley. Upper Hutt used to have two similar shops plus a dedicated toy shop, a department store that had a big toy section plus other places where models could be found.

Picking up on the theme of 'where did you buy your models' mention a couple of issues ago, I can tell of many places that I have found models (or toys) being sold outside their normal inventory. I grew up in Petone (New Zealand's Detroit with motor assembly plants for General Motors, Ford, Rootes and Austin all with a few miles of each other. In addition, New Zealand Motor Bodies made buses and coaches.). Perhaps that is the reason for my interest in motor vehicle models?

Anyhow, the first shop that comes to mind is a chinaware shop that had a cabinet of toys at the back of the shop. Just the thing for a young bull to visit now and then. All the shelves of china used to rattle as you passed them! They used to stock Tri-ang, Lincoln Toys (including Micro Models) etc.

There were several magazine shops that also sold toys including Fun Ho! (I remember getting a preview of the newly released Midget series) and later a good range of Dinky Toys. There was only one true toy shop locally and I recall being able to demonstrate the new Scalextric racing cars.

In nearby Lower Hutt, there was Whitcomb and Tombs (now Whitcoulls) that used to stock things such as Budgie Toys and Tri-ang railways along with Dinky Toys. One of my favourite places was Smiths Cycles

that had a big selection of Märklin trains and diecasts and even their equivalent of Meccano and the live steam toys.

Then there were the local car dealers such as the FIAT one in Naenae that used to 'import' Italian toys such as Mercury and RIO. My first car was a FIAT 500D so I visited there frequently.

There was even a second-hand model shop in Petone (The Hobby House) that turned up quite a few nice items. Unfortunately, I also traded in quite a few Dinky and Spot Ons that are now quite rare. This was a time when I was swapping interests between model cars and model railway. The true model shops were found in Wellington City – Modelcraft and Hobbies which still exists, supplied many an exotic diecast. Spot On could be found in Couchman Cycles and The Lamphouse (electronic gear) had Märklin. There was even a small bookshop on the tram route to the Mount Victoria tram tunnel that was the only place at one stage where second-hand Dinky Toys could be bought.

There were many more sites to hunt through around the region – ones I had almost forgotten such as Puff'N'Stuff in Upper Hutt (reminded by an advert in a February 1994 copy of Miniature Auto).

Not all toys were bought locally of course, which meant trekking around all the Post Offices in the area (and there were quite a few within cycle distance) for the ubiquitous 5/- British Postal Notes!

Have you any memories? I recall Carville saying they had a similar chinaware shop to the one I frequented.

**Ron**



## TAILPIECE:



What is attractive to collectors with the Dan-Toys issues is that they have created versions that were planned by Meccano France but never actually issued. An example is the Berliet cabbed Marrel multi-bucket truck that was shown pre-production sample but actually appeared as a Unic cabbed model.

A part-work Russian ambulance (more likely a mobile clinic?)



Original (left) and counterfeit Dan-toys (right) copy of the French Dinky Toys Citroen Presidentialle #1435. Very expensive and lush toy then and now!

**Wanted wanted Wanted wanted Wanted wanted**

**Kitset News,  
Diecast News.  
Any Hobby News whatsoever!**