

# Dinky Toys Story

The first Dinky Toys cars came on the market in December 1933, but they were not called Dinky Toys until April 1934.

Until then they were Modelled Miniatures, sold under the name of their original manufactures, the Frank Hornby firm best known for its electric trains.

The Modelled Miniatures were intended for use as accessories on model railroad platforms, and included figures of people and domestic animals, mail boxes, railroad signals...

One of the most unusual early models was a signboard, carried by two painters with buckets and brushes, advertising Hall's Distemper.

## **Before World War II**

Production of Dinky Toys vehicles began more or less simultaneously in Liverpool and in Bobigny, France. Until the World War II both branches had produced cars, trucks, buses, military vehicles, aircraft, ships and accessories of various kinds. Among the most popular models were the British branch's 38 series of sports cars and 39 series of American cars.

## **World War II**

World War II brought production to a standstill for several years. It appears that remnants of prewar were put on the market in time for the 1945 Christmas season.

## **After World War II**

Production was restarted in 1946. Numerous models were reissued, completely unchanged. One of the first notable changes occurred later in 1946, in both branches, on hubs and tires. The first entirely new postwar model, appropriately enough, a Jeep, appeared in 1946.

In 1947 the first Dinky Supertoys were issued.

In 1956 Corgi Toys came on the market, equipped from the start with clear plastic windows, which appeared in Dinky Toys starting in 1958. Suspension was introduced in 1959 and a wealth of moving and detailed parts in the Sixties.

Most Dinky small scale models had been produced 1/43 and 1/48 scale, with larger vehicles generally made to a slightly smaller scale so as not to look excessively big beside models of smaller vehicles.

In 1963 the British branch of Dinky Toys was bought by the Tri-Ang firm, and in the same year the first Dinky antique car, a model T Ford, were issued. Dinky's horizons were expanding in numerous ways, for in 1965 six models of American cars were made for Dinky in Hong Kong. Another Hong Kong range, the small scale Mini-Dinky Toys, appeared in 1968, with each model sold in its own plastic garage.

During the Sixties both Dinky and Corgi began to make their models to a larger scale, approximately 1/35, instead of 1/43. While they had their reasons for doing so, many collectors wish they had not, for the newer models just don't fit in with the old ones – and they take up more shelf space too!

Late in 1967 the diecast toy market was strongly influenced by the first Mattel Hot Wheels, making it necessary for numerous other firms to develop similar wheels. Dinky Speedwheels first appeared in 1969, and this change was paralleled by others that brought more realism, more gimmicks, more play value, and more character cars based on children's television shows and films.

But all these modes were not enough to keep Dinky Toys solvent. French production ceased as of 1972, though the Spanish firm of Pilen manufactured some French Dinky Toys later in the Seventies and Solido made an effort to do the same in 1981. The British branch struggled on until 1980, farming out some production to Polistil in Italy as well as the Universal firm of Hong Kong.