



The Golden Years of Dinky Toys 1945-1964

This page is from the original DTCA Website created by Peter Golden.



In 1945 following the end of the Second World War, Meccano Limited was able to release products frozen since 1943. Also a government ban on the use of metal for Toys was lifted. No new toys were released in 1945, although the factory drawings were altered in August 1945 to increase the axle diameter from 0.062inch (1/16th) to 0.078 inch (5/64th) or 1.575 mm to 2mm.

The first production took place in 1946. Initially, cars etc. continued with most parts, wheels and chassis as the pre-war style and some parts were probably stored during the war. This leads to some confusion between pre-war issues and post war issues. However, there are no exceptions to the thicker axle. Initially, the wheels used in Dinky Toys were the same rounded or smooth type as used pre-war, late in 1946 or 1947 the ridged hubs were introduced which also helps to identify post war production.

1946 saw the first new models, the 38c Lagonda continuing the 38 Series range announced in 1939 but interrupted by the war and a US Jeep, the 153a.

The immediate post war years were influenced by continuing shortages of materials and the economic state of the country. For the latter, the Government mandated that priority was to be made for exports and to this end Meccano through its US agent (H Hobson Dobson) had a significant export trade in the late 1940s and 1950s. Many items indeed were only produced for export including the Military Models based on pre-war designs that were sold in the US and Canadian markets long after the items had ceased to be available in the home market.

Materials shortages limited the production initially in the 1940s and later the Korean War caused further shortages of raw materials. This caused Meccano Dinky Toys at that time to experiment with new materials such as Aluminium rather than the Mazac (also known as Zamak in the US and elsewhere) Alloy for certain models..



1947 saw an innovation in the form of Dinky Supertoys, some of which, the Guy Vans and Foden Lorries, have become classic Dinky Toys. This was a range of much larger models than those previously manufactured. The scale of Dinky Toys was mostly around 1:48 although this varied. Only the O Gauge models were made to the 1:43 standard prevalent today.

1949 to 1952 saw a slowdown in the production of new models and many items such as aeroplanes were suspended altogether. Of the larger toys only the 514 Guy Slumberland continued in production. The Supertoys sub-brand was suspended until reintroduced in 1955, meaning that many Dinky Supertoys were rebranded as Dinky Toys.

In 1952, some items were reintroduced including items such as the O Gauge railway accessories and aeroplanes. Materials shortages, a paucity of new models and a shortage of supplies of existing models continued through 1953 and 1954.

1955 saw the resurgence of Dinky Toys and the Golden Years were here. The Dinky Supertoys name was reintroduced and many of the larger toys were renamed Supertoys. Demand for the toys was high.

1956 saw a major production, over 26 million Dinkys were produced. However, this year also saw the introduction of Corgi Toys by the Mettoy Company. In time, Corgi Toys proved to be very strong competition for Meccano Dinky Toys. The cars in 1956 from Corgi were the first to innovate with glazed plastic windows. Later Corgi continued to innovate sparking a feature war with Dinky leading to the introduction by the two companies of other features such as independent suspension, steering, plastic interior seating, etc.



Following the Corgi lead, in 1958 Dinky Toys introduced the first cars with windows, the 176 Austin A105 and over time other innovations followed such as suspension in the 150 Rolls Royce Silver Wraith in 1959 and the first interior to a closed vehicle, the 295 Atlas Kennebrake Standard Atlas Van in 1960.

The first years of the 1960s saw many other innovations introduced into the range, but by 1963 many factors started to impact the viability of the Meccano Company. The company had changed its OO Gauge Railways from 3-rail as introduced before the war to 2-rail and the retooling costs were high. One of the factories (Speke) was closed and the main one at Binns Road extended. A building system, Bayco, was purchased in the year that Lego was launched, the US Distribution system was disrupted and there was intense competition from Corgi Toys and other model car manufacturers in the UK and Europe.

In 1964, the company could no longer continue and was taken over by Lines Brothers (Tri-ang toys/railways and Spot-On Cars). This led to the loss of the railway business to the Tri-ang factory but Lines Brothers dropped the Spot-On range in favour of Dinky Toys enabling the Binns Road facility to continue through to 1979.

Timeline

































































