

This evening began very well, with our guest speaker **Hugo Marsh**, now retired from Special Auction Services, entertaining us with the story of his life in the auction world.

Hugo confessed that he has never really grown up, having spent his entire professional life working with old toys. Being born in the mid-50s he considers he just made it into the right toy generation, and he has a great love of Dinky Toys. He brought along some of his own toy collection, which I will include later in the 'show and tell' report.

Hugo collected 'junk' at school, and the auction world seemed an obvious choice for him. He started as a Sales Clerk with Phillips in 1980, and transferred to the Diecast section the next year. He very soon met the much-missed Dinky Toys expert Mike Richardson, the start of a long and joyous friendship which lasted until Mike's sad death in 2013.

It was an exciting time, toys being quite a new auction market, with no computers and no internet!

In 1989 Hugo transferred to Christie's in South Kensington, the start of a very busy period.

Many superb collections came to auction, and 1994 saw £1.6 million turnover during the year, with auctions of Dinky Toys, the Britains Archive, and a £600,000 train and toy collection in the autumn. From this last-mentioned auction alone a single Marklin racing car made £6,000, far more than its current worth...

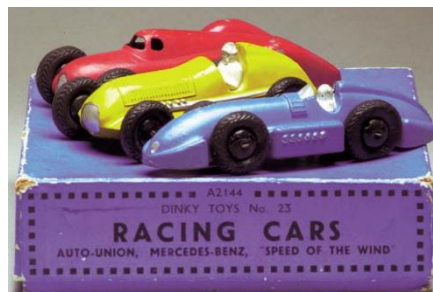
This period also saw the auction of the Remy-Meeus collection – some 5,000 Dinky Toys, all cars, (Here's just one lot >>>) no commercials, with French made South African issues being the highlight.

Into the 2000s, and interesting lots still appeared. Christie's set up a sales category called TV Generation, and a toy robot collection was sold for over £200,000, one example making £15,000. Later a young man brought in a box of 'puppetry bits' from the Thunderbirds programme, from when Elstree Studios had a clear out... All together the 'bits' made £110,000, with one puppet's head making £30,000 alone...

Sadly times were changing, and Christie's closed its South Kensington collectors' departments in 2007; the whole site closed in 2017, and the company now mainly deals in art.

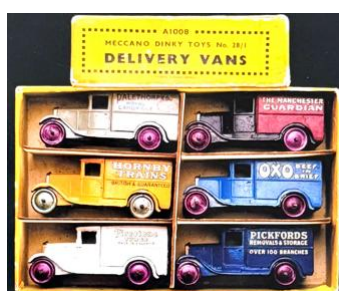
In 2009 Hugo went to Special Auction Services – originally on the first floor of a tiny shed near Thatcham, then into a larger site at Greenham Common near Newbury, once the library of the US air base. The company outgrew that, and Hugo eventually found a huge warehouse on the east side of Newbury, which, after spending a lot of money, provided 18,000 square feet of space – just in time for lockdown!

More incredible auctions before that – the McCrindell collection of tinsplate toys that had featured in the 1975 book 'The Art of the Tin Toy'; the lead figures of Shamus Wade (>>>); and the archive of Roy Selwyn-Smith, artist, director and sculptor of Herald and Britains.



A highlight in 2014 was a sale which included a trade box of 12 Dinky Triumph 2000s, as made in special colours for dealers. It made £9,200. (<<<)

In the same sale was an incredible collection of first and second series Dinky 28 series vans,



which made £19,000 and £20,000 respectively.

(Here are just some! ^^)

All good things must come to an end, and Hugo is now retired, with many happy memories of an enjoyable career, and of the many friends he made along the way. While he admits it was not a particularly tough occupation, it did involve long hours and much travelling, sometimes in an airliner, sometimes at the wheel of a Ford Transit... Hugo recalled being greeted on one occasion with 'That's the first time I've seen a Transit being driven by someone wearing a tie!'

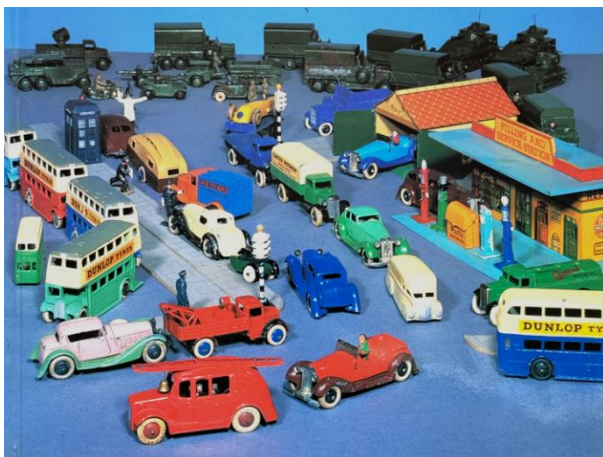
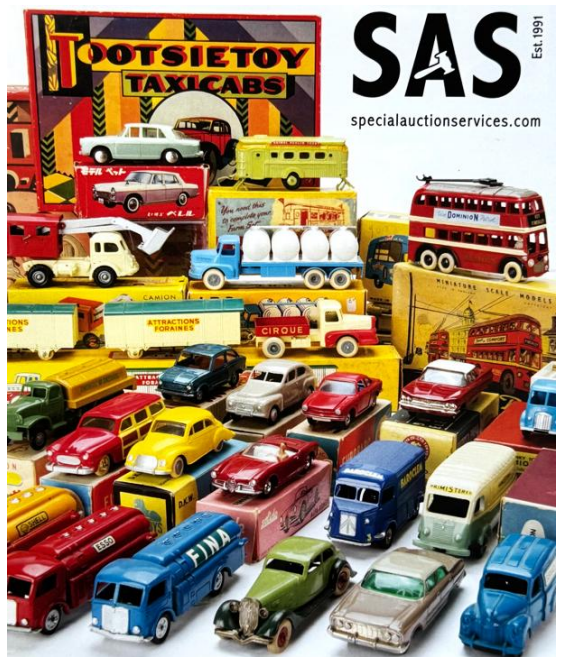
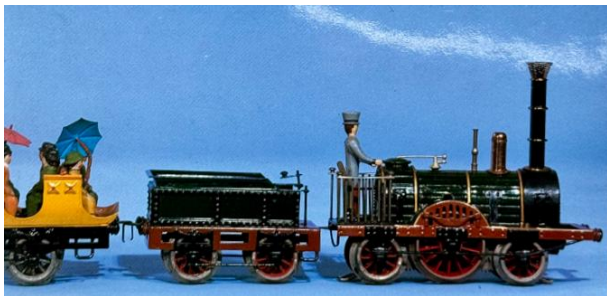
And the future? Sadly Hugo thinks that the traditional diecast market is past its best now, as the collectors are getting older (or worse...). Ebay has of course greatly affected the way trade is carried out, and the many available copies of once rare items have not helped.

Hugo ended by saying that if the future involves Star Wars toys and similar, he is glad to be retired! Just recently Darth Vader's Light Sabre from The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi made \$3.6 million (£2.7 million) at auction in Los Angeles... As Hugo said...'Beam me up, Scotty!'

Hugo's talk was illustrated throughout with slides of many of the catalogues for the auctions he was talking about, showing the incredible collections that some folk amassed. I will add a few more pics here...



^^^ Wooden prototype of 39d Buick



Enough to make your mouth water, isn't it... Many thanks, Hugo, for such an excellent talk!

And, for the rest of the evening, what goodies had folk brought along to Auction Night for us to admire?

Well, we'll start with our guest **Hugo**, who had brought along a few favourites, most of which were his childhood toys. The Dinky Bedford car transporter and its three cars (sadly missing the Hillman Minx) was a present from his Godmother, much played with, and very nostalgic! The McLean truck was another present, which, sadly, was confiscated at school for some misdemeanour. Hugo didn't realise that he could later reclaim it, so now it's a 'sentimental replacement' from much later. A great



aunt gave him the Spot On Humber Super Snipe Estate, and the two CIJ Renault 4CVs came from another aunt, who lived in Paris. The battered Tekno Carlsberg truck came from Denmark when Hugo was 5 – now with a later mint example. And the little Simca 5? At one time Hugo had the real thing, so just had to get a model of it... You are lucky to still have so many from way back, Hugo!

Bob B is of course a dedicated auction-goer, and brought along some items he had won which perhaps had been overlooked by other bidders. These included a Dinky 36e British Salmson 2-seat tourer... But, look carefully, it's got the radiator grill from the 36d Rover! A Dinky Toys 'Friday Afternoon Special'? > > >



^^^ And here's another rarity from Bob, a Gescha 6-wheeled armoured car, which was hiding unnoticed at the bottom of a box of other toys...

Don brought this set from Bengurion Models, I have scribbled down 'RAF Military Transport Engineers', number 3 of 50...

So a Limited Edition auction purchase! >>>



Looking for somewhere to store his teabags, **Doug** had bought this tinplate Ringtons Tea van... > > >



...and, sticking with the Ringtons theme, this Morris 1000 van made by Wade < < < .

Nick's auction purchases are through Ebay... He missed getting the 1970 World Cup Rally winning Escort Mk 1 when it first came out, but was successful with a late bid when this one was listed – and at less than the original price! > > >



<<< Here is the Mercedes Benz Atego racing truck of Steve Parrish. Purpose built by MB, it enabled Steve (No – NOT our Chairman!) to become European Championship winner. Neither of these has (yet...?) been on a slot track!

Brian G showed these two Tri-ang Minic tinplate cars, won at Wessex Auctions. In the foreground – the 'Sunshine saloon' with its sunroof, made between 1936 and 1939. At the back is a post-war 'Learner car' – identified as post-war because of its no doubt cost-cutting paper sticker L plate!



Oh dear....

It's every Editor's nightmare... Having put everything into the latest issue, you have an odd number of sides... No problem for those who have an email copy of Smalltalk (they'd probably not even notice!), but I'm sure the paper copy recipients don't want to be presented with one blank page!

So... what to do? Well, trips to the Atwell Wilson Motor Museum have meant passing through Chippenham en route, and have reminded me of this... (What's it got to do with collecting? Nothing whatsoever!)

A Sad Story...

Members of a certain age (like me – old!) may – again like me – enjoy listening to the rock and roll records of the 50s by the likes of Elvis (his early ones...), Buddy Holly, the Everly Brothers, and of course Eddie Cochran... (As an aside, why is it I can sing along to these old records, remembering most of the words, but can't remember something that happened last week? Most odd!)

Trips through Chippenham have reminded me that it is where young Eddie Cochran met his sad end.

Early in 1960 he came to the UK to tour, together with fellow US rocker Gene Vincent. Saturday 16 April was their last performance after a week of shows at the Bristol Hippodrome, and after it ended, they boarded a private taxi to take them to London Airport (not named Heathrow until 1966...), as they were returning to the States early the next day. There were five in the taxi – the 19-year-old driver, Eddie, his girlfriend (and songwriter) Sharon Sheeley, Gene Vincent, and tour manager Patrick Tompkins.

In those pre-motorway days they were taking what was then the main route from Bristol to London, the A4. There are some reports that the passengers were concerned that the driver was going too fast, and asked him to slow down... As they drove through Chippenham on Rowden Hill at about 11.50pm, the driver lost control of the car – a Ford Consul Mk II – which spun backwards and hit a lamppost. Eddie Cochran was thrown out of the car, and suffered severe head injuries. Sharon Sheeley and Gene Vincent were also injured, but not so severely. The casualties were initially taken to Chippenham Community Hospital, then transferred to St Martin's Hospital in Bath. Sadly, Eddie Cochran died there of his injuries the following day, Sunday 17 April 1960 – Easter Sunday. He was just 21 years old.

There is a memorial at the site of the crash on Rowden Hill, unveiled in 2019 to replace a previous smaller memorial, also a memorial stone by the chapel at St Martin's hospital, and in 2023 a blue plaque was put up at the Bristol Hippodrome.

BtE



Below:
Left – the memorial at the crash site.
Centre – the memorial stone at St Martin's Hospital in Bath.
Right – the plaque at the Bristol Hippodrome.



Annual General Meeting – and Yellow Night

5 November Club Night

Well, if anyone came to the WMTC AGM expecting fireworks, they would have been sadly disappointed... (See what I did there? Look at the date!) It all passed by very quickly, with no surprises, and, yes, the same crew will be running the show for 2026... Best of luck to 'em, I say! Draft minutes of the AGM will be included with this Smalltalk, for members only.

So, having got that bit of business out of the way, it was on to 'Yellow Night'!

First out of the traps was our **Alex**, with some of his chops and repaints. Buses, of course >>>, but also these two Dinky Supertoys 991 AEC tankers. V V V



When one of his infamous band of 'little old ladies' came up with one tanker, Alex was very pleased... But then, a while later, a different 'little old lady' came up with *another* one! I think you should share these ladies out, Alex!

And next it was – gosh – me (**Barry** the Ed), with all the yellow I could find.

One scurrilous individual didn't think there was enough yellow on the Ferrari to qualify... But I ignored him! And several folk knew why Dinky used blue and yellow for the Ferrari (The racing colours of Argentina – and Fangio was Argentinian, although he never drove that particular Ferrari!)

And I brought the club model from 2017, the Ecurie Belge (So Belgian racing yellow!) Talbot Lago of Johnny Claes from the 1950 Monaco Grand Prix, where he finished seventh (and the last car running...)

Everybody seemed to have forgotten about this one!

Bob B was next around the table, with a LOT of yellow, from every corner of the globe (so to speak!)

Here are super trade boxes of 25f the Market Gardeners lorry, and



more 44b AA patrols than you could shake a stick at...



Bob also showed this rather cute French Dinky Triporteur (That's yer actual French), and, of course, it's the real deal, NOT an Atlas repro! > > >



And a real rarity from Uncle Bob – this AA patrol, by Moultoys Ltd of Wrexham. < < < Bob said he's never seen another one... Blimey, it MUST be rare!

Ah, now it's **Brian W**, so railways, yes? But, just to confuse us, also some buses this time! This tiny school bus by Lone Star > > > (Looks as though the kids have got at it...!) and the good old Yellow Pages Dinky Atlantean. V V V Even I had one of those, long ago!



But there were some trains too, so all was well...

The Lone Star Union Pacific ^^



And this set by Midgetoy... < < <

Sharpie had a good display of yellow – some original, some repaints (But did I spot a *genuine* Guy Weetabix?). The originals included this Euclid tipper truck – one of my favourites as a lad. "That's not yellow" cried the usual disruptive influence.... Well, perhaps not, but it's near enough, and a nice toy, so once again he was ignored! Sorry Uncle Bob... (Oops – have I given the game away??)



Here's Sharpie's complete display. >>>

And he was most insistent that I take a pic of the first-type Foden tanker he has refinished in National Benzole livery, with the aid of decals produced by **Graham V**. A very good job, both of you!



Next was **Don**, with his yellow display >> Included were the Spark Vollstedt Ford driven by Jim Clark at Riverside in 1967. He led the race, but retired when he missed a gear change and over-revved the engine – most unusual for him!
V V V



And here we have the Lola T70 by Best; the Toyota Supra GT 500 by Ebbro; and the Minichamps Mercedes Benz C Class AMG. >> All yellow, and, yes, all with Scottish drivers!



Brian G was next, with his usual extensive display! Included were this Dinky Leyland Comet in Ferrocete livery – one of his original old toys, bought in 1953 >> and this Tri-ang Minic push and go Shell tanker.



<<



As usual Brian produced a real rarity – this early tinplate clockwork car by Whitanco, the trade name of Whiteley Tansley & Co Ltd, a Liverpool company whose works were very close to Meccano at Binns Road. In 1919 they claimed to be the largest mechanical toy makers in England, but for whatever reason went in to receivership in 1921, and ceased trading in 1924, following the death of Mr Whiteley in 1923.



Nick was another with a lot of yellow! > > >

I particularly liked these two 'tiddlers' below – the Hot Wheels 2023 Toyota Corolla GR on the left (A 'slide' car – but no tyre smoke tonight!), and the Majorette Peugeot 405 T16 from the Paris – Dakar rally on the right.



A nice one from **Mark**, which may ring a few bells? It is of course the Lansdowne 1957 Series 1 Hillman Minx estate car, our club model for 2011. Just 105 were made for discerning members... Mark's Dad changed his cars often – never new – and had 4 Minxes, so a bit of a memory-jerker!



All facts, opinions, comments, criticisms etc. contained within Smalltalk are the responsibility of individual contributors (especially if anonymous!). The Ed is just glad to get this one out of the way! Phew, it's been a struggle...

Your 2025/6 Committee comprises: -

Chairman:	Steve Clements	devizesdiecast@aol.com	01380 725322
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Treasurer:	Bob Warfield	bobandjill1945@gmail.com	01373 864820
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Membership Secretary:	Nick Male	njmale007@gmail.com	07905 546287
Smalltalk Editor & Secretary:	Barry Lloyd	barrylloyd1946@gmail.com	01179 866503
Co-opted Committee Members (AKA SLH – Steve's Little Helpers):	Alan Sharpe and Don Stevenson		

WMTC Club Nights are held on the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month from 7.30pm at The MILK CHURN, Commerce Way, Melksham SN12 6AD (EXCEPT JAN '26 – 12 NOON!)

The club loves to receive **any** feedback from members, so please email us at **wmtc25@aol.com**
And don't forget to email your contributions for **Smalltalk** to the Ed at **barrylloyd1946@gmail.com**
Or, send by post to: **Barry Lloyd, 36 Windrush Road, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 1QP**

WMTC Diary Dates

All information – including swapmeet dates – is given in good faith, but it's best to check first BEFORE making plans! Club events, or events where the club will be represented, are in BOLD.

3 December	Club Night – WMTC Christmas Meal at The Milk Churn , 7 for 7.30pm
9 December	Hook (Odiham) Toy Fair RG27 9NN (SCF)
14 December	Shepton Mallet Toy Collectors' Fair BA4 6QN (BDF)
16 December	Wootton Bassett Toy Fair, Memorial Hall, SN4 8EN (SCF)
27 December	NEC Toy Fair – Hall 18, NEC, Birmingham B40 1NT

2026

7 January	Club Lunchtime Meet, 12 - 2.30 (DON'T FORGET...) Agriculture/Tractors
13 January	Hook Toy Fair, Community Centre, Ravenscroft, RG27 9NN (SCF)
18 January	Wickham Toy Fair, Community Centre Mill Lane PO17 5AL (SCF)
25 January	Mega Malvern Toy Collectors' Fair WR13 6NW (BDF)
1 February	Kidderminster Toy Fair, Kidderminster Harriers Social Club, Stadium Close DY10 1NB
4 February	Club Night – Charity Auction in aid of Wiltshire & Bath Air Ambulance
10 February	Hook Toy Fair, Community Centre, Ravenscroft, RG27 9NN (SCF)
14 February	Exeter Toy Collectors' Fair, The Matford Centre EX2 8FD (BDF)
21 February	Sandown Toy Fair, Sandown Exhibition Centre, Portsmouth Road, Esher.
21/22 Feb	Bristol Classic Motorcycle Show, Shepton Showground BA4 6QN

SCF = Steve Clements Fairs

BDF = Bulldog Fairs (Stu Vowles)

Our Chairman Steve of Steven Clements Fairs (SCF) kindly offers WMTC full members ONE FREE ENTRY to all his fairs, on production of a valid WMTC membership card. BUT PLEASE NOTE – this offer applies ONLY to Standard Entry times, NOT EARLY ENTRY

And that's it until 2026!

Are you all ready for the festive season?

The cute pic on the right (Awwwww!) can't possibly be our Steve... He is always so organised it's almost unbelievable!

Anyway, try and behave yourselves over Christmas, and we'll see you all in the New Year...

With Season's Greetings to everyone out there....

Barry the Ed

Is Steve ready for Christmas?
No. Steve is not even ready for today.



Oh - and have we reminded you that January's meeting is LUNCHTIME??