

# WESSEX SMALLTALK

**No. 249 – April 2026**

**The Newsletter of Wessex Model and Toy Collectors – Founded 1984**

*Hello all! Well, here we are, already well into 2026 and all it has to offer... And, my word, there is a lot to tell you about! And who better to do so than the man in charge, with his...*

## ***Chairman's Chatter ~ April***

**Hello! So much to mention, and so little room to write it in (don't want to upset the Ed...), so here goes...**

**The proceeds from February's Auction Night for the Wiltshire & Bath Air Ambulance (plus donations – thank you) means we can donate £1,725, which, added to last year's figure, means the Air Ambulance will have received £3,000 in total. 'Well done' to all involved! It is a lot of work for the few, but the final total makes it worthwhile...**

**Our annual Auction Night is certainly getting much harder to perform, and maybe our days of 'grand auctions' may be short lived, but we will crack on with next year's February auction once a worthy local charity has been chosen. All to be announced in next time's 'Chatter'!**

**It was a club night with a slight difference in March – thank you, Chris! Your presentation taught us so much about the coins in our pockets, both past and present... If you missed it, you dipped out on a very good talk. And 'thank you' to Ashley our techmaster for supplying the kit needed!**

**Meanwhile, we have been invited to the South Hants club down in the New Forest on 10 June for one of their club meetings, with a bite to eat beforehand, travelling by shared cars... BtE will add details later in this issue – anyone fancying a 'jolly', just get in touch with me.**

**Also, I popped into the County Classics Motor Museum in Taunton town centre a couple of weeks ago, and was suitably impressed... Impressed enough to go for a club trip in a few weeks' time – add Thursday 14 May to your diary now! Easy parking, excellent café, and a great selection of cars, bikes and memorabilia. Travel once more by car share... Again – if you are interested, talk to me!**

**That's it – biro down now... Over to you Mr Ed!**

**Chairman Steve**

*Thank you, Steve... Gosh, lots to take in there!*

*But I do wish you wouldn't use that biro - makes terrible marks on my laptop...*

*Barry the Ed*



## The Famous WMTC Charity Auction

## 4 February Club Night

Well, here we are, all together once more for the annual WMTC Charity Auction! This time, as last year, supporting the Wiltshire & Bath Air Ambulance at their base at Semington, very near The Milk Churn where we meet.

As usual your committee didn't really know what to expect... We had had one or two items donated before the night, but as ever were relying on folk arriving on the night with arm loads of 'goodies'!

And, thankfully, they did – so our Master of Ceremonies Chairman Steve was kept busy in the first hour or so, shuffling items into sensible 'lots'... And there was even a 'Mystery Prize' very kindly donated by Edward at the Milk Churn – thank you, Edward! Not too many 'top table' items, but we had brought along three of the 'spare' club models to boost things a bit...

Once all was sorted, out came the numbering gun, with BtE trotting alongside Steve as the lots were numbered, making a brief (barely legible...) list of lots for Auctioneer Jim, who was kindly doing the hammer work for us once again...

As well as the auction we had the usual good selection of items on the obligatory raffle table, and Raffle Supremo Ricky, together with her helpers Michelle and Trina, were soon parting the assembled crowd from their cash, in exchange for raffle tickets...

The action started quite promptly at about 8pm, and gavel man Jim was soon into his stride, knocking down the lots to the lucky winners, while at his side the 'scribes' BtE and Don coped with the paperwork.

The usual chaos at the end, as folk queued to pay before going to Steve and Don who were trying to sort out the lots... A plea here from Steve for the future – please don't short cut the system by helping yourself to what you think you won – it can cause problems! This year a Hot Wheels set of a Mk I Jaguar with Land Rover and trailer went home with the wrong person... If you find you have it, can we have it back please, coz according to Auctioneer Jim's record, you didn't win it, and so didn't pay for it (!) ... Ta!

So, come the end, how did we do? Well, the auction proceeds were not quite as good as last year, and even the raffle was slightly down, however our Charity Fund was boosted by the usual cash donations from club members, including two **VERY** generous ones.



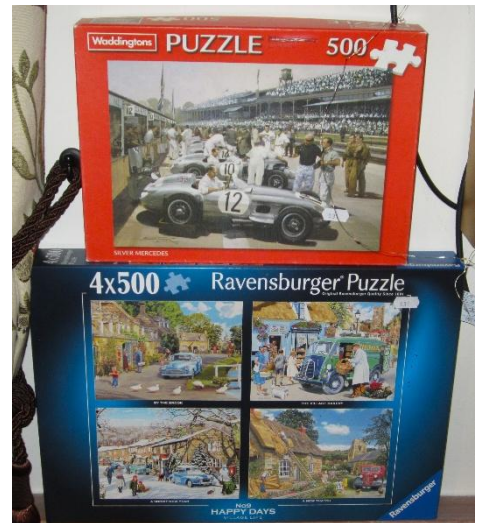
Having done all the sums, we will be able to donate **£1725** to the Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance this year, making a total of **£3,000** over the last two years. Not bad for a bunch of grown-up kids, is it?! **BtE**

*Left – some of the goodies... Right – Yet more goodies (With Uncle Bob checking 'em out!)*





Left – even more goodies...  
Above – the Top Table...



Jigsaws? Yes, we had jigsaws... ^ ^ ^  
< < < And some (very) large-scale plastic kits!  
VVVV





## The Dinky Toy and the Real Thing...

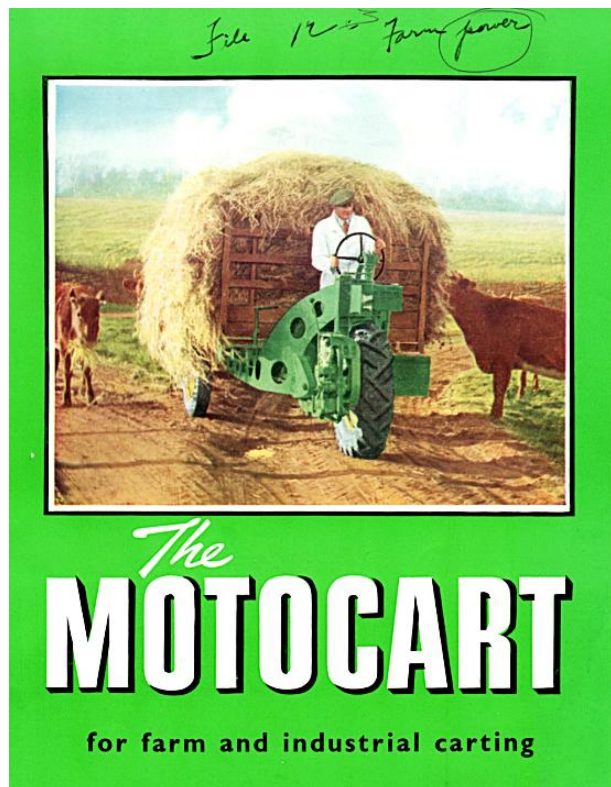
Here's one of those little oddities that Dinky Toys occasionally came up with – the **27g/342 Motocart**. The Motocart was made after WW2 by S.E. Opperman Ltd, of Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, and was said to be 'designed by a farmer for farmers' – although the cover of one brochure (below) says '... for farm and industrial carting', while another says '...for Mining, Building, Industrial and Municipal purposes', with no mention of farms! Truly a jack of all trades...



The Motocart was intended to take the place of a horse and cart, being capable of '3 times the work at lower cost – just 1½ gallons of petrol a day!' It was driven by the large single front wheel, powered initially by a 630cc Douglas engine, later an 872cc JAP engine, both single-cylinder and air-cooled, with four speeds and reverse. The controls were laid out

so that it could also be operated by walking alongside – much like a horse and cart. The Motocart could carry loads up to 30cwt., with either a fixed or tipping body. Production ended in 1955, after some 10,000 had been produced.

While they could not have been a common sight back then, Dinky, as usual, captured the 'look' very well.



Fancy a real one? Tamar Vintage Tractors down near Tavistock currently have one available – but no price mentioned... They seem to come up at auctions from time to time – and there is even a Facebook page for owners and enthusiasts! Alas, with a top speed of about 12mph they are not really ideal for road runs... **BtE**



## Coins: Real, Rare, or Replicas?

## 4 March Club Night

Well, this was something different! Rather than the usual boring evening with old Dinky Toys, Corgi Toys or whatever, this time we had a presentation by **Chris Everett**, all about coins!

It was very quickly evident that Chris is an expert in his field, and he treated us to a most interesting presentation. I won't even attempt to cover it in detail – always difficult with a talk and slide show combined... But, I'll try and give a little taste of the evening, – and if you weren't there, well, you really should have been!

Let's start with some of the technical terms... Numismatics? That's the study or collection of coins and banknotes... Notaphily? The study or collection of bank notes – paper money... And last, but by no means least – Exonomia/paranumismatica.... That covers coin-like items, such as tokens and medallions...

As to coins themselves, 'obverse' is the 'head' or country identifying side; 'reverse' is 'tails', usually the value indicating side. Collectors use a system of grading – 'Proof' being the highest quality produced by a mint... 'BU' – brilliant uncirculated, I guess what we would call 'mint condition' in a toy...'UNC' – uncirculated... 'F' – fine...'G' – good... 'P' – poor... And there are variations within the gradings – for instance as well as F you can have VF (very fine) or EF (extremely fine)... I'll let you look them all up!

We learned about the development of coinage – in ancient times shells, stones, beads and ivory were all used. Eventually metal coins made their appearance – initially being 'hammered', before milling and machining were developed from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Here we have an early (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) Celtic coin (left), and a Roman coin c385AD... Both hammered, and both from east Wiltshire...



Here's the difference between a hammered and a machined coin from the reign of Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>... ^^

The Royal Mint was established in London by Alfred the Great about 886, moving to the Tower of London by the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Since 1968 it has been based at Llantrisant in South Wales...

As well as coins we heard all about tokens, long used by traders throughout the country, and still seen today for vending machines and gaming, as well as trading.

Here is a farthing token, issued in Devizes in 1669...

->->->->->



Real rarities? Well, probably the best-known one is the 1933 George V penny. A genuine example sold for £72,000 in 2016... Don't get too excited if you think you've found one – it's almost sure to be a fake! Only 6 or 7 are known to have been minted...



<-<-<-<- And here's another – a threepenny piece pattern dated 1937, produced for Edward VIII prior to his abdication in December 1936... Did a handful escape into circulation? The jury seems to be out on that one...

And there are more to watch out for – like 'simple' errors. About 250,000 20p pieces were produced in 2008, but without a date! Check your change – they can go for up to £100...



<-<-<-<- Another error – in 2011 a set of 50p coins was produced featuring sports of the Olympic Games. The one for 'swimming' should have the swimmer's face clear... But about 600 were produced with the face covered with the 'waves'... Could be a nice profit in that one if you find it – about £2,000!

Even some of the coins in general circulation are collectable, because for whatever reason they were they were produced in much fewer numbers...

Here ->->->->->- is the 50p 'Salmon', one of a set of 8 designs celebrating the flora and fauna of the UK. It was only produced in 2023, in much less numbers than the rest of the set... Could be worth about £80...



<-<-<-<- Another rare beast, the 50p produced in 2009 to celebrate 250 years of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew... Second in the 'rarity index' for 50p pieces to the 'salmon' pictured above, but for some reason said to be worth more, at about £150... But – be careful... A similar coin was issued in 2019!!

Wow! Well, I think I will call a halt there... My brain is beginning to hurt! Chris warned us all to be very careful in the coin-collecting field, and to do our research very well – there are many frauds, forgeries and replicas around...

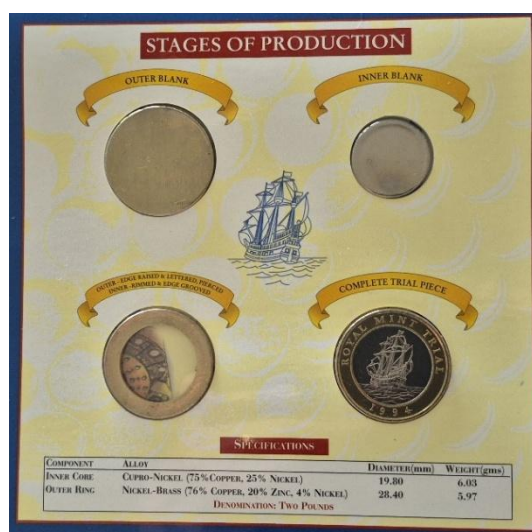
Coins? No, I think I will stick to old Dinky Toys!

I hope I have given a flavour of the evening to those of you who couldn't be there... Those that were there will no doubt soon be pointing out all my mistakes!

Very many thanks to Chris for a most enjoyable evening, very different from our usual fare!

There followed the usual raffle, and also, courtesy of Mrs Chairman Ricky, a three-part coin-related quiz! Steve very quickly ran through the easier General Knowledge section, with folk shouting out answers, and left it to everyone to pick up a copy of the other questions, and submit their answers next time... There was even talk of a prize...!! (I will own up here that I seem to have picked up a sheet with the answers printed on it! I'd better not enter, wouldn't be right, would it?!)

Unfortunately there wasn't time at the end for folk to talk about the displays they had brought along (a surprising number – obviously a lot of us don't just collect old toys!!) but here some pics, and a few words to go with 'em!



First in the row was **Bob Warfield**, with this fine display of coin sets, which included, on the right, a set that Chris admitted he didn't have! Back in 1994 the Royal Mint produced a 'Trial' of the proposed bi-metal £2 coin, which was sent to vending machine companies so that they could adapt and modify their equipment as necessary. It was exactly the same size and weight as the coin which eventually went into circulation in 1998, except it had 'TRIAL COIN' etched around the rim. The set, which is quite sought after, shows the stages in the production of the trial coin.

**Sharpie** (That's **Alan S**) showed a very personal item. It is the memorial – known as the 'Death Penny' – which was issued by the government to the family of every British Empire serviceman who lost their life in the First World War. This was given to Alan's father's family for Frank Sharpe, their 2<sup>nd</sup> eldest son. He served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment, was seriously wounded during a trench raid in 1916, and sadly later succumbed to his wounds... Each 'Penny' is 12cm in diameter, and includes the name of the fallen serviceman. Frank's is now beautifully framed, surrounded by poppies...



Next along the table was me – **Barry the Ed**... On 8 October 1962, as a fresh-faced lad still wet behind the ears, I joined the National Provincial Bank, Mutley Plymouth branch. Over the years I have collected some National Provincial memorabilia from those simple days – paper coin bags and note wrappers, cloth coin bags, and the lead seals and 'crimpers' which were used to seal the string tying them up, coin shovels plus a set of pre-decimal coins, advertising booklets and book matches – even some paid cheques from Honiton Branch in 1965 which would have passed through my hands! Different times then – no names printed on the cheques, you had to read the signature before sorting them into alphabetical order and 'hand posting' them into the large ledgers – every customer had his or her separate page... Almost unbelievable nowadays – how times have changed!



<<<<<< Here is **Brian G's** display... A couple of 1967 pennies – the final year of minting for general circulation before the introduction of decimal currency on 15 February 1971 – although some dated 1970 were minted for commemorative sets... *(Gosh yes - just checked and my set of old coins are all dated 1970! BtE)*

The pennies in the tin – stuck together with Sellotape – were collected by Brian when he was about 10 years old, for a school competition... And, of course, a couple of Volvo buses – the B71 launched in 1962. Tekno made the models in a wide range of liveries between 1962 and 1972. The moneybox version was only made between 1965 and 1970 as a standard, plus 16 different bank and financial institution liveries. Brian's liveried version doesn't appear in his Tekno reference book, so it may be a Code 3 or another sort of 'special'.



**Doug's** display of Isle of Man coins included a medal celebrating Steve Hislop breaking 120mph for the first time at the Isle of Man TT in 1989, with a lap at 121.34mph... There was also a £1 coin which Doug struck himself during a visit to the Royal Mint at Llantrisant... And this rather cute penny farthing – the penny front wheel being dated 1967, and the rear farthing 1940!





**All facts, opinions, comments, criticisms etc. contained within Smalltalk are the responsibility of individual contributors (especially if anonymous!). The Ed just keeps tapping away on his laptop and hoping for the best!**

**Your 2026 Committee comprises: -**

<b>Chairman:</b>	<b>Steve Clements</b>	<b>devizesdiecast@aol.com</b>	<b>01380 725322</b>
<b>Vice Chairman:</b>	<b>Doug Male</b>	<b>malesatone@btinternet.com</b>	<b>01225 755043</b>
<b>Zoom Meister:</b>	<b>Ashley Jones</b>	<b>pickfords1630@yahoo.co.uk</b>	<b>07516 478830</b>
<b>Membership Secretary:</b>	<b>Nick Male</b>	<b>njmale007@gmail.com</b>	<b>07905 546287</b>
<b>Ed/Treas/Sec:</b>	<b>Barry Lloyd</b>	<b>barrylloyd1946@gmail.com</b>	<b>01179 866503</b>
	<b>Bob Warfield</b>	<b>bobandjill1945@gmail.com</b>	<b>01373 864820</b>
<b>Co-opted Committee Members (AKA SLH – Steve’s Little Helpers):</b>		<b>Alan Sharpe and Don Stevenson</b>	

**WMTC meets at The MILK CHURN, Commerce Way, Melksham SN12 6AD, usually on the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month from 7.30pm, but very occasionally at lunchtime, 12 – 2.30pm.**

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 are in BOLD.**

<b>1 April</b>	<b>Club Night – Figures...</b>
12 April	NEC Toy Fair – Hall 18, NEC, Birmingham B40 1NT. 580 stalls...
12 April	Kempton Park Toy Fair, Kempton Park Racecourse, TW16 5AQ
14 April	Hook Toy Fair, Community Centre, Ravenscroft, RG27 9NN <b>(SCF)</b>
19 April	Wickham Toy Fair, Wickham Community Centre Mill Lane PO17 5AL <b>(SCF)</b>
25 April	Exeter Toy Collectors' Fair, The Matford Centre EX2 8FD (BDF)
25 April	Italian AutoMoto Festival, Devizes marketplace 10am – 4pm
25/26 April	Great British Land Rover Show, Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet BA4 6QN
26 April	Kidderminster Toy Fair, Kidderminster Harriers Social Club, Stadium Close, DY10 1NB
2/3/4 May	Lechlade Annual Vintage Rally and Country Show, Langley Farm, Langley Lane, Clanfield OX18 2RZ9 See the website – <a href="http://www.lechladecollectorsclub.co.uk">www.lechladecollectorsclub.co.uk</a>
<b>6 May</b>	<b>Club Night – Kits/Chops/Repaints</b>
9 May	Kidlington Toy Fair, Exeter Hall, Oxford Road OX5 1AB <a href="http://www.toytraincollectorsfairs.com">www.toytraincollectorsfairs.com</a>
9/10 May	REME Museum – Wartime Britain 2026.. See <a href="http://www.rememuseum.org.uk">www.rememuseum.org.uk</a> for booking details.
10 May	MSMC's Windsor Swapmeet, New Windsor Community Association, Hanover Way, Windsor SL4 5NW 11am – 2pm (Early Birds – 10am)
10 May	Cornwall Toy and Train Collectors Fair, Royal Cornwall Events Centre, Whitecross, Wadebridge PL27 7JE (New event - BDF)
10 May	Basingstoke Festival of Transport, War Memorial Park, RG21 4AG 11am – 4pm
12 May	Hook Toy Fair, Community Centre, Ravenscroft, RG27 9NN <b>(SCF)</b>
<b>14 May</b>	<b>Club Trip to the County Classics Motor Museum, Taunton – see this time's Ed's Briefs!</b>
16 May	Sandown Toy Fair, Sandown Exhibition Centre, Portsmouth Road, Esher. 500 stalls...
16/17 May	Castle Combe Steam Rally
17 May	30 <sup>th</sup> Mendip Vintage and Classic Tour, finishing at Wells Cathedral Green from 2pm. <a href="http://candhmotorclub.co.uk">candhmotorclub.co.uk</a>
20 May	Atwell Wilson Motor Museum Calne SN11 0NF – Classic Car Evening Gathering 4-9pm
31 May	Stonehouse Gloucester Toy Fair, Magpies Social Club, Oldends Lane GL10 2DG <b>(SCF)</b>
31 May	Lostwithiel Toy Fair, Lostwithiel Community Centre, Pleyber Christ Way, PL22 0HE
<b>3 June</b>	<b>Club Night – Pre 1960 Night – and celebrating Corgi's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday this year.</b>
6/7 June	Middlewick Hpuse Open Garden, Corsham SN13 0PX 10am – 5pm Advance booking required – <a href="http://www.middlewickhouseopengarden.com">www.middlewickhouseopengarden.com</a> . The chance to see some of Nick Mason's superb motorcars, all in aid of Wilts & Bath Air Ambulance, and Wilts Bobby Van Trust.
<b>10 June</b>	<b>Club visit to South Hants Model Auto Club – see this time's Ed's Briefs!</b>

**SCF = Steven Clements Fairs**

**BDF = Bulldog Fairs (Stu Vowles)**

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

*Wow - what a lot of diary dates!*

*Just space left to say "Best wishes, and bye bye for now..."*

*Barry the Ed*