

# PLAYING AT FARMING

A new exhibition of items drawn from the  
Peter Wade-Martins Collection of Farm Toys

[www.merl.reading.ac.uk](http://www.merl.reading.ac.uk)







These toy farm vehicles and implements are from a collection assembled over the last 20 years by Peter Wade-Martins. This is just a small selection of many hundreds of different British-made horse- and tractor-drawn implements. It is one of the most comprehensive collections of its kind and covers all known UK manufacturers, materials, and types of machine that were made.

All the large-scale farm technologies in the Museum are reproduced here at a smaller scale. There are also toy versions of things that the Museum doesn't have. For example, there is no full-size combine harvester in the Museum's galleries. Toy examples can help show the development of such machines.

As this display reveals, many kinds of equipment were recreated in toy form. As well as modern-style tractors, there were also traction engines and crawlers. Other technologies made in miniature included wagons, carts, trailers, ploughs, harrows, hay rakes, hay loaders, and the ever-popular combine harvester.

This collection covers most of the different materials used to recreate farm machines in miniature. In this selection alone you can see lead, wood, tinsplate, leather, Bakelite, rubber, and plastic. Lots of these examples still retain their original packaging. The images on toy boxes reveal a great deal about how the countryside was represented during the twentieth century.

These toys showcase the companies that helped children to become 'carpet farmers.' From the first UK-made toy tractor of the 1920s to the many later plastic playsets, they show how the toy industry reflected changes on the farm. By 1980 most toy manufacturers had moved their operations overseas.

Many of these toys present an evocative sense of childhood and nostalgia for old rural ways. In this way they echo themes that play a major part in the presentation of technical change in twentieth-century farming. The scope of this collection stops in 1980, when UK-based manufacturing ceased, but 'carpet farming' remains popular to this day.

Following the generous gift of the Peter Wade-Martins Collection of Farm Toys to the University of Reading in 2019, the Museum has begun carefully conserving and cataloguing each individual artefact. Watch this space for future displays showing different selections of objects from this amazing resource.









Top left shelves



Middle left shelves



Description MakeBox Access No.

Shelf one top left:

1 Tractor	Coral	no	2020/12/1
2 Tractor	Lipkin	yes	2020/37/2
3 Tractor	ST Ltd	yes	2020/59/6
4 Combine Harvester	ST Ltd	no	2020/59/7

Shelf two middle left:

5 Crawler Tractor	Shackleton	yes	2020/55/1
6 Tractor pull-apart	Lipkin	yes	2020/37/1
7 Tractor	Lesney	yes	2020/36/1
8 Horse and Cart	Marx	no	2020/39/2
9 Bucking Tractor	Mettoy	yes	2020/45/4
10 Tractor and Plough	Mettoy	yes	2020/45/1

Shelf three (top tier) left:

11 Tractor	Britains	yes	2020/4/10
12 Rake	Britains	yes	2020/4/11
13 Tractor	Britains	yes	2020/4/12
14 Horse and Tumbrel	Britains	yes	2020/4/3
15 Tractor and Trailers	Britains	yes	2020/4/9

Shelf four (middle tier) left:

16 Tractor and Trailer	Corgi	yes	2020/13/5
17 Tractor, Shovel and Trailer	Corgi	yes	2020/13/7
18 Tractor and Plough	Corgi	yes	2020/13/4
19 Tractor and Trailer	Corgi	yes	2020/13/3
20 Volvo Tractor	Husky	yes	2020/29/1

Shelf five (lower tier) left:

21 Tractor	JoHillco	no	2020/30/1
22 Horse and Reaper	JoHillco	no	2020/30/6
23 Horse and Rake	JoHillco	no	2020/30/5
24 Horse and Rotary Plough	JoHillco	no	2020/30/7
25 Horse and Plough	JoHillco	no	2020/30/4
26 Cattle Float	JoHillco	no	2020/30/3
27 Tractor	Merit	yes	2020/44/1
28 Tractor PVC	Lone Star	no	2020/15/1





Bottom left & right shelves



Shelf six (case floor) left, objects from left to right:

29	Horse and Wagon	Taylor & Barrett	no	2020/60/1
30	Horse and Sardine Cart	Sontaw	no	2020/56/1
31	Tractor and Hayrake	Kemlow	yes	2020/40/1
32	Horse and Wagon	Charbens	no	2020/8/2
33	Horse and Cultivator	Kayron	no	2020/31/4
34	Tractor	Benbros	no	2020/3/3
35	Horse and Cart	F.G. Taylor	no	2020/61/2
36	Tractor and Harrow	Paramount	no	2020/49/1



Shelf six (case floor) right, objects from left to right:

37	Tractor	Primus	no	2020/53/1
38	Tractor	Timpo	no	2020/64/3
39	Tractor	Airfix	no	2020/1/1
40	Crawler Tractor	Moko	yes	2020/47/3
41	Crawler Tractor	Matchbox	yes	2020/41/2
42	Tractor	Matchbox	yes	2020/41/3
43	Tractor	Matchbox	yes	2020/41/1
44	Tractor	Matchbox	yes	2020/41/4
45	Combine Harvester	Matchbox	yes	2020/41/5
46	Tractor and Trailer	Matchbox	yes	2020/41/6

Top right shelves



Shelf one top right, objects from left to right:

47	Horse and Cart	Escor	no	2020/21/1
48	Horse and Cart	Edith Reynolds	no	2020/20/1
49	Horse and Cart	Forest	no	2020/24/1
50	Horse and Cart	Luntoy	no	2020/38/1

Shelf two middle right, objects from left to right:

51	Tractor	Kondor	yes	2020/33/1
52	Traction Engine	Tri-Ang	no	2020/65/3
53	Tractor Minic	Tri-Ang	yes	2020/65/9
54	Tractor Nuffield	Tri-Ang	yes	2020/65/6
55	Tractor	Kraftoyz	no	2020/34/1
56	Tractor	Tri-Ang	no	2020/65/1
57	Tractor	Chad Valley	yes	2020/7/1
58	Crawler Tractor	Marx	yes	2020/39/1
59	Tractor	Passal	no	2020/50/1



oldest tractor!



Smallest tractor!



Middle right shelves



Shelf three (top tier) right, objects from left to right:

60	Tractor	Charbens	yes	2020/8/3
61	Tractor	Mears	yes	2020/43/1
62	Tractor	Tri-Ang	no	2020/65/4
63	Tractor	Taylor Toys	yes	2020/62/1
64	Crawler Tractor and Trailer	Tri-Ang	yes	2020/65/8

Shelf four (middle tier) right, objects from left to right:

65	Traction engine	Tudor Rose	yes	2020/66/1
66	Dextra Tractor and Trailer	Crescent	yes	2020/14/6
67	Crawler Tractor	Crescent	no	2020/14/4
68	Hayloader	Crescent	yes	2020/14/2

Shelf five (lower tier) right, objects from left to right:

69	Tractor and Hay Rake	Dinky	yes	2020/18/7
70	Tractor and Disc Harrow	Dinky	yes	2020/18/10
71	Tractor David Brown	Dinky	yes	2020/18/5
72	Tractor Leyland	Dinky	yes	2020/18/6
73	Tractor Massey-Harris	Dinky	yes	2020/18/4
74	Tractor Field Marshall	Dinky	yes	2020/18/3
75	Tractor Fordson	Dinky	no	2020/18/1
76	Heavy Tractor	Dinky	yes	2020/18/2



Youngest tractor!





Acknowledgements  
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