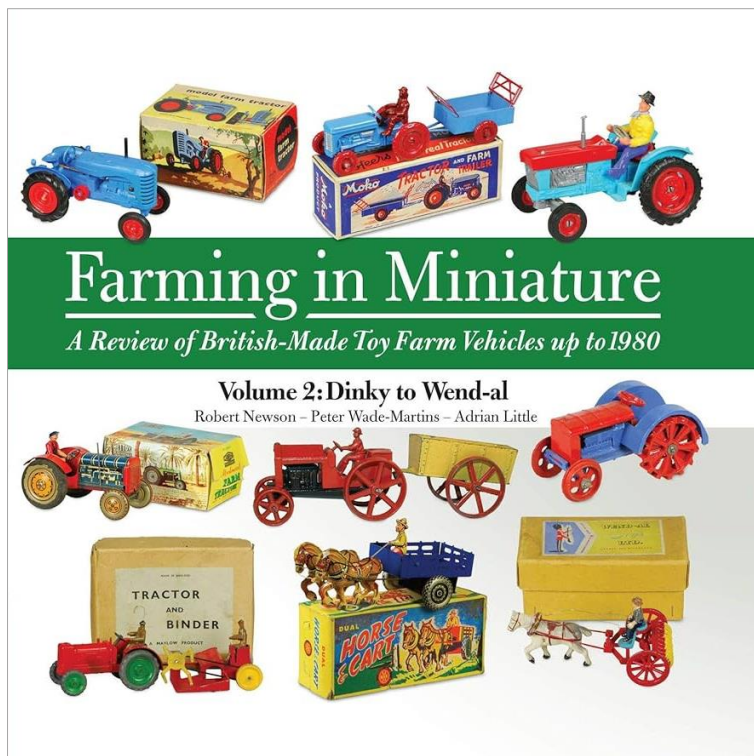
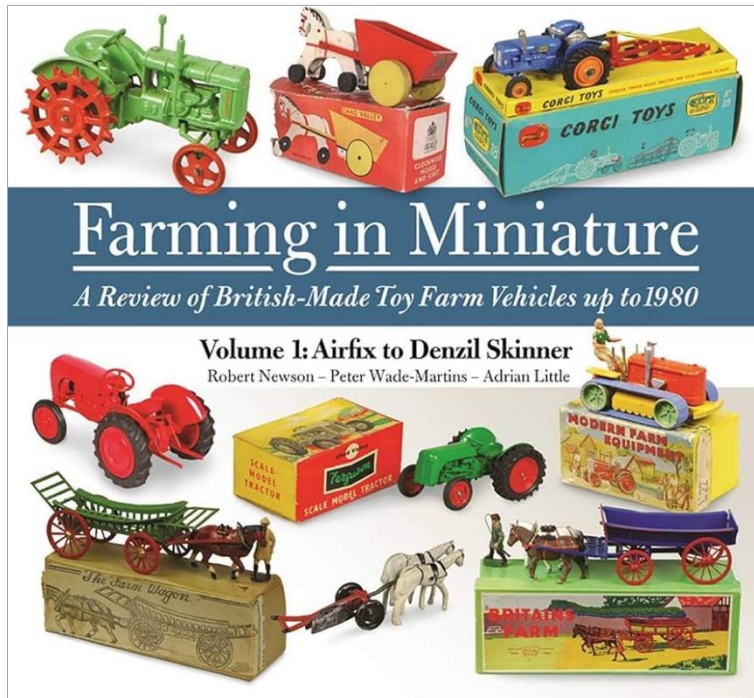


# **FARM TOY MANUFACTURERS**

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Newson, Robert, Peter Wade-Martins and Adrian Little, *Farming in Miniature Volumes 1 and 2* (Ipswich: Old Pond Publishing, 2014). Some new findings have been published at <https://farminginminiature.co.uk/>.

# FARM TOY MANUFACTURE IN THE UK

## A STORY OF 70 COMPANIES, COMPETITION, AND COOPERATION

Only a small number of the manufacturers described here began during the nineteenth century. Very few started producing toys straight away. More than 25 were London-based, and over 30 were started directly after the Second World War. Almost none survived the economic downturn of the 1970s and early-1980s, or the impact of cheap overseas imports. Toys were the main output for several companies but for others they were just a sideline. Although some focussed only on farming, such toys were often a small part of the overall range. Despite this, many thousands were employed to make this kind of toy.

These A to Z listings feature all the toy-making companies in the Peter Wade-Martins Collection, including all of those displayed here and more represented in stored holdings. As well as showing changes to farming, the Collection also reveals changes to materials and production techniques. The following summaries draw heavily on *Farming in Miniature* by Robert Newson, Peter Wade-Martins, and Adrian Little. Peter's Collection provides the core of this series of books, which describes each and every model in exceptional detail.

**Airfix** was founded in London in 1939 by Hungarian refugee Miklos Klein. They initially made air-filled rubber toys and plastic combs. The first kits were made in the late-1940s. By 1976 they owned **Dinky** and **Tri-ang**. In 1981 they called in the receivers and the company was sold several times. In 2006 it was bought by Hornby Hobbies Ltd and is back in UK ownership.

**Authentic Model Books** was a 1960s brand name under London publishers Bancroft & Co Publishers. The books contained cardboard cutouts of David Brown tractors.

**Benbros**—initially **Pure Rubber Products**—was founded by brothers Jack and Nathan Benenson in Walthamstow, London, in the late-1940s. Around 1952, their products were distributed by **MOKO**. After 1952, Benbros used **Timpo** dies to produce farm carts. The company introduced a

miniature range, eventually called Mighty Midgets. This lasted from 1954 to 1965, when the firm was sold and production ceased.

**Britains** was the brainchild of William Britain who was a Brass Finisher until his listing in the 1871 census as a toy maker. One of the oldest toy manufacturers in the UK, Britains began making hollow-cast lead toy soldiers in 1893. Their first farming-related toys—the Home Farm Series—date from 1921. The last member of the Britain family to serve as Managing Director retired in 1968. Based in Walthamstow, London, by 1914 the company employed 300 people with further outworkers, painting models at home. As late as 1975 the number of outworkers was around 1,500. The company was first sold in 1984 and later purchased by US toy giant Ertl in 1996, who retained the Britains Farm Series brand and thereby continued an unrivalled tradition in farm toy production.

**Budgie** started production in 1959 under the company Morris & Stone and their sub-contractor Modern Products, both originating in Stoke Newington, London. Budgie were in competition with **Matchbox** to produce models of a similar size. Morris & Stone were taken over by Guiterman & Company, who went into voluntary liquidation in 1966. Modern Products bought the Budgie trademark and kept producing until they ceased trading in 1985.

**Bullock Toys** was listed as trading in Bournemouth in 1946. In 1948 they were purchased by the Metropolitan Sliding Roof Company in Brighton. They traded under the Bullock name but as part of M. S. R. Toys from 1951 until 1964. The only farm-related toy they made was a farm trailer.

**Chad Valley** started trading under this name as a printing and bookbinding business, having been founded by Anthony Bunn Johnson in Birmingham, in the early-1800s. Two generations later, as toy imports stopped during the First World War, the company began to produce soft toys. A farmyard set was introduced in 1934. The company grew after the Second World War and purchased several local companies, increasing their range and production methods. By 1960 they had 7 factories and employed 1,000 people. In 1971 they became part of the Barclay Toy Group. Over following decades the Chad Valley brand changed hands

several times and ended up as part of the Home Retail Group. In 2016 the supermarket chain Sainsbury's bought the Home Retail Group, making Chad Valley products exclusively available through Argos.

**Charbens** was founded in Holloway, London, in 1927 by brothers Charles and Ben Reid. Charles learned lead hollow-casting skills whilst working for **Britains**. They produced farm-related toys from the start, eventually under the name Mimic Toys. Ben Reid sold the company in the late-1960s and diecast production ceased in 1967. Plastic toy production continued until 1974 when the factory came under compulsory purchase for redevelopment by the Local Authority.

**Cheerio Toys & Games (England) Ltd** was part of a larger Canadian company with the same name (England denoting the division status). They were listed to trade in London between 1946 and 1954. It is likely that the plastic toys were sold in Marks and Spencer stores.

**Cherilea** was formed in Burnley, Lancashire, in 1946 by W. Cherrington and J. Leaver. Leaver had previously worked for the **Johillco** company. The company ceased trading in the late-1970s.

**Childs and Smith** were toy manufacturers based in Atherstone, Warwickshire, and were listed as such from 1948. They made toys under the Nulli Secundus (Second to None) brand. The company appears in directories for the last time in 1958, and therefore lasted only a decade.

**Coral Plastic** traded from premises in Manchester from 1960 until 1975. Little else is known about the company other than this brief trading period. Their range may have used repurposed moulds to re-issue models previously marketed under **Mettoy**.

**Corgi** (see **Mettoy** for early history) started in 1956 as a brand of the Mettoy company and in direct competition to **Dinky**. They outperformed Dinky by providing more detailed models in nicer packaging. Most of their products were designed by one man, Marcel Van Cleemput. They reached their peak in 1967, selling 17 million models worldwide. The farming-related models were plentiful and highly detailed, though quality diminished in the late-1970s as they sought to cut production costs. They were sold to Mattel in 1989 and became independent again

in 1995. They later became part of the Hornby brand in 2008, with a factory in Leicester.

**Crescent** was founded in 1922 by Henry Eagles and Arthur Schneider, after both men had been made redundant by the toy maker Reka. Their first premises were on De Beauvoir Crescent, London, hence the name of the company. After the Second World War, Crescent started to market diecast toys made by Die Casting Machine Tools Ltd (**DCMT**). Farm toys were always a large part of their range. Many castings suffer from irreversible and detrimental metal fatigue caused by a poor mixture of zinc with lead contaminants. Crescent moved its factory to Cwmcarn, near Newport, Wales. The company ceased trading in 1982.

**DCMT** (and **Lone Star**) was started in 1939 in Palmers Green, London, by diecasting machine designer Bob Mills and skilled toolmaker Sidney Ambridge. They began toy production after the Second World War, marketed by **Crescent**. The first farm-related model was Harry Hayseed, a 'bucking' tractor which was plagiarised by **Mettoy**. In 1950, the arrangement with Crescent stopped and they marketed their own products under the Lone Star brand, using new factories in Hatfield and Welham Green. An associated company was Eaglet Industries Ltd, who made vinyl baby toys including a tractor (on display). In 1978, DCMT introduced the Farmer's Boy series. The company continued until 1988 when production moved to China. The Farmer's Boy series was available until 1992 with 'Made in England' removed from the casting.

**Deltoys** castings are crude and made from pure lead. They are therefore prone to distortion. Not much is known about this brand, but they were probably made from the late-1940s until the early-1950s.

**Denzil Skinner** was founded in Camberley, Surrey, in 1952 by Colonel Denzil Skinner. During the Second World War, Skinner had been involved in the manufacture of recognition models. By 1969 the company was operating from Phoenix Works in Hartley Wintney, Hampshire. In 1956 the company started to supply detailed versions of the Nuffield Tractor to Morris Motors. On retirement in 1987, Skinner sold his company. The name disappeared but the product range changed hands several times

until more recently, when some were still available through ASAM Models.

**Dinky** was a sub-brand of Meccano Ltd. The company was based in Liverpool and produced Meccano construction sets, Hornby Trains, and Dinky Toys. It was started by Frank Hornby in 1901. The first toy marketed under the Dinky sub-brand was introduced in 1934. Profitability peaked in 1956, when they hit 1,281,000 sales. Competitors updated their production methods and model range more readily and Dinky was reluctant, which led to a decline. In 1964 a takeover was accepted by Lines Brothers, makers of **Tri-ang** Toys. Tri-ang failed to turn the tide and the next company to takeover Meccano—and therefore Dinky—was **Airfix** in 1971. They failed to turn around the fortunes of the Meccano brand and it ceased trading in 1981. The Dinky brand still exists and is owned by Mattel, with re-issued models now made in China.

**Dragon Toys** appear to have made wooden toys but probably didn't trade for more than a couple of years after the end of the Second World War. Not much is known about this company.

**Edith Reynolds** sold equestrian models from her house in Catford, London, from the 1930s until the 1960s. She sold her models exclusively through high-end retailers like Fortnum & Mason, Liberty, Hamleys, and Harrods. Uniquely, the animals were covered with leather hides.

**Escor Toys** was formed by E. S. Corner in 1938 and based in Christchurch, Hampshire. They made brightly coloured, wooden toys aimed at pre-school children. Eventually the company was run by Bournemouth Council to provide work for people with disabilities. They finally ceased trading in 2012.

**Fairchild** was a brand that formed part of the Selcol company, which made a variety of plastic products. In turn, Selcol was part of the Selmer Company, which had begun in 1928 and was renowned for making musical instruments. The plastic toys were made in Braintree, Essex, in the 1960s. Selcol ceased operations in 1968 and Selmer in the 1980s.

**Fairylite** was a brand name of Graham Brothers, a toy wholesaler based in London, which began in 1887. Little is known about its range or about

where items sold under the name were produced. They appear to have retailed in the cheaper, novelty end of the market. It is assumed the company ceased trading around 1970.

**Forest Toys** was started after the First World War in Brockenhurst, Hampshire, by Frank Whittington. The company made wooden sets, mostly of animals made from deal wood. The toys were very popular and in 1922 the company employed 16 people. Demand seemed to outstrip supply but in 1939 the company closed due to shortage of raw materials and labour. Production never resumed after the Second World War. Frank Whittington died in 1973 aged 97.

**Glyntoys** is something of a mystery and little is known of the company. One piece of packaging mentions Loughborough as a manufacturing base, but telephone directories do not mention Glyntoys. Their toys were all made from pure lead, were easy to damage, and are therefore rare. Dating them is difficult but they are most likely from the decades either side of the Second World War.

**Grace Toys** was a short-lived wooden toy sideline for E. & H. Grace, who were listed as cabinetmakers in South-East London in around 1940. They ceased trading as furniture manufacturers in around 1977.

**Hercules** was the brand name for a range of wooden toys made by Critchley Bros. based in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Not much is known about the company, though they were in business in the 1950s.

**Hitchin Components** is recorded as having operated from Stotfold, Bedfordshire, in around 1970. Not much is known about the company, though their name is moulded in the rubber tyres of the tractor models, implying that they had a reasonable set-up. Confusingly, the text reads 'Hitchin Components Herts'.

**Hobbies** was started by John Skinner and was based in East Dereham, Norfolk. From the 1890s to the 1960s Hobbies Ltd was the leading supplier of fret-working equipment, designs, and materials. Their success was mainly the result of two publications: Hobbies Weekly and Hobbies Handbook/Annual. The modelmaker bought a design and plywood sheets from the company as sets. Ten farming-related designs were



made available over the years. The company initially ceased trading in 1968. An employee bought the company trademark and copyright and from 1979 the company was known as Hobbies (Dereham) Ltd.

**Husky** (and **Corgi Juniors**) models were introduced by Corgi Toys (see **Mettoy** and **Corgi** for further history) in 1964. They were smaller in size to compete with **Matchbox**, and sold in 'blister packs', exclusively through Woolworths shops. Initially Husky models were made in Swansea but transferred to Northampton in the late-1960s. In 1969 the deal with Woolworths ended and the range was rebranded Corgi Juniors.

**Johillco** (John Hill & Co) produced quite possibly the first British diecast tractor in 1932. The company history is vague and could have started as early as 1898, but it was certainly in business in Islington, London, by 1932. At that time the premises were known as Britannia Works, with a 50,000 square foot facility and a 400-strong workforce. Johillco were successful because they were subcontractors for several other companies, including the American Tootsietoys range. Johillco were competitors to **Britains** in producing hollow-cast lead figures. In the 1930s they started producing toys made of wood, wire, and tinplate, and these were sold unboxed. After the Second World War the company restarted but no longer producing the farm toys from before.

**Kleeware** was started by Oscar and Max Kleemann in London in the early twentieth century. Plastic toys became part of their range after 1938, using imported injection moulding machine from the US. By 1940 the company was moved to Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. Further success then required moving production to larger premises, which they found in Aycliffe, County Durham. They became the UK's major manufacturer of plastic houseware and toys, using 50 injection moulding machines, and employing a 900-strong workforce. Models were often copied from competitors or by using moulds in agreement. In 1959 the Kleeware business was sold to **Rosedale** Associated Manufacturers (see **Tudor Rose**).

**Kondor** was a brand name for items made by G. Oxenford & Company at High Holborn, London. They appear to have only made a tractor model to

show off their patent pending clockwork spring mechanism. Kondor was the name given to the spring and they subcontracted casting of the tractor parts to **Kemlows** (see **MasterModels**). They were made between 1949 and 1951.

**Kraftoyz** were based in Saffron Walden, Essex, from around 1946 to 1950. The tractors were made from wood with tinplate wheels. Not much is known about this company.

**Leeway** was a trademark for Patterson Edwards, which was based in Lewisham, London, and may have started as early as 1892. They were competitors to Lines Brothers (see **Tri-ang**) though never as successful. They employed up to 300 staff in 1931, making toy prams, pedal cars, and other items. Their only farm models was a pull-along horse and cart. By the mid-1970s the company was no longer trading.

**Lesney Toys** (see **Matchbox** for the later history) began when Rodney Smith returned to civilian life after the Second World War. He worked for Die Casting Machine Tools (see **DCMT** and **Lone Star**, and **Crescent**). Rodney and Leslie Smith bought a diecasting machine and started their own business at Upper Edmonton, London. The first models were produced in 1948. They were good quality from the start and were sold via Woolworths shops. They moved to Hackney in 1949 where they stayed until the 1980s. In 1953 they produced a miniature Coronation Coach, which sold over a million copies, paving the way for the hugely successful **Matchbox** series. The products were exclusively distributed by J. Kohnstam under the **MOKO** trademark.

**Lipkin** emerged after the Second World War. At this time, Raphael Lipkin was working as buyer for the toy importer Guiterman & Company, and was surrounded by new products from American and German manufacturers. In 1954 Lipkin was established on South Lambeth Road, London. They made high quality plastic toys including pull-apart tractors. Sub-brands included Pippin Toys and Pedigree Playtime. By 1969 the company had been taken over by **Tri-ang**.

**Lord Roberts Memorial Workshop** was a scheme for the employment of disabled soldiers and sailors. Taking their name from Lord Roberts, a

revered military figure of the nineteenth century. Launched in 1915, by the end of the First World War it had provided employment for thousands of men, with production facilities and retail premises throughout the UK. Although they made a wide range of domestic and utilitarian products, the workshops were established with the ‘intention of capturing the German toy trade.’ The collection holds only one example, that of a pull-along wooden horse.

**Luntoy** was a brand name belonging to the London Toy Company of Bethal Green, London, between 1948 and 1965. Their only farm-related toy was a pull-along wooden horse and cart.

**Marx** had its origin in America, where brothers Louis and David Marx worked for Ferdinand Strauss, manufacturing mechanical tin toys. In 1932 they set up a company in Dudley, Worcestershire. After the Second World War they moved to Swansea as part of a government scheme to incentivise regeneration. Marx company became a world leader in mechanical tinsplate toys, with factories in ten countries and 5,000 different products. In 1967 the UK subsidiary was sold and in 1972 the American Company was sold to Quaker Oats. The name was then sold several times and, until recently, still existed. The models were finely decorated with lithographic techniques.

**Master Models (Kemlows or Kemlows Die Casting Products)** created products at a 00 scale. They were founded in 1946 by Charles Kempster and William Lowe and based at Smithfields, London. By 1958 they were at Potters Bar, Hertfordshire. The first farm-related products were introduced in 1954, in the Wee World Series. In 1958 this was changed to Master Models but by 1961 the range was much reduced possibly caused by competition from **Merit**, which caused Kemlows to cease trading.

**Matchbox** (see **Lesney Toys** for the early history) produced a range of toys that can be divided into two eras: ‘regular wheels’ with thicker axles (1953–1969) and ‘superfast wheels’ (1969–2004). The success of a Coronation Coach produced in 1953, gave the company means to create a new smaller model range. In 1957 and again in 1959 larger premises were

required to make their expansive range. By 1961 they employed 1,300 people over 3 sites, producing five million toys per week. The first major competition came from Mattel with the introduction of their Hot Wheels range, which led to Matchbox introducing their Superfast series. In the 1970s, a collectors range called 'Models of Yesteryear' was introduced. **Lesney** (and therefore Matchbox) went bankrupt in 1982. The Matchbox name changed hands and production moved to China. By 1997 it was owned by Mattel.

**Maylow** is a manufacturer that remains a mystery. The name was cast underneath the tractor and printed on the packaging but it is not known where they were based. Their products appear to date from the late 1940s and early 1950s.

**Mears** emerged in London after the Second World War. Frederick C. Mears was listed in the telephone directory as based in Tottenham. Prohibition of the use of zinc in 1951 put an end to the Mears output. Their only diecasting machine was purchased by Kemlows (see **Master Models**).

**Merit** was a brand name for toys made by J&L Randall Ltd, as founded by Jack and Lena Randall. They were Polish immigrants who started their business in the early 1940s. Their premises were bombed in 1943, but they restarted in Potters Bar, making signalling equipment for the Ministry of Defence. Initially they used **Taylor & Barrett** or **Johillco** toys in their sets. After the war they made a large range of toys, microscopes, and steam engine models, as well as pre-school toys made using high-gloss polythene developed by ICI. Around 1959 or 1960 they produced some small, pull-apart puzzle tractors to be given away in Kellogg's cereal packets. The company was sold in 1978 to Letraset and the Randall's retired to Monaco.

**Metal Tube Products** was based in Woking, Surrey, in the late 1940s. They produced similarly styled toys under a range of different brand names including **Kayron**, **A.V.H.**, **Olson Farminit Toys**, and **Toby Toys**. Or so it seems, as the toys are all virtually identical and even their packaging is similar. In contemporary advertisements, their products were advertised as part of the **MOKO** range. The exact interlocking of the brand names is

difficult to untangle and confusing. The range consisted mainly of brazed wire models, sheet metal, hollow-cast horses, and cast wheels. The fragility and crudeness of the models caused the company to cease trading in the late 1950s.

**Mettoy** (see **Corgi** for later history) was founded by Phillipp Ullman, a German refugee, in around 1932. He had experience in the manufacture of fine tinsplate toys and based his company in Northampton. The company built a second factory in Swansea in around 1944. The two factories made a large variety of toys under many brands, employing some 6,000 people. From 1952, tinsplate toys were replaced by plastic. Various ranges were launched including diecast, but competition from **Dinky** made them unsuccessful. This was until they launched the Corgi range, and everything changed.

**Micromodels** were produced by Modelcraft in London from 1938. The main driving force was Geoffrey Heighman, and the business was to supply plans to model makers. Heighman left Modelcraft in 1947 and took the Micromodels brand with him. He operated from Fleet Street in London and subcontracted design as well as printing. The models were intended as self-build kits and the printed sheets required cutting, folding, and gluing. Many sets were of architectural models, a Threshing Outfit being the only farming-related offering. The company closed in early 1960s. However, stock was purchased by D. G. Models (Autokraft) and are still available from them.

**Mills** was founded by three Mills brothers in Sheffield in 1919. They made woodworking tools and highly detailed model railways. Their most famous model was that of a Ferguson tractor, showing the innovative 3-point linkage. The model sets were issued by Ferguson to be used by salesmen all over the world. A red, overpainted example of one of these models can be seen in a separate case in this gallery. The company ceased trading in the 1960s.

**MOKO** was first used as trade name in the late nineteenth century by a German called Moses Kohnstam. His son Julius set up business in London, but it wasn't until the third generation Kohnstam, Richard, following the

Second World War, that they started to produce their own diecast toys. Initially these were subcontracted to **Metal Tube Products** and distributed by **A.V.H.**, or more specifically as the **Farminit** Series of Farm Implements. Other models like the Blaw Knox crawler was based on a **Dinky** design and cast by one of the many small companies in London. Kohnstam was really a distributor rather than a manufacturer, though the models were labelled as MOKO. As a result of the success of Matchbox, MOKO introduced the Farmette series of horse-drawn vehicles. Eventually, the business was bought out by **Lesney** in 1959.

**Nicoltoys** was a maker of wooden toys based in Robertsbridge, Sussex. They began by manufacturing cricket bats in 1876, under the name of L. J. Nichols. The company was acquired by H. J. Gray in 1941 but returned to its original owners in 1949. By 1979 Nicoltoys closed before being again acquired by Gray to form Gray-Nicholls, who are still in business today making cricket bats.

**Paramount** emerged in London following the Second World War. The company was started by William Lucas who had worked for Toy Importers Ltd (**Timpo**). A range of farm vehicles was produced called the Little Farmer Series. These were like models made by **T. N. Thomas**, a business linked to **Poplar Plastics**. It is likely that the three companies exchanged moulds. The Little Farmer models were sold as kits for the buyer to assemble. Kits were also offered with Oxydol laundry detergent. By the early 1960s the company ceased production of plastic toys, but continued trading until finally being dissolved in 2000.

**Passal** was registered as a brand in 1949 by Freeman & Brown, makers of hot air engines in Eastbourne, Sussex. The manufacture was subcontracted to Hotchkiss & Son, who bought the Passal name in 1950. Hotchkiss had been in business as engineers from 1885. They could not make the Passal model into a success and ended the short-lived venture in 1951. Hotchkiss is now the UK's leading manufacturer of air-conditioning and ventilation equipment.

**Peter Ward** models are labelled 'Peter Ward' and have sophisticated castings, which mean they were most likely manufactured in a production run.

However, no company has been identified with this name. Could they be homemade items, produced in a garden shed? We may never know.

**Poplar Plastics** emerged following the end of the Second World War. Using his demobilisation grant, Major Eric Jones set up Poplar Plastics in Bridgend, Glamorgan, Wales. These were the same premises for Thomas & Jones Injection Moulders (see **T. N. Thomas**). The business was successful, employing 110 workers by 1949. Initially the exchange of moulds between companies (American, Continental as well as UK-based) was rife and some models were imported, but Poplar proved successful, embracing new materials and techniques such as blow-moulding in the mid-1960s. The company was registered up to 2001.

**Primus Engineering** sets were most likely produced between about 1914 and 1926. Their manufacturers—W. Butcher & Sons of London—initially made construction kits, capitalising on the popularity generated by Meccano from around 1902 onwards. The ready-made tractor in the collection (as displayed in this gallery) is almost certainly the first mass-produced, British-made toy tractor.

**Promotional Model Tractors** are something of a mystery. Nothing is known about the company but the *Farming in Miniature* books list three different detailed plastic models. Whoever made them was skilled and in possession of quality machinery. One such boxed tractor includes a leaflet stating: ‘Courtesy of BRITISH FARM MECHANISATION’.

**Shackleton** was started by Maurice Shackleton in Sandbach, Cheshire, just prior to the Second World War. They made wooden toy lorries and doll’s houses. After the War they started making high-quality diecast model lorries. Government restrictions on the use of zinc made production difficult for Shackleton but the David Brown tractor company asked them to produce a model of the Trackmaster 30 crawler. They reportedly produced 150, of which David Brown bought 100. Shackleton soon ceased trading with dies and machines being sold to **Chad Valley**.

**Sontaw** was an anagram of the founder W. H. Watson’s surname. They were based in Brighton, West Sussex. Founded at the beginning of the twentieth century, the company initially made shop fittings. By the mid-

1930s they had begun to diversify into toy making. Two models of horse-drawn carts are known, of which one (on display) incorporates early recycling: a meat-tin is used as the cart body. The company appears to have ceased trading by the early 1940s.

**Speedwell** was a London company making plastic figurines, which was mostly active in the 1960s. The only farm-related model was that of a very crude horse-drawn cart.

**Spot-on** was a brand name introduced by **Tri-ang** in 1959 for their first diecast model range. Made in their factory at Castlereagh, Belfast, the models were made to a highly detailed standard, hence the name. Tri-ang made the mistake of buying the failing Meccano company and combining the **Dinky** and Spot-on range. By 1967 the range was axed, although manufacturing continued at Tri-ang New Zealand for another 3 years.

**S. T. (Wembley) Ltd** made large wooden and tinsplate toys from their premises in Greenford, Middlesex, in the late 1940s. By the early 1950s they were operating from Herne Bay, Kent. They appear to have only made farm toys as depicted on the labels on their packaging. The models were quite crude, and taste changed as more detailed diecast and plastic models became available. By 1953 the company stopped trading. They played on the S. T. initials, labelling products variously as Steering Toy, Super Toy, Strong Trailer, Special Toy, Satisfactory Toy, and Sensational Toy.

**Taylor & Barrett** emerged in the 1920s when two ex-employees from **Britains** began to make hollow-cast lead figures and vehicles. Only one farm wagon was produced, which made use of the Wild West covered wagon in their range (this can be seen on display). During the Second World War their factory in East Finchley, London, was bombed and after the war the partnership broke up, later morphing partly into **F. G. Taylor and Sons**.

**F. G. Taylor and Sons** emerged soon after the demise of **Taylor & Barrett**. F.G. Taylor and Sons continued the production of farm-related models. Interestingly, they produced slush-castings in zinc alloy as well as diecast lead models. Identical versions of the latter later continued in plastic. The company ceased trading in 1980.



**Taylor Toys** was part of L.C. Taylor Ltd, who were registered as cane furniture makers in Leicester from around 1928. Later they specialized in 'handicrafts' and between 1957 and 1981 they were manufacturing wooden toys. They produced a 'Wellington Tractor' named after the company's address in Wellington Street.

**T. N. Thomas** was linked to Thomas & Jones (Plastic Moulders) and **Poplar Plastics**, and all these companies operated from the same address in Bridgend, Glamorgan, Wales. The origin of the initials T. N. is not known, but the name Thomas probably referred to Islyn Thomas. Islyn emigrated to America aged 11 and was instrumental in some of the largest American plastic manufacturers prior to the Second World War. In 1944 he started his own business, the Thomas Manufacturing Cooperation. The Bridgend companies were linked to Islyn and he was further involved in advising and supplying companies like **Airfix**, Rosedale (**Tudor Rose**), and **Paramount Plastics**. T. N. Thomas ceased trading in around 1974.

**Timpo** (short for Toy Importers Ltd) was started in 1937 by Salomon Gawrylowicz, a refugee from Germany. Based in London, they started by importing toys from Holland. The war made imports impossible and the company began to produce their own models. Timpo made a range of farm-related items, mostly horse-drawn carts, the dies of which were sold to **Benbros** who re-issued them. The name was changed in 1953 to Model Toys Ltd. Timpo was the first to use the over-moulding technique in 1962, eliminating the need for painting by moulding several colours of plastic. In 1964 they moved to Lanarkshire, Scotland, and in 1968 they merged to form Berwick Timpo Ltd. The recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s resulted in the collapse of the company, which went into receivership in 1983.

**Tri-ang** was formed after three Lines brothers set up business together, using the triangle (three lines) as their logo. The company grew rapidly, eventually building Tri-ang Works, a 27-acre site at Merton, London, employing 1,500 workers by 1932. Around that time tinsplate models were introduced including an impressive clockwork crawler. In 1935

they started the Minic range of smaller models. Success allowed them to buy different companies including toy retailer Hamleys. Growth continued after the Second World War, many more companies were taken over, and production was extended to factories in Belfast (see **Spot-on**) and Merthyr Tydfil, Wales. The latter was huge, employing 4,000 workers and utilizing 500 power presses. By the end of the 1950s they ran 39 separate factories worldwide. The range of companies and brands once owned by Tri-ang is staggering. However, they overreached and some of their offerings were outdated. The takeover of **Dinky** (Meccano) proved to be a mistake and Tri-ang struggled to make it profitable. Falling demand and an overvalued pound led to the collapse of Lines Brothers in 1971. The following decade the company sold most of its assets and in 1983 Tri-ang was bought by Sharna Ware.

**Tudor Rose** (also **Rosedale**) was the brand name used by Rosedale Associated Manufacturers Ltd. This company, started by Norman Rosedale, traded from Glamorgan, Wales, in the 1940s, initially making imitation jewellery. Early toys were made from Cellulose Acetate and Polystyrene plastics, both used in the jewellery. Like with other British toy companies, early plastic models were often copies of American toys. In 1959 Rosedale purchased the **Kleeware** business. By the late 1960s, the company sold over 1 million pounds worth of toys via Woolworths shops, but in 1970 they made a significant loss and were sold to a finance company. **Mettoy** bought the brand in 1978 but sold it again in 1983. See **T. N. Thomas** and **Poplar Products** for the Glamorgan Toy manufacturing connection.

**Wells-Brimtoy** formed from two companies. Brimtoy was registered in 1914 by The British Metal and Toy Manufacturers Ltd, and A. Wells & Co started in 1919, buying the Brimtoy name in 1932. Both produced tinplate clockwork toys, but Wells invested in up-to-date technology and made everything in-house. The combined company employed 500 staff and both factories were used separately. After the Second World War they moved to Holyhead, Anglesey, starting a factory called Progress Works which made alarm clocks. Clockwork toys were made at the London factory in Walthamstow. The London business closed in 1970 and The

Wells name disappeared after a merger with Kelo (another toy company), which failed in 1998.

**Wend-AI** was based in Blandford Forum, Dorset, and was formed in 1947. They made 'unbreakable' solid-cast aluminium toys. Edgar Kehoe was the founder, who based the use of relatively expensive aluminium on its use by the French toy maker Quiralu. The original company was called Wendan Manufacturing Company Ltd. They remained in business until the 1980s but aluminium toy production stopped in 1956. The models were made using the slow and outdated sand-casting technique.

Finally, there are a handful of toys in the wider Peter Wade-Martins Collection that either sit on the periphery of the term 'Farming Miniature', where the search for company history has drawn a blank, or where they have been discovered after the main collection came to the MERL. These include:

**Brown's Models** (Tyne and Wear)

**Malins Engineering Ltd, MAMOD live steam models** (Smethwick, Warley)

**Woodnote**

**Distinctive Toys**

**International Products** (London)

**Sunshine Toys**

**Dorset Products**

**Roydon Toys** (Wallasey)

**W. & T. Manufacturing** (Birmingham)

**Scaledown Models** (Havant)

**Herald Models**

**Scalecraft**

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