



Parsons' pleasure

Alwyn Brice visited Ashington, to sample Sussex hospitality.

David Parsons' Ashington event runs pretty much every month of the year and, by his own admission, it's the only show in the heart of West Sussex. It's not huge but it attracts a regular exhibitor base as well as plenty of interested collectors from around the area. At the April show he announced that the next event would have free entry: surely a pull? He's also involved in the Henfield swapmeet, so is kept quite busy.

Amongst his own toys, of note was a Britains 18inch howitzer of 1970s vintage, with a good box and most of the shells: this was £45. Joe 90 and Captain Scarlet annuals were a mere £4 each whilst £15 would have secured a small but complete Arkitek set. Finally, the Dinky AEC Transporter with Chieftain tank load was very good indeed, and looked almost mint. Decals were still on the sheet and for this combination

he was seeking £80.

Inside the show proper was everything from second-hand model railway models and accessories to modern day vacuum-sealed diecasts. Kits were about, and I spotted a handful of Tamiya WW2 German tanks in 1/35 scale at just £8 each. There was also a Revell Polikarpov 1/16 aircraft for half that! Inexpensive fare indeed! I stopped to talk with Steve Pocock, since I was attracted by a large card displaying a variety of different plastic horses. He buys in these equine accessories since there is a demand from collectors, and his stable was suitable for Matchbox, Dinky and Corgi primarily. I also noted that he offers the same service with replacement tyres! For these he had examples that fitted Minic and Shackleton, as well as the more common diecast makers. White metal radiator castings are another

line which are useful for the early Dinky saloons and vans. Aside from these supplies he is able to restore old Dinky toys and he enjoys tinkering with Hornby Dublo 3-rail. It seems to me that he is one useful contact if you are short of an expert!

Amongst Steve's toys were four wonderful sets of Dinky Modelled Miniatures, these representing station personnel. All were in original (good) paint and contained in excellent decorative boxes. The figures had been restrung on new backing cards but otherwise were all correct. Sets 1, 3, 4 and 5 were marked up at £100 a time. In contrast, for a paltry £25, you could have bought his Truescale HO/OO railway platform, two bridges and steps. These were made of wood and were in remarkable condition for their age, still bearing their advertising labels.



LEFT
This Hong Kong collectable was rather like a Tudor Rose model.



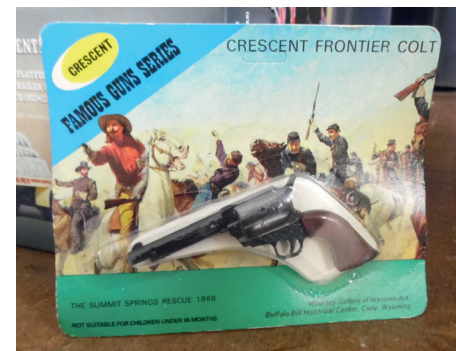
ABOVE
A large scale friction driven racer by Mettoy: with box, it was £45.



ABOVE
Small boxes of Arkitek, such as this one, are not often seen today.



ABOVE
Hornby Motor Coach was not for the impecunious.



LEFT
Crescent Colt, still on a card: hens' teeth or what?



ABOVE
Simply beautiful: four different railway personnel sets from Dinky were as good as it gets.



ABOVE
Good set of Britains lead Arabs seen on Peter Holmes' stall.



LEFT
This attractive Dinky tank transporter was almost shop fresh.



ABOVE
My favourite: the Hong Kong friction-powered Zephyr convertible with suitcase.



ABOVE
Who couldn't fall in love with this gorgeous Distler Jaguar? The boy's expression says it all.

On to David Ronnie, who used to run a toyshop in Tunbridge Wells. Now semi-retired, he enjoys the swapmeet scene and he had some interesting articles for sale. I've never, in all my years of swapmeets, seen a miniature Crescent gun still on its backing card - but he had an 1869 Frontier Colt, untouched, at just £10. A Benbros television series boxed milk float was a reasonable £35, whilst for £4 there was a mint blister card of Merit railways hedges. His Hong Kong plastic vehicles, though, really stood out: a Mobilgas articulated tanker was impressive in red (£60), whilst £25 was being asked for a friction drive Merehall Commer Van. Personally, I loved the Lincoln International convertible Ford Zeyphr, though. This had a hinged boot and came with an opening suitcase and was priced at £45. There was also a pair of Telsada Lotus Elan convertibles, one blue, on yellow: okay, so the windscreens weren't accurate but the cars' lines were well captured, if spoiled by the huge chrome boot rack each sported! You could have had the two (both boxed) for less

than £100.

Peter Holmes' stall was awash with O gauge tinplate Hornby rolling stock and he assured me that he is selling this scale quite steadily, which rather begs the question of the size of people's houses... Whilst there was nothing worthy of special mention, I did see an Edwardian Chad Valley blow football game, complete with tinplate goalies and wooden blowpipes for sale at £45. The ball, though, was long gone. A good boxed set of Britains lead Arabs of the Desert caught my eye amongst his stock of figures: the box was quite reasonable and the contents were all unbroken, in what looked to be original paint. He was hoping for around £100 for this colourful set.

I spent quite some time with Ken Addison, who had some delectable, if costly, railway stock. The Wrenn Golden Arrow Fighter Pilot loco was impressively heavy and immaculate: for this he wanted £300 whilst an equally collectable (if less attractive) Hornby 2-rail electric Motor Coach was simply stunning at £225. This latter, I was told, being tinplate, tends to

rust around the window so good examples are hard to find. Had it been suitable for 3-rail track, it would have commanded over £100 more. Ken also had a handful of clockwork Minic vehicles. His dark blue racing car was £50 whilst a US jeep, also in great condition and boxed, was just £30. A fire engine, with flat spotted tyres, was a little more at £45.

Finally, some delights on Rob Bath's stall rounded off my day. The pair of celluloid acrobats on a wire frame were made by Branko and still worked, and £95 was the going rate for this Japanese curiosity. The red tinplate Distler Jaguar XK120 with battery-powered "fuelling" station was utterly divine (but sadly £240). More affordable was its smaller sibling, portraying a plastic Buick, also in red, at £140. Keil Kraft gliders, in simple balsa wood, requiring a lot of effort and woodworking skills, would have put off many but were looking for new homes; and a charming, if simple clockwork Mettoy tinplate train set, still boxed, could have been yours for £55 - and it even retained its original key. ■