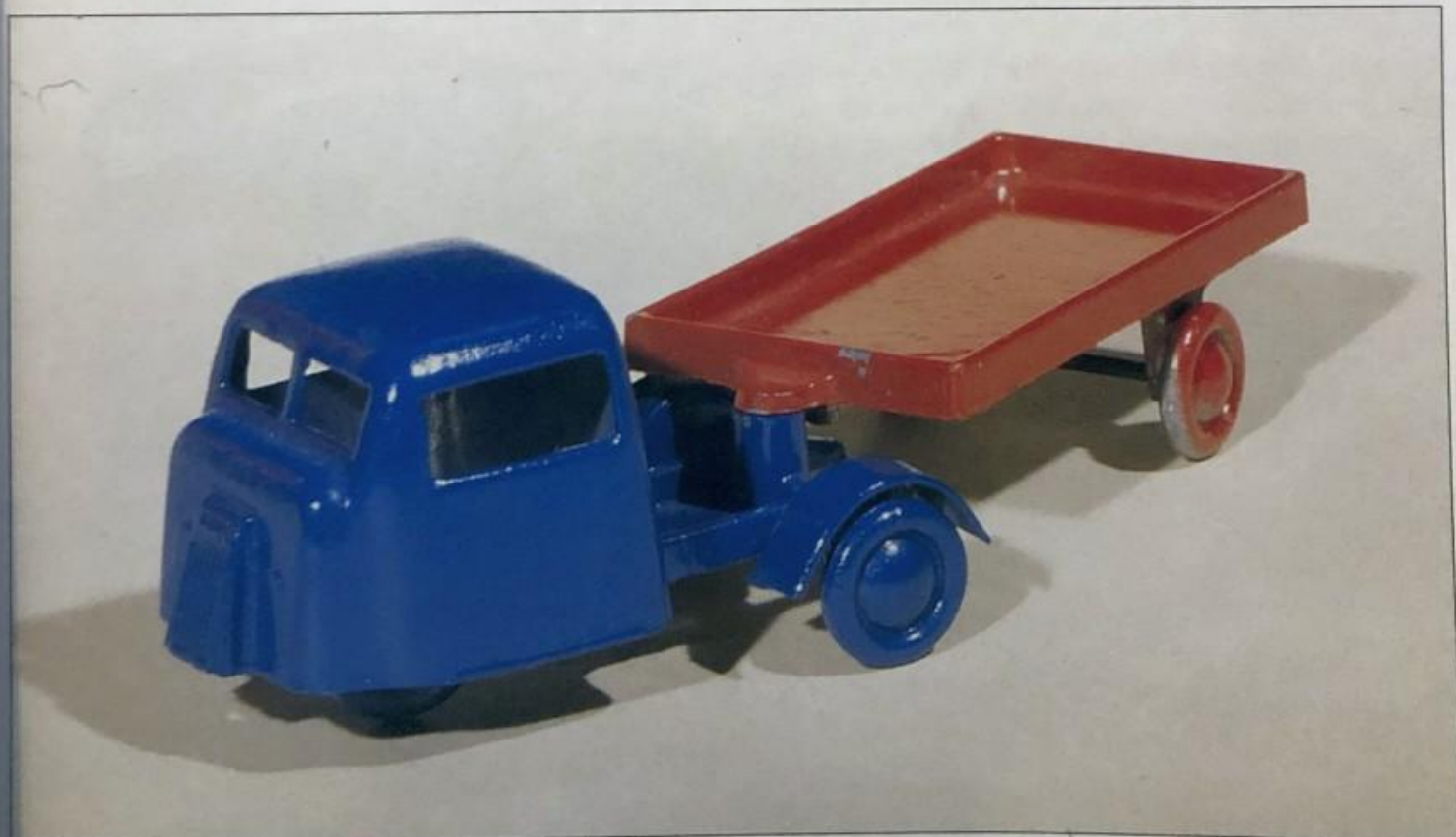


# F Robert Newson's Favourite TOYS

The fact that apparently unconnected toy manufacturers often made very similar toys, is one that has intrigued collectors over the years. There are certainly some cases where dies changed hands and others where a sub-contract tool maker may have made dies for more than one manufacturer. However, most of the time it seems to have been a case of straightforward copying of ideas. After all it is easier to use another toy as a pattern rather than develop an original idea.

Our subjects this time are typical examples of copying. They are similar but not identical mechanical horses and trailers and can only be said to be Scammell's because they couldn't really be anything else! It is also hard to decide which came first and which is the copy.

The model shown with a red cab and green trailer is probably by Sundaw Products Ltd. This firm was incorporated in 1949 and their address was 1949 Bath Row, Birmingham. They are best known for a model of a Midland Red bus in single or double deck versions. The mechanical horse was not marked with



*TAL Developments Ltd example. Note the extensive details*

the maker's name, but had the same red and gold "Transport Services" transfer on the rear of the cab as found on the bus. Another common feature between the mechanical horse and the bus is that the castings were painted evenly inside and out. This is quite unusual, as most toys of the time were spray painted on flat trays, so that only the outside of the castings were covered, leaving the inside and underneath unpainted. Also, silver trim was very neatly applied, on the mechanical horse to the radiator grille and single headlight. The cab and front wheel were painted red, while the other wheels were painted black. The overall length was 150mm.

The model with the blue cab and red trailer was probably made by TAL Developments Ltd, diecasters, of Lordship Lane, Tottenham, London N17, and dates from the late 1940s. It had the same wheels as are found on the "Merlin Racing Car" which was definitely made by TAL. Compared with the Sundaw model, the TAL example had a differently shaped cab with a wider grille and two headlights, but without any silver trim. The single front wheel was mounted between two forks riveted at the front of the model, allowing the wheel to swivel, exactly similar to the Sundaw. The TAL model had a smooth floor to the

trailer (ribbed on the Sundaw) and the same wheels on the trailer as on the rear axle of the cab (the Sundaw had larger trailer wheels). Both models had a two-position coupling between cab and trailer for no obvious reason. The TAL model was spray painted after assembling the wheels and axles and from the top side, leaving the underside only unpainted. Other colours have been seen besides the blue and red version shown. This example came in a plain brown cardboard box with LOW LOADERS 4/- handwritten on one end flap! Overall length was 159mm.

I have seen more of the TAL model than the Sundaw, although neither is particularly common. They are typical of the crude toys made by many small diecasting firms in the years immediately after the war.

Valuation of toys like these is always difficult because there are not sufficient examples available for a "market price" to emerge. Quoting "mint and boxed" prices is particularly inappropriate since even fewer have survived in perfect condition. However, in good original condition, these models would probably be in the range £20- £30.



*Rear view of Sundaw example showing 'Transport Services' transfers.*