

# DCMT CRESCENT

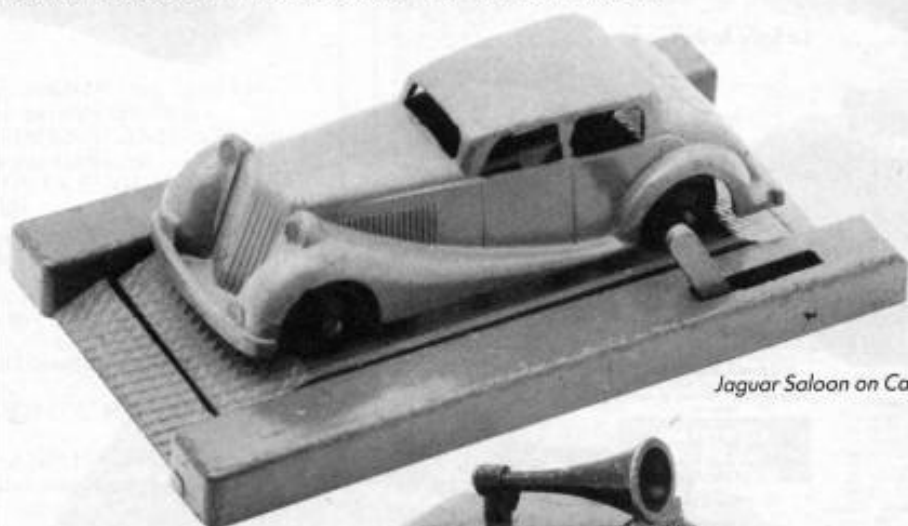
An occasional series in which Robert Newson looks at the lesser-known British die-cast manufacturers, starting with the DCMT Crescent vehicles of 1947 to 1950.

This is the first of an occasional series of articles in which I hope to take you down some of the backwaters of collecting by looking at die-cast vehicles from smaller British manufacturers. In general the products of the major companies such as Dinky, Corgi and Matchbox have been well documented, but there is much less information available on the smaller firms, and I hope that I can be some guide. In particular, if you have a query on this subject, why not write to the editor, and we will do our best to answer it.

Many small companies started producing die-cast toys just after the Second World War. At that time, the market had been starved of metal toys for several years, at first by rationing of metal supplies, and from 1943 by a complete ban on the manufacture and sale of metal toys. The ban was lifted in June 1945, but continued rationing of metal and the export drive for quality toys such as Dinkies meant that on the home market virtually anything would sell, and many toys of the era are correspondingly crude! As conditions improved many firms dropped out of the die-cast toy business, while others consolidated their position and expanded.

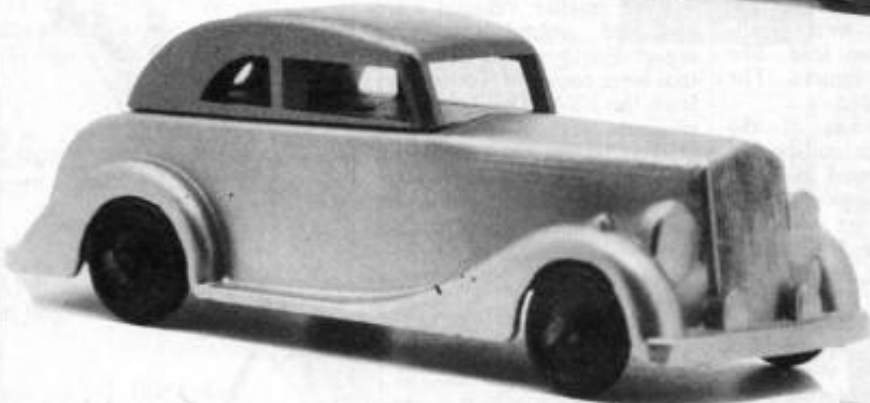
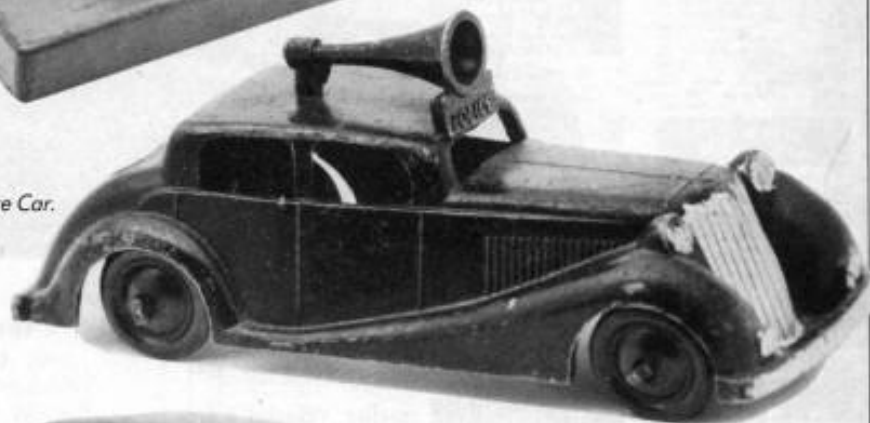
One of these survivors was Die Casting Machine Tools Ltd, who used the brand name 'Lone Star' from the early 1950s, and who continue to produce die-cast toys to the present day, although they are now a subsidiary of a German group. The company was started by two die-casting engineers, Aubrey Mills and Sidney Ambridge, and was incorporated as a limited company in August 1940, based at Palmers Green in north London.

Their first toys were made around 1947 and were distributed by The Crescent Toy Co Ltd, based in South Tottenham. Crescent was an established manufacturer of lead soldiers and other figures, having been in business since 1922. Crescent produced a boxed set consisting of a Jaguar car and car ramp (both made by DCMT) and an oil cabinet,

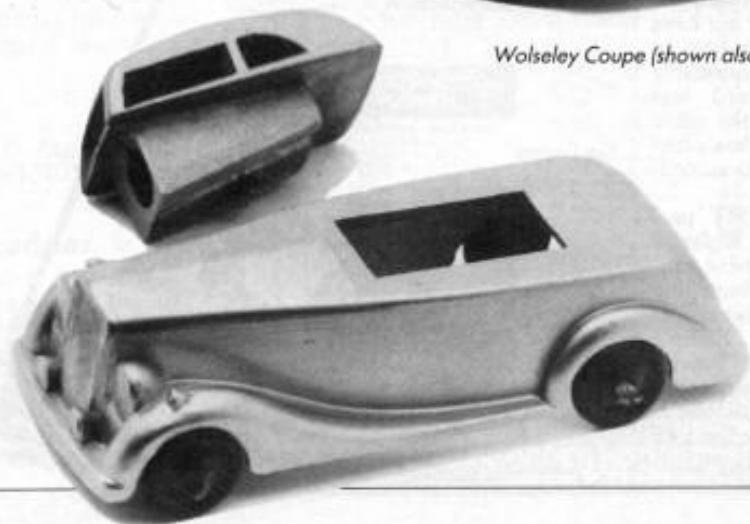


*Jaguar Saloon on Car Lifting Ramp.*

*Jaguar Police Car.*



*Wolseley Coupe (shown also as a pencil sharpener).*





*La Salle Sedan.*



*Nash Roadster.*



*Low Loading Flat Lorry.*



*Petrol Tanker.*

mechanic and 'Free Air' sign which were made by Crescent. The DCMT items were both die-cast in zinc, whereas the other accessories were slush-cast or hollow-cast lead, like Crescent's other figures. The set retailed at 3s 11d.

A Police version of the Jaguar with a large loudspeaker on the roof followed in 1948, again sold by Crescent as a 'Dial 999' boxed set with four lead figures. The Jaguar is a reasonably good model and must have been produced in large numbers, because it is one of the most common of late-1940s toys. Most swapmeets will yield a couple of examples, and a collector should not have to search too long to find one in good condition at a reasonable price. Complete boxed sets with accessories, on the other hand, turn up much less often and are usually priced accordingly.

Also in 1948, DCMT produced a model of a Wolseley Coupé which had a lift-out window and roof section containing a pencil sharpener! This model was distributed by Bailey's Agencies Ltd as one of a series of 'Novelty Pencil Sharpeners'. The Wolseley is also quite a good model, but since the roof section is loose one often finds

just the bottom half of the model. The retail price was 3s 0d.

Four smaller vehicles were produced around this time (again distributed by Crescent) that were copies of Tootsietoys from the USA. The Tootsietoy originals were all part of the '230' series introduced in 1940, and the DCMT versions were simplified by omitting bumpers and had open wheel arches



*Fire Engine.*

(closed on the Tootsietoys). All four models had solid black plastic wheels, and the same wheels were introduced on the Wolseley, and slightly larger black plastic wheels on the Jaguar, to replace the previous solid metal wheels.

The last model to mention is a Fire Engine with extending ladder, introduced by DCMT in 1948 and distributed by Crescent. This was quite a complicated model with a two-piece ladder in pressed aluminium attached to a die-cast body. A strong spring forces the ladder upwards and it is only stopped from reaching vertical by a string that passes through a slot in the front bumper and is tied around the front axle! The intention is that by winding a handle at the rear the ladder will raise and extend and the fireman on the ladder will climb to the top. Unfortunately the mechanism does not work very well, and the strings are vulnerable to breaking through being under tension all the time. Two seated firemen were also provided with the model.

In 1949 there were several developments which brought an end to the relationship between DCMT and Crescent as manufacturer and distributor. Crescent were now introducing their own die-cast toys, although as a lead toy maker high-pressure die-casting was still a new technique for them. Crescent opened a new factory in South Wales during 1949 and started to transfer all production there, while DCMT having gained a foothold in the toy business saw that the way ahead was to organise their own marketing and distribution.

So DCMT advertised that 'as and from January 1, 1950 we are selling direct to wholesalers'. Of the DCMT Crescent models I have described, the Jaguar Saloon and Police Car, Car Ramp and Fire Engine were continued by DCMT with the castings changed to remove the CRESCENT name. (I haven't actually seen a Police Car with the revised casting — can anyone confirm this?) The

brand name 'Slikka Toy' was used by DCMT for a short while, and was cast on the Fire Engine.

New DCMT toys were rapidly introduced, including in 1950 a 'Lone Star' repeater cap pistol — the first use of the

Lone Star name. It should also be mentioned that there are other DCMT Crescent toys apart from the vehicles described here, such as a dolls' house gas cooker with pots and pans, but these are outside the scope of this article.

The following are detailed descriptions of the DCMT Crescent vehicles.

## Jaguar Saloon

Length 101mm. First advertised in *Games & Toys*, April 1947. Colours: red, blue, yellow, green or metallic light blue.

First casting: CRESCENT MADE IN ENGLAND and 10 cast underneath; painted metal or black plastic wheels.

Second casting: DCMT LTD MADE IN ENGLAND and 10 cast underneath; black plastic wheels.

The significance of the number 10 cast on the model is not clear. It does not seem to be a catalogue number for either Crescent or DCMT versions.

## Car Lifting Ramp

Length 128mm. First advertised in *Games & Toys*, April 1947. Colours: red, blue, yellow or green.

First casting: MADE IN ENGLAND D.C.M.T. CRESCENT PAT. APPL'D cast underneath.

Second casting: MADE IN ENGLAND D.C.M.T. CRESCENT PAT. NO. 5019/47 cast underneath.

Third casting: CRESCENT name removed.

## Jaguar Police Car

Length 101mm. First advertised in *Games & Toys*, March 1948. Colour black. Loudspeaker and POLICE sign on roof.

Painted metal or black plastic wheels.

First casting: CRESCENT MADE IN ENGLAND and 10 cast underneath.

Second casting: not confirmed.

## Wolseley Coupé with pencil sharpener

Length 88mm. First advertised in *Games & Toys*, July 1948. Painted metal or black plastic wheels. MADE IN ENGLAND cast underneath. Colours: lower half of body metallic light blue, metallic light brown or metallic pink; window and roof section metallic dark blue or metallic light blue.

Length 77mm. Copy of Tootsietoy no. 230. Black plastic wheels. CRESCENT MADE IN ENGLAND DCMT cast underneath. Colours: turquoise-green or red.

## La Salle Sedan

Length 77mm. Copy of Tootsietoy no. 230. Black plastic wheels. CRESCENT MADE IN ENGLAND DCMT cast underneath. Colours: turquoise-green or red.

## Nash Roadster

Length 75mm. Copy of Tootsietoy no. 233. Black plastic wheels. DCMT. CRESCENT MADE IN ENGLAND cast underneath. Colours: metallic light blue or metallic light green.

## Low Loading Flat Lorry

Length 94mm. Similar to Tootsietoy no. 234. Black plastic wheels. DCMT. CRESCENT MADE IN ENGLAND cast underneath. Colours: red, metallic dark green, metallic light blue or metallic pink.

## Petrol Tanker

Length 79mm. Copy of Tootsietoy no. 235. Black plastic wheels. DCMT. CRESCENT MADE IN ENGLAND cast underneath. Colour green.

## Fire Engine with Extending Ladder

Length 106mm. First advertised in *Games & Toys*, August 1948. Black plastic wheels. Red body with black, silver and gold trim, unpainted winding handle, unpainted pressed aluminium ladder with brass pulleys, metallic blue fireman on ladder, two dark blue seated firemen.

First casting: DCMT. CRESCENT MADE IN ENGLAND PAT. APP'D cast underneath.

Second casting: CRESCENT name removed, SLIKKA TOY added.

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4149 Renault 40CV
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4863 Citroën C4 Fire Engine
4863 Citroën C4 Police (Horn) Bus
4867 Citroën C4 Van (Michelin)
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4812 Citroën Wrecker
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4816 Citroën C4 Van (Energy)
4821 Dodge Pick-up (5000 Gall)
4822 Citroën C4 Fire Tanker
4823 Dodge Pick-up
4828 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz, open
4851 Cadillac Eldorado Biarritz, closed
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Y19 Packard
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Y34 Spoons
Y35 Fair Taffes, zinc green paint
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Y39 AEC Bus, Schweppes, red straw box
Y40 AEC Bus, Heng Whisky, brown cream
Y41 Bugatti grey/red domes
Y42 Renault Eagle Panhard
Y43 Renault Panhard
Y44 Renault Army Ambulance
Y45 Renault Tankards
Y46 Chrysler Daimler Shery
Y47 Chrysler Lovellville
Y48 Renault Tankards
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129 RM Bus, 190 Locomotive
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1106 BMW 318i (T21), grey
1107 Volvo 740 GLE (T21), red
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1109 Ferrari 300 (T20), red
1110 Jaguar XKE (T20), green
1111 Jaguar XKE (T20), red
1112 Mercedes 250 (T20), red
1113 Ferrari California (T20), red
1114 Ferrari GTD, red
1115 MGA Twin Cam, green
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1199 MGA Twin Cam, green
1200 MGA Twin Cam, green

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08131 Bedford Parthenon-Pickup
08132 Bedford Parthen

shown in the illustration.

Regarding John Humphreys' letter in the same issue of the magazine, a Triumph Dolomite (1970s) was made by Grand Prix Models. I have this model which I made up, but it was not of high quality.

I am still looking for models of Austin Allegro Estate and Fiat 125S saloon — were they ever made?

R. D. Gillham,  
Crowthorne,  
Berkshire.

I cannot let John O. K. Humphreys' remarks about the choice of subjects for the first three models in the new 'Dinky Collection' (in the April/May issue of *MODEL COLLECTOR*) pass without comment. Although he has a valid point about the Jaguar E-Type and Chevrolet Bel-Air models, which have both been modelled on numerous occasions already, the MGB GT model is very much a step in the right direction.

It has, for a long time, been a source of amazement to me that the majority of manufacturers have ignored MG cars, with the exception of the TC and TF Midgets. This is even more surprising when you consider that the MGB was the best selling sports car, with most of the half-a-million cars produced going to that darling of both the sports car and toy car manufacturers — the United States of America.

It is strange, therefore, that the only mass-produced MGB items of note were the Dinky Toys MGB roadster (a frankly awful effort with appalling opening doors), the Corgi MGB GT and MGC GT (a very attractive model, popular with MG model enthusiasts) and both Airfix and Revell 1/32nd scale plastic kits. Wills Finecast produce superb kits of both the open and GT MGB versions, and they may eventually produce a V8 version. Both 'Jem Models' and 'KJ & R Replicas' produce excellent MGB, C, GT and V8 models in 1/43rd scale, but it is a shame that it has been left to the small producer of high quality, expensive, white metal kits to satisfy the demands of the MG collector.

Polistil have made a step in the right direction with their lovely model of the MGA Twin Cam (shame about the wire wheels though; a proper set of centre-lock disc wheels would transform the model), but we really need somebody like Bburago, Polistil or Majorette to come up with a decent large scale model of the MGB, MGB GT, MGC or MGB V8. Vitesse, Box, Solido, etc, could also produce a decent 1/43rd MGB instead of so many

Porsches, Ferraris, etc.

Matchbox are to be applauded at their choice of MG in the form of the MGB GT (although I hope that they swap the awful wheels shown on the pre-production prototype for those from the Jaguar!). I understand Matchbox hope to follow the MGB GT with a model of the MGB GT V8 in 1989/90, complete with correct V8 alloy wheels. An open MGB version would make a pleasing future derivative, utilising the base and many other parts of the GT Model, as would the fabulous MGC GTS Sebring race car.

Now, if Bburago were to make a 1/18th scale MGB GT V8 in their 'Diamonds' series, that would make my year.

David A. Knowles,  
Editor,  
MG Car Club.

Now that the good news regarding the rebirth of Dinky Toys is official, I would like to make the point that the models should be of UK manufacture and contain as little plastic as possible. The use of plastic, in my opinion, undermines the quality and feel of the model.

In addition, I wish to nominate the following vehicles as being suitably interesting subjects for consideration. They have not been done to death either! Good luck, Dinky!

Facel — Vega HK500  
Wolseley 6/80 (Police)  
Buick Skylark  
Oldsmobile 88  
Citroën DS19  
Checker American Taxi-Cab (Yellow Cabs)  
MG TF Midget 1500  
London 'Beardmore' Taxi-Cab  
Austin Healey 3000  
Vauxhall Victor F series Mk1  
Riley RMA 2½ litre  
Borgward Isabella  
Sunbeam Tiger  
Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud Mk3.  
M. A. Wardle,  
Heywood,  
Lancashire.

### Edocars

I would like to add some information on the Euro Ford feature in the April/May edition of *MODEL COLLECTOR*.

Three models were mentioned and pictured from the Mini-Sport/Edocar range. I own six more models in the series — they are:

Ferrari 308 GTB — green;  
BMW M1 in 'Bast' livery;  
VW 604 — orange;  
Porsche 911 — silver;  
Pontiac Firebird SE — black;  
Mercedes-Benz 500 SEC — gold.

They were being sold in our local branch of the supermarket chain, Tesco, for 19p each. They were in bubble-packs and labelled as Mini Sport. On the base of the models it states that they are made by MC Toy in Macau.

The wheels, and some of the castings, are identical to the ones produced by Matchbox (also made in Macau).

On a different note, I have been thinking about building a model of the Brooklands motor racing circuit to display my Yesteryear Grand Prix series models. Is it possible to get hold of some drivers for the cars; does a company produce

them?

Simon Carter,  
Mappowder,  
Dorset.

### AEC

With reference to the April/May edition may I submit the following regarding the AEC Mandator model.

PECO, the model railway manufacturers, made an OO scale plastic kit version of the entire 'Road Railer' device, including the AEC Mandator truck.

Andrew C. More,  
Forestdale,  
Croydon.

## DCMT Crescent An up-date by Robert Newson

Following my article on the vehicles made by Die Casting Machine Tools Ltd from 1947–50 in *MODEL COLLECTOR* (Winter 1987, pages 13–15), an interesting variation on the Fire Engine has now come to light. As mentioned in the article, the name cast under the Fire Engine was changed from DCMT. CRESCENT to DCMT. SLIKKA TOY in 1950, when The Crescent Toy Co Ltd ceased to distribute the DCMT range.

I have now acquired a Slikka Toy Fire Engine which has the main body made of red self-coloured plastic rather than the usual die-cast metal, but clearly taken from the same mould. This plastic version has the same silver and black spray-painted trim on the radiator grille and headlights, and the same two-piece aluminium ladder. The fireman on the ladder is also cast in red plastic, over-painted dark blue. Only the seated fireman and winding handle remain in die-cast metal. Wheels are black plastic, as on the metal version. The model is individually boxed, with a price of 3s 6d marked on it.

This model probably dates from 1951 or 1952 when, due to

the Korean war, supplies of metal for toy production were severely rationed. Several small manufacturers of metal toys gave up completely at this time, and others had a struggle to keep going. Plastic moulding was obviously one way to keep the factory working until metal was once again more freely available (from mid-1952).

Incidentally, there is a plastic Jaguar saloon, very similar to the DCMT model, but this is in fact a copy by Palitoy dating from 1948, and not from the same moulds. Having said that, though, was the Fire Engine the only DCMT model tried in plastic? A plastic Jaguar is certainly a possibility!



The fire engine  
from DCMT  
Crescent