

3 of the best

- * REVOLUTIONARY LORRY
- * ITALIAN STATION WAGON
- * RAC PATROL VAN

WITHOUT doubt, the standard of die-cast modelling has improved enormously in recent years and, in nearly every case, Dinky Toys have set the trend. It is hard to believe that as little as five years ago none of the refinements, now regarded as standard on the cheapest model, were incorporated in even the most expensive replicas on sale at that time. If you thought that these were pretty basic in design, however, then how much more so would be the early pre-war Dinky Toys that were often little more than a single body casting with wheels? Who, in those days of simplicity when models with even opening bonnets were unheard of, could have foreseen a model in which the complete cab hinged to allow access to a minutely detailed 'engine'?

You may not have heard of such a model yourselves; therefore, I should explain that I refer to the Leyland Dump Truck with Tilt Cab, Dinky Toy No. 925, which would have been described in these pages last month if the space had not been taken up by my customisation article. The Tilt Cab is a good, substantial model of distinction, and 'distinction' here is definitely the right word. In fact, it is quite unique in appearance, with a wide, flat-fronted cab on the long Leyland 8-wheeled chassis—both small in comparison to the huge tipping body, pivotally mounted on the chassis. Except for the opening tailgate, which is in unbreakable Alkon, the body is diecast as a complete unit for strength and is virtually unbreakable. The hand-operated tipping movement is controlled by twin 'hydraulic' rams.

Turning, now, to the cab, this really is unique. Besides being equipped with windows, seats and steering wheel, it is hinged at the front, as I explained, so that the whole unit can be tilted forward to allow access to an amazingly detailed and plated 'engine'. Both the cab and body are held in the normal position for travelling by spring clips. Jewelled headlamps are fitted at the front of the model, which is finished in off-white with orange body and blue cab roof and wheels. Spread across the tailgate in white lettering on an orange background are the words 'Sand Ballast

By CHRIS JELLEY

Gravel', together with a line of diagonal black and white stripes.

Fiat 2300 Station Wagon

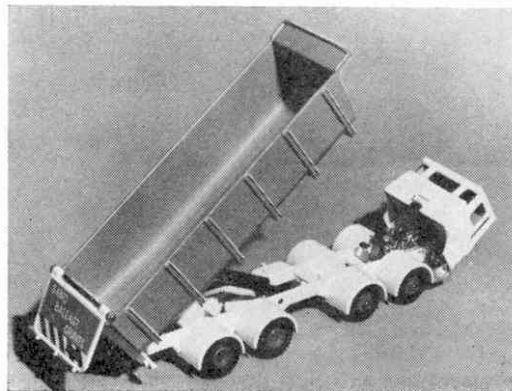
The second model featured here is this month's scheduled new release—the Fiat 2300 Station Wagon, No. 172. A superb, action-packed reproduction it

is, too, but before going into detail, I should like to write a little about the real-life car on which the Dinky Toy is based.

Manufactured in Italy by Fiat S.A. of Turin, the 2300 is powered by a 6-cylinder o.h.v. engine of 2,279 c.c. capacity that develops a power output of 105 b.h.p. at 5,300 r.p.m. Transmission to the rear wheels is via a 4-speed and reverse, manually-operated gearbox with synchromesh on all forward ratios. Maximum speed is a fraction over 97 m.p.h. and performance up to this speed, according to the experts, is most impressive.

In general terms, the Fiat confounds all those people who still regard station wagons as being little more than vans with windows. Not only has it a mechanical performance equal to many comparable saloon cars, but it is also smooth-running, quiet, extremely well finished and almost luxuriously equipped. Standard fittings include, to mention a few, heater/demister, windscreen washers, a cigar lighter and a whole host of instrument dials and warning lights, the last drawing attention to such things as choke, handbrake on, low fuel, direction indicators, oil

* REVOLUTIONARY LORRY



✻ ITALIAN STATION WAGON



pressure, ignition, lights and doors open.

One feature which, while being of little actual importance, I found particularly interesting is the horn. A switch under the facia changes its note from a gentle toot to a loud, blaring blast—very useful and something entirely new to me! Like all station wagons, the back of the rear seat folds down to increase the luggage area in the back. The backs of the separate front seats, incidentally, are fully reclining, each controlled by a catch at the side.

While collapsible rear seats are standard on real-life estate cars, they rarely appear on miniature, die-cast examples. Dinky Toys, however, have succeeded in fitting this very feature to their version of the Fiat 2300 and what is more, the position of the rear seat-back is governed by a small lever underneath the model. Access to the resulting luggage space is through an opening tailgate which is in two sections, the top opening upwards and the bottom dropping downwards.

Other features included are opening bonnet, covering a detailed 'engine', twin jewelled headlamps, windows, full interior fittings, number plates and, of course, Prestomatic steering and 4-wheel suspension. Add to this the fact that Meccano Limited are laying a new emphasis on their undoubted ability to reproduce, to scale, all the general external features of any vehicle, and you have an excellent miniature, well worth adding to your collection.

RAC Patrol Van

Released with the Tilt Cab was a B.M.C. Mini-Van finished in Royal Automobile Club livery and carrying Sales No. 273. Like the existing Dinky AA Mini-Van, the RAC counterpart is fitted with opening rear doors, windows, seats and steering wheel plus Prestomatic steering and 4-wheel suspension. The general colour-scheme of deep blue with white roof is off-set by white RAC 'Road Service' slogans on both sides and the rear doors of the model. A similar

slogan appears on a small blue head-board mounted on the roof.

The Royal Automobile Club, the oldest motoring club in the Commonwealth, began in 1897 as the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland, receiving its present title ten years later at the command of King Edward VII. It was not until 1910, however, that the forerunners of the now famous Patrols appeared, when guides who had expert local knowledge were appointed to help members of the Club on tour.

In those early days the Patrolmen used bicycles—nowadays they are mounted on high-powered motor-cycle

combinations or drive the increasingly popular B.M.C. Mini-Vans, often equipped with two-way radio. For a Patrolman, who is expected to work all the year round in all weathers, the vans must be a tremendous advantage. The man himself is 'just an ordinary chap' with a certain specialised knowledge of motor cars, motor-cycles and scooters and of the roads which comprise his 'beat'. He carries maps, tools, first-aid kit and fire fighting equipment, all enabling him to be of special help to RAC members who may be lost or otherwise in trouble. In addition to performing this valuable service he must also make regular reports on weather conditions in his locality so that the RAC can provide a round-the-clock weather conditions service both for members and for the Press. Overall, the Patrolman's work is exacting and often far from easy.

✻ RAC PATROL VAN

