



A DIVERSE TRIO

By Chris Jelley

'DIVERSE' is certainly the word to describe the three most recent Dinkys to be released at the time of writing this article—'Diverse' and, without a doubt, 'Excellent Models'. Neither of these descriptions, I feel, is an exaggeration. Take the former, for instance, and look at the models in question. These are No. 153 Aston Martin DB6, No. 970 Jones Fleetmaster Cantilever Crane and No. 282 Austin 1800 Taxi—a sports car, and a taxi. What could be more diverse than that? 'Excellent Models', on the other hand, needs far more individual justification, so the best thing I can do is cover them one at a time, beginning with the DB6.

Sports car

Before going any further, however, I should warn you that my description of this particular model may be coloured slightly by my own personal feelings rather than my professional duty. Off the record, I am deeply interested in sports cars, generally, and I think that the Aston Martin DB6 is the most superb example of this type of vehicle ever produced. It has long been my ambition (at present, unrealised) to own an Aston Martin or, at the very least, to drive one, so you can understand that a miniature version of the car starts with a distinct advantage. All the same, I think that the new Dinky will stand up to the critical inspection of any reviewer. Even before I took my model from its clear-plastic display box, I was strongly impressed by its almost perfect scaled-down body shape, its minute yet sharp casting detail and, most of all, by its magnificent silver-blue, metallic colour finish.

Once out of its box, my first favourable impressions of the model were enormously strengthened by the quantity and quality of the action features it carries—opening bonnet covering a huge detailed 'engine', opening boot, two opening doors, tipping backs to the front seats and, of course, Prestomatic steering coupled with 4-wheel suspension. Other features include plated radiator-grille and bumpers, 'wire' wheels, number plates and glass headlamps, plus windows, seats and steering wheel. Also present is an adhesive paper 'instrument panel', very well detailed, correctly shaped and with a 'wood' finish to it.

To allow the doors to open, their windows are separate from the main window moulding and are 'open', leaving just the quarter lights in position, with the tops of the windows peeping above the doors. The doors, themselves, could provide the only subject for adverse criticism as they don't open very wide, but this one point does not alter the fact that, overall, the DB6 is a really splendid new Dinky Toy!

Having dealt with the Dinky Toy, it is customary for me to cover the real life car. Knowing my personal feeling for this, however, I would probably go on writing about it indefinitely if I once got really started, therefore I will content myself by saying that the full-size Aston Martin DB6 is *the* sports car in existence today. Power comes from a 6-cylinder in-line engine of 3,995 c.c. capacity developing 325 b.h.p. at 5,750 r.p.m. and

is transmitted to the rear wheels via a 5-speed all-synchromesh gearbox, to give the car a top speed in excess of 150 m.p.h.

Cantilever crane

Moving on to the Jones Fleetmaster Cantilever Crane, this is a fully operational model based on a machine produced by K. & L. Steelfounders and Engineers Ltd., Letchworth, Herts. The jib of the model is hinged part way up for ease of travelling and is erected simply by swinging it into position where it is held by a spring catch. Once in place a single crank handle at the side of the crane body gives control both of jib movement and of hook travel thanks to an ingenious dual-purpose gear system.

To explain this, separate winding drums, each incorporating a gear, are provided for the jib and hook cords, the gears on the drums being out of line with each other. The operating handle, also incorporating a small gear, fits between the drums so that, with the handle pushed in, its gear engages with the hook drum gear. Pulling the handle outwards, however, causes the gear to disengage with the hook drum gear and to engage with the jib drum gear. A strong spring acts on the shaft of each drum to prevent its cord from unwinding accidentally.

I imagine that a few sceptical collectors will take one look at the model and accuse Meccano of simply modelling the Jones Crane and then sticking it on a modified version of their own Bedford TK chassis. If so, they will be completely wrong as the model is an almost exact reproduction in every detail of the real Jones KL 3-7 Fleetmaster Cantilever Crane. K. & L. Steelfounders and Engineers Ltd., in fact, designed their own crane and chassis and simply used a modified Bedford cab.

There's no doubt about the cab being modified, as one glance at the accompanying picture will show—an extra level has been added! The 'turret' actually serves as the operating cab for the crane, the operator sitting on a fold-down seat, situated along with a set of control levers, above the driver and passenger seats. All these are represented in the cab of the Dinky Toy, although the operator's seat is in the folded-up position.

Approximate dimensions are rather impressive. With the jib dismantled and in the travelling position an overall length of 7 in. is obtained, but with the jib fully extended rearwards, the length amounts to nearly 13 in. Overall height with the jib dismantled is just under 3½ in. but, with the jib fully raised, is close on 10½ in. Overall width is about 2½ in.

In the real vehicle, power for all operations, including road travel, is obtained from a Bedford diesel engine of 5,420 c.c. capacity. The standard jib length is 20 ft., but this can be increased to 30 ft. or 40 ft. by the addition of one or two 10 ft. intermediate sections. The Dinky Toy has a scaled-down 30 ft. jib which, in real life, will enable the crane to lift weights varying between 3,500 lb. and 17,920 lb., depending on the angle of the jib.

New taxi

There is a great deal more that could be said about the Fleetmaster Crane but I must pass on to the Dinky Austin 1800 Taxi while I have sufficient space left. This is actually a taxi version of the existing Dinky Austin 1800 equipped with a roof-mounted 'taxi' sign in white with red lettering and the word 'taxi' added to both front doors. Features include opening bonnet, opening boot, Prestomatic steering and 4-wheel suspension as well as a detailed engine, jewelled headlamps, windows and full interior fittings. The model is finished predominantly in a deep blue gloss, except for the bonnet and boot lid, which are painted a brilliant white that really catches the eye.

I must admit that, when I first saw this model, I was rather surprised as I had been expecting the normal 'professional' Austin Taxi. I soon realised though that the model was not meant to represent the standard hackney cab, but a typical 'private hire' taxi. These, as you know, are now extremely common sights in nearly every city and town throughout the country.

