

EARLY DINKY TOY AEROPLANES

How I became a collector, and some collectors' items

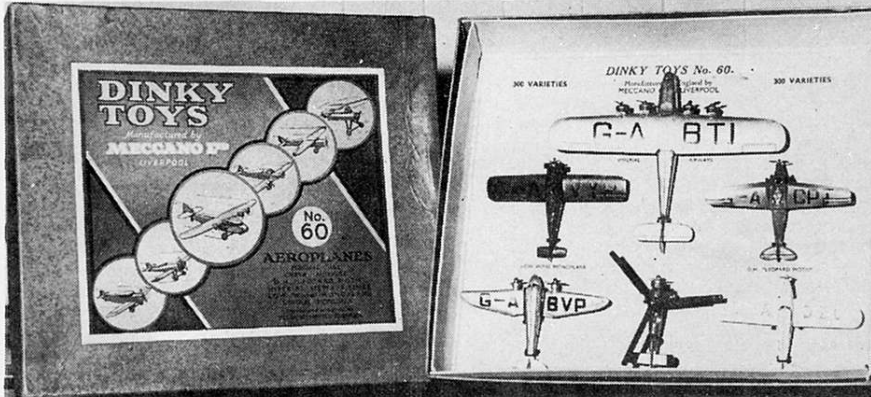


Fig. 1 The 1936 No. 60 Aeroplane Set, in original box with lid.

THE idea of collecting Dinky Toys miniatures according to type has, no doubt, been around as long as Dinky—about 45 years. Most youngsters start off with a general collection of cars, lorries, cranes, bulldozers etc., and then, (finding the attraction of the miniatures as strong as ever as they grow older) tend to specialise so that they can attempt a complete collection of the type of model in which they are most interested.

In my own case it was the miniature aeroplanes, probably because they were not widely available during the early post-war years when I was a boy—so it was all the more exciting to find one in a shop among all the cars and trucks! When I had the opportunity in 1948 of seeing an adult enthusiast's pre-war collection, I was really 'hooked' on them, even though I had only two or three examples myself.

Dinky aeroplanes disappeared completely from toyshops around 1949 and relations insisted on buying me cars and lorries for Christmas and birthdays—I was pleased to have them, but it was really Dinky 'planes that I sought after! In 1952 some of the early post-war models were re-introduced, the Avro York, Vickers Viking, Tempest etc.—so every bit of pocket money was saved in order that I could buy them—I was determined not to miss out this time! I still remembered that pre-war collection ... flying boats, biplanes, airliners, fighters, bombers, small flying-club planes.

In the mid 1950's Dinky brought out their new range including some jets—The Comet Jet Airliner, Hawker Hunter, Supermarine Swift and Gloster Javelin. Collecting and keeping up to date with these issues kept my mind off the unobtainable (as I thought them) earlier issues of 1934-9. It was not until about ten years ago that I was able to make any progress and I determined to try and find some of the pre-war models by placing classified advertisements in the Meccano Magazine and its contemporaries. The response was amazing, I gradually accumulated obsolete items and got to know other enthusiasts—and eventually realised my ambition of owning a collection of Dinky Toys aircraft equal to the one I had seen so many years before.

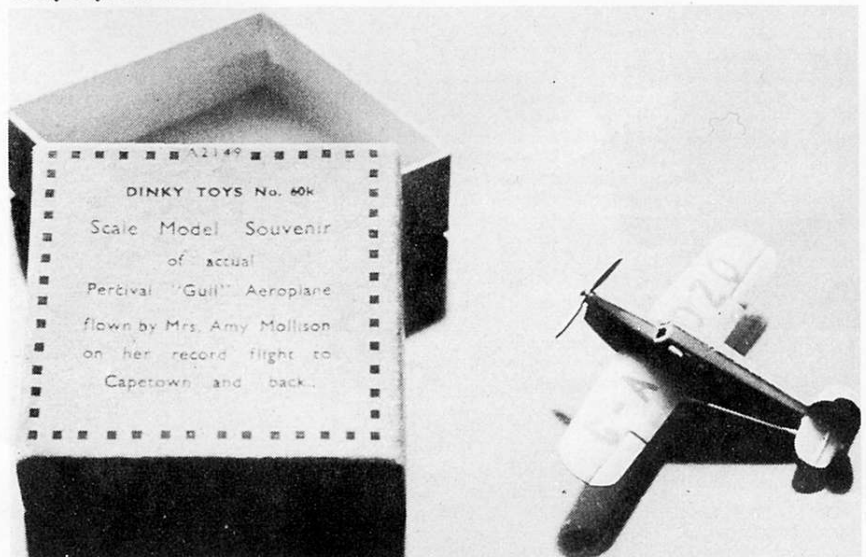
By Alan Dimmock

Some of the items I have been fortunate enough to acquire are shown in the accompanying photographs. The very first Dinky aircraft were sold as a set of six in 1934 without registration letters—Pictures 1 and 2 show this set as it appeared in 1936 with registration markings on the wings. The types represented are the Armstrong Whitworth 'Atalanta' Imperial Airways Liner; a Low-Wing Monoplane based on the Vickers 'Jockey'; the Percival 'Gull'; D. H. 'Leopard Moth'; General 'Monospar' twin-engined monoplane; and the Cierva Autogyro.

The scale of these is approximately 1/150; later introductions varied between this scale

Fig. 3

The Dinky version of the Percival Gull monoplane flown by Amy Mollison, (Amy Johnson).



and 1/220. With the exception of the Monospar (completely die-cast) and Autogyro (cast fuselage, tinplate type rotor), all these models had tin wings, cast fuselage/tailplane units and were fitted with miniature undercarriages with tiny wheels and propellers which could be spun with a flick of the finger.

A special version of the Percival 'Gull' model appeared in 1936 (Picture No. 3). This souvenir model commemorated the record flight to South Africa and back by Mrs. Amy Mollison (Amy Johnson) in a 'plane of this type. The miniature is finished in the actual colours of the prototype—aluminium-colour wings with blue registration letters, light blue fuselage and fin and aluminium-colour tailplane. The Percival 'Gull' model contained in the No. 60 boxed set subsequently appeared with the same registration letters G-ADZO but was finished in a single colour only. In 1940 the Dinky Percival 'Gull' was sold for a short time in camouflage finish; and the model was re-introduced briefly after the war as a 'Light Tourer'.

The famous D. H. 88 'Comet' Racing Aircraft (not the jetliner!) was represented by Dinky Toy No. 60g in 1935, originally without registration letters but later with G-ACSR in black on a range of attractive colours including red, silver and gold. (Picture No. 4).

Another interesting model, produced in 1938, was a special version of the Airspeed 'Envoy' twin-engined monoplane finished in the attractive colours of the King's Flight. The miniature is beautifully enamelled in red and blue with silver-colour wings and tailplane. Windows are picked out in silver and the registration letters G-AEXX are featured in dark blue on the wings. (Picture No. 5).

Some idea of the scale proportions of the

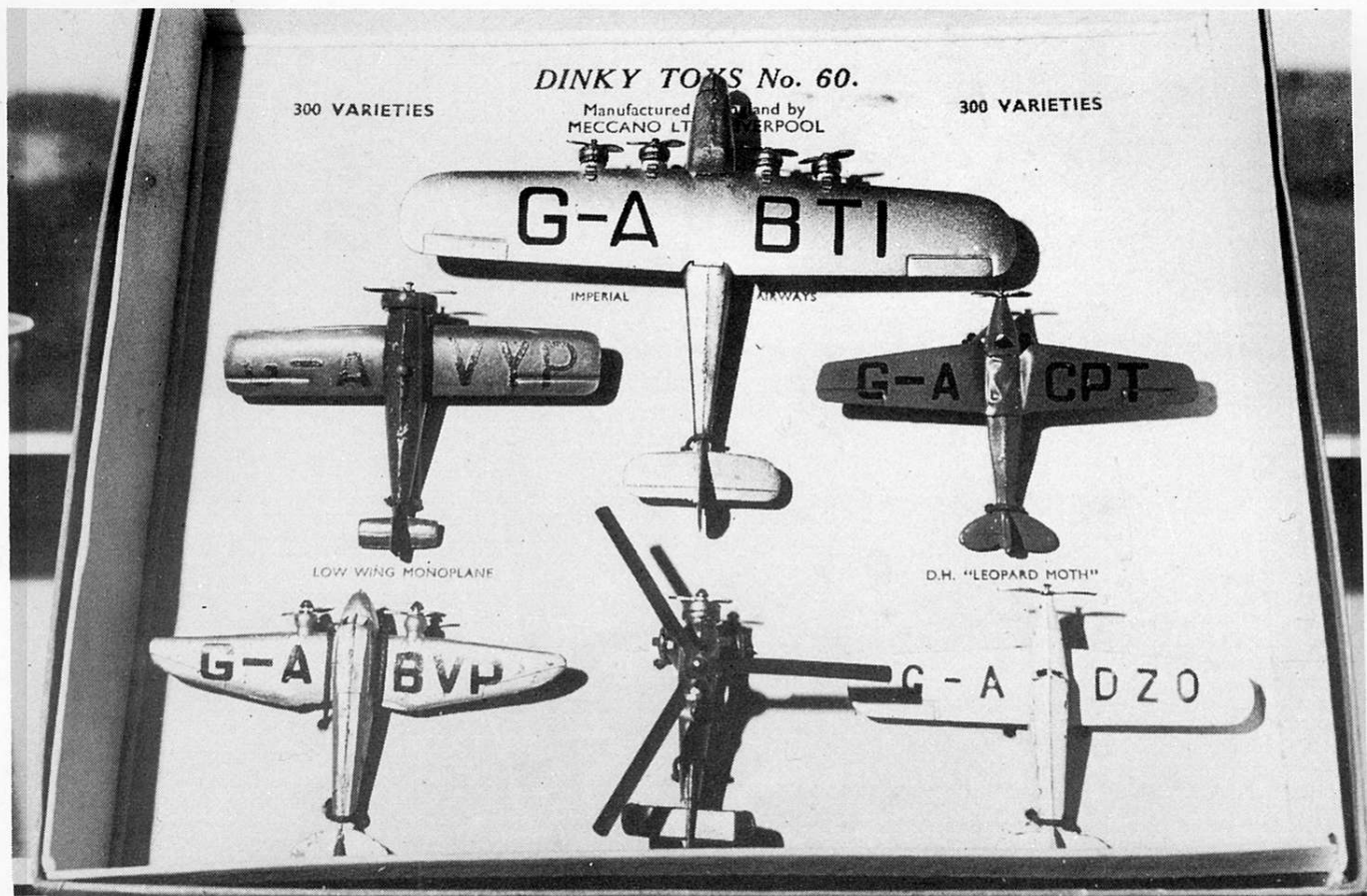
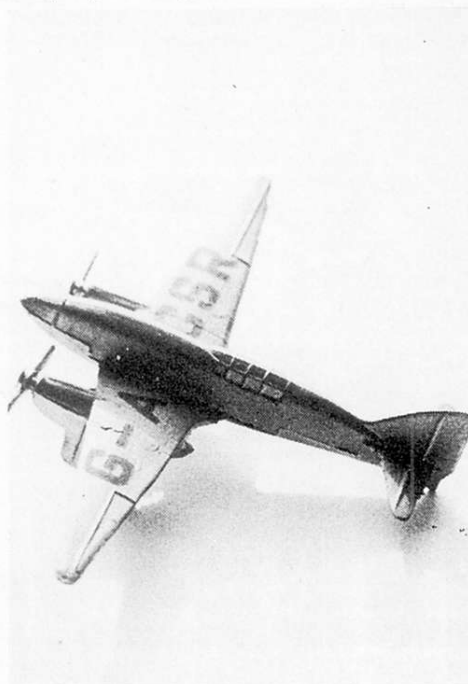


Fig. 2 Close-up of the Set contents.

range can be gained from the group shown in Picture No. 6. Apart from the items mentioned earlier, this includes an old-fashioned-looking biplane flying boat—Dinky Toys No. 60h Short Singapore III. This first Dinky flying-boat was originally finished in silver-colour, later in grey, with R.A.F. roundels prominent on the upper wings. From late 1936 the toy had a roller fitted so that the young enthusiast could push it along more easily (this was hidden within the hull casting so did not detract from the appearance in any way).

Fig. 4 The famous De Havilland 'Comet' racing aircraft, Dinky Toys No. 60g.



Nearly 50 varieties of aeroplane miniatures were produced as Dinky Toys before 1940 and a similar number have been issued since production resumed after the Second World War; the latest types to a much larger scale than the miniatures of earlier years, so that working features can be incorporated. Whilst some of the latest models have been withdrawn now, others are still available so now is the time to complete your collection—it is always easier to buy them now rather than wait until they are obsolete!

Fig. 5 The Airspeed Envoy used by King George VI, Dinky Toys No. 62k, dubbed 'The King's Aeroplane'.



Fig. 6 A few examples of Alan Dimmock's large collection of Dinky aircraft, the Short Singapore Flying Boat, Dinky Toys No. 60h, can be seen at the centre.

