



SPECTRUM IS HERE!

Chris Jelley reports on the
new Captain Scarlet S.P.V.

Above: Captain Scarlet automatically descends from his Spectrum Pursuit Vehicle, with its rear half tracks down. This model fires a rocket and the radio aerials retract. Below, just a finger touch releases the rocket hatch and a further push fires the rubber-tipped rocket. This model has every action feature you could imagine. Here the aerials are extended.



"CLOUDBASE TO all Spectrum personnel. Mysteron agent heading south down highway 15. Captain Scarlet in hot pursuit!" No, this is not a transcript of a police message, printed here by mistake, but, as followers of the highly successful television series "Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons" will recognise, it is just the sort of message that might be transmitted from the headquarters of "Spectrum," the world security organisation featured in this imaginative TV. programme. I made up the announcement, of course, but, if Captain Scarlet was chasing a Mysteron agent, the chances are he would be driving a "Spectrum Pursuit Vehicle." (The Mysterons, by the way, are a race of alien beings from another planet determined to destroy the earth.)

What, you may ask, has all this got to do with *Meccano Magazine*? The answer you will have already guessed—Meccano have produced a Dinky Toy model of a Spectrum Pursuit Vehicle, under licence for Century 21 Toys Ltd. It is a very large toy—more than 6 in. long by 2½ in. wide by 2½ in. high—and its striking colour-scheme of pale metallic blue with soft white ramming cushion at the front is enough to make it stand out in a crowd. The effect is strengthened by white "SPV" identification letters on the sides and front of the model together with the Spectrum insignia of a black-edged gold "S" superimposed on concentric violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red rings—the colours of the spectrum, in fact!

Impressive as all these features are, though, they pale into insignificance immediately the model is studied at close quarters. It's packed with so many action features that I hardly know where to begin my description, so probably the easiest course is to follow the order in which I found the features.

Firstly I was puzzled by a set of four small caterpillar tracks tucked up behind the ten road wheels at an angle of about 45 degrees. There seemed little reason for these, unless they were to give the S.P.V.

the initial push up very steep hills! Understanding soon came, however, when I discovered that all four tracks clicked down to ground level as a complete unit so as to help the vehicle over difficult terrain.

Next I tried turning a small wheel protruding part way through the roof of the model, towards the rear, and a pair of black radio aerials, previously lying along the roof, jumped into an upright position. "Very novel," I thought, but I received my greatest surprise when I pressed a little silver fin in the top of the casting—a large hatch in the side of the model shot outwards and, believe it or not, a moulded seat carrying a miniature "Captain Scarlet" swung down to ground level! And, as if this wasn't enough, the tiny figure actually looks like the indestructible Captain, being "dressed" in a black uniform with red hat, tunic and boots. Quite remarkable! To "reload," the seat is simply folded into the "up" position, remembering that it *must* be upright, and the hatch on its extending

arm is snapped back into the body casting.

So far, all my discoveries had been made as I "fiddled" with the model in my hands. Now, I put it down to test for springing. Imagine my surprise when, as I pressed down on the front, another hatch above the nose sprang open to reveal an aggressive-looking, rubber-tipped rocket primed for action. I pressed down harder and the rocket was away, propelled by a powerful little spring. Talk about play-value!

The two entirely independent actions of the hatch opening and the rocket firing intrigued me, so I investigated, to find that they were triggered by the front axles, the first operating the hatch and the second the rocket. With this system it is of course possible to open the hatch without necessarily firing the rocket automatically, which to the best of my knowledge is a unique feature. In fact, I have no hesitation in saying that the Spectrum Pursuit Vehicle, as a whole, is unique. Remember the Sales No.—104.

FORD ESCORT FOR DINKY

A new release from both Ford and Dinky that is up to the minute

SECRECY HAS hung over the Halewood plant of the Ford Motor Company like a cloak for some years now—a cloak designed not to hide any unlawful activities, but to guard the secrets of a striking new car in process of design and production. This same cloak of secrecy has reached out to envelop the works of Meccano Ltd. in Liverpool. Why? Because, thanks to the confidence of Fords, Meccano have been preparing the tools and dies for a Dinky Toy model of the new car, and this long before anybody outside the Ford Company, and many people inside it, had any knowledge of what was in the air!

For Meccano to be able to produce a Dinky Toy, they need detailed information on shape, features, etc., of the original vehicle. Fords supplied this information far in advance of the release of the real car and Meccano have asked me to express their sincere gratitude for the confidence placed in them.

Mind you, they have taken great pains not to abuse this confidence. No more than a handful of top executives in the Company knew what the model in preparation was based on. To everybody else, it was known only as "Dinky Model X," which, I am sure you will agree, gives nothing away!

When this magazine first appears on the bookstalls, the new Ford, as well as the Dinky, will just be on sale, and so you will know the subject of all past

secrecy—the Ford Escort, designed as the successor to the top-selling Ford Anglia. I had the privilege of seeing and travelling in the Escort at a pre-release Press Show, held at Halewood shortly before Christmas, and I now have no hesitation in predicting an even greater success for it than for the famous Anglia.

Besides the normal De Luxe car, the Escort will be available in Super, GT and Lotus-engined versions. Unfortunately, no technical specifications for any of these have been released at the time of writing, but the GT model I travelled in gave a pretty impressive performance, despite carrying four adults.

If I was pleased with the real car, everybody I spoke to at Fords was delighted with the Dinky Toy model, Sales No. 168. An excellent reproduction of the original, it is fitted with two wide-opening doors, plus opening bonnet and boot, detailed engine, windows, seats, steering wheel and number plates. The front seats tip forward as they do on a conventional two-door car. In addition, rear-view mirror and windscreen wiper representations appear on the windscreen.

Finish is in pale blue gloss with red interior, silver bumpers and radiator grille and silver-plated base. Actually the baseplate is so designed to follow the contours of the body casting that it gives the effect of a silver-plated trim strip on the body. It's really very striking!

