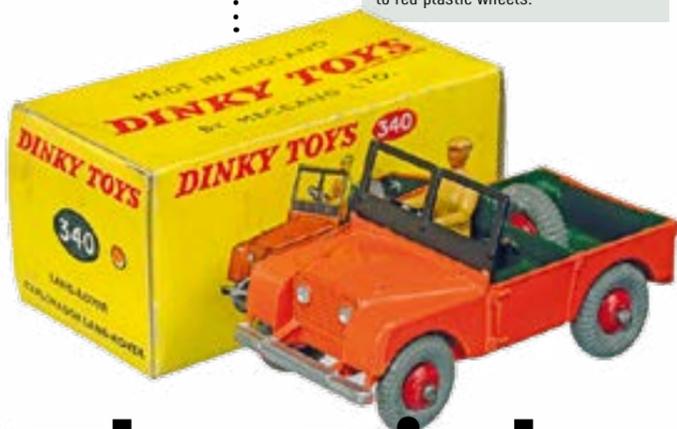


**Early variations found**  
on the Dinky Toys 27d Land Rover.

**Dinky Toys No.340** Land Rover.  
This colour had the longest issue run, having a modest future change to red plastic wheels.



**Original 1st series** Land Rover  
Image courtesy Ron Cobb Antiques.

# The Dinky Toys Land Rover

**Phil Silvester shares his field research into the many variations and rarities to be found amongst the Dinky Toys Land Rovers and trailers ...**

**A**s a young boy I had many Dinky and Corgi toys but I can never recall having a Land Rover.

My father was in the business of caravan sales and caravan site management. This led him and my mother, to seek a farm with the potential for running and building a holiday park and one was duly found with potential for expansion, near a village called

Delabole in Cornwall. I was around the age of 10 at the time and discovered that left on this small 36-acre plot was a working early Land Rover. I was allowed to drive this in the fields as, being tall for my age, I could reach the pedals. You can probably imagine the thrill at that age of being allowed to drive a real vehicle. I remember getting the Land Rover into third gear and it felt as if I was hitting the kind of speed

I imagined on a racetrack. Fortunately, I was also taught how to brake!

A few years ago my wife and I were in the area and visited the farm. There was this same old Land Rover, like an artist's picture, sitting very mournfully in a field corner with long grass growing around its perimeter. The site manager told me, that the present owner had had many offers for this Land Rover but he refused to sell it. I asked why? He explained that it had a rare number plate, but the real reason for its value lay in the fact that it was one of the first 50 Land Rovers ever made. It would have been around 60 years old at that time and I dare say it still sits in the same place today.

**A little background history**

The original Land Rover was conceived by the Rover motor company in 1947, inspired by the US Willys Jeep. The objective, was to design a vehicle that was between a tractor and a Jeep, with emphasis on the agricultural farming industry and to produce a vehicle, that was able to travel on conventional roads but at the same time perform various practical functions around farms and their various terrains.

Rover's main factories were badly damaged during World War II, being based in Coventry, which was of course heavily bombed. Rover, however, had an unused plant in Solihull, Birmingham. In the austerity of the immediate post-war period, Rover's cars, then considered prestigious, were not in great demand, so with raw materials being in short supply, priority was given to the Land Rover - a practical vehicle which could



**left** This letter, dated February 12, 1995, from a Mr R. Smith to a Mr Ward, both possible toy dealers, pertains to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Land Rover. It states that the Dinky Toys Land Rover was being used as a promotional by MoAF reps to try and persuade farmers were to use light tractors for agricultural use.  
**below** Two examples of the rare MoAF Land Rover with a dealers supply box produced to contain six models.



**This Dinky Toys** Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries promotional was produced as a special release and finding an example today is likely to prove very difficult indeed. Note the correct dual numbered box.

meet a real need in the market place.

In 1948 Series One Land Rover was launched. This had a steel box section chassis and an aluminium body, with a 1.6 litre petrol engine and a 4-speed gear box. Initially a central steering wheel design like the tractor was used but soon was recognised as impractical and the steering wheel was moved to one side. Early versions were finished in army green as there was a general shortage of paint but a surplus of army paint left over from the war effort. The Land Rover was designed to only be in production for two to three years to provide the much needed revenue for Rover to re-start car production. This revolutionary off-road vehicle though, saw unexpectedly high sales and the rest, as they say, is history.

As testimony to the vehicle's rugged durability, in 1992 Land Rover

**“A special release was made for the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries; few were produced and they are now very hard to find”**

claimed that 70% of all the models built were still in working use.

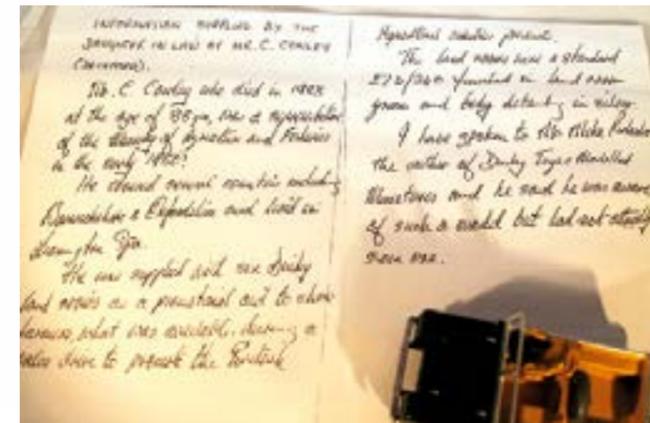
**The models**

*Early days 1950-53*

The Dinky Land Rover was first launched in 1950 under code 27d and was produced in various colours, some now much rarer and harder to find than others.

Initially, issued in trade boxes containing four models, it was renumbered in around 1953-54 to 340 and released in its own individual box. The early dual numbered box showing the green model one side and the orange model the other side is quite hard to find, due to a short production run before full renumbering to 340 took place.

The model itself had a metal driver in tan (used for several models at the



time), coloured ridged wheels (the spare was held upright behind the front seats, retained by a split clip), metal windscreen, steering wheel, rear hook, and baseplate covering the front section only. The front bumper was sprayed silver and included the headlamps.

The baseplate featured the wording 'Land Rover' and 'Made in England Dinky Toys Meccano Ltd'. As far as I am aware, the numbering code did not appear on this model's baseplate throughout its entire production history.

**Colours**

The hardest to find colour seems to be the deep blue with light tan interior and blue hubs. Very few were issued, in the trade box only, and a matching trailer 27m was also avail-

**This letter from** the daughter-in-law of Mr C. Cowley, a representative for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, provides confirmation he was supplied with a box of six models to give to farmers in his district (Warwickshire and Oxfordshire) and that these were indeed promotional aids to show farmers what equipment was available to them through the Ministry.

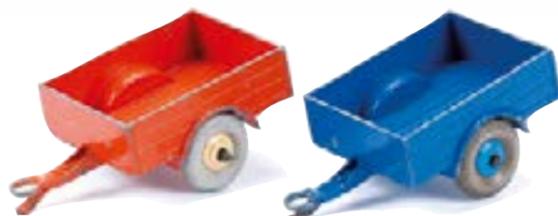
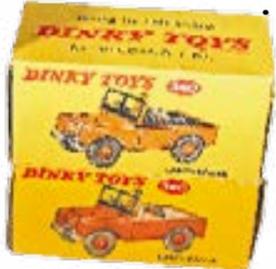
able, which is now equally scarce.

Also thin on the ground is the brown bodied version with a deep blue interior with red hubs. This was produced for the first releases of the Commercial Gift Set No. 2 but may have been also been released in a trade box. My own opinion is it was likely to be a special colour produced just for the gift set but I have no proof as to this.

The standard early colours were orange with a deep blue interior and red wheels, and green with light tan interior and green wheels.



The above picture captures the different box styles used through the Land Rovers production.



**Special release (1953 approx)**

At the same time this model was issued in its own box, a special release was made for the Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries, to be handed out by its representatives to farmers to promote the new light agricultural vehicles. Few were made and they are very hard to find.

Issued in dark military green with matching wheels, these came with the standard driver and components, light grey tyres and a standard dual numbered box only. Each model had enhanced silver detailing covering the windscreen and top edging around the cab, with further enhanced bonnet and door hinges.

I have some additional documentation (see previous page) that I obtained from Keith Harvie, a renowned collector and dealer now living in the USA, and I believe this documentation, though not from Meccano or Land Rover, sheds further light on these interesting models.

**1954-60 (approx.)**

There were two colours issued within the main run during these years: orange with dark green interior and red wheels and the continuation of the lighter green with light tan interior and green wheels. The ridged wheels and metal driver were retained for this period.

**Later stage 1960-1970 (approx)**

In the early 1960s there were a number of component changes. The exact year dates I have no records to refer to, so the following is based on my own estimation.

Around 1960-61 a shiny black

**Dinky Toys 27m** early trailers. The orange with cream wheels and the military green were the only colours supplied that did not have matching land rovers. Note the rare blue example. Image courtesy of Vectis Auctions

baseplate, as used on many Dinky models at this time, was put to use, and wheels became plastic. The driver figure was also changed to a blue suited man with brown cap made in plastic.

Initially, there was the continuation of the orange model with dark green interior but now with plastic driver, red plastic wheels and gloss baseplate. Then a whole variety of colours and wheel variations were issued, which I show in the listing within this article.

Probably the hardest of these to find is the orange model with black interior and red plastic wheels, but the orange model with green plastic wheels is also hard to find and was probably, in the main, sold to the USA and is most likely, when seen, to come in an export window box.

However, all these later models, with exception of the orange model with dark green interior, I would say are not seen that often.

The final releases had a further change to the baseplate, which became matt black.

**Full model listing**

**Model No. 27d**

The following models are all early type, with tan metal driver, colour ridged wheels and standard tinplate base. These were sold from trade boxes.

- Royal blue body with light tan



These colour variations represent the later issues with plastic wheels and driver. Note the rare black interior to the model in the left side foreground. The only difference with the two models with green wheels are the tyres. Also note two of the later box types.

**341m trailer,** rare in red with black plastic wheels. Image courtesy of Vectis Auctions.



interior and blue wheels

- Brown body with deep blue interior and red wheels
- Bright green body with light tan interior and green wheels
- Orange body with deep blue interior and red wheels
- Orange body with dark green interior and red wheels

**Model 27d/340**

- Special launch at time of the transitional box featuring the dual reference number
- Bright green body with light tan interior and green wheels
- Orange body with dark green interior and red wheels
- Dark military green body, with matching ridged wheels and light tan interior, tan metal driver, standard baseplate and tow hook but with extra silver detailing as described above. As above but continuing now numbered solely as 340
- Bright green body with light tan interior and green wheels
- Orange body with dark green interior and red wheels

Early 1960s, various component changes resulting in blue plastic

drivers, shiny black gloss base plates and plastic wheels.

- Orange body, with dark green interior and red plastic wheels
- Red body, with yellow interior and red plastic wheels
- Orange body, with dark green interior and green plastic wheels
- All red body and interior, with red plastic wheels
- A further change took place with the introduction of a matt black base.
- All red body and interior, with red plastic wheels
- Red body, with yellow interior and yellow plastic wheels
- Orange body, with black interior and red plastic wheels

**Box history**

- Yellow trade box; this contained four models
- Scarce dual numbered box 27d-340. This was the standard yellow picture box, which displayed an orange model with dark green interior on one side and green with light tan interior on the other. There were black ovals on each face side and on end flaps, incorporating reference number 340 in white. The old code in red 27d each



**341 trailer:** this example is a late issue and hard to find finished in red with yellow plastic wheels. Image courtesy of Vectis Auctions.

**341 trailer:** another scarce late issue in orange with green plastic wheels. Image courtesy of Vectis Auctions.



**Standard later version** in red with matching plastic wheels. Image courtesy of Vectis Auctions.



**341 trailer:** this late issue in orange with red plastic wheels is packed in a scarce USA gold window box. Image courtesy of Vectis Auctions.



**27m trailer:** an early, now very rare, military green version. Image courtesy of Vectis Auctions.

“The very rare early blue trailer and the scarce military green one are sought after and command high prices”

end and a colour spot, depicting the model colour inside.

- A similar box was then produced but with only 340 code. However, subtle changes took place. The picture side face ovals became red with white numbering. The dual code was removed from the end flap. This box was used for several years.
- A similar issue to the standard box but shows both colour spots each end flap on either side of model number.
- Red and yellow panel non-picture box with colour spot (may be a large spot, see picture)
- Red and yellow panel non-picture box with no colour spot on ends
- The light yellow picture box was then released. This shows a similar model each side, one I think was never actually released: an orange model with black interior and orange ridged wheels with metal tan driver. The picture side ovals are in red and end flap ovals in black both with white numbering. There is no colour spot to either end.
- A similar light yellow picture box followed, but now on one side the orange model has a light grey interior again still showing old wheels and

driver - another model actually never released. I believe by this time models were being released with matt black bases.

- Red and yellow export window box with Land Rover 340 in red along the front.
- A gold window box exists, made for USA export, but I have never personally encountered an example.

**Dinky Toys Land Rover Trailer**

The trailer was released in around 1952 and, again, started its early availability through a shop keeper's trade box containing four models. Early box versions were numbered 27m only, but later boxes had the dual numbering, including 341, added to them.

Around 1953-54 individual boxes were produced, initially with dual numbering, then quickly followed by re-numbering to their new code 341 only.

These followed a similar general pattern to the Land Rover boxes, with early versions in standard yellow card picture boxes, followed by red and yellow panelled non-picture boxes and then later light yellow picture boxes.

As well as the very rare early matching blue trailer, a further scarce issue was finished in military green; this is now sought after and similarly commands high prices.

The early ridged metal wheels were later changed to plastic ones and all Land Rover colours can be found, though the black plastic wheel version with red body is the hardest of the later versions to find.

**Listing for the 27m-341 trailer**

- The early colours on 27m issued in trade boxes are:
- Deep blue body with blue ridged wheels
- Military green with matching ridged wheels
- Orange body with cream wheels
- Orange body with red wheels
- Green body with green wheels
- Orange body with red wheels
- Green body with green wheels
- Colours for later issues with plastic wheels are:
- Orange body with red wheels
- Orange body with green wheels
- Red body and wheels

**Boxes**

I have not created a listing of boxes but these followed in a similar pattern to the Land Rover boxes.

The later boxes generally did not have printed colour spots on the end but have been seen with a large colour spot - an example of which is pictured in this article.

Some later light yellow boxes had additional white label removable tabs to one end flap.

There was a colour change on the light yellow picture boxes on one model side. Most dual box pictures show a Land Rover with red body and yellow ridged wheels, but there is also a box with the picture on one side substituted by a Land rover with green body and matching wheels.

**Share your knowledge**

If you can add any further knowledge or additions to the listings found here please either contact Model Collector or get in touch with me directly. I can be reached via my website at [www.diecastgems.com](http://www.diecastgems.com) or my email address [phil@diecastgems.com](mailto:phil@diecastgems.com). Equally, I would welcome phone calls on 07973 563476.