

Corgi Die Cast Collectables

By Neil Searle

The South Wales famous toy factory in Swansea was founded by Phillip Ullmann from Germany in 1949.

The Corgi brand was created by the Mettoy Factory in Fforestfach, Swansea, which first started to produce colourful, pressed metal toys in the 1930s. Mettoy was open for 42 years and at its peak it employed more than 1,000 people. The Corgi range was launched in 1956. The Swansea factory was finally closed in 1991. The Corgi brand was bought by Hornby Hobbies in 2008.



Fig. 1. 1980's Corgi Classics Stanley SW Tools Corgi Mack Truck.

Martin Donnelly Antique Tools made the following statement in 2002 *“We are delighted to be the sole agent offering these spectacular well done collectables to the American market. First come, first serve.”* Also, *“ Produced by Corgi Toys of Great Britain and then modified by artist/craftsman David Burman. David produced a series of trucks decorated with the original logos of major British tool manufacturers . Only a limited number of these collectable trucks have been produced.”*

I believe David Burman under some arrangement with the Mettoy Company bought blanks and decorated the trucks with transfers of the individual tool companies, possibly in the 1980s. I think that most of these trucks are now owned by collectors of vintage tools.

A list of Tool Manufacturers and Merchants that David Burman used to decorate the trucks. This list is only those that I know about.

Frost & Barret (Tool Merchants)
William Marples & Son
Alex Mathieson & Son
Robert Sorby & Sons
John Rabone & Sons
H. Griffiths & Co.
Rd. Melhuish (Hardware Merchants)
Stewart Spiers
T. Norris & Son



Fig.2. Stewart Spiers, Paisley & Ayr, Scotland. The following five die cast models are from my collection and all still in original boxes, except briefly for the photo shoot...



Fig.3. Edward Preston & Sons Ltd. Birmingham.



Fig.4. Thomas Norris & Son, Lambeth, London.



Fig.5. Alex Mathieson & Sons, Glasgow.

The “AEC 508 forward control 5 ton Cabover “ was the truck blanks that David Burman used.

The current owners of the Corgi brand, Hornby, have no record of these trucks in their archives. Also I posted on a Corgi collectors forum online with the result being that no one had seen these before... didn't know they existed.

Ref: Corgi.co.uk. Martin Donnelly Antique Tools.