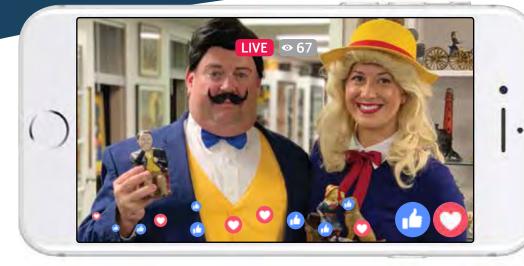
# OLD TOY SOLDIER



THOMAS TOY AND POPLAR PLAYTHINGS SPACE FIGURES

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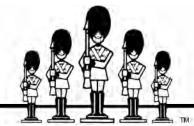




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Thomas Toy and Poplar Playthings Space Figures Courtesy Bill Hanlon



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### **HOBBY NEWS**

### **OBITUARY - BY JAMES OPIE**

### Hands across the sea - my friend Ed Ruby, 1925 - 2019 - An obituary

I first met Ed Ruby at a Phillips auction on Thursday 20 July 1972. By that time I was well into trying to acquire examples of every toy soldier commercially sold in Britain from 1893. When we compared notes, he said his current aim was to collect all the sets of the British Army issued by Britains in hollowcast, which indicated a large overlap in where we wanted to go.

In a short while, our collecting paths converged – Eddie's expanded to all Britains military, he couldn't resist getting the figures he liked so much – mine contracted – it was too much to collect all the new things after 1973, so I limited my scope to eighty years, also military. But we both agreed that the way to collect was to follow our instincts whenever we found anything we liked enough to buy it, in addition to our game plans.

One of the first things he had done when he started was to type up and copy Len Richards famous series of articles in the British Model Soldier Society Bulletin, which he used to give out to people who he felt would find it useful.

McDonald's Being an early franchisee, and possibly copying McDonald's famous university methods. Ed made it his mission to educate California (or perhaps the whole of the US of A) in Britains. It helped that he had been a direct customer of Britains US agent, Reeves International, or maybe even George Borgfeldt when he had a hardware shop in Chicago before he moved to Orange County he never ceased this relationship with Britains. To achieve this end, he needed to fit out a corner of his



home where he could introduce his subject to his pupils. Where vou could be immersed totally in Britains and shut out the rest of the world. Eddie succeeded in his goal of putting together probably the most complete collection of Britains best quality 54mm hollowcast military figures ever assembled. He early on became the go to person to whom to offer unusual sets when they were discovered, largely because he was fair, even generous, about the price. When I needed someone who had a good collection of Britains to photograph for The Great Book of Britains, there was just one thought in my mind - Eddie. No-one can ever collect everything, but he filled nearly three quarters of that book right out of his showcases.

Once the fame of the Ruby Family Collection was in this way assured, Ed took the next logical step. He sold all but his favourite pieces. The Paris Office came to London and were sold alongside Peter Cushing's collection. The special paint figures were sold en masse to a private collector. But now that Scott Morlan had become one of the premier dealers in the US, the bulk of the collection was sold through his lists.

This left the field open for other people to become king of the hill, but I suspect that of all the people who have since had a lot of fun trying, none really ascended higher than Eddie. Once he was settled with his best-loved figures around him, as well as his fabulous collection of military art, he could relax and enjoy. He never lost his interest in toy soldiers, He visited the shows for as long as he was comfortable with doing so. Above all, he stayed true to his vast number of friends. Eddie was 'Britains central' for all his days, one of his last visitors being Ken Osen.

He had invited me to share his life with him for a fortnight, and though he now needed round the clock help, he was still as wise, interested and interesting as ever. We took in the West Coaster toy soldier show and a gathering of collectors in his honour.

Eddie never ceased to love his toy soldiers, and to share that love with everyone who would listen. The fact that everyone did listen, and never wanted for an answer to any query, made him one of the most influential toy soldier collectors there has ever been. Last spring, he sent me three parcels of toy soldiers to be passed on to my step-grandson Sam, age seven, who has started collecting. I for one shall never lose the memory of all his kindnesses.

Edward H. Ruby, the 'King of Britains', died during the night of 8 to 9 June 2019.

# CTSS' CHICAGO TOY SOLDIER SHOW

Sunday, September 22, 2019

10 am to 3:30 pm - \$10 Admission

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### 2019 CHICAGO TOY SOLDIER SHOW Pre-Show Press Release

The 39th Chicago Toy Soldier Show (CTSS) will be back in full swing once again this September. We will be at the Hyatt Regency Schaumburg on Sunday, September 22 in 3 ballrooms with approximately 400 tables staffed by over 190 vendors. The Show remains our nation's biggest and oldest toy soldier event, the "Olympics of Toy Soldier Collecting" as one vendor dubbed it!

Many CTSS 2019 innovations are part of our Pre-Show Events Calendar. Everyone knows that what makes the Chicago Toy Soldier Show so much fun is that we celebrate our favorite hobby for 3 days before the Sunday Show. CTSS is famous for its pre-show room display and trading.

Our 2018 pre-show demonstrations and workshops were so well attended and received that we have expanded upon that success!

### **Demonstrations and Workshops**

Our 2018 Stars are back this year with fresh twists on their popular demonstrations.

**NEW!** Benjamin Zerbib from Drapeau de France (Paris) will add an international touch to antique soldier and toy repair.

**NEW!** Kathi Bird, our miniatures workshop expert, has designed a brand new Halloween themed project.

### NEW!

### **Breakfast with the Experts**

For those who cannot start their CTSS fun too early, we have added a Saturday morning seminar!

Marc Gaynes and Will Beierwaltes will present: CHICAGO'S FORT DEARBORN IN HISTORY AND IN TOYS

### CTSS Happy Hour(s)

Our Social Time is back with raffles, prizes, camaraderie, and just plain fun.

We welcome Ken Ciak of LOD Enterprises (Green Bay, WI) who will join Frank Way of Trains and Toy Soldiers (Lincoln, NE) as co-sponsor of this famous CTSS get-together!

### **Sunday Show**

**NEV!** Building on the enthusiastic response to our 2018 Author/Reference book table, Julie Abraham of Treefrog Miniatures has agreed to manage and expand our effort.

Kid events such as Doug Dearth's CTSS Treasure Hunt and the Selfie booth are back again.

**NEV!** We have a new child-scale, gaming event using toy soldiers that is designed and presented for CTSS by our friends from Historical Miniature Gaming Society-Midwest.

**NEW!** CTSS will encourage our younger visitors to stream on Facebook Live during the Show with Prizes for the best broadcast.

Throughout the Show, CTSS will continue to shoot new footage for our 2019 YouTube video. Our immensely popular 2018 video had 1,000+ views in just 3 months! If you have not seen it, visit YouTube: Tour the Chicago Toy Soldier Show

... and, of course we will be planning for the 2020 Chicago Toy Soldier Show:

Our Big 40th Anniversary Show!

Save the date: Sunday, September 27, 2020.

### POPLAR PLAYTHINGS AND THOMAS TOYS PLASTIC SPACE FIGURES

### THE ARTISTRY OF JOHN RYLANCE AND THE INGENUITY OF ISLYN THOMAS.

By Bill Hanlon and Norman Joplin



**Thomas Spacemen and Aliens** 

An article that appeared in the Toy Trader and Exporter in 1953 contained the following information on artist John Rylance.

"Space Ships and the fantastic looking bodies that man them are all the rage this decade both in comic strips cartoons and juvenile literature. The same applies to all manner of Space toys"

Toy Soldier and figure makers in the UK during the early fifties were producing lead space figures, John Hill, Charbens, Cherilea and Crescent with their Dan Dare Pilot of the future series. While these companies were sticking with the traditional tried and tested hollow cast item. Plastic toy figures in the UK were in their infancy. Playthings of Bridgend Glamorgan in Wales, employed proficient artist John Rylance whose experience in the modelling trade was extensive.

An Arts and Crafts enthusiast and later a member of the Royal College of Art, John had produced busts of Julius Caesar and British politician The Right Honourable Lloyd George.

Eric Jones, cousin of Islyn Thomas and owner of Poplar Playthings asked John to design a plastic Robot, the result was very pleasing but for some reason production was not commenced. Instead John designed a set of 6 Space men. Children at the time collected each of these rubber type material figures, each coming in either grey or



John Rylance

brown. Hard plastic Spaceships were available to complement the figures.

I had mentioned six Space figures, only 5 were available in the UK a sixth with long ray gun was available only in the USA.

Poplar Playthings sent the space moulds over to Thomas Toys and the sixth figure was released in America. Hard plastic versions of the first five figures also became available at a later date.

### POPLAR PLAYTHINGS AND THOMAS TOYS PLASTIC SPACE FIGURES (Continued)





Poplar Playthings "Rubber Space Figures"

Poplar Playthings "Rubber Space Figures"

#### **Bill Hanlon writes:**

I met Islvn Thomas in 1990 while doing research on my book on the history of plastic toys. We hit it off right away and within no time I was somewhat adopted by the Thomas family. Over the next twelve years I would visit the family two or three times a year when I was in town on business. During those wonderful day-long visits Islyn and I spent many hours sipping tea and swapping stories about the toy industry then and now. After lunch we would always go through his extensive archives, most of which were located in a basement room with only a single light bulb for light. Islyn would give me an empty box and then start opening cabinets tellling me about each toy as he pulled it out.

The first box contained the six spacemen masters. Each was carefully wrapped in cotton sheets like you would find under a Christmas tree, and each had a numbered tag from Ferriot Brothers. Also I found a spaceship, space targets, and the seventh spaceman! There was an Astral cannon that is one of the most beautiful space items you will ever

see. The cannon master made use of the popular Tomik Pistol, which acutally made it into production. This pistol shoots rubber bands and the Astral cannon base was actually going to be a stand to hold the pistol, when not in use. There were also going to be spacemen and alien targets to shoot at. These were made to hang on a wide U-shaped wire stand. Finally there was the seventh spaceman. This would have been the best spaceman of the lot. He had two jet engines on his back and is made to stand at the controls of the Astral Cannon. At first glance, I thought these engines were supposed to be shells for the Astral cannon, but when I found the targets one of them was the same figure in high relief 2-D flying through space powered by his jet pack!

Most of the Thomas figures I believe originated in Wales. The wax or plaster masters were sent to Thomas by his cousin Eric Jones (his son Bob later ran the company). Then Thomas would send them to Ferriot Brothers to have the Kirksite models made. Kirksite is a metal alloy with a surface like chrome and it is quite

striking. The Ferriot Brothers evidently invented and perfected this method of preserving original sculptures so they could be used again and again to make cavities for new moulds.



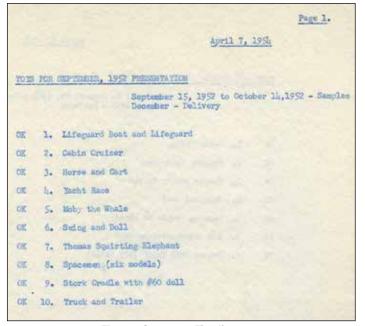
**Prototype Rocket** 

Kirksite is a zinc/aluminum alloy that was originally developed within the automotive industry for sheet metal forming tools. The vapor pressure of the zinc allows the material to be virtually immune to the gas porosity that occurs with other alloy products.

### POPLAR PLAYTHINGS AND THOMAS TOYS PLASTIC SPACE FIGURES (Continued)



**Thomas Toy Catalogue Image** 



**Thomas Spacemen Timeline 1954** 



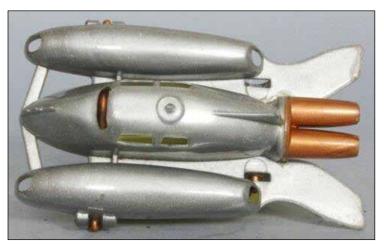
**Thomas Aliens Masters** 



**Thomas Spacemen Masters** 



**Thomas Alien** 



**Hard Plastic Space Craft** 



eventh Thomas Spaceman

### POPLAR PLAYTHINGS AND THOMAS TOYS PLASTIC SPACE FIGURES (Continued)







**Astral Cannon Unassembled** 



**Astral Cannon With Gunner** 



Prototype Spinners for target not produced.

There were also plans for a spaceship, but only the KIRKSITE model was made by Ferriot Brothers in Akron, Ohio. Thomas faced the same problem that BARCLAY, MANOIL and other soldier manufacturers had...How do you make a vehicle to the same

scale as the soldiers?...you can't! It's too bad Thomas never was able to complete their intended space line...but new molds cost money and Thomas was already starting to feel the pinch from cheap imports from HK and Japan...his business was on a decline. And perhaps

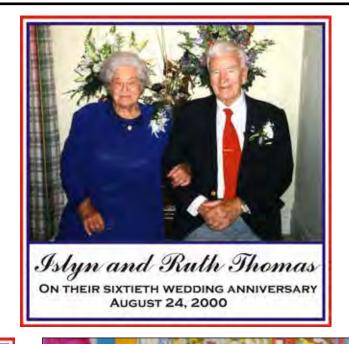
more importantly the Pre-Sputnik space craze of the late 40s and early 50s was short lived and on its way out by 1953.....soon to be replaced by a flood of movie and TV westerns.



Thomas Toy Spinners for targets would have been compatible with The Rex Mars Space Target Game by Marx.

### POPLAR PLAYTHINGS AND THOMAS TOYS **PLASTIC SPACE FIGURES (Continued)**





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**Hard Plastic Examples** 

in compiling this article. Check out Bill's website at:





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## TOY SOLDIER **AUCTIONS USA**

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An exquisite assortment of soldiers produced by the finest. Including 5 Josianne Des Fontaines, 6 Roger Berdou, Bernard Vanot, Baldet, Vertunni, Greenwood and Ball, Courtenay and Ping. Along with a huge assortment of Britains and Heyde plus virtually every other manufacturer represented. A sale not to be missed.



Lot 3016 Lucotte France #26 Royal **Africans Boxed Set** 



Lot 3355 Hocker Types of the Zulu War Presentation Set



Lot 1080 Very Rare Britains Christmas Box



Lot 1045 Britains Set #108 6th Inniskilling Dragoons



Lot 3572 Heyde Woman Golfer with Caddy



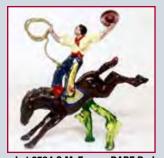
Lot 1025 Britains Set #69 Pipers of the Scots Guards



Lot 1288 Heyde Boy Scout Jamboree



Lot 3348 Britains RARE Lambeth Walk **Dancing Couple** 



Lot 3524 G.M. France RARE Rodeo **Cowboy on Bucking Horse** 



Lot 1042 Britains Rare Set #98 King's Royal Rifle Corps



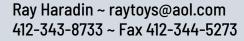
Lot 1222 Josianne Des Fontaines **Charles VII** 



Lot 1113 Britains Set # 2080 Royal Navy Sailors

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### **AUCTION PREVIEW** (Continued)



Lot 3542 Johillco VERY RARE King Neptune



Lot 3365 Hocker #49 Bengal Horse Artillery in Action



Lot 3546 Heyde RARE Large Scale Russian Sharpshooter



Lot 3247 Britains RARE #101 Band of the Life Guards



Lot 1148 Very Rare Britains Archive Paint Sample Card



**Lot 3547 Heyde RARE Mounted Personality Figures** 



Lot 1139 Britains Paris Office Four Horse Supply Wagon



Lot 1166 Courtenay #15 Erle of Oxford



Lot 3008 Northcoast Miniatures Circus Band Wagon



Lot 3113 Britains RARE #2184 Bahamas Police at Attention



Lot 3487 Britains RARE #5MG Miniature Gardening Set



**Lot 3539 Britains RARE Snow Babies** 



Lot 1173 Courtenay Tournament Knight Sieur Henry



Lot 1286 Heyde Crocodile Hunt



Lot 3541 Heyde EXCEPTIONALLY RARE Puss in Boots



Lot 1296 Very Rare from Britains Set #1415 Killer Kane



Lot 1290 Marklin Large Scale US Gun Team



Lot 3120 Britains From #1446 Fox Hunt Picture Box



Lot 3230 Britains VERY RARE Miniature Road Roller



Lot 3512 Britains RARE Nestle's World Cow



Lot 3384 Britains RARE #29 British Army Display

### **AUCTION** PREVIEW (Continued)



**Lot 3507 Britains RARE Cowboy Firing Pistol** 



**Lot 3282 Crescent VERY RARE Pullman Waiter Railway Figure** 



Lot 3469 Britains #1448 Army Staff Car



Lot 3352 Lucotte RARE Japanese Infantry Boxed Set



**Lot 3311 Warren EXCEEDINGLY RARE Cavalry Charging** 



Lot 3455 Heyde Unusual Circus Clown on **Elephant** 



Lot 3343 Courtenay Tournament Knight Sir John Chandos



Lot 3421 Britains VERY RARE Two Man Footrace 1880's



Lot 1225 Josianne Des Fontaines Sargent - Fourier



Lot 3281 Johillco RARE Women's League of Health & Beauty



Lot 1217 Vanot Garde Karabinier Firing



Lot 3501 A. Barrett & Sons VERY RARE **Spaceship Set** 



Lot 3350 Britains RARE #2172 Algerian Spahi





Lot 1234 Roger Berdou Chasseur de la Garde



Lot 1197 Greenwood and Ball #14 Argyll Highlander



Lot 3351 Timpo VERY RARE #240 **Hopalong Cassidy Set** 



Lot 3276 Britains RARE #1219B **Rodeo Cowboy Picture Pack** 



Lot 1281 Rare Heyde Monkey Cage

### PREVIEW (Continued)



Lot 3248 Britains RARE #1438 Types of the Italian Army



Lot 3399 Britains RARE Paris Office **Prussian Infantry** 



Lot 3385 Britains RARE #1607 British Army Display



Lot 3433 Timpo #801 Station Figures



Lot 3266 Britains RARE #91 United States Infantry



Lot 3566 Heyde Nippes Cat & Kittens under Umbrella



Lot 3407 Britains RARE #101 Band of the Life Guards



Lot 1227 Josianne Des **Fontaines Napoleon 1er** 



**Lot 3231 Britains VERY RARE Mechanical Road Roller** 



Lot 1279 Heyde Jaguar Hunt



Lot 3070 C.B.G Mignot Garde Française



Lot 1231 Roger Berdou Grosse Cavallerie 1795



Lot 3403 Britains RARE #19 West India Regiment



Lot 3402 Britains RARE #16 The Buffs East Kent Regt.



Lot 3408 Britains #2043 Rodeo Set



Lot 3445 Britains RARE #188 Zulu Kraal Boxed Set



Lot 1289 Rare Warren US Gun Team

### RICHARD COURTENAY'S TOY SOLDIERS

### By Henry Kurtz

Illustrations from Heraldic Miniature Knights by Peter Greenhill

The beautifully crafted connoisseur figures of medieval knights produced by Richard Courtenay from the late 1920's to the early 1960's are well known to serious collectors of model soldiers. Less well known are the earlier toy soldiers that were produced by Courtenay in conjunction with Ernest Doran in the aftermath of World War I (better known to Europeans as the Great War).

Born Reginald Charles Frederick Courtenay, the future manufacturer of high quality miniature figures was dubbed "Richard" after the English king Richard the Lionheart by his wife Vida and the name stuck. Together with his partner Ernest Doran Courtenay he created a series of 45mm hollowcast knights which, although as Peter Greenhill points out in his Heraldic Miniature Knights, "were not of outstanding merit... they were the seeds from

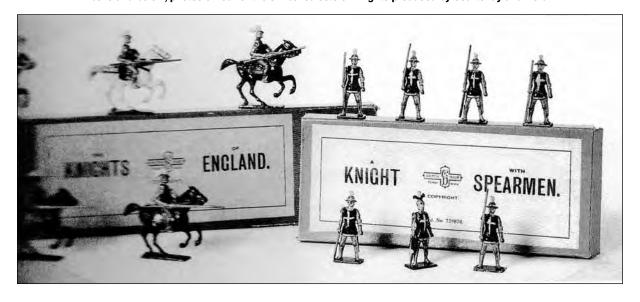
which flowered Courtenay's (later) inspiration." Certainly they had the simple charm and functional quality that youngsters and later collectors seek in toys.

In all, there were six sets which came in red boxes containing five to eight figures. "The box lids," notes Peter Greenhill "had rather austere labels in black and white with a title of contents and a cruciform logo comprising the words "C&D-British"



Courtenay - Doran Toy Knights

Above and below, photos of four of the six boxed sets of knights produced by Courtenay and Doran.



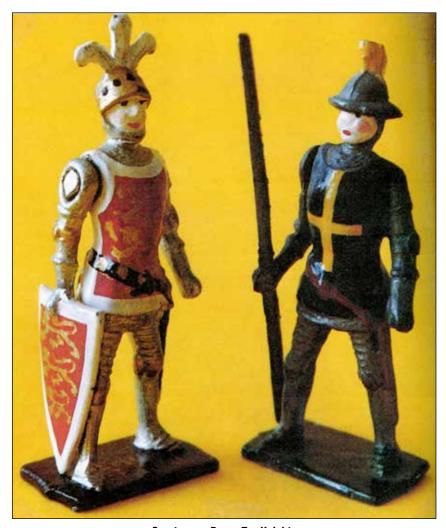
### RICHARD COURTENAY'S TOY SOLDIERS (Continued)

Made" and "Trade Mark." Beneath the logo was the word "Copyright" and a registered number.

A box entitled "Knight of England" featured five mounted knights on cantering horses carrying Lances and in one instance a battle axe in movable arms - a common feature know to all collectors of Britains Ltd. and other toys soldier makers. One of the mounted knights was clearly a precursor of a later more sophisticated Courtenay H2 model knight with movable arm and helmet visor.

In 1928, Courtenay and his partner, Ernest Doran separated. Doran went on making toys, while Courtenay turned to the manufacture of superior model figures. And thus from little acorns mighty oaks were born.

Henry I. Kurtz is the author, "The Art of the Toy Soldier" and numerous articles on toy and model soldiers.



Courtenay - Doran Toy Knights
Photo enlargements of figures from Knight with Spearmen Set.



Courtenay - Doran Toy Figures
Double Fire from Knights in Battle Set



Courtenay - Doran Toy Figures

Knight of England (left) toy figure. Juxtaposed with later Courtenay H2

Figure of Model Knight. Note similarity.





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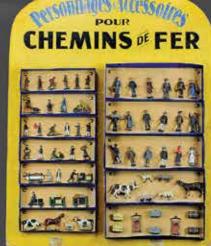
## TONY ANNESE THE GENTLEMAN'S COLLECTION AT AUCTION OCTOBER 11,2019

A connoisseur collector of Marklin trains & accessories, Mr. Tony Annese collected exquisite condition figures to accessorize his fantastic toy displays. This collection features nearly 100 lots of Heyde, Britains, Elastolin, Minot, Lineol, Barclay, Johill Co, Timpco, and more.

We welcome all to attend this signature one day auction. For catalog and bidding information, please contact us at 856-692-1881.









### MORE VARIATIONS OF BARCLAY'S BC2 & BC10 CANNONS

By Stan Alekna

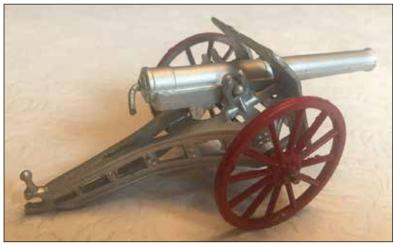
My article on Barclay's cannons in the Spring 2004 issue of OTS included descriptions and photos of several variations of Barclay's BC2 WWI field cannon and its successor, the BC10 WWII howitzer. The combination of features that represented the variations in this article were: the open versus closed hitch; marked and unmarked barrel; silver versus olive drab (O.D.) paint; and cast, spoked wheels versus rubber tires.

Thanks to the keen eye of my long-time friend and Dimestore dealer Phil Savino, in Micanopy, Florida, it turns out that there are several more variations of these popular toy artillery pieces based on his discovery of other features.

The cannon barrel has two distinct methods of attachment as shown below.

Phil and I agree that the earliest BC2's had the barrel attached by pins that were cast into each side of the barrel and snapped into clamps on the carriage. The axle/rod method of attaching the barrel replaced the cast pins, most likely because the pins broke off easily when the cannons were played with.

Another feature that I had missed on the BC2 was that the shield was originally cast with a smooth opening and a later version was cast with reinforcing tabs on each side of the lower portion of the front of the shield, probably for increased strength.



**Photo 1 Cast Pins Attachment** 

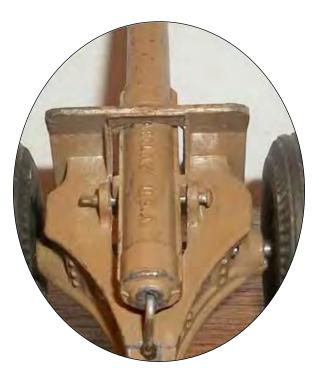
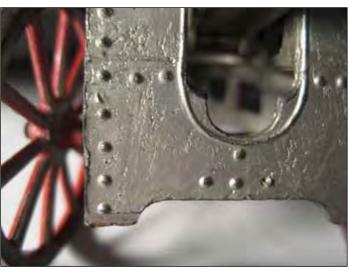


Photo 2 Axle/ Rod Attachment



**Photo 3 Smooth Shield** 



**Photo 4 Reinforced Shield** 

### MORE VARIATIONS OF BARCLAY'S BC2 & BC10 CANNONS (Continued)

Yet another feature of this cannon is the wire firing mechanism that is found with either a loop or with a single bent piece of wire. BC2's and BC10's, have been found with both types of firing mechanisms.



**Photo 5 Loop Mechanism** 



Photo 6 Bent Wire Mechanism"

Phil also noticed that most of the BC2 gun carriages had five triangular openings on top but he found at least one silver and one olive drab BC2 with no openings on top of the carriage.

It is generally accepted that some of Barclay's vehicles, airplanes and cannons that were comprised of multiple parts such as wheels, axles, propellers, spring mechanisms, etc., were assembled using left over, old parts, before the new model parts were phased into production. For example, it is not uncommon to find the same model of slush cast vehicle with both metal wheels and another version of the same model with white tires. It was during such manufacturing



**Photo 7 Carriage with Five Openings** 



**Photo 8 Carriage with No Openings** 

### MORE VARIATIONS OF BARCLAY'S BC2 & BC10 CANNONS (Continued)

BC2	PAINT	TYPE	BARREL	FIRING	BARREL	TYPE	SHIELD	OPENINGS
	COLOR	WHEEL	ATT.	MECH.	MARKINGS	HITCH	<b>OPENINGS</b>	ON
								CARRIAGE
1.	silver	red spoke	cast pins	loop	none	open	smooth	5
2.	"	44	"	66	"	"	"	none
3.	"	"	axle/rod	"	"	closed	reinf. tabs	5
4.	"	"	"	bent wire	BARCLAY	"	"	5
					USA			
5.	O.D.	O.D.	"	66	"	"	"	none
		spoke						
6.								
7.								
8.								
BC10								
1.	brown	rubber	axle/rod	bent wire	BARCLAY	closed	reinf. tabs	none
		tires			USA			
2.	O.D.	66	"	66	"	"	"	"
3.								
4.								

### Variations of Barclay's BC2 and BC10 Cannons

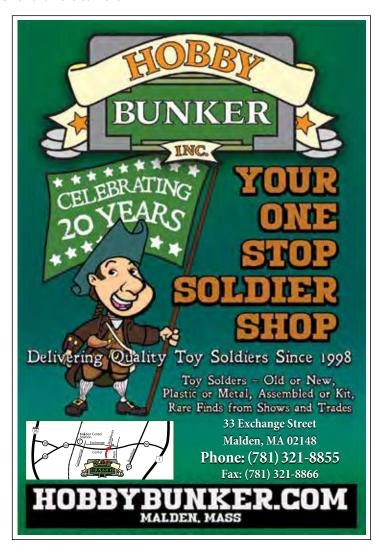
transition periods that many of the unique vehicle, cannon, and airplane "variations" were created, not by design but for economic reasons.

The following table shows some of the combinations of the newly documented features, along with the previously known features, that have been found on BC2 and BC10 cannons. However, it is very likely that there are still other permutations of the new, and the previously documented features, still to be found. For example, is there an O.D. BC2 or BC10 with an unmarked barrel?

I have included additional rows in the table so that you can add the information on additional variants that you may encounter. My experience is that all variations of BC2 or BC10 sell for the same price of around \$40.00 today, in mint condition.

So, for those of you who are as compulsive a Dimestore collector as I once was, perhaps this article will have you adding additional variants of Barclay's BC2 and BC10 to your "Want List". Good hunting!!

Stan Alekna 732 Aspen Lane Lebanon, PA 17042 Phone: (717) 228-2361 email: salekna1936@yahoo.com



# Old Toy Soldier Auctions Annual BARGAIN ROOM

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### WILLIE'S HEAVEN AT 60, LOWER SLOANE STREET, LONDON, YEAR OF OUR LORD 1970

By Luigi Toiati



"Swinging London' meant the
Beatles, Lord John and Lady Jane,
fish and chips wrapped in newspaper,
the 'Flower Children' in Soho,
Islington and the King's Road; as well
as the Pearly Kings with their rows
of shining buttons, the orderly queues
for the bus, Harrods, Biba and Laura
Ashley. It also meant to me the old
antique shops on the King's Road or
in Kensington, full of Britains from
25p to 50p each (!): I bought the
Britains Agincourt series for £5 in a
small shop in George Street."



Edward Suren at BMSS (courtesy Rupert Surèn)

A young specter was haunting Europe in 1970... myself in search of toy soldiers.

Aged 21, dressed as was then the costume in my Maoist-Marxist-Anarchist N°1 dress (Zhivago shirt, pouch for coins hung on a loose belt and washed-out jeans decorated with anti-Vietnam slogans), armed with my pipe, accoutered with long hair (alas!) and beard, and accompanied by my then true love dressed as a Victorian Pre-Raphaelite, I explored the twofold city cradle of the "depraved" Empire and inward strongpoint of freedom to us young protesters, as well as source of beloved toy soldiers for vour humble servant.

Not even John Milton could have dreamt of such a Paradise Lost: toy soldiers everywhere, and within my meager reach. For the price of a fish 'n chips you could buy a couple of dusty Britains lost in small, dark shops in Islington or King's Road, then quite shady places, in the thrilling company of tramps, beatniks and Flower Children.

London was also full of ateliers and shops such as Tradition, Hinton Hunt and Ken Kearsley, Under Two Flags, The Mad Colonel and many more, which were a kind of other side of the toy soldier's coin, true hothouses of a new wave of artists.

My enlightenment did not occur on the road to Damascus, but in 60, Lower Sloane Street SW1, where I met the "Willie" shop for the first time.

A maroon curtain surrounded the whole window, displaying Guards' uniforms, drums and books interspersed with the most fantastic toy soldiers I had ever seen, 30mm high and beautifully matt-painted: I was shocked.

A bell rang as we came in, and its sound was to me like that of St Mary-le-Bow to Dick Wittington, predicting my future as a maker of toy soldiers.

Windows crowded with painted and unpainted figures of every kind covered the walls. Mohawks to Ironsides, Dolly Gray and Napoleonics, Arabs and Landsknechts, including some spicy 60mm Camp Followers, halfnude or half-dressed according to your viewpoint, in partial uniform. Very partial, to tell the truth.

Day after day we visited it, each time spending just one or two pounds for half a dozen unpainted figures – I was already a professional toy soldier painter and kept them for my own collection.

We met Sonia and after a while Edward Surèn, who introduced and guided us to their fantastic catalogue: or better, me, since my sweetheart was attracted by a Laura Ashley's shop just round the corner...



Surèn in North Africa WWII (courtesy Rupert Surèn)

I spoke a pidgin English, but we were all French-educated, so we understood each other.

Edward was "en bon point", that is plump, with glasses and a nice "Van Dyke" beard, and most of all his unforgettable smile. He had served in the 18th King Edward VII's Own Cavalry – not by chance bearing the same name – where he adopted his nom de guerre "Willie". In my imagination, Sonia instead looked like the actress Lauren Bacall.

They were unforgettable persons, in love each with other and with their job and family, with an aristocratic allure and an easygoing character, who soon made us comfortable; in time we got up a friendship and met their son Rupert, a true little Dickensian gentleman. Some more illustrious people than we were usually frequented the shop: Charles Grant, Roy Dilley, Donald Featherstone, Peter Young and many others, in a kind of familiar "club".

We had not got a bean, thus often the Surèns invited us to a nearby Mexican restaurant, where every waitress was crazy about Edward, or to the local Rose and Crown pub, where I used to sketch the Chelsea Pensioner habitués. Often, while I was painting in the atelier, we all shared some aspic de poulet and other delicacies brought from the local rotisserie Le Cochon Rose.

For repaying their kindness, in fact, I also tried to lend a hand painting toy soldiers in the lower ground floor, gladdened by a series of gin and tonics, which started at 10:30 a.m.

As a result, I mean of my skills in painting, not in drinking, Edward later enlisted me as free-lance in painting his figures in Rome.

Willie figures had basically the same 30mm size, except for 45 or 54mm figures for chess sets, and 60mm Camp Followers, plus some Crimean Riflemen in pillbox of the same size, now in my collection and never mentioned in catalogues, to the best of my knowledge.

"His 30mm figures were sculpted with a talent for movement and sketch, and ineffable humor. They were molded in one piece, apart from saddles with rider and weapons: the excellent pewter they were made with enabled the maker to animate them, and to easily solder weapons. It was nice to hear the creaking sound of metal when you delicately bent, say, an arm. An autograph document in my collection on The Battle of Tankondibo reports: 'selection particulière de Sonia Surèn: tin 95%, antimony 41/2%, copper 05%'." (2)

The peculiarity of these figures was their being "moys" or "todels, as I already wrote in my book mentioned above, that is half-way between figures either to play with as toys or to display as models. Willie was a forerunner of this current, together with his friends Marcus Hinton, Les Higgins and others, a British counterpart to the French Mme Desfontaines, MIM, etc.

Ideally, the production can be divided into three categories: standard, chess-sets and dioramas.

These last are both astonishing pieces of art and formidable educational tools: it is impossible here to mention all of them. Let it be enough to remember just some, such as those "at the National Army Museum (Rorke's Drift) and the Scottish National Trust (Killiekrankie)... he was commissioned by Malcolm Forbes to create a number of North-west African subjects for the Palais Mendoub collections [in Tangier]." (3)

Or again the Battle of Ticonderoga, then at the Perth's Black Watch Museum, and the Charge of the Light Brigade for the MMSI (Military Miniature Society of Illinois). Plus those for other private collectors such as the diorama of Sergeant Ewart of the Scots Greys capturing the French Eagle ("cuckoo") at



The Hunt (ph. Francesco Toiati)



Fontenoy 1745 (ph. Francesco Toiati)

Waterloo, among those made for the Marquis of Cholmondeley, and many others.

The fateful phrase "Messieurs les Anglais, tirez les premiers" ("English gentlemen, fire first"), pronounced at Fontenoy, 1745, by the Garde Française, and which cost it 50 officers and 760 men, became in turn a diorama, which is in my heart (and now in yours truly's collection), since it was one of the first things I saw in the shop in the 1970s.

Chess sets were sold painted only and presented, according to the catalogue, in an elegant "handmade mahogany and yew box with chess-board top", with figures in different sizes depending on their rank of importance: the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the Battle of Pavia, the American War of Independence and the Battle of Pyramids.

"Painted boxed sets in the catalogue were fifteen mounted 'Napoleon and his Marshals'; 'The Hunt', that is an '18th Century Hunting Scene'; and a parallel 'Hunting Scene in India' with elegant British cavalry officers in mufti, Sowars and a boar."(4)

The catalogue started with Harlequinade, an extravagant potpourri of mainly female figures, followed by Romans and Gauls, English Civil War, the Jacobite uprising and Marlburians, with several characters such as King Charles I and Cardinal Richelieu. In the 18th century section we have figures of many nations, often taken from rare prints or by the fantastic magazine *Figurina Helvetica*, of whom Edward was member.

My favorite period was the French and Indian War, including Mohawks and Rogers' Rangers: when I started my Garibaldi & Co. Toy Soldiers production I dedicated this period to Edward in my catalogue.

The Napoleonic wars followed, with almost every nation involved being represented, preceded by the early campaigns of Italy and Egypt including a nice French savant mounted on a donkey or a camel, with his large glasses and a sketchbook.



Characters



**Gallantries** 



Early 18th century British cavalry



Guards. Gren. Coy, 1750



Napoleonic Egyptian campaign



Napoleon and staff



**Waterloo Highlanders** 



**Portuguese Caçadores** 



**Normans and Saxons** 



Napoleon's 'oblique tactics'

Normans and Saracens were in the medieval section, together with a mounted Black Prince, and knights made to special order. The geometric patterns painted on Norman shields may be considered a historical-archaeological essay.

There were also Colonial Wars with Zulus and red-coated British also in Dolly Gray's khaki version; plus Egyptians, Fuzzy-Wuzzies, Hadendowas and Dervishes; moreover, Indians, Pathans, Tuaregs, and almost unknown people such as Chad and Kanembu warriors, all with horses, camels and donkeys, also suitable for use as artillery teams, or even cattle according to one's needs.

Sikh Wars included foe and friend, with fierce Sikh artillerymen threatened by red-coated Lancers (also displayed in the fantastic "Aliwal" diorama); along with Bombay Grenadiers 1880, followed by Boers, naval ratings and many others.



Frederick II



Miscellanea of flags

Crimea figures were ideal for reenacting every incident of the war, with a special attention to the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. Personalities were always present, from Sir Hugh Gough to Gunga Din, Gordon, Major Roger, Wolfe, Cumberland, plus historical ladies such as Madame Fourès Bellilotte (Napoleon's mistress in Egypt), the warrior princess Lady Sichelgaita (1040-90), or queens and kings.

The catalogue was regularly updated following Edward's inclination to prolific sculpture. He also dedicated to Sonia a nice Franco-Prussian War series, 1870, whose glamorous vivandières might per se represent an original cameo. As you have perhaps already understood, his inclination to the *eternal feminine* was equal to that for sculpture.



Florence Nightingale and a French Vivandière

The American War of Independence and Wild West gave the menu a pinch of overseas touch.

Artillery had a separate section in the catalogue, from Roman Onager to Gatling, to be accompanied by the fantastic Hinchliffe Models guns, too.

Aztecs, Spanish and Portuguese were also produced, these last coming from the Battle of Three Kings diorama.



**Elizabethans and Portugueses** 



Landsknechts

Landsknechts were Edward's swan song, sculpted in many poses and excellently painted, with characters such as a hanging man, executioner, cleric, etc.

Civilian figures were a separate world and had a small additional

section in the catalogue; here too, sexy mini pin-ups predominated.

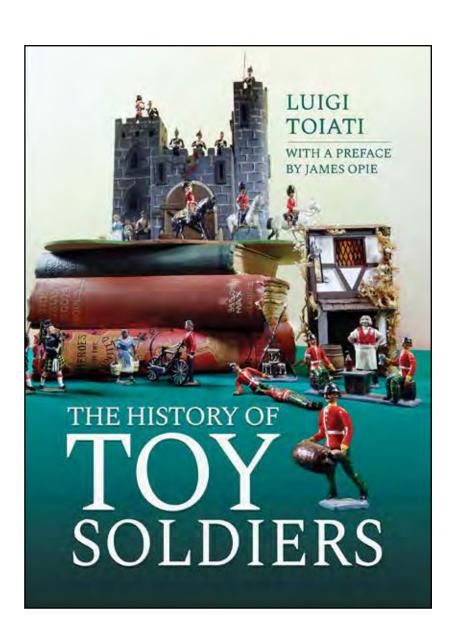
We met the Surèns again over some years, then as it often happens either military service, divorce and other bagatelles stopped my travels to London, even if for some years

I continued painting for them, as well as selling their painted figures at home. In the Spoleto Festival in 1974 I had a little shop with Willie figures: I also numbered Marcello Mastroianni and his then wife Flora among my guests and had the pleasure to strike up a friendship with both.

And to fall for their daughter Barbara the moment I saw her... but that's another story.



**English Civil War Diorama** 



### The author:

Luigi Toiati, semiotician, collector and toy soldier maker ("Garibaldi & Co. Toy Soldiers"), lives in Rome together with his beloved wife Monica, enjoying his retirement and their flowered roofgarden. He has written articles for *Toy Soldier and Model Figures* and Old Toy Soldiers and recently published the book "The History of Toy Soldiers" by Pen & Swords (2019).

### **Bibliography**

- Luigi Toiati, The History of Toy Soldiers, Pen & Sword, 2019
- (2) Id.
- (3) Planet Diecast, Internet
- (4) Luigi Toiati, cit.

The book is in course of preparation and we will run a book review in November issue.

### AUCTION PREVI



### **The 50th Old Toy Soldier Auction**

October 11th. 12th. and 13th. 2019

### Rare Britains boxed and unboxed sets, pre and post WWII, including:

- Monoplane in camouflage finish, large display sets, etc.
- Britains and Pixyland Noah's Arks
- Britains Half sets and Picture Packs in original boxes
- Herald Plastics

#### Other makers, including:

- Timpo Quentin Durward Display set
- · Heyde King George · CBG boxed sets
- · Minikins, including Hannibal and his elephant
- Hugar and King & Country buildings
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boxes - Mamelukes



Britain's post war boxed sets - Ski Troopers



Rare Britain's post war 3 row display set, **Scottish Regiments** 



Britain's pre WW II boxed sets -**Egyptian Camel Corps** 



**Exceptionally Rare Britain's set 1550 Noah's Ark** 



**Timpo Quentin Durward series -Royal Guards in original boxes** 



Rare Hugar (for Britains) **Large Country Cottage 94F** 



Two of the large selection of **Britain's Picture Packs** 



Rare Hugar (for Britains) military buildings -Set 1734 Guard Room



**Tipple-Topple NA Indians** 

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### **AUCTION PREVIEW** (Continued)



Heyde no 2 size King George V personality figure



Pixyland Kew Noah's Ark - the only other Hollowcast maker to attempt this set



Rare Britain's post WWII special packaging uncatalogued set, Guards in Winter Dress



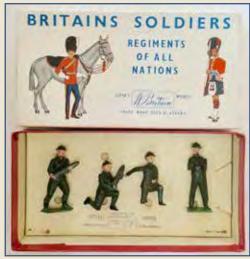
SAE Holger Ericsson 30mm Armies from the 7 Years war, and other campaigns



Britain's pre WW II boxed set -Royal Engineers Pontoon Wagon, Service Dress



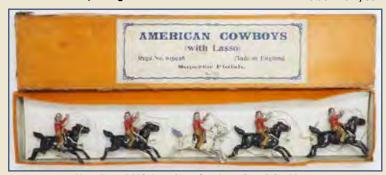
Minikins - Hannibal's War Elephant Crossing the Rhône, in original box



Britain's boxed "half-sets" - Royal Artillery Gun Detachment, Set 2129



One of the rarest Britain's post-war sets: Algerian Spahis in original box



Very Rare BMC American Cowboys in original box



Rare Britains 3 row Display set, Types of the French Army



Britain's set 1641, Underslung lorry with driver, rare post-war "roundnose" variant



Britain's set 1903, Indian Army Mountain Battery, 1941 only



Britain's set 433 Monoplane in exceptionally rare camouflaged paint finish

# **AUCTION PREVIEW** (Continued)





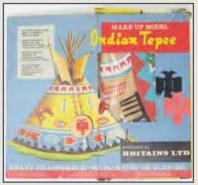
Britain's Exceptionally Rare Large Display set #1477 Coronation of Edward VIII



Britain's (for CFE) rare CIV Army Supply Corps wagon



Britain's pre WW II boxed sets - Austro-Hungarian Lancers



Britain's Herald series Plastics - rare Tepee in original box



Very rare, King & Country Rorke's Drift Storehouse/ Hospital building



Timpo Quentin Durward Display Set - containing a full set of figures from this series.



Britain's set 1721, 12 piece Band of the Royal Scots Greys, 1940/41



Britain's set 1835 Argentine Naval Cadets, 1948 only





Britain's Rare Herald series Zoo Display set



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#### PIXYLAND KEW NOAH'S ARK

By Rob Wilson

The recent article by Norman Joplin in the Spring 2019 issue of the magazine prompted me to "reach for the pen" to add a few more words on the output of one of the more obscure British Hollowcast figure makers.

While my prime collecting interest has always been military types, especially those made by William Britain, I have always been fascinated by the various competitors that set up to challenge Britain's hegemony over the lead figure business in Great Britain.

As Norman's fascinating article makes clear, Pixyland Kew did not focus on the military types that were Britain's specialised area of interest. Rather they specialised in producing civilian and novelty items which seem to modern eyes rather obscure. Nevertheless, these were very popular in 1920s and 1930s culture of the time.

One area that they did offer direct competition to Britain's is the topic of this short addition to Norman's article: Noah and his Ark! In fact it seems likely that Pixyland Kew got in first, as The Britain's set (#1550) was not introduced until 1937. The Pixyland Kew Version probably predates that by at least a decade.

All Pixyland Kew figures are rare but the Ark, is exceptionally so. The one in my collection is the only one I have come across in almost 50 years of collecting.

It is unclear what would comprise a complete set as this is not described in detail in any catalogue. However, as a minimum one might expect Noah and his wife Sarah, plus a selection of pairs of animals. The set shown in Photo 1 has 12 pairs of animals (including great auks, lions, polar bears, tigers, giraffes, elephants, hippos, brown bears, wolves kangaroos, dogs and some kind of mountain goat). In addition, in the set shown, there are a single camel



Photo 1: Pixvland Kew Noah's Ark and crew

#### **PIXYLAND KEW NOAH'S ARK (Continued)**



Photo 2: Britain's equivalent: just 11 pairs of animals here.

and a monkey who both seem to have lost their partners some time along the road.

All the pieces are housed in a tinplate ark, with a hinged roof for access. The Ark was manufactured by Huntley, Boorne & Stevens (later Huntley & Palmer). The Ark was originally designed as a novelty biscuit tin! However, it serves much better as a home for Noah and his charges. Other tins of interest to toy collectors were produced in the shape of castles, ships and tanks. The tins were bought in by Pixyland Kew to complement their lead Hollowcast animals and figures.

The modelling and adherence to scale of Pixyland Kew's set is not quite up to Britain's standards, but they have a charming toy / cartoon like quality. The larger animals like the giraffes, elephants and hippos are probably intended to be adolescents rather than adults. It certainly made it easier to fit them inside the container.

Britain's faced the same difficulties with their set as shown in Photo 2. By the time set#1550 was released the Britain's zoological range included adult versions of most of the "big five" as well as many other types. The Britain's set used young versions of many of these creatures in order to fit within the

confines of the Ark. In Britain's case the Ark was a custom made, lithographed card box, with additional features to represent the boat shaped hull and roof.

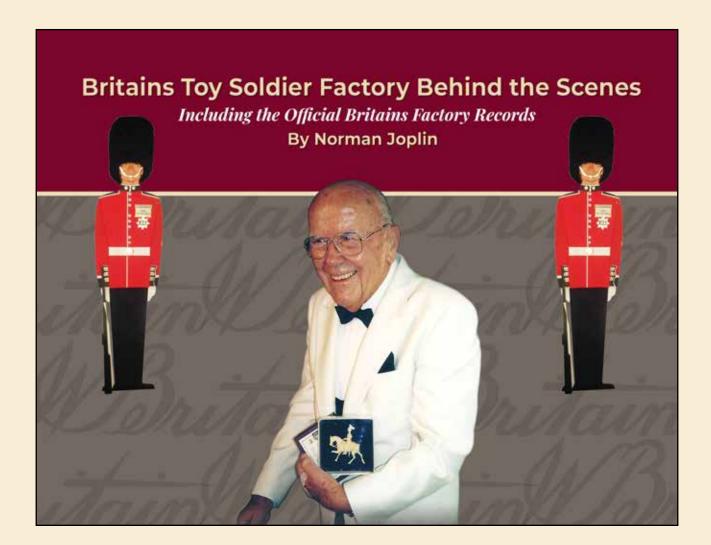
Many other manufacturers produced Arks, including Elastolin, as well as many toy manufacturers working in wood (especially in Germany). As far as I am aware, the Pixiland Kew and Britain's sets are the only ones made in hollowcast lead, but if you know better please let us know!

Rob Wilson
June 26th 2019
Contact details:
r.a.wilson@warwick.ac.uk
Telephone +442476523530



# New Book

# TO BE RELEASED EARLY 2020!



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The book will not be available on Amazon.

For information contact: info@normanjoplin.com See following page.

# **BOOK PREVIEW**

# New Book

# **Britains Toy Soldier Factory- Behind the Scenes.**

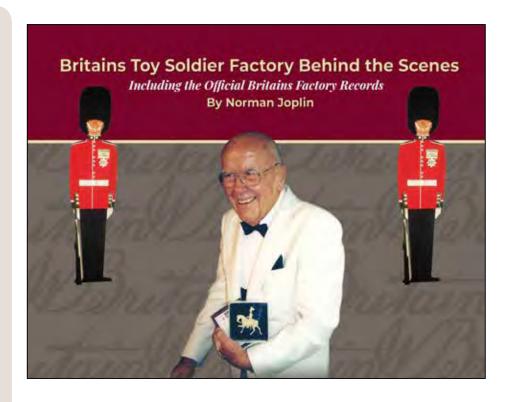
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#### THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MARCUS HINTON

By Robin Forsey

Part Three: "Marcus was just Marcus. He wasn't very practical."

As in all other aspects of his life eccentricity also shone through Marcus Hinton's business affairs. Indeed, it has been said that he lived in a dream world and Cynthia, his wife, was the stabilizing force behind the company. Nevertheless, it does seem that Marcus entered the 1970's decade with an industrious mindset. He added many new figures to the 54mm collector series, remodelled many of his earlier 54mm efforts, expanded the 20mm war gaming range, set up the Battle Commemoration Unit, and wrote various papers on martial subjects, including two articles on Knights and Medieval Warfare and one on the Battle of Bunker Hill, all of which were published in Military Modelling magazine in 1975.1 However, while working on all these different projects it seems that the everyday running of Hinton Hunt Figures was being neglected. Although the company had been run with relative efficiency during the 1960's, by the mid '70's inefficiency ruled supreme. In fact, one mail order customer recalls that things were "so bad that I thought they had gone out of business."

While this inefficiency was mainly caused by a lack of investment in equipment and labour, it was also partly due to Hinton Hunt being primarily a producer and animator of 54mm models. Although the company was one of the first to make metal 20mm soldiers, it never really capitalized on its early lead. Even though war gaming with small-scale figures was a growing and popular hobby, it seems that Marcus merely looked upon 20mm production as a sideline to his 54mm business. As a consequence the firm never invested in moulds and equipment capable of turning out huge amounts of 20mm figures. While attempting lengthy 20mm manufacturing runs, moulds became hot and time was lost in having to let them cool



Probably taken during the 1970's, this photograph depicts Marcus Hinton donning his customary bowler hat. (By courtesy of Hinton Hunter)



Cynthia Hinton participating in a Napoleonic wargame with Marcus. This photograph is taken from a 1966 British PatheNewsreel which showed the Hintons at work and play.



From the very first issue of *Military Modelling* in January 1971, Hinton Hunt continually advertised and had its figures reviewed in the periodical. Although the everyday running of Hinton Hunt was far from perfect the above advertisement, which appeared in the December 1973 issue of the magazine, clearly indicates the efforts that Marcus was still putting into the business. Not only was he adding many new figures to the 54mm and 20mm ranges, but was also remodelling many of his earlier works. (By courtesy of Model & Allied Publications Ltd.)

down, thus delaying production. During the 1970's the problem further exacerbated because it seems that there was no system or finance available to cast for stock. Furthermore, sometimes there was little or no metal in store, thus what few 20mm figures that were in stock occasionally had to be melted down to fulfil orders. Hinton Hunt also tried to save money by experimenting with inexpensive and rather inflexible metal. Yet another cost cutting measure was the use of cheap brown coloured moulds, which were less supple than the black silicone variety. While these moulds may have sufficed for 54mm soldiers due to the simplicity of the spreadeagled castings and limited numbers required, they were not ideal for 20mm production. Because of the undercuts on the smaller scale figures and the often lengthy manufacturing runs, these cheap moulds soon became hot, brittle, and easily damaged, especially used with a less pliable metal. Consequently deposits of brown rubber would often be left in the undercuts of 20mm castings.2

The use of hot and damaged moulds, no matter what type, caused a major problem with flashing. When a mould was new there was no difficulty, but once worn flashing became atrocious and the Hintons would not replace a mould until there was fifty per cent flash on a figure. One 20mm war gaming customer during the early 1970's recalls receiving a package containing "a load of Union Zouaves" and not being sure what they were after he unwrapped them. Yet another 20mm patron remembers the bittersweet experience of "looking at a heap of lead that

represented 3 months pocket money and trying to work out what was figure and what was flash!" He concluded, "in the end it was the labour involved in cleaning the castings that put me off buying other Hinton Hunt ranges..."3 Of course, not all customers were prepared to carve their figures back to the desired look. One complainant wrote to the Hintons saying that he "did not expect to have to take a knife to his investment." Although Hinton Hunt was willing to recast his order, Cynthia informed him that she would have to make new moulds first.4 What-is-more, even some of the painted 20mm figures supplied by the company, which were supposedly to be done to collector standards, were far from perfect. For instance, one purchaser remembers treating himself "to some factory-painted general staff figures which were even dearer, took even longer to arrive and were so badly done" that he got angry just by thinking about them. Consequently the disgruntled buyer had to repaint the figures himself.5 Marcus and Cynthia were simply unrealistic about the market and took no notice of feedback. They did not seem to realize that sending poorly painted figures and castings with excessive amounts of flash damaged the company's reputation.

Hinton Hunt's mail order service was never particularly good, but as the 1970's decade progressed so it became steadily worse. No doubt this was partly due to the firm's inefficient casting system. One client remembers once telephoning Marcus to find out what had happened to his order, which was a month overdue and was simply "given a lecture about how busy they were." Sometimes months

would pass and reminder letters go un-acknowledged before a parcel would arrive and even then there was no quarantee what it contained. For example, one war gamer recalls sending "off for artillery horses and got a load of wheels instead."6 Hinton Hunt got around this by a rubric on its order form, which stated: "In the event of any MODEL being sold out at time of ordering, we reserve the right to substitute what we consider the next best kind..." The 20mm figures were usually shipped wrapped in newspaper and placed in a Jiffi bag; not the ideal packaging for small fragile items and they often got damaged. Some believed that Marcus' mother ran or was involved in the postal side of the business.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently, customer service was sometimes little better at the store in Camden Passage. For instance, in 1974 a client who attempted to enter the premises was met by a man at the door with a bunch of keys who asked was he "thinking of coming into the shop." When the customer said yes the man said "Nah - sorry - I have to go out for a while - can you come back later?"8 Although Hinton Hunt advertised that the store was "Open Monday to Saturday 10:30 AM to 6 PM" and "expertly staffed at all time" in reality it was managed very erratically.

Due to the popularity of its 20mm figures, Hinton Hunt also had to contend with copyright infringements by both private individuals and commercial enterprises. spurious examples even bore the initials "HH" and serial numbers. Nevertheless, it could be argued that to a certain degree, Marcus brought on some of these piracy issues himself because his war gaming pieces were expensive when compared to those of many of his competitors. The problem was that Marcus moved in circles where a few rich men, often retired army officers, played war games, a

clientele where money was no object so prices were high. Many a war gamer on a limited budget could not afford such costly pieces.9 However, as a consequence of Britain joining the "Common market" in 1973 and the replacement of the Purchase Tax system with that of Value Added Tax, Hinton Hunt was able to reduce the costs of some items. For example, in June 1973 Military Modelling ran a half-page advertisement for Marcus, which announced "HINTON HUNT FIGURES PRICE REVOLUTION! many prices now down due to VAT".<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, its gaming pieces were still rather costly and this combined with the frustration caused by Hinton Hunt's appalling mail order service, enticed many war gamers to make their own drop cast moulds from such materials as cold vulcanising rubber and even plaster of Paris, using, of course, Marcus' little soldiers as masters. Apparently, it was because of the piracy issue why Hinton Hunt would not fulfil orders for just one 20mm figure.

On a commercial level Hinton Hunt's war gaming pieces became particularly susceptible to copying in the United States where they were sold quite openly in gaming stores and at conventions.11 While some figures were plagiarized in their entirety other were altered and converted to make "new" masters. instance, one company during the early 1970's that made "modified" versions of Hinton Hunt's Napoleonic 20mm soldiers, which it termed "Napoleoniques," was Der Kriegspieler, Dayton, Ohio. Evidently the practice was so blatant that one individual who had recently returned to America from Britain, assumed that Der Kriegspieler was the United States licensee for Hinton Hunt. the Der Kriegspieler However, facsimiles were more expensive. less detailed and made of inferior metal. Although the writer has not been able to verify the facts but it

has been said that Hinton Hunt did take legal action against the firm.<sup>12</sup>

It was mainly to combat such unscrupulous practices, which in 1966 had led to the organizing of the Guild of Model Soldier Manufacturers whose aim was "To protect the integrity and interests of manufacturers of high quality military miniatures." The members that made up the group were Marcus Hinton, Edward Suren of Willie Figures, Roy Belmont-Maitland of Tradition, The Sentry Box and a Spanish maker called Almirall. However, it seems that the Guild's main target was not an American, but a British maker entitled Minifigs.

The ancestry of Minifigs dated back to 1964 when it began life as a venture called Alberken in Newark, Nottinghamshire. Upon the death of one its partners in 1965 it was purchased by Neville Dickinson for a nominal sum who renamed the business Miniature Figurines and moved it to Southampton on the south coast of England. The trademark Minifigs was adopted in 1968 when it became a limited company. With a constant stream of new releases its output became astronomical and by 1976 it was employing thirty people who were "responsible for the weekly production of some 134,000 figures..."13 individual **Besides** war gaming pieces, the company eventually also made other items miniature including buildings, micro-armour and even 54mm model soldiers. Its customer service was also superb with orders being fulfilled within twenty-four hours of receipt.

The firm's success generated controversy. Copyright infringement accusations became rife and in 1969 the Guild took the decision not to advertise in any periodicals that carried adverts for Minifigs. Don Featherstone, the editor of

Wargamer's Newsletter, believed that this amounted to blackmail and deemed that the Guild had been formed for the sole purpose of putting Minifigs out of business. Other war gaming personalities were drawn into the verbal affray and part of the impetus came from Marcus Hinton who thought that some of Minifigs designs were too close to his own. Apparently these allegations became so widespread that it was rumoured Neville Dickinson sought legal advice. However, Dickinson did agree that his 20mm figures were of the same size and build as Hinton Hunt's.14 Of course, Miniature Figurines was not the only company to produce 20mm figures to blend in with those of Hinton's and in this respect; Marcus was a victim of his own success.

For a brief period Hinton Hunt had led the field in metal war gaming figures, but by the mid 1970's the company had many competitors most of whom were offering cheaper products and a better service. At one time customers had deemed it a privilege to deal with Marcus, but not anymore. While many still regarded Hinton Hunt's 20mm figures to be the best, due to the company's haphazard business approach they now inevitably purchase elsewhere. Hinton Hunt simply could no longer compete, especially against its archrival Miniature Figurines.

Nevertheless, there were still some who believed in the Hinton Hunt name, but when they tried to invest in the brand, apparently Marcus and Cynthia became greedy and wanted more than the business was worth or would not relinquish control. A prime example was a Mr. Steve Thompson and his father who were interested in buying the Hinton Hunt figure range. Living in the Thames Valley area, one afternoon they visited Hinton House and "were ushered through into a sitting room and Marcus came in dressed in a



The final advertisement for Boutique 19, which appeared in the July 1975 issue of Military Modelling magazine. (By courtesy of Model & Allied Publications Ltd.)

pinstriped suit and bowler hat. He told us all about the company and showed us lots of moulds. I asked him about the masters. He said, 'Oh you don't need those. These moulds are what you want.' Well to me, the moulds looked burned out. He then named the money he wanted for these old moulds, which was a huge sum, far more than we had, and that was that."<sup>15</sup>

Besides trading from home, over the years Marcus had also sold his figures from various locations in the Camden Passage Antiques Market area of London. His final venture in the neighbourhood was Boutique 19, First Floor, Pierrepont Row, but it was short lived and by mid to late summer 1975, it seems that the store had closed. Over the years Hinton Hunt had always advertised and had its figures reviewed in Military Modelling magazine, but July 1975 was to be the last issue in which the firm was mentioned. Of course, some retailers continued to sell Hinton Hunt's 54mm soldiers. A fine example being Cyril Howe's of Bath Ltd., a miniature figure stockist in the west of England, which was still listing them as late as May 1978.<sup>16</sup> But, of course, these may have been old stock. As for the

20mm war gaming pieces, as soon as Hinton Hunt stopped advertising, devotees of its little soldiers were soon scouring the market for second-hand examples and placing adverts in the wanted columns of relevant journals. No doubt, this led to yet more bogus copies being turned out.

Why Marcus ceased trading so abruptly is difficult to tell, but the reminiscences of Mrs. Penny Fabb who had worked for him in Camden Passage and later as a 20mm figure caster, may hold the answer. She says "There was a fire, but it wasn't at the shop. Marcus kept all the moulds and master figures in a wooden shed at the bottom of his garden in Taplow. We all tried to tell him that this wasn't a sensible place to store them. But Marcus was just Marcus. He wasn't very practical." No doubt this was the same shack in which the casting took place and inevitably it caught fire. Mrs. Fabb recalls "All the 54mm masters and moulds were destroyed and he had to build the business up again from scratch." It is believed that about a quarter of the 20mm masters and moulds were also damaged beyond repair.<sup>17</sup> She says that this happened "about five years before

Marcus died" which would put the incident as taking place around 1980 or '81, but memories do fade and an earlier date is quite possible and more likely. Indeed, if the fire had happened in mid 1975 it would explain why Hinton Hunt curtailed its activities so suddenly.

Although the glory days of Hinton Hunt Figures were over and evidence seems to indicate that 1975 was possibly the company's final year of any significance, Marcus probably still continued to dabble at making military miniatures if only on a limited scale. Apparently he did sculpture some replacement 54 figures after the fire and it is said that they were more "toy soldier" like in appearance. Yet another

indication that Marcus continued to practice his military modelling skills is the quantity and variety of items that made up the Hinton Hunt estate in 1987.

Marcus Hinton's ambition was to establish a military museum, but sadly he never achieved his goal. At the age of fifty he died in December 1986 and neither Cynthia nor his daughters were interested in carrying on the business. On May 5, 1987, by order of the Executors of Hinton Hunt Figures, most of what was left of the company, including Marcus' reference books, was put up for auction by Kent Sales in South Darenth, Dartford. As for the 54mm "toy soldier" like figures which he had modelled after the

fire, Mrs. Penny Fabb's husband, John Fabb, who had been a close friend of Marcus and also active in the Confederate High Command, recalls "We tried to find out who bought them" but they "wouldn't disclose who it was. As far as I know the figures have never been made again which is a real pity. Marcus was an expert on medieval armour and the knights in particular were wonderful." 19

One company, which did obtain "stocks of the famous Hinton Hunt white metal 54mm miniatures" around this time, was Battle Orders Shogun, UKLtd, of Lower Willingdon, Eastbourne, East Sussex. Although this firm was more renowned for selling such items as lifelike replica



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This half page advertisement publicizing the auction for the remnants of Hinton Hunt Figures appeared in the May 1987 issue of *Military Modelling* magazine. (By courtesy of Model & Allied Publications Ltd.)

firearms, in August 1987, it had for sale "at very competitive prices" a "selection of foot soldier figures. mainly the Napoleonic types...in sets of six." Also available was a very limited quantity of individual cavalry mounted and "many medieval and 16th century soldier figures." Whether these Hinton Hunt models had been obtained through the Kent Sales auction is not known, but the quantity must have been fairly substantial because the firm produced a separate leaflet listing them which was free upon request.<sup>20</sup>

As for the rest of the Hinton Hunt assets, Roy Belmont-Maitland of Tradition was interested in buying Marcus' collection of militaria and it seems that he persuaded a business associate, Colonel Anders Lindstrom of Stockholm, to purchase the Hinton Hunt 20mm range. Apparently Mrs. Fabb, who was by this time working for Tradition (probably as a figure animator) helped organize the sale. However, once the Colonel had shipped everything back to Sweden he quickly lost his enthusiasm for the project and recalls "There were simply too many figures and too much to sort out."21 There are conflicting reports as regards to the chain of events which then took place, but it appears that during the late 1980's the Colonel sold the moulds to, or at least, they ended up in the possession of David A. Clayton of Elan Enterprises in Florida.<sup>22</sup>

After Marcus' death and following the dispersal of the Hinton Hunt assents, very few items in the way of memorabilia remained with the family. However, one particular memento reflecting the glory days of Hinton Hunt which is still in the possession of daughter Tanya, is one of her father's scrapbooks containing uniform information.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Notes**

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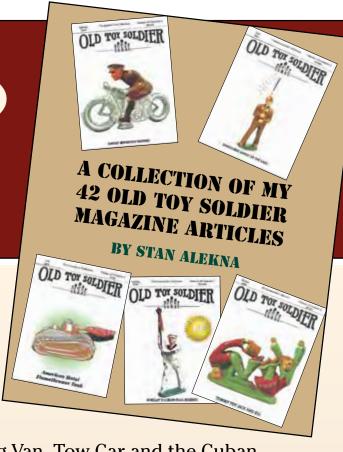
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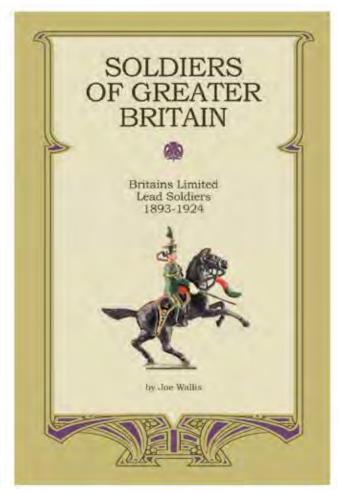
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# HOW DID A REVERED VICTORIAN BRITISH GENERAL BECOME PARODIED?

By Ed Poole

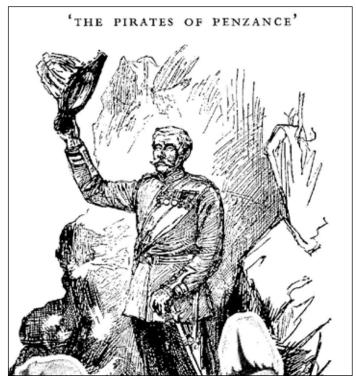
Just a sidelight on the comic General toy article: How did a revered Victorian British general become parodied in a comic opera and caricatured in a Britains Ltd. Mechanical Toy?

In 1880 the popular British operetta composers W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan premiered their latest, "The Pirates of Penzance". The plot features a comic Major General Stanley who, desperate to prevent a Pirate King and his band of gullible pirates from carrying off and marrying his bevy of beautiful daughters, falsely claims to be an orphan. He knew full well that word had already spread that this pirate crew was composed entirely of orphans such that they scrupled never to harm orphans and that every ship they tried to capture claimed to be entirely manned by orphans. The plot goes on with zany twists, a romantic young couple, intervention by timorous policemen and a midnight raid but ends happily. The production was immediately a great success and is still frequently performed worldwide. And Penzance in Cornwall, England is still a resort; think: The Pirates of Atlantic City, NJ.

In the earliest performances in London, the fibbing father appeared in authentic-appearing uniform to sing his "patter" song, "In short in matters vegetable, animal and mineral, I am the very model of a modern Major General"- wise in every academic subject but unable to tell a chassepot rifle from a javelin. Supposition was that the character was meant to spoof the then very popular General Sir Garnet Wolseley, the exact opposite in ability to silly Gen. Stanley. It is also reported that Sir Garnet attended a performance and clearly enjoyed it. What he thought of the his gamecock caricature in Punch, the humor magazine (see illustration), I expect was taken in equally good humor.

But why spoof him at all? The British National Army Museum (www.nam.ac.uk) explains it this way under the heading <u>Great Commanders</u> (italics mine): "Garnet Wolseley: the modern major-general Field Marshal Garnet Wolseley was an influential commander in several 19th century campaigns. Because of his reforming zeal and attention to detail the phrase 'All Sir Garnet' came to mean 'everything in order'....His struggles to continue the Cardwell reforms (abolishing purchase of commissions, flogging, etc.) brought him into conflict with his (ultratraditional) Commander in Chief, HRH the Duke of Cambridge whom he privately characterized as 'that





# HOW DID A REVERED VICTORIAN BRITISH GENERAL BECOME PARODIED? (Continued)







great German bumble bee'. He was subsequently parodied for these views by Gilbert and Sullivan in their comic opera..."

An 1880 theater poster, program cover and "Theatre" sketch (See illustrations) all show General Stanley, slenderly handsome as played by George Grossmith. But even then, Gilbert conceived him in a more comic uniform (See his sketch, also circa 1880, signed with his pseudonym "Bab" and showing the plume attached to an academic cap, a chemical retort under one arm and an encyclopedia dangling). Later productions featured even more comical outfits, including the umbrella, recently carried again by the General in the Joseph Papp NYC Theater-in the-Park offering (still available on DVD) with Kevin Kline as the Pirate King and Linda Ronstadt as the heroine daughter Mabel. I'm sure I once saw, in another production, the General ride onstage to confront the pirates on a miniature donkey- although not a hobby horse!

In my mind, given the intense popularity of the Major General character at the time, The General on the Hobby Horse toy was a cheerful homage, instantly recognizable to the British public. -EKP





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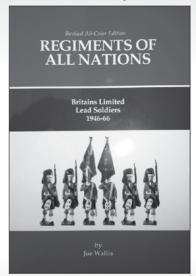
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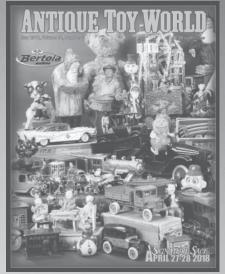


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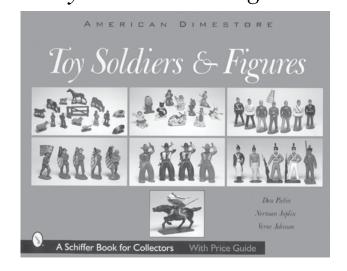
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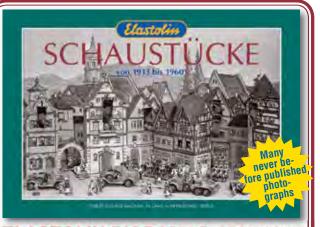
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This book is already the 2nd photo guide on Hausser/Elastolin showroom dioramas. Represented are many of never before published original photographs of dioramas built for Hausser/Elastolin in the period between 1913 and 1960. The documentation's themes are ranging from military scenes and political events via zoological highlights and Wild West topics to certain examples of the early post-war period. The editors were able to share their treasure of high quality old original black-and-white photographs with the readers community on quite a high-quality standard and added also some more recent photographic documentations. 112 pages, hardcover, 21 x 30 cm. Price 39.00 Euro plus postage: within Germany 3.00 Euro; 5.00 Euro within the EU; Non-EU and World the real shipping costs.

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cation from 1993 about the Elastolin figures and accessories (4 cm to and other sizes) of the company Hausser. All hard-plastic themes are compiled together in one volume. All items are listed in a price chart and in pictures. Many almost unknown models are documented. Exact description of various versions. The themes range from ancient Romans, Normans and Vikings, Medieval Knights and Wild West to soldiers from the periods of the 18th and 20th century, as well as castles, camps, African Safari, domestic and wild and 20th century as well as castles, camps, and a soldier for the safari, domestic and wild and 20th century. animals, farms, zoos, circus, tales figures, advertising and special edition figures, mechanical toys and Bild-Lilli (the proto-type of all Barbie dolls). For the first time and only in this publication one can find 15 additional Elastolin dioramas and scenic arrangements from various historical series. Size 21.5 x 29.8 cm, 208 pages, more than 1,000 objects whereas 500 are in color photographs. Price 45.00 Euro. Shipping: EU 5.00 Euro. Non-EU and World the real costs.

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King & Country VERY RARE Mahogany War Bird \$1000



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Heyde RARE 70 mm Knight on Galloping Horse \$600



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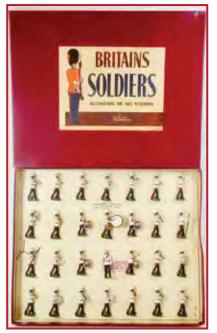
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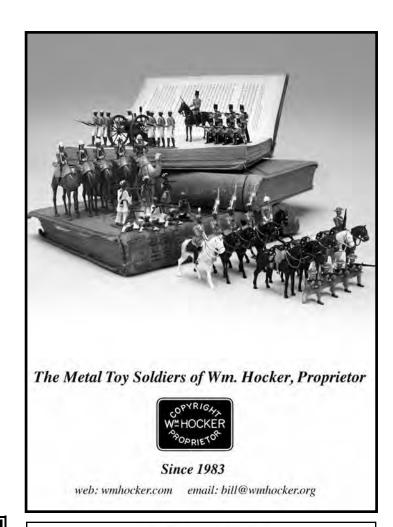
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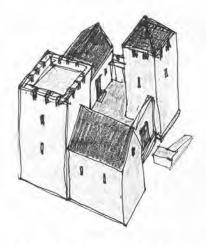
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**September 21st, 2019 - Saturday** OTS Auctions Bargain Room. Hyatt Regency, Fourth floor - Room Number 4311 During the Chicago Toy Soldier Show

**September 22nd, 2019 - Sunday** 10am - 3:30pm 39th Annual Chicago Toy Soldier Show. Hyatt Regency Schaumburg, 1800 E Golf Rd, Schaumburg, IL

Website: chicagotoysoldiershow.com Email: roger@chicagotoysoldiershow.com Phone: Roger Garfield 847-567-5355

October 11th, 2019 - Friday Bertoia Auctions. Tony Annese, The Gentleman's Collection. Tel: 856-692-1881 BertoiaAuctions.com

October 11th, 12th, 13th 2019 - Friday, Saturday & Sunday Old Toy Soldier Auctions USA. The 50th Old Toy Soldier Auction. oldtoysoldierauctions.com

October 13, 2019 - Sunday de 8h 30 à 13 heures - Entrée Gratuite - Organisée par Eurofigurines. La Plus Grande Bourse Internationale de Collectionneurs de Figurines Anciennes et Modernes. Tous thèmes - Toutes marques. Soldats - Figurines historiques et publicitaires Figurines de Bande Dessinée. www.eurofigurines.com Email: albaretphilippe@orange.fr Renseignements, réservations: 06 14 61 16 18

Dates and times are correct at the time of printing; however, it is strongly advised that before traveling, contact is made with show organizers to confirm date(s). October 20, 2019 - Sunday The Columbus Ohio Toy Soldier Show - For info. call: Steve Connell - 734-455-0724, or: Rod Chapman - 740-924-2531, or: Rick Keller - 765-430-6289.

November 20th & 21st, 2019 - Wednesday & Thursday Vectis Auction Tel: +44 (0) 1642 750616 www.vectis.co.uk Email: simon.clarke@vectis.co.uk

March 29, 2020 - Sunday The Midwest Toy Soldier Show, Lafayette, Ind. - For info. call: Steve Connell - 734-455-0724, or: Rod Chapman - 740-924-2531, or: Rick Keller - 765-430-6289.

**April 19, 2020 - Sunday** The Gettysburg Toy Soldier Show - The Eisenhower Inn - For info. call: Steve Connell -734-455-0724, or: Rod Chapman - 740-924-2531, or: Rick Keller - 765-430-6289.

May 17, 2020 - Sunday The Ohio Toy Soldier Show, Wadsworth, Ohio - For info. call: Steve Connell - 734-455-0724, or: Rod Chapman - 740-924-2531, or: Rick Keller - 765-430-6289.

**September 27th, 2020 - Sunday** Chicago Toy Soldier Show (This is the Big 40th Anniversary!)



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