



Serbian troops on the chase are featured in this Britain's box -



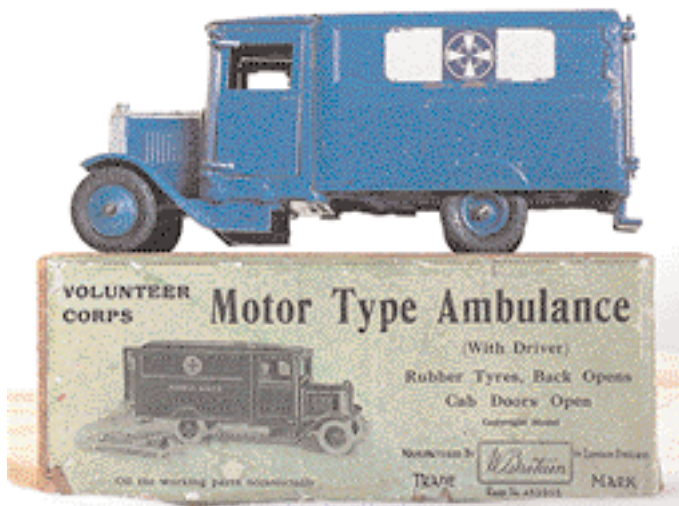
'Drums & Bugles of the Line' - Britain's famous lead soldiers are highly collectable today - preferably along with their original boxes.



- and it's back to Britain's Britain with this boxed set of Princess Louise's 'Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders'.



Britain's also produced regimental models from other countries such as this display of Japanese Cavalry - six Japanese foot soldiers have found their way into this box of six cavalry figures.



This 'Motor Type Ambulance' of the 1914-18 First War period included a stretcher with a wounded soldier and nurse figures.

## The Best of Britain's with Price Guide

by Jack Tempest

In 1860 Englishman William Britain set up his business dedicated to the production of die-cast model soldiers which was soon offering competition in a world that had hitherto been dominated by the German toy makers. 79 years on, Britain's 1939 catalogue had a foreword telling how the company's products had become favourites of the youth of the world and telling how "This popularity is due as much as anything to the great care which Britain's Limited had always to make their models true to life, and the amount of time and care spent on details in producing models has proved time well spent, as is evidenced by the ever increasing demands for them."

The catalogue listed illustrated examples of the firm's products then available - military figures of existing regiments such as the Empress of India's Lancers on horseback, marching members of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, the Coldstream Guards, and the Royal Marines were to be had in decorative boxes. Foreign troops were available including West Point Cadets, Sailors of the USA, the Cossacks of the USSR, and many troops from Egypt, Australia, Canada, India, Africa - the list is almost endless! Included also were horse-drawn and motorised military vehicles along with ambulances, trucks, heavy lorries, and tanks. Various big guns, howitzers, and anti-aircraft guns figure prominently along with aircraft of the Royal Flying Corps/Royal Air Force.

War games were popular using such metal models. The writer H.G. Wells was a great player of such miniature battles and published at least two books on the subject with simple rules for conducting these table-top battles. William Britain's products certainly put his country well on the die-cast metal map that had been previously the domain of the German toy manufacturers! Helping the sales of Britain's products was London toy salesman Albert Gamage who placed his faith in the success of Britain's products and proved successful by managing to sell their toys at a slight discount. He was to gradually replace his original stock of German-made products, replacing them solely by stocking Britain's merchandise!

The international success of William Britain's models was a result of the company's revolutionary invention by William Britain Junior of the technique of hollow-casting their products, thus lowering their manufacturing and delivery expenses. The demand for Britain's products increased - their accuracy of scale, detail, and colouring was well appreciated by customers - especially those who owned the 0-gauge model railway layouts which had become very popular at the time. The railway staff figures issued by Britain's were designed to match that of the newer increasingly



popular 0-gauge model railway scale. The earliest examples from German sources had been made to match the larger Gauge-1 scale of the time. Britain's were quick to adapt to the increasing popularity of the 0-gauge railway dimension and their models were then made to match the smaller scale. Business improved dramatically with overseas exports expanding.

After the 1914-18 World War toy production returned once war work was over and to the new world, tired of war, saw a switch from military to peaceful models in the introduction of the firm's Home Farm Range of items which became successful by the 1930s. In 1931 a new factory was opened in North London to deal with the demand for this series of countryside farm buildings, farmers, cattle, sheep, chickens, trees, horses, horse-drawn milk floats, people - from policemen to vicars, a 'Village Idiot' (sadly!), and even scarecrows! Horse-drawn farming equipment was not forgotten, nor was the village blacksmith and his anvil! There was also a Zoo Series which included a variety of animals ranging from a Lion to a Giraffe; and a Camel to an Elephant. A selection of railings was available to keep the animals safely apart! The 0-gauge scale continued until after the Second World War when the small 00-gauge (known as 'Dublo' in Hornby terms) made its appearance.

The Britain's products were moving well away from war and the company's 1939 catalogue closed with Britain's Miniature Gardening Series - as far away from World Wars as could be envisaged! Several pages illustrated a wide species of colourful plants, from sunflowers to wallflowers; daffodils to rosebushes; and even a scenic lead lily-pond that could hold water, along with a series of 'stone' rockeries. Boxed sets were available, ideal for beginners containing a selection of useful basic items for the beginner mini-gardener! This last section of the 1939 catalogue issued before the outbreak of the Second World War covered miniature household utensils and tiny tea-sets. Famous football teams, footballer figures, Christmas and other novelty figures were also featured along with model racehorses and their jockeys. Miniature garden gnomes were also illustrated.

Collectors of motor vehicles still seek good examples of the Britain's Model Open Tourer, a Two-Seater Coupé, and Mobile Police Car with two Officers - all with rubber-tyred wheels. (one-shilling each!). Two Speed Record Cars, with detachable tops, were the famous Bluebird and Cobb's Railton Wonder. The 6ins long Motor Type Ambulance was available in two types at three-shillings and sixpence each. They came with a Driver, a Wounded Man on Stretcher. Nurses were extra! Three different motor lorries were advertised - a four-wheeled tipper, a six-wheeled lorry, and a ten-wheeled vehicle. Odd man out was a Post Office Red Royal Mail Van, rubber-tyred with Driver. Several Road Signs (in 1930s style) were available boxed - and unboxed.

The catalogue ended with Britain's Mammoth Circus which included a decorative Roundabout and a working model Flying Trapeze featuring the acrobatics of a Clown and Fairy on a Swing. Their animated performance is carried out on a length of wire strung overhead! The Hunting Series of figures and Railway Station Staff & Sundries end the Catalogue with pictures of the company's 'Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs' produced with the permission of Walt Disney-Mickey Mouse Limited of the USA, along with sixpenny or so figures of Disney's heroes Mickey Mouse, Pluto, Clarabelle the Cow, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy. These six characters were available also in an attractive box for four shillings and sixpence!

The Second World War raged from 1939 to 1944 and led to several problems for Britain's in respect of metal eventually being replaced by plastic in toy production - and the company's eventual take-over in the year 2000 by the American toy company of Ertl.



*A Britain's early rubber-tyred Two Seater Coupe Model and original box.*



*Farmer's tractor with two trailers (centre trailer contains wind-up clockwork motor) Last trailer is for carrying hay.*



*This boxed model of a Cierva Auto Autogiro (a helicopter of the 1930s) is a rare Britain's product - very desirable to specialist collectors.*



# Toys



Britains set No 181, Britains Boy Scouts, 1950s: Scout Master, 23 boy scoutss, 3 trees in leaf, 10 fence pieces, 6 section track cart, boxed with inserts. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Feb 08. HP: £2,250. ABP: £2,646.*



Britains Mammoth circus series, The Roundabout No 1439, 5.5in dia, 5in high, gold painted lead organ and propulsion hub, gallopers style roundabout, 6 lead horses ridden by 3 boys and 3 girls, circus scene and 'Britains Round-A-Bouts and Circus', made in limited numbers between 1936- 1939, original covered box. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Feb 08. HP: £2,200. ABP: £2,587.*



Produced only during 1939, Britains Mammoth circus The Flying Trapeze No 1441, high wire act, seated girl on a trapeze with a clown figure balancing on high wire with parasol, wire and rare card disc for drawing out the wire, instructions printed at the bottom of the applied printed label. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Feb 08. HP: £1,150. ABP: £1,352.*



Boxed Britains metal figures set No. 1540 Territorial Army, Present Arms. *Biddle & Webb, Birmingham. Sep 08. HP: £750. ABP: £882.*



Britains Zoological series set No 4Z, 24 pieces incl. 21 animals, palm trees, original two-tier box, orange paper covered box with applied pictorial label. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Feb 08. HP: £640. ABP: £752.*



Set of Britains Royal Horse Artillery figures, set No 126, boxed. *Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £520. ABP: £611.*



Britains Mobile Police Car set No 1413, open two-seater tourer with black base and green body, two removable police officers, white rubber tyres, original green box. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Feb 08. HP: £500. ABP: £588.*



49 early Britains Boer War and similar figures in khaki uniform. *P. Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09. HP: £400. ABP: £470.*



Britains Farm Series Farm and Farm Buildings, incl. milk float and horse No 45F, general purpose plough No 6F, animals, Britains hunt figures, farm buildings, and accessories, mostly boxed. *Charterhouse, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £400. ABP: £470.*



Britains Army Staff car No 1448, olive green, unpainted screen radiator and lights, with driver and passenger. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Feb 08. HP: £380. ABP: £446.*

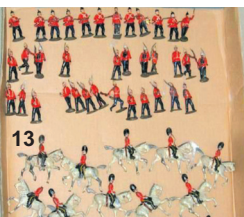


Britains motor cycle combination, 1930s, pale blue side-car, motorcycle frame and tank, dark grey suited rider, pillion passenger and figure cast into the sidecar. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Mar 08. HP: £370. ABP: £435.*



Early Britains Boy Scout Signals Set, No.163, 5 scouts standing in action poses holding signal flags in various positions, tied into their early style box. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Oct 08. HP: £360. ABP: £423.*

The prices quoted are actual Hammer Prices (HP) followed by the Approximate Buyer's Price (ABP) which includes an average buyer's premium of 15% + VAT.



Britains Zoo Elephant Ride, No.25, elephant with keeper, howdah and children, boxed, very good condition. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Aug 09. HP: £240. ABP: £282.*



Britains Knights of Agincourt 1659, 1661, 1663, boxed, G-E. (3) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £320. ABP: £376.*



Britains Hunting Series 1446 'The Meet', fair to good, box good, and a quantity of hunters on horseback, and dogs. *George Kidner Auctioneers, Lymington. Mar 10. HP: £300. ABP: £352.*



Five Britains Farm Series Models, 6F General Purpose Plough, 8F Horse Rake, 9F Horse Roller, 20F Farmers Gig, all boxed, and 4F Tumbrel Cart, box bottom only. *F-G Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £250. ABP: £294.*



Britains Miniature Gardening items: 053 Greenhouse, 15MG and 2MG, boxes, AF. (3) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £250. ABP: £294.*



Britains Zoo Elephant Ride, No.25, elephant with keeper, howdah and children, boxed, very good condition. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Aug 09. HP: £240. ABP: £282.*



Britains Collectibles Circus: Street Parade Diorama with circus professional vehicle, boxed, complete with Parade clown with baby elephant, Parade clown with bass drum, Parade elephant, Arab acrobat troupe, High School riders, Uni-cyclist and Musical Clown Duo, all separately boxed. *E-M. (9) Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



Britains 1512 Army Ambulance with driver, stretcher and patient, boxed. *G. Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



Britains Scout figures: Scout with trek cart, larger scale Scout figure, and seven other figures etc. *P-G. (9) Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £200. ABP: £235.*



Britains Model Home Farm 4-wheeled lorry, No 59f, with three sandbags, boxed, lacks driver. *Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £190. ABP: £223.*



Britains 'Types Of The British Army' Band of the Royal Marines, (Set 1291) 12 figures - a drum major and eleven marching men playing instruments, boxed, figures loose on card backing. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Jun 09. HP: £190. ABP: £223.*



Britains Cadbury's Cococubs Jonathan figures, one in a blue suit and white shirt eating a chocolate bar, the other in blue shorts and brown jumper walking. *Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Mar 08. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*





**25**  
Rare Britains army under-slung lorry, No.1641, 2nd post war type, cab with a sloping bonnet and round nose, only driver's door opening, painted in original olive green livery, opening trailer compartments, paint flaking. Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Aug 08. HP: £160. ABP: £188.



**26**  
Britains miniature balloon barrage unit, with instructions, boxed. Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £160. ABP: £188.



**27**  
Set of Britains soldiers, The Attack, No 216, in a plain box, labelled. Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £160. ABP: £188.



**28**  
Britains Autoways Models 9830 Trailer, 9888 Tractor & Digger, 9888 Land Rover & trailer, 9883 Land Rover & low loader, 9884 snow plough, some boxes AF, G-E. Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £160. ABP: £188.



**29**  
Boxed Britains 1855 Barrage Balloon Unit and a boxed Britains 1728 Predictor. Biddle & Webb, Birmingham. Sep 08. HP: £155. ABP: £182.



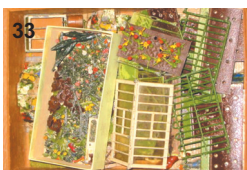
**30**  
Britains Army lorry, No 1334, 4-wheel, 3 sandbags, boxed. Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £150. ABP: £176.



**31**  
Britains Hunt, with huntsmen, riders, dogs and foxes. Charterhouse, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £140. ABP: £164.



**32**  
Four Britains items Racing Colours No.237, Coronation Chair No.86D, Nile Crocodile No.917, Picture Pack Cowboy No.1219B, boxed. Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £140. ABP: £164.



**33**  
Quantity of Britains garden buildings and equipment incl. a greenhouse, P-F. Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £140. ABP: £164.



**34**  
Britains Model Farm Fordson Major Tractor No.127F, dark blue, orange painted metal wheels, driver, boxed. Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Aug 09. HP: £140. ABP: £164.



**35**  
Thirty nine early Britains guardsmen figures, P. Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09. HP: £130. ABP: £152.



**36**  
Britains 128F Fordson Major tractor, boxed, E. Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £130. ABP: £152.



**37**  
Britains Bluebird No 1400. George Kidner, Wimborne. Mar 09. HP: £120. ABP: £141.



**38**  
Rare Britains lead farmyard figure 'The Village Idiot', 2.25in high, G. Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £120. ABP: £141.

Images are in descending hammer price order. The price range is indicated at the start of each section.



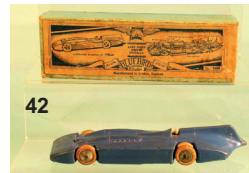
**39**  
Britains 112 Seaforth Highlanders, eight figures, boxed, G. Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09. HP: £110. ABP: £129.



**40**  
Britain's Royal Army Medical Corp wagon, 4 horse team and canvas tilt, a stretcher bearer, stretcher & wounded soldier, and three nurses. Charterhouse, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £110. ABP: £129.



**41**  
Britains Zoo Set, thirteen animals and three palm trees, mounted on original card, no box, G. Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £110. ABP: £129.



**42**  
Britains boxed model of Sir Malcolm Campbell's Bluebird, original white tyres, moulded seat, steering wheel. Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury. Apr 08. HP: £100. ABP: £117.



**43**  
Britains Miniature Balloon Barrage Gas cylinder lorry and trailer, 00 Gauge No 1879, boxed. Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £100. ABP: £117.



**44**  
Nine Britains metal Arab figures: one on camel, one on horseback with scimitar, 3 marching with rifles, one marching with scimitar, one seated with rifle, two unarmed, P-G. Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £100. ABP: £117.



**45**  
Britains Motorcycles series Lambretta Scooter (9685), white with red panels, rider and passenger, contents mint, boxed, Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Aug 09. HP: £100. ABP: £117.



**46**  
Britains tractor, Model Farm Fordson Major Tractor No. 127F, dark blue, rubber tyres, orange metal wheel centres, lacked a driver. Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Aug 09. HP: £100. ABP: £117.



**47**  
Britains metal AA Officer saluting, a Salvation Army lady, Long John Silver with parrot and hat, a similar figure (no hat or parrot), F-G (4) Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £95. ABP: £111.



**48**  
Britains series of the Knights of Agincourt, No.9495, the Knight in red uniform carrying his lance with a George Cross pennant, horse with blue covers, boxed, good condition. Wallis & Wallis, Lewes. Jan 10. HP: £95. ABP: £111.



**49**  
Britains RAMC stretcher party, in service dress, with stretcher and patient, boxed with illustrated label. Charterhouse, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £90. ABP: £105.



**50**  
Set of 10 Britains state coach attendants, and a silver state coach, with team of eight horses. Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £90. ABP: £105.



**51**  
Five Britains metal figures, Arabs in the desert on camels. Biddle & Webb, Birmingham. Sep 08. HP: £85. ABP: £99.



**52**  
Early 20thC painted lead Britains Zoo series Chimp-anzee's tea party, 8 pieces with 2 extra keepers, boxed, table initialled T&B. Gorrings, Lewes. Dec 08. HP: £80. ABP: £94.



Britains British Army 10-wheel covered tender with canvas tilt, and two sandbags, boxed. *Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £80. ABP: £94.*



Britains Scout figures comprising Baden Powell in uniform and two Scouts with Semaphor Flags, G. (3) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £80. ABP: £94.*



Britains 9527 Ford Super Major 5000 tractor (exhaust missing), and 9563 Hay Baler, boxed, G-E. (2) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09. HP: £75. ABP: £88.*



Britains Farm Implements 9550 Trailer, 9555 Plough, 9541 Rotary Shredder and 9539 Seed Drill, boxed, E. (4) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09. HP: £75. ABP: £88.*



Britains collectors Club Set (1996) The Sherwood Forresters Regimental Band, boxed, E. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £75. ABP: £88.*



Britains 9705 25 Pounder gun howitzer (2), 9720 B.A.T. gun (2), 9724 105mm Pack Howitzer, boxed, G-E. (5) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09. HP: £70. ABP: £82.*



Die Cast, Britains 1433 Covered Tender, Caterpillar Type, boxed, F. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09. HP: £65. ABP: £76.*





Die Cast, 591 A.E.C. Tanker, 622 Ten Ton Army Truck, and Britains 1877 Beetle lorry, P. (3) *Hartleys, Ilkley. Mar 09. HP: £65. ABP: £76.*



Britains set 202, Togoland Warriors, original Whissock box. *Bellmans, Wisborough Green. Sep 09. HP: £65. ABP: £76.*



Britains No 69 Pipers of the Scots Guards, seven pieces, boxed, G. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £65. ABP: £76.*



Two Britains Metal Sets 8870 Confederate Supply Wagon, 8873 Union supply Wagon, boxed, E. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 09. HP: £65. ABP: £76.*



Britains No 12 Zoo Figures, eight items, boxed, F-G. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £65. ABP: £76.*



Britains 9740 18in Heavy Howitzer, boxed, F-G. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 10. HP: £65. ABP: £76.*



Britains 18 in Heavy Howitzer, No 1266, with directions and other accessories, boxed. *Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Dec 08. HP: £60. ABP: £70.*

