



DINKY TOY TAXIS



39H – Ford Luxicab

This is the Dinky toy that never was. The Ford Luxicab itself served taxi markets outside London, but when World War II intervened at the toy's prototype stage the Liverpool Dinky factory converted from toy to war production.

The two existing prototypes, carved out of wood and slightly different in form and color, seem to be based on the 1938 Ford Model 62, otherwise known as the V8-22 (right).

The prototypes are 4-door sedans with the same V-shaped grill, flat one-piece windshield, four side windows and shallow bustle trunk under the spare tire.

The Ford Model 62 was produced from 1936 to 1939 at the Ford plant in Dagenham, a suburb of London.

Because of high U.K. taxes on large car engines, the Model 62 had a 22 horsepower V8 engine that was downsized from the Flathead V8 engine used in Ford's American cars.

The Luxicab seems to have been a Ford taxi package marketed to taxi operators outside London and delivered complete with meters and a cream and black paint job.

The Luxicab campaign apparently began in the spring of 1938, with local newspaper ads announcing "The Luxicab Comes to...!"

For example, ads appeared in Hull (May 26, 1938), Plymouth (May 28), Torquay (June 10) and Rugby (June 28).

Liverpool was probably a typical case. The instigator here was a Halifax coal merchant named J.R. Greenwood, the sponsor of a Liverpool private hire (limousine) service.

Greenwood first had to clear his Luxicab proposal with Liverpool authorities since local cab legislation evidently favoured purpose-built taxis, as in London.

Page 1 Continued...



The *Liverpool Echo* reported details of his proposal on June 2, 1938:

8d. A Mile Taxis? Meanwhile Private Service Will Run.

If the hopes of Mr. J. R. Greenwood, a well-known coal factor of Halifax, are realised, Liverpool will eventually have modern saloon taxis plying for hire at a fare of 8d per mile.

The Liverpool Corporation Watch Committee already have an application before them regarding saloon [i.e., sedan] cars, without partition between driver and passengers, plying for hire.

Meanwhile, Mr. Greenwood, as the sponsor of Luxury Taxis, Ltd., with headquarters at 60 Russell Street, Liverpool, will begin on Friday a night-and-day service of handsome saloon cars for private hire, at 8d [8 pence] per mile.

The service will provide a wide variety of travelling requirements -- to dances, theatres, shopping trips, or trips into the country. Long or short journeys will be undertaken, and waiting time charges will work out at 2s [2 shillings] an hour.

The saloons will be painted cream and black — Luxicabs — and the taximeter will be concealed from the outside public.

The saloons can be summoned by telephone and passengers will be picked up free within a radius of two miles.

Apparently special permission was needed to operate cabs without a partition behind the driver.

The “concealed” meter is an odd selling point. Early London cabs had meters visible from outside the cab, and into the 1950s French cabs had meters mounted on the right front fender, likely to enable police or taxi inspectors to make sure that drivers weren’t “high flagging” or pocketing fares not recorded on the meter. In Winnipeg George Moore advertised “plain” cars so customers could pretend to be riding in a private car rather than a gaudily painted cab. The concealed meter may have served the same purpose.

The offer of free pickup within a 2-mile radius harks back to horse cab days, when livery cabs charged time from when the cab left the stable to pick up passengers.



Above: This key ring was offered for sale at auction in 2024 without a description. Assuming it is authentic, does it offer evidence that Ford was closely involved with the Luxicab scheme?

The Luxicab owners in Torquay were “men who have operated taxis in Torquay for many years.” Their Luxicabs were “fitted with 8-cylinder engines of 22 hp,” suggesting that they were, indeed, model 62 Fords.



Above: A genuine Luxicab in Hull in January, 1939. But it's not a Model 62. The grill, divided windshield and rear suicide doors show it's (**below**) a 1938 Ford Deluxe Fordor. That's likely why the Hull photo caption called it a “super” Luxicab.



Page 2 Continued...

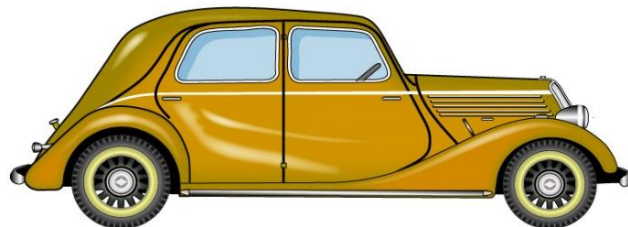


The Dinky Luxicab has been resurrected by at least two replicas. With only a top view in the picture, it is difficult to see how closely the Steve Flowers kit version (**above**) conforms to the Ford Model 62.

However the Club Dinky France CDF78 version (**below**) shows definite differences, notably the front suicide doors and the swept back fenders.



The profile of the Club Dinky France version in fact looks a bit more like that of a 1936 Renault ACL-1 Primaquatre (**below**).



Picture Sources

Page 1 Left – Isabelle and Vincent Espinasse, Auto Jaune Blog May 25, 2016: Luxicab Projet Abandonné ([Link](#)).

Page 1 Right – Both pictures are from Automotive Heritage: Ford Model 62 (1936-1939) ([Link](#)). The site Includes a brief history of the Model 62 in Russian, but the Google Translate icon provides an English version.

Page 2 Center – The key ring is from easyliveAuction.com ([Link](#)).

Page 2 Right top – "Harry Roy & Wendy Claire, assisted by Bill Curry, Go Shopping in Hull," *Hull Daily Mail*, January 11, 1939, p. 9 ([Link](#)) via British Newspaper Archive (subscription required). In a 3/4 page photo essay, two vaudeville performers visit several shopping venues in Hull to provide publicity for the merchants. The photo caption reads: "Harry Roy and Wendy Claire setting off for their tour in a super 'Luxicab,' loaned by HARBOUR MOTORS LTD."

Page 2 Right bottom – Hemmings.com: Sold - Restored, Flathead V-8 Powered 1938 Ford Deluxe Fordor Sedan ([Link](#)).

Page 3 Left top – Steve Flowers Model Supplies: SLMC (Steve's little motor company) #56 Ford Luxicab Taxi (copy of never released Dinky 39H) white metal kit. Via ebay ([Link](#)).

Page 3 Left bottom -- Club Dinky France CDF 78 Ford Luxicab 'Taxi' jaune & noir ([Link](#)).

Page 3 Center -- Raymond Martin-Faber, Renaultheque, La Gamme Renault: Renault 1936 – Type ACL-1 Primaquatre ([Link](#)).

Other Notes

Planet Diecast: The Abandoned Luxicab Project by Dinky Toys (an English translation, with pictures, of Luxicab Projet Abandonné) See **Picture Sources, Page 1 Left**; ([Link](#)).

The publicity generated by the Luxicab marketing campaign may have persuaded Dinky to create a model Luxicab. Examples from the British Newspaper Archive (subscription required):

"The Luxicab Comes to Hull" (ad), *Hull Daily Mail*, May 26, 1938, p. 14 ([Link](#)).

"The Luxicab Comes to Plymouth" (ad), *Western Morning News*, May 28, 1938, p. 6 ([Link](#)).

"The Luxicab Comes to Rugby" (ad), *Rugby Advertiser*, June 28, 1938, p. 2 ([Link](#)).

Page 3 Continued...

“The Luxicab Comes to Torquay” (ad), *Torquay Times and South Devon Advertiser*, June 10, 1938, p. 8 ([Link](#)).

“8d. A Mile Taxis?” *Liverpool Echo*, June 2, 1938, p. 10 ([Link](#)). Article reprinted on p. 2, above).

“Luxicabs: Torquay’s New 8d. Per Mile Taxi Service,” *Torquay Times and South Devon Advertiser*, June 10, 1938, p. 8 ([Link](#)). Includes quote re owners and 22 hp engines, p. 2, above.

The two Luxicab prototypes fetched the highest prices of any Dinky taxi. See the [Appendix](#).

