

Rare bus hailed in Oz

In Australia, the Trains, Planes and Automobiles auction house was very excited at the start of 2021, for they had been consigned a Matchbox bus. Not any old bus, though: this was a first series No.5a green bus. This particular model was produced expressly for the Australian market in the 1950s and is now considered extremely rare. It sported "Buy Matchbox Series" paper labels on both sides, with No 5 cast on the front destination board.

The auction house's Rob Jones relates that this represents only the third example he's come across in the past decade, and it is in unusually good condition, with its original box. It is being offered for sale in April by the family of the original purchaser. Ramsay's valuation of this item is £4,000-5,000 and Rob reckons that around Aus\$10,000 would be par for the course.

His most recent auction featured no small number of Lesney/Matchbox models. In the Models of



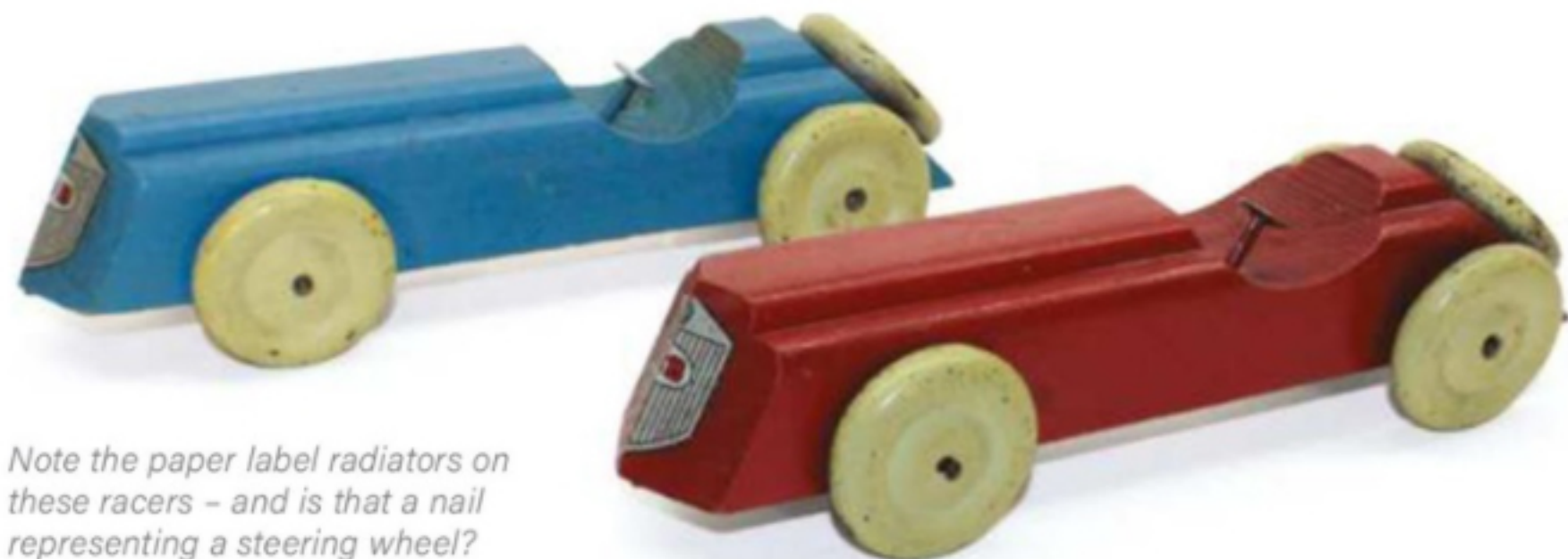
This very scarce Matchbox bus is due to go under the hammer in April: stay tuned for the result!

Yesteryear series, a Y2-1 1911 B Type London Bus was the version with 8 over 4 side windows. In excellent shape, and in a good box, it sold for Aus\$100. Another Yesteryear, the Y8-2 1912 Sunbeam Motorcycle with Sidecar, in a chromed finish, also attracted the bidders; again excellent with a good box, this achieved Aus\$90.

Slightly different were the Matchbox Collectibles "Models of Australian Art" Set. This involved two 1926 Ford TT Vans, featuring artwork by Pro Hart and Jenny Kee. In a limited edition (No. 5 of 1,000), the key element was the outer

sleeve that was signed and illustrated by Pro Hart (one of only 20 signed at the launch, and given to dealers). They sold for Aus\$380.

An unusual pair of CB (Belgium manufacture) pre-war wood and metal racing cars sped off to make Aus\$140, neatly exceeding their estimate: each was around 200mm in length. Finally, the big stuff: a Bing O gauge three-rail 18V LNER 0-4-0 Locomotive and tender, numbered 8851 and finished in green, looked lovely – and it worked, too. It went under the hammer for Aus\$260. ■



Note the paper label radiators on these racers – and is that a nail representing a steering wheel?