



History of Gee Dee Models. Ltd.

Gee Dee Ltd was started in Goosegate in 1946 by Mr.E.L.Grain and Mr G.Dick...One of the conditions when we applied for a lease was that you had to have been in business for at least ten years.

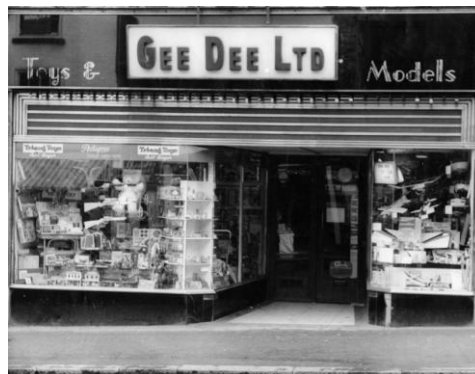
Shop premises were nonexistent in Nottingham after the war. The lease was only granted to us by virtue of Mr.E.L.Grain having been in business as E.L.Grain (Sewing Machines) Ltd since 1930. The name of Gee Dee originated from Grain & Dick. At that time so soon after the war it was virtually impossible to obtain anything to sell. Our quota of Trix train sets was two a year! We used to sell garages and dolls houses made by locals in their sheds at the bottom of the garden. Model cars that we sold were made of plaster of paris! After about two years Mr Dick left the company and the firm has been run by the Grain family ever since. We gradually acquired more agencies such as Triang, Hornby, Dinkys, Meccano, Keilcraft and Gee Dee gradually became more Models than Toys.

In 1960 we opened two more shops...one in Friar Lane and another in Skegness. At that time there were many car parks around Friar Lane and the shop was very successful... However, gradually all the car parks were built on and double yellow lines arrived and trade went down. Having been offered a good price for the lease we decided to sell and concentrate on Goose Gate and Skegness. There were many shops in Nottingham selling toys and trains (even Marks & Spencer sold Rovex trains sets)

But our main opposition was Beecrofts in Pelham Street. They had been trading since the beginning of the century. The same week as we closed the Friar Lane shop, Beecrofts also closed their shop in Pelham Street. This consequently boosted the trade in Goosegate. We had two floors in Goose Gate, the ground floor was for toys and the first floor was for models...At Christmas we were so busy we could only let customers go upstairs as other customers came down! Many a time have we been setting out the window at one o'clock in the morning!

In the early seventies the powers that be decided Goosegate should be a cul-de-sac and the road was closed at Cranbrook Street. To us and other shops this was a disaster. When we first heard of this proposal we rang the council and complained that this move would finish Hockley as a shopping centre... The reply was oh yes it will! Hockley at one time was a second city centre and they killed it off. At this time our associate company E.L.Grain Sewing Machines were building a new extension to their premises on Highcross & Heathcoat St, so we decided to sell the Skegness shop and move the Hockley shop to Heathcoat St. Just after we moved the council decided to open up Goosegate again!

For many years we ran the Gee Dee Model Aircraft club also the Gee Dee Model Railway club with its own club room. Every year we held a model railway exhibition in the Elite building on Parliament Street.





We also held many flying displays on or near Colwick racecourse even providing a free bus service from the market square.

In 1976 we opened our new shop in Heathcoat Street. With so much extra space we really could put on a good display. It took a year or two for customers to find our new premises but we gradually became established once again. Then along came Beatties and we were really up against some strong opposition. In order to publicise ourselves we commissioned the first city transport bus to have complete overall advertising. The front of the single decker was painted to resemble a railway diesel and pictures of trains and aircraft covered the whole of the outside of the bus. This ran for several years until the bus was no longer roadworthy (see below).

In the eighties computers and computer games hit us hard but we decided not to break into new ground but to stick to the models that we specialised in. Beatties on the other hand diversified into computer games and became more of a toy shop. Whilst we went into far more serious modelling stocking thousands of slow selling specialised bits and pieces that other shops did not want to be bothered with. Eventually Beatties went into receivership and closed.

In the late nineties we were running out of room once again and took over the lower ground floor showroom of E.L.Grain Sewing Machines; this now gave us over 3000 sq.ft of floor space including a separate showroom solely for die cast models.



On the first floor we have a vast range of intricately detailed model railway engines, coaches trucks and accessories in all gauges... N...009...00...16.5mm...0...and G... Hundreds of plastic kits. A complete range of diecast, buses, cars, lorries and aircraft. Full range of Scalextric, Steam engines, Books & Videos & DVD's.

On the lower ground floor we had radio controlled Aircraft...Helicopters...Cars...Tanks...Submarines...Lorries...Yachts... Boats even a Jet Ski, plus many Classic ship kits. If you wanted to build your own models then we had all the materials and tools that you would ever need.

Unfortunately in 2008 due to intense competition from the web sites we had to close the lower ground floor in order to reduce staff and save running costs. The whole shop was integrated into the upper floor level with a reduced display area. We hope that one day we will be in a position to reopen the lower ground floor department. Unfortunately we have lost a lot of trade due to the intense competition from youngsters whose only interests are computer games and mobiles and texting!

Keeping up with the times we do have a very extensive web site...www/geedee-modelshop.com covering almost 6000 items. You can take a trip around the shop seeing all the displays... just connect to the home page on our web site and click on Google shop view. There is also a link alongside to connect to our EBay Shop.

It is very sad to see the closure of so many shops in Nottingham due to out of town shopping centres, shopping on line, restrictions on parking etc.. We are promoting **SOS (save our shops)** and we need all the support you can give us. We hope that we have served you well for the past 60 years and would appreciate all the support you can give us.

Gee Dee Models