

Selcol was an offshoot of the Selmer Musical Organ and Instrument company and was set up in 1953 and seems to have been the plastics division and 'Toy' arm, although they were also involved in producing children's records too. Best known for their Airfix-style 6" figure kits of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I - among others from their Braintree, Essex factory. Before producing Beatles guitars they were also known for toy guitars featuring Elvis Presley.

They produced several guitars; 'Junior', 'Big Beat', 'New Sound Guitar', 'Cutaway' (2 versions), 'Red Jet Electric', 'New Beat' and the 'Big Six'. The rarest being the 'Junior' and the super duper cool 'Red Jet Electric' guitar that came with an amplifier! Now what kid would not want that toy at Christmas? Also produced by Selcol is the ultra rare plastic Record Rack, which is very fragile and amazingly survives intact even all these years later. Hard to track down, and super expensive if you do find one (below).



'Red Jet' and 'Junior' Toy guitars



Selcol also produced a single snare drum in two designs, one with Ringo's printed signature on the skin and a smaller image of his face, the other featuring his face much larger also with a facsimile signature.

Both came with a box, with label and included a stand and drum sticks and instruction booklet.





Regular contributor Paul Rose was lucky enough to own a drum in his collection, but the skin was split and the toy was eventually thrown away, however two toy guitars are still present in his collection. Publisher Craig Smith thankfully has kept his drum and several guitars in his collection and photos from their collections are featured in this article.

It was also around this time that Beatles items were being given away as prizes at local fairgrounds. Most notable prizes were large Beatle badges.

To my knowledge (PR) only a group badge and one for Ringo were ever made, but if anyone out there has a John, Paul or George please let us know. We have searched far and wide so if you do have one it looks to be a rare item.

As with the badges mentioned in BBFC 73, The Beatles version of this badge resurfaced in the 1970s with red beetles.

Our thanks to Paul Rose and Craig Smith for allowing us access to their collections.



Museum archives hold invaluable background information on the objects in their collections. For advice on how to research museum collections, please email treasurer@britishbeatlesfanclub.co.uk

Ernie Sutton and Craig Smith