

NSCC

The independent club for everyone interested in all aspects of 'scalextric' type cars in all scales.

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EDITOR DROWNS IN SEA OF ARTICLES

Following last month's advert laden issue the NSCC membership responded to such an extent that the editor could not cope with the flood of submissions and disappeared under the waves of paper - no I am lying - but I am glad to say that there was a considerable increase in contributions so this month's Journal is much improved. My thanks to the new contributors whose work appears this month. Now you have seen your name in lights you may get the taste for it!

As mentioned last month I have been communicating with our colonial cousins in Australia and have now received some copies of their newsletter. I have found a lot in common with their editor, Wayne, and I hope to introduce a couple of ideas from 'Clublines' in the near future. We may be separated by half the globe but the enthusiasm for our hobby is just the same and the editorial problems are no different. He whinges at his members for their lack of input just as I do!

We have had another large influx of new members this month - welcome to the club everybody. This has presented me with a bit of a problem trying to include everybody on the membership update page. I am currently about a month behind with the changes of address so if your details have not yet appeared please accept my apologies and I will try to catch up next month.

Much more to read this month than and I was particularly pleased to see the contribution from Ted Martin about the Hawthorn Park Club, one of the last surviving clubs from the days of rail racing in the 1950s. I think we tend to forget that model car racing existed well before Scalextric was invented and the early years of our hobby are very poorly documented, so it is good to see that an event is being planned to celebrate those pioneering days (see page 37).

Enough about small cars - the real thing has started and I am off to Snetterton for the first meeting of the year - Vroom! Vroom!
Till next month

Brian



SOME NEWS IS GOOD NEWS.

I'm glad to say though that there are a few items to update you on. Glad, because this time last year an announcement was made by Hornby Hobbies Ltd to close the Westwood factory down and relocate to elsewhere. Today the factory is still at Westwood near Margate, producing Scalextric cars, albeit in very small numbers. Most are now produced entirely in China. All other business functions are still carried out at the East Kent site at Margate. How long the factory will remain operational is uncertain. Despite a severe trimming down of output and a heavy reduction in the workforce over the past few years there appears to be no physical signs of an impending move. So, the factory, still here in Thanet and still producing, is good news in itself.

TV IN MARCH?

The new Scalextric interview with one of our club members by the TV show 'Collectors Lot' may be delayed for screening until April.

COLLECTABLE CAR

Last month, a gold Corolla for the 'International Sales Conference 1998' was documented in this column. Following up on the discovery, I have enquired at the factory as to whether similar conferences have been held since. As far as the factory knows, this car has been the only car for this event in 1998. Hornby Hobbies Ltd. has not attended any further event or made plans to attend one in the future.

BARRATTS SUBARU

To lay your fears to rest, I can confirm that there are not two racing number versions of this car. The catalogued car has racing No. 18 and is the only version planned. The confusion has probably arisen due to a 'Spot the difference' competition in the Racer magazine where pictures of two Subarus were shown!

LOOK, NO NSCC JAGUARS!

Just a reminder to all you hopefuls who are still sending in applications for the free NSCC 200th Edition Jaguar XJ220! The cars have, at last, all been distributed to NSCC members. Please don't send any more applications in.

MRRC REVIEW

BY THE EDITOR

Recently I was asked, by John Robinson of MRRC, if I would like to review some of their new items. Now I am always somewhat wary of model reviews when the subject has been provided free of charge in case the author is unduly influenced by the desire to keep on good terms with his benefactor. I also value my editorial independence and I do not wish to become too involved with any manufacturers or distributors in case I need to criticise them at any point.

However, I am as susceptible as the next man to the offer of a freebie, so I agreed to do a review on condition that it would be a totally honest one. To his great credit John accepted this and sent me some of his plastic figures and a Chaparral 2C to try out.

MRRC is, to a large extent, the forgotten make of slotcars. Despite an illustrious history, which stretches back to the dawn of slotracing, I have yet to receive a single article about them. Most of their products, with the exception of the Airfix inheritance, are aimed at the club market and their range is enormous - the price list runs to eighteen pages of A4! However the items I received are clearly meant for the home racer.

PLASTIC FIGURES

Those of us who pursue the neglected hobby of model road racing and like to build a realistic track, complete with scenery and spectators, have been crying out for some modern figures for many years. Scalextric 'man in bobble hat' must be drawing his pension by now. I had high hopes that these MRRC people might fill the gap. There are five different sets:- racing figures, drivers and pitcrew, track officials, spectators and vendors

They are not new but are actually made from Monogram moulds of the mid to late sixties. However as American fashions tend to be a little ahead of ours they have a much more modern look about them. They are not totally up to date but are a considerable improvement on anything else currently available. The women

spectators, in particular, are excellent - there is even a Pamela Anderson lookalike!

A friend of mine makes his living by painting the figures used in Fantasy and War games so I thought the obvious thing to do was to seek his opinion on these ones. When I informed him of the age of the moulds he was most enthusiastic, stating that the detailing and quality were almost on a par with current figures he was painting. He thought that they would accept enamel paints very well and has taken a few to try. I will report on his efforts at a later date.

This leads me to my one major criticism of the product - the figures are unpainted. That in itself is not a problem, the cost of factory painting would be astronomical and it is common practice to sell them in bare white plastic. However the packaging shows the figures in decorated state - it is only when you read the small print on the back of the box that you discover that they are unpainted. I can imagine that little Johnny is not going to be very pleased with his purchase when he discovers that he is going to spend a lot of time painting them before they resemble the pictures on the front. I know that Airfix kits and suchlike are also supplied in this form, but it is usually made quite clear on the front of the box. I regard this form of packaging as sharp practice and I wish manufacturers wouldn't do it.

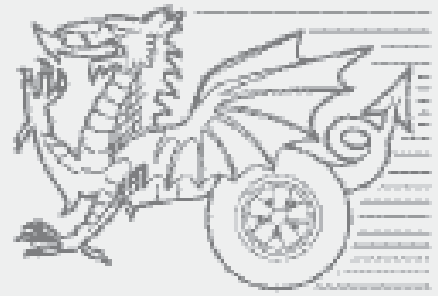
This criticism apart, though, I am very happy with the product. I reckon that about half of the figures could be used in a modern setting without any modification at all. A further 25% would need a little alteration and the rest would have to be hidden round the back of the circuit in case a visitor thought he had gone 'Back To The Future'. We still await the definitive modern pitcrew with Nomex overalls but as the cost of figure moulds exceeds that of car ones we could be waiting for some time. In the meantime these will provide a useful stopgap.

The ultimate question in this sort of review is "would you buy the product with your own money?" The answer in this case is "Yes, I already have."

Next month I will report on the Chaparral.

TOP GUIDE

By Richard Davies



CYBERSLOT

I have seen the future. It probably hasn't escaped your attention that everything is becoming computerised. When you consider the fact that a couple of decades ago people thought a microchip was a very small piece of fried potato and then compare with today's society it seems clear that computers are taking over. What has this to do with slot cars? They'll be computerised next.

Virtual reality slot cars! No more getting up to put the car back on! No more pushing the wheel back on after seeing it overtake the car going down the straight! The possible range of venues is enormous as the track can be placed at any one of several preprogrammed locations without moving a muscle. I can just see the options screen now: Location Select: [Pub] [Bedroom] [Living room] etc. each with it's own hazards for the cars. In the pub, you would have to dodge pools of booze spilled by inebriated customers. In the bedroom, the danger would be from some idiot getting up and stepping on the cars before becoming fully awake and in the living room, you would have to dodge the plates thrown by irate housewives. Even more interesting than the possible venues are the cheats that could be programmed in. Imagine being able to covertly reprogram your Mini to handle like a FLY Venturi, or to replace your driver with Michael Schumacher. However, the possibilities for sabotage are what makes it really interesting. How about a cheat that when activated sends your opponent's car into either 1 mph max speed or an inability to drive around a corner, or one which summons a T-Rex from Jurassic Park to turn your opponent's car over, push it around a bit, eat the driver and push the car off the edge of the

track. The possibilities are boundless. The cars could also have such features as appropriate animation. Learner driver cars would continuously stop and start for no reason while emitting a teeth grinding cruch of shattered gears, Police cars would display flashing blue lights when approaching a dodgy car and the car approached would receive a speed boost until it crashes, and a police, camera, action crew arrive. Cheap, small cars which, for some unfathomable reason, have been modified to have tinted windows and big exhausts would emit a dull, thump thump thump sound, superficially resembling music but with the same tone and rhythm of an industrial construction site.

Maybe one day someone will try and wean us off our traditional plastic and rusty metal rails for the flawless world of cyberspace. And on that day, I suggest they wear bodyarmour. Fire axes at the ready.

21ST CENTURY SWOPMEET!

PHIL ETGART REVIEWS NSCC MILTON
KEYNES SWOPMEET 20TH FEBRUARY 2000

One of the highlights of the swopmeet calendar is the February Milton Keynes event. Following on from the busy December 'Slotswap' event at the venue, this was an eagerly anticipated day. By 0730hrs a large number of UK and overseas traders had gathered outside the venue and, in the process of unloading stock to a convenient position adjacent to the stallholders' entrance, an informal outdoor swopmeet was taking place! Items that changed hands early on in the day included a boxed example of the rare light blue Javelin and one of the early rubber track paddocks (The covered paddock with the grey plastic roof).

Inevitably discussion turned to which new products were in circulation and a large part of it centred around the specials that had recently surfaced from the Hornby factory. As has become an annual occurrence there has been a 'Range Presentation Model' produced for Hornby's trade customers. This year's model is a dark blue Porsche GT1 with appropriate tampo printing. In previous years these cars have been reasonably easy for collectors to obtain if they were willing to meet the market price. However to my knowledge only one of these cars changed hands at Milton Keynes and if that is so then they are obviously a lot more difficult to obtain this year!

The second of the 'Hornby Specials' to surface recently was the 'Millennium TVR'. This car was produced as a commemorative gift for factory employees. The model was finished in dark blue (Same colour as the 'Range Presentation' GT1) with very smart gold tampo printing on the body and the aerofoil. Production was limited to one per employee and each car should have a sticker on the plinth bearing the name of the employee to whom it was issued.

Obviously an item like this is of great significance to devoted Scalextric collectors, but in spite of fairly generous offers very few have been tempted away from Hornby employees. As a consequence of this there were none offered for sale at Milton Keynes.

However there were two limited editions that surfaced over the weekend of Milton Keynes that were available to buy if you moved quickly enough. Both of these items were from Technitoys 'SCX' range. The first of these models was especially to commemorate the 1999 Spanish slot car championship. Reference 6027 is a variation on the Ford Focus WRC 'Valvoline' livery, but with additional tampo printing. The roof of the car bears the legend 'IV Campeonato De Espana De Scalextric Slot '99' and there is additional tampo printing on the aerofoil. Production volumes of this car are unclear, but are believed to be restricted to one for each of the 40 competitors and one for each of the sponsors. This suggests a production run of around 50, but based on previous similar items I would expect there to be at least double that number.

The second of these items was a 'Producto Promocional Del Club Scalextric'. Reference 6043 is in fact the '2000 Millennium Edition Club Scalextric' car. It is true to say that one or two of the recent cars in this series have not been terribly attractive (e.g. 1997 yellow SRS2 Mazda; 1998 black SRS2 Jaguar), but last years red Megane looked nice and this year's car is a stunner. The Porsche GT1 is in a gorgeous turquoise blue metallic with silver and white tampo printing and fluorescent red mirrors and aerofoil. This is one car that is well worth seeking out.

In terms of more readily available new product two new Scalextric NASCAR's were seen for the first time at Milton Keynes. The first of these was C-2143 the 1999 'Mobil 1' #12 Jeremy Mayfield Ford Taurus. A smart looking car in a predominantly navy blue livery with a white nose band and the familiar red 'Pegasus' logo on the rear quarters. The second new NASCAR was the first of the new Pontiac bodied cars. C-2247 was the 1999 'STP' #43

John Andretti Pontiac Grand Prix. As with the 'John Deere' Ford Taurus this is another great looking car. The main colour of the car is a bright french blue with a red noseband and large 'STP' logos. At the time of writing this car is only released in the American market.

Beyond the limited editions and new releases there was the usual myriad of rare and collectable models which went back as far as a early/mid 1950s hand carved balsa bodied championship winning car from the 'Southport' club era. The model was in the hands of one lucky NSCC member and is now awaiting restoration. Also sold on the day were rarely seen examples of the first two SRM cars, the Ferrari and Vanwall. Whilst these cars had no windcreens, even in this condition they were not only very desirable, but also more complete than the examples possessed by the original owner of SRM Sir Holbert Waring.

During the course of the swopmeet various visitors brought along finds of theirs to show. Two of which were fairly spectacular! The first item that surfaced was a nice example of the very rare C-7 Mini Cooper Type 5 moulded in white with a black roof. For once this car was still fairly bright white rather than the slight yellowing often seen on white cars of that era.

The second item was a major discovery. A dusty document type box was brought to me, in order that I could advise on availability of parts for restoration. Upon opening the lid of the box the first items that came into view were a first series Alfa Romeo 8c and Bentley. Amongst the next three cars revealed by lifting the tissue paper was a fairly complete Super 124 Ferrari GP. As if that was not enough, the final lift of the lid revealed an example of one of the rarest and most desirable Scalextric cars ever, the Race Tuned Bugatti Type 59. Only around ten examples of this car are known to exist and it cannot be faked by changing the front axle and motor in the more common version of this car as it is moulded in a darker blue than the standard version.

The swopmeet also produced a number of other rarities for sale including boxed Super 124 cars, yellow C-68 Aston Martin, yellow C-69 Ferrari, double guide Spanish Cooper Climax in blue and a Mexican Fiat 850 Abarth in Orange. Also seen were some stunning Spanish produced replicas of ultra rare cars. These included the Auto Union in blue with a red nose cone, which unlike the replica due from PinkKar at the end of the year has all of the original Triang Scalextric script on the base. This replica has been produced in incredibly small numbers and is indistinguishable from the original model pictured in the Roger Gilham book.

Another stunning replica that was seen was the copy of the very rare Mexican Fiat 850 Abarth in Yellow. Whilst a different yellow to the almost fluorescent Mexican examples I have seen, it was a stunning looking car none the less. The final replica worthy of mention was the yellow Austin Healey 3000 MkIII. This car is a replica of the heavily rumoured, but never seen, car that was supposed to have been produced as a test shot by Exin back in the late 1960s. The original supposedly resides in a Spanish collection. This replica is a very welcome alternative!

If anything the swopmeet was even busier than last year when I was sure that the hall must have had elastic walls! As ever many thanks to Nigel Copcutt for organising this superb event and here's to the next Milton Keynes!!!

Next on the swopmeet agenda;

16th April NSCC swopmeet Loughborough, England

16th April SLN swopmeet Utrecht, Netherlands

?? May Mini Classics swopmeet Barcelona, Spain

RACEWAY U.S.A

BY TONY SECCHI

As you may know, I run a home track for myself and a few friends (all now retired) who used to race together at a club in the early to mid Sixties. Recently, one of them had a loft conversion and, in clearing out, he found a box of his old racing gear, including a few items of American origin.

American imports began to appear in my local slot model shops (London) around about 1964. As far as I can ascertain, the American slot car boom started in 1965 and was all over by 1968. I started racing in 1961 and finished in 1966, so the two periods almost match. Coincidentally, so do the scales, because like our club in those days the Americans raced mainly in 1/24. I went to Los Angeles in 1965 and visited several Raceways in that area. They were all run on a commercial basis, you paid to race and they all raced cars to that scale.

However, the cars and chassis were very different to the self-built models that we used to race at that time. Firstly, there were very few ready-made models, unlike today. The cars were presented in boxes as kits with all the necessary components ready to be assembled. As you would expect with American products the parts and packaging were of a very high quality.

The bodies were plastic or lexan as today but the chassis were very different. They were made of stamped aluminium or brass with outriggers - sometimes a welded brass ladder type chassis was used (Cox, to my mind the best, often used die cast magnesium).

Flag type pick up guides were universal and braids were screw fixed. The pick up was mounted on a separate swing arm which pivoted from the chassis just in front of the engine, unlike the fixed pick ups with vertical front axle slotted mounts that we have today.

The engines were all 'can' types (except Pittman) and at that time I assumed that each manufacturer made their own, but I have since learned that they were supplied by Ken Mabuchi (yes, he of the Mabuchi 'S' used by all current Scalextric models today). He made several types of engine to order for the various manufacturers

who renamed them to suit.

There were also, if I remember correctly, a few firms who specialised in rewiring (Jo-Han:Mura:Dyna-Wind) and these engines were used by professionals in national competitions. I believe that they revved up to and above 40,000 rpm.

Mabuchi motors were used by such manufacturers as Strombecker: Cox: AMT: Monogram and Revell. Strombecker also used an engine made by Hitachi which they re-christened the Hemi 400.

As with all clubs, we had strict parameters about which engines we could use in regular championship racing, but three or four times a year we had 'Formula Libre' races in which we had a free choice. In a previous article on long distance racing, I wrote about a six hour Formula Libre race in which I used an American five pole Pittman DC/704 sidewinder engine with built in axle and gears. These were not as fast as the can motors (which, however, could and did overheat in long races) but very reliable.

Most of the chassis were made for sidewinder mounted engines but a few 'in line' configurations were used. For instance, Cox used a two piece aluminium frame hinged behind an in line engine so that it carried the front axle independently of the guide, the weight of the engine helping to keep the guide in the slot.

Wheels were generally die cast aluminium and came with sponge tyres glued onto the rears. Fronts were sometimes very narrow (to reduce friction, I suppose) but most kits had all the wheels to scale.

As we were used to mainly building our own cars from scratch and 'tuning' them to suit our own driving style, we found that the main drawback of these kits was the lack of this facility. There was very little you could do to improve or change the roadholding characteristics - you raced as built. Consequently, we generally used the many spare parts that were also imported - tyres, pick ups, braids, bearings etc.

Several of the manufacturers replicated the same model (as they do today) and as far as my

recollection goes the non-definitive, non-complete list was as follows (all 1/24 scale)

Corvette Stingray -	AMT	REVELL
Chaparral 2 -	AMT COX	REVELL
		MONOGRAM
Ford GT 40 -	COX	MONOGRAM
Lola P70 -	AMT COX	MONOGRAM
McLaren Elva -	AMT	MONOGRAM
Lotus 40 -	COX	MONOGRAM

My favourite manufacturer was Cox, who produced first rate, accurate models and a level of packaging and presentation unequalled by others. Just before our club moved and became a 'Raceway' with ready to race coloured 'Thingies' (alas also an American influence), I purchased a Cox Chaparral 2E, complete with working rear wing and magnesium chassis. The engine rotated in its mount working the wing via a wire linkage. When accelerating the wing flattened, but during braking the torque of the engine caused it to move upwards. This had a resistance effect similar to the famous Mercedes 500 SL bootlid at Le Mans in 1955 with Moss and Fangio driving.

This car had great detailing and a full driver compartment (long before Fly) and was good enough to serve some enthusiasts as a static display model. I never raced this car for real because we stopped doing our 'Formula Libre' races, but I used to practice with it all the time, sometimes hiring our track for a weekend afternoon just for the pleasure of driving it. It was very, very fast in a straight line, using (I think) a Mabuchi F56D which had a chrome plated can cover.

Alas, when I gave up racing in 1966, I donated all of my gear to the club members for them to share. Since starting up again in 1997, I now race 1/32 scale and I have a nice collection of very raceable cars, but I do miss that big size.

Finally, I apologise for any inaccuracies that members may find in this article - blame lies in my lagging and aged memory, but if I have aroused some memories of treasured times past then the compilation and writing will be very rewarding to me.

Dear Brian,

I just wanted to write and say thanks for the Unique NASCAR that I won in the Christmas crossword competition. I received the blue one which is an unusual turquoise blue in colour. It will look really good on my display shelf. I have one or two limited edition cars and older cars but it feels good to know that I have a car that no one else in the world can have. So once again thank you very much.

Two small gripes that I would like to mention - the first is regarding the extension of the competition closing date. I and 19 other members managed to get our entries in on time and I feel it is unfair on us to accommodate the lackadaisical or unorganised members who cannot manage this by extending the closing date. Secondly, I always thought that to win any competition you have to have the answers correct. Surely only the people with the correct solution should go into the draw for prizes. Then, and only then, should people with one wrong answer go into a separate draw for any prizes that may be left. The way that things were done it was possible for all three prizes to have gone to entrants that did not have the correct solution to the crossword. It is akin to Manchester United winning the F.A. cup final at Wembley 1-0 and then tossing a coin to see who really won.

Anyway its time for me to come down off my high horse. As I said these are two small points but they may have something to do with the poor response to competitions in the club magazine.

I would like to sign off by saying yet again thanks for the prize and the great magazine. Keep up the good work.

Alex Hastings

Dear Brian

I had a rather 'tongue in cheek' entry in the Christmas crossword not realising the prizes to be on offer. I was obviously delighted to see in February's issue that I was one of the winners and have now taken delivery of a truly unique orange Pontiac.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the NSCC, and, of course Hornby Hobbies for making such prizes available. Long may this generosity continue! I am looking forward to the next competition with pen poised:-

“My prize is here
I am enraptured
A one off Pontiac
I have captured
I must not be
a boastful prancer
for I am just
a Glasgow chancer
My entry seemed
a childish joke
but I am now
a happy bloke”

Richard Allan

**At last - a satisfied customer!
And yet more bad poetry. I am beginning to wonder if we have any normal members
out there!**

Members letters



Dear Brian

re. letter about Beatties Mini/Scalextric car packaging...

Many Hornby cars tend to rip themselves away from the brass knurled nut and clang around inside the plastic case. It happens a lot. It is a bigger problem with the Mini since they wrap a fairly cheap piece of plastic covered wire round the motor and (a) the wire snaps leaving a mini bouncing around inside the box or (b) the wire holds but pulls the motor out of the mounts on the seat unit, much the same result except the motor and magnet assembly and the remains of the car are all loose inside the box.

Sometimes bits of Scalextric cars get broken off (or paintwork damaged) because of the impact of a loose car shaking about in transit. Box lids break too, because of the inward impact of loose cars. The box lid has not really travelled well between the factory and shops, many break before they arrive in the shops.

However... the lid has just been re-tooled, because in the last couple of weeks the latest boxes have a slightly thicker feel to the crystal box top, approaching Fly thickness. Packaging is one of the great irritations for shops and especially mail order companies. Hornby cannot say they didn't know that the Beatties mini was not travelling well, since Beatties head office arranged with Hornby to supply up to 5 spare body tops to any Beatties shop that asked (by a certain date) for replacements for scratched/smudged bodyshells. I bought 12 Beatties minis, one was still in tied in place in its box, I took eleven of them in a poor state because I had orders for them from overseas friends! How else would I get these models?

Steve DeHaviland
(Traffic)

.....
Dear Brian,

I notice that recently members addresses are not being included in the Members Letters page. Is this because they all wish to remain anonymous, or is this part of a master plan to fill the newsletter by making members write back to you instead of directly to the author? (I wish I had thought of that!)

Graham Pritchard asked about the club list. Well, Graham, the Editor has the lists (uk-clubs.PM6 & euro-clb.PM6 in the Club directory, Brian). I do not know how up-to-date it is at present, but as far as I know the list on the club website is up-to-date so that is one source. With regard to the 132 Racing BTCC list, as you know Graham, the BTCC has not run for two years now and so we have not produced any material such as the drivers handbook which you refer to, which would be out of date anyway now.

Hope that clears things up.
Regards,
Alan Slade

Indeed Alan, a plan so cunning that you could put a tail on it and call it a weasel - trust a former editor to see through it.

Dear Brian

I thought I would put pen to paper and review this year's Scalextric line up (I do not wind them up every year about their cars - honest). By now most of us have got the 41st edition and we have the usual repaints. All the firms do this but not always as many.

First, cars I like the look of :- NASCARS, six in the catalogue including the McDonalds not available in the E.U. I picked one up at Milton Keynes for £32, very nice, we want more in the U.K. Beetles.....people I have talked to either love them or hate them. The racing models look alright but the cabriolets seem a bit, how can I put it..... bright? Also, without upsetting anyone, we have our first politically correct driver in the blue C2215. Why haven't we got any female drivers and passengers?

Secondly, cars that nobody will like. These will be sitting on shop shelves for the next five years or vanish by the time the 42nd catalogue comes out and become expensive collectors items for those of you with no taste. This years Touring Cars, apart from the Vectra Masterfit, are horrible. they may be based on real versions but I doubt they were the best they could have picked. By the way, if a car carries Warsteiner sponsorship PUT IT ONwho is "Westminster"? Putting correct sponsorship on model cars wont make kiddies drink like fish and smoke 60 a day.

Protec ...ha...ha...ha.., those of you foolish enough to have spent nearly forty pounds on these "club record breaking models" will be pleased to know that they now only need to spend thirty quid. I have heard that you can get them from the London based centre for fifteen! Which clubs have had their records broken by these things anyway?

Anyway lets hope that the Pontiacs are available from August, people buy the Mika/David McLarens even though its the wrong model, we get CLKs in other colours, the person who designed the Corolla has been locked up, the Beetles come out in slightly more butch colours and the Football Special F40s are replaced with..... almost anything!

Why isn't the Ford Focus in the catalogue (available 2nd quarter @ £22.99 each) and is it a sidewinder motor so half the clubs wont run it due to incompatibility with other rally cars? So to finish let's look forward to this years wonderful releases and buy; Panoz Roadsters, Listers, Cobras, 917Ks, "Steve MqQueen collection", Corvettes, Arrows etc. etc.

Graham Smith

I sometimes wonder if, as collectors, we forget the true nature of Hornby's business. They are primarily a maker of TOYS for children and depend on their performance in that market for their survival. The collecting and club sales, while welcome additions, are very much a secondary consideration for them. The brightly coloured Beetles are not to my taste either but my neighbour's ten year old is raving about them. As regards ciggy and booze sponsorship, it would be commercial suicide, and probably illegal, if Hornby were to market such cars. The antis would tear them to pieces. However, there is a way out of this one that they may like to consider; most teams have a p.c. livery for their cars when they run in Europe and Hornby could use that instead of making up fictitious sponsors like "Westminster". Regarding repaints, I hardly think Hornby are the worst offenders in this area; Fly are in a different league altogether! I gave up trying to collect all versions of their cars long ago - I think they are in severe danger of killing the collectors' golden goose with their reckless model release policy, especially the rip - off limited editions. Their ability to manufacture promised models is also highly suspect as their performance last year would testify. Whatever happened to the Fly sponsored Marcos with video? I think we have been waiting two years for that one.

MODEL REVIEWS

BY JEFF DAVIES

AA HORSE POWER

I've always wanted to own a real Mustang as these cars came from my favourite period in American automobile design: the muscle car years. The early Mustangs had masses of charisma with their wonderfully over the top styling and great big V8 engines. One of my all time favourite slot cars is the Exin Mustang Dragster which I have in all four colours made in Spain.

What I could never understand was why nobody made a model of the Mustang driven by Steve McQueen in the film Bullit as this was one of the greatest car chases ever filmed and the car just cried out to be modelled. AA bodies were recently kind enough to send me a Mustang sample car body. The car modelled is the notch backed saloon, not the more popular fastback. This was built up by Phil Barry brilliantly, sprayed in the Shelby colours of white with blue stripes. He liked this car so much that he bought himself one. The bodyshell uses a Ninco XK120 chassis or the new Parma Excalibur chassis to which was fitted a Ninco NC-2 engine and Ninco Porsche GT3 wheels to make a most stunning looking model. Phil Barry built his up using the Parma chassis. Both of these two cars perform really well with the Parma chassis car having a slight edge in the handling and stability stakes.

In the run up to the recent Ninco Challenge I used this car for practice as it handles really well without a magnet and is great fun to drive. Several people I have shown this car to have said they will build their own as they like it so much. It is an extremely sturdy bodyshell, and should stand up well to racing accidents. A really nice effort by AA bodies.

AMAZING ALFA

Recently I had a really great day out travelling to the swopmeet at Milton Keynes with both my son and my daughter. The weather was perfect, I had never been to Milton Keynes so I was quite interested to see what it was like, and the journey was a beautiful run up over the Cotswolds, which is always enjoyable. At Milton Keynes it was interesting to compare the three versions of the AC Cobra. There was no doubt which one was the best model, the MRRC version won hands down. This is a beautiful looking car and Monarch Lines have promised an early sample car for me to review. While I was there Collette kindly provided me with a sample Proslot Alfa Romeo 156 API.

I like the styling of the real car, thinking that the front grill gives it quite a distinctive shape, helping it stand out from the vast majority of pretty uniform cars now available. I've always liked Alfa Romeos and this one perfectly captures the shape of the real car, even down to the protruding lip over the front wheel arches. The only criticism I have of the body shape is that the front spoiler/splitter could be better detailed and finished. The model is painted in a very attractive colour scheme. I particularly like the main yellow body colour and the way the green stripe runs through it all. It comes equipped with an attractive set of multi spoke wheels fitted with a set of slick tyres. Overall, I find this particular model really attractive. But, saying that, this model is not to everyone's taste as my son Richard doesn't like it at all.

It is fitted with an EVO2 sidewinder engine but is not fitted with a magnet, instead of which there is a lead weight where the magnet would have been. Personally, I feel this is no bad thing as this car handles really well and allows you to power slide out of the corners at some really good angles. The EVO2 powers it down the straights at a very respectable rate of knots and it is very enjoyable to drive seeing just how far you can get it to slide coming out of the corners. This is the first Proslot car I have tried with slick tyres and they seem to be quite soft in compound and grip well. I really like this car and think it is a great effort from Proslot.

ASTON MARTIN DB4 GT ZAGATO

I am sure almost everybody could think of their ideal kit of parts to build their favourite slot car and everyone's ideas would be different. The car I would like to build would have to be a model of a classic British sportscar from the end of the 50s, early 60s that raced in a variety of green and that was driven to and from the races as to my mind these were the last of the race cars that could be conceivably used as day to day transport. One car springs to mind, probably the nicest looking car ever built with a sensational blend of exotic curves making up the bodywork. If you haven't guessed it by now, the car is an Aston Martin DB4 GT Zagato.

It was built as Aston Martin's answer to the road going Ferrari Berlinettas which were being purchased to race at such places as Goodwood, Snetterton, etc. They were driven by people like Jim Clark who drove 1 VEV at Goodwood in 1962. They were powered by a 3670cc twin overhead cam engine with twin spark plugs per cylinder which produced approximately 315 bhp at 6000 rpm and could accelerate to 60 in around six seconds with a top speed of over 150 mph. They weighed approximately 24 cwt. and had a steel chassis with steel tubing covered in light weight aluminium panels. These were expensive cars, costing £5,460 in 1962 which was considerably more than the average house! This, to my mind, is the most beautiful car ever made. What absolutely amazes me is none of the major slot car manufacturers has ever made a model of one.

Newly Discovered Variation

An item recently posted on e-bay turned out to be a previously unknown variation of the C-79 front-engined Offenhauser. As with the more commonly found blue and white versions it is marked as 'Made in Hong Kong'. The car is pictured with the 'New Zealand' box that appears identical to those previously discovered (In two variations) when a small number (Around six) of yellow front-engined Offenhausers were found. To date this is the only

Recently Dave Yerbury was kind enough to send me an AA bodies DB4 Zagato shell. In my opinion this is their best model yet, being quite detailed and designed to accept the new Parma Excalibur chassis. This shell makes the most beautiful car when completed, perfectly capturing the exquisite lines of the real thing.

The Excalibur chassis is a very classy piece of engineering and looks great. This is a brass plate chassis with countersunk screw holes, axle bearings and completely adjustable front and rear mounts. It is possible to adjust the wheel base by using any one of the four positions of the front axle. They accept any Ninco running gear, NC-1s, NC-2s and almost any axle. To build the car up I chose an NC-2 engine and the wire wheels off the XK120 fitted on the front axle which came with the wheels and on the rear a Porsche GT3 axle with the wire wheels fitted to give a wider rear track as the front and rear dimensions are not the same.

Phil Barry painted the car beautifully in exactly the correct shade of Aston Martin light metallic green. I carefully assembled the car, superglueing in the rear axle bearings. Chas Keeling of SCD said if you need to remove the axle all you need to do is to heat up the bearings using a soldering iron and this will dissolve the superglue holding them in.

This car performed brilliantly. With all the weight concentrated about an 1/8th of an inch off the track it cornered beautifully and was extremely stable. I really like these chassis as they are a great step forward. I will be taking this car to an important exhibition of slot car history later on this year as I feel it epitomises what a lot of the early slot cars were all about.

known example of a colour that was previously not even suspected to exist. With the two rare variations of this car that have now surfaced and the mid-blue Hong Kong GT40 discovered two years ago it appears that there are a number of rare variations from down under and we can expect that other rarities may exist. It is always possible that the second colour of the Triumph TR4a and Sunbeam Tiger that were pictured in an Australian catalogue actually exist!

Phil Etagart

MORE ON BETTA & CLASSIC SLOT RACING BODIES

BY DAVID LAWSON

Reading the piece in the March 2000 Journal about the excellent range of Betta & Classic bodyshells prompted me to write about my experiences with them.

I have been involved in slot racing since my parents bought me an Airfix set in 1964 and have over the years raced on home sets, loft layouts, commercial tracks – such as Wonderland Raceway and The Drag Centre in the 60's and 70's and various small clubs around the Southend area.

Almost immediately I wasn't satisfied with standard cars offered by the various manufacturers and spent hours altering and repainting models until they vaguely resembled whatever was my particular favourite at the time.

I discovered "Betta & Classic" in the late 1960's and they transformed the hobby for me, I could now get a good quality bodyshell of most of the significant cars of the period.

Imagine my surprise when I returned to the hobby in 1992 after a ten-year break to find they were still trading and offering all my old favourites. My model-making skills have improved a bit in the intervening years and I am now able to again recreate some of my favourite cars from the golden era of motor racing.

Recently having carried out a remodelling and repaint of a Scalextric McLaren to represent Damon Hill's 1996 Williams, I decided to build a companion car for a father and son set.

This was possible using the "Classic" fibreglass Lotus 49B body shell, a scratchbuilt plastic chassis and a small Pink Kar motor, which just slips inside the slim 1960's monocoque chassis. All wheels, tyres and axles are Scalextric.



The performance isn't earth shattering with this motor, but the car is great fun to drive and with both cars mounted in Fly display boxes they look fine on the shelf.

I hasten to add I have no connection with Betta & Classic and am only "promoting" them because I feel their products are excellent. They and all the other similar cottage industry producers deserve to flourish as they provide an invaluable source of all sorts of accessories and make the hobby much more rewarding.

DUNDEE COLLECTOR AND RACER CLUB REPORT

To celebrate our anniversary we held an open day on 20th February. Having set up a four lane track the night before I was out at 10am putting up posters along the A90.

First arrival was the local photographer, who happened to have a set in his younger days, followed by a party from Fife. The hall soon started filling up, a lot of interesting cars began to appear, and everyone had fun testing them.

Our next event is the Scottish Open 1/32 Slot Car Championship on the 29th and 30th April. This event will be held at the Newport Hotel, Newport On Tay situated on the river bank overlooking Dundee. Accommodation can be booked by ringing 01382 543203.

The track will be MDF board with copper tape so magnets will not work and it will be driving skills that count. Day one will be for registration and box standard cars. Day two will be for race tuned cars. There will also be a 'take on the locals' event. For further information contact Roy Butchart on 01382 462375

CLUB NIGHT

BY DEREK WHITE

It is 3pm and I have been up since 5am doing my part time job at Sainsburys (6am – 10am), taken the dog for his usual one hour walk and done a lunch time gig with my vocal / guitar duo. Time for a rest or even a snooze maybe. No, it's the second Monday of the month, it's club night!

Having just unloaded the P.A., mixing desk and guitar, it is time to load the track, computer, tool box, two cases of ancillaries, canteen supplies, notice boards, paddock etc..... All fit very comfortably in my twenty year old ex-ambulance.

4pm and the loading is complete, just time for a shower and a quick snack before heading off for the Church Hall. Fortunately this is only a half-mile journey and takes under five minutes. Arriving at the hall at 5pm Graham, Mike and David are waiting to give a helping hand. We unload the van, carry the tables in from the foyer, set up the track and get the canteen organised. A couple of laps in each lane to check all is well. Yes, no problems, that's good news. 6pm and a few more members are arriving. Time to get practice underway.

The first eight-minute session begins. This is free practice which some use to check that the cars they are going to race are running properly or to choose which is best if they are lucky enough to have two or more. Some develop cars for meetings they are going to attend elsewhere, try out new purchases or just thrash around with their favourite car. These sessions continue until 7pm and those who arrive in time have two sessions. I use this track time to check out the cars which I will be racing that night. Once I have established that they are all running reasonably well I concentrate on one or two cars and experiment with various driving techniques to get the best out of each. I usually have my two sessions straight away so that I am then free to get the evening organised and sort out any problems, which thankfully are very rare.

7pm arrives, all twelve members are present and the final practice session comes to an end. David is serving up the tea and coffee and there is a general hum of conversation around the hall. Members are asked to place their cars for the Ninco Touring car race into parc ferme. Drivers have been allocated their lanes according to how they finished the last time we ran this class, with those who finished in the lower positions getting the better lanes. The four drivers for heat one apply their lane stickers and commence their two-minute pre-race practice. At the end of two minutes the excellent 'Slot Master' race control system automatically cuts the power. Drivers are informed of their best lap time just as a matter of interest, a barrier is placed across the start line, power is switch on and the cars brought around to the start.

The barrier is removed. Graham, Terry, Joel and David fix their eyes on the start lights. The red light is on, tension mounts, green, go go go. Frantic battles for the first few laps until a few errors are made and eventually at the end of twelve laps David comes home first. He goes forward to the A final, Graham second takes a place in the B final, Joel third for the C final and Terry, a relatively new member, slots into the D final. Two more heats and the line up for the finals are complete.

Gareth wins the D final and takes his place in the Red lane for the C final alongside Derek-B, Joel and Mike. Mike is victorious and moves into the B final to do battle with Noel, Graham and Jared for that all-important place in the A final. Mike does it again and joins Chris, David and myself in the A-final.

After twelve laps of hard battling I clinch first place with Mike second, having moved up brilliantly through the field from the C final and David claiming the final podium place. I am speaking metaphorically, we do not actually have a podium!

Time now for the modified saloons. As a club intended for those who want to race true box-standard cars this is our only class which allows substantial modification. Bodies are Scalextric black window saloon cars but

underneath there is an interesting variety of concoctions. Sticking to my principles and to give the others a bench mark by which to measure their progress I drive a box standard Calibra. On this occasion they are all very keen to put me in my place as I actually took first place in the A final last time out.

The same routine is followed with three heats and four finals each consisting this time of 15 laps. Once again we see another remarkable move up through the finals. David having finished fourth in his heat starts in the D final and works his way up winning the D, C and B final to take second place in the A final. Noel takes outright victory with Graham third. I struggle home in third place in the B final, which relates to sixth place in the overall results.

Next comes the mid-evening interval. Tea, coffee, lots of chat and a few interesting old cars being given a gentle few laps around the circuit by Joel. The next race is for a Secondary Class, which race just once a year. This gives members a chance to drive cars in their collections other than those, which are included in our ten Primary Classes. At this meeting we are racing Fly classic sports cars and seven members will be taking part. Cards are drawn to allocate lanes and the two ten lap heats commence followed by an A and a B final. The A final is won by David with Graham second and Derek-B third.

And so to the final race of the evening. This is for Scalextric Sports GT which at the present time consists entirely of Porsche 911 GT1 cars. Fortunately these are available in a variety of colour schemes, which along with a few repaints means the field still looks quite varied. These cars always produce excellent racing. Many of the heats and finals are closely fought with David taking the honours in the A final followed by myself in second and Chris third. This brings the race night to a close at 10 pm and everybody lends a hand with packing away and loading the van. A few minutes chat and the members drift away looking forward to the next meeting in two weeks time when we will be racing, Scalextric Formula One, Fly Sports GT, Ninco Classic Sports and a

secondary class.

I drive the short distance home and start the most difficult job of the day, unloading the van and putting everything away. It is at this point that I sometimes wonder why I do it. By midnight I am in bed with a full five hours sleep before the next day begins. Why do I do it? Because I enjoy it and most of the members are very appreciative of the effort I make. I am pleased that the track is being put to good use and I have made many new friends through the club. My advice to anybody who is considering starting their own club is, DON'T! Unless you are very committed, prepared to ride out a few ups and downs and have sufficient time not only for the club night but do results sheets, news letters, general organising and possible repair work in between meetings. This is my fourth year of running a club and things have not always been fun and games but as long as I enjoy it I will continue.

Southend Slot Racing Club meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed. Nobody shouts and screams at marshals and it is very seldom that the dolly gets thrown out of the pram after a bad race or on track incident. Classes are varied and mostly box standard. Race format includes that described above plus a timed Sports GT race, Ninco F1 in league format and occasional team events. Membership is full but I would be interested to hear from anybody who would like to be a reserve member and come along whenever a regular member is unable to attend. This would lead to full membership when a vacancy arose.

Contact Derek White on 01702 351616

E-mail:derekwhite@cablnet.co.uk



CUTTING YOUR OWN

BY DAVID SYKES

Following on from recent discussions for motorising static model kits, I have found that Airfix model kits will take the following Scalextric chassis with a minimum of trimming. The wheel base is close enough and I have tended to glue the chassis in place with Epoxy glue. However it is really horses for courses as these chassis will not be best for racing.

Austin Healy Frogeye..... Mini C122.

Triumph TR4 and MG Metro underpans.

Aston Martin XR3i escort.

E type I have a badly mangled BMW CSI pan that looks like it may fit.

For older Bugatti 35s , 59s, Bentleys and just completed Bull nose Morris I use AFX motor Chassis units. Here I drill out the contrate and axle holes to take a larger diameter axle and fit old MRRC wheels (Narrow Wheels and Tyres are hard to find). I use the front axle to hold a drop arm for the guide . I then separately fit the model front axle to the model kit through suitable brass or plastic Sprue. On the subject of wheels I used the kit originals filed down to take O ring washers from my local hardware shop but I have yet to see how it runs, looks great though .

Now to the main gist of my thrust. So you have been after your favourite car that your all time hero raced in but no one has made a model yet, not even a static, and letters to jolly old Insanity Clause have yielded no fruit. Well why don't you model it yourself....What, that's too hard? ... No the most difficult part is getting your hands on some good scale drawings and/or loads of pictures from most elevations and a few technical details. In this modern age such info can be found on the net and loads of photos copied to your machine or visit a motor museum and take photos from all sides. Many motorsport books dealing with one manufacturer even show plan drawings (such as Ferrari by Hans Tanner and Doug Nye published by Haynes). To get

plan drawings from photos just apply tracing paper. ...BUT what about scale....? Well that's where the technical details come in . I use wheel base and wheel track of the original to give me a scale for the plan or photo and then calculate the magnification factor to get it to the scale I want. Then I use that other great modern invention, a photocopier with enlarging capabilities, to get a set of plans in my scale mostly 1:32Duhh How does that work .. Eh OK From a plan I have for the Jaguar XK120C. It has a wheel base 8ft or 240 cm at 1:32 scale would be $240 / 32 = 7.5$ cm . The plan I have has a wheel base of 8cm so the plan scale is $240 / 8 = 30 = 1:30$. So to convert the plan to 1:32 I photocopy it with the enlarger set at 93.75 (94) % $7.5 / 8 * 100 = 93.75$. I don't fully understand it all but it seems to work so I wont argue with the copier.

Once I have my plans or a few copies of them and as many photos as possible I begin work on a piece of balsa .



Several models at several stages. L to R . Talbot Lago, BRM, Lancia D50, Mercedes.

I have tended to glue a cut out copy of one aspect of a plan to one side of the section of balsa and sand down roughly to that shape leaving myself some leeway to fine tune later. I tend to take the excess balsa off using a belt sander. It is very quick so take your time else you may not sand down the balsa evenly (I have wrecked one Gordini that way) also wear good leather gloves and eye protection as it is quite difficult to sand a good surface blind with no sense of touch and balsa is very good at soaking

up blood stains that will ruin your paint work. From now on it is gentle sanding with fineish sandpaper to get the shape you want. Work with your photos and plans near by and check frequently. When you are close to the shape you want apply a sanding sealer. This is available from model shops and is varnish with a filler mixed in .It paints on and allows you to sand with finer paper to get a very smooth surface it also strengthens the balsa surface. Do not be too bothered about details as these can be added later with modelling clays such as Milliput (use the finest grade white). This can be worked best with dampened fingers or tools, sets in 2 hours and can then be sanded, drilled or carved. Have a look at the plastic or brass sprues available at model shops as these may save you a lot of time making exhausts, filler tubes etc.

When fine detailing vents and cutouts in the outer surface I use a small hobby drill with small routing or sanding bits. I also find this machine very useful for hollowing out the shell .Have a good think now what chassis you are

going to use. For example my C Type Jag uses a modified Ninco Jag XK120 chassis but the Gordini is much narrower and the shell will have to form the chassis. For the Mercedes I have loads of space to play with so I may go for a hand built brass chassis but all along the way I have hit problems and had to find a way round them.



Mercedes SSK work in progress.

Hope this inspires or aids someone . My next attempt at writing will look at moulding and casting of shells.

WHY DO I COLLECT SLOTCARS?

BY PETE KESSELL

Good question, but what's the answer? Well I suppose it was sure to happen at some point and probably began, as always, as a child.

Big brother had a set in the loft he didn't use. It was the GP33 with a red C62 Ferrari sharknose and a yellow C54 Lotus 16 (I still have both but they are well abused). Christmas brought a C126 JPS Lotus for me and a C121 Tyrrell Ford for little brother. These were quick (ha! ha!) and we were off, leaving the original cars to rest. A few second hand track additions and some saloon cars, bought in the sales, made for great racing. The action was red hot with neighbours, cousins and anybody else we could find, digging out their sets and cars. We soon had about ten cars.

I started work and purchased another mint GP33 set from a second hand shop in Taunton for ten pounds. Eight years pass with few additions because I now have the real thing - a Mark 1 Escort. It is quicker than Scalextric and doesn't need a slot. I later wished it did as 12 months later a Cornish hedge, complete with large granite stones, jumped out in front of me and damaged the front end beyond repair.

Cars are now in my blood and a copy of Collector's Gazette led me to Bill Bradley. One of his lists arrived and started the whole thing off again; were all these cars still available? I went looking and was hooked after a few purchases. Bargains aplenty then - C68 Aston, C69 Ferrari, C64 black Bentley plus buildings and Formula juniors for fifty pounds - this was fun!

In 1992 I discovered the NSCC and also started proper racing on the local small oval. Collecting and weekend racing now ran side by side. I raced small ovals for three and a half seasons in a bog standard Mark 2 Escort which took me to the points and Southwestern championship (silver roof) in 1996. I ran a whole season as a red roof driver and had to start from the back at every event.

Racing and winning was a proper job but by now the Escort was getting tired so I quit while I was ahead. We were also expecting a baby by this time so priorities had to change. Well, almost; I fell in love with a Lotus 7 replica kit car in stainless steel. We built it while waiting for baby to arrive and nearly got it finished in time.

Back to Scalextric, SCX and then Fly, we are collecting again, but what's next? Well the Escort has gone, the kit car is flying (a 2litre upholstered roller skate), the collection stands at about four hundred cars and is still expanding -mainly Scalextric plus a few of the other makes, including, of course, the new Caterhams and Sevens. The quality has improved drastically, thanks to the increased competition, and I am pleased that the NSCC has moved with it.

I have now started a club locally (the Cornwall Slotcar Racing Club) and we meet on the first Monday of every month. We do not have a permanent circuit but we use the same venue, a local village hall. We have regular attendances of twenty five to thirty racers, sadly using Fly cars, which is a shame as Scalextric started it all.

When it comes to slot racing I am not very good; I am used to going round ovals in a clockwise direction so I tend to crash on left hand bends. I race a Venturi or a Panoz but I have experimented with a Proslot Ferrari 355 to try and make it handle better. It came with an evo3 motor and I found that by fitting a Fly super magnet (round type) just in front of the rubber engine mount the handling was greatly improved. You drill a hole the same size as the magnet in the chassis and glue it in slightly proud. You also need to drill a hole in the driver's platform to accommodate it. So long as you paint it black it doesn't show inside the car. Of course it only works on metal slots. The original magnet can be discarded as it only helped to keep the guide in the slot on a bumpy track.

In conclusion, I would just like to thank the NSCC and all the members for keeping the hobby so enjoyable. After all, a train is plain; stamps - no thanks; **the car is the star!**

GOM FIAT 695 SS ABARTH

BY ALAN SLADE

Well I have finally finished building this wonderful little car that I first saw and fell in love with at Toy Fair 1999. In truth it was running in January when I took it to Belgium to test it on the track that we built for Auto Trader at the Brussels Motor Show. It has also been down to Leicestershire for a run round the Quorn track so it is a much travelled little car.

This is the first of many models that I thought I would finish very quickly now that I am only writing the occasional page for the Newsletter, sorry Journal, instead of 48 per month – how did I find the time!!!! The others range from static kits of NASCAR's though Hot Rods to a fibreglass Lotus 19 and 23 and an A35.

The Fiat was my first foray into resin kits and I was very impressed with the quality of the moulding of the body and chassis as well as the vac formed interior and 'glass'. The wheels are of the correct Minilite pattern for this period but they do require a bit of modification to make the car look realistic. There is even a driver and steering wheel.

Included in the kit is a simple transfer sheet and instructions on how to modify a Ninco NC-1 motor mount to fit in the chassis. I found that I had to cut and file more away than mentioned in the instructions to get the motor adapter to sit really snugly in the chassis.



I also experienced some problems with the front axle rubbing on the front 'leg' of the motor adapter, and so it was out with the file again!

When I first assembled the kit the wheels were about 3mm proud of the body so I cut down the collar on the inside of the wheels until they were flush with the wing edges. As can be seen from the pictures it would not go amiss to remove a fraction more, but that is a job for later.

I came across a much more serious problem when I assembled the car for the first time and ran it round my track. It was crabbing very markedly and this was traced to the front wheels rubbing on the wing edges. Filing the wing edges did not help much, unless I wanted to enlarge them to look like a Class 1 Touring Car, which I didn't. After some thought I decided the best way to solve the problem would be to raise the body on the chassis, which I did by gluing washers to the body pillars, and by fitting low profile front tyres from Pink Kar. With the standard size rear tyres this has given the model a slightly raked look which is probably in keeping with the period, I will leave it up to you to decide for yourselves.



The final job was to give it a coat, or three!, of paint. I chose a plain Humbrol yellow for the bodywork and a matt black for the sunroof. The detail 'chromework' was picked out in silver and the windscreen wipers were also painted matt black as was the oil cooler and inside of the exhaust pipes. The transfer sheet that comes with the car has red side stripes with Fiat Abarth on them, number plates and a few

Fiat/Abarth decals. As I wanted this as a competition car I finished it off with some black roundels and white numbers from an MRRC period waterslide transfer sheet. The headlights are clear moulded 'jewels' that come with the kit.

The question that you are all wanting to ask (is I hope), "How does it perform?". The answer is surprisingly well considering the short wheelbase and narrow track. Around the track at Brussels it was only around a half a second slower than a Renault Laguna, and for those of you who didn't go, there were three longish straights on the track which meant that the extra 'grunt' of the Mabuchi motor could be used very convincingly. Around Knockhill it does mid 5's which is very good. Certainly it will live with my Jaguar 3.8 – which again is very true to the period!

All in all I would say it is a very nice little model. Go out and buy yourself one and have some fun.

Thanks to Monarch Lines for the sample and the MRRC decals.



BROOKLANDS MUSEUM EVENT

Collette Clarke of Monarch Lines in association with Jeff Davies, Phil Barry, Betta & Classic and SCD/Parma is proud to announce a series of memorial races to be held in the Chequered Flag room on Sunday 20th August, at Brooklands Museum, to commemorate the history of slot car racing and British motorsport. The meeting will commence with the Tim Birkin Memorial Race. It is generally accepted that he was one of the first people to slot/rail car race commercially in the 1930s.

The second race will be the Walkden Fisher Memorial Race. Walkden Fisher built the first documented and photographed rail racing track for the Southport Model and Engineering Club's exhibition in 1955 following an article that appeared in the 1954 Christmas edition of Model Maker, publicising the various experiments being carried out up and down the country with electric racing.

For the 1955 modelling exhibition SMEC had planned to use model diesel cars running around a rail track. Unfortunately the Zonker (the guide) infringed an MRRC patent, forcing the club to look for another kind of vehicle to use for the exhibition.

An electric rail racing track was constructed with handmade 1/32 scale rail racing cars. Walkden Fisher won the first race with a Mercedes sports car SLR. The car was beautifully carved out of balsa wood and was a good scale model as he was an artist of no mean talent. The third race will commemorate the part BRM played in British racing history.

A rail racing track is being constructed specifically for this event by Phil Barry. To the best of my knowledge this will be the first one built in over 40 years. Charlie Fitzpatrick has handcarved out of balsa four replicas of Walkden Fisher's car that won the first race. We would also like to bring several of his paintings along with a collection of his original cars. We are planning to use a plastic four lane Carrera track of anywhere between 60 and 80ft lap length with Carrera 1/32 scale Mercedes 300SLRs for the majority of the races. It is intended for the following teams to compete on the track: Wye Valley Racing which races as the Welsh team, the B.S.C.R.A and a team from the media.

I would like at least one overseas team to compete in this historic event which is for invited participants only. Interested parties can reach me at r.davies@currantbun.com or phone 01633 779203.

HAWTHORN PARK SLOT CAR CLUB

BY TED MARTIN

Hawthorn Park Slot Car Club grew out of the ashes of the Aintree Slot Car Club, which was one of the first model car racing clubs in Britain. Back in those far-off days of the 1950s it was a rail-racing club, changing to slot in common with most other tracks when it became obvious that it was the best way forward. It may seem strange, with the benefit of hindsight, but many clubs tried to persevere with rail for some time! As the years went by, Aintree maintained its position as one of the countries premier organisations, counting amongst its members the legendary Laurie Cranshaw. If you are ,like me, in your forties, then its quite possible you read one of his regular columns in Model Cars magazine. In fact ,I first became aware of the Aintree club through that very magazine. I was delighted to find it was located only a couple of miles from my parents home.

And so in the spring of 1973(!) along with my great mate Bill Jacques, I visited Aintree slot car club .We were made to feel at home right away. The next decade or so was spent with iso-fulcrums, reversed plumbers, flexi-boards and numerous other weird and wonderful slot car chassis, although I never lost my interest in “standard” slot cars.

As time went by, Aintree (and many other clubs), began to find membership dwindling. The reasons for this slump are many and varied, but whatever the reasons, this trend continued. The biggest blow, however was the club losing its premises. Faced with the prospect of having to find a new home and then build a new track, the membership dropped to a stalwart four(!) These four being myself (Ted Martin), Alan Clark, Stan Hatchard and Bill Jacques.

If we had known how difficult the next few years would prove to be, as none of us had any track- building experience, we may well have had second thoughts! No, lets be honest, we would still have been daft enough to carry on!

The most difficult part of building the track was ensuring it was portable(ish), but after five long years it was finally ready to race. It was at this point we renamed the club as part of our “fresh start” The last thing we needed at that point was to lose our club room again, but that is exactly what happened. It was then the wisdom of making the track de-mountable proved itself. In the long run this last move has proved to have been in our favour as we found our present home, where we can actually leave the track assembled.

As time has passed Hawthorn Park has gradually gone over to race scale hard-bodied cars exclusively. We also have changed from racing 1/24th only to racing 1/32nd cars. With so many top-quality products on the market it makes sense to use them!

The only problem we now have is membership, or rather lack of it. We have a good club room, an excellent 100 foot 4 -lane track, and low subs! Our club is located at: St. Monicas social centre, Stewart Avenue (off Fernhill Road) Bootle, Merseyside.

Whatever type of slot car you own, its probably eligible for one of our classes or you can use one of our club cars. Racing at Hawthorn Park is close and competitive. The well thought-out track design (by Alan Clark) encompasses fast, open corners, tight hairpins , long straights with plenty of opportunity for demon out-braking manoeuvres .There is even a humpback bridge which, if you are quick enough, doubles as a launch pad! The atmosphere is friendly and newcomers are given every encouragement. If you live within reach of Hawthorn Park why not pay us a visit? Visitors from other clubs (even en-masse) are also very welcome.

If you would like more details about us or if you just like to talk slot car racing, ring me, Ted Martin on 01695 731348 or Alan Clark on 01925 810015