

N S C C

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

No.222

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EDITOR FINALLY GOES OFF THE RAILS

Contents

Editorial.....	2
What's On.....	3
Swopmeets.....	4
Membership Update.....	5
Ninco News.....	7
Factory Lines.....	9
Top Guide.....	11
Super Slot Car.....	13
Backtrack.....	14-15
Members Letters.....	18-20
Web Browser.....	21
Anoraks Corner.....	26-27
Track Talk.....	30-31
Ten Years Ago.....	34-35
Ninco Track Test.....	37-39
Members Adverts	40-44

And so to Brooklands for Jeff Davies' rail racing event where I had the dubious pleasure of being nerfed off the track (three times!) by my old friend Dave Yerbury. Jeff, needless to say, won the race but he has been practising for three months. Mind you he had to give best to the old master himself, Charlie Fitzpatrick, who put in a flawless performance to win the first race of the day.

No doubt I shall be receiving a full report of the event for next month's issue so I would just like to say thanks to Jeff for setting it up and investing so much time, money and effort in the building of the only rail racing track in existence. I hope he brings it out to play again in the near future because I really enjoyed it.

I also left Brooklands somewhat lighter in the wallet department, having purchased one of the special clear Diablos produced for the event - not cheap at £125 each - but Phil Egart assures me I have made a good investment so who am I to argue? However it did set me thinking about the vast amount of special/limited editions which are flooding onto the market. I understand from Phil that Hornby have produced eight specials in August alone. It would appear virtually impossible for anyone to acquire all of them, regardless of size of wallet, since they are now being produced as promotional items in runs as small as fifty cars. I wonder how long it will be before the bubble bursts and the limited edition market collapses? Mind you it is all good business for Hornby and the more profit they make the better it is for us, as they have more resources available to invest in new products.

And Finally - this is my first anniversary edition - twelve issues down and only another fifty five to go in order to equal Norman Wheatley's tenure of office! (see this month's Backtrack) Somehow I think it is a record which is unlikely to be beaten, but I have enjoyed my first year in the hot seat and I look forward to the second one.

*Till next month
Brian*

NINCO news

BY ALAN SLADE

For those of you who do not already know the big news this month is that Riko International are no longer the UK importers for Ninco products. The new importers/distributors are The Hobby Company. I wish them well in their venture and look forward to being able to work with them for the NSCC as I have done in the past with Riko.

On the model front the new releases are the first two of six planned Karts (see separate article on pages 37-39), I refuse to use the term 'Go-Kart' - reserving that term for the pedal toys sold for the under 6's, and a new Porsche 356A, N50205 'Sebring'. This is an open top version as raced at Sebring in the early 1960's. It is interesting in that the new box insert is very Fly like proclaiming the car to be a Classic.



The model is a gun-metal-blue metallic with plain numbers. The interior is well detailed with the various dials and switches printed onto the dash board. The driver is protected by a simple but sturdy period roll bar, and the vehicle is finished off with by a rear end with two chromed exhaust pipes.

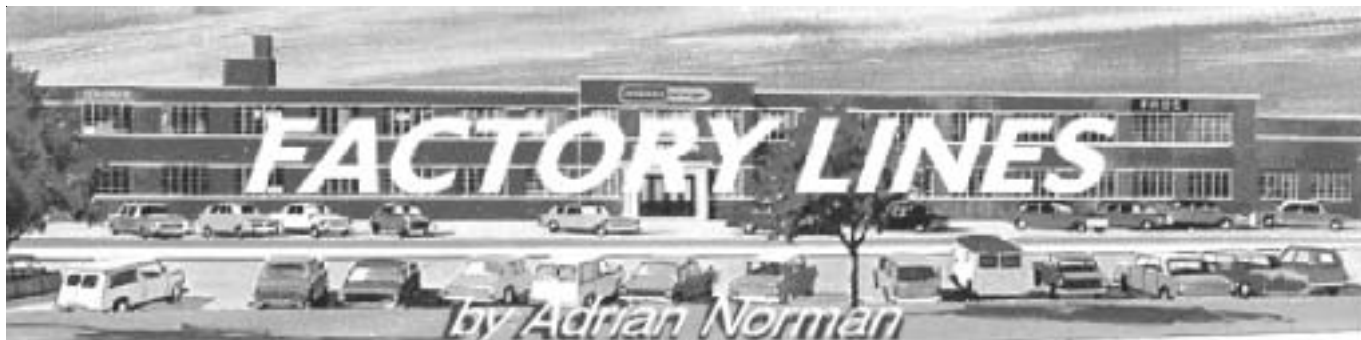
This version is supplemented by two closed versions, a Panamerica car (N50198) in full road trim and N50205 'Guatemala', a track car.

I know there are people who dislike racing the 356A due to its short wheelbase, but I have always liked these cars right from as early as I can remember, and one day I may be able to put a 1/1th scale one in our 'stable' along with the A35.



They are a handful to control, I agree, but when you come to terms with them they are a joy to drive. They will not exactly set the world alight, but with their narrow tyres, relatively high centre of gravity and lack of magnets they epitomise what slot racing is all about - car control. Learn to drive a 356A well and you are on your way to being a champion.

This is a well detailed model and should find a home in every collection that traces the history of motor racing in miniature or just because it is a nice model.



NEW RELEASES.

World Rally set C1048 will be available from the Empire Stores catalogue range, and C1057K from Argos. However, new information has come to light. The Argos, C1057K Rally Challenge set has new car liveries. C2295W is a red Ford Focus and C2296W a silver Toyota Corolla.

Set C1048 World Rally has the familiar C2176W Ford Focus No.5 and the C2257WA Subaru Impreza. One point worth noting, before ardent collectors go too mad, is that the Empire Stores catalogue shows a No.8 Focus with a pre-production livery example that was not used. Don't order a set on the basis that the car exists!

Another store, this time Index, have secured an exclusive twin-pack deal with Hornby. Twin pack C2328N contains two Vauxhall Vectras. They are decorated in a similar manner to the Argos cars mentioned above, in that the livery simply promotes the manufacturers name 'Vauxhall' and the car model 'Vectra'. The cars, one black the other silver, are lighted and appear from the catalogue artwork to have 8-spoke wheel hubs, making these non-standard Vectra specifications.

CATALOGUE

The second edition catalogue, a new innovation for Scalextric, had the final proofs agreed this summer. Therefore, we should see a new catalogue in September. Just in time for the guys at the factory to crack on with the preparation of next year's catalogue. Phew!

C2094 RENAULT MEGANE 'TOTAL' OR 'ESSO'

Last month's issue showed two versions of the dark blue Diac Megane, displaying Total or Esso above the door mounted race numbers. Apparently, the second production run was changed to reflect the life-size car. Neither version seems to be in particular short supply as this car was produced in reasonably large quantities.

NSCC TVR

Hornby have kindly assigned an official C Number to the TVR Speed 12 cars presented to the attendees of the May 2000 Hornby/NSCC weekend. Update your reference lists with C2325.

C NO. UPDATES

C2176W Ford Focus No.5, from set C1048 via Empire Stores

C2325 NSCC TVR 'Hornby Weekend 2000'
C2257WA Subaru Impreza 'Works 2000' No.3, from set C1048 via Empire Stores

C2295W Ford Focus, from set C1057K Rally Challenge via Argos.

C2296W Toyota Corolla, from set C1057K Rally Challenge via Argos.

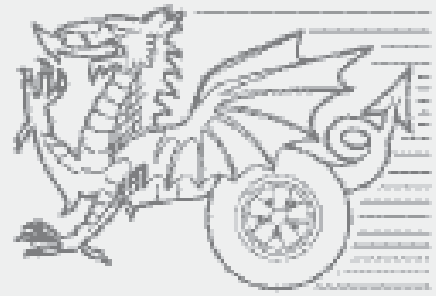
C2329WAA Vauxhall Vectra, Silver. From twin-pack C2328N via Index stores.

C2329WAB Vauxhall Vectra, Black. From twin-pack C2328N via Index stores.

Unallocated Lamborghini Diablo 'Crystal Classics' Brooklands Memorial Race 2000.

TOP GUIDE

By Richard Davies



RAIL RACING - A SURVIVAL GUIDE

Here is a guide to rail racing. Having spent several months building the Gilbern Park Rail Racing Circuit I have a pretty fair idea of how rail racers behave and this is how to deal with them:

First, forget slot cars. These cars do not handle like slot cars, do not accelerate like slot cars and do not corner like slot cars. They are not anything to do with slot cars. Period.

Second, remember that these cars have tyres tall enough to give the Post Office tower a run for it's money in order that they can keep the gear above the rail. To use the word 'unstable' is to stretch the word to it's limits.

Third, this means the only way to keep the car on the track is to make it heavy. Very heavy. We haven't had to purchase a crane to move the cars on and off the track but we've been tempted a few times, and this means that when the car gets up to speed nothing short of collision with another car, or possibly a continent, will slow them down again.

Fourthly, if your car's guide hits the soldered joints it means that your car's pick up is too big and needs cutting down. It doesn't mean the track is the wrong shape and should not be attacked with a file.

Finally, if the car goes too slow around the corner it will stop because the body will not swing out enough to keep the guides on the side wire. If the car goes too fast it will plunge off the track, smash through the crash barrier and give the marshal serious pain.

However, once we've got past these minor points rail racing becomes as fun as slot racing. It takes a lot of skill to slide a car around a corner, especially on 'instant glasspaper' sandtex and if you get to the point where you can do it regularly you feel a real sense of achievement. You have a lot more leeway than with slot racing as everybody builds their own car from scratch, making the battle between different designs as much of a competition as the racing itself. The races are great fun, with far more action in a couple of laps of rail racing than in a couple of hundred laps with 'weld to the track' magnet slot cars.

Rail racing is like taking a step backwards through time, before commercialisation homogenised slot racing to the point that a modern race consists of four clones sitting side by side on the starting grid. Rail racing is unspoilt, and long may it remain so.

SUPER SLOT CAR

BY E.J.POTTER

In about 1966 there was a lot of noise in the press about air pollution and electric cars as a possible cure someday. All the car companies were real heavy into explaining that we really wanted to keep buying their gas guzzlers and that besides, electric cars only go 20 MPH on the golf course.

Well, I just happened to do some fooling around and found out that a starter for a big jet engine, which I knew where there were some of, would make over 200 horsepower for a little while if you could find the electricity to run them that hard. So, since I had some extra generators, gearboxes, Allison engines, and numerous other doodads laying around, I bought a pile of the starters and built an electric drag car stupidly thinking that anyone would be interested in seeing electricity make a car go fast. The trick was that it should be a real car that people could get in and ride or else it would not prove anything.

So I ended up with an electric 4 wheel drive car that did not carry enough batteries to go very far but was able to get electricity from outside like a trolley car. The thing had a pickup finger on each side, and I drove between 2 big bare cables that I strung out on the pavement. I built a trailer with 2 reels of cable and electric motors to reel it up. It took about 3 minutes to lay out 1/4 mile of cable and about 4 minutes to reel it back in. Obviously this was not a finished concept but I wanted to prove that there was reason to think about electric cars in a different way. So I got some volunteers again and tried the thing out a little bit. It went about 120 MPH in the 1/4 mile, with an Allison motor and some generators on the starting line to feed horrible amounts of electricity into the cables. Like in the old joke, it went OK until it got to the end of the extension cord. It was real interesting to drive this thing because when I slammed in the

big giant switch, the car leaped ahead kinda like a big frog and sorta whined on down the track sounding like a giant electric shaver.

Well, the next lesson in my young life was to find out that the car companies were noticeably unthrilled about the whole idea, and so none of the magazines wanted to make their advertisers mad by printing anything about 120 MPH electric cars. And that was that.

Reprinted from the book "Michigan Madman" written by E.J.Potter, which relates his life long passion of swapping engines from one vehicle into another. Starting by fitting a lawn mower engine to a bicycle, moving on to Chevy V8 powered motor bike, Allison (27 litre V12) into a Plymouth, two Chrysler Hemi's into a 54 seater passenger bus mounted in the rear so as the bus would pull wheelies. 2500 horsepower turboprop engine into a tractor. So the list goes on.

Sent in by Dave Stevens



BACKTRACK

NO.5 NORMAN WHEATLEY

This month - the longest serving editor of them all. Norman produced the newsletter from July 1985 to December 1990, a staggering 67 editions; Daft Idea Animal must have been working overtime to keep him going that long. Once again nobody had heard of his whereabouts for years but several people I asked were of the opinion that he was still to be found in the Birmingham area so I proceeded to plough my way through all the N. Wheatleys in the Birmingham phonebook. Many strange conversations followed, including one with a certain Nathaniel, a gentleman of Jamaican ancestry, who had no knowledge of Scalextric but generously offered to supply me with any amount of funny tobacco - having made a note of his number I continued my search!

Eventually I found him and the years rolled back as we reminisced about the swopmeets of the mid eighties. A few months later the following account arrived:-

“I was always into motor racing — don’t know why: perhaps it was just because I was given Dinky toys of a Maserati and an HWM when I was very young! So it was natural I would progress to slot cars but when my Dad started looking around, he noticed that there was a system modelled at 1/52nd scale, and logical chap that he was, reasoned we could have a bigger circuit. So Wrenn it was — so basic at the start we had to screw sheets of acetate to the corners to act as barriers to stop the cars flying off! No wonder I looked with longing at the catalogues from Scalextric — they even had a First Aid Hut for heaven’s sake!

The Wrenn layout gave years of service even though it was temperamental. Then one day in around 1977 a colleague at BBC Radio Birmingham where I worked brought in a Scalextric set saying he was looking for a buyer — for a tenner. Instant sale! I had the figure of eight layout with the blue Ford (C15) and the red Ferrari (C16) on the floor for a while but soon got bored with crouching and only having two cars. So I bought the green BRM (C51) and the red and white McLaren (C127) and found a timber merchant to sell me a 8 x 4 piece of chipboard. (Sorry, dear — were you hoping to keep that as a dining area..?)

More cars followed as they came out and then I discovered the wonderful world of swapmeets.. I can remember grabbing a rather tatty orange Ford 3 litre (C18) and thinking how amazing it was to come across something so “rare”!

I don’t know how I heard about the NSCC but I think it may have been meeting a certain Mr.DeHavilland at one such event

By this time we had moved from a flat to a house (sorry, dear — thinking of having guests to stay..?) where the Scalextric **area** became the Scalextric **room**. Extra bits were added to the baseboard and I had quite an intricate permanent layout. (Featured in the June ‘86 newsletter as the start of what was to be a popular feature on members’ home circuits.) It was a good time to be into collecting Scalextric in the early 80s because there weren’t all that many of us and supplies from the 60s were still reasonably plentiful (lots of people like my work colleague selling off the sets from their youth.) At that time I worked at BRMB, the commercial radio station in Birmingham doing a late night radio programme. It meant that when I came off the air around 2.30 a.m. I could ring an NSCC member in America who not many people could ring at a civilised hour! Did some good deals that way, I seem to recall.

I really should not give the impression my partner was against my passion for model cars. Far from it — she would race with me, sometimes to decide who made the coffee after dinner! She also came along with me to swapmeets and toy fairs, deciding that she must collect something too and went in for London buses and variations of the Citroen 2CV, which she once had in full scale.

Having changed jobs in the mid-80's I had more time available and offered my services to be the editor of the newsletter. At that point, as far as I recall, Mike Pack was doing pretty much everything himself, so fair play to that.

For reasons which are now lost in the mists, I'd read an article on how to make club newsletters more interesting in a photographic magazine and one of the simplest things they recommended was to put the print into two columns on the page! Hence the change from June '85 to the July issue in which I recount the story much as above, including pictures of the first two Le Mans cars! (Yes, I still have copies of the newsletter...) One thing I did right at the start was contact the companies that had connections with Scalextric like Duckhams and Golden Wonder. Later I remember writing to Yorkshire TV who produced that programme which featured the almost mythical "Ternco" Metro 6R4 (photo from the programme featured on the back of August '85 issue.)

I shudder to think now of the primitive way the newsletter was produced. I had invested in an electric typewriter (thinking I would write freelance articles) and all the items were typed on A4. The headings were done with Letraset, the typed pages cut in columns and then laid out onto further A4 pages using spraymount.. It used to be all over my lounge floor once a month! It would then be photoreduced and copied at the local Kall Kwik. I would love to be doing something like that now with all the DTP packages available (no, I'm not offering.) The other essential ingredient without which I don't believe it would have been possible was knowing someone who would **very** kindly update the members list on computer and print out the address labels once a month. How things change: an article in the August '85 newsletter Nigel Fraser-Ker offers to send a computerised list of all Scalextric cars via a "modem" — I had no idea what one was then and now I use one every day.

I put the newsletter together for five and a half years (I think Brian worked out that made it the longest stint as editor anyone had managed to survive.) Things change, jobs change and life

changes. I sold the bulk of my collection (I still retain a core of 40 (plus two I acquired this year!!) I now work for a training consultancy called TMI which has taken me all over the place in the last 11 years.

Prophecy of things to come: in the last newsletter I edited I mention having bought a four track recorder. It's now become eight track and digital and in March I released the second CD of my own songs. It sells for £10 and 50% of the proceeds go towards research into Lupus, a disease of the immune system.

Looking at the collection while I've been writing this has made me very nostalgic — it's the *smell* of them for one thing! For so many years, Christmas was not complete without a new model. I think you either are a collector by nature or not — obviously I am (I identify with "High Fidelity" completely!)

The reason that Scalextric was so good to collect was that it was finite (you could get a book which told you what was available) as opposed to stamps, of which there are millions; it was reasonably plentiful and affordable; you could come across the occasional "find" like a black Bentley; and there were sometimes surprises that no-one knew about. Oh, yes, and you could make them "go" as opposed to die-cast models. All the right ingredients!

I've started subscribing to a magazine called "Motorsport Collector" and recently they had an article on someone who collects anything other than Scalextric. I thought "Naaah! Scalextric is the real one!" Even now, I am ridiculously and fiercely brand loyal to Scalextric!

Thanks to Brian for tracking me down: (I hadn't gone that far) and for the NSCC model of the Jaguar XJ220. Having been involved in the production of the early ones, the blue Escort and the grey Datsun it was a very nice touch to bring things full circle. I'd be happy to hear from anyone from those long lost days of the Eighties when Scalextric was plentiful, hair was blacker, waistlines thinner..."

Thanks Norman, glad you liked the Jag. If anybody wants to get in touch or buy the CD I will be happy to pass on the address.

Members letters

Dear Brian

Firstly can I congratulate everyone involved with the 'newsletter', I personally find it informative, constructive, and on occasions a humorous approach to an extremely addictive hobby.

Secondly, and the main reason for my writing in though, following the excellent and enjoyable response to a member's request for information with regards to scratch building, is another appeal to some of your more experienced collectors. I'm sure, like the majority of the newer members, a large number of my cars are obtained through car boots, jumble sales, adverts in papers, etc, and was wondering if someone could maybe write an article on how to restore these models, as I'm sure there are a number of tips and hints that could be passed on. One of the areas that affects myself the most are the motors, as I personally I have a number of older cars with dead engines, and am reluctant at this stage to start taking them apart for fear of them never working again, when I'm sure it wouldn't be to difficult to get these cars back on the track where they deservedly belong.

Other areas would be the removal of old glue, paint, and any other substances from the body without causing further damage, in fact the list is endless.

I think it was a comment from Phil Etagart with regards to the enjoyment that can be obtained in restoring some of these older cars to their former glory, something I'd like to try, and I'm sure so would many others, but are either wary in case more damage is done than corrected, or just where to start first.

So if some one out there could find the time to put pen to paper, I'm sure there would be an awful lot of appreciative readers.

My thanks in advance

Gary Baldwin

O.K. folks - your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to help Gary restore his damaged cars. All contributions gratefully accepted. This page will self destruct in thirty seconds.

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Hi Brian,

just read that letter in the August issue about an email version of the newsletter. This opens up a whole tin of worms both technically and costs/ revenue issues.

Firstly, as an advertiser it is not really the same advertising in an online newsletter, customers tend to buy more stuff when they can sit down in the comfort of thier armchair an decide what to buy, rather than looking at a computer screen. Ezines tend to carry banners and text links as advertising, not lists of cars as most adverts currently do.

Technical issues - Sending the entire journal by email, photos and all, is just not possible due to file size limits. Most ezines are backed up by a website. The email either just informs the subscriber that new content has been put onto the site or gives a teaser with links directly to those articles (on the site).

I could ramble on for all day about this, but if you or any other club member would like to follow up on this, please don't hesitate to contact me. I have setup several ezines (for sites I have worked for), handling everything from the technical side through to the marketing.

Regards

James Penton

Members letters

Brian

re. e-mail newsletters:-

I am a member of various clubs and associations in various fields and receive about eight newsletters and magazines on a monthly and quarterly basis and I also produce a very small newsletter for a local slot racing club.

One of the pleasures of club membership is that feeling of anticipation of a forthcoming newsletter and the enjoyment of opening the envelope and having your first read of all the news and articles. There is also the collector's pleasure of keeping all your newsletters in your "library" for future reference. I am also a hopelessly hooked fan of the internet and avidly surf all sorts of sites on all sorts of subjects but this is a totally different interest.

I don't get the same feeling when I click on any of my electronic newsletters which are usually addressed to "List Member" - very personal ! - and tend to speed read them and skip anything that doesn't immediately grab my attention. With a conventional newsletter I can relax, put my feet up, flick through the pages and then go back and read it from cover to cover in any order that takes my fancy. OK, I could print it but it would just be a bunch of paper unless I bothered to buy the various grades of paper and card and staple it all together in the right order to produce a magazine and I wonder how many people would be inclined to do this.

You only have to look at the shelves in W H Smith to see how the publishing revolution has enabled the proliferation of titles on every subject imaginable and obviously the public love to buy all these magazines so the written word is hardly going out of fashion.

I think the cost and hassle for the NSCC to set up an electronic newsletter for a fairly small minority of the membership who would actually want it is probably not justified.

Regards

David Lawson

.....
Dear members

Last month I mentioned my pictorial Scalextric reference site in the Journal. Unbeknown to me, and with great thanks, a fellow member wrote about the site in his Internet column article. Since then I have seen another article about my sites, one a pictorial reference site the other a reference point for clubs, this time in a world-wide car modelling magazine.

To my amazement the hit counter on the websites has spun in to orbit! I didn't quite imagine that they would be visited as much as they have! Thanks to you all for your support. I hope you keep coming back to the site. Thanks to all you club organisers who have entered your club details to the web page.

Because of the high hit rate, I had to increase the quality and usability. To this end, I have redesigned the site so that you'll only need to remember (or bookmark) one page. I have also increased the disk space so that all thumb-nail images can be clicked on to reveal a full size picture.

Therefore, I have amalgamated and re-launched the site under one new name with a new theme. It's name is SlotCarPortal (<http://www.slotcarportal.com/>). It is your portal to the world of slot cars. Judging from feedback, I'm sure you will find it a useful source of information.

My thanks to all visitors,

Adrian Norman

Members letters



G'day Guys

I've asked Brian, your very hard working Editor, to publish this letter on my behalf. I said very hard working deliberately because I'm the editor of "Club Lines" the official newsletter of the ASRCC Australian Scalextric Racing & Collecting Club, so I have a fair idea just how hard Brian works to compile your journal every month.

No doubt most of you would be aware that both our clubs now exchange copies of each others newsletters and on behalf of my readers I wish to thank Brian for agreeing to my suggestion. I would also like to ask each of you to stop promising to make a contribution to your journal and actually do it. Please don't leave it up to someone else to provide the information, the more help Brian gets the better it will be for everyone.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank Brian together with the other members of your committee for allowing me to reproduce "Factory Lines" in my newsletter. Their cooperation has provided my readers with a valuable source of information and one which I hope you don't take for granted. Special thanks also to Adrian Norman for his support.

Despite the fact that we are half a world away there is much we have in common but after completing a cover to cover read of the journal it struck me there is one big difference, new car prices ! A comparison of advertised prices for the main four brands, Scalextric, Ninco, SCX and Fly prompted me to raise the following question..... Why do SCX cars appear to be more expensive in the UK?

Scalextric range from 20 to 25 pound, here we pay \$55 to \$69, Ninco are 19 to 26 pound and we pay between \$50 to \$65 while Fly cars range from 22 to 25 pound, in Australia they are \$65 to \$75 but SCX there are much the same price as other brands 19 to 22 pound compared to only \$35 to \$39 here. Can anyone tell this Aussie why we pay half the average price for SCX cars while you guys pay about the same for SCX as other brands ??

Finally, if anyone has questions about the ASRCC, our newsletter Club Lines or if just want to say g'day you can contact me by email at clublines@telstra.easymail.com.au or ask Brian for my address and phone/fax number.

'til next time close racing.
Wayne Bermingham
Editor Club Lines



Right:- nothing to do with the letters page - just a picture of one of the limited edition Jaguars produced recently for the Gamleys Toyshop.

WEB BROWSER

BY TREVOR MAY

Well, I suspect that James' excellent article on the delights of Ebay last month was taken to heart by far too many of you. I base this observation on the fact that I have noticed a marked increase in the favourite pastime on Ebay, namely the practice of outbidding me in the last few minutes of every auction that I think I "have in the bag". I can only think that you must all be very much thinner in the wallet this month.

As I've been spectacularly unsuccessful in acquiring the glittering prizes, I've been occupying my time with creating my own instead, and the Web is an incredibly rich source of ideas inspiration and "how to " articles.

For those of you who enjoy the building side of our hobby (or for those of you who are now too poor to buy any more items from Ebay!) this month we'll visit a site dedicated to makin' em and racin' 'em for as little as possible.

The URL is :-

<http://msnhomepages.talkcity.com/hobbyct/stinsonx/index.htm> - It's a bit long-winded, but believe me it is worth it. I have to own up here and admit that this is the site of a personal friend of mine, Jack Stinson. He is from Columbus Ohio, and has that pleasant, easy going nature that some Americans seem to manage so effortlessly. He doesn't see why he should buy

things that he can make himself (it's that pioneering spirit) and is happy to share his expertise.

The site is split between 1/32 and HO slot cars with many of the articles relevant to both, So what are you going to find to interest you ? Well, amongst other things, you can learn how to make your own resin bodysHELLS and your own silicone tyres (or is it tires?). It might sound daunting but even I have got the hang of it, and I have no artistic talent whatsoever and no workshop either; a craft knife is as technical as it gets !

It doesn't take long to be able to make your own car, and I mean the bodysHELL, interior, chassis, wheels, tyres and axles, I just have to find out how to make the gears ,engine and guide blade now. Not only do you get the satisfaction of making your own car, it's also cheap..... which (as they say) is nice. So why not give it a try, as Jack says "it ain't rocket science"

Also on this site is Dave Cheeseman's encyclopaedic Slot Car Link, it's so good that if you don't have free internet access, you better not look!

As an aside, the rather nice Monogram Cooper Monaco pictured at the bottom of Jack's page, now resides on a shelf in my Scalextric room, which goes to prove that not all the glittering prizes are on Ebay!!!



Club Focus

DUNTON SLOT CAR CLUB

A HISTORY OF THE REVIVAL OF AN EARLIER CLUB.

BY DAVE EDWARDS

The story starts back in 1995 when I rescued a plywood and chipboard constructed track from a school outbuilding where it had been kept for several years while being used for entertainment at school fetes. Prior to that it had been kept in a garage belonging to a supervisor colleague in my department at Fords Dunton. I couldn't bear the thought of the track being destroyed and I had grandiose plans to set it up in my Mother's garage and start my own club. Two years later the track was still where I had left it, untouched and gathering dust and cobwebs.

Then in late 1997 I spied a name I recognized from work in the NSCC members list. "How strange", I thought, "can't be him, he seems such a sensible fellow, the address looks plausible though, I wonder, I must ask him when I see him." A couple of days later I asked Noel Taylor if he was one of those sad individuals who collected Scalextric cars and after an hours discussion I left Noel's office having become one of the founder members of the revived Dunton Slot Car Club.

A couple of weeks later when I had gathered enough potential members (including the NSCC ex-editor Tony Frewin) we convened a meeting in Noel's office after work and put together the nucleus of a club. Over the following weeks we secured the relevant permission from the site management to run an out of hours club and were fortunate enough to obtain use of a double door cupboard in the canteen in which to store the track.

My Christmas holiday 1997 was spent in my mother's freezing cold garage cleaning, painting and generally refurbishing the track that we later learned had been built in the early 1970s. The track was basically a bent figure of

eight with a lap length of approximately 38 feet and with a Sandtex surface.

Our first race meeting was held early in January 1998 after the track was transported to Dunton in the back of a van borrowed by one of our members, Tony Weatherley. Surprisingly back of van to racing took less than an hour and our first races were held after a few teething problems with everyone being honest (?) and counting their own laps.

Race meeting number two was a complete washout. One week in a heated and air-conditioned building after years in damp outbuildings had caused all the wood to shrink as it dried out and about a third of the copper lane tapes had lifted as a result. We decided that funds would be needed to rebuild the track so we relieved from our members the sum of £5 as a joining fee.

Noel and Tony W. came into work one weekend and estimated what work was needed to turn the washboard surface back into a viable track. They divided the work into manageable sections and allocated work parties. Individual work parties did any structural repairs during evenings or on Saturday mornings. The interim club nights were spent lifting and relaying the copper tapes.

Over the next few months various other faults became evident and were repaired on an ongoing basis.

We soon realised that a lap counter / timing system was essential so members dug deep into their pockets for a further £10 contribution and Dave Lelievre's superb Slotmaster system was bought and installed. I am pleased to report that the inaugural race using the Slotmaster controls was won by yours truly, a feat that sadly rarely occurs now. I am still convinced that the

other members let me win this milestone race as appreciation for restarting the club.

From this moment onwards £15 became the joining fee for any new members. We realised that this would be a useful way of discouraging halfhearted members. Those who put their money where their mouth is are rewarded with 15 sub free race meetings, after that subs are £1 per race night.

Racing continued unchanged each week until September 1999 when having accrued a substantial kitty, we went on a spending spree. Deputy Chairman, Ken Stanton and Treasurer Alan Graham kindly spent long hours in a hot garage building a replacement ramp section leading down from the flyover (without a hairpin), a replacement high-level section, and a new hairpin section. The new sections were finished in gloss paint and Purchasing Officer and club superstar Mark Rampling volunteered to sand off the Sandtex from the remaining old section allowing that section to be re-finished in matching gloss. Thankfully Mark's fingertips have fully regrown since this sanding exercise but regrettably his driving finger was unaffected! The joints between all sections were replaced with the superb metal dowels and tube alignment system made by Alan and described by Ken in his track construction article in the December 1999 issue of the NSCC magazine. Following the rebuild the track length is now around 58 feet and bump free for most of its length. At the same time we took the opportunity to move the start / finish line to give a longer sprint to the first bend, and purchased the start lights and jump-start / race finish solenoids from Slotmaster.

The revised and enlarged track has proved to be substantially faster with lap times now almost on a par with those recorded on the old smaller track due to the adoption by most members of Scalextric cars. These have proved faster but don't corner as well as the Ninco cars that were favoured on the previous bumpier track.

Apart from changing the race formats and eligible classes to suit the membership we have continued racing every week as before. We held

a two-part challenge against Derek White's Priory Club and where possible we have contested local open events as part of the South Essex team formed with a mixture of Priory and DSCC members. It helps that Noel is a member of both clubs and is able to coordinate our entry.

Now that the kitty is again awash with money, Ken and Alan are planning to build a further track extension once they have completed their respective year 2000 "household" projects. The final old piece of track will be replaced by a new flat flyover section, a large radius curve, a tight hairpin and a rising multi-radius curve, and will hopefully be available for use towards the end of the last quarter 2000 or early in the New Year. This does of course mean that our old track (the "existing track" in Ken's December 1999 article) will be surplus to requirements, so if anyone out there is thinking of starting another club and needs a track please make me an offer.

Regrettably we are unable to admit casual visitors to the club due to the secrecy of the work carried out at Dunton, but whenever possible we are happy to accept any invitations for our team to visit other clubs.

'WHAT A LOAD OF OLD COBRAS!'

BY PETER 'ANORAK' NOVANI

Now here's a conundrum for you. When is a '289' Cobra not a '289' Cobra? Easy, when it is a Ninco Cobra. Or, to be precise, a Ninco 'Goodwood' '64 Cobra as reviewed by Richard Davies in his recent (July issue) Top Guide column. In his wisdom, Richard chose to omit the fact that the car is totally inaccurate! So, by way of a riposte, I have provided some additional information for your delectation! Firstly, let me put on this old 'anorak' - now that's better! Ninco's Cobra is, supposedly, a representation of the John Willment Limited entered Shelby Cobra. A car that was successfully campaigned, by Jack Sears, during those halcyon days in the sixties. However, the Willment car was an earlier '289' spec'd version and not the later '427' version Ninco have based their body shell on. The figures refer to the cubic (inches) capacity of the engine. Comparisons with the full size version reveal other discrepancies. Although, I shall spare you every nuance, it is worth mentioning a few examples just to illustrate my point.

The Ninco car should have a black roll bar across the entire width of the cockpit area, braced by a forward facing bar. Bare metal exhausts emerge from underneath the sill area on both sides. John Willment Limited and Cobra badges are conspicuous by their absence, as are Goodyear logos and blue circle surround on the tyres - the wheel centres were alloy coloured and not as depicted. Side panel (plastic) windows were also a distinctive feature of the Willment car, as was a driver's rear view racing mirror mounted centrally on the dashboard. And was the car really that shade of red? You kind of get the picture. Pedantic? Maybe. But, I'll let you be the judge of that once I have told you that Richard also neglected to mention that the 1:1 scale Willment car was **RIGHT HAND DRIVE!** Still being pedantic? I think not! Understandably, Ninco chose to use their existing Cobra '427' mould rather than make modifications and incur additional retooling

expenses. They could just have easily based a new release on one of the many historically important '427' racing versions. And believe me there are loads to choose from. Check out any one of Dave Friedman's Cobra books and be suitably impressed. Trying to pass off the existing body shell as a '289' version does the collector a disservice. Better, that it should be packaged as a 'red' Cobra and reviewed as such. If you are after a '289' Cobra, then I suggest you refrain from buying the Ninco version. Alternatively, opt for vastly superior MRRC '427' version - although that is based on an old Revell mould and is made in limited numbers, it does capture the evocative and brutish shape of the real thing. Alternatively, save your money and wait until someone produces a definitive version.

And, before everyone starts writing in to suggest that slot cars are merely toys. Let me ask you this simple question. Who the hell buys Fly Classic or Ninco Classic cars? I cannot recall seeing either range displayed in my local toy shop. Toys, indeed! Can you imagine this scenario? "Sorry darling, I can't stop for dinner, as I've got to get along to Toys 'R' Us before they close. The store manager informs me that stocks of the Fly (SM1) Steve McQueen Porsche 908 and (C52) Porsche 917 are extremely low. So, I want to get there before they sell out completely. Apparently, some school boys were queuing all night to buy them with their pocket money." Get real will you! Sure, a good number of slot cars could be described as toys. Certain companies specifically market them as such. Nothing wrong with that, no doubt, they serve a purpose in attracting youngsters to the hobby. However, historic/classic type slot cars are aimed squarely at a more discerning and knowledgeable collector. Therefore, a review of such a slot car should reflect that fact. And, yes, I accept that it would be almost impossible to replicate the intricate detailing found on static hand built models. Nor, would it, be appropriate to do so, within the context of a mass produced

slot car. However, that has not stopped Fly from getting pretty damn close to achieving what, in my opinion, is the slot car Holy Grail. This is a truly impressive range of slot cars, with features that, until quite recently, could only ever have been dreamt about. Gentlemen, Fly have moved the goal posts! Arguably, they possess the most coveted slot car range on the market today. Undoubtedly, this is a company run by people with a passion for motor sport in general, and sports car racing in particular.

What a pity that certain NSCC reviewers do not possess similar attributes. Although, that is not to detract from their doughty efforts to write reviews, albeit at times, in a rather haphazard manner. But, what is the point of expressing your personal preferences within a slot car review, as typified by comments such as "I especially like the shade of red as it goes really well with the white stripes" and so forth (sounds like a Vogue fashion review) without adding some salient comments regarding the slot car's full size counterpart. After all, slot cars are invariably based on real road/race cars. Surely, establishing whether a slot car is accurate or not, is an important prerequisite of any review, as is the inclusion of an informative slot car track test - even if it does tend to be subjective. Is that too much to ask, or are there other 'factors' involved which precludes criticisms? Whether a slot car is the best thing since sliced bread or total crap, then please let us know about it. Preferably, in a concise, unbiased and well written 'warts and all' appraisal which includes, where applicable, some racing history. The editor's Chaparral review (May issue) is a good indication as to what is required. So, go on, I dare you to emulate or surpass his efforts! So, before committing pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, how about doing some elementary research into the 1:1 scale version of the slot car that you intend reviewing? Unlike myself, you may not possess Autosport/Motor Sport magazines dating back almost to the year dot, or a substantial library of motor sporting books etc. However, with the advent of the Internet, owning such a collection is no longer essential. So, if you have access to

the web, what are you waiting for - log on and get surfing. There must be a relevant web site out there worth visiting to help put together a more informed review on a particular slot car. That way, you will avoid embarrassing mistakes and accusations of being a motor sport Philistine!

Quite possibly, this rather vitriolic critique has 'opened up a can of worms.' I make no apologies for doing so. A certain amount of controversy is always welcome in the NSCC Journal - it gives it that certain edge! And whilst in a rather finicky mood, and still wearing my trusty 'anorak,' I noticed that David Wisdom erroneously stated, in his Fly Classic Car article (July), that a Porsche 917 has a V12 engine. Sir! You are wrong. It actually has an air cooled flat-12 engine. Just such an engine helped Porsche vanquish the opposition during that golden period of endurance racing, circa 1970-71. Let's hope that Fly go the whole hog and model the entire range of 917s, including those 'awesome' turbo powered CanAm cars. Other important cars that merit consideration for slot car production include, the Porsche 956 & 962, Ford GT40 & MkIV, 'D' & 'C' Type Jaguars, Ferrari P3 & P4, and of course the Cobra! Lots of colour scheme variations amongst those. Ok! That's your lot from me. Time to take my 'anorak' off now and have a well earned pint. Wait a minute, I have just noticed that the Ninco Willment Cobra has it's fuel filler cap in the wrong position....

TRACK TALK

by Steve Carter

PROSLOT TOYOTA GT-ONE

Now I know things have been said about this model before, but I feel not enough has been said about this radical racer, for this is one model that really does emulate the real car.

The Toyota GT1 stretched the F.I.A GT rules to the limit, and it showed. Most of its competitors felt it drove a coach and horses through the regulations. To avoid the obligatory luggage space rule the designer utilised another one which said that you may put the fuel tank in the boot - common practice when race preparing a road going sports car. Effectively the Toyota's luggage space was the fuel tank! By luggage the rules mean a pilot's case, so you can imagine how close to the edge everything was taken on this car. It was dramatic in every way, including its speed. The model is no different.

Monarch Lines sent me the latest version to review. The first one issued was the #27 Japanese crewed version from the 1998 Le Mans. This second one is the #29 car from the same race. Curiously the drivers named on it are Boutsen, Kelleners and McNish. Now we all know that McNish actually won the race for Porsche; his one big highlight in a year spent playing second fiddle to Mercedes in the championship. The Briton whose name should appear on the car is Geoff Lees. I suspect that Proslot intend to produce the 'Zent' liveried cars from the 1999 race which was indeed crewed by Boutsen, Kelleners and McNish.

Could this car be a rare collectors item? How many did they make before they realised the mistake? Have they realised it?

It is surely indisputable that Fly are the best finished and presented models of current makes, but Proslot offer a slightly different approach. This car is well modelled like previous ones and

is decorated to an acceptable level, but it is the design and construction which really set it apart.

The body shape is a strikingly accurate reproduction of the real thing; it's low, really low; so much so that Proslot have had to move away from their usual sidewinder chassis in favour of an in-line one, much the same as Fly with their Porsche GT1 - 98. The body is thin, flexible and very light. It does not feature a great deal of cockpit detail, although it does have a full length driver. Fixing is by a central screw front and rear; perfect for obtaining that essential loose body rock sought by racers.

Now on to the chassis; again it is thin and flexible. I know some people think that flex is bad and chassis should be rigid, but, believe me, flex in the right places of slot cars is an asset. Proslot's design of a motor and transmission subframe, rubber mounted at the front works really well in its in-line form, keeping rigidity around the gears whilst allowing the chassis to flex around and in front of the motor. It is a good idea to remove any mould flashing or burrs around the two parts to ensure they have free movement.

The chassis rides super low and wraps closely around the wheels, spreading its weight all around the car. The independent front wheel stub axles now run in redesigned supports which offer better geometry for roll correction whilst minimising friction. The guide is mounted as far forward as the body will allow in order to improve driveability, but I found that, just like Ninco ones, I had to trim around 1mm off the bottom to ensure it did not snag in the track anywhere. I have also heard that the guide is a bit of a tight fit in Ninco track although I have no direct experience of this.

This second version comes with black versions of the wheels fitted to the Alfa 156, and a magnet in place of the weight which was fitted to the first version. Although it is fairly weak, compared to a Fly or Ninco Motorsport item, it is fitted to a very low chassis of a light car so it has less work to do to be effective. It is mounted in my own favoured position just behind the front wheel axis in much the same fashion as the original Ninco GT models which so many club racers preferred. This means that the rear end relies more on tyre grip than magnetic attraction.

Proslot tyres are the favoured choice of many a racer at the moment; they are very soft and work best when they have been glued and trued as, being so soft, they can grow under acceleration. However, they provide tremendous grip just as they come and readily absorb any tyre dressings you may wish to apply.

The motor supplied had no identification label but seemed to be on a par with previous evo3 ones. Whichever version it happens to be it is plenty fast enough and the gearing, at 3.7 to 1 seems just right for most club circuits. This is achieved via an 8 tooth pinion and a 30 tooth crown contrate.

In non-magnet sportscar racing on the 105ft Plexytrack at the London Scalextric club the best car used to be the Ninco CLK, but now the Toyota GT-ONE has taken over. I know the same has happened at the Pendle MDF track and probably at most other tracks across the country.

Proslot seem to have the perfect understanding of what makes a good slotcar and this GT-One mirrors all the radical features and raw speed of the real Le Mans racer.

My thanks to Colette of Monarch Lines for giving me the opportunity to test this super car.



Phil Egart wades through the NSCC archives of September 1990

The September 1990 NSCC newsletter was a great deal shorter than the normal newsletters and thus there was a limited amount of information that ten years on I can regale you with. I assume this was because of the holiday period and not the imminent departure of the then editor Norman Wheatley. However it is timely that, as I sit down to write this focus back to a decade ago, I have just returned from an event that was focused on the 1950s rather than the 1990s.

The event that I refer to is of course the first Brooklands memorial race meeting, which featured a newly built rail car track that was built to the same broad specifications as the tracks that were in use at racing clubs up and down the country prior to the introduction of slotted tracks as we know and love them today.

Cars that were run included historic, replicas of historic and newly built cars. This was certainly the first time I had seen rail cars driven in competition and possibly the track is the only working rail car track in the UK. The tone of the event was certainly lifted considerably by being held at Brooklands, more specifically in the clubroom of what most regard as the home of motor racing.

Whilst the complex immediately takes you back to earlier days, as with Grand Prix cars that are far broader than they appear on television, it is not until you stand at the 19ft. summit of the Brooklands banking that you get a true perspective on the scale of the circuit and the sheer bravery of the drivers who raced there. To say the track is bumpy is an understatement and in combination with the primitive suspension of the 'between the wars' year's

competition cars, it is little wonder that the drivers had to wear special broad belts (Not unlike a weightlifters) to prevent damage to their stomachs!

Anyone who has not visited the birthplace of British motor racing really should. Looking back 90 years suddenly puts these glimpses back ten years ago into perspective!

The event itself attracted friends from days gone by and in particular it was nice to meet Roger Gilham. During the course of a lengthy conversation Roger mentioned that Haynes (the publishers of the Scalextric collectors bible 'Scalextric - Cars and equipment, past and present') had seen a copy of the Alain van den Abeele and Eric de Ville book 'Scalextric - History and Passion' and had decided that the fifth edition of the Roger Gilham book will be a totally new publication. This is in order to allow for significantly improved photography and a rewrite of the text correcting the niggling errors that Roger is only too aware of, but has been unable to do anything about due to the printing processes involved. At the time of writing the projected publication date for the fifth edition is unknown.

Three editions back in 1990 there was consternation in Scalextric land over the apparent disappearance of the Purple XJR9. The car at that point was only available (And believed exclusively) in a set for Littlewoods (sister company of Index who currently have the exclusive twin packed limited edition Vectras). Trouble was that the set didn't appear to be available in any of their stores. (Ironically enough at the time of writing the Vectras are not available in any of the stores either!). Alan

Slade had queried the disappearing Jags with the factory whose only comment was “What have they done with the hundreds we have sent them?”

Elsewhere in Group C there was a mention of the forthcoming Sauber Mercedes, which “will be a favourite, no doubt”. It also mentioned another Mercedes, former Miss Austria Mercedes Stermitz who was embarking upon a career as a sports car driver, but driving a Porsche. Whatever happened to.....!

Also newly announced were the first of the ‘Magnatraction’ generation motorbike/sidecars ‘Racing Red’ and ‘Yellow Flash’. Which were well received as they were viewed as going “at a respectable speed”, although the reviewer got the feeling that “you don’t get a lot of warning when the thing is about to come unglued”.

Elsewhere, news from Exin of a new livery of the Ferrari F1/87, the ‘F1 3C’ was a tricoloured livery, green nose, red midriff (beginning to sound really attractive!), and blue tail with ‘Pioneer’ decals. There was a suggestion that this was a way of bringing out a ‘Benetton’. Hornby’s Benetton was still a little way off.

“Exclusive from KPL International” announced the advert launching a new range of 10 Scalextric badges. At £0.75 each (not particularly cheap in those days) they appear not to have sold particularly well as I do not recall ever having seen them anywhere other than in the advert. I suppose this makes them highly collectable now!

Next month ‘Happening Ten Years Time Ago’ becomes a time machine and briefly transports us back to 1960!

NINCO track test

BY ALAN SLADE & ROY BUTCHART

Ninco Karts track tested

Right from the first time that I saw pictures of these I was captivated and knew I had to have one at least. And when I opened the box I knew I was right, they are little marvels, and even Carol likes and approves of them, which I suppose is the ultimate accolade for any slot car. [Figure 1].



The larger scale of the karts (1/18th) means that the detailing is very good, and all that the super detailers amongst the membership have to do is add the throttle cable, brake hydraulic line, fuel line and spark plug lead and they will have a model that is worthy of a static collection. The larger scale means that it has been possible to really detail the driver right down to the laces on his boots. [Figure 2].

Before I took it out of the box I thought to myself that they have even put a chain sprocket on as well before I realised that it was the spur gear for the anglewinder motor, but it does look



very realistic. And it is in the correct place to put the drive on the axle. This led me to thinking that this is probably the first commercial slot car (model?) that actually has the correct drive train layout allowing for the fact the motor is not quite in the right place. Yes I know there was a FWD Mini, the SCX 4WD cars have shaft drive and the Panoz is front engined with a long drive shaft. But none of them had differentials and the SCX cars do not have a central differential to split the torque between front and rear axles. In contrast the Ninco kart has the drive to the right hand side of the axle, the disc brake (non-functional, but maybe some day?) on the left [Figure 3], a solid axle and steering – what more realism can you ask for?



OK, a petrol and chain engine drive, and no doubt someone will have a go someday. And I suppose the ultimate in realism would be for the drivers feet to move dependant on the hand throttle setting and for the steering wheel to be actually connected to the steering and the drivers arms to be attached to the steering wheel and move as the kart goes round the circuit.

Yes, I hold up my hand and say I like them!!!

On to practicalities. To get to the engine you need to remove the driver and seat (held in with the same screw) and then carefully remove the exhaust from the rear crash bar and engine, and finally lift up the engine and surround. It was at this point that I discovered that the chain guard is quite flexible, another realistic feature, and also that the back of the chain guard would not easily come away from the crash bar. It does with a judicious bit of levering and pulling, but it is not necessary as the whole assembly can be swung back to reveal the engine. [Figure 4].



The engine is one of the small Mabuchi engines such as has seen service in most H:O cars, and Scalextric trucks, horses, Turtles and Fiestas, so there is no shortage of scope for some experimentation. I know which I would choose, but I'm not saying! But then again it may not be necessary.

Another thing I noticed was that on one kart the steering was very free and the other very tight. The problem appears to be with the guide, because when I pulled it clear of the chassis the steering was free. On further investigation it transpired that the guide wires were not pushed home fully so catching in the housing. A point worth checking on all the karts I suspect.

As I said earlier these models are 1/18th scale which means that they are somewhat bigger than normal slot cars; 72mm wide, 117mm long and 55mm to the top of the drivers helmet. The tyres are 15 x 10 rear and 14 x 5 front. For completeness, the front of the guide

is 64mm in front of the centre of the rear axle and the magnets are 40mm in front of the rear axle spaced 11mm apart. The rear axle runs in brass bearings.

This does raise a couple of interesting points, will they fit side by side on Scalextric/SCX track and do you need borders? The answers are "Yes" and "Yes." [Figures 5 & 6].



It is obviously that the karts have been designed to run on Ninco track which is wider but I would still recommend borders. Another item that shows that these have been designed from the ground up to run on Ninco track is the placement of the magnets. Yes, magnets, plural. There are two small round magnets fitted just below the fuel tank which align with the power rails in the track. These are slightly further apart than on Scalextric/SCX track, hence my comment.

I can see these magnets becoming very popular with scratch builders owing to their small size. The part number is N70229. Ask your dealer for some.

Enough of the waffling on. It's time to see how they perform. Knockhill being out of commission at present, it was time for a quick

telephone call to see if Craigmount Park was available for testing. Thankfully it was, so away to west Dundee I went. This was a good opportunity for me as Roy has asked me on many occasions to visit but something has always prevented me from going. The track is a U shaped figure of eight, and my first thought was, "Will they fit under the bridge?". We were lucky, the answer was 'Yes, but don't sit up!'.

There is another feature with Craigmount Park that makes kart racing interesting – there are no run off areas, the barriers being right on the edge of the track. This makes cornering a very delicate business as the slightest hint of a powerslide (the only way to tackle tight corners with a kart!) results in contact with the barrier and you are then bouncing all over the place, and as often as not de-slotting. I noticed a lot of bouncing with the karts and I could not immediately identify the cause. Was it the kart, an uneven track, contact with the barriers, tyres/wheels that were not true? It was possibly a combination of all of these, but my prime suspect is the chassis. On a real kart the chassis is tubular with an aluminium floorpan. This allows for a degree of flexing to counteract the fact that there is no suspension. The Ninco model follows this layout (but all in plastic), and consequently there is quite a degree of flexing, especially around the rear axle mounts. Until I have had a chance to drive one on a smooth track I will not be able to comment further. [Figure 7].



Following my usual practice when test driving, I spent around half an hour getting to

know the track and the kart before trying to record a time. Roy set the timers and we were away for our first race, and straight away I did my usual karting trick (Adam will confirm this) of getting it all wrong on a fast corner and ending up in the scenery. Having sorted myself out I then set off on pursuit of Roy who was really enjoying driving the kart. Roy kept his kart on the black stuff more than me and not surprisingly came home first. Times on this run were Roy 7.6 seconds and me 7.9 seconds, so there was plenty to do.

Round two, and the results were reversed. I managed a 7.4 with Roy recording a 7.5. As we progressed times came down and we both eventually ended up recording a 7.1 second lap. My firm belief is that it should be possible to get down to a time in the high sixes and if there were some borders then times in the mid to low sixes should be possible. To put these into perspective, these times are comparable with old non-magnet Scalextric cars with the current fastest lap is 5.3 seconds with a Fly car.

Verdict

You either like it or you don't. Both Roy and I like them, and reaction from Dundee club members has ranged from 'Cool!', 'Neat' to 'Yuk!' and 'I don't like it'. We both feel that it will not feature in everyday club racing, but maybe feature once a month for specialist races. With prices ranging from £23 to £25 we feel that this may also influence the take up of them, but I hope not. And I do know that there are already plans for a trial Kart Championship later this year that may lead to a full championship next year.

Note.

Since starting to write this article, I have checked up with people who have a wooden circuit, and they also experience some bouncing when accelerating hard out of corners. This would appear to confirm that it is the chassis that is flexing that is causing at least some of the problem. But no doubt careful race preparation such as truing wheels and tyres will eradicate most of this. 2000 laps of Craigmount Park has trued them nicely! And only one breakage, the nose cone on number 23.