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# NSCC

The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts.

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### EDITOR

Brian Rogers  
27 Paige Close  
Watlington  
King's Lynn  
Norfolk

PE33 0TQ

Tel/Fax:- 01553 813090

e-mail:- editor@nsc.co.uk

### TRADE ADVERTISING AND WEBSITE

Alan Slade  
The Old Schoolhouse  
Bridgefoot  
Strathmartine  
Angus  
Scotland

Tel/Fax:- 01382 828670

e-mail:- alan@theslades.f9.co.uk

## And the nominations are.....

For front cover design - Kevin Myler.

For new letters page masthead - Peter Novani.

For new Factory Focus masthead - Adrian Norman.

For gratuitous use of Beatles lyrics and supplying twelve articles in one go - a second nomination for Adrian Norman.

A special award to Holger Thor Nielsen, a Danish member, for excellent use of the English language. When Holger sent in the article on page 27 he informed me that his English was very bad and that I would have to correct it. I actually changed just four words!

I get the impression from some of your letters that you think this publication is all my own work - not so - without the help of the people mentioned above who do the fancy stuff for me it would be much the poorer.

Anyway a new year is upon us and I have taken the opportunity to muck about with the Journal. Some changes will be obvious and some less so; I hope you like the new look. I fear I am turning into a desktop publishing anorak!

Plenty to read this month, including the first instalment of Adrian's year long series on Scalextric car production (see page 31). As the months roll by he will take us from initial concept to the finished product; perhaps when you see exactly what is involved you may realise why Hornby Hobbies have a bit of difficulty responding to every letter that starts "Why don't Scalextric make a .....?"

Before reading the rest of the Journal please turn to page 3 and look at the announcement about the change of publication date. Bob is likely to be extremely rude to anyone who phones him up complaining about the late arrival of the next issue.

**And Finally** - the winner of the prestigious "Late Copy" trophy is Colette Clarke of Monarch lines. This year she has managed to beat all previous records by sending her cover advert to the printers a month late!

*Till next month*

*Brian*



### **Hamleys Jaguar**

Hamleys Jaguar XJ220 C2330 is available as a free promotional car when purchasing the Le Mans 24hr or Formula 1 set from the London store. The car is red, similar to the Racer Club car of several years ago but has extra leaping Jaguar cats printed on the car. The only mention of Hamleys is on the box sleeve.

### **NASCAR**

Yes, there's always NASCAR news, isn't there. So let's start off the year by announcing that the Lycos and Tide cars have been launched and are available in the USA and, in limited quantities in Europe and the UK.

Two plain white cars (C2326/7) were released for the USA. Presumably, enthusiasts wanted the opportunity to decorate the cars to their own taste!

### **New releases**

A new TVR set with two unique car liveries in purple and silver are to be released exclusively through Argos.

A Formula 1 set is also due to be available exclusively through Toys-R-Us with a race number '9' Benetton Playlife (black letters, before you ask... and no red letter version!) The 'Mika' McLaren is the partner car in this set.

### **C No. Reference updates**

C2277WA Benetton F1 No.9 available in set  
C1058P 'Formula 1' through Toys-R-Us  
C2286 Ford Taurus Tide  
C2288 Pontiac Grand Prix Lycos  
C2326 Ford Taurus - plain white  
C2327 Pontiac Grand Prix - plain white  
C2330 Jaguar XJ220 from Hamleys' toy stores only.

The guys at Hornby Hobbies have now been busy for the last twelve months preparing the product range for 2001. In some cases they have been working away in the background on projects for a good deal longer than a year. The results of their efforts will astound us later this year. There is already a promise of at least three new cars to the range. Don't forget that your input and feedback is always listened to by Hornby staff; keep your ideas and suggestions coming in thick and fast. As I mentioned before, some of the recent innovations have been as a direct result of our feedback to the factory. ■

# Slot-Tech race prepared cars

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

Now the members at my local club Viking SCC at Ramsgate know that, in the main, I'll run a box standard Scalextric car. They know I won't spend too much time preparing it. They're absolutely correct. I have other commitments with my spare time and as much as I like tinkering with cars I do have another life. Just!

Over the years at the club, I have entered all the championships. Driving at 99% of my own ability as well as the cars capabilities, I usually manage to end up in the top 6 by the end of a Championship. A reasonable result based upon two factors: keep the car in the slot and ensure the car is looked after and still a good runner by the end of the Championship.

But wait! Where's that killer instinct gone. I want to win, don't I? Yes, I do. What I need then is a decent mechanic. Enter Slot-Tech.

Slot-Tech is Jim Brown who hails from the North West of England. I spoke to Jim and asked for his advice. I explained that we were currently running a Touring Car Championship and that I would like to enter it armed with a secret weapon! My usual car, a Scalextric Renault Laguna, has seen better days but served me well for three years. Slot car evolution has moved on and currently the Laguna was no match for the latest ProSlot touring cars.

So, as Jim advised, my new secret weapon would be a ProSlot Alfa Romeo 156 Touring Car. Jim takes pride in his work and will only provide a car that will have the ability to win races against the slot cars currently available.

Without prompting Jim even visited our club website to check out our track lap records and noted which cars were achieving the best results.

He then checked back with me to confirm the modification rules for the Touring Car class. Armed with this information he set about race preparing the Alfa for me.

A couple of weeks later I was in possession of the Alfa. At our next club meeting the Alfa sat on the start line along side a mixed grid of Touring cars. A few frowns from my fellow competitors, "What! No Laguna?" No time to explain now. Red lights. Green lights. We're off.

The car performed faultlessly. Having spoken to Jim a few times, I knew he wouldn't send a car that was anything less than perfect. I didn't win every race, nor did I expect to. There were other ProSlot and Ninco Alfas and Audis in the races I competed in and they were being driven by some of our seasoned racers. I was very satisfied with the results.

Later in the week I went back to the club circuit and did some quiet testing against other cars. Pleasingly (or do I mean 'Annoyingly!'), my son broke the lap record for the lane we were testing on with the Slot-Tech prepared Alfa. The results are summarised in the table at the bottom of the page.

I suspect you are expecting me to reveal how the car was prepared? I can't do that! You'll have to contact Jim and discuss your requirements. Race preparing a car isn't rocket science but it does take up time. If your spare time is precious or you simply don't have the inclination to spend time race preparing a car, speak to Slot-Tech.■

Make	Model	Tyres	Engine	Best Lap Time
ProSlot (Slot-Tech)	Alfa Romeo 156	ProSlot 3 groove	ProSlot Gold	7.734
Ninco	Alfa Romeo 155	ProSlot 4 groove	ProSlot Red	7.845
Scalextric	Subaru Impreza	Scalextric	Mabuchi S	8.180
Scalextric	Renault Laguna	Scalextric	Mabuchi S	8.344
Ninco	Audi A4	Ninco	NC1	8.544

Best Touring Car lap time recorded to date during last four years of Club Meetings.

ProSlot	Alfa Romeo 156	ProSlot 3 groove	ProSlot Gold	7.774
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# BACKTRACK

## No.8 Steve Pitts

**As with Mike Pack, a previous subject of this column, Steve is probably known as a swapmeet organiser to most of the newer members. He is, however, a past chairman of the club and when I met him for the first time at Evesham recently he was accordingly forced to write the following account:-**

“Like most of us, my first recollection of Scalextric was when I was ten (more years ago than I care to remember) when I received a Formula Junior set at Christmas. What fun I had with that little figure of eight set; I was soon buying extra cars, a blue Javelin was one of them and boy did it go!

Alas - school, girls, beer and eventually a wife intervened and my set was sold to finance other things (probably beer). My son's birth in 1981 gave me a fresh interest in 'boys' toys' and his very first birthday present was a new Scalextric set. At one year old his abilities were a bit limited but he could launch the Ferrari and Renault into outer space at every opportunity.

Eventually, of course, he became very proficient and when he started to beat me regularly I decided it was time to change direction towards collecting instead of racing! I have always collected things, coins, stamps, birds' eggs etc. so the 'bug' was already present; all it needed was the spark and that came in 1990. I was introduced to Mark Hulme, a former member of the committee, who invited me round to his house. Wow! His collection was something else and to cap it all off he had a multi-level 1/24th scale layout in his loft.

That was it; I joined the NSCC and went to the Coventry Swapmeet, organised by Norman Wheatley. I bought a mint boxed Cobra, Porsche 911 Jocavi and Porsche 911 Rothmans, all of which I still have. Mark introduced me to John Jude who managed to relieve me of some cash (some things never change) and I also met Richard Snell from Devon. As we sat and admired each other's purchases a friendship was started which still remains.

In 1992 I was encouraged to join the committee, which seemed to be going through a transitional period and I was soon trying to raise money as the club's finances were in a

perilous state. Loughborough Swapmeet found me organising a raffle and addressing sixty six members (some sort of a record attendance for an AGM I think). At this point the Club was poor in terms of finance, responsibilities and organisation; the newsletter, which was the most important method of communicating with the members, was being produced on an old typewriter by Tony Frewin. Things quite clearly had to change.

Gradually the elected team of officers began to work together; finances improved; a computer was purchased for the editor; area representatives were elected and the committee seemed to have a clear sight of the Club's direction. I was, indeed, very lucky to work with some wonderful people. In Tony Frewin and Malcolm Parker we had editors who were not only immensely knowledgeable but dedicated, loyal, honest and hard-working.

I was reminded by Tony's contribution to this feature of a particular drive in a l.h.d Cosworth Sapphire when he visited me one evening; I don't think that pair of underpants was ever used again! I was very sad when Tony retired but fortunately Malcolm continued his excellent work, improving the Newsletter with the aid of technology.

Bob Bott was treasurer then, as he still is, and one evening he phoned me in sheer panic. “Steve I need to see you urgently,” was his opening statement; he did indeed appear to be worried. I had visions of a major catastrophe - were we bankrupt? Had his house burnt down? No, he couldn't balance the books by about six pounds!! This typifies the man - honest and conscientious - a true workhorse. Without his efforts over many years the club would not be in the strong position it is today.

By this time we had produced the limited edition Clio; attended the Model Engineering

Exhibition several times and were working towards the Club Rover 3.5s with Hornby Hobbies. The finances were secure and I felt I had achieved my aims. Unfortunately with success comes criticism and the people who were moaning when we had no money now wanted to know why we had so much. Politics started to raise its ugly head and I was increasingly being used as an unpaid debt collector by people unwilling to conclude transactions themselves - retirement beckoned!

I had enjoyed 4½ good years as Chairman, made many friends, built up a lovely collection and travelled across Europe in pursuit of my hobby. The trips to the Paris Swapmeets were particularly memorable in the company of such people as Angus Heeps, Les Watson, Graeme Thoburn and Richard Snell. They usually commenced on a Friday evening when we set off from Dover for two days of frantic swapping, eating, drinking and fun; truly magical weekends with very little sleep.

My collection reached its pinnacle in 1997 with about 800 cars, including yellow and white Auto Unions, #1 yellow Clio, mint boxed examples of every English 60s car, bike and

GoKart and an Australian Dick Johnson Mondeo autographed by the great man himself. I also had examples of every building and a complete set of catalogues. I have retained these special items to this day but I disposed of most of the 'ordinary' cars some time ago and I now have about 150 cars left.

I remain a member because I have had ten wonderful years in the Club with many happy memories and some sad ones. I often look at my collection and admire the beautiful models; I hope to keep them for many years to come.

The NSCC, however, is all about people and special thanks must be reserved for Messrs. Frewin, Parker, Bott, Jude, Mason, Carter, Ellis, Slade and Barber; without them the job and hobby would have been much harder and less enjoyable.

In conclusion I must make mention of Bill Holmes who I met through our mutual interest in Scalextric. He invited us into his home last year for the holiday of a lifetime. He lives in Brisbane, Australia; it is a part of the world I would never have visited were it not for those little pieces of plastic that we have all come to love so much." ■



# The Heuliez Pregunta

a radical new slot-car from Proteus

BY STEVE BARNETT

First impressions count, and as Mark Scale explained one year ago when I first approached him for guidance on slot-car collecting, “the excitement can be measured in cups of tea whilst pondering and examining one’s latest acquisition”. Well, the Pregunta, in my opinion, is worth a complete pot.

If you are interested in a different concept, perhaps from a collector’s point of view, then read on. For the true slot racers/enthusiasts, I have used the slot car, as very briefly explained further on.

## The car

Pregunta in Spanish means ‘question’, and the concept was an original way of questioning or asking the motoring world whether it was aware of the possibilities which the manufacturer had displayed in designing and building the real-life car and not just a prototype for exhibition.

Presented at the Geneva Show, as a pure sports concept car representing the outcome of a design study carried out by the creation centre of the Group Henri Torino. The history of the group extends from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it manufactured carts, up to the present day in which its different divisions cover the whole range of study, design, development and manufacture of motor cars.

## The scale model

Whilst in real terms, the manufacturer refers to this as a model reproduced to a true 1:32 scale, with little reference to the fact of it being used as a slot car, and notably the non existence of the driver. Nevertheless, the quality is remarkable, with advanced techniques of design, modelling, development and mould construction being used. The model being painted and finished in silver grey metallic with black trim and parts being injected in ABS and SAN; the only criticism is a slight lack of mould surface finishing that causes very fine lines and marks predominantly in the curved areas.

The detail and painstaking lengths that Proteus has realised are quite impressive. Such as the accurate reproduction of the enormous windshield, and the various heads, side, brake lights etc. is incredible, with a total of 20 small apertures. The excellent three-piece wheels with brake discs, and the correct design of the tyres with diagonal treads in the correct direction. The cockpit is well detailed with seat centres, side panels and dashboard hand painted in blue. The interior includes a correctly positioned gear lever and steering wheel, and although tight, it may be possible to insert an appropriate driver. Proteus say they will be including a detachable driver for their next models.

On removing the chassis from the body via three screws, it is noticeable how Proteus has simplified the layout with ease of maintenance and accessibility of all parts. To compliment the attention to detail, including a full reproduction of the cockpit, the Mabuchi 12v 18,000 rpm motor is fitted in a detachable mounting unit positioned in traverse and also incorporates an adjustable/removable neodymium magnet. The rear axle is equipped with brass bearings and the front wheels fitted to a full width axle. A detail to longevity and cleanliness is the detachable transparent cover to the drive gear assembly, protecting the interior from lubricant spray whilst avoiding track dust and dirt to the gears. The electrics are simple, two fine brass strips along the base of the chassis, no wires, the motor makes direct contact, as with the pick-up braids with sprung effect.

Proteus say that the production is limited to 7,000 units with the colour and decoration of the original car, they do not intend to make any other version. The Heuliez Pregunta is their first model with the intention to produce only two different models every year. Their marketing strategy is by direct sales, so it may be difficult to obtain through normal local suppliers.

## Performance

As a dedicated yet perhaps somewhat of a novice collector compared to most NSCC members, it's heart breaking having to place such a fine exhibit on the track, but I felt this article would be somewhat pointless without at least a few circuits of the track. My initial intention was to ensure the car kept on the track, avoiding any damage, hence speeds were low with careful cornering. This soon changed as I became aware of the superb performance; the motor seems to have plenty of torque and equal to any other car I have used. It's quick off the mark and just seems to want to keep going, the motor is most responsive with good braking. The road holding is particularly impressive, the tyres grip extremely well and the guide obviously functions correctly, presumably due to the spring effect of the pick-up via the brass strips and the depth within the slot. The magnet seemed to make little difference, the ground clearance is relatively high, yet the car did not tend to slide. The more I used it the more I enjoyed it. An enjoyable and easy to handle car. Perhaps a dedicated racer will prove me wrong.

## Technical details

Scale 1/32. Length 141mm. height 35mm. width 65mm. wheel centres 83mm.

Front tyres 20 x 8, rear tyres 22 x 11.

12v direct current (DC) Mabuchi motor 18,000 rpm, torque 120gr/cm<sup>2</sup>

Gearing 13z/36z, ratio 1:2,77

ABS injected and painted

Weight 85gr

Actual car: 12 cylinder, 48 DOCH valve engine, 5.707 cm<sup>3</sup>. Power 530 HP at 7,100 rpm. Rear wheel drive with 5 gears. Max speed 333 km/h. 0-100 km/h in 4 secs. 0-1000m in 20.7 sec

## Conclusion

Mounted in an enormous presentation display box, admittedly, a fine exhibition piece, posed at a slight angle with a stance of concept and elegance, complete with a booklet in several languages with information on the model and the actual concept car, and packaged in a suitable box. My conclusion is that this car deserves a place within my collection, not only through pride of ownership, or that this is the first model from a new company, Proteus. But more importantly, I like the look of it, its concept appearance, and its uniqueness in respect of the fact I will not see its actual prototype; somewhat similar appreciation as to owning a classic Ferrari. I'm certainly looking forward to acquiring the next model in due course.

There's more information on the actual Heuliez Pregunta on <http://www.heuliez.com> and if you want more info or pictures on the slot car, contact me on [mansions@mercuryin.es](mailto:mansions@mercuryin.es) or fax: 0034 952 887792 ■





Dear Brian

Following on from Peter Novani's article in the November journal about FLY's excellent Steve McQueen collection, members may be interested to know that the video has just been re-released in North America.

I ordered my copy on the internet from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) at a cost of \$9.99 plus \$12.00 for shipping via DHL which only took 10 days to arrive. The video itself is only available in the American NTSC format(not UK PAL) which should play automatically on any newish video player, anyone with videos over 3 years old should best check the manufacturers handbook as it may not be able to play NTSC format.

As for the film it is everything I remember it to be, little or no dialogue, less of a plot, but an excellent place to see Porsche 917s, Ferrari 512s, Lolas, Matras etc, fully recommended for any fans of sportscar racing of the early seventies. Now if only FLY will produce the Matra and the rumoured GT40 to complete the line up of the best cars of the heyday of sportscar racing,

Regards

Andrew Bond

.....

Dear Brian,

I enjoyed your December editorial but unfortunately you elevated me somewhat, I received an MBE, not an OBE.

In the Bishops Stortford swapmeet report Julie mentioned a 911 Rescue set; the museum has an example of one of these sets which came from Belgium. It is one of those frustrating exhibits as, although the box has been opened, it has never been unpacked with all the tie wraps still holding the components down or still in bags. I also have an extra set of the white and red vehicles which were used on the Toy Fair trade stand when the set was being shown for the first time.

Regards

Rod Moore

**It would appear that I had two 'senior moments' last month; apart from nearly elevating Rod to the peerage I also managed to attribute the article entitled "One person's junk" to a fictitious Dave Ashby. It was actually written by Steve Westby who also has a contribution in this month's issue. My apologies to both members and I will now go and stand in the corner with my dunce's cap on.**



# Niche but nice!

BY PETER NOVANI

Greatness once earned has to be maintained, and with their Classic range Fly continue to produce slot-cars of the highest quality. Having introduced the 908/1 and 908/2 range of spyder (flunder) Porsche endurance sports racing cars, slot-car enthusiasts can now enjoy Fly's latest interpretation of the 908 - the 908/3 spyder.

## RACE CAR HISTORY

As the 908/3 was originally built specifically for racing on tight and twisty circuits, Porsche wisely based much of the design philosophy on lessons learned during the development of their less well known 1968 2-litre hillclimb spyder - the 909.

Therefore, an extremely short wheelbase, ultra light weight and minimal bodywork dimensions were an integral part of the agile 908/3's specification. In fact, the driving position plus the air-cooled 3-litre flat-8 engine had to be moved unusually far forward to compensate for the car's lack of weight. All in all, an ideal contender for outright honours on the two circuits Porsche had in mind, the daunting Targa Florio road course in Sicily and the equally demanding (old) Nürburgring race track in Germany. In effect the works supported 908/3s took part in just four races over two seasons. Definitely a niche racing car! Moreover, it would prove to be a capable substitute for its bigger brother, the much bulkier Porsche 917. That car was the preferred choice for faster circuits such as Monza, Spa and Le Mans.

For their 1970/71 endurance sports car racing programme Porsche delegated its racing activities to independent teams. Their 917 and 908 race cars would be run under the auspices of John Wyer Automotive Engineering (JWA) sponsored by Gulf (fuel/oil) and to a lesser extent Porsche-Salzburg (Austria), much to the chagrin of the JWA team who had assumed that they would be Porsche's sole representatives. By 1971 the Austria team would be usurped in favour of former race driver Hans Dieter Dechent's Martini International (drinks) team. The Targa Florio race was unique amongst

endurance sports car races until its demise at the end of 1973. Races were only about 10 laps in duration, but here's the rub, each consisted of over 40 miles of mainly public roads - an amalgamation of tarmac rally stage, hill climb and race track. A formidable challenge demanding the maximum from both man and machine.

Lap times could just as easily have been measured with a calendar rather than a stop watch. For example, the lap record in 1970 was almost 34 minutes with an average speed of over 70 m.p.h. Indeed, the length of each lap required the teams to set up a secondary service area half way round. How the drivers ever remembered the entire circuit I'll never know. Maybe they didn't, hence the number of crashes. And to think that I have trouble finding my way to the Milton Keynes NSCC swapmeet - and that's with the help of a road map!

When mentioning the Nürburgring I of course refer to the original and now legendary 14 mile Nordschleife circuit with its incredible 140+ corners. In 1970, sports/prototype racers such as the 908/3 were lapping the circuit in an incredible 7½ minutes. That compares very favourably with the times set by contemporary Formula One cars.

## THE SLOT-CAR

Two distinct versions of the works 908/3 were raced. The most obvious visual differences were a flat rear tail for 1970 and a high-fin tail plus a larger roll-over bar for 1971. For its debut in the 1970 Targa Florio, a trio of JWA 908/3s plus a single Austria example were entered. This review concentrates on the recently released version (C64) as driven to a maiden victory by Jo Siffert (depicted with correct full-face crash helmet) and Brian Redman.

Having built a 1/43rd resin model of this particular car some years ago, I was interested to see how FLY would approach the task of replicating it as a slot-car. And if looks are important to you then these rather bland slab-sided cars may well disappoint. Yet the →

functional shape was cleverly disguised by the use of some vibrant paint schemes. Each JWA car incorporated a distinctive variation of Gulf's pale blue and orange colours. In addition to which all four Targa Florio 908/3s featured a playing card suit identification (ID) symbol on the lower offside front wheel arch.

Enthusiasts unfamiliar with this range should appreciate that all Fly slot-cars include a high level of fine detailing. For evidence of this fact, look no further than the intricate rear shock absorber assembly which contains miniature springs - exquisite! Undoubtedly, this unique and realistic looking feature is the pièce de résistance of the 908/3 range.

The main distinguishing feature on this version has to be the huge orange arrows, one either side of the cockpit area. Other livery details include an almost fluorescent green ID colour surrounding the nose air intake, on both rear wheel arches and along the lower edge of the tail. However, the car raced with just one (nearside) green section and a Bosch logo on the offside wheel arch. The 'diamond' playing card symbol and engine covers are correctly painted orange. Fly should also be applauded for including the driver names on the plinth in addition to stating which race the car participated in. That type of information is useful and should be included with all slot-cars.

The small rear facing Porsche badge that should be on top of the tail section, plus tiny black arrow markings on the front and rear wheel arches are annoying omissions. Unfortunately, Fly chose to use their existing 908/2 'windshield' which is totally the wrong shape for a 908/3. If you want the interior to be the correct colour then you could try painting it matt mid-tan with a matt red drivers seat.

Those rather elementary errors should have been spotted by Fly's research team before the production run was even started! Nevertheless, they have still managed to capture the overall feel of the race car. In all other respects it is entirely in keeping with their redoubtable reputation for manufacturing slot-cars based on historic race cars.

## ON TRACK IMPRESSIONS

Having established that the car looks the part, it was time to give it some track time. Other than the rear view mirror stalk and roll-over bar there is little to damage when racing. With regards to the chassis and running gear there are no real surprises as the treaded tyres, sidewinder Mabuchi type motor and powerful magnet are all derived from previous 908s. In my experience that equates to a good handling, reliable and potent slot-car, which can be raced competitively straight out-of-the-box.

If the truth be known, one of the quickest sports/GT cars on my 35ft four lane exhibition layout is a bog standard Fly 908/1. So, there is every reason to expect the 908/3 to emulate that kind of performance. However, one criticism(?) I would level at the entire Classic range is that, in standard form at least, they are unrealistically quick. Therefore, you have a scenario whereby slot-cars purporting to represent race cars from the Sixties and Seventies can out perform present day sports/GT cars!

No doubt, club racers will question Fly's wisdom in persisting with front stub axles rather than the preferable solid axle. Yet for home racing (magnet fitted) I found that it performed equally as good, if not better, than previous 908 versions. And much like the real thing it takes twisty track layouts completely in its stride. The only 'tuning' required was to loosen the chassis screws to give the car some 'suspension.' After the obligatory running-in process, a track test was undertaken and a brief timed session on the 'difficult' inside blue lane on my four lane 35ft exhibition Scalextric layout. This lane has a tendency to reveal any handling/road holding shortcomings with the cars.

### **Fly Classic (C64) Porsche 908/3**

Fastest lap = 3.8835 sec

Total time for 20 laps = 1 min 24.9806 sec

### **Fly Classic (C11) Porsche 908/1**

Fastest lap = 3.8578 sec

Total time for 20 laps = 1 min 21.8606 sec

Predictably, the 908/3 performs just as well as its looks suggest - in other words a typical Fly slot-car! Whether the car proves a worthwhile proposition for club racers who intend racing it

in a modified (without magnet) configuration is another matter. A recent practice run on the Wood Green Scalextric club's expansive 100ft six lane layout proved inconclusive. Although the car performed well, it was still completely standard. Incidentally, a whole raft of 908/3s have been announced by this prolific slot-car company. Some of them are listed below to whet your appetite!

#### **C65 Austria 908/3 - Targa Florio 1970**

A Porsche-Salzburg entered 908/3 (No.20) driven by Elford/Herrmann. Painted in white with large horizontal red stripes across the front half of the car plus a 'heart' playing card symbol and green race numbers to complete the stunning effect. It retired in the race.

#### **C67 Gulf 908/3 - Targa Florio 1970**

Yet another JWA car, this time with a single orange arrow on one side of the cockpit area. Orange air intake surround and rear wheel arch ID markings plus a 'club' playing card symbol feature on this version. The No.40 race car driven by Rodriguez/Kinnunen made it a one-two that year for the JWA team.

#### **C62 Gulf 908/3 - Targa Florio 1971**

A pair of JWA 908/3s and a single entry for the Martini sponsored team appeared the following year. This (No.4) car was driven by Rodriguez/Müller and had an unusual 'lightning' variation of Gulf's racing colours. As this is a 1971 version it featured the revised tail and roll-over bar. Undoubtedly, the tail fins were an aerodynamic benefit. Yet in my opinion they made the car much more aggressive and purposeful looking. In stark contrast to their 1970 efforts it was not a happy hunting ground as all three cars retired early, thus ending Porsche's five year domination of an especially tough endurance event.

#### **C61 Martini 908/3 - Nürb'ring 1971**

By now Dechent's Martini team had taken over from Porsche-Salzburg. Hence the silver Martini colours on this victorious high-fin (No.3) 908/3 driven by Elford/Larrousse.

#### **C63 Martini 908/3 - Nürb'ring 1971**

This (No.4) high-fin Martini 908/3, the sister car to (C61), was driven in the 1000km race by Marko/van Lennep who finished third. Fly's brochure shows the sill area painted white. This

is quite correct as the car practised with a white Martini signwritten paint scheme. However, the removable body panels were replaced for the race with the normal silver Martini livery, but with the sill areas remaining white. The nose air intake surround was also white.

#### **C66 Tergal 908/3 - Montseny 1972**

Of the eleven 908/3 cars made, some were eventually sold to private teams who would continue to campaigned them throughout 1972 and beyond. This is just such an example, an ex-works 908/3 campaigned by the Spanish Escuderia Montjuich team. The yellow Tergal sponsored car had distinctive green arrows and a flat rear-deck, similar in style to (C64), but with a 1971 roll-over bar. As depicted it took part in a national event driven by Fernandez. Fly do that from time to time, throw in a less well known Spanish entered car to keep the 'anoraks' amongst us on our toes!

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The 908/3 concept would metamorphosis into a new generation of turbocharged (908/3 T) endurance cars in 1975. In its many guises, the ubiquitous 908 would continue its racing career right up until 1981. One gripe I have is that Fly have failed to announce the inclusion of the important plain white 1970 Nürburgring 1000km winner. Hopefully, that will eventually materialise. The 908/3 is a welcome addition to their burgeoning Classic range, and helps piece together the story of Porsche's racing exploits. We should rejoice in the fact that they have created something of a dilemma - just which version(s) to purchase. Whether they are thrashed around a track or merely displayed on a shelf, these slot-cars will satisfy the most discerning collector or racer.

Can Fly really improve on this? You'd better believe it. Their forthcoming Chevrolet Corvette C5-R release, which includes a high level of interior detailing, confirms that once again Fly are about to up the ante. Who said slot-cars were toys?

And finally. I am indebted to Sean at Pendle Slot Racing for supplying the review car, and for prompting me to indulge in some wonderful racing nostalgia. Cheers! ■

# Strange SRM straights

BY ROD MOORE M.B.E.

Some time ago Nigel Robinson wrote a couple of articles about the history of SRM which included a reference to a Mini Cooper set. The Cumberland Toy and Model Museum owns one of these but I noticed recently that it includes a peculiar piece of track which I can only describe as a 'blow out' straight.

When the museum acquired the set I wondered what this straight was and how it worked as one lane has a slot cut out at an angle similar to a Scalextric pit stop but not quite reaching the edge. Underneath it had cut outs moulded in the plastic and five pivot pins but no actuating mechanism. On removing the card trays from the box I found two pieces of odd shaped flat plastic the same colour as the track. These appeared to have been machine made but hand finished; the marks indicating the holes had been drilled and the flash removed with sandpaper. To bridge the electrical rail across the cut conductor rail a piece of wire had been placed under the track; the ends were pushed through the rail fixing holes and bent over to lie in the bottom of the slot. the rail was added and fixed by flattening the bottom in a press; this also jammed the wire on the rail making a somewhat crude electrical connection. the normal 'tube' flattener would have cut the wire so a single ended tool had to be used. The wire is covered by a black plastic sleeve under the track. terminal connections were made in a similar way, the bare wire being fed through moulded recesses in the plastic

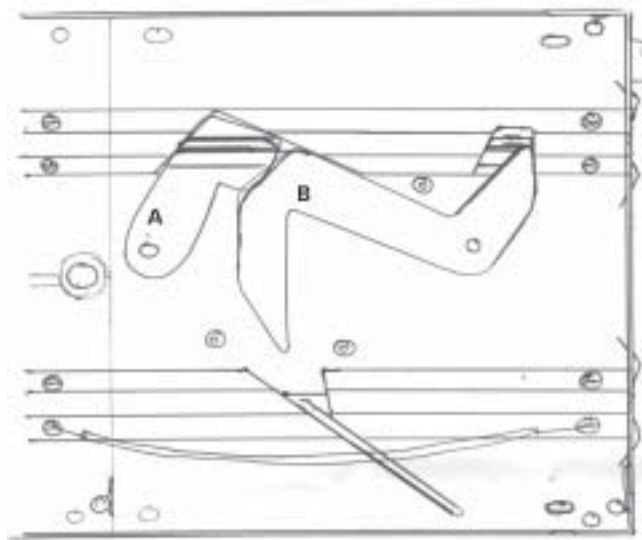
It took some time to work out how the flat parts fitted onto the pivots and I was not even sure that I had all the parts. However something eventually clicked, everything came together and operation seems to be as follows:

## Operating sequence

The sequence is entirely automatic in operation and is worked by the guide of car 1 moving lever A. This moves lever B which will deflect car 2 into the extra slot causing it to crash. As this slot ends before the edge of the track I would

imagine the guide pin gets a bit of a hammering!

Meanwhile car 1 has moved forward about three inches and its guide hits the other end of lever B thus resetting everything to the original position and allowing car 2 to run normally. Two things are apparent; firstly, in order to cause a crash the two cars must be within two inches of each other when lever A is operated and secondly the driver of car 2 cannot get his own back as there is no corresponding mechanism on his side of the track!



## Manufacturing process

I would imagine that the two operating levers would have been held in place by the type of clip/washer that is easy to push on but difficult to remove. Close examination of the split pins shows no evidence of any fastening. The side cutouts in the track are moulded in rather than machined. The manufacture of the half, normal and terminal straights must have been quite complex; in each case using a half straight mould as a common base. All three pieces have the terminal wiring separators and exactly the same mould imperfections and part number (this also includes the 'blow out' straight). to make a half straight the mould was completed using an extra part incorporating the end edge. Similarly the straight was finished using an extra part to



give the required length; the three holes in each side of the terminal straight for the electrical connections being hand drilled. On this extra half all the mould release pin positions and flow lines in the plastic are the same, but not for the 'blowout', this must have had its own special mould.

Another part not mentioned in the original articles is a plastic clip used to hold track sections together in a similar way to the white Scalextric ones. These are cylindrical with a slot and can

be fitted almost anywhere along the edges where two track sections join.

All this is based on a single set which dates from around 1965. Was this 'blowout' track an unfinished prototype added to the box to make up the set? Surely there must be more in existence to justify the tooling expense?

In conclusion - one of the Minis has lost a rear bumper and one of the second smallest bridge supports is missing. Can any one help me complete the set? ■

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# Leeds Swapmeet review

## 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2000

By our absent reporter **Julie Scale**

How's this for ambitious – a swap meet review, when I was not even there! (Mark could not think of a decent excuse so he had to don the reporter's cap).

Non-attendance was the trend at Leeds this year; it has been organised for almost as long as living memory by John Jude, and he was not there either! As you would expect he was well and truly represented. Excellent use was being made of the space available, with acres of stock on display, including loads of sets and a fantastic range of slot car brands, Fleischman/VIP/Minic/Auruora/Exin even Scalextric Turtles.

Pendle Slot racing were also represented - but yes – you guessed it no Sean, I understand he was attending another event. Many a bargain here though, with an excellent selection of loose cars at the right money.

A few other poor souls, who had no prior intuition, turned up with their stock, in torrential rain, to discover that due to the poor ground conditions entrance to the hall was restricted, and a major detour through the leisure centre complex preceded entrance to the hall.

Peter and Jackie (P&J Models) were the first to arrive having made the trip over from Wales,

with their usual excellent selection of new releases, and of course, Peter's speciality, the Rally Car selection.

Derek Cooper had some beautiful mint boxed 1/24<sup>th</sup> cars, which unbelievably remained unsold! Along with an example of the new Proteus Heuliez Pregunta, manufactured independently in Spain; Mark describes it as looking like a kettle on wheels!

Roger Barker was in good form, buying, selling and swapping, making the most of an NSCC get together, I understand he sold quite a few 1960s cars during the day.

Dave Yerbury, a long time NSCC member also had a stall with various bits and pieces, including some very nice fibreglass bodies.

Generally a good time was had by all, and whilst Leeds cannot claim to be the most popularly attended swapmeet, it is in the true spirit of an NSCC event, giving every one a chance to meet and catch up on all the gossip, and of course get soaked to the skin packing up to go home.

Thanks to John, Elaine and team.

Have a very happy and successful 2001 and we hope to see you at Milton Keynes. ■



# Don't you just hate it.....

BY STEVE WESTBY

**D**on't you just hate it when you think you've caught someone out and they turn out to have been right all along? As I have a relatively new collection and not unlimited means, I try to focus on specific areas that interest me. In my case this has meant Airfix models and stock cars of both the British and American varieties, more recently branching out into models of pre-1939 cars.

FLY models had never appealed to me, because of both the bewildering variety of liveries and my lack of interest in modern sports car racing. Then I saw pictures of their model of the Sid Taylor liveried Lola T70 Mk IIIB and all that began to change. I remembered this car and the roar of its Chevy V8 engine from one of the first motor racing meetings I attended, at Thruxton in 1969. And there it was on the plinth, "1st Thruxton 1969", this model was clearly made for me! I would have to get one of these as soon as my collecting budget recovered a little from its perpetual state of overspend.

## **FLY collection for sale**

Then I saw a whole collection of FLY Classics at a price that I convinced myself was too good to miss; the fact that it would blow the next six months budget was something I managed to gloss over. When the box arrived I hunted through it ticking each car off and giving it a quick look, but though there were several rare cars included, there was just one I was looking out for.

When the Sid Taylor car emerged it had to be taken out of its box immediately and admired to the full. It seemed just as I remembered it, the white and green livery, the Hamlyn Books sponsorship and the cloverleaf. Then nagging doubts began to creep in. The driver was listed as Brian Redman, but I knew that I had seen Denny Hulme driving it and had my picture taken next to him. Also the race number was 4 and I was sure I remembered it as being number 3.

## **Missing programme**

I knew that somewhere I still had the programme for that meeting, which would resolve my doubts, if only I could find it. My initial searches failed to turn up my collection of old programmes, which meant they were probably in the loft. It usually takes me several weeks, a stiff whisky and a very good reason, to gather the nerve to tackle the loft ladder. So I resigned myself to not finding the programme for a while. Then Shelley, my wife, proved that she was useful for more than following me around at slotswaps; carrying the purchases; reminding me just how much of next months housekeeping I was blowing; querying why I absolutely had to have that model when I already had it in another colour, or without a box. She tracked the box of old magazines and programmes down to a corner of the spare bedroom we use as a library.

There it was, from August 1969, a Kodak sponsored meeting and there was the proof. Denny Hulme first in the number 3 Sid Taylor Lola. I was right! Visions appeared of the headlines in the Journal "New member spots FLY inaccuracies". But then I thought; just suppose there was more than one sports car race at Thruxton in 1969. Suppose the Sid Taylor Lola also won that race, but driven by Brian Redman with number 4. Wouldn't I look silly then, not only an anorak, but also a failed anorak!

## **www.help!**

How was I to check? A perusal of my motor sport books failed to come up with any definitive answers so I turned to the Internet. I tend to stick with the tools I know perform well, so Altavista, which has been my preferred search engine for many years, was my first port of call. Maybe I was asking the wrong sort of questions, but it failed to turn anything up. So I gave up on it and turned to a young pretender, Google. ➡

This turned up lots of fascinating information on Thruxton and the Lola T70, even a Denny Hulme tribute page, but not what I was looking for. Then I finally worked out the right question to ask and came up with the British Sports Car Championship results for 1969.

Wouldn't you know it? FLY were right all along. There it was in black and white, at the Easter meeting at Thruxton, Brian Redman had come first in the no 4 Sid Taylor car, with Jo Bonnier second in the Bongrip car that is also modelled by FLY.

This weekend I should be catching up on my invoicing and payroll records. But I still haven't found that photo of me next to Denny Hulme. And I'm sure there's another one of me in the paddock with my foot on the sill of the Sid Taylor car and trying to look as if I owned it. Wouldn't they look good displayed next to the model? Now where could they be.....

I may have to take early retirement to have time for this collecting lark. ■

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## It shouldn't happen to a slot-car

Prompted by Rob Smith's picture of a vandalised James Bond Aston Martin, Robert Learmouth sent this picture of a Ferrari which has met a similar nasty fate. I wonder what the story is behind the names on the windscreen?

If anyone else has pictures of a normally collectable car which is now only fit for the dustbin perhaps they would care to send them in.



# Danish Mini "Le Mans"

BY HOLGER THOR NIELSEN

On this Saturday afternoon the scene was set for a race with classic FLY cars on my private Scalextric four lane track at about 22 metres, called "Ring Taps". Five teams of two drivers each would compete against each others with the famous Le Mans start, pit stop, change of drivers, maintenance etc. The cars were all straight out of the boxes, but without magnets.

As with the real race the target was to complete as many laps as possible. Each team would drive 4 x 50 minutes to try all four lanes. During each race you had to make either one pit stop at 4 minutes or two at 2 minutes to change driver, clean braids etc. With five participating teams, there was always one free to help crashing cars back on the track again.

## The teams

The following teams took up the challenge:

Beat It - René and Jesper - Ferrari 512S

Unknown- Kim and Joergen - Porsche 917K

Bluetel-Klaus and Peter - Ferrari 512S Berlinetta

Brauhaus- Henning and Jacob - Porsche 908

Flunder

Ironside & Co. - Niels and Holger - Porsche 908

## The race

The start was at 02.00 PM, and the splendid DS counter system from MRRC started its long and hard work. It soon showed that the red Ferrari 512S of the "Beat It" team was the car to beat. After less then 20 minutes René set a lap time at 13:54 which would remain unbeaten during the rest of the race.

During raceday drinks and food were on the house, and especially "Team Brauhaus" (which is German for Brewery) had a lot of fun discovering different types of beer and ales. All in all almost 100 chicken wings, kilos of potatoes and approximately 20 litres of beer (and a few soft drinks) disappeared during the day. A big thankyou to my wife, Hanne, who kept the refreshments coming

"Beat It" kept the pace during the first 3 races, but suddently after the fourth race

"Ironside & Co." was in charge, their Porsche being 19 laps ahead of the Ferrari. "Mureren + Bluetel", who had been sure of victory before the race started, were third and complaining about their Berlinetta. The brewery boys were happy with their yellow Flunder on a safe fourth, and the "Unknown" guys, who were newcomers to the slot car business, were trying desperately to convince their 917K to stay in the slot.

Unfortunately for "Ironside & Co." their last race was on the most difficult lane, so the 512S was unstoppable. The final result was:

Beat It	678 laps
Ironside & Co.	666
Mureren + Bluetel	581
Team Brauhaus	557
Unknown	488

René and Jesper won two TeamSlot Citroën ZX's as first prize; Niels (who is confined to a wheelchair, explaining the name of "Ironside") and myself won two older Scalextric Le Mans cars, and finally René received a Scalextric Lamborghini for fastest lap of the race. All prizes generously provided by Pendle Slot Racing at very fair prices.

Five minutes before the qualifying started for the Formula One race in the USA, all the prizes were handed out, and everybody rushed to the television to watch their favourites. Do I have to mention, that the brewery boys didn't forget to bring beer to the television room as well?

We had a fantastic day, and everybody will return to "Ring Taps" for the next race soon to follow. ■



# Jose Rodriguez Jnr./Marconi Foundation Proxy Race

BY RUSSELL SHELDON

The Jose Rodriguez Jnr. Memorial Proxy Race was held at the splendid Marconi Foundation Automotive Museum in Tustin, California, on the 13th of December 2000. Jose Rodriguez Jnr. who passed away in 1998 was a pioneer of slot racing and co-founder of Car Model Magazine. The Marconi Foundation for Disadvantaged Kids was the beneficiary of the \$1,200 raised by way of donations and entry fees. The event, for 1/32nd scale cars, was organised by Philippe de Lespinay of Electric Dreams, and attracted 53 entries in the five classes raced.

The classes were:

Class A: NASCAR from 1950 to 1967.

Class B: Formula One/Indianapolis cars from 1935 to 1960.

Class C: USRRC sports cars from 1959 to 1965.

Class D: Le Mans 24-hours entered cars from 1970 to 1980.

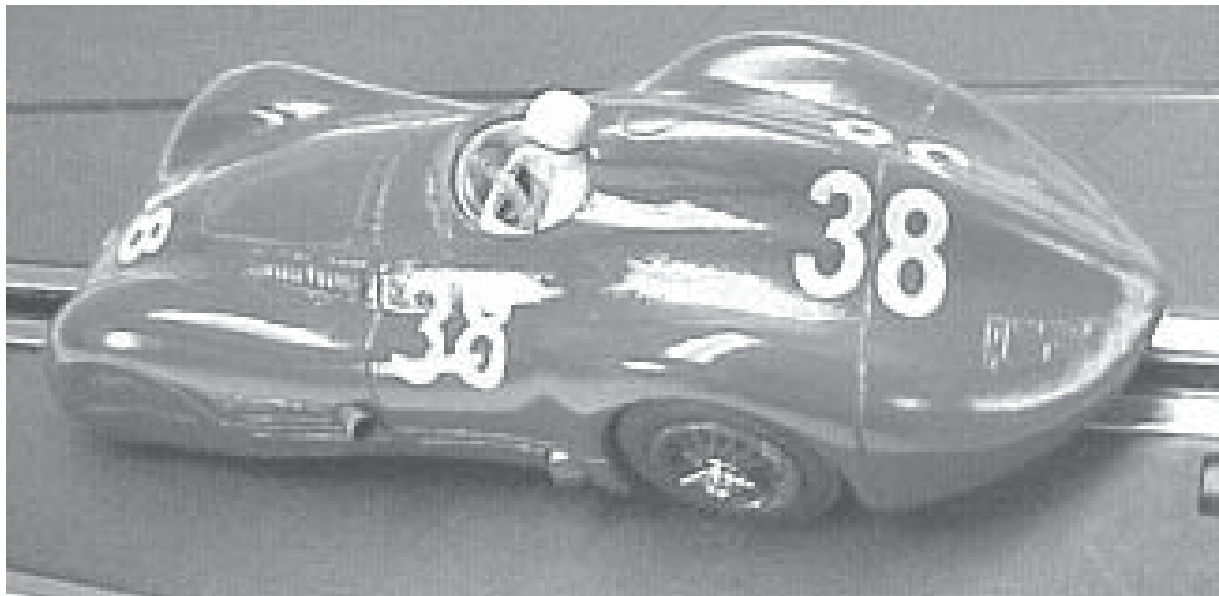
Class E: Challenge Class - anything!

## The Circuit

The track used was a 60', 8-lane circuit, assembled using Rikken/Revell plastic track, with the outer curves made from routed Formica with magnetic braid. Power was eight MRC train power packs, rated at 12V, 3 amps, one per lane. Parma 45ohm "Econo" controllers were used.

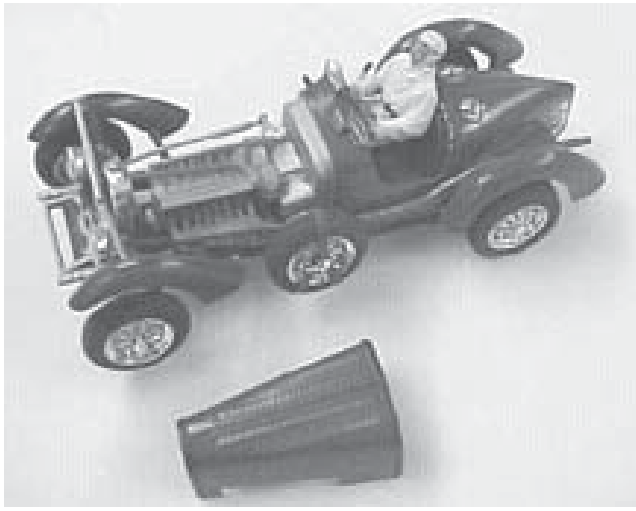
## The cars

There was a strong emphasis on scale appearance, and all entries had to be perfectly scale models of actual cars raced, including scale dimensions of wheels and tyres. Concours d'Élégance counted for 50% of the points scored and the race result the other 50%, the combined scores determining the overall winners in each of the classes. The true spirit of the event was captured by many of the entrants, who built cars using hand-carved balsa wood bodies. ⇒



*Entries included this hand-carved Maserati 4CL "Streamliner" by Michael Pascal.*

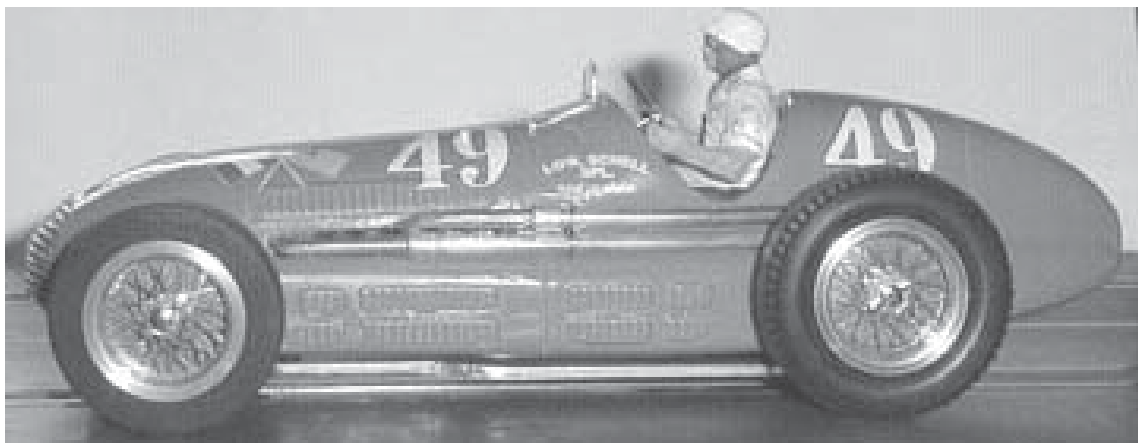




*A Bugatti T59 with engine detail and opening bonnet was the work of Jim Cunningham.*



*Jim Cunningham's 917 LH uses a hand-built chassis, Cheetah motor and a body decorated with fabulous home-made decals. The chassis shows great engineering. A full sidewinder in the great tradition of pro-racing.*



*The overall "Best in Show" winner was a beautifully carved Maserati 8CL, built by Mark Gussin.*

## Results

Class A was won by Mark Gussin with a 1957 Chevrolet; Class B (which had the most entries) by Russell Sheldon's Alfa 12C; Class C by Luiz Valdetaro's incredibly fast McLaren M6; Class D by Jim Cunningham's Porsche 917LH and Class E (with the second highest number of entries) by Kathryn Walwick's incredible Porsche 908/2, which also set fastest qualifying time of ALL the entrants. Let's hear it for the girls!

The event was televised by the OCN Channel, and there will be a feature story by star-writer Mark Vaughn in a future issue of Autoweek magazine.

Well-known slot racing personalities judged the Concours d'Elegance, including Lloyd Asbury, master mould-maker of Lancer bodies, Gene Husting, Gene Parrill, Mark Vaughn and Jim Russell of Russkit. Drivers were USSRC and CASRA US National Champion Greg Gilbert, John "The Jet" Cukras, Jim Cunningham, Paul Sterrett, Gil Rivera, Luiz Valdetaro, Daniel Murai, Stan Smith, Larry Shephard, Rod McPherson, Bob Hackl, Mike Brannian and Milt Surratt. ■



# A 'Day In The Life'

## The production of a Scalextric car - part 1

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

The Scalextric Volkswagen 'New' Beetle was one of the first cars to be made overseas since Hornby's announcement that it was looking to the Far East for the manufacture of Scalextric cars. It seems to be appropriate to entitle this record of how a Scalextric car is made 'A Day In The Life' - a song written by the Beatles. The Beatles were an icon of the 1960s as was the Volkswagen Beetle. The 'New' Beetle heralds a new era of economic change at the Scalextric factory and it is at this timely point that I thought it would be important to record 'A Day In The Life' of the production of a Scalextric car as it was when production was still carried out at the Margate factory up until the year 2000.

Here we go, from the top, in 'G'. A one, a two, a one, two, three, four-

**I read the news today,  
oh boy!**

In 1999 the local paper in Thanet sadly announced that one of its major and long established employers was moving production to China. They say life begins at forty.

Perhaps with the passing of the recent 40th anniversary of Scalextric, commemorated with a limited edition run of Mini Coopers (itself having just celebrated its 40th birthday), this new era beckons in a new lease of life for perhaps one of the twentieth century's most well known toys.

**About a lucky man who made the  
grade**

The lucky man was of course the comrade in China who clinched the deal with Hornby Hobbies to produce Scalextric cars for a worldwide market.

The end of Scalextric! I don't think so; it is more likely to be the lifeline it needed to survive in today's economic climate. Given the lasting success of Scalextric, I think the Chinese factory can look forward to a long and profitable relationship with Hornby Hobbies.

**And though the news was rather  
sad**

When corporate decisions of this magnitude are made there are always victims. Thanet has been severely hit by this announcement and further compounds the problem of unemployment in this area of Kent. In August, 2000 it was announced that Thanet is officially one of the poorest regions in the U.K. Yes, news of Hornby's plans to outsource its production of cars (the trains 'left the station' a long time ago!) to China brought despair to many employees at the factory. From a work force of thousands in the heyday of Scalextric there are about eighty employees left at the large and (relatively) eerily empty factory.

**Back In The USSR**

As far back as the 1960s, Scalextric was actively manufacturing outside the U.K. With factories in France and Spain, plants soon appeared on general in South America. Involved in producing the Tam Tiger, Ford GT40 some cars also appeared on the underside of the car as little surprise then has joined the list of suppliers to the manufacture of Scalextric, reflecting the turning tides of worldwide economic fortunes.

**I saw the photograph**

Looking at the paper, I was reminded by the photograph of the factory of the hoards of workers that used to stream out of the factory filling the roads with bicycles and long queues at the bus stops. Today, you'll barely notice any movement at 'knock off' time! ■



# Derby HO Le Mans 24 Hours - A Personal View

BY JEFF DAVIES

Over the years it's been my privilege to meet many passionate slot car racers. The vast majority of these have had no financial stake in slot car racing at all and purely been consumed by the passion for this hobby.

Several years ago I met Nick Sismey at the Toyfair. Here was a man who obviously believed in and loved his hobby. Nick is the organiser and originator of the Derby HO Le Mans 24 Hours. Three years ago he invited me to participate in this great race. This year circumstances allowed me to accept his invitation.

## **Raindrops keep falling...**

In the weeks leading up to the event which was held on November the 11th and 12th the British weather did its absolute worst to flood the whole of the country and I seriously wondered whether the journey was going to be even possible. To further complicate matters I pulled something in my knee two days prior to the event which left me permanently in pain. Not the best start when contemplating a 24 hour slot car race. Saturday November 11th came and I duly left South Wales at 6.30 in the morning; it was dark and emptying down raining. As we progressed to the Welsh border the sky gradually lightened and as we crossed the River Severn downstream from Tewkesbury the extent of the flooding became apparent. From horizon to horizon the land had been turned into a giant lake with the water coming half way up several trees and the river flooding all the neighbouring fields. After an interesting journey we arrived at Derby and immediately proceeded to get lost. Eventually after the use of a mobile phone to get directions we arrived at Rolls Royce. The track was housed in the social club's gymnasium. The first time I saw it I couldn't believe how good it was; it is a huge layout. There were 8 teams competing on a massive 206 ft HO track for the coveted first place.

## **Practice makes perfect**

Standing on the rostrum for the first time the enormity of it all became clear. You wonder how you are even going to see the cars going around the corner at the end of the straight as it seems so far away. This event is an official world record and is one of the very few slot car races that are actually recorded by the Guinness book of records.

The 8 teams involved in the event were: HORSE (HO Racing South East), DHORC (Derby HO Racing Club), Race Control, Continental (a French team of 5 HO racers), The Enjoyables, Team USA (comprising of 3 American racers and 2 English), Southern Comfort and Bourne Motor Racing Club. The driver's briefing started at 9:30. We did just manage to arrive to catch the end of it.

At 10 o'clock the track opened for practice. My son Richard and I were in the Race Control team which included several novices to the event. The first time I drove a car around I could not believe how difficult it was. It was impossible! It wasn't a question of coming off once a lap, it was a question of how many feet you could cover without coming off. The corners were the tightest I've raced on in my whole life. This was clearly a track where practice is essential for good lap times. It was soul destroying to see the pace of some of the veteran racers who had raced on it for hours on end.

I really enjoyed practice, the one thing that kept it in perspective was that there were several other people having just as many problems, if not more, with cars flying off the track and through the air at regular intervals. After practice came one of the most exciting parts of the whole event. With 55 racers competing everyone qualified for 3 laps individually on lane 5, with the times called out at the end of each successive lap. This was real heart pounding in

chest time as you knew most of the eyes in the room were watching your pathetic efforts and you didn't want to let your team down.

My turn to qualify was one before Richard. My best lap was 18 seconds and Richard immediately out qualified me with a 17; the fastest lap was a 12. I was not unhappy with this time as it placed me smack in the middle of people who hadn't previously raced. This track demonstrates the immense amount of skill it takes to be a successful HO slot racer that can only be achieved through constant practice, which is exactly as it should be. The pain in my knee meant that instead of standing on the rostrum I sat on the edge. I do not think this had even the slightest bearing on my performance however, and it would not have made any difference if I had stood on the ceiling.

Slowly but surely the clock ticked towards 1pm and it was possible to feel the tension in the room increasing as the time got nearer to the start. Our team made both Rich and myself feel extremely welcome, especially AJ Fryer who attended Brooklands earlier this year.

### The race

Before the start Nick Sismey took me down to meet Barry Johnson who is the owner of Midlands HO and showed me the huge range of HO slot racing equipment on his table. At the start Lee Pateman drove the first half an hour for our team with Richard taking over at the half an hour mark for the next session and he experienced difficulty keeping the car on the track.

At the end of the first hour we were well down the leader board. I then took over. This was where it really showed up my lack of experience with this track. I gave up any idea of trying to race, even though at least one of the teams was circulating considerably slower. The rest of them seemed to be flying past just about every other lap. I couldn't believe half an hour took so long! This was a period of intense concentration where the only object was to complete as many laps as humanly possible. In the first half an hour period I don't think I completed a single lap without coming off at least once. Our car wasn't the fastest in a straight

line as the team had set it up for maximum cornering ability so I deliberately braked as late as possible for every corner. This often allowed me to re-overtake a car that had just passed me down the previous straight. Last year around this time our club took on a motor racing club at Abergavenny. We lapped them 205 times within 2 hours. I knew just how they'd felt by the end of my first half hour! I was really glad when Richard took over. The next half hour seemed to go in about three seconds flat and all of a sudden it was my turn again. This half an hour didn't seem quite so bad as I was gradually dialling myself into the track and I actually managed a couple of laps without falling off.

It was Richard's turn again for half an hour and so on until we'd both completed our two hours each. I really enjoyed my last half hour stint of driving, by now being at least able to drive around the track at a reasonable speed without falling off, and I was quite sorry that my allotted time had run out. This is a memorable event that I believe every slot racer should participate in at least once. Nick Sismey and Phil Rees had put in an unbelievable amount of work and it was one of the slickest organised events I have ever taken part in.

The final results are shown below.

1st	Derby HORC	5,969 laps	236.6 Miles
2nd	Team USA	5,865 laps	232.4 Miles
3rd	HO Racing S.E	5,832 laps	231.1 Miles
4th	Continental	5,708 laps	226.2 Miles
5th	Southern Comfort	5,657 laps	224.2 Miles
6th	Race Control	5,275 laps	209.1 Miles
7th	Enjoyables	5,157 laps	204.4 Miles
8th	Bourne M.R.C.	4,204 laps	166.6 Miles

As can be seen from the above, DHORC won setting a new world record of 236.6 miles, an increase of 326 laps over last year. As Max Boyce said, "I was there." ■



# In or out.....

BY TONY SECCHI

**D**e-slotting has recently become a subject of heated discussion between my mates and I during our regular 'friendly' meetings at my home track.

When we belonged to our slotcar club during the mid sixties the rules in force at that time stated that in the normal race format a de-slot put you (and probably someone else) out of that particular race. We have continued this same ruling for our events today.

Digging up the past, I can remember one certain member who used to enter our infamous banked turn on full throttle and take out the other three cars in one foul swoop, finishing the race on the first lap. Whether or not this was deliberate he never said, but it used to happen on a reasonably regular basis when he was generally behind the pack.

During our longer two or six hour events, the cars were re-slotted for the sake of continuity and fairness. It is this last value that has caused the recent heated discussion. We only have two lanes, so that if one car comes out the remaining one has an easy ride for a win. Being still highly competitive despite their age, my friends have complained that in a two car race staying in becomes more important than racing flat out, and indeed, they have a point. Races have been won by going just fast enough not to come out and inheriting the win when the other guy de-slots. At least with four or more lanes you can still have a competitive race after one or even two de-slots.

One answer would be to have more lanes, but this is not viable in the space I have available, so we have come to a democratic decision to re-slot the cars during the race. This in itself was not an easy or clear cut act because my layout has to be tight against the walls on two sides of the room so access to the far side of the track has to be with the help of a handheld 'longreach' gripper. This entails stopping the race so that you can reach over and pick up the car (elapsed time continuing).

This causes a lot of comment in relation to track position and number of completed laps, but is no worse in my view, than the safety car closing up the field in a real race. All round access would help of course, but as stated, is not possible in the space available, so racing is stopped and the car re-slotted.

This new ruling has resulted in some marginally less fast times but has made people concentrate more on car control, braking points and power application to ensure remaining in the slot. It is a compromise and at best not an ideal solution, but as far as I can tell, the racing is just as competitive and comments just as pointed

I am sure that with the passing of time the races will get quicker and eventually be as fast (if not faster) than they were before re-slotting was introduced.

Finally, if other NSCC members have a two lane home circuit with a better, efficient or more tested operational system it would be interesting to hear of it with a view to incorporation in our future events. ■