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NSCC

The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

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The future is oval

Bring back the Scalextric banked curve! Having just returned from the Coys Historic Festival at the Rockingham Motor Speedway I have only one word to describe this new addition to Britain's circuits - Awesome! If you weren't there you missed something truly special.

Highlight of the weekend had to be the fastest ever lap of a British track as "Our Nige" pedalled a current Indycar round the 1.5 mile banked oval at 163mph; for once he managed to keep his mouth shut and let his driving do the talking! However, no less impressive was the NASCAR demonstration by the Richard Petty Experience - now I know what they mean by the expression "Rolling Thunder"! I can't wait for our own version, ASCAR, to get going in earnest as the initial demonstration race, by just ten cars, was enough to rattle the fillings in my teeth.

Most of the 300 acres is still a building site but the organisers are to be congratulated on their achievements so far; it was such a welcome change to be treated as a valued customer rather than a nuisance, as is the case at most other tracks. You can hear the public address system over the noise of the cars and, wonder of wonders, there are loos in abundance!

I would seriously suggest that the Hornby marketing department considers a Rockingham set in the very near future; the ASCARs are virtually identical to their American cousins in body shape and, with up to thirty cars likely to contest each round, the scope for repaints is enormous! Now where did they put the mould for that banked curve?

And Finally - a somewhat thinner issue than normal this month, mainly due to a lack of members adverts. Either I put you all off with my diatribe last month or the postal strike was more widespread than I thought. Factory Focus is also absent as Adrian has not been able to meet Simon Kohler in time; it should be back in the July issue.

Till next month
Brian

John Fingland R.I.P.

There is one part of this job that I do not enjoy - the recording of the death of one of our own. Sadly I now have to report the passing of one of the original members, John Fingland; I never met him in person but we corresponded quite often during the early years of the club and I still treasure his long erudite letters on all things Scalextric. When I became editor I phoned him on several occasions seeking information on the history of the club and always found him to be most helpful. I find obituaries very difficult to write so my thanks go to Steve Carter and Alan Slade for the following words:-

It was with great sadness that I learnt recently of the death of my old friend, John Fingland.

He may well have had the longest continual membership of the NSCC as well as being the elder statesman of the club. His passion for slot-cars brought him to the London Scalextric Club when it was founded in 1977 at Wood Green, and here, along with Roy Charlesworth, Roger Gilham and Martin O'Reilly he was part of the early collectors section that was to become the NSCC.

By the time that I arrived in 1983 John had switched racing allegiance to the breakaway club at Cheam and the Autodrome Club in Croydon. It was here that I got to know him, always distinctive in his trilby hat. Being already retired he could devote a lot of time to his hobby and, with his engineering background, his cars were always quick. Despite his years he was always hard to beat, even on an unfamiliar track - always the sign of a good racer. This could be seen when we made our annual pilgrimage to Quorn for the sports/saloon opens.

Heart surgery failed to slow him down, but, when his wife Rose suffered a stroke we saw less of him as he devoted his time to caring for her. However you could still bump into him at the odd swapmeet and, despite more heart problems recently, he managed to race occasionally at the New Addington Scalextric Club and was still a force to be reckoned with. At least that was what he told me when we had one of our regular chats on the phone!

John's passing has robbed us of one of life's true gentlemen; though we shall miss him I know Rose will miss him more.

Steve Carter

As with so many other people, I met John through our passion for racing slot cars. Our intense rivalry on the track led to many interesting discussions regarding cars, setup and, inevitably, the opposition; this led to us forming an enduring friendship which extended to our wives as well.

When John and Rose made a trip up to Leicestershire to compete in the many race events I organised for Quorn Slot Car Club, Carol and I would be their guests on the evening prior to the meeting. Of course the impending event and slot cars were mentioned, but our discussions went far beyond that. We had many chats on the merits and otherwise of Scotland and when John knew we were intending to move there he warned us most forcibly that on no account should we buy an old house as they were damp and uninhabitable. For once we did not take John's advice, buying a house built in 1790 - it may be cold but it is not damp, and even though there was a room always ready for them they were not able to make the journey to Dundee to see for themselves.

There are two lasting impressions that I will always have of John; one is the hat he always wore and the second is his manner when competing. He was a true gentleman, and even if he did not agree with a decision (or your driving!) he would not flare up in a temper. He would just quietly tell you that he was displeased and then go back to his pit area (no doubt counting up to ten under his breath) to prepare for the next race. If only there were more like him!

Yes, John was a true sportsman, gentleman and friend to me and I shall miss him dearly until we meet again.

Alan Slade

Loughborough Swapmeet

BY JULIE SCALE

Mark was seen wandering around with a pen and pad making notes for me to base this review on and that was it; every one had a contribution to make, so the by line is rather vague this month!

Robert Smith had his most recent finds with him (display only) these consisted of a fruit cocktail from the orchards of New Zealand- three front engine Offenhausers- apple green- strawberry red and lemon yellow! (I cannot quite believe it took three people to come up with this description). It was good to see them though as they are very rare; the last ones we saw came from Peter Morley's collection! I had to get that over with - now for the swapmeet.

Attendance was certainly up this year; stallholders had increased and it was good to see a few more members there. Amongst the new faces behind the stalls was Max Winter- Maxi Build. Max builds the Top Slot kits to a standard that is hard to believe if you have not seen them. Fantastic paint finish and very high detail.

Steve Cannon had some very nice Mexican cars on display, including a light blue C48 Tyrrell and yellow C36 Honda. Phil Smith had a very impressive display of Fly models - with over 135 variants - also attracting Mark's attention were very nice examples of 1/24th Scalextric F1 Indy and Ferrari.

Andy Carmichael's stall reflected his growing interest in the MRRC brand, in which he is becoming somewhat of a specialist- we joked that in future we will simply put his name on any dump bags containing Airfix - as he swooped on them within minutes of our arrival.

For those of you who like to search out the limited editions from the various manufacturers, examples of the BMWs from Scalextric, the Pink Kar GTOs, and the Rallye Slot 'Costa de Almeria' from Ninco were all available.

Bargain of the day award

We thought we were in contention with our bargain basement/ end of range SCX/Ninco

etc. However Derek Cooper, recently back from Spain was offering a Ninco Golf 'Festival of Infants' limited edition at an unbelievable price. Mark nearly choked as our stock cost twice as much! However P&J Models has to get the award for the Ninco Rally Set! If you were not there, you do not know what you missed!

Buyers Beware

Examples of a dyed black or more accurately dark blue D Type were available for discussion. These cars were not being offered for sale, but we should all be aware when being offered cars of an unusual colour. Remember to check on the inside that the colour is true all the way through- a discrete scratch inside the body work will put your mind at rest. That said these cars would be nice addition to any cabinet, so long as the price paid reflects what they are. It is only in time as the cars move to third and fourth parties that problems may arise.

Finally, at last, a new car from Fly! Just in time for the swapmeet. The amazing Lister Storm. We had been advised that the detail would be greatly improved and we were not disappointed; the model sports photo etched grills, two-tone exhausts and a roof aerial. The interior has also become even more detailed. The price increase is the only disappointment with this model.

Nothing to do with the swapmeet but our local paper recently decided to do an article about our local club - Hazel Grove. Obviously they had never tried slot-racing because they used the angle of "stress release"!

For some reason the national press took up the story and it appeared in the Express and Mail; Mark was even interviewed live on BBC radio! Andy Warhol said everyone gets fifteen minutes of fame but we stretched ours to nearly a week! Not that we are vain but you can view the press coverage on our website! ■

A trip around the slot world

BY DON SIEGEL

In the interest of preserving national stereotypes and promoting racial misunderstanding, I would like to lead you on a short tour of slot car manufacturers around the world. This is of course another product of rampaging globalization. Thanks to the Internet, we can now see slot cars from all eras and from all countries. Looking at these cars, not to mention buying them, I can't help thinking that they often correspond to our long and dearly held preconceived notions about those poor folks who are unfortunate enough to live in a country other than our own....

Mother countries

Let's start with where it all started, in England of course. Like 19th Century Great Britain, Scalextric pretended that nothing had changed for many years, and in consequence almost lost its Empire. British slot racing also has a curiously eccentric streak, as could be expected in a country where debate raged for many years not only about the relative merits of slot and rail racing (a tie, I believe), but also whether steering improved handling (the consensus seems to be that it did), and whether drivers of thingies should be drawn and quartered or tarred and feathered. Along with the self-destruction of the British toy industry, however, native craftsmen continued to turn out beautifully engineered little jewels, with working steering of course. Ultimately, Britain seems to have followed on the heels of the new mother country, the United States of America, and shipped its production offshore (as I believe it did with the native car industry some years ago...). Which, justement as my neighbours in France would say, leads us to my original native land, the USA.

The American juggernaut ran roughshod over the slot racing industry for many years, bringing it to a fever pitch from 1964-67, and then dropping it like a hot potato once the

bubble burst. Except of course, for HO scale sets, which continued to sell very well in this country of limitless space, and a cottage industry in 1/24 scale racing. This industry has been shaped by the eternally optimistic American entrepreneur, who has given us not only the timeless and effective Womp-Womp and Flexi, but also amazingly sophisticated wing cars, symbolic front tires and, my personal favourite, the "hollowweenie", a hollow axle which saves a few precious fractions of a gram. And who originally supplied the motors for the U.S. slot racing boom? I thought you'd never ask! Japan of course, and more specifically Mabuchi, still the world's leading maker of miniature electric motors. Back in the 60s, "Made in Japan" still had rather negative connotations. Their first efforts in the slot world were in fact pale imitations of U.S. brands, especially Revell, whose versatile ladder-like chassis continues to be widely copied. But they weren't too bad, and being relatively inexpensive, they were widely distributed in England and of course Australia. However, companies like Tamiya quickly learned their lessons, and were soon turning out products that surpassed their counterparts in the U.S. Now, why does this sound familiar? Today, Japan has become the leader in scale 1/24 slot racing, offering a wide range of incredibly realistic – and expensive – products.

Do the Continental

This brings me back to the Old Continent, and those two long-time allies, France and Germany. It was actually Germany that got me started on this in the first place. I've got a fair number of both vintage and modern German slot cars, and they are almost always extremely well done, well detailed, well engineered – and boring! I'm not sure why this is so; take the Marklin Mercedes W196 and Ferrari Supersqualo Monoposto cars, from the late 60s or so: both beautiful little cars,

with nice working steering, excellent details and a whole bunch of gears – maybe that’s the problem: idler gears on a racing car! (a common trait of many train manufacturers, by the way, viz. Atlas, Marx, etc.). Almost perfect, but somehow a little too stolid, which is the same impression I get from the current Carrera range of 1/24 Streamliner Mercedes and Auto Union vintage cars. And then, crossing the Rhine we enter the land of Ooh la la.

If you’ll excuse a cliché or two, French slot cars are quirky, inventive and generally don’t work very well! Hardly surprising in a country that supposedly invented the personal computer but was unable to develop or sell the idea. Take for instance my personal favourite, Miniamil, endorsed by Maurice Trintignant himself. Miniamil-Monthéry offered real 1/32 scale Formula 1 cars with 4-wheel independent suspension, front steering, simulated exhaust flame, two cars on the same lane, etc. – all back in 1963. But because the bodies tended to distort, or for some other reason, these never seem to have the success they deserved. And then there is Circuit 24, the quintessential French brand. Who else could have come up with these incredibly heavy 1/30ish scale toylike cars, with 24v ac vibrator motors and absolutely no brakes, and still have every kid in the land clamouring for a Circuit 24 for Noël? They also invented a name that would still be synonymous with home slot racing some 30 years after finishing production....

South of the Border

Italy was probably home to Europe’s biggest commercial 1/24 slot racing scene in the 1960s, and for the last 20 years or so, has had some of the hottest 1/32 racers in the world. It was also one of the few Continental European countries that came up with its own 1/24 and 1/32 commercial slot racing products, from Policar, to Unicar to Mini Dream Car. Some of these featured beautifully detailed bodies (like Unicar’s 1/24 Ferrari Dino, easily the equivalent of Cox’s) and very effective chassis (from Policar’s own iso-fulcrum design to the Mini Dream

hinged wonder). Above all, there was Polistil (Policar’s parent), which offered until very recently (and is still involved through ProSlot I believe) a very wide range of cars in just about every scale: HO, 1/43, fake 1/32, real 1/32 and 1/24. They were also wise enough, or perhaps chauvinistic enough, to replicate some marvellous home-grown products of the inimitable Italian design genius, like the Osi Bisiluro and the Ghia Mangusta.

Spain is of course largely responsible for kicking off the current home slot racing boom, not to mention giving Scalextric a necessary kick in the pants. I guess you could see this as revenge for the Spanish Armada, or perhaps a post-Franco blossoming of Spanish culture, but I’m not sure I should venture into those waters.... Let’s just say that the Spanish companies do very nice work and leave it at that. ■

A 'Day In The Life'

Part 6 - production planning

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

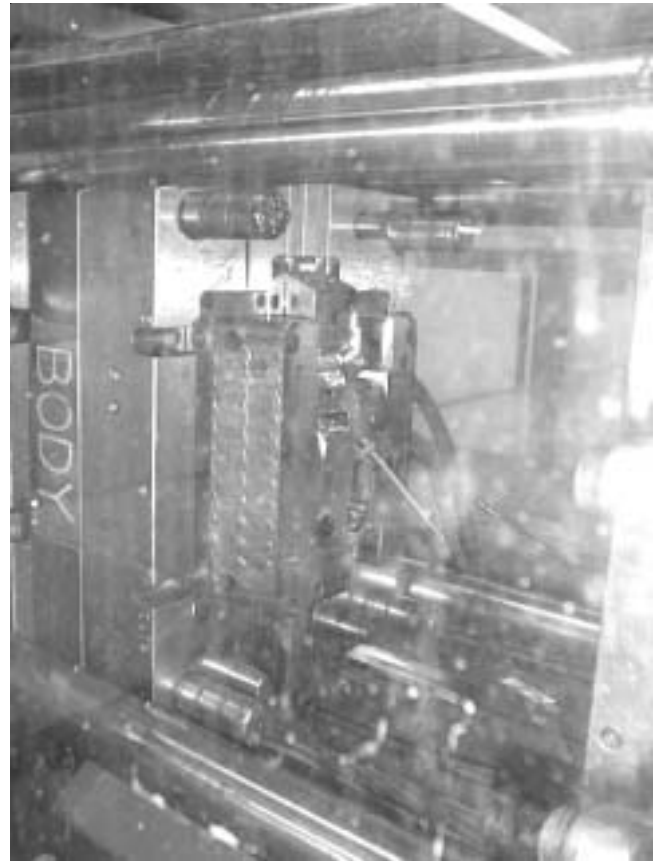
When the first test moulds arrive they are fitted to the plastic injection machines and a small quantity of components are made. Pumping almost clear plastic through the car body also tests the moulds for what is known as 'witness lines'. The plastic is pumped in through more than one inlet point. Where the molten plastic meets molten plastic a witness line may appear and depending upon the thickness of the car body at that point and the temperature of the plastics at the moment they meet will determine the strength of the body.



A container of 'plastic' crystals used to produce a black mould! The dye has already been added in the form of small black crystals. It may be difficult to tell from the photograph but imagine an eggcup of white granules. One black dye granule is all it takes to make the whole lot black as night

Pre-production assembly and testing

Having an underpan is fine, but more work is required on it. The lugs that hold the bar magnet need to be formed, the magnet pressed in and the lugs burred over. The factory tool room workers would make up a jig for the underpan and a 'stamping' machine would take care of pressing the magnet in to the underpan. Recent underpans require the round magnets to be pushed in. The guide blade sprung contacts also require pressing and setting in to the underpan in a similar manner and, this too, was automated requiring only one machine operator.



The plastic car body is ejected from the mould machine and drops down into a collection bin. The plastic stays warm to the touch for at least ten minutes after it has been ejected. A red Toyota Corolla is moments away from being dropped in to the collection bin after being formed. It takes about ten seconds to make shell. Note the size of the mould. The word 'BODY' is stamped on the mould at the foot of the picture. The other half of the mould is out of shot at the top of the picture.

Every Little Thing

Before the factory can set to work building cars a great deal of work is required in the Production Planning team. Each product has its own computerised structure that lists out every detail of every component. The structure will further identify machinery utilisation, i.e. which machines will have to be used and how many hours they will need for a given production run. It will also provide information about labour hours. All this data has to be produced during a particular production period to ensure the work load balances with the equipment and labour available.

⇒

Before you can think of sending your product to retail outlets it must be safe to use. Their Quality Control department have very high standards when it comes to safety. Every little thing is tested. CE regulations, the European standard, and EN rules (European Norm) are adhered to the letter. All Scalextric cars are certified in

respect of safety, for use by children as young as 36 months. The testing for this is absolutely rigorous. The Scalextric packaging is printed with the safety certification stamps showing that Hornby apply the highest standards to their products and possibly not bettered by any other slot car manufacturer. ■

Abergavenny rail race report

BY JEFF DAVIES

On Sunday the 20th of May at Abergavenny the latest rail race competition took place. In the field of sixteen drivers who contested the event were several past national slot racing champions, and this was certainly the highest quality field of drivers yet to take part in a rail race on the recently constructed Gilbern Park Circuit.

The entry was comprised of Chas Keeling, Ralph Parker, Sean Fothergill, Phil Fields, Mac Pinches, Peter Zivanovic, Derek Cooper, James Cooper, Phil Barry, John Moxon, Steven Moxon, Jeff Davies, Richard Davies, Andy Meredith, Nick Hurst and Roger Gilham. The track has become progressively faster and smoother as more and more laps are put on it.

An amazing array of different kinds of rail racers were used during practice, from John Moxon's magnificent Napier Railton Mk II to Peter Zivanovic's Bugatti Type 35. The Napier Railton was the lightweight car he has recently constructed, along with a D-type Jaguar, Bugatti Tank Type 57, Novi Indycar, Auto Union Streamliner, Lancia Ferrari and Ferrari 250 GTO.

Almost everybody had more than one car. One of the more surprising entries was the Parma chassis Jaguar Mk 7 as this was a huge looking car yet ballistically fast down the straight. After practice, where everybody did their best to sort out their cars, Mac Pinches qualified first with a 5.7, followed by Ralph Parker who unsurprisingly qualified with the fastest time of the day at five seconds dead. The qualifying for this race was a flying lap followed by three timed laps, with the fastest lap counting and everybody using the middle lane. The

qualifying was amazingly tight, with a whole string of people qualifying on 5.8 seconds. I qualified second with 5.1 using the Alfa Romeo 12C built by Charlie Fitzpatrick, followed by Phil Fields and Andy Meredith, both sharing the same Scalextric Auto Union converted to a rail car.

After qualifying everyone was placed into groups of three. The bottom four were placed in two groups of two. The opening group of races went pretty much to plan, until it came to the A group race, when half way through the race the back wheel on my Alfa Romeo unscrewed itself, ruining the gear mesh and stranding the car helplessly in the middle of the track. This was completely my own fault as I had failed to tighten it sufficiently after cleaning the car. At the end of the first race I was last by a considerable distance. John Moxon's Napier Railton was going brilliantly, breaking 20 laps in his first race as did Ralph Parker, Phil Fields and Chas Keeling. By the end of the first series of races when reseeding took place Chas Keeling was seeded first, followed by John Moxon and Ralph Parker. By now I had climbed to be grouped into the C group, along with Richard and Phil Barry. After a break for lunch racing resumed, with 4 minute races on each lane instead of the 2 minutes beforehand.

In race one Ralph Parker went the farthest a rail racer has yet been in a rail race on the new track, completing 45.2 laps. This was a new bench mark for anyone to beat. Meanwhile, I was gaining hand over fist, pulling up through the field as the Alfa Romeo 12C was probably the quickest car on the day. By the end of the second of the four minute races, to win the



each lane, 0.3 of a lap separated Chas Keeling from Ralph Parker. It was impossible for the racing to be any closer, positions were won by a couple of feet in several races.

This was the first time that Roger Gilham had ever rail raced, which he thoroughly enjoyed and said that he was considering putting pictures of the rail racing track in his latest update of his book on Scalextric. Other notable people to have their first rail race included Derek Cooper with his son James and Sean Fothersgill who has been absolutely fantastic with his total support for the rail

second set was between Chas and myself, with Chas 1/10th of a lap in front. In my third and final race on blue lane I set a new track record of 46.5 laps. I now had to wait for Chas to drive his final race in which he scored 41.6. Winning the afternoon event pulled me up to within one point of Ralph Parker's score, so Ralph won with 40 points, I came second with 39 and Chas Keeling came third with 38.

The racing had been unbelievably close. After 12 minutes of racing in the afternoon, 4 on

racing from day one, providing prizes at every single event.

I'd like to thank the following people who supplied cars which were given out on the day: Nikko UK Ltd., the new Carrera importers and Pendle Slot Racing. A total of six cars were given out on the day for prizes and to people who had helped organise and run the event. I can't wait for the main rail race of the year on July 22nd, which should prove to be the best one yet. ■

Phoenix Club at the charity six hour endurance race

BY JON SWORD

Bank holiday weekend, Saturday afternoon and the phone rings. Paul Darby, as organised as ever, wants to know if I can attend the six-hour endurance race as part of a six-man team from the Phoenix club. "It's for a good cause, for charity, can you do it?" "Well sounds good but I've never raced for that length of time, how many of the others have you got so far?" I ask. "Well no-one actually". "When is the event Paul?" I ask naively. "Well ... actually...it's tomorrow!"

We managed to get together a team of four. Paul (The Guvnor) Darby, Mac Pinches, Daz (The Iceman) and me, the weakest link. The other three being a lot more experienced than me I was worried that I might let them down, they wouldn't have any of it, we were a team. The event was to be held in the St. George's Centre, Harrow on Sunday May 6th. Organised by the Eastcote Scalex club in aid of a children's centre at Northwick Park. I knew to expect a high standard in terms of track build, layout and organisation because of my Hastings experience earlier in the year. As we pulled up my face dropped when I spotted a lot of the faces from that same event, a number of class racers, this was going to be a real challenge.

As soon as possible we put together a McLaren GT car, NC 1 powered with the track pushing out 21 volts. Darbs built two models with slightly different set ups and the four of us got in as much track time as possible. This was helped by the professional manner of the organisers. There were six teams so each team had a lane, swapping to your left on changeover to get even practice over the whole circuit. This was the normal Eastcote club circuit as used in their London GT Championship. As I have come to expect from these guys this was put together superbly. I thought it was a fast track and was testing in certain areas. As the practice session completed our biggest question was

which tyres? We had been going around on softs but as Darbs pointed out they were already showing signs of wear. At the last minute Darbs changed them for hards, remember it was he who had suffered a tyre nightmare at Hastings.

We established a running order so as to have equal running time which meant 30-minute stints. Darbs started and as we expected built up a four-lap lead. The car was going well whilst two other teams had problems, one repair job cost them 30 laps! Mac, with fifty years experience of slot racing, took over, consolidated the lead and handed over to me. I admit I was nervous, I knew how good some of these lads were and I just wanted to hold my own. I have got to say that running around a track doing circa 9 second laps for 30 minutes was hard. I lost the feeling in my trigger finger and having to concentrate was sending me dizzy! I was so glad to hand over to Daz, a couple of laps down in second place now. It was already close at this stage and the teams who had dropped down due to repairs came back at an amazing pace. Daz kept our noses in front. We had no problems with the car and I suddenly realised how hard this was going to be. At this stage we were talking amongst ourselves and we started to believe that we would not shame ourselves, perhaps second place was realistic.

It was always going to be close but after four hours racing we led by a gap of just 7 seconds! At this point tactics were going to play a part so we switched to 15 minute stints to lessen the impact that the other faster drivers could have on me, luckily I found Red lane, the inside lane was a brilliant lane to race and we kept a slight lead through to the final stages. Darbs built up a 5 lap lead for us, Mac increased it to 9 laps, I lost 5 laps on second placed team, four laps in front I handed over to Daz for the final 30 minute stint. I knew he would bring us home in winning form because he is so cool headed. He

maintained our lead throughout the first twenty minutes then as the second placed team started to recover some time he put in a fastest lap and increased the lead to five laps. It was gripping stuff! You can never count your chickens can you? I remembered that at Hazel Grove we were doing fine until our motors burned out. But not this time as Daz (The Iceman) brought us home in first place.

Six hours of racing suddenly ended and it felt great. The event had been great fun, friendly but competitive. With the public in attendance it had been good to natter to interested individuals and we had raised money for a good cause. Our thanks to the Eastcote club for all their hard work, after that I need about a years rest so until next year! ■

Despatch from Mole Towers

I have been snuffling around in the deep south recently and have found the exciting information that Fly are going to celebrate the production of their millionth car with - A LIMITED EDITION! (now there's a surprise) -which should go a long way to getting to their two millionth car; or will it?

Because this very special car does not in fact exist, it is the front body half of the new Chrysler Viper and the rear body half of the older Dodge Viper with no rear wing. I wonder if the weld line in the moulds will show or is it yet another triumph for modern computer graphics? Another surprise is that it will be in the normal SE livery of two broad bands on a contrasting background colour, but this time with the addition of a 'swirly logo' on the sides. The colours are blue with yellow stripe - or might be. The really good news (but not if you are a dealer I suppose), is that it will be limited to a certificated "once only" production run of 1000 units with 200 only allocated to the UK "retailing initially at £200.00, their value is bound to rise as soon as they hit the open market" NOT Mole's words. Some semi-medical terms relating to collecting urine samples spring to mind.

On another point entirely do all the new Porsche GT3s have two magnets or do I know of one that slipped through the net? I must confess that the placing of the magnets when I



opened up the car confused Mole (easily done) and I could not see the point of having two so close together. The ability to move the magnets about in the car, within reason, was then pointed out to me to assist with different driving styles but this still did not explain the two magnets.

I did not like to go back to the man who sold the car and ask if he could open up all his new ones in case he got a mite touchy about all of his new stock being dismantled while he was trying to sell it. Another innovation on the Porsche was also pointed out to Mole - the self centring guide arrangement, which took me back 30 years when such devices were commonplace and eventually discarded because of the extra force exerted on the guide by the spring/rubber band/whatever. They also fell out of favour because if the spring/rubber band/whatever broke/failed then the marshals, presuming that the guide was straight, had a nasty habit of slamming the car back on the track and hey presto! one broken guide/chassis. All these new ideas lead Mole to the conclusion that the best way to drive a car is so that you stay on the black bit and do not rely on outside forces to help you win. But it always was a blinkered view from Mole Towers. ■



Dear Brian,

After a period of around eight months being fostered at Oaklands Park, the Phoenix Scalextric club has a new home.

We have leased an enormous barn at Quinneys Farm, The Slough, Studley. Building of a six-lane track has begun and will be finished late June, complete with scenery and accessories (mostly SRA). we are now looking to recruit new members from the Redditch, Studley and Bromsgrove surrounding areas to join our friendly club. Anyone interested should contact me at the SRA address (daytime) or Graham Pritchard on 01384 561532 (evenings).

Phoenix has a long history of racing box standard cars with simple and common sense rules that provide fun and competitive racing in an enjoyable atmosphere. Currently, with a membership of 37 there is still plenty of room for more to meet on a Thursday evening at 7.00pm. You are guaranteed a warm welcome.

Check out the photos of the club circuit on the web @ slotracingaccessories.co.uk

Cheers

Jon Sword.

.....

Hi Brian

I got a message from James Day of the Train Collectors Society today which might be of interest to some members.

Apparently 'hand crafted' replacement brushes for the early Minic Motorway vehicles with the metal chassis and the gimbal wheel are now available from Minic enthusiast Glenn Goodwin. The price is £4.00 per pair including P&P and they are available from:-

G P Goodwin,
4 Smithall Road,
Molescroft,
Beverley,
East Yorkshire
HU17 9GU.
E-mail:- gpjz@gdwn.fsnet.co.uk

Cheques etc should be made payable to 'GP Goodwin'.

Regards

Malcolm Parker

In further praise of vacuum forms

BY TONY SECCHI

In April '99 I wrote an article for the Journal titled 'In Praise of Vacuum Forms' which featured the AA Bodied Nissan R390. I am returning to the subject again because we now have a special category for these very lightweight cars.

Originally the Nissan ran against other injection moulded cars in its class but was ballasted to compensate for its light bodyweight. However, over time, we added extra AA Bodied cars to our stable - The Panoz LM The Toyota GT One and just recently the open topped Riley and Scott (of which more later). We also added some of the similar Lexan bodied SRS1 models of the old World Championship Prototype Sportscar C1 class Cars - Jaguar XJR/6/9/12, Lancia LC2, Nissan R890, Peugeot 905A, Mercedes C9/10 and Porsche 956/962C (refer to my article in the May 2000 Issue) This then gave us a whole new category of cars that could be run against each other according to their age and era of competition.

The original thinking behind this departure from the heavier injection moulded models was that at the time AA Bodies made cars that were not available through the proprietary companies - the four previously mentioned, plus other like the Mercedes CLK - the long tailed McLaren GTR - the Lister Storm and Lotus Elise GT. This meant that you could race a car that was unique and not generally available.

Since that time, of course, Ninco and Scalextric have produced the Mercedes, Proslot the Toyota, Team Slot the Nissan (although in different livery) and Team Slot Resin the Riley and Scott (at £30.00 per body).

The AA Bodies models are home produced by David Yerbury and although not as detailed as injection moulded types are better than the Lexan SRS1 models. You have to paint them yourself and provide the decals, but any model maker or enthusiast worth his salt can do this

and it allows you to produce a particular car to suit your own taste instead of running with the crowd.

All the cars that we use in this category are fitted with Scalextric chassis floor pans, modified to suit the wheelbase, plus running gear as per my article on quick conversions in the Nov. '99 issue.

As previously stated the most recent project has been a Riley and Scott. This American/English built sports car has competed at Le Mans, Sebring and Daytona with Oldsmobile or Ford power units. In fact, it won the Sebring 12 hours in '96 and Daytona three times - in '96, '97 and '99 when Andy Wallace was one of the driving team.

Our body was hand painted blue, red and silver with self adhesive white pinstriping to border each colour change. Decals for race numbers, tyres, fuel, engine and lighting were added from stock. A modified Scalextric Porsche 962C chassis was screwed into tubular hollow plastic posts araldited into the body. We used black plastic card for the interior with a 962C driver. Power was provided by a Mabuchi 'S' engine and Scalextric wheels were used with the rears shod in Proslot slick tyres which, as Steve Carter has said in a recent article, are very soft and very adhesive. Magnatraction was by a single Fly circular magnet just in front of the engine. These last two requisites are necessary because of the lightness of the whole car - about two thirds of a conventional injection moulded model.

Being that light, the whole package dictates a different attitude to competent, quick driving. It is exceedingly fast in a straight line and can be braked very late into a bend, although power application on exit has to be finely controlled or else it will spin sideways. If you set up the meshing of the contrate and final drive gears to give a 'loose-ish' fit the car will carry enough

speed into a corner after you have lifted the throttle to negotiate the apex under zero load until you choose to feed the power back in.

Some of the cars are extra skittish and need judicious use of strategically placed ballast at the rear - usually Plasticine, but this is rare. Generally if the set up is right the cars can be fast and stable if a little hairy - all good fun.

The SRS1 models/bodies were all bought from the excellent small ads. at the back of the Journal. The AA Bodies were originally supplied by Sean Fothergill of Pendle Slot Racing, but the Riley and Scott was purchased direct from Dave Yerbury himself who also makes the original model template formers. You may have to wait a few days as he produces them to order, but the wait is well worth while.

The AA bodies are authentically scaled, well detailed, do not cost the earth and are great fun

to make. You, yourself have the satisfaction of racing an original car which no one else can emulate. What more could you ask for?

Finally, a plug for David - he can be reached on 01254 875262, a fellow enthusiast and a nice bloke. His current range of bodies (as well as those previously mentioned) include the Audi R8 LM, Williams BMW LMR, Lola Sports B89/10, Panoz Spider, Marcos Mantis and an interesting retro series which includes the Jaguar MK 2, Aston Martin DB4 Zagato, Camaro, Mustang, Galaxie, Ford Anglia and the Austin A35.

I have no ulterior motive in blowing Dave's trumpet apart from the fact that his models along with the SRS Lexans have given my friends and I a whole new range of skill and enjoyment. ■

Tales from the box of stuff

Maserati 4CL

BY DAVE YERBURY

During the 1930s Maserati were very much at home in 1.5 litre Voiturette racing. Their main competitors were the E.R.A.s but they eventually gained the upper hand. In 1936 they introduced the 6C which had a twin overhead cam 1493cc engine which was good for 155bhp. This model was highly competitive from 1936 to 1938.

Upset by Maserati's burgeoning prestige in Italy, Enzo Ferrari, in charge of Alfa Romeo's racing team at the time, decided to introduce his own voiturette - the 158. It was an instant success and the ever willing Maserati brothers attempted to rise to the challenge with the 4C (using the 6C chassis and a choice of engines).

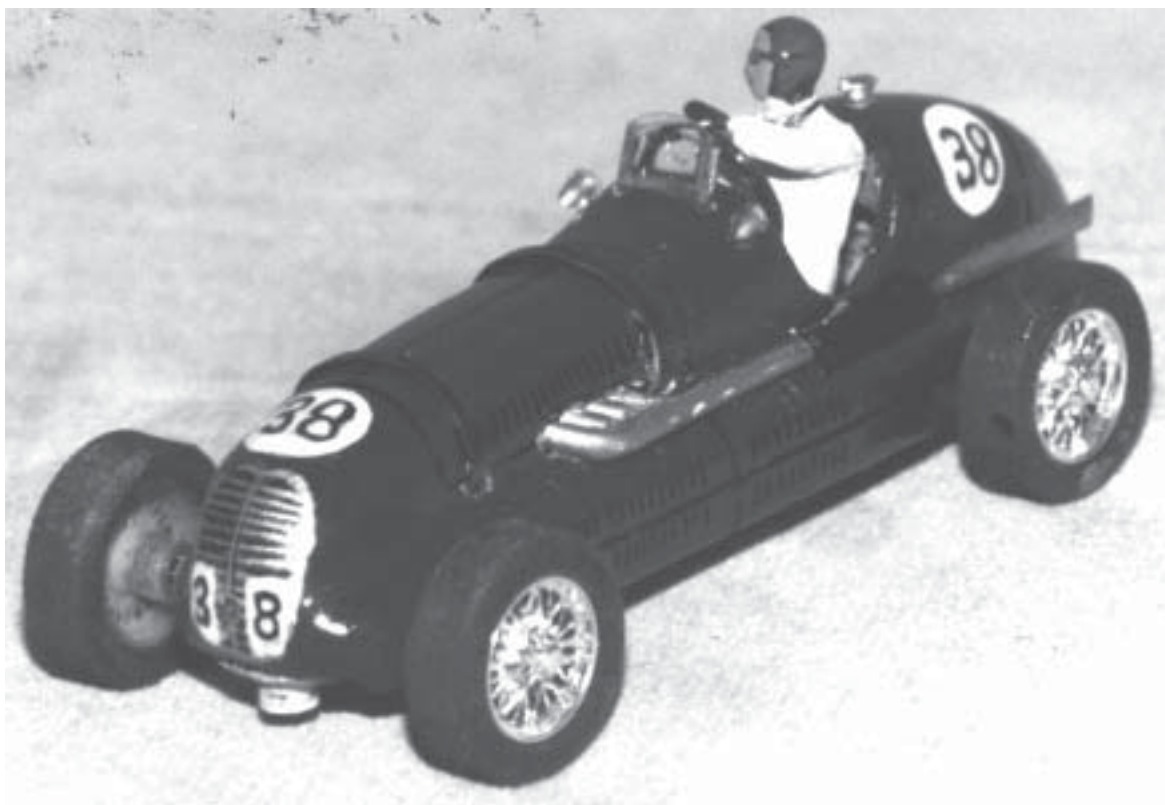
In 1939 it was developed into the 4CL and this sixteen valve car was to become a classic. The engine was of 1489cc and its square dimensions of 78mm by 78mm were somewhat unusual. Aided by a supercharger the power output rose to 220bhp but even this was not enough to beat the all conquering Alfa 158s,

although it did win virtually every race that the Alfa team didn't attend.

After the war had ended motor racing quickly restarted with prewar cars that had been hidden during the hostilities and it was in a modified 4CL that Villoresi took the first Grand Prix at Nice in 1946. Three weeks later Raymond Sommer notched up a second victory at Marseilles and Nuvolari led home a Maserati 1-2-3 at Albi soon after.

This initial run of success was halted as the Alfa 158 reappeared so they were soon relegated to minor events. Bob Gerrard and Reg Parnell campaigned them very successfully so, when I found a balsa body of the 4CL in my notorious box of stuff, I decided to recreate Parnell's car from the 1948 Empire Trophy race in the Isle Of Man.

The body was motorised in the same way as the Ferrari 246 in my previous article but Ninco spoked wheels and tyres were used from an XJ120 and the period driver was rescued from a Scalextric Bentley. ■



Slot Racing Accessories - product review

BY RICHARD WELCH

You probably could not help but notice that recently a new name has appeared in the slot racing world, that of SRA. There seems to be an ever-increasing amount of cars to choose from but the scenic side has not kept up in either availability or, more importantly, in terms of quality. Until now that is!

I have both bought and been given for review all of the figure and building ranges that are produced to date and I feel like spreading the news that there has never been a better time to build a scenic circuit. As well as being made in Great Britain, the owner is also an NSCC member and keen slot racer with a genuine interest in slot racing. Every stage of design and manufacturing is carried out in the West Midlands base of SRA with the marketing being efficiently handled by the most well known and respected traders known to nearly all NSCC members.

The figure range to date consists of eleven packs of six figures, priced on average at £6.95. They are all original designs based on the current racing scene. Made from pewter they are light but strong and very easy to paint. The design features are well-proportioned figures with great detail; little skill is needed to paint each personality as the detail is all there, raised in front of you. Some people claim to be able to recognise certain personalities and I'm not surprised!

Figures

SRAF 1 is a set of modern drivers, not particular to any formula; they look just as good as either Rally, Formula One or GT. types. The one exception being the seated figure, head in hands obviously having a bad day, having a bit of a cry. I wonder who he is based on?

SRAF 2 is based on formula One drivers, each one a little personality to paint up as some memorable character. These guys just come alive even after a basic paint job.

SRAF 3 consists of a resting pit crew. Six characters relaxed, perhaps watching the monitors attentively waiting for the moment when they will be called into action. The faces on these figures absolutely burst into life!

SRAF 4 is made up of six figures celebrating the victor, runner up and third placed driver. Each of the three drivers has a bottle of bubbly, one seems to be enjoying spraying his competitors, whilst a fourth driver stands arms raised fresh from the finish of the race.

An older, portly and balding official stands by with trophy in hand waiting to be called forward for the presentation, this figure is my favourite. Last, but not least, is a female public relations assistant with clipboard in hand looking very attractive and quite obviously she is a bit of a poser.

SRAF 5 are much needed track marshals featuring flag wavers, radio communication marshal and a fire marshal. The remaining two figures are a beautiful one piece casting of a marshal helping a staggering driver, obviously slightly injured after some minor shunt... Brilliant!

SRAF 6 and SRAF 7 are absolute masterpieces of figure designing and quality casting. A 12-figure set based on the Ferrari pit crew in action. Complete with jacks, trolley, battery charger, spare wheel and refuelling rig. These characters are bang up to date and capture the very essence of the tension and excitement of a pit stop for fuel and tyres.

SRAF 8 is a set of team technicians gathered around a car. Complete with stopwatches, clipboards and even a couple of laptop computers; they look busy and attentive to the drivers needs.

SRAF 9 will certainly raise a smile at first glance! What can I say about the team managers? They are quite simply... spot on. Of course they are not meant to be anybody in particular but I painted mine up as Ross Brawn, Jackie Stewart, Ron Dennis, Alain Prost, Eddie Jordan and Frank Williams complete with wheelchair. Quite obviously, you could paint them up as anybody! Wonderful characters.

SRAF 10 features a crash scene with injured driver, hand up against the flames with a marshal dragging him clear. Another marshal is waving his flag wildly with his other hand up and shouting a warning to the fast approaching drivers still racing.

A doctor races to the aid of the injured driver and two paramedics with stretcher complete the scene. Two stretchers are supplied, one empty, the other occupied by the injured driver now being carried from the scene, a nice touch to a really useful set.

SRAF 11 is a T.V. and commentators set with a certain excitable commentator in his last Grand Prix season before retiring. Cameraman,

soundman, director and photographer also feature and finally a Martin Brundle type ready for the grid interviews. Well what can I say; this is a superb set with real character.

Buildings

The current range of buildings attempts to bring up to date the more visible aspect of any race circuit. All of the buildings currently available are manufactured in high quality resin, do not need assembling but do feature lift off roofs to make it easy to place figures inside. I believe they offer very good value for money, especially when you consider the comparative cost of car body shells.

SRAB 1 - what a start to a range! A magnificent two storey pit building with space for two cars and attending technician figures etc. Designed to be positioned side by side you have only to visit Scale Models website and take a look at the Hazel Grove club feature to see what can be achieved.

SRAB 2 - two marshals posts with lift off roofs to house flag marshals. Ideally positioned around the track at points that need human marshals they certainly add character to any circuit. The moulding quality is very good and they are very easy to paint up.

SRAB 3 - Victory Podium. A one-piece casting comprising a raised platform with chequered display backboard which is a stand-alone model. Looks great with the victory figures but I have to say that painting it is a labour of love. If it is decorated with advertising like the example on Pendle Slotracing's website, then the effect is very good.

Overall, this is a brilliant start from people that know what's needed to fill the gaps, it helps that they listen to customer feedback and I personally hope they go from strength to strength. Now how about a Steve McQueen figure or perhaps.....? ■



Stop starting will you!

BY PETER NOVANI

Ever wanted to automatically stop and start your slot-car races, incorporate dynamic braking and have a decent computer lap timer thrown in for good measure? I certainly did. However, what I did not want was a bulky PC based lap timing system – at least not at the moment. Undoubtedly, they offer a bewildering array of features, essential for slot-car clubs when organising their tournaments etc. But, the main prerequisite for the type of usage I envisaged was to simply display fastest overall race and lap times, plus the number of laps completed. Ease of use, portability, compact dimensions, accuracy and reliability were all important factors. Was I asking for too much?

Dislot lap timing computer

Having investigated most of the available options, I eventually opted for the system manufactured by the Spanish ‘DS (Dislot) Electronic Racing Products’ company. That was about two years ago, and believe me, as far as obtaining information was concerned, it was like trying to get blood out of a stone. Purchasing items from this range required a great deal of perseverance on my part as most slot-car dealers, at the time, did not stock the range, or if they did, certainly not in its entirety. Thankfully, that unsatisfactory situation no longer exists. An improved and professionally run distribution network is now well established to supply dealers. However, I often get quizzed about the timing system I use when displaying my four lane exhibition track layout at events. Inexplicably, publicity regarding this range of electronic wizardry has been conspicuous by its absence. No doubt that oversight has left many slot-car enthusiasts oblivious to its merits.

Dislot’s ‘Super Racing Computer System’ digital LED lap timing computer (DS-030 + DS-034) combined with their overhead infrared sensor gantry is now a regular feature on my layout. I chose the gantry option, as opposed to

the ‘dead strip’ track section, as visually it is a much more impressive piece of kit. The bright red beams shining down on the track make it a real conversation piece. Appearances can often be deceptive, and that is certainly the case with the diminutive DS computer combination – imagine two rectangular shaped alarm clocks stacked on top of each other. The units are powered by a single dedicated transformer. I locate mine within the actual confines of the track layout. This allows participants and spectators to see how a race is progressing. Various display settings and functions are programmable using buttons located on top of the unit. However, finding out exactly what they were used for was quite another matter. The English translated instructions were somewhat ambiguous. Nevertheless, once deciphered, and some experimentation, the computer rewards you with a variety of useful timing features.

Now, where do I start, or more importantly stop! The main purpose of the computer is to show lap times and the number of laps completed each and every time a car passes beneath the infrared gantry, and also on completion of a race. Therefore the computer copes admirably with most timing eventualities. Four illuminated red LED display panels convey the relevant timing information, each with a corresponding lane identification number to avoid confusion. In the centre of the fascia, separate red-to-green start sequence LED lights are incorporated.

The type of timing information displayed is dependent upon your own preferences as several options are available. For example, lap times for each lane and/or the number of laps completed will be displayed in ‘real time’ each and every lap. Alternatively, just the time elapsed, either counting down to zero, or up to the time originally programmed. A maximum of 9999 laps or 9 hours 59 minutes 60 seconds should satisfy the requirements of even the most

committed endurance racer. At the end of a race, the LED panel will display the total number of laps completed for each lane, with the winning lane flashing for a few seconds, leaving no one in any doubt as to the actual winner. Assuming that a race was programmed for a set number of laps, then press a button to display the total elapsed time of the race, shown in hours, minutes, seconds, and fractions of a second. Press yet another button and you will be presented with the fastest lap time for each lane, and a flashing display for the overall fastest time of the race. Fastest lap times can be checked during the race without affecting other functions in use.

Still with me? Lap times are normally measured to within 1/1000th of a second, or, if you want to be really precise then press the relevant button twice to display lap times to within 1/10000th of a second. Pretty impressive stuff, and incredibly addictive as attempts are made to shave fractions of a second off your lap times. One other feature included, is an audible beep which emits each time a racer sets a personal fastest lap or when the race starts/finishes. Although helpful, it soon irritates – I usually have it switched off.

Dislot stop & go box

So far, so good. But, how about stopping and starting races automatically? Enduring the annoying, and often time consuming jump start scenario at public events, when overzealous participants were too eager to win races, can be rather taxing. Conversely, when races finish, participants would continue to race around oblivious to the fact that the computer had actually stopped recording the number of laps completed! The resultant confusion can cause unnecessary arguments, especially if cars complete the same number of laps, or worse still, cross the finish line in close proximity. Naturally, I tackled that problem with a great deal of urgency. Using Dislot's appropriately entitled Stop & Go Box, in conjunction with their computer, eradicates most of those problems. Power is only transmitted to the track once the computer's green start light illuminates

at the beginning of a race. On completion of a predetermined number of laps (by the winning car) or when the overall race time has elapsed, power to all lanes is terminated, with the red stop light illuminating. Final race positions of the cars can now be assessed (without arguments), by the total number of laps completed and which track segment the cars have stopped on. Not unlike a slot-car club's race procedure. To temporarily stop a race use the pause button. Power to the track is interrupted, as is the computer's internal timing clock. The red light stays on until the race resumes, or is aborted.

Dynamic braking is a fundamental part of the electronic circuitry of the box, so the necessity for complicated club type wiring is thankfully eliminated. Earlier last year I successfully used Ninco Vario 16 controllers with my original 'club' wiring and 2 amp controller sockets. However, I was unable to get the Vario 16s to work with this new box of tricks. Therefore I reverted back to my usual Parma controllers. That was a sacrifice well worth making as the plastic casing on Parma controllers are more robust, and better suited to the demands made on them at public events. Incidentally, a pair of Stop & Go boxes will be required for a four lane layout, preferably with a transformer powering each lane separately.

Conclusions

Should you eventually decide to increase the number of lanes on your layout, then simply add some extra computers and accessories to accommodate a maximum of eight lanes. The extensive Dislot range, which includes many items not mentioned here, is entirely modular in concept. By now, your slot-car dealer should be conversant with this particular range and able to advise you on availability and pricing. So, if you are contemplating a lap timing system and do not want to go the bells-and-whistles PC computer route, yet still hanker after something more sophisticated than the more basic lap timers on offer. Then I would thoroughly recommend this impressive range of electronic products....I say Viva Dislot! ■

Hooked!

BY ANTHONY CLAYDEN

It all started for me around 1966, the time of Dr. Who and Juke Box Jury, when, after hinting with notes craftily left around the house, I came down on Christmas morning shaking with excitement. Along with several other less interesting presents was left a large figure 8 Scalextric set (CM34 I think) containing a blue D type Jaguar and red Porsche Spider.

A separate brown corrugated box contained a light grey Hammerite finished "Smoothflow" transformer with pop up red reset button. Because the cars kept spinning and the pin guides continually shorted the track this kept going buzz, click and refusing to deliver any power. Eventually someone would shuffle across the room and press down the red Reset button; I bet many of you have tried to tape this button down with insulation tape. Despite this irritation, I wish I still had that old transformer as it gave good service; mind you it cost half a decent basic Scalextric set. It lasted over 25 years till recently I tested it and it went bang and blew the house fuses.

My late father, who I sadly lost about 18 years ago now and greatly miss, was also a huge fan just like myself of both motor racing and slot car racing; he would have joined the NSCC without doubt had he lived. So that first Christmas, after waiting for the end of the Queen's speech and then waiting for my dad to finish playing with it I finally got my hands on the Scalextric set. The moment I picked up the two Triang push down controllers (one red, one black) I was totally hooked, although it took me the best part of two weeks to get the hang of keeping the sports cars on the track.

At the slightest provocation the reset button would pop or the cars would leave the track and crash into the white, horse racing style, barriers. A few weeks later, after using the set for quite long periods, there was a funny smell in the air; a sort of burnt charcoal and plastic sort of smell as my original controllers started melting. Those who remember these sets, will know that this was

a common problem, made worse if you ran race tuned models with them.

It was a few years later when I could at last get it up on a proper baseboard and around that time I met Alec at school who, I found, loved motor racing. One day I opened my mouth, as you do at school, and let it slip out that I had a Scalextric set. It was not very long before he would start to come over unannounced, on a Saturday, firstly to watch Star Trek and then race on the Scalextric. Unfortunately he was none too careful in his driving and my cars were soon less than mint; the chrome details began to get loose and bits fell off. So around my 13th birthday a few extra cars was added, Porsche and BRM formula junior cars, plus a yellow Lotus. These were bought from Shadicks, a great toy and hobby store that also had some kit slot-cars from Japan and America in chocolate style boxes. I'm still kicking myself that I never asked dad for some of them for future Christmases. Sadly the kit cars are no longer on sale, and the shop is now a building society.

With the original set now over 25 years old, and getting more and more use, the original track had become very worn and the standard curves from the set were almost completely smooth, looking almost like the centre of a skid chicané. I therefore called a halt and for fifteen years the Scalextric was confined to a rather damp spare bedroom and what was left died a death when rust set in to the rails.

I am still totally hooked, however, and a new circuit is currently being constructed. To date I can only find the two formula juniors, an Electra Special and Javelin car, so the best cars are sadly lost. The new circuit, to be named the Albert-ring after my late father, will use Ninco track as its wider and runs most 1/32 scale cars. I still like Hornby's product very much, apart from their naff brass whiskers that break off and don't pick up as well as the eyelets, and even more naff quick fit guide blades. I like the Caterhams and Beetles, but I feel that the cars are not quite as

good as they were. But Scalextric started me off in the hobby, and in 1989 I joined the NSCC, after finding details of the Club in the local library and this has been my best ever move. I'll be a member now till I'm no longer around. It's a superb club, but then if you are reading this you already know, of course.

I feel the Scalextric system needs to be updated now with the best pick-up in the cars being the original wires and eyelets. In future years perhaps they will sell a conversion kit if you are like me and prefer the older type of Scalextric lead wires and no magnets in the cars. Also I feel the track needs to be re-tooled and made wider so, like many people, if Scalextric Mk 2 came out I would totally replace the

current Scalextric track. I do currently have a smaller self built figure 8 circuit but it is the Ninco circuit that I am working on, with the option to house the other Scalextric circuit underneath the trestles.

My baseboard constructor has been unwell, so my plans are really well behind; hopefully a new circuit of some 33 feet lap length will arise shortly. I am currently searching for original Scalextric buildings like TV towers etc. to decorate the circuit and I will keep you posted as the building progresses.

Here I am, in my mid forties, still totally hooked on a child's toy; what a sad person. But then, aren't we all? ■

The allure of rubber!

Part 5 - Rail refurbishment

BY PETER BOITA

So, now your rubber track is looking nice in the cosmetic department the next job is to refurbish the guide rails and connector tabs and reassemble them back onto the rubber track section.

The process is the same for the curves as it is for the straights so you can suit yourself in which order you choose to do things. Let's start with a curve. I finished off my curved rails in the 1 - 4 order I took them off in. For this part of the refurbishment you need 4 items. Emery paper in coarse, medium and fine grades and a few sheets of non-metallic abrasive material. This last product, made by 3M, is sold in burgundy coloured sheets and is available at any professional car body finisher suppliers. On the other hand just go to your local car body spraying and talk them into/bribe them into giving you a few sheets! It essential you use this non-metallic type of abrasive material, as you want the finished job to be pristine with no hint of any rust contamination which may be possible if, for example, you used ordinary steel wire wool. This 3m product is also the perfect stuff to use for ongoing maintenance of the metal track rails as you can cut it into very fine strips, hold it onto a thin strip of hardwood or plastic and finely clean each rail without also abrading the adjacent rubber track. It also has the advantage in that it doesn't easily shred or disintegrate.

So, holding your metal guide rail firmly - but never too firmly to the point of distorting it, start with the coarse emery paper and following the contours of the rail abrade the top surface of the rail where the car braids pick up the electric current. You will be amazed at just how much thick "gunk" there is on these rails. No wonder

the cars didn't go that fast last time you used the track! Aim to cut through all the dirt and rust to expose the clean metal underneath then still with the coarse emery paper rub away any pitting or unevenness paying special attention to the very ends of the track rails. Do both outer sides of the rails next. Don't do the inside section of the metal rail at all, as the original finish should be intact here with no rusting. If there is a little rusting here and there just use a small piece of the 3m non-metallic abrasive sheet to very gently remove any localised rusting. As far as the three outer surfaces are concerned, you should now be left with a series of neat lines that follow the guide rail contours. All there is left to do now is to get the same even finish with the medium Emery cloth, then the fine and lastly finishing up by almost "polishing" the guide rail up with the 3m non metallic abrasive scourer. What you are after is to finish up with a beautifully even satin finished metal strip that has a slight "grain" to the finish running the length of the metal rail.

Each rail would usually take me 30 minutes to achieve the "concours" finish I required. You really do have to be patient to get a good result. As you finish each metal guide rail you need to immediately protect it from any chance of spoiling. Simply spray a little WD40 into the top that comes with the can and liberally "paint" the WD40 onto the metal rail with a small stiff paint brush working the WD40 well into every crevice of the rail. Put the now glistening metal rail on a lint free cloth and just allow it to drain. After a few minutes blot off any excess WD40 and move onto the next stage which is to refit the metal rail back onto the rubber track section. Time taken for this stage 120 minutes. ■