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# NSCC

The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

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## I Don't Believe In Miracles.....



But I might just change my mind this month as I have actually managed to complete the Journal without the computer throwing a major fit of the sulks! Mind you it may also have something to do with the fact that it has been virtually rebuilt.

I also visited the Milton Keynes Swapmeet and, for the first time ever, managed to find it at the first attempt! I dread to think how many hours I have spent driving round the accursed town over the last fifteen years; every year I pore over the maps, determined not to get lost, and, without fail, I end up in the middle of some housing estate miles from my destination. According to the organiser, Nigel Copcutt, the local council don't help as they have a ban on temporary direction signs. Perhaps it is all a cunning plan to keep people in Milton Keynes forever!

The Swapmeet, as ever, was a huge success with a record number of stalls and visitors; I hope you all had an enjoyable day and returned home with worthwhile additions to your collection.

This month's issue is a little short on pages, due to the computer being away at the menders for a while, but there is a good selection of articles. Dave Yerbury has sent me several pieces over the last few months but, as they were handwritten, I simply haven't had the time to type them up. However, providing the computer continues to behave, I should be able to include them in future issues. The first one, about a personal favourite - The Birkin Bentley - is on page 23. My thanks to Dave for his patience.

**And Finally** - Red Nose Day is nearly here so please remember that there are countless people around the world who really do need a miracle. Andy Brown-Searle of Riverside Raceway is putting on a special slot-car event ( see advert on page 18) with the support of Colette Clarke. It is in the true spirit of Comic Relief which aims to raise money while having huge amounts of fun so do try and support it if you can.

*Till next month  
Brian*

*Adrian Norman reports on current news from the Scalextric Headquarters in.....*

# FACTORY FOCUS

**T**his month's factory Focus concerns itself with bringing you a list of 'C' numbers and confirmation of some not so well known cars liveries.

The initial 2001 new car range is as follows:-  
C2258 Cadillac Northstar, Le Mans, GM Racing, #1, silver

C2259 Cadillac Northstar Le Mans, DAMS, #3, black

C2264WAA Williams BMW F1, Allianz, #9,

C2265WAA Williams BMW F1, Allianz #10,

C2274 Porsche GT3R, Paragon, #77, blue

C2275 Porsche GT3R, Red Bull, #77, blue

C2278 TVR Speed 12, Scania, #27, blue

C2297 Opel Astra V8 DTM, Opel Service, white/yellow

C2298 Opel Astra V8 DTM, Sport Bild, red

C2336 VW Beetle NeuBeck.Online, #1, blue

C2337 VW Beetle, Optimax, #12, green

C2343 Ford Focus, Laukkanen, #19, white

C2344 Caterham Peter Ritche Racing, #69, blue

C2345 Caterham Team Taran, #88, orange

C2352 Mercedes CLK GT1, 2001 Range presentation car, silver

C2354WA Porsche GT3R, Hewlett Packard, white

C2355WA Porsche GT3R, UPS, black

C2356WA TVR Speed 12 #5, purple/silver

C2357WA TVR Speed 12 #6, purple/silver

C2358WA Opel Astra V8 DTM, #1, yellow/white

C2359WA Opel Astra V8 DTM, #2, red

C2363 TVR Speed 12, blue

The new sets in the range are;

C1065 Formula One (C2220 and C2265)

C1069 Opel Motorsport (C2297 and C2298)

C1064 GT Super Cup (C2354 and C2355)

## Argos sets

The Argos stores have a TVR set C1068 TVR High Speed Challenge with a silver and purple pair of TVRs. The No.5 car is C2356 and the No.6 car C2357. It seems that Argos set names are all to have 'Challenge' in their titles. Interestingly, the first batch of these sets delivered to Argos have Mercedes CLKs on the box lids and not TVRs. The Argos catalogue shows TVRs on the box lid!

The Hamleys Jaguar XJ220 C2330 is reported to be sold out. Apparently a production run of 1000 were made but only a handful have been seen in the collecting circle.

## Packaging

Packaging has been of great concern over the past years, particularly when the cars arrive damaged when ordering direct from a high street store (NSCC advertisers know how to re-pack the cars to avoid damage).

It appears that solo cars are now being shipped from China in packs of six. The cartons contain six separate cushioned compartments and each Scalextric case is individually bubble wrapped. Let's hope this is enough to cut down the amount of damaged items.

## New pamphlet

The 3rd issue foldout pamphlet is released. It generally reflects the contents of the 2001 catalogue by simply displaying the 52 cars, 10 sets, track and accessories from the range. Two Porsche GT3Rs grace the front page.

Thanks to all of you who have sent information in about the Argos and similar store sets and other oddities.

You are a valuable source of information. ■

# Milton Keynes Swapmeet

REPORT BY JULIE SCALE

If you have never been to an NSCC swapmeet - this is the one not to be missed. There were loads of stalls, ranging from the dealers like ourselves to collectors with a few items to trade on.

We were treated to a major display of all things slot related and it was wonderful to see quite a few new faces, both behind the stalls and as customers.

We were stood next to Joaquim Morriscot Sola (from Spain) who shared a first time table with Peter Zivanovic; I understand he was quite overwhelmed by the sheer size of the event and variation in the range of product available. He told Peter he had seen things readily available at Milton Keynes he had only ever seen as one offs in Spain in poor condition!

## New releases

There have only been a few new releases so far this year, The new Cadillac from Scalextric was being lapped up, and met with everyone's approval; we certainly think it is the best Hornby have done to date. The Opel Coupé DTM is now awaited with bated breath as it promises to be just as highly detailed.

Fly's T series has caused quite a lot of consternation for the collector- and whilst the T3 and T4 Panoz were available in quite good numbers still, the T1 and T2 Porsche have proved very elusive, Alberto from Spain had an example of the T2, without a box, that I understood sold. A rare Pace car E2 was also being offered around the hall, so some collectors went home on a high.

Our German friends were represented by Slot 32 who had a very nice display of the new Rally Cars from Team Slot, including the Lancia Delta Integrale, which seems to be an excellent shape and a much improved quality, although the stickers are still an area for improvement.

We were all pleased to see a new release car from Ninco in the form of the VW Golf. This was initially launched in December at the Festival of Infants in Spain – with the production of a limited edition car in white with the logo and dates of the festival and children's drawings as the livery (sales were limited to people who attended the festival so this is quite a collectors piece). Milton Keynes saw the first sales of the Sony livery which proved popular- The car is 4 wheel drive band driven, which seems really smooth and runs the NC2 motor. We now all await the DTM Mercedes.

Mark was very excited to find the French tyres have finally been reproduced; this will release so many French cars with split tyres.

So far there are three types - French F1 and GT, Renault 12 and most exciting - *honest* - Alpine Renault and Matra Djet - apparently these fit the Scalextric 190sl hence the jumping up and down! Needless to say he bought them all and Paul had to post the balance across the channel- thanks Paul.

The turn out was brilliant - the international feel of the swap meet was complete with members from France, Germany, South Africa (obviously Nasseem was over); Ferry Musters was representing the Dutch contingency and of course there was P&J from Wales and Pendle and ourselves from the outer reaches! Phil Smith was heard to comment in the car park that it is always so cold when he travels to the North! He assured me that the daffodils are out in his garden- We do have the odd green sprout that promises spring soon. Angus represented the far Northern reaches where daffodils never grow, or is that where they are seen in August?

Our next opportunity to get together is Loughborough, which includes the AGM, your chance to have your say about your club- it would be great if we could all give our support.

See you there? ■

# S-PLAN V.2 - Software review

BY ALAN SLADE

Recently I had a need to draw up some circuit plans and this gave me an excellent opportunity to try out the latest version of the S-Plan circuit design software, which, by sheer coincidence, Andy Sykes had e-mailed me about only the day before.

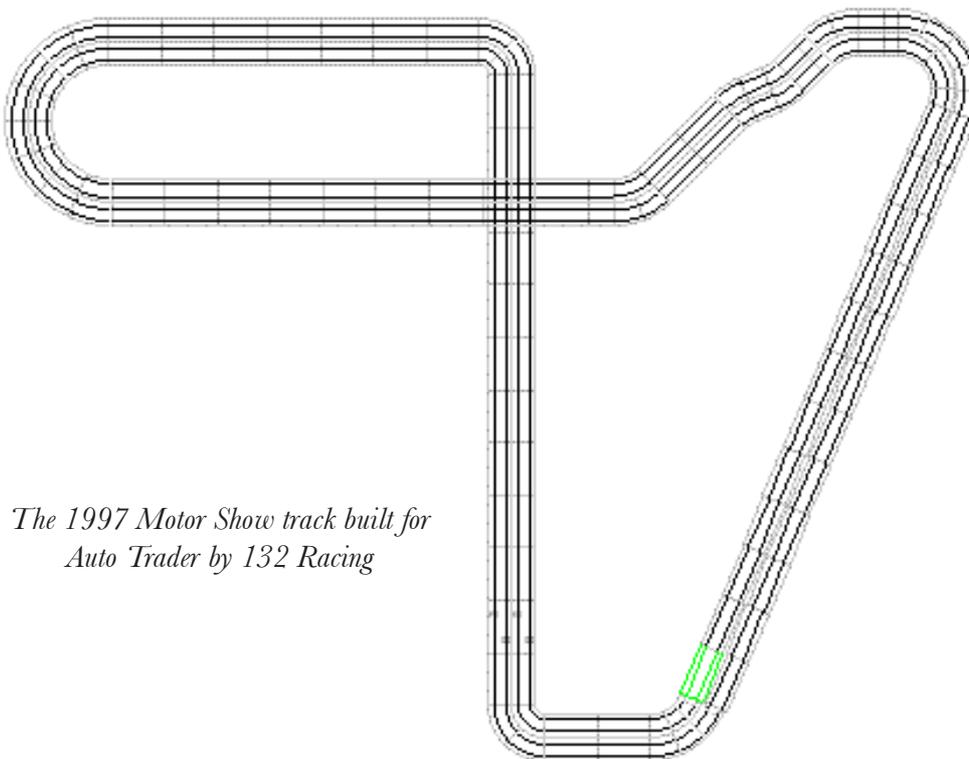
Having got used to the original version where you had to think carefully how you placed each track section and which way it was going to go and continually swap between the various straight and curve menus, the new version is a joy to use, with a much improved toolbar for the track selection and placement. Andy has now thoughtfully provided a picture of each section and a clockwise or counter-clockwise button beside each piece.

It is very easy to use, but not totally ex-editor proof as when you are drawing tracks the wrong way up I tended to get my clockwise and anticlockwise a mite mixed up - some things never change!!! But, to be fair, this is not the fault of the software, just my ageing brain.

Another nice feature with this latest version is the ability to be able to draw multi lane tracks in one go. With the original version you had to draw one track first and then place the other lanes either inside or outside this track. Now you can choose to draw 2, 4 or 6 lane tracks in one go. Should you want to design an eight lane track then you have first to use the six lane tools then add the other two lanes. Alternatively I suppose you could draw two four lane tracks. But which ever route you choose - **THINK FIRST**. If the inside lane is a standard curve then you are **NOT** going to get two more inside it no matter how hard you try.

All the other features of Version 1 are still available - lap length calculator, track parts required, insert track before, the ability to draw shapes to represent furniture or board sizes, along with some new ones that allow you to colour code the lanes (which unfortunately do not show up in black and white); to add borders to the track and now you can design Ninco tracks as well with all of the same features as the Scalextric / SCX track.

I had been asked what the tracks that we (that is 132 Racing) had built for Auto Trader at the Motor Shows looked like, and it took me only a few minutes to commit them to the computer screen which in itself is amazing as they have never been drawn before as we tend to make them 'interesting' to drive and to fit in the space we are given (which is never what we were told we were getting). ⇒



*The 1997 Motor Show track built for  
Auto Trader by 132 Racing*

So that you can have a go at building your own Motor Show track I have included the 1997 track in this article (the others are available from the S-Plan website at:-

<http://www.s-plan.co.uk>.

The track length is 20.67 metres which is a shade under 68 feet for those who like their measurements that way. The salient features of the track are that the start straight climbs up and ends in a 90° left bend (not many cars made it), and then drops down to a 180° left hand hairpin (this caught the rest of them). It then went back under the 'Beastly Bridge' (every one of our Motor Show tracks has one, along with 'Harry's Hairpin') and then left into a 'handling section' before sweeping right, along a straight and a

double apex right hand bend back to the start line.

It was very interesting to watch the BTCC drivers on this circuit, as apart from the outright attempts at cheating, they were on the whole pretty damn good. If you are thinking of employing one to drive in your touring car team then I can (for a fee!) recommend some suitable drivers.

One thing that they were not very appreciative of though, was if you dived down the inside on a corner and lent fairly hard on their car. They were very quick to point out that touring car racing is a non-contact sport. All I can say in my defence (and that of Don and Tony) is watch the video footage!!! ■

# A 'Day In The Life'

## Part 3 - Because

The decision to make a particular car is not taken lightly. Nor can it be assumed that any car chosen can, in fact, be produced. Many factors in the planning stage can cause the cancellation of the chosen model and those factors are often outside the control of Hornby Hobbies. A car doesn't reach the shops simply because the factory said, "We want to"

At Hornby Hobbies the decision to make a particular model is made by Senior Directors based upon the recommendations of their Development department and input from Directors, the Sales Force team, feedback from the retail trade, collectors and racers. For example, the TVR, Lotus and Beetle cars would not have been considered as regular standard catalogue items but Hornby recognised that there was a perceived call for them.

The justification to make a car is calculated through various measures, some of which aren't easily evaluated. Obviously, sales statistics play a major part here but market research is also carried out with adults and children. Press reports, letters, faxes and e-mail are all considered.

Once the marketing brief on the total specification (headlights, etc) is agreed, the go ahead to start development is given and data for modelling a car is collected from various sources. The data can be in the form of computer-aided design (CAD), photographs and existing models of the car. Access to exact measurements is rarely possible. This is because the measurement data that a real car manufacturer has is highly detailed and relative to each specific component of the car. A modeller needs a different kind of measurement. For instance, to get the contour of the windscreen correct a modeller will make measurements from the real car from specific reference points. The Porsche GT1 windscreen contour may have been measured from top dead centre of the windscreen to a reference point, let's say the wing mirror stem. Then another measurement will be made from bottom dead

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

centre of the screen to the mirror stem, giving a starting and finishing point. Measurements are made from points in between, thus building up a contour. A full size manufacturer such as Toyota would probably not have this type of measurement data in a format that was more easily useable than the modeller's normal method. It is a time consuming exercise although the CAD computer system can help speed things along. Vauxhall were able to provide CAD data for the Vectra that helped immensely with the modelling.

Some manufacturers allow Hornby's team to visit their factory and crawl all over the car and take photographs and measurements as required. Such was the case with the Jordan F197, the Subaru Impreza and the Caterham cars. The development team were able to take every conceivable measurement they needed to make the model as perfect as possible to suit its needs. In this way, the outer shape of the car can be drawn up. Once this is set, then the internal components of the car are designed taking in to account draught-angles and screw bosses.

### **He didn't notice that the lights had changed**

One of the most important stages in pre-production is Clash detection: No, this doesn't mean the fashion police check to make sure that the nice blue cardigan worn by the passenger in the convertible Volkswagen Beetle doesn't clash with the colour of the dash board lights!

### **All Together Now**

Clash detection is both desirable and undesirable. In Scalextric terms it relates to how the components fit with each other. For instance, headlamps should offer in to the headlight apertures without being tight or loose. It should be 'just right'. Conversely, the electric motor must not fit exactly in to the engine mountings. To ensure a tight fit it must fit under tension, this is known as 'interference fit'. All this has to be checked out using the CAD 3-dimensional imaging before expensive moulds are made. ■

# International Toy Fair, London, January 2001

BY ROB SMITH

Monday 29th January saw Lorraine and I heading east on the Docklands Light Railway to ExCeL, the new exhibition centre on the north bank of the Thames, just opposite the Dome. We were going to the International Toy Fair held annually in London.

ExCeL is a beautiful new venue, only finished last November and it is bright and spacious and easy to get to. We were a little surprised when we arrived to discover few other visitors had apparently made the effort. The Toy Fair is a trade only event but our local shop was kind enough to provide the official invitation form.

The Fair concentrates on toys, mainly for a very young age and there was not much in the show guide to interest the average slot car buyer. There was no Lego, no radio control and very little die-cast. However there were three stands that could not be missed !

The first we came across was that of Monarch Lines. Monarch were displaying a real racing car together with the complete ProSlot, MRRC and TopSlot ranges. Colette Clarke enthusiastically showed us the latest and greatest ProSlot cars. In no particular order these were:

- Martin Brundle's Toyota in the red & white Le Mans colours.
- Brown UPS Porsche GT3 in a limited edition run of 1500.
- Bright yellow Monster Raving Looney Party (yes, honestly !) Porsche GT2 in a limited edition run of 500.
- A beautiful chocolate brown and cream Prestat Porsche GT3 with the Royal Warrant on the roof in gold. Prestat are the Queen's chocolatiers. This car is also in a limited edition run of 1500.
- Black Ferrari 360 road car with finely detailed etched wipers and brake discs.

Two ProSlot sets were on show too. An F1 set containing 2 Ferraris and a GT3 set with two Porsches. The GT3 set was assembled to try and although the hard plastic track did not seem to fit together very well the cars ran well around it - the smooth sleeve inside the slot makes all the difference.

From the TopSlot range the Cunningham and Lightweight E Type Jaguar caught my eye. It is good that a manufacturer can provide such interesting models and the big manufacturers should take note and stop just copying each other.

Expect some exciting news from Monarch Lines soon, both on new product and new distribution arrangements.

We then moved on to the Nikko stand where they were displaying the range of 1/32nd and 1/24th scale cars. The Mustang and Corvette 1/32nd cars looked nice in their boxes but the overall quality of the cars available for closer examination was very poor. They are a long way behind their competition. They too had a layout assembled to try - a large 4 lane landscaped circuit- but none of the cars we tried seemed to work !

Finally we moved onto the large Hornby stand. This was split into three independent sections, the first dealt with preschool items, such as Thomas, the middle with Hornby Railways, and the last with Scalextric. One of Hornby's regional sales reps was kind enough to show us around the new range. A display board showed box images of the two new sets with the UPS and HP Porsche GT3s beneath. The quality of moulding and decoration on these cars was excellent and although a very simple blue on white livery, the small printing on the HP car was still legible even though the text was much less than a mm tall. All of the range shown in the new Catalogue was on display and available for

close inspection. The new Opel V8 Coupés being of most interest as they are not photographed in the catalogue. Again they were finely moulded and decorated with particular detail at the rear of the cars. All of the new models, the Cadillac LMPs, Porsche GT3s and Opels make extensive use of very finely detailed etched metal parts for brake discs and grills. They have really moved the cars on to a greater level of detail, but I cannot imagine how the collectors amongst us will be restoring them in 20 years time.

We then examined the new race control software. This was being shown as a rolling demonstration that we couldn't interact with as the software development is still underway. However, the user interface looks clear and easy to use and there are some nice touches such as a petrol hose plugging into a car to show when a car is in the pits. You can change drivers from car to car so those of us who would like to know how good Michael Schumacher really is can put him in a Minardi, or promote Jenson Button to the top McLaren seat; or put our own

photographs into the leading Ferrari. Apparently we will be able to download the latest cars from the Scalextric web site - eventually! The software will race-control a 4 lane track, contain a track design module and enable a virtual lap of your track with a car of your choice. Those who have tried their Virtual Railway software will know what I mean.

More excitement is due from Hornby later in the year too with hints made about the new Focus Works livery, the latest Subaru, re-engineered McLarens and Williams and a new F1 car still under negotiation. All will become clear later in the year when a new catalogue is published.

So it is an exciting year ahead for slot car fans. It was disappointing that Ninco and Fly were not present so direct comparisons could be made, but there is no doubt that the sheer range and quality of the cars available to us is getting ever better. ■

# Phoenix F1 Trophy - Race report

BY JON SWORD

Phoenix Scalextric club recently held an open meeting organised by club members Tim and Busby. An excellent turnout at Oaklands on a cold Sunday morning ensured that a cracking days racing would ensue.

Arriving very early (more time to practice!) with my lads Rob and Sam (Team Sword) and R.S there was the usual chaotic pre-race activity. Who would have the correct set up to race on a wooden track? Would Daz bring enough supplies of pop and chocolate to last the day? More importantly, how long would it be before Shep would perform the ritual Tasmanian devil dance complete with spectacular door slamming and projectile car throwing?

Tim and Busby had put a lot of effort in and Busby, in particular came into his own at extracting the race fees from the adult club members, whilst Tim did a brilliant impression of a rocket scientist by organising the race order promptly. At this point R.W. turned up late wearing a big smile and sporting a huge box of cars, he was then suitably verbally abused by the rest of the club as Tim sought to rewrite the race order using his well practised crisis management techniques (also known as shooting the crocodile that is nearest to your canoe).

Looking around there was a good mix of cars. Proslot was the most popular choice, with the Mabuchi powered SCX F1 87s also showing well, and some Ninco F1 models also racing. Interestingly, the older SCX cars took the top honours due to a blend of speed and handling consistency.

The race was run in two halves, the first section was as per the club nights with everyone having a bash in each lane and the points for

four races being totalled. Everyone was then put into groups (A-E) to form league tables. The groups then ran two minutes on each lane for distance, with the person covering the greatest distance winning their group etc.

There were some great races in the first section. The best encounter was between Busby and Paul with Paul on the rack for 13 laps until Busby spilled off. I had a great race with Ralph from Oaklands, very close until the final bend when he came off as he came alongside the outside of my car (oop's) R.S was also on top form, with Graham Pritchard racing for fun and also doing well.

The pressure was now on and round two was run in double quick time. This format meant that racers of equal skill were competing and to come off would mean a low placing. Despite being competitive all of the races were good humoured. At Phoenix the philosophy is to have fun, we are a loud bunch and everyone joins in to have a good natured sociable day. The juniors are encouraged and put into the races with everyone else. There is always a good atmosphere at the club and Shep can always be relied on to remind us to be competitive.

The final winners in each group were Paul, Shep, Graham, Ian and Graham P. Everyone went home with a trophy including Sam Beech as the best Junior. Thanks to Tim and Busby for running the show and also to Alan who got hold of the trophies from 'a mate in the business'. Oaklands Graham was a star as the race controller for the day (but still managed to beat Tim to victory in group C, the group of death!). Finally, thanks to all of the lads at the club for contributing in their own way, which makes being a Phoenix club member a real pleasure.■



Dear Brian,

There is a new Brooklands website on which are lap by lap results from the Abergavenny Rail Race along with pictures of all the cars that took part. New information about this year's event has also been added. To view the website go to <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/j.davies4>

Best wishes,  
Jeff Davies

.....

Dear Brian,

Just a quick note to say thank you for the pre-production Subaru, I was very fortunate to have won in the Christmas competition. Tell Archie I owe him a large Whiskas!

On reading my name in February's Journal, I rushed home from to work every night to see if the car had arrived and nine days later it was delivered. On opening the package I had a mixture of emotions, due to having no idea what a pre-production model would look like. I can only say I was both surprised and pleased. I don't know if I should say this but up until now I never knew how much anticipation and pleasure a motorised piece of plastic could bring. I hope this is not too risqué and once again I would like to say thank you to Hornby Hobbies, Archie, yourself and anyone else who was involved with the running of the competition. Keep up the good work.

Regards  
Dave Wilcock

.....

Dear Brian

Good progress is being made with the Dundee slot-car exhibition to be held on Sunday 13th May at the Marrayat Hall, City Square, Dundee.

Various clubs are involved; two slot car dealers have booked space and twelve tables have been taken at the time of writing. It is certainly shaping up to be an enjoyable day; the doors will be open between 11am and 4pm and I look forward to meeting some of our members on the day.

If anyone would like further information please phone myself on 01382 622012 or Alex Pierson on 01382 201678.

Regards  
Roy Butchart

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Dear Brian

We must be mad! Ice, snow and fog were the conditions experienced while travelling to Abergavenny for an invitation rail race.

Was it worth it? The circuit was a reproduction of the Southport track as used at Brooklands last year; it had some birth pangs but, happily, they had been sorted out in the meantime. Rail joints had been smoothed; base board joints covered; a formal race programme was in place and computer timing installed.

Points were gained from qualifying times and heat positions throughout the meeting and were totalled at the end of the day to give an overall winner.

We have all experienced the pressure of open or club championship meetings but these retro rail races are all about the 'F' word - Fun! They consist of some light hearted racing in a relaxed atmosphere and the chance to meet up with old friends. All in all the day was a vast improvement on the initial Brooklands meeting last year.

Was it worth it? I believe it was.

Regards

Mac Pinches

.....

Dear Brian

At Milton Keynes we were very saddened to hear of the death of one of our fellow members John Harford after battling a long illness.

Over the last 15 years as well as being a good customer he had become a good friend and quite regularly we would talk on the phone about the great passion of collecting Scalextric cars. John was a wonderful character and will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Mrs. Harford and her family.

John and Elaine at J & E. Models

**It is always sad to hear about the loss of one of our own but, just for once, there is a slightly brighter side. John's son has inherited his father's collecting genes and has joined the club thus retaining John's membership number.**



## Selling on Ebay

BY JAMES PENTON

**T**he reaction to my first article on Ebay was so positive, it has led me to elaborate a little with the secrets of buying and selling on Ebay. All these hints follow the rules and are simply intended to help you get more from a clearly very popular service, so please don't bite my head off if they don't work every time!

### Timing

All times are not equal. Items are bid on more frequently the closer they are to the end of the auction. Therefore in the last few hours they get the most bids. It makes sense to ensure that the last few hours of your auction are at a peak time. In the UK, the peak times are 6pm – 8pm weekdays, however worldwide the peak times are closer to 10pm – 4am weekdays.

Providing you are prepared to, always click the 'will post worldwide button' (not set as default from UK) otherwise your items will only be shown on Ebay.co.uk, not Ebay.com (which has far more users).

### Choose your title carefully

Most buyers search by keyword not category, so unless you put the right words in the title, buyers probably won't even see it. Only if Scalextric manufactures it are you allowed to use the brand name. Don't use all capital letters – they are harder to read than regular case. Use capital letters only to emphasise important words.

### Description

Include as much detail as possible, potential customers range from knowledgeable collectors to people who have never bought a slot car before, so mention scale, compatibility and any features of the item such as lighting, Magnatraction etc. in addition to standard descriptions like condition, colour etc.

### Picture

A picture speaks a thousand words, it allows the buyer to see condition, colour, livery etc. more closely and more importantly more quickly. Remember that the buyer is searching through hundreds of lots; photos speed up this process as the item descriptions all follow different formats, making it harder for buyers to scan auctions quickly.

### Postage

Charge extra for postage; you pay Ebay a percentage of the auction closing price, do you really want them to charge you a percentage of the postage price as well? Charging a set amount tends to make buyers happier as they know the postage cost they have committed to pay and it is easier to see how much the item is actually likely to cost them.

### Feedback

There is nothing more assuring when buying a car from a stranger on the other side of the world than to read lots of different people saying nice things about them. Always ask buyers to leave feedback about you; more feedback = more assurance.

### Minimise costs

Ebay charge more for putting a reserve price on, and for setting an initial bid price higher than £5. Most items usually rise to about their market value, so don't panic at setting the bid price for your James Bond set at £4.50 – it will rise very quickly.

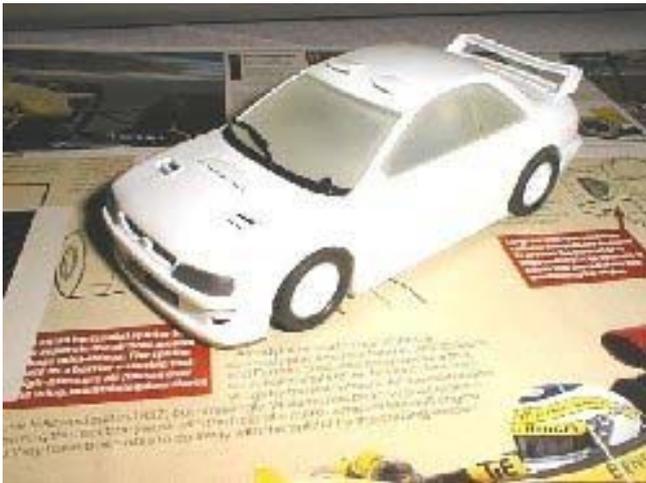
As usual, full details can be found at [www.slotsurfing.co.uk](http://www.slotsurfing.co.uk)

Next article – The secrets of buying on Ebay ■

# Guide to - The Subaru Impreza

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

The Subaru Impreza has proven to be one of the best rally cars produced by Scalextric. Its forward mounted guide blade and low center of gravity of the car being the main reasons why this car is a good all rounder on the circuit. Even so, the car has undergone several changes in the chassis during its three years in production. It was, of course, amongst the first cars to be produced abroad in China. The lucky attendees at the annual NSCC/Hornby Special Weekend in March 1998 were first shown a first mock-up of the Impreza to be launched later that year. Although the car was just a test model in plain white, you could sense that it was going to be a winner on the track as well as for its authentic appearance.



When the car is turned upside down the brown bar magnet looks like a nicely browned, freshly baked loaf of bread laying snugly in its baking tin. It's fitting, then, that there has been a baker's dozen (13) of different Subaru liveries with the 'loaf' magnet.



They are:

C2118 race No.3, 'stars' livery, blue

C2140 road version, burgundy

C2129 road version, silver, 1000 produced.

C2203 road version, black, Scalextric Racer club, approx 500 produced.

C2177 'Stomil' race No.9, white



C2132W race No.3, 'stars' livery, no lights and less tampo printing, blue.

C2235W race No.3, 'stars' livery. Same as C2118. Argos set, blue.

C2236W race No.4, 'stars' livery. Argos set, silver.

C2240W race No.3, 'stars' livery. Toys-R-Us set, blacked out windows, no driver platform or lights and less tampo printing, blue.

C2243 race No.18, 'Barretts' livery. Scalextric Racer club, 500 produced, blue.

C2246 race No.5, 'stars and stripes' livery. Collectors Centers, blue.

C2221 Senna, yellow and green

C2222 Senna, blue and white.



As the new catalogue for 2001 is released we can record that there have been eighteen Subaru liveries. Five of these have the new round magnet.

C2296W/C2257 Burns/Reid, No.3, blue

C2255 Kankkunen/Repo, No.6, blue



C2256 Belgacom, No.16, light blue

C2273 Police Car, white

C2313 Norisbank, No.30, orange



The underpan has been modified to house the stronger round magnets. These are now mounted inside the car instead of on the outside. The bar magnets' housing has now been completely removed leaving no trace of its existence. The underpan is more or less flat from bumper to bumper. There have also been four wheels; 5, 8, 16 & 20 spoke hubs. At least two variations of treaded and grooved tyre have been used.



There have also been a few variations not released as part of the standard range. A plain green road version of a limited run of 50 promotional cars was seen last year and the previous year saw a burgundy car for Harlekijn.

Pictured below is one of the first shots with the altered underpan to be returned from China for approval. Hornby kindly donated this car to the NSCC as a prize in our December 2000 contest.



The preproduction 'approval' car has clear plastic wheel hubs and light lenses front and rear and a matt black body, and, of course, a flat



underpan. Unlike previous cars, this is the first to be altered outside of the Margate factory. Up until now all amendments to the moulds were made and tested locally.

The prize is an interesting record in the development of the Subaru at a time when many aspects of Scalextric production have undergone huge changes. ■

# UU 5871 - a question of colour

BY DAVE YERBURY

No, this is not the story of a German submarine but of probably the most famous Bentley of them all - the first supercharged car built by Sir Tim Birkin.

Many moons ago I made a model of this car from drawings in 'Model Car' magazine. The article said it was blue so I duly painted it and was happy with the finished result. A picture of the car appeared in one of the early NSCC newsletters.

Over the years I've talked to people about old cars and the colour of Birkin's Bentley has always been a topic of conversation. Everybody assured me it was red! It did my head in; was 'Model Cars' wrong or was I the only one who had read the article? At the Brooklands rail race meeting I enquired in the museum; "it's not here but it is definitely red". That's it, I've had enough - I give in - when I get home I will paint the bloody thing red!

Going to Brooklands was a good excuse to see family and friends so I called at my sister's because her two lads are into rallying. One has a nice TR8, not a factory original but with a lot of works parts, in the Leyland livery. The other one has a repro Datsun 240Z modelled on the Altonen rally car. While I was there I took the opportunity to peruse their motor sport library and a book about Bentleys caught my eye.

Flicking through it I found the article that would bring back my sanity:-

## **UU 5871 4½ Litre supercharged chassis no.HB3402. Registered 1929**

"This was the first of the supercharged 4½ litre Bentleys; raced by its owner Tim Birkin at the six hour Brooklands race in June 1929. Two weeks later it was third at the Irish Grand Prix, held in Phoenix Park Dublin, averaging 79 mph. It later finished 11th in the Ulster TT and retired from the Brooklands October 500 mile race after

catching fire. Up to this time it had a Vanden Plas Le Mans type body. A year later it appeared at the 500 mile Brooklands race fitted with a single seater body painted blue." At last - the proof!

"Its next appearance in a major race was October 1931 - once again the Brooklands 500 miler - driven by Dr. Benjafield; it failed to finish. By March 24th the following year the cylinder bore had been increased to 3.96 inches and the car had ben painted red ; with Tim Birkin aboard it took the Brooklands outer circuit record at a speed of 137.96 mph - a record which was never broken."



*If this were a colour picture the car would be blue.....or possibly red.*

The present owner is B.M. (Russ) Turner, chairman of the Bentley Drivers Club and the car regularly appears at VSCC meetings and the Brighton Speed trials. In 1976 it averaged 127 mph over the two directions of the flying kilometre at Ghent.

The doctors have now given me the all clear and I don't need the valium any more. I'm glad I'm better now as the last doctor I saw kept showing me pictures and asking what I saw in them. I don't know where he got them from as they looked like ink blots to me; maybe the long training had taken its toll or he was in need of a new fountain pen. I'm just glad I can see everything in red and blue! ■

# Meet the advertisers - S.R.A.

S.R.A. was formed by Jon and Janet Sword in November 2000 as an off shoot of an existing business producing toy soldiers. Their aim is to produce a modern range of trackside figures, buildings and scenic accessories to match the needs of today's slot car enthusiast.

Jon has been collecting cars for 26 years, an N.S.C.C member he also races at the Phoenix club. Janet is the backbone of the firm possessing the necessary skills to operate a thriving business and is clearly the better looking of the two! For Jon, memories of slot racing go back to a Christmas when, aged 12, he received his first set. This set contained the BRM F1 cars, which now have pride of place in his ever growing collection. Jon recalls "My first home layout was built around my bedroom wall by my Dad and I. This layout featured landscaped terrain all around the race track with an expanded area for the pit lane."

Leaving home at 16 to join the Army the set up was left at his parent's home and used only during periods of leave. However, once basic training was completed a newly bought four-lane set accompanied him to Germany. Jon remembers, "I turned up at the guard room with a kit bag under the one arm and a boxed set under the other. The lads ribbed me at first but it was soon set up in the squadron bar; the set travelled the world on various tours of duty including Northern Ireland. As I climbed the promotion ladder I took it everywhere I could. Unfortunately, as a Tank Commander, there is little room for stowage so my set never made it to the Gulf War! I will also always remember the occasion that I set up a track in the Sergeants' Mess, we had a competitive games night and raced with various F1 cars. The lads really got stuck in until the Regimental Sergeant Major decided to have a go, he was slightly the worse for wear and crawled around the track with no-one daring to overtake in case he gave them extra duties!"

Slot car racing was always a hobby for Jon and remained a primary way of de-stressing himself whilst running a thriving business. "The

toy soldiers have kept us very busy; although I enjoy it I have always had an ambition to produce figures and buildings for slot racing". After many years of trying to find the time what has changed to bring about the launch of S.R.A? "A number of factors contributed" recalls Jon "Joining the N.S.C.C. and becoming aware of the services of Scale Models, Sean at Pendle and Gary at MRE added impetus to my ideas. Andy Walker at Scale Models (also a highly skilled model maker) encouraged me to subscribe to 'Racer' and then joining Phoenix Scalextric club and being supported by, in particular Graham Pritchard and Richard Shilvock was the final push that I needed."

S.R.A is a manufacturing business, all designs, moulding and production are carried out in Redditch, Worcestershire. Justifiably proud to be British and respecting modern standards and expectations, S.R.A aim to fill a gap in the market. Jon believes that there is a need for quality figures and buildings to match the ever-growing ranges of modern slot cars. The figures are manufactured in pewter and the buildings are produced using best quality resin. The product range represents today's racing scene, but, as Jon states with a smile, "any resemblance to known personalities is purely coincidental." Jon and Janet also believe in leaving the marketing of the S.R.A products up to the experts. Well established and respected dealers and shops stock the complete range and work closely at the ideas stage of any new product. "We welcome feedback and ideas on what we should bring out; this is where the N.S.C.C. can come into its own, by co-operating with one of its own number we can develop ideas into a product within a short period of time. We are also keen to produce limited special edition runs and are willing to undertake commissions for that special something."

"My boys, Rob and Sam, are also full of ideas but unfortunately, making Orcs and Dungeons and Dragons figures to fit slot racing cars just wouldn't sell too well .... Or would they!" ■

# The Best Yet

## Scalextric Cadillac reviewed by Jeff Davies

**H**ornby were recently good enough to send me two sample Cadillac Northstar LMPs; they would make extremely accurate and detailed static models. This is not only the best finished and detailed Scalextric car, it's probably the best detailed slot car ever released.

The Scalextric Cadillac LMP is a model of the car Cadillac returned to Le Mans for the sixty eighth running of the 24 hour race. Scalextric have chosen to model both the Motorola/Dams team, carrying numbers 3 and 4 as well as the official Team Cadillac entry cars numbered 1 and 2. The Team Cadillac cars qualified in 11th and 17th place, the Motorola/Dams team cars qualifying in 10th and 15th place. Emmanuel Colland got the Motorola/Dams car up as high as fourth place before problems intervened.

Scalextric have captured both the essence and the presence of the real car in the model. The cars are beautifully finished. The tampo printing is of the highest quality, even down to the three drivers' names being printed on the roll bar. Every vent and grille is faithfully reproduced on the model, with some of the deepest and most accurate slot car moulding I have ever seen.

Every detail is faithfully reproduced from the metal grille on the front of the car to the vents on the side of the car, fuel cap filler and oil tank filler. This is the first slot car I have ever seen to have so many metal etched parts. Even under the windscreen is a metal roll bar. The car has a full driver figure and steering wheel, with a line of switches in the cockpit alongside the driver, and on the dashboard is a panel complete with the symbols for every switch.

The bodywork is in front and rear sections which can be removed separately. I think this is a really great idea as by undoing one screw you can remove the rear section of the bodywork to get at the engine and back axle gear. The wheels are beautifully moulded, complete with Pirelli

PZero tyres but the feature that I think is so impressive is that the wheels come complete with photo etched ventilated brake discs which can be clearly seen through the spokes of the wheels.

The front wheels are attached to the chassis independently by brass pins and are a big improvement on the plastic pins used by other companies. This must be the first slot car that I've ever looked at and couldn't see something obvious that they could have improved upon when they manufactured it. The other really neat touch with this car is that it has working amber headlights with LEDs which look great as the car is going around.



This car drives exceptionally smoothly, cornering well with its magnet placed slightly in front of the rear axle. The slick tyres are of quite a soft compound. This car is a real pleasure to drive around a slot car track. It comes complete with two spare guides fixed to the bottom of the box, a very useful feature. Over the last few years Hornby seemed to have lost ground slightly to some of the other slot car companies. This car not only catches back up that ground but puts them firmly in front. A brilliant effort by Hornby. ■

# WHEELSPIN

## GB TRACK (GB1) PORSCHE 917/10 REVIEWED BY PETER NOVANI

**Y**ou've either got or haven't got style. Evidently, with the introduction of their new GB Track range, the Fly slot-car company have it in abundance!

Apparently, "GB" is taken from the initials of the co-founders of Fly Car Model, the Spanish parent company, based in Madrid. "Track" is a reference to the fact that these new slot-cars are modelled on actual racing machinery. Their motives for adding this new brand are, for the moment at least, somewhat unclear. Rumour has it that this will become their 'budget' range, allowing the revered Fly brand to produce slot-cars with even greater levels of detail. No doubt, correspondingly high price tags will ensue! The differences between the two brands will only become obvious, once Fly have released their much vaunted Corvette CR-5.

If this new initiative allows an even wider selection of slot-cars to be produced, then I applaud their decision. Yet my enthusiasm is tempered by the fact that not everyone is going to be salivating at the thought of having to pay even more money for a slot-car, no matter how much I, or anyone else, extols their virtues. It's debatable whether the average club-racer will be enthused by the prospect of racing extremely expensive slot-cars burdened with assorted detailing features. Come to think of it, I'm not sure if I would choose to race such a car. And that's the crux of the problem I foresee Fly Car Model encountering. For example, how many Fly 'Steve McQueen Collection' Porsches do you see racing? Mine are still unused and firmly ensconced within their packaging.

Although, justifying their status as purveyors of state-of-the-art slot-cars is an admirable one. Many enthusiasts will question Fly's wisdom in not maintaining the status quo. They already

have an established range of slot-cars that is both diverse and competitively priced. Quality and performance are never in doubt, and once 'retired,' they have the advantage of quickly appreciating in value. Arguably, they are the archetypal slot-car. Yet with the introduction of their new marketing policy, Fly Car Model may no longer remain in credit with slot-car enthusiasts.

### RACE CAR HISTORY

The origins of the 1971 Interserie 917/10 can be traced back to the CanAm (Canadian/American) 1969 Porsche 917PA spyder. A car developed with the help of Swiss Formula One and works Porsche driver, Jo Siffert. He was instrumental in attracting Porsche to the lucrative CanAm series which catered for Group 7 unlimited engine capacity 'big banger' spyders. At the time, the series was dominated by Bruce McLaren's eponymous team.

The 917PA (PA stands for Porsche-Audi, the American importers) was a precursor to Porsche's parallel racing programme of works supported CanAm and customer European Interserie race cars. Following Siffert's untimely death during a Formula One race in 1971, Porsche formed an alliance with the American based Roger Penske organisation. This proved to be a hugely successful partnership. Penske entered turbocharged Porsches steamrolled the 1972/73 CanAm series. Initially, with the 917/10, sponsored by L&M (cigarettes), and then its successor, the Sunoco (fuel) sponsored 1000bhp(!) 917/30.

The first of the normally aspirated air-cooled Interserie 917/10s, of which just three were made, bore a striking resemblance to the 917PA. Imagine a 917K coupe minus the roof, windscreen, headlights and spare tyre. In fact,

John Wyer Automotive Engineering, who were representing Porsche in endurance racing, drew inspiration from the 917PA's shape, when trying to resolve the aerodynamic deficiencies on the original (1969) Porsche 917 coupé. Hence, both the 917K and 917/10 look like the 917PA, rather than vice-versa.

## **INTERSERIE HISTORY**

This much maligned European based series boasted powerful Group 7 CanAm type cars, often fitted with outrageous 8.1-litre engines. For the series' inaugural season in 1970, a motley selection of ex-works privateer sports/prototype cars joined the Group 7 monsters to bolster the rather sparse grids. Jürgen Neuhaus had the distinction of winning the series in a Gesipa (rivets) sponsored Porsche 917K. Fly should consider adding that car to their existing 917K Classic range. The following year saw renewed interest in the series as Chevrolet powered McLaren M8E, March 717 and BRM P167 sports cars joined the fray. Faced with stiffer competition, Porsche introduced the 917/10 spyder fitted with an air-cooled 5.0-litre engine for customers to campaign.

In a sense, the first Interserie 917/10 was not particularly successful. Yet Finland's Leo Kinnunen managed to win the 1971 series, despite scoring a solitary victory. This was at the helm of a Team AAW 917/10, entered by fellow Finn, Aarno Wihuri. Moreover, Kinnunen would achieve a hat-trick of Interserie titles. Porsche introduced a 5.0-litre turbocharged version, the following year, in an effort to thwart the more powerful opposition. Largely derived from the high downforce Penske CanAm 917/10, the European turbocharged version helped Porsche maintain their dominance of the Interserie until the series' demise at the end of 1975.

## **THE SLOT CAR**

Reviewed here is Fly's, sorry, I mean GB Track's (GB1) interpretation of the Jürgen Neuhaus entered and driven Porsche 917/10. As the reigning Interserie champion, Neuhaus' car carried the much coveted No.1 during 1971.

However, he only managed sixth place in the series that year. Adorning the car is a spectacular variation of Shell's (fuel) corporate colours. The combination of vivid yellow and prominent red stripes certainly grabs your attention – I suggest wearing sunglasses when racing it! As Fly's unimaginative packaging has been retained, you can expect an insert card bereft of useful information, a clear plastic display case and a black plinth with rather perfunctory car/driver/year details printed on it in silver text.

Similarities continue with the running gear. The chassis design, treaded and tampo printed tyres, wheels, sidewinder Mabuchi type motor and a powerful removable magnet would not be out of place on a Fly Porsche 917. GB Track have wisely opted for the alternative (and correct) solid post mirror stalk, rather than the delicate thin wire or front wing mounted type that teams also utilised (see cover and illustration in GB Track's pamphlet). The entire bodywork, including the tampo livery, benefits from having a lacquered finish. A method that I would like to see adopted by other slot-car manufacturers, so as to preserve a car's livery against the rigours of racing.

However, minor faults are evident. On my example, the hollow air vents across the top of the front wings lack the sharp definition found on Fly cars. Annoying dust particles were present, and the depth of red paint varied around the leading edge of the 'bonnet.' GB Track also chose to lacquer the engine cover – it should have a matt finish. The grille inside the front (oil cooler) intake is made of solid plastic, rather than the superior photo-etched type fitted to Fly 917s. And why weren't the visible yellow body mounting posts, seen through the small front NACA ducts, disguised with black paint? All these factors conspire to debase the overall look of the car. Yet GB Track still capture the feel of the unadorned (pre-aerofoil) spyder, despite those shortcomings.

## **ON TRACK IMPRESSIONS**

A brief out-of-the-box comparison track test session with a brand new Fly Porsche 917K was undertaken. This proved an ideal way to⇒

gauge just how the two mechanically identical cars performed. However, a running-in period was adhered to, prior to each car having a couple of 20 lap timed 'races' to establish decent race and fastest lap times. Although, with regular use the times will inevitably be reduced, it helps to illustrate my initial impressions of the two cars.

#### **GB Track (GB1) 917/10**

Fastest lap = 4.0929 sec

20 laps = 1 min 24.8305 sec

#### **FLY Classic (C53) 917K**

Fastest lap = 4.1835 sec

20 laps = 1 min 30.3106 sec

Overall, there is little appreciable difference between the two. Both are endowed with impressive speed and acceleration. Yet it is the handling of the lighter and shorter spyder version which was much more self assured, but not quite on a par with the Fly 908/3 recently reviewed (NSCC Journal, January 2001). In contrast, the coupé version's additional tail-end weight (bodywork and spare tyre) made it feel less sure-footed, somehow more demanding to control through corners. Having said that, across an entire range, Fly, and now GB Track cars, are by far and away the best performing out-of-the-box slot-cars currently available. Thankfully, they need little or no fettling to get them to perform competitively. In total, GB Track have announced four race versions of the 917/10, the other three are listed below.

#### **(GB2) AAW 917/10 – 1971**

No doubt, this will be a popular choice for many collectors as it represents the 1971 series winning car. The white and blue with gold (No.11) race numbers car was sponsored by Colt during that season, and entered by the AAW team for Leo Kinnunen.

#### **(GB4) Gesipa 917/10 – 1971**

The (No.5) car in the familiar Gesipa sponsored colours of blue with a central yellow stripe. With Michel (Michael) Weber at the helm it took third place in the championship.

#### **(GB3) Kraus 917/10 – 1971**

As depicted this was a 1971 car, entered and raced by Porsche stalwart Ernst Kraus in the 1972 series without success. It features a gaudy

shade of green (incorrectly shown in their pamphlet as blue) with an orange/red stripe.

#### **(GB?) Test Car 917/10 – 197?**

At the time of writing, this has yet to be officially confirmed, but expect its release in due course. It represents the plain red test car version, as driven by Jo Siffert.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Fundamentally, there is nothing wrong with the 917/10. But, I just wonder if it has that all important desirability factor. Something that will allow collectors and racers to embrace GB Track products with the same enthusiasm previously reserved for Fly cars. In fairness, the 917/10's excellent performance and handling are redeeming features. However, we can banish any thoughts of this 'new kid on the block' being as good as a Fly Classic slot-car in the quality department. Whether this proves to be their modus operandi remains to be seen. If it is, then I suggest GB Track reflect that fact by marketing future releases at a lower price level.

Although, nonplussed by their choice of subject matter for an inaugural slot-car. I have to concede that the Interserie Porsche merits inclusion in Fly Car Model's (GB Track) range of historic slot-cars. As the race history suggests, it was an integral part of Porsche's racing programme during a transitional period, which saw the gradual introduction of turbocharging into the sport. I would now encourage GB Track to produce the original 1969 Porsche 917PA CanAm version – minus the aforementioned faults!

If you are currently documenting Porsche's racing heritage in slot-car form, or find that era of motor racing fascinating, then the 917/10 is a must-have purchase. Would I part with hard earned cash for one of these Porsches? Despite my earlier reservations regarding quality, the answer has to be an emphatic yes! The 1971 series winning 917/10 (GB2) would be my preferred choice as a 'coat hanger to hang a memory on.' Once again, my thanks go to Sean at Pendle Slot Racing for supplying the review car. Until the next trip down memory lane, cheers! ■

# Memories of a gentleman racer

BY TONY SECCHI

I have just recently learned, from a mutual friend, that Bert Hyland has died. Who was Bert Hyland I hear you ask? Well, Bert was our club champion for most of my racing years. Older than me, he was a quiet modest American graphic illustrator, who lived with his wife in a two room studio flat in South Kensington, London. He had immigrated over here after the 39-46 War and taken up slot car racing a few years before I did.

He was a meticulous car builder and his preparation left nothing to be desired. He was, moreover, a fast and fair racer who was always approachable for advice and information - a worthy champion.

When I joined the club in 1963 it took me a good six months of regular competition before I was able to construct a car good enough to compete. As I have stated in a previous article, we had six championship events a year, each one lasting two months. During this time you had to fit in ten rounds of racing.

I had struggled (to put it mildly) with the first two category events of Sports Cars and Saloons, but by the time the GT event started I had put together and tested a pretty good 1/24 Jaguar 'E' type Coupé. Bert had prepared a beautiful Ford Mustang to his impeccable standards. He was a very skilful and fast driver, almost never deslotting and/or taking anyone off; clean, fast and fair summed him up.

I was at that time cast in the role of one of the 'up and coming', so in a way he was my arch rival. He was far more experienced than I and from the start of the championship he was faster and more successful. However, like anyone with any competitive spirit, I thrive on competition and began to give as good as I got. At the end of the ten rounds he beat me fair and square into second place, but I had the satisfaction of an extra point for the fastest lap.

After our two months of highly competitive racing we were firm friends and had a lot of respect for each other. He invited me to his flat and I met his wife and ogled at his model car workshop in a corner of his studio. He took pleasure in the closeness of the racing and the friendly rivalry that existed between us. He commended me on my improvement and said how much he had enjoyed it. The rest of the season concluded, but I could not quite get my other cars up to the standard of his and I offered no further challenge to his inevitable Club Championship. And of course, there were other drivers who were much better than I.

The following year was 1965 and I was due to go to California for three months, so that excluded me from a full racing season. However, I constructed my cars and hoped to get as many races in as I could before my departure. I used my old 'E' Type to form the basis of a 1/24 Ferrari 250 GTO LM64 (Monogram body). Into this I built all the knowledge gained in the previous season and slowly began to come of age. Due to my absence I could only enter four of the six two month events. Bert was leading the overall championship, winning the first two events (saloons and sports) with me second in one.

The third event was my favourite - GT Cars in which I entered my GTO. Bert had entered a Camaro which looked very fast and stable in practice, but which I felt was no better than my GTO.

I got off to a good start winning the first two or three events with Bert not quite on the pace. However, by the middle of the championship he was back on song and we both fought tooth and nail, swapping fastest laps and results until the last round - round ten. We had a system of one ten lapper on each of four lanes - this was then repeated. Whoever had the most points from

the first four races had choice of lane for race nine and similarly in the second four races for race ten.

The best and fastest lane on our track was lane three, with lane two second. I had the choice for race nine and chose this lane with Bert on my inside on lane two. He had more points in the second set of races and would have choice of lane in race ten - the last of the event and of the championship. With five points for a win and four for second I was leading by three points at the start of race nine so I figured that a first and second place would suffice in these last two races.

In the event of equal points the number of fastest laps counted and I had a lead on that score. We started and soon left the other two entrants behind; I was leading Bert by about a length but could not really shake him off. Coming up the rise to our infamous banked bend there was a stretch of tunnel under the overpass. We both entered this and for a split second (as usual) lost view of the cars. Just as we came out and into view we collided and I came off. I don't know what actually happened, but I suspect that Bert tried a late braking surprise move on the tunnel exit before entering the banking where the extra momentum would have given him the advantage to the line.

As I stated before, Bert was a very clean and stable racer so I took what happened as a racing accident. Besides, we had never collided before. Bert apologised and I said that it did not matter (of course it did). Bert was now ahead by two points and whoever won that last round would win the GT Championship - (Schumacher and Villeneuve eat your hearts out, we did it years before).

We got prepared and Bert was asked his choice of lane as was his right. Very quietly he answered 'Lane Two'.

Along with the rest of the members I was stunned - lane three surely? But no, Bert had already plugged into his chosen lane. Naturally I chose lane three and the race got under way. I managed to get a couple of lengths ahead and tried to stay there with Bert pushing me all the way. Suddenly he was off. I don't know how or why but it was so and I finished to win the race

and the GT Championship

Bert was, as ever, generous in his praise and heartily congratulated me on my first ever championship win. I commiserated with him but I did not feel that it was prudent to ask him why he had chosen lane two over lane three.

I went on to win the next championship event - (saloon cars using a 1/24 Jaguar MK 10 with Woolworths body) mainly due to Bert missing a lot of races due to his work schedule. I then went to California and Bert won the Club Championship once again, losing only those two events.

The news of his demise triggered off memories of that night and although not sure, I think that in retrospect, Bert was making amends. I like to believe that he did not want to win on what he deemed a default of his own making; he wanted to give his rival a fair chance. I think that modesty and humility were his paramount virtues. Of course, I will never know for sure what his motive was, but I do know that he made me a better racer by his advice and competition and a fairer one by his example.

Our favourite driver in the 50s/60s was Stirling Moss who, in all the many races I witnessed, never 'T' boned or deliberately crashed into anyone and who in the 1958 F1 championship spoke up on his rival, Mike Hawthorn's behalf to have four deducted points reinstated. He lost the World Championship to Mike by one point.

In today's dodgem/bumper car events that pass for real racing, to nerf your rivals out of the way is venerated. But not may I say by me, even when I raced for real.

I have in my lifetime been fortunate to watch live, some of the greats - Fangio, Moss, Clark, Prost, Lauda etc. and admired not only their immense skill but their fair play and enjoyment. I know that pressures are very different today - people excuse their actions by saying that they really hate losing. Well, in my day so did we, but not at all costs. We loved the participation and the friendship more, and I think that Bert did too.

Thanks for the memories, Mate. ■

# The allure of rubber!

## Part 2 - restoration

BY PETER BOITA

I started from a position of finding out exactly where the original design faults of the rubber track lay and then set about correcting them in sequence and seeing how I could improve things along the way.

The faults were as follows:

- 1) Metal rails at best heavily ingrained and soiled, at worst (as with some other rubber track I had acquired as part of a "job lot") containing a fair amount of surface rusting.
- 2) Track surface heavily soiled from years of use.
- 3) Solid white lines on curves and broken white lines on the straights and starting straight faded, worn and chipped from years of use.
- 4) Bad electrical conductivity from track piece to track piece and finally;
- 5) Sloppy butt jointing of adjacent track pieces.

Faced with this list I started to look closely at the track to see just what could be done to address all the above problems. It soon became abundantly clear that all the problems could not be sorted out with the components of the track left in situ. It then became painfully obvious that if I was going to get it to concours condition I would have to approach it in the same way as restoring my classic car.....i.e take it apart to the very last nut and bolt, refurbish / improve as required and then carefully rebuild everything until the end result was perfect..... I therefore started to strip down each piece of track to it's individual components.

To remove and replace the metal rails I used three screwdrivers with nice thin, but strong ends, in 4mm, 3mm and 2mm. First of all, I turned the track upside down on a hard surface. I used the 2mm blade screwdriver to lever up the track rail tabs and the 4mm blade screwdriver held near vertically to support the back of the delicate tab as it is levered up to the vertical position. It is critical that it is supported as the tabs are particularly fragile and if you snap one you must effectively scrap that piece, for if you were to put it back the rail would not seat into the rubber correctly and you would end up with

an uneven pick up surface which would just make things worse, apart from not achieving your goal which is a perfectly restored piece of track.

Once all the tabs are levered up, use a pair of fine nosed pliers that have smooth, not serrated jaws which would mark the delicate metal rail tabs, to straighten them as much as possible. Usually, you only need to clamp it once in the jaws of the smooth, fine nosed pliers to effect an almost perfect straightening of the tab. You will notice at this point that the end two tabs bend in the opposite direction to those in the middle of the track. This is important to be aware of when you come to reassemble it. Either way, there are usually faint marks on the rubber that show where they were bent at the factory. Beware, however, of factory mistakes! On quite a few rails the tabs had been bent the wrong way! Yet another opportunity to get things as they should be on re-assembly.

Now all the tabs are nice and straight and standing up vertically it is time to remove the metal rail. Use a pair of fine nose serrated end pliers this time. The serrated jaws give the grip required to help ease the tabs through the rubber track without damaging it. Move the track to the end of the hard work surface so that the metal rail overhangs the edge. Take the fine nosed serrated end pliers and holding them shut, place them over the tab, as though you were going to grip them in the normal way, but do not open the plier jaws. Merely engage the tab on one or two of the jaw serrations. Start with one of the tabs near the centre of the piece of track you are working on and gently but firmly press down on it until it is flush with the underside of the track. Be very careful here. If it is stubborn, move onto another one so that you do not distort the rail itself. Once all the tabs have been pushed flush with the underside of the track, turn it over and with the 4mm screwdriver gently lever off the rail from the rubber track surface. Repeat the above procedure for all four metal track rails. ➡➡

As you look at the front of each piece of track you will see the actual connectors that slot into the adjacent track piece situated in the top right and bottom left of the track. These will only go back in these locations due to tiny slots cut into these parts of the track only so it is virtually impossible to get things crossed up on re-assembly! As I said earlier, apart from my original track, I also had a fair amount from a "job lot" I had acquired. This seemed an even earlier version as it had brass connectors instead of plain metal. On re-assembly I elected to use these earlier connectors rather than the originals. I rather liked the period feel they gave and indeed on page eleven of the Third Edition Catalogue the illustration of the track hook up alludes to them with the track connectors coloured in a faint yellow. I actually stripped all the track I had in order to use all the best pieces to make up my original CM3 circuit.

I also labelled and put in identical piles all the curved pieces as I took them off. The metal

rails used on the straights and my three piece chicane are identical so they just went in one big pile. Next came the task of sorting out all the best bits. As far as the now stripped pieces of rubber track were concerned I was looking for the unwarped and undamaged sections - don't worry about the inevitable chipped white lines as we'll be dealing with those later. As far as the rails were concerned, any with rust on the inside faces (where it comes into contact with the rubber track itself) were rejected along with any distorted ones. As long as the rust was not deep seated on the running surfaces these were considered acceptable as surface rust here would be dealt with automatically as part of the cleaning process. It probably took me about 20 minutes per track section to remove all the metal rails and connectors. In the next issue I'll be sharing with you how best to clean everything up. So until then start sorting out your old track and stripping it down! ■