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The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

Move over Vine Fennel

This month I have been doing some Westcountry rambling of my own. I am also becoming seriously worried about the extent of my paranormal powers.

Recently, while on our annual holiday in Devon I vaguely recalled reading about a motor racing circuit on Dartmoor which had only run meetings for a couple of years in the early fifties and somehow it just seemed like a 'really good idea' to try and find it.

Needless to say the relevant book had been left behind in Norfolk and I had totally forgotten the name of the circuit. Never one to duck a challenge though we started our enquiries at Okehampton tourist information office - total blank; Tavistock - the same; rest of Devon - same result.

Then I had a flash of inspiration; Okehampton library and try the Internet. Off we went, explained our quest to the lady behind the desk and spent a fruitless half hour on the computer. I was about to give up when a man tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me but I couldn't help overhearing your conversation and I think the place you are looking for is called Davidstow on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall!"

Well I was close with Dartmoor but how did my informant know I wondered; "Easy," he said, "I went to the first race meeting." Right, so a visit to the library fifty years after the event puts me in the direct path of a man who actually watched one of the race meetings - spooky or what?

Anyway, we went to Davidstow and had a drive round the remains of the circuit; no wonder it wasn't a success - 970ft up on Bodmin the weather varies between howling gale, fog, rain or all three at once! Having to clear the sheep off the circuit between races can't have helped either. Try a visit if you are in that part of the world; the nice man who runs the flying club will be happy to tell you about it. Yes, I know it has got nothing to do with slot-cars but you can't have everything can you ?

And Finally - the lottery numbers are.....!

Till next month

Brian



Out of focus

OK, it was my mistake. I can't tell the difference between white and silver! The Toys-R-Us Ford Focus correct set specification should have been C2405 Ford Focus Ka livery 1 silver/blue skirt Toys-R-Us set C1096L C2406 Ford Focus Ka livery 2 silver/red skirt Toys-R-Us set C1096L.

Now it's a blur

One of the problems of getting all those red-hot news items for you all is that sometimes, last minute production or specification amendments don't get tagged for my report. A recent case in point is Argos 'circuit 1' set C1080K 'Speed Extreme' previously reported many months ago with set cars C2427W Subaru and C2428W Mitsubishi Evo7. The correct specification is for two Ford Focus cars of C2427W in white and C2428W in red. As a by-the-by, can anyone identify the blurred red car on the box lid of this set?

Seeing double

Set C1080N. Haven't we just done this one? No. This is the Rally Sport set from Index stores with Subaru Impreza and Mitsubishi Lancer EVO3. So, to confirm, as I know lots of members will ring me to double check, the set contains C2364WL Mitsubishi Lancer EVO7 and C2412WL Subaru Impreza.

Did I blink?

It may have escaped your notice that there is a new livery Porsche 911 GT3R in set C1095 GT Interactive as shown in this year's catalogue.

Accompanying C2274WL Porsche 911 GT3R Paragon is the newcomer C2268WL Porsche 911 GT3R Tengtools.

It's all gone dark

The silhouetted Ford GT40 MKII cars are a C2464 light blue bodied racing number 1 car with orange flashes around the headlights - very similar to the Minic Motorways artwork for the 1960's 1/43 scale mini racers. The other blacked out GT40 in the catalogue is C2465, racing number 4, in a beautiful golden copper colour with 'loud' reddish flashes around the headlights.

Vision impaired

Take a look at the picture of the Williams FW23 and the McLaren MP4-16 cars in the New Release catalogue for a sneak preview of cars to be released around Christmas 2002. But what you see in the New Release catalogue are only mock-ups and will not be the same as those eventually released. So, when you see a No.6 World.com/FedEx/Compaq liveried Williams and a No.3 David/Siemens McLaren, don't think your vision has gone totally cross-eyed. That'll just be the Christmas spirit!



Happy Autumn or, if your vision is still out of focus, then Happy Fall! ■

Westcountry rambles

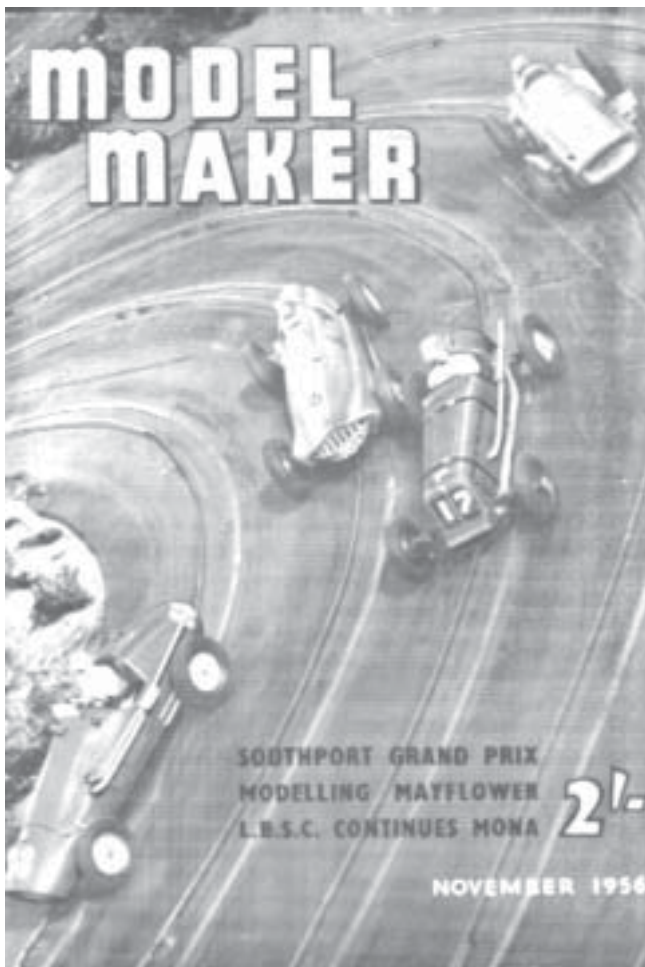
BY VINE FENNEL

I have started at the very beginning of Dave's collection of magazines so hopefully you should get an idea of how the hobby has evolved over the years.

As there are quite a few missing issues there will obviously be gaps in some of the articles. This month for example the article comes from Model Maker, April 1956 (I was only 3 months old!) and is a follow on from an article printed in May 1955 (not even a twinkle). I hope you still find it interesting. It was titled as follows:-

Some further experiences of electric model car racing

It is by G. Atkinson who apparently was the first reader to get a track operating following an introductory article in December 1954, describing it in May 1955, Model Maker. He makes a few more pertinent comments in the light of mature experience.



“Since the publication of my original article on this subject, in the May 1955 issue of Model Maker, I have naturally been most interested in the various developments arising therefrom, and have also made further experiments myself. It is hoped that the conclusions may be of interest to other builders of these cars and tracks.

In general, I have found that my original designs of both track and cars were unnecessarily robust. This was impressed upon me when my wife and myself were fortunate enough to be invited, by the Southport M.E.S., to visit their Exhibition in 1955, and see their track in use - the improvement in effect and actual operation, of cars smaller and neater than my own and fitted with correctly operated steering was most marked. I have now changed over to 1/32 scale and have built two new cars fitted with Ackerman steering, drivers, and full detail using the “Lazy Man’s” bodies, so admirably provided by Gowland Bros. Highway Pioneer Kits, for Jaguar XK 120 and Bentley models. Alterations to my previously published designs are as follows:-

Track

I still use 1/16in. brazing rod - available in dead-straight 3ft lengths - for the guide rail, but make my spacers of 20 swg nickel-silver wire. Return rail and locating pins also of this wire, which can be bought in 25ft. coils. Return rail is spaced 3/8 in. from the guide rail and on its left looking along direction of travel (Southport Standard). While this construction gives a lower guide rail height than that used by the Southport M.E.S., my cars will run on their standard track as the guide bracket is designed to give full 3/16th in. clearance in height. The above dimensions, however, make up an even neater track, and also make driving more exact, since cars do not tend to corner with their rear wheels located by the guide rail - they can climb over this with ease, and do so immediately the speed rises too high.

I found that brass brazing rod and N/S wire keeps clean indefinitely, and provides better electrical efficiency than birdcage wire, while =>

it should not be more costly to purchase (I was lucky - my supply was given to me, so I cannot speak from experience on this point).

Pick-ups

The forward facing return pick-up, of my original design, was a definite mistake; this should be made as a trailing pick-up, to avoid catching any snags in the rail laying, and consequent major smash. It should, however, be so designed as to make contact with the rail exactly in line with the front axle, which necessitates its being mounted on the chassis as far forward as possible so as to provide sufficient length and flexibility to its spring.

The "T" form of the original guide-rail pick-up also had its disadvantages, as, should a car overswing on a corner and come to a stop, the projecting end of the "T" invariably caught UNDER the guide-rail, with the risk of damage to the pick-up when the car was replaced on the track. I now make this pick-up triangular in shape, with base of 1/8in. x 1/16in, brass strip and sides of 26 SWG hard brass wire, to form the springs. The apex of this triangle makes the point of attachment to the chassis.

Gearing

I still believe that the gears originally specified - a two start worm meshing with a 20 tooth gear wheel, supplied by Precision Model Engineering Company, Whitechapel, Liverpool, are the most efficient to use and are dead silent in operation, if correctly meshed. They are also practically indestructible. I do, incidentally, join issue with the Model Maker when, in their February 1956 issue's description of the Southport M.E.S. gearing, they say that a two start worm, as supplied with Triang motor, meshed with a 10 tooth wheel gives a ratio of "About 4 to 1: just right for racing". The ratio so obtained is exactly 5 to 1, but my own experience shows that the higher ratio of 10 to 1 both gives faster acceleration out of curves and also enables the motor, when "flat out" to operate at higher revs and therefore greater efficiency - power is high RPM with these small motors.

All S.M.E.C. wheels will give adequate

clearance between the 3/16in. high guide rail and the Precision Engineering Company's worm wheel, since the diameter of the latter is only 1/2 in. - it therefore projects 1/4in. only, below rear axle level. Present supplies do, however, need bushing to fit axles suiting S.M.E.C. wheels - I make my axles out of 16G piano wire - since they are bored out 1/8in. as supplied. I am contacting Precision Company on this point, with a view to suggesting that they make future batches with a 1/16in. central hole, which could be enlarged for other purposes. The cost of these gear sets is, by the way, very low.*

*Editorial note - We have now received samples of these gear sets from Precision Model Engineering. They have, as suggested, been drilled with a 1/16in. central hole to gear, which is fractionally under 3/4in. diameter, thus providing clearance of just over 1/16in. between guide rail and wheel - provided track is accurately constructed. Price is 4s. per set plus P.T. if applicable (*Shillings and Purchase Tax for those too young*).

Steering

The original design of pivoted front axle has been scrapped, and correct steering is now fitted - it appears to stand up to the bumps and stresses of racing as well as the former version. The thing to guard against when making a front axle, is making it too sloppy and easy-working. A small amount of friction in the king pins and/or pivots is desirable as this will damp down wheel wobble (hence steering dampers in full size). The critical dimension is that between the guide pivot and the pin operating the track rod. This amount should be exactly 1/4in., for correct amount of wheel turn applied when on a curve, and presuming that the guide is pivoted at the centre of its length, and exactly under the front axle.

Chassis design

The original material used - 1/16in., paxolin - proved to be too whippy in nature, and allowed the mesh of the gears to vary. I now use 1/16in. hard brass sheet, with stiffening edging of 1/8in.

by 1/16in. brass strip, on end, sweated on. This gives a very rigid chassis and also provides the bearings for the rear axle. Weight in the chassis is essential, to provide wheel grip - cars made too lightly merely spin their wheels, instead of accelerating, when the power is turned on.

General

All in all, very little of my original design, except the basic idea which was not mine anyway, remains. The amendments given above do, however, prove to be well worth while, and we get even more fun out of our track than we used to. To those constructors who are using Scalex cars and 1/27 scale as their standard, I would still recommend these revised track standards, Ackerman steering and also weight - this last is most important, since Scalex wheels do not give the same adhesion as S.M.E.C. tyres, and there is plenty of room, in these larger bodies, for a piece of lead to give some much-needed ballast over the back axle.

Lastly, my thanks to the Model Maker both for the "Invention" of this form of modelling, and also for the subsequent support which it has given to it. May I add a plea to all builders to either 1/32 or 1/27 scale to adhere to the "Southport Standards for track", as laid down in the February, 1956 issue of Model Maker so that all cars may run on any track in use, and the days of Open Meetings come so much nearer. There is, by the way, one additional standard not so far mentioned - cars should run forwards when Negative DC voltage is applied to the Guide Rail and Positive to the Return Rail. This, again, is the method used by Southport M.E.S. - I know, as my track was constructed, and the cars wired, the "other way round" and my cars ran smartly backwards when I attempted to run them at the Southport Exhibition. It is therefore equally necessary to standardize this track polarity if all cars are to run correctly at any open meeting of the future. Thanks also should go to the Southport M.E.S. for their elaboration and improvement of my original designs, for their efforts to popularize this form of "Indoor Sport", and for their personal hospitality to myself."

In conclusion here's the latest instalment of the Fly listing. This month it's Ford Capris.

Ford Capri RS Turbo

A141 Ford Capri RS Turbo. White/Blue. Sachs. #08 Zolder 1979.

A142 Ford Capri RS Turbo. White Liquimoly. #55 Nurburgring '81.

A143 Ford Capri RS Turbo. Green/Yellow/Black. #04 Nurburgring '81.

A143l Ford Capri RS Turbo. Green/Yellow/Black. #04 Nurburgring '81. Lights

A144 Ford Capri RS Turbo. Black. Mampe. #52 Hockenheim '78.

A144l Ford Capri RS Turbo. Black. Mampe. #52 Hockenheim '78. Lights

A145 Ford Capri RS Turbo. Jagermeister. Orange #01 Nurburgring '82.

A145l Ford Capri RS Turbo. Jagermeister. Orange. #01 Nurburgring '82. Lights.

Next time I'll try to update all the new releases of the cars already listed. ■

How to improve your English with Scalextric

BY LAURENT CHERUY

Like many French teenagers of my generation (I am now in my late thirties - well I will be 40 next April!) I learnt English at school and also by listening to the Beatles and the Stones. I later improved my English at business school and even worked in England for two months. Until recently, as a publisher in an international editing company, I still considered it to be mainly a business language.

That was before I rediscovered our hobby; naturally I played with a figure of eight set (my brother's) as a child and have vivid memories of a blue sharknose Ferrari racing against a yellow Lotus 21. I later had my own circuit and drove French Matras during the glory days of endurance racing.

After several years of interruption - studies, spots, wedding - you all know the story - it was time for a comeback with a group of friends. The circuit was rebuilt on a non-permanent basis, since a 20 metre 4 lane layout does not fit in a small apartment. With the support of my ever patient wife we decided to run a competition weekend at least once a year which has lasted since 1987.

Finally, as a logical consequence I started to collect Scalextric catalogues and cars, of course.

And here we are

I then discovered the internet sites of our well known dealers and discovered that trying to understand their contents is definitely a strong motivation to improve your English.

The next step was sending and receiving emails ending with "cheers; bye for now; see you; regards" ...each dealer should be able to recognise him (or her) self!

New words soon made an appearance in my vocabulary list; my usual "operating income, last estimate, turnover, return on sales" were now overlapped by "bumpers, wheel hubs, aerofoils,

rear axle, gearbox, bonnet, body clips, round pin/medium head, loop braids/big head" etc. I also frankly admit that the most difficult to understand was the famous BTS spare parts list!

Always improving

I also had moments of anguish when a dealer told me he had sent a pic! At that time I hadn't got the slightest idea what he meant; happily I soon understood when I opened the file. Another good one was when Robert Learmouth told me that "the small metal part just behind the driver's head on the sharknose Ferrari" which I was looking for was simply a rollbar!

Not only was my written English improving but I also had to make some progress with the spoken version; I sometimes have to phone about a special order or to give credit card details. Pronunciation improves dramatically when you learn to say "filler cap" (thanks to Josefine!) or even "Vanwall"

Strange messages

Another funny thing is the questioning look on my beloved wife's face when she discovers esoteric messages on the family PC like "green VG C68 in stock; Cat #25 arrived; powersledge OK; FJ available now" and so on.

Strange terms for a great hobby; but it's reassuring to know that she receives esoteric messages about her hobby of cross stitching as well!

I must also add that my monthly reading of the Journal is one of the most important methods of improving my cultural and technical Scalextric English.

I hope that the British members are not too bored with my language difficulties; I guess that other overseas members have the same problem to share and that Scalextric has helped them improve their English as well! ■

Track cleaning blocks

BY THE EDITOR

Last month's enquiry from Graham Smith (the other one!) about the best methods of cleaning track has prompted some replies from other members. Also, as mentioned, I have received some sample track cleaning blocks from Plebys Hardware so I will attempt to explore the subject a little more deeply.

The best method to use really depends on how bad the track is to start with and what result you want to achieve. If the track is in regular use and all that is needed is a basic "wash and brushup" then the following tips from Max Winter should suffice:-

"Clean the rails with meths., keep rubbing with a bit of kitchen towel till the black stuff has gone - when buffing up the contacts don't forget to clean the insides of the bits they slot into, a cotton bud dipped in meths. will do this. Don't forget to give the track surface a good clean with a damp sponge, it's amazing how much grip my track had lost over time from everyday dust and pollution."

If your aim is total restoration then I thoroughly recommend you refer to the series of articles by Peter Boita which I published last year. Although he was writing about rubber track many of his methods can be applied to the modern plexytrack. Be warned though - this is restoration to "as new" condition and is very time consuming. If you have lost your copies, or have only recently joined the club then drop a line to Bob Bott who would dearly love to get rid of some of the back issues which are cluttering his loft!

What to do though with the heap of track which you have inherited or acquired at a car boot sale? Firstly, throw out all the severely warped and badly rusted pieces; no matter what you do it will prove impossible to return them to a useable condition and second-hand track is so cheap that it is not worth the effort.

However, the stuff that is essentially flat but seriously dirty can be easily and quickly restored with the aid of the aforementioned track cleaning blocks from Plebys.

They look similar to the black sponge sanding blocks available from any DIY store but have the great advantage of being cut to the exact size of the metal rails of Scalextric track. They can be used on their own but the job is made a lot easier if you also use the cleaning fluid which Plebys sell. It comes in a spray bottle, is non-flammable, non toxic, water soluble and doesn't stink the house out like meths.!

The method of use is as follows:

- Put some newspaper on a flat surface to protect against overspray and place your track on top.

- Spray track lightly with cleaning fluid and rub rails with cleaning blocks; they are mildly abrasive so don't press too hard and avoid touching the plastic. The blocks will mould themselves to the shape of the rails.

- Clean small sections at a time; any light surface rust will be dissolved by the fluid and the rails will soon be clean.

- Wipe each section with a clean cloth and, when the whole piece is finished, spray with the fluid again and buff with the cloth to complete the job.

- No hard polishing is needed and the cloth will remove any surplus fluid, complete with all the dirt.

Now I just happened to have a Goodwood chicane which had been stored in the loft for upwards of twenty years; it was covered in so much muck that you couldn't see where the plastic ended and the metal began! A fair test for the cleaning stuff I thought.

To say I was impressed would be something of an understatement - the product is truly excellent. Within ten minutes, without any major effort on my part, I was looking at shiny rails and pristine black plastic. That should double the value when I stick it on eBay!

The cleaning fluid also leaves a protective coating which helps keep the track clean for the future. I returned the chicane to the loft for a month and it promptly attracted a fresh layer ➡➡



A before and after picture - or alternatively - a black blob which might be a bit of track!

of dust but a quick wipe with a clean cloth soon restored its pristine appearance.

The fluid is also very good at cleaning other types of plastic such as car bodies. I tried it on an equally dirty Austin Healey which was awaiting restoration; it not only removed the muck but also dissolved that horrible white fungus which afflicts some older cars. The fluid had no adverse effect on the number discs and, to date, the fungus has not returned.

So much for its cleaning properties - trust me, it works - but what about the performance side of the equation? I inserted the cleaned track into my test circuit and initially was disappointed as conductivity did not seem to be improved; the cars still stuttered over the chicane. However I soon realised that I had neglected to attend to the actual track joints - a quick squirt of fluid and a poke with the cotton buds - Voila! My cars ran perfectly.

The only criticism I can make is that the protective coating on the plastic tends to give a non-stick effect which reduces grip compared to new track. This can be nullified to a large extent by a quick wipe with a damp cloth (the fluid is

water soluble) but if it is a major concern then it is easy enough to apply the fluid only to the metal rails.

The blocks and cleaning fluid are very reasonably priced but, as always, the postage adds a fair bit so larger purchases will be more economical. If you would like to try a sample first then Plebys do a small kit containing 14 blocks and 50ml of fluid for £1.99 plus p&p; this is sufficient to clean at least 30 pieces of track.

Contact details are as follows:-

Plebys Hardware Sales

54 Standard Road

Enfield

Middlesex

EN3 6DP

Tel:- 0774 7861809

email:- wiggler@supanet.com

They do not accept credit cards but all other payment methods are fine.

If you mention that you are an NSCC member and have read about the products in the Journal they will allow you a 10% discount. ■



Dear NSCC,

It seems to me that the mistake with double booking of the Swapmeets at Newark and Bishops Stortford goes back to when they were applied for.

Although Brian indicated that there might not be a swapmeet this year I was always under the impression that he was going to try to find an alternative venue. A phone call to him when Newark was applied for may have sorted the matter out then, anyway I think the only way out at this time is to check with him to see if he has had many bookings for tables, i.e. are dealers going to travel two weeks in a row.

Whatever the solution please have it made by the next Journal. As you may know last year six of us travelled from Northern Ireland to Bishop Stortford, and this year I believe there will be approx. 10 of us. We need to know early to book flights, because if there is no swapmeet on we don't get a refund. If the decision is delayed until the October journal, which will arrive here around the 15th of the month, then the cost of flights will have gone up and make travelling prohibitive.

Regards,
Ian Thompson

Just to keep the record straight, it is not the committee's responsibility to phone swapmeet organisers and ask for information; the onus is on the organiser to submit their dates at least six months in advance.

Brian Walters has been well aware of the Newark swapmeet for some considerable time but, for his own reasons, decided to organise the Bishop's Stortford event a week later.

As he has sent me payment for his adverts I assume that it is going ahead as planned; however, the committee must point out that it is strictly a commercial venture and NOT an official NSCC event. The club accepts no responsibility for any aspect of the swapmeet whatsoever and any enquiries should be sent direct to Brian Walters and not to me.

.....

Dear Brian,

Can I, through the pages of the Journal, bring the Padstow Scalextric Club to the members' attention?

We closed for the summer months but hope to reopen in the Autumn and we desperately need more adult members; I suppose this is the same for every club. If there are any members in North Cornwall who might be interested they can contact me on 01841 533545.

Thanks
Jim Hull



Dear Brian,

In last month's Journal I read with interest John Dilworth's piece about slot racing shopping trolleys: I thought you may like to know that I have witnessed slot-trolleys in action.

In 1997 my partner invited me along to view Sheffield Hallam University's final year art students degree show. Amongst some very fine (and not so fine) work there was one in particular my partner thought I would be especially interested in - she knows me so well!

Located in one of the galleries was a well set out Scalextric circuit (although in no way as spectacular as John's visions described last month) fixed on a table top measuring roughly 10' x 8'. The circuit was a reasonably complex design which would have tested the skills of many racers out there I'm sure.

However, there was not a single racer in sight that evening and certainly no detection of the unmistakable sound of hand throttles or smell of faintly burning plastic. Instead, whizzing around the track in a head to head battle were 2 beautifully hand crafted motorised slot shopping trolleys. They were being operated by some sort of pre-programmed device; possibly a couple of hidden hand throttles taped up to a certain speed as not to bring the carts off the rails, although I imagine these would have certainly started to smell rather hot after a very short while. I believe the student who created the work also made jewellery so the wirework that went into making the basket part was absolutely spot on. The trolleys were attached to what looked very much like old Metro or Maestro chassis parts.

My biggest regret is that I have no photographic evidence of the event; or indeed remember the name of the woman who created this masterpiece. Although I can assure you that it did happen and is absolutely true.

Finally a word of reassurance to anyone who like me, has purchased the new Scalextric Sport Track. I fear (and hope!) Doug (Brands Hatch article last month) may have encountered a duff layout or bad batch of track. I'm in the process of constructing a 4-lane circuit using Sport Track and so far all the initial testing has been very successful with no problems at all. I'll let you know if I experience anything of the contrary.

Regards,
David Wisdom

Dear Brian,

I would like to start by thanking Peter Morley for his comments on my Cooper article last month, it was good to know that someone was interested in reading it!

Peter was right to question my knowledge of Mexican cars, I don't really collect them so my main knowledge-pool is the famous Mr. Gillham's bible. Most of my other sources do not collect/trade in them due to the lower quality of the products.

I am, however, on more solid ground with the UK and French cars, in fact I can authenticate the dark red and lemon yellow UK cars in the best possible way - I own one of each! (The red one can also be seen on Adrian Norman's excellent website at www.slotcarportal.com, along with one of the funky colours, a beautiful light green).

The Lionel connection is indeed as Peter states. Lionel actually used the Scalextric cars as the basis for their tooling for their Cooper and BRM, the Cooper has even got the extra moulding to accommodate the RX motor that it doesn't use. Strangely, their D-Type Jaguar is completely different to the Scalextric C60.

Just one last thing, sorry to any regular visitors to my website. My ISP decided to screw up the site so I am looking for new web space. I'll be up and running again soon.

Thanks,
Neil Dunham

.....
Dear Brian,

Purchasers of my 5th Edition Scalextric book will be pleased to learn that the green roof Mercedes 250SL Coupe pictured on page 117 appears to be correct.

I have been advised by a long term Spanish collector that the green roof was available in the first year of production only. This is a rare colour and no doubt the owner of the model pictured will be pleased.

There is so much more information now available and with Scalextric turning out more cars and the new track system a 6th edition will be published later in 2003. Thanks to all those who have sent me additional material.

Regards
Roger Gillham

.....
All that hutch and no rabbit

Dear Doug,

You had us sold; the engine was running and the search about to begin. We were hooked and about to locate your website.

But, like the England cricket team, once the openers are out the middle order collapses. Surely eight plugs for Brands Hutch in the first column constitutes some kind of record! I lost interest halfway through the second column but through the haze I thought I saw three more hutches towards the end.

Perhaps the only rabbit was Murray's commentary but I was long gone down the escape road by then.

Yours sincerely
Mr. Woody Track (aka Dave Yerbury)

Guide to - Scalextric BRM P25

BY NEIL DUNHAM

The P25 was a ground breaking car for British Racing Motors (BRM). Not only did it give the mark their first pole position, but also their first GP win after 10 years of trying. Joakim Bonniers victory in the Dutch GP in 1959 would turn out to be his first and last win, but as we know BRM were to go from strength to strength.

In early 1961 Scalextric introduced their second wave of plastic cars. These were first shown in catalogue 2 and were C58 Cooper, C60 D Type Jaguar, C61 Porsche Spyder and the car this article is concerned with, BRM P25, which in this release was designated C59.

The cars were the first to be issued with the 'medium head' driver including upper body, but were released with the 'loop braid' guide pin.

The UK BRM came in green, red and dark red. Scalextric often seemed to tinker with the colours soon after issuing a car as has previously been described with the light blue / blue variations of the first series plastic cars. In the case of the BRM the dark red came first, to be replaced by the more usual bright red.

For some unknown reason the option of yellow or blue cars was not given to British drivers. The luckier French had the option of light blue or yellow to choose from and maybe also red and green. If anyone can confirm French loop braid red and green cars please

drop me a line.

Another mystery is why the Spanish factory did not produce the C59 as they did the C58 Cooper, C62 Ferrari and C63 Lotus. Perhaps there just wasn't room for a double guide on the chassis!

Within a year the cars were updated with the 'round pin' guide. Again, those pesky UK kids foiled us by producing only red and green cars, and again the French outdid us at our own game (just like the Football) by doing the standard four colours including dark red.

Around this time Lines Bros. signed an agreement with the Lionel corp. to market Scalextric in the USA under the Lionel Tri-ang label (If you can get hold of a Lionel 1962 or 1963 catalogue you will find the contents of Scalextric catalogue 2 or 3 at the back). At some stage in the early to mid sixties Lionel decided they should go it alone in the blossoming slot car market and produced a set with cars that, shall we say, were an obvious 'tribute' to Scalextric. The Lionel Cooper and BRM were retooled from the Scalextric cars, but with all the chrome work incorporated in the body mould. They had a screw fit body and Aurora style pick-ups that made them incompatible with other slot makes. An example of these pick-ups can be seen on page 18 of 'Scalextric History and Passion' by Alain Van Den Abeele and Eric De Ville. These



cars are worth collecting, the BRM definately available in green and red (sounds familiar) and possibly in white.

In late 1966 Scalextric started introducing cars for club racers, or for the cynical, for the kids who liked to cheat. The 'Race Tuned' BRM included the standard upgrades of a flag guide, tuned motor, wider wheels with soft compound tyres and 'Go faster' stripes with 'race tuned' stickers. The new car was released in green only, albeit in two distinct shades. Obviously red was now out of favour.

The race tuned car did not sell particularly well, probably because it was quite outdated by the mid-sixties. This makes it the rarer of the UK P25s.

There was then a 24 year pause in the production of the P25 before a Spinal Tap-esque come back as part of the 'Power and the Glory' range based on the BBC TV series of the same name. In true Scalextric fashion the cars were released long after the show was broadcast. This new BRM was guilty of sacrilege as its reference was a reused C number. This usually goes unnoticed as the original C98 was the James Bond Mercedes which is not listed in

Roger Gillham's bible and is shown as C75 on the base of the car.

The car itself was based on the C89 version but with a modern Mabuchi motor. The race tuned stripes remained and all cars had the racing number 5. Oh, and of course, it was available in any colour you liked, as long as it was light green.

Thanks must, as always, go to Phil Smith for putting me back on the path when I stray off into the nonsense forest.

C59 - UK:

Type 1: (Medium head, loop braids) green, red, dark red.

Type 2: (Medium head, round pin) green, red.

France:

Type 1: (Medium head, loop braids) yellow, light blue and possibly red and green.

Type 2: (Medium head, round pin) green, dark red, yellow, light blue.

C89 - UK:

(Small head, flag guide, race tuned) green, light green.

C098 - UK:

(Medium head, flag guide, Mabuchi motor) light green. ■

Short Circuits

BY JIM HULL

Who would have guessed the results of putting our club details on the Slot Car Portal website? Obviously we were hoping for contacts but from television companies?

I was fortunate to get an email from Jo Hawkes, a production assistant for Carlton TV. In Plymouth, she asked if I would like to take part in a programme about Scalextric, would I? Do bears poo in the woods? My reply was sent off without delay, well relatively speaking as I had taken 2 weeks to open the email. She telephoned 2 days later to say I had missed the boat but she would put me on the stand-by list! I was inconsolable, but never mind at least my bulk wouldn't be filling a small screen to my everlasting embarrassment. The very next week Jo rang again, somebody has cancelled and would I like to fill in next Friday, horror, excitement or just confused.

I had to take a team mate and come up with a team name. Both decisions were easy. Gerry Creechan was the only other bloke in Padstow who played with toy cars (the other club members being almost all under 15) and you only had to look at us and watch us race to realise we were Padstow's answer to the Schumacher brothers. The Padstow Cobblers were born.

Off to Plymouth where Carlton put us up overnight in an hotel which was a bit unusual as we had only driven for an hour; anyway, drop off the bags and hit the Barbican for a curry and a drink. Next morning we sat looking at the other guests having breakfast trying to spot the spotty fresh faced youths wearing anoraks who were going to be filming with us. No joy, they looked strangely sane. We thought perhaps they had already left.

Arriving for 9.00 at Plymouth Crown Hill Fort for the "Shoot". We were given racing overalls and matching baseball caps to put on. It dawned on us that they were about to make us look even dafter than we normally do, what do

you mean is it possible?. Our fellow racers were two young gentlemen from Redditch (Phoenix SCC), I can only recall the name of one of them, Daz, I believe his father manufactured soap powder. The other two were no gentlemen as will be revealed later but I think they came from the Woking area of Surrey. I do recall their names but I shall spare their blushes. At this stage the thought of having no corner marshals became very daunting, the idea of staying on for a whole lap seemed almost impossible, and so it proved to be!

First the 'Gladiator Walk', look mean and moody as you march purposefully towards the camera. Easy, I can be seriously mean, there's no way I was buying a round for this lot.

Next the interviews one to one with Alex, presenter and urine extractor in chief. Best to gloss over that.

Then onto the track. FANTASTIC, John Sword had recreated Interlagos from the Brazilian Grand Prix using 6 lane Scalextric Sports Track. The scenery and detail were great and we must have looked like kids in the toy shop at Christmas. We were introduced to the film crew who politely never laughed at us the whole day. The racing was over 6 heats of 5 laps each with points awarded for race position. The winner after the 6 heats was given pole position and chose his lane for the final. After that the others were allowed to choose their lanes in their finishing positions. Needless to say Gerry finished second to last and was the leading 'Cobbler', enough said. For the final I had the lane that nobody else wanted, the inside. This is now where the fairy story comes good; after a terrific start I was in second, just behind Gerry for lap after lap, oh the tension, then going up the back straight on the last lap, I passed Gerry and won.

Erh no, actually I came last and Gerry was second to last, never accuse a 'Cobbler' of inconsistency. The first three went through to the Semi Finals at some time in the future. The =>

2 pros from Redditch cleaned up looking in a different league with the Surrey lads third and fourth. Looking complete pillocks we left, not realising that they had a podium ceremony with Champagne; drat, missed out again.

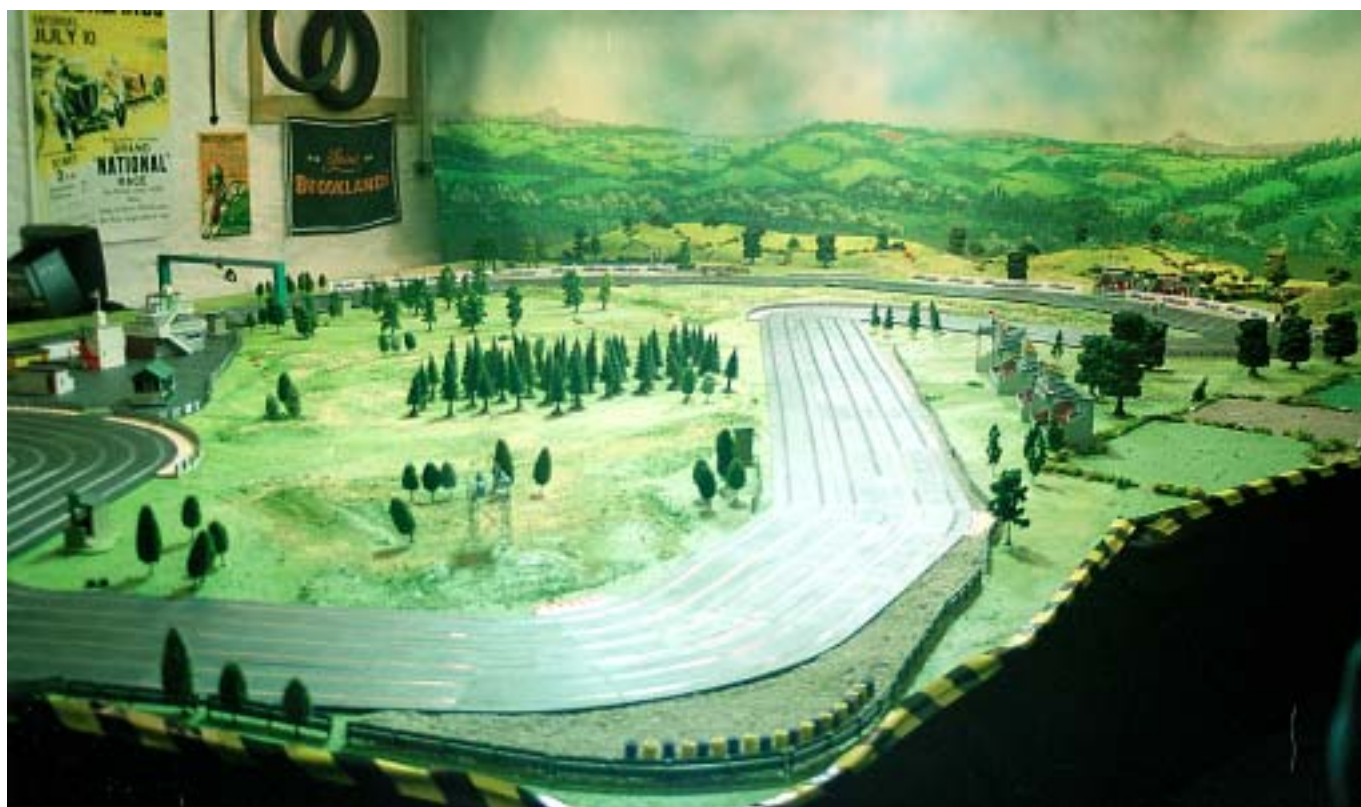
All in all a great day out, we thoroughly enjoyed it and I found the experience of racing Scalextric in front of the cameras surreal, I suspect Gerry was much the same. Don't get me wrong, there's no way we could have beaten the other guys but concentration was hard to come by; that's the only excuse I can think of so it'll have to do.

I understand that the track was supplied free by Scalextric in order to promote their new Sports System and they should be praised for supporting the programme in this way and furthering the hobby with the publicity this will attract. However, while the track itself looked good and was flat, as you would expect of nearly new track, the electrical connections were appalling and there were constant breakdowns in filming while they tried to sort it out. John and the crew assured me that it had been alright the week before for the first programme, so whether it had got bent disassembling or was just faulty I don't know. The cars used were the new Fly Porsche GTIs which went well but, although the

Scalextric hand controller supplied had brakes it was like an on/off switch. It was obviously not designed for these particular cars.

Surprise, Surprise, no it wasn't Cilla Black but Jo Hawkes on the phone, the charming chaps from Woking may be disqualified. When the production crew were driving the cars round to film some extra footage their 2 cars seemed oddly better than the others and were found to have more and bigger magnets than the others. They had cheated! Gentlemen slot racers in Cornwall were spinning in their graves at the very thought. The 'Cobblers' may be invited back, she would let us know in the next week. First thought was could I stand another day hanging around waiting to do the filming. But the thought of seeing another of John Sword's fantastic tracks and having a drive was too much.

As Gerry had come 5th in our heat he was promoted to 3rd and myself to 4th. So Gerry qualified for the Semi. The 'Cobblers' had at last achieved the fame I always knew they were capable of. Gerry used his immense charm on Jo to say he needed his manager, mentor, official photographer, coach, masseur and gofer, so they invited me to watch; great, another night in Plymouth, more curry and beer.



This time round I could relax, the other competitors were more laid back, and happily put up with their cars or the track's faults, with one exception. I must emphasise that there was no hint of cheating but one competitor refused to race until he had tweaked his car to his personal satisfaction. He eventually won easily. Scrutineering?

Gerry was supremely confident, after the fiasco of the first heat where our Bridgestone hard compound tyres had let us down, he had spent much time and money negotiating with the Padstow Rubber Company for sponsorship and they had supplied their popular knobbly product for extra grip. Alas, on opening the packet it seems they had supplied the Reliant Robin version as it was only a pack of three.

Forgive the lack of surnames but I only know the competitors by their Christian names: Steve from South Wales who brought his son to watch, Kevin from the home counties, Doug who seemed to be a rabbit breeder from Southend and was very famous, at least he told me he was, Gerry 'Cobbler' #1, Simon and I believe the last entrant was Malcolm but I never

got to speak to him so I may have the name wrong. I thought this last chap either supremely confident or not interested as he seemed to wander out of the building whenever there was free practice!

Some really good racing took place with Simon and Kevin easily the best of the field and they were 1st and 2nd in the final by at least a lap clear. Both through to the Grand Final but both unwilling to surrender the lead and coast it. Tragedy, Kevin crashed with 2 laps to go and was eliminated.

Simon, Steve and Malcolm qualified for the final, which by now has been staged. I hope they did well.

What of the 'Cobblers', we'll be back, our soles go on forever!!!!

I believe the programme is due to be broadcast in November by the Discovery Home and Leisure Channel (Satellite & Cable) and will consist of 10 programmes of 30 minutes each. I would like to thank Carlton T.V. and the film crew in particular; they had a lot to put up with and were very professional. It certainly opened our eyes as to how programmes are made. ■

BITS AND PIECES

Ramsgate weekend update

Adrian Norman informs me that he still has some places available for the NSCC/Hornby weekend at Ramsgate. If you have not attended one of these events before I can assure you that they are hugely enjoyable. Don't worry about a lack of racing skills - this is a fun event not a serious race meeting.

As an added attraction(?) this year I shall be revealing all about the production of the Journal. Come and find out how this publication is compiled in a state of sheer blind panic!



Prize car winner



This month's recipient of the Slot.it® Audi is Jim Hull of Padstow. He wins firstly for producing an article within a month of joining the club

and, secondly, for being on a par with the editor in slot-racing skills - it's good to know that other people can come last without a trace of shame! I am also awarding him the prize in the forlorn hope that he has some influence with Rick Stein and can get me a table at the Seafood restaurant without having to book a year in advance!

Incidentally there is a slight delay with the cars so Jim will have to wait a while before he receives it.

Rod Moore in the news...

...or rather the Daily Express. The Cumberland Toy museum was recently featured in the travel section with a two for one entry offer and a favourable write up - pity the copywriter couldn't spell Scalextric though!

Scalextric – a review of recent releases

BY IAN THOMPSON

I hadn't got round to buying the new Scalextric releases this year for one reason or another; indeed the last car I bought was the Burns Subaru ltd. edition. So when I had a win on the works bonus ball sweep I thought what better way to spend my winnings than to catch up with the latest releases. A quick phone call and five Sport edition cars were winging their way to my collection; a Mitsubishi Lancer no8, McLaren (David), Williams no6, Ford Mustang 15 and Chevrolet Camaro no6.

Before I go on to the review I should tell you a bit about my set up. I have approx. 600 cars being split approx 550 Scalextric and 50 other makes, Team Slot, Ninco, Fly etc. Scalextric is my favourite and I only buy other makes if (a) I really like the looks of the car and (b) it is not already made by Scalextric. My home circuit takes up my entire garage. Built on a table 16 feet by 6 it incorporates a full length start / finish straight through pit and paddock, has bends of double inner, standard and outer curves, hump, high hump, skid chicanes, and a chicane section which the cars go through twice with corner, long and double Goodwood chicanes. Virtually all buildings are represented the only one still to be acquired being a time keepers hut. The track used is SCX for standard pieces and Scalextric for the fancy bits. I don't include a timing piece at the moment as I got fed up hearing "failed to qualify" because very few cars ever do a lap under 10 seconds.

Mitsubishi Lancer No 8

First out of the box and at last something to race against the Subaru. Initial impressions are very good. Nice paint job and very nice detail around the front grille and brake discs. Fitted with similar stay on lights to the Subaru (a feature I really like) but still no lights to the rear. Onto the track, box standard, no modifications, and after

a few warming up laps the car is quick. It is holding its own against the Subaru and they are a very good match for each other. Both cars are lapping at around a consistent 10 seconds (all timings from my wristwatch). The strength of the magnet is such that there are no tail slides, the car cornering as if on rails.

Time to mess about with magnets. The car being supplied with an additional round magnet this was the first change. Although the car seemed slower it was about half to a full second a lap faster and edged ahead of the Subaru. With the two magnets and four positions there are plenty of combinations to mess around with. To simplify - with the rear magnet only fitted to the front position you can achieve tail slides at the loss of speed. With it in the middle (as supplied) the car is fast and sticks well but with it fitted rearmost between the rear wheels the front end became light and the car began to de-slot occasionally, especially going through the Goodwood chicane at speed. I shall be keeping it fitted with only the rear magnet in the central position.

Overall impressions of the Mitsubishi are that it is a very good car and a welcome addition to my collection. On the downside, this was supposed to be a Sport edition but didn't seem to perform any better than the Subaru (which presumably isn't a Sport edition) except when the extra magnet was added. I don't have a non Sport car to compare it with so would I buy another? Well only if this becomes a racing class at our local club. Then I would buy a second car and repaint it in my own livery.

This brings me to a point about the current rally cars. Firstly we had the Focus, nice car but when the Subaru came out it had a stronger magnet so the Focus falls rapidly into second place. Now along comes the Mitsubishi and it can disadvantage the Subaru by fitting the ⇒

second magnet. You can't simply buy extra magnets because neither car has the fittings to take them. Will Scalextric be amending the chassis to take account of this? Would I buy a new Focus and Subaru just to keep up? No I wouldn't but I would buy a new chassis and magnets to fit to my existing cars. What about it Hornby? Another point about the chassis, when I went to move the fitted magnet I couldn't slide it to the rear because of the engine mounts and I couldn't slide it forward because of the hole for the screw which holds the car in the box. I had to do some pruning with a blade first to free the magnet. Possibly move this hole or flatten the edges?

On the subject of rally cars, when do you ever see two racing side by side. I believe there is an end of season race in Tenerife but it is rarely televised here if ever. Why not consider a single lane track with skid surface corners and hazards on straights for the cars to go through. The possibilities are endless and it would also give the opportunity for an overhead timing device.

McLaren (David) and Williams no 6

Scalextric F1 cars had become so out of contention that some of my power sledge cars could keep up with and stay on better than recent releases. When the Ninco F1s were released a giant step forward was taken. SCX followed suit, both cars having steering which even if it doesn't make them go quicker adds immensely to their looks when racing.

I must say I love the looks of the McLaren and can only find one fault with it. With so much attention to detail, even the coloured buttons on the steering wheel, why did they not put a blue helmet in the car? And would it have been that hard to print a Saltires cross on it? The Williams on the other hand looks great from a distance but for me is spoilt by the 'wet weather' tyres. Perhaps now that McLaren have switched to Michelin, next year slicks will be available. Another thing I didn't like are the two 'wings' fitted ahead of the radiator intakes. These cars arrived about an hour before qualifying for the French Grand Prix so I was watching closely for



The test track

accuracy but I could not detect these small wings. They may well have appeared on last year's car but I believe they are likely to get broken off easily and I would have thought it easier to have left them off.

Onto the track and both cars are flying machines. The strong magnet giving a ground effect impression the cars have no tail slides and both can manage the hump bridges with ease. The McLaren did, however, seem lighter at the front so I fitted the extra magnet there but it immediately came off at the hump bridge and was left attached to the track. I didn't therefore fit the magnet to the Williams as I think this will only be suitable for a very flat smooth track.

The Williams was going particularly well until a sudden de-slot on the main straight at high speed caused a head on collision with the barrier. Given that I had read that the front nose cones could be replaced, I was impressed when I noticed it hadn't come off only to find when I retrieved it that the wing had actually bent. As I tried to straighten it the darned thing snapped so I hope replacement cones are available soon.

All in all two very quick and good looking cars both well able to beat my Ninco cars. I am looking forward to the Toyota and have even been thinking of a repaint of the McLaren into Jaguar colours. It may not be an exact bodywork double but a close representation will be good enough for me. Oh, and hopefully Michelin slicks to add on.

Ford Mustang 15 and Chevrolet Camaro 6

I don't know much about American muscle car racing but I love these two cars. They are great competitors with each other and I have had loads of fun with them already. To say they are both well run in would be an understatement. I have only one small gripe with the Mustang. It looks like it has a maggot trying to climb in the driver's window. An unnecessary addition when the window is down in my opinion and one I don't think anyone would have noticed.

Will I be buying more? Yes I already have in mind a repaint for the Mustang. Yellow with a

black stripe over the roof, and for the Camaro, orange with a 01 on the door. Well why not? And the offending maggot will be removed from the Mustang.

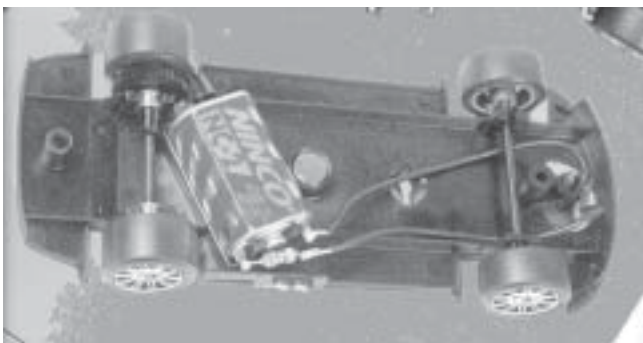
I would also like to see Scalextric doing other releases of classic cars, Mk 2 Escorts would be the best. Even re-releases of their own classics such as Aston Martin, now that silver paint is available why not a new James Bond car. Don't say the moulds, make new ones but don't make the mistake Ninco have made with their classics and fit an engine which is so fast that it makes the car almost undriveable.

In conclusion

I have tried to give an honest appraisal of the cars. I hope this doesn't come across as knocking Scalextric. I would be interested to hear other views particularly from anyone using the new Sport track. Is it better? Will my old cars with poor tyre grip still perform on it? And what about the non Sport edition cars? Any views? ■

FROM ALAN SLADE

The BMW M3 GTR marks another first in the ever changing world of slot-car racing, although I had better qualify that before someone writes and reminds me of the 1/24th scale Twinn-K Mini? What I should say is that these new Ninco models are the first 1/32nd models from the current producers of scale model slot-cars with an anglewinder motor layout. I specifically say 1/32nd as the Ninco Karts are 1/18th scale.



I gather that they have been available for some time and by all accounts are extremely good race cars. My information has only just come from Spain, and as I have never seen one you probably know more about them than I do.

The race cars are based on the cars built for the 2001 American Le Mans Series of races and raced by such people as Hans Stuck, the Muller brothers and J-J Lehto. And in true ALMS style these cars "have enormous rollers to transmit that power to the ground to add to the already aggressive silhouette of the M3" as the Spanish say. When I first saw a picture of these cars it reminded me very much of a true slot racers car - very low and wheels coming out of the top of the bonnet.

To further quote the Spanish notes "For example, the enormous one alerón trasero and the immense steps of wheel are a great deal smaller in the real version, but is something that does not bother at all. The numerous entrances and exits of air have all been reproduced conscientiously." It seems that a certain licence has been taken with the production of the model. Other little details are the brake discs moulded inside the wheel.

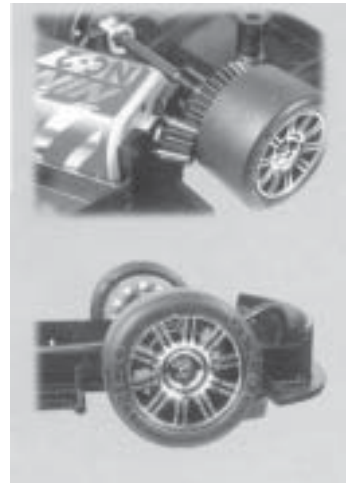
Interestingly the "civil" version has a driver with no crash helmet and dark tinted glass, so it is probably hard to see that he (she) has no helmet on. Is the driver wearing a normal seat belt or a full race version I wonder?

I have not seen any pictures of the interior, but I am sure it will not be up to the same level of detail as in the Fly cars, but at around £6 less I am sure it will find more favour amongst the racing fraternity.

Some people have questioned how long the plastic gears will last. The ones on my Karts are still fine even after the tender attentions of the public racing them at shows, but an NC-2 motor has slightly more power! All I can say is thank goodness that I still have some Taylor gears left.

I have recently received a couple of samples of these cars and have sent them out for review - a track test should be in next month's issue.

In answer to Alan's question about seat belts in the "road" version - your little driver is indeed protected by a racing seat and a full 6 point harness - should come in handy for the traffic lights Grand Prix! ■



NINCO *track test*

**50266 Citroen Saxo "Sola"
50267 Audi TT "Red Bull"
50268 Opel Astra DTM
50272 Citroen Saxo "Road"**

50267 Ninco Audi TT ABT 'Red Bull' Reviewed by Simon Moss

When I was given the opportunity to review the Audi TT I couldn't wait for it to turn up on the doorstep. The reason being that I already have the yellow 'Hasseroder' version in my collection and had always been itching to take it for a spin, but I never race any of my show cars. To my despair, on the day the car arrived my wife was delayed at the school where she works and missed the postman by an agonising one minute. A couple of days later I was able to pick the parcel up and the review could begin.

The Model

My first impression was very favourable. In fact everybody I showed it to said words to that effect. I think the main reason, apart from being a car which many people recognise and desire themselves is the striking blue colour which sets off the livery. I was particularly impressed with the lacquered finish, being virtually dust free. The tampo printing also being crisp and sharp. There may be a slight criticism in that the large white 'W' blob on the bonnet could have done with a slightly thicker coat of paint, but this was negligible.

Looking at the detail and you cannot but notice many slots and holes for air ducts, radiators etc. The front grill being nicely detailed in black with the Audi rings raised and painted in silver. I was nearly fooled into thinking that they were a separate attachment. Other features are a windscreen wiper and separate wing mirrors, although they could have been improved with a touch of silver paint to resemble the mirrors. The passenger side headlight lens on the test model was not fitted

properly and had a 1mm gap beneath it. This can be easily corrected by removing and resetting. Whilst on the subject of the headlights I would have liked to have seen a bit more realism by painting the reverse side of the lens chrome silver. Ninco appear to have made a step backwards here compared to the Renault Mégane I have. The wheels are 'Y' spoked BBS as used on the Porsche 911 GT3-R and the Mercedes CLK GT1.

The chassis is held in place by three screws, which, on removal, reveals a tried and tested configuration of an in-line NC2 motor, flat chassis, spring mounted guide forward of the front axle and a 1500 GM magnet directly forward of the motor. This makes the magnet's position just forward of the mid-way point which should mean plenty of power slides whilst keeping the car well balanced. One other point which will help the handling is the wheels being in all four corners with short overhangs.

On The Track

Track testing was done on my 95ft plexytrack 'Mosshill' circuit. I decided to compare the Audi against two other Ninco cars in my racing stable, a McLaren F1 GTR and a Porsche 911 GT3-R. All three cars boasting NC2 motors and super magnets. As the McLaren and the Porsche are well used, I decided to give the Audi a 500 lap running-in period (250 in each lane). After a light oiling of the bearings and motor, the screws were loosened slightly and it was ready to turn a wheel.

First impressions are a fast, good handling car. Even straight out of the box it was quick and smooth. As the laps rolled by I could feel the car getting quicker and I was able to attack the circuit. I had to keep reminding myself that I was only running her in. I couldn't help but →

have a sneak look at the lap times. During this period the best lap times tumbled from an initial 9.36 secs after 50 laps, to a staggering 8.72 secs toward the end. This compares to the all time bests of the McLaren (8.86 secs) and the Porsche (9.12 secs). This means the Audi is already my class leader. A quick check round the car for any tyre wear and I was impressed to see that all four tyres wore evenly. This means they were pretty true straight from the box. I then decided to do the head-to-head test with all three cars doing 25 laps each over both lanes. The times are as follows:-

	Lane 1
Audi TT	8.64
McLaren F1 GTR	9.00
Porsche 911 GT3-R	9.20

Lane 2

Audi TT	8.72
McLaren F1 GTR	8.92
Porsche 911 GT3-R	9.10

During the test the Audi just kept getting faster and faster. The motor has a distinctive scream to it. Maybe the 'Red Bull' gives it that extra oomph. It's difficult to say whether the spring mounted guide helped, but the motor never missed a beat.

Conclusion

This model will appeal to collectors and racers alike. The purist collector may like to see Ninco re-tool this model into the later version with the wing mounted on the lower rear chassis. To the racer it is brilliant - a must in fact. The only change that I may make is to fit some softer tyres, but in standard form it is a pure joy. ■

50268 Opel Astra

Reviewed by Alan Clark

The car

In its bright orangey red colour it certainly cannot be missed. The quality of the tampon printing is excellent although the detail of the car is definitely missing something when compared to its Scalextric counterpart. The fit of the body onto the chassis is not that good either - a 1mm gap down one side. It is fitted with an NC2 motor, the usual 1500gm magnet and the sprung guide.

The track

I use a two-lane Ninco track with a running length of 16m, the longest straight is 5m long, and there is an infield section with lots of bends. I use an old Pentium PC for lap timing, which can measure down to 1/1000th of a second.

The competition

I usually do a ten-lap stint in each lane and then write down the results for each car. I keep an Excel spreadsheet with the results of all the cars I own. The Ninco Astra was going up against three competitors, Scalextric Astra, Ninco Audi TT, Ninco Mercedes CLK DTM.



Straight out the box

I like to race my cars straight from the box. The Opel Astra had a problem straight away, one of its rear wheels wasn't running true, it was jumping all over the place. I ran the wheel over some glass-paper for five minutes on a slow speed to wear down the bump. The average lap time fell by 20%.

In conclusion

On the day the Mercedes beat it for the fastest lap but its average speed was quicker. If you remove your magnets it comes out a lowly third. When compared to the Scalextric Astra on the race track it beats it hands down, in the display cabinet it comes a poor second.

Would I buy one? Yes, I will be buying the road car to join my road car collection.

The Times - With magnet

The car	Inside Fastest	Inside Average	Outside Fastest	Outside Average	Overall Average
NINCO					
ASTRA	4.880	5.100	4.927	5.124	5.112
SCALEX					
ASTRA	4.922	5.584	5.218	5.549	5.567
NINCO					
AUDI	4.952	5.413	4.984	5.595	5.504
NINCO					
MERC	4.717	5.347	4.735	5.006	5.177

Without magnet

NINCO					
ASTRA	5.949	7.022	5.884	6.282	6.652
SCALEX					
ASTRA	6.572	7.076	6.486	6.731	6.904
NINCO					
AUDI	5.898	6.823	6.009	6.274	6.549
NINCO					
MERC	5.970	6.242	6.100	6.535	6.389

50266 Citroën Saxo "Sola" Reviewed by Dave Dodd

Here we have the latest release rally car from Ninco, based on the Citroën Saxo kit car, which raced in the super 1600 group. The paintwork and decals depict the vehicle which ran in the 38th Catalunya rally this year. A look on the Internet has shown me that D.Sola and co-driver A.Romani came 1st in the World Junior Rally Championship at Catalunya in March this year.

Anyway back to the model, it is mostly yellow in colour with a bit of red splashed on the bonnet, front wheel arches, lower rear quarter panels and rear bumper. It has flared wheel arches, a bee sting aerial (which will probably break off after some serious racing.), a roof spoiler and sponsored by Lloret de Mar.

To me the biggest surprise was the interior detail, not just a couple of shoulders and half a steering wheel. There are 3/4 length figures, half size bucket seats with shoulder support, full steering wheel and column, clocks on the dashboard, a fire extinguisher behind the co-driver who has a pictured pace note board, roll cage and finally a spare wheel with useable tyre (unfortunately you cannot get to it).

The chassis is the usual in-line type, 27/9 gearing, and NC2 motor. Wheel hubs are white multi spoke with visible brake discs through them, a single piece front axle and a sprung track guide (which I personally find quite good).

In testing I would normally take the model to my local club, which is the Melton Mowbray slot-car club (<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/c.savidge1/>), you can find us there every Thursday from 7:45pm; we are not too serious. But unfortunately the track is up at the moment while the room gets a lick of paint. So I have tested this one on my home Scalextric track, which is on an 8' x 4' board hinged on my kitchen wall. Alas I have not got a lap timer system but I will be able to compare it to my other 2wd rally cars (Scalextric Lancia 037 and a SCX Renault Mégane). Although it is only a short twisty track and has no long straights you can still get a fair indication of how a car handles. All three cars have similar length wheel



bases, so other than the body shape the only differences are in relation to magnatraction. The Lancia has none so is very tail happy thus lacks overall speed, the Mégane having its magnet ahead of the crown wheel did not suffer from tail out slides but when it did you knew you had gone too far and the Saxo - well firstly you notice how strong that magnet really is when it is pulled out of your hand trying to put it in the slot. Then when you try throttle for it to get going it seems to be all or nothing which is no good, so after some thought I decided to move the magnet a little, just to ease the overall effect which in turn made the car more of a pleasure to drive.

In conclusion the car has great detail and is modelled on an actual winning car this year. I think the Saxo makes a good addition to any one's collection. The only alteration I would make is to change the rear tyres to standard Proslot ones.

50272 Citroën Saxo "Road" Brief thoughts from the editor

As should be fairly obvious the performance of this "road" version is identical to the rally one.

Colour is a fetching metallic blue and it is an attractive model but the real question is - why produce a road car at all? Apart from Saxo owners who would buy it?

The only time it would appear on a circuit is at a "Track Day" but it would be instantly disqualified as the driver is not wearing a crash helmet! No doubt it could be displayed in the spectators' car park, in which case why fit a motor?

I will, therefore, give it away as a prize to the member who can provide the most amusing reason for the production of such cars. ■