



No.256 JULY 2003

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The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

### Snail's progress

Call me an old cynic if you must, although I prefer the term 'realist', but I really can't take Bentley's win at Le Mans seriously. Consider: after three wins on the trot the Audis no longer have works support and Team Bentley romps home 1st and 2nd in front of an adoring British audience. However, when you realise that the Volkswagen/Audi group owns Bentley and are trying to promote the brand the whole thing just degenerates into a cynical PR exercise; under the skin the EXP 8 is almost exactly the same as the Audi R8. It is probably no coincidence that the German firm, Carrera, has the licence for the Bentley slot-car!

Personally I was happy to give Le Mans a miss and headed instead to "Le Vingt Quatre Heures Du Snetterton" for the 2CV endurance race. If you have never seen the 'Tin Snail' race then you have missed a rare treat; fast is definitely not the word to describe them but after three hours the top ten were covered by the proverbial handkerchief. The lead changed at least once a lap and they were going into Riches three abreast - F1 would kill for racing as close as this! At the end of 24 hours racing the top two were just 8 seconds apart and the rest of the pack were not far behind.

Speaking of snails, I have recently joined the local slot club in King's Lynn in order to find out just how bad I am - the answer is - even worse than I thought! At my first meeting I finished last in every heat by at least two laps and, in a fun race, my Ninco Audi TT was lapped by a C281 motorcycle combination! Things can only get better.





**T**he eagle eyed amongst you may have seen another white car mentioned on the Scalextric-USA web site. This is C2525 white Corvette and we should see it towards the end of the year.

Also recently announced are the Italian Job Minis in red white and blue. These will be available as Sport limited edition versions C2538A Red Mini Cooper S, C2539A White Mini Cooper & C2540A Blue Mini Cooper. These cars have different grilles and wheels from the other Minis being produced. The blue and red cars will also be in an extended Bash and Crash type racing circuit #C1130T The Italian Job complete with leap, side swipe straights and an electronic lap counter. The Italian Job cars and set should be available in September.

Two of the new Indy Car sets in the US have also been announced:

C1100T Indy Sport 500 - Track T1.

Pennzoil Panther Dallara #4 and Corteco Bryant Dallara #7

C1110T Grand Prix Set - Circuit 1.

Grand Prix Racer #5 & Grand Prix Racer #7

## Goodwood

The three Goodwood GT40s have individual reference numbers with an AWD suffix. i.e. C2463AWD, C2464AWD and C2465AWD. "A" is for Sport and "WD" is for weathered. The set of three is C2529A Goodwood Ford GT40 commemorative set.

## Challenger cars

Several people have asked me about running more than one Challenger car at the same time. The answer is yes. You can run as many of them as you want to with only one control tower. I suppose you set them all going and then clear off down to the pub. If quality control is perfect there should be a dead heat !

## Green Beetles

Those of you that have visited the Scalextric road show recently may have been lucky enough to have been given a plain green VW Beetle. The bodyshell is completely undecorated, the wheels are moulded in clear plastic and the driver is unpainted. Around 200 of these were made as samples when the Beetle was first introduced.



## Errors

Thanks for spotting my error in the Goodwood article last month. An actual speed of 30mph is not a scale speed of 300mph. That will teach me to borrow from other peoples press releases without reading them first. 15mph and 480mph would be the right values.

## New cars

The new Opel Astra V8 Coupés arrived right at the end of May.

C2474A Opel V8 Coupé “Opel Team Phoenix” No7

C2475A Opel V8 Coupé “TV Today” No8 red

Visual differences between these new cars and the previous releases of the Astra are limited to the skirts and spoilers all around the car to reflect their specification in the 2002 DTM Championship. Underneath, the chassis has changed considerably with the three position

button magnet replaced by a bar magnet with three positions. To move this magnet you first need to remove the interior now retained by two screws in the chassis. These Sport versions come with an additional button magnet that can be placed right at the front, just behind the guide. Putting the car back together is a real challenge; the wiper is attached to the dashboard and needs to go outside the windscreen which is attached to the bodywork!

To my mind the yellow and blue livery of C2474A is the most attractive and strangely is a limited edition of 5000 pieces compared with the red C2475A edition of 6000 pieces. The Opels have black crown wheels and pinions too. This is not a change to the gear ratios but to make them less conspicuous.

Also released in May was the non Sport version of the red GT40 MkII

C2509 Ford GT MkII 1966 Le Mans “No3”■



# Ian Stewart's superb 1/32 Dino Ferrari

Model Maker August 1959

FROM VINE FENNEL

## Object

- (a) Primarily to produce a race-winner at Crieff and Alva, and, if possible, a car which would do reasonably well on most circuits.
- (b) To produce a reasonable scale model, which would convey the atmosphere of its full-size counterpart.
- (c) To produce a car which would be ultra-reliable and durable, without the constant need for adjustment and modification.
- (d) To have a car with pleasant handling characteristics. My previous first-line contender requiring just too much concentration to avoid derailment, due to weight in the wrong places and too much initial "punch" in its Romford motor.

## Design principles

- (a) Lightness - in the hope that I could prove correct my belief that massive lead weights were only needed to hide basic design faults.
- (b) Weight distribution - to contain the majority of the weight between the axles and as low down as possible. Also as near the fore and aft centre-line as possible.
- (c) A power unit which would keep its tune and last a long time. Romford Phantom too bulky, and giving too much initial "punch" for smooth cornering. Triang too untidy to fit in with my "one-piece" motor/rear axle idea, though excellent in all other respects. The small K's motor and the Romford Terrier not powerful enough. This left the larger K's Mk1, which seemed ideal but for one enormous snag - i.e., a habit of overheating and seizing and ultimately burning out. I hoped to overcome this by letting sufficient cool air flow round the motor during running, and by giving the motor the minimum of weight to pull. Also by avoiding strain on the

rear motor bearing, often caused by allowing the rear axle to be located solely by the contrate - against the chassis side in one direction, and the pinion in the other. On the credit side, the K's Mk1 was slim, neat, powerful enough without being vicious, and with excellent weight characteristics - i.e., magnet at each end. Also the provision of a good length of shaft at each end allowed the brush end of the motor to be placed forward, keeping it well clear of rear axle lubricant.



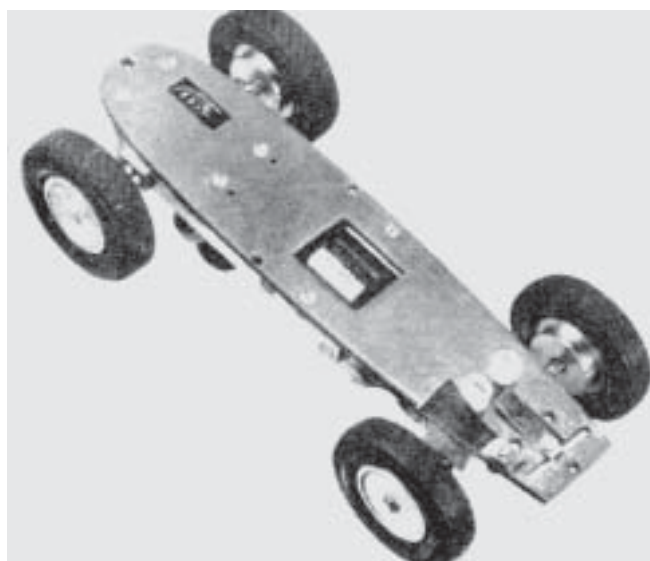
- (d) Rigidity between the motor and the rear axle, for obvious reasons.
- (e) A front axle unit with strength, but slight inbuilt "give", to avoid crash damage, and "bounce" over the bumps or joints on the track.
- (f) A reasonably strong but light body, which would look decent when finished.
- (g) A guide assembly which would be of sufficient strength, but made of a soft enough material to run quietly and absorb some of the shock encountered at badly mated rail-joints.
- (h) Contacts which would contact well but not "flutter", with sufficient "give" to prevent ⇒

their lifting the front end off the deck at rough rail-joints.

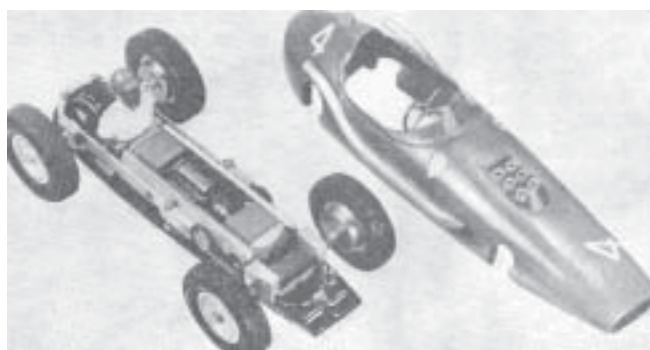
(i) Transmission which would be reasonably silent and very smooth, so that the rear wheels would revolve rather than thrash about.

## Resultant design

(a) A light chassis formed of two main parts - the Formica base and the motor/rear axle unit. Rigidity achieved by joining the one to the other by means of four bolts, which act as supporting pillars - the Formica base giving side to side



rigidity - the motor/rear axle unit giving up and down rigidity. The whole affair bolted to the wooden body at four points, thus giving further rigidity to the chassis, and much-needed strength to the body.



(b) A wooden body - obechi - easily worked and light - hollow nose cowling and plenty of interior space to allow good air flow round motor (hope to change over to Fibreglass for next car - wood too fragile).

(c) K's Mk1 motor - reasons as stated, and suitable for mating with rear axle unit as the sides give tappable fixing points without obstruction.

(d) Horseshoe-shaped rear axle unit - light (dural, silver steel axle bearing inserts) and most economical of space within the body, the shape rounding off as does the tail of the car. Absolute accuracy in drilling holes and in alignment of rear axle, to ensure smooth transmission.

(e) Front axle mounted on dural block, with intermediate rubber sleeve to provide "give". Dural block tapped for fixing to chassis with three screws, two of which form the guide assembly, being threaded through nylon "zonkers", through the chassis, and clamping the lot together when tightened into the tapped holes.

(f) Slender copper foil contacts, with plenty of give.

## Method

(a) Chassis. Formica base cut out to desired shape, with gaps for armature and contrate. Dural "horseshoe", of minimum possible dimensions, machined from solid (Unimat), and drilled where fixed to motor sides, and for rear axle bearings (3/16-in. silver steel, pressed in with heavy vice). The horseshoe could have been simplified by merely bending a suitable piece of metal to shape. Motor sides drilled and tapped (10 BA) and horseshoe fitted firmly in place. Forgot to mention - holes drilled down through horseshoe for fixing to Formica base (12 BA clear) before fitting to motor.

(b) Front axle unit, machined solid dural - drilled No 29 to accept valve tubing, through which S.M.E.C. axle ultimately threaded. Drilled and tapped 10BA for fixing to Formica base with screw-in zonkers. Third hole drilled and tapped 12BA for fitting direct to Formica base. Drilled along lower sides to accept leads from contacts to motor.

(c) Guide assembly - zonkers made from nylon turned to required size - drilled to accept 10BA screws.

(d) Body. Obechi, carved to shape and well and truly hollowed out, to accept complete chassis.

Nose and tail left solid, until chassis fitting ascertained. Nose then drilled through, and hollowed out with round file, until orifice large enough to take metal reinforcement insert.

Some time ago I bought some very small reamers, and they came in a small, oval, tinned brass container, similar in shape to the things they sell toothbrushes in. The nose cowling insert is merely a 1/2-in long section of this, duly flattened to shape, and with the rough edges trimmed. Having hollowed out the wooden nose, a goodly quantity of Isoxon (plastic paste for repairing minor coachwork dents) was slapped round the interior surface, and the metal insert forced, or rather eased, into position. After the whole affair had dried, it was simply a matter of trimming, and ultimately painting the interior of the cowling a matt black. (Araldite would probably be even more satisfactory.) The Formica base of the chassis is firmly fixed to the body by means of four 12Ba screws, the body having 4 x 12BA nut recessed into its nose, tail, and sides. (Nuts secured with Araldite).



The windscreen and its small brother round the Webers are both made with three lugs each, which fit into razor-thin slits, one on each side of the body, in the case of the windscreen, and one at the front. The edges and lugs of the screen are well covered with Araldite, and then eased into position. Also, in the case of the windscreen, the rear-most edges are firmly Araldited to the sides of the tail, and afterwards covered with Isoxon, which is rubbed down to merge with tail when dry.

Exhaust pipes and Webers made with very thin alloy tubing - filler cap is 8BA screw with small piece of wire hammered into groove in screwhead and solder flowed on to the lot.

(e) General. Driver - ex polo-player from Revell Ford Fairlane kit. S.M.E.C spoke discs. Adams wheels (Silver steel bushed, and modified on lathe as regards shape). S.M.E.C. front tyres. Excellent Walshaw rear tyres (don't know what we'd do without them). Sprayed cellulose finish. Incidentally - spare gaps and holes at front of chassis base are in anticipation of slot!

## Results/conclusions

The car proved lethally fast on the 16 v. Crieff circuit, but displayed good stability nevertheless. The light weight seems successful where a circuit is free from bumps, but the addition of a little lead was necessary at Worksop. Too much was used in practice, and the motor started to overheat and ominously to smoke! Weight removed for the heat in which the car came second, but driver trouble spoiled car's chances. Since return to Crieff circuit find that overheating caused damage, car now manageably slower! (Still under lap record) - but roadholding much better than my previous attempts. ■

# Four Long Years

BY COLIN SPARK

There I was, back in 1999, minding my own business, pottering about in Beatties with my six year old son. We were looking for a new car to use on the Scalextric set we had acquired the previous Christmas, when I saw it in the glass display cabinet. I'd never seen a slot car so detailed before. In fact I'd never seen a Panoz before, but there it was, a silver Panoz "Esperante", and at £24.95 seemed worth every one of the extra five pounds compared to a Scalextric car.

We weren't to be disappointed. The track was set up as soon as we got home and the two set cars were almost shaking with fear when the Panoz was sucked out of our hands and onto the track by its magnet.

Dad, of course, had to make sure the car was suitable for a six year old to handle, so my son could have first choice of either the Mondeo or the BMW 320i. Seems fair!

Well you know the result of course. It was the fastest, most impressive car we owned and it never seemed to come off. So that was the beginning of collecting Fly cars. I then found out that Bob Rackham, my business partner at R/S Racing, collected Fly cars and he showed me the first of the "C" cars. "C" being of course for Classic. That was it. I was hooked! Over the next couple of years I collected all the Classic Series and felt that I'd made a good little investment. It was a bit odd buying slot cars that never reached the slot, but hey, with the outlay now into four figures, you don't honestly expect me to race them?

Throw in a few modern cars (sorry, I meant place carefully) and a splashing of "Special" boxed sets and that about gives you a brief history of my Fly collection.

"So where's all this leading?" I hear you ask. Well.....

Wind forward to present day. Colin goes to his regular model shop, which stocks Fly cars, to buy some R/C bits for his, now ten year old, son.

"Seen the latest Fly boxed set?", asks the young lad who runs the shop. "You're gonna

love this!"

Did I detect a lip curling up at the corner just then? Hmmmm. He reaches behind the counter and then produces a tall box with a window in it. Upon inspection I can clearly see three chrome BMW M3s. All exactly the same!!!!!! "So what's that then?" I ask, "Fifty quid?" "No." He says, in that kind of high pitched, questioning tone that men use. "No.....One Hundred and Twenty." Do you know, I could have sworn he said £120. "And they've all got the same part number!" he added.

Well my flabber was gasted. I knew things were getting silly in the Fly department, I mean, I only had to count how many Porsche 917Ks I now owned, but this really was the limit. Or was it?

It made me make a decision that had been on the cards for a while. No more Fly cars. I'd already given up trying to complete the Classic Series when everything went pear shaped last year. How can Porsche 917/10 Can Am cars be "A" series when that's always been for modern cars. Oh, hang on a minute, weren't Capris "A" Series?

Tell you what, let's make things easier. Everything is now coded with numbers that resemble free phone lines. 8083...what was it again? Oh no, that's a Saleen, I wanted that bland orange Porsche 917K that doesn't actually replicate a real car.

## Confused yet?

Having now made a firm decision to stop buying Fly cars I then began to notice that in fact they were suddenly in plentiful supply. They were everywhere and when I went to Loughborough Swapmeet I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Stacks of Fly cars at £14 ! Not just on one dealer's table either, but three.

On further investigation of this strange phenomenon I realised that the stacks of cars were actually quite limited in their selection. There were just a lot of them. Still, £14, come on. After a bit of enquiring with a dealer I ⇒

found out that there was a reasonable profit at this price as well. I just thought everyone was selling off surplus stock, but oh no, this lot had been distributed in the UK by Scalextric-USA!

## **I bet you're really confused now?**

It turns out that they are/were the distributor for Fly in America and they've shipped something like 21,000 Fly cars here to sell off cheap. Now, there are a couple of observations I've made at this point. Firstly, as a collector, I am a bit peeved to see cars that I've paid top money for and in some cases really hassled to get hold of, being stacked high and sold cheap, and I didn't seem to be alone. Secondly, and I find this quite odd, is that having offered these once highly prized cars at such a low price, they were being packed away again at the end of the swapmeet, unsold.

So, basically it's like this. We've got established collectors who can't get hold of the latest releases in sufficient numbers and when they do the price is sky high. We've got Dealers who are fed up with the whole Fly situation and are considering stopping, or have already stopped, stocking Fly. Then we are offered cheap Fly cars that were once short in numbers, so the Dealers buy them but the collectors don't. So the Dealers are left with more Fly cars than they ever wanted in the first place. Unless of course it's a new release.

I know I've made the right decision and it's given me the incentive to thin out my collection of cardboard boxes in the loft. In fact I had my decision confirmed only this week, when I went to the model shop again (funnily enough for R/C bits).

## **Yes, you've guessed it**

"Seen the latest Fly boxed set?" I looked along his shelf, now buckling under Fly boxed sets (chrome BMWs still unsold) and tried to fathom out which one he was talking about. Ah, there it was. A dull orange box with large numbers across it simply stating "917". I tried to mutter some kind of enthusiasm but it came out as unprintable here. Anyway, he kindly did the

deed of removing the sleeve and opening the box to reveal a dull orange 917K and a dull orange 917/10 with its wheels jammed up inside the body. I didn't recognise the graphics at all and gently closed the lid. He knew my next question so I didn't have to ask it. He just said, very quietly, "One hundred and fifteen pounds".

I'm glad to be free of the Fly. Then, just as I was leaving I caught sight of the latest M.A.N Super Truck in red, by Fly. I asked him if I could have a look and "wow!" it is fantastic Man (pun). It has even got suspension. The detail is even better than the previous trucks and it's absolutely huge. Guess what ? I put it back!!

## **Yes, yes, I'm free**

Now then, where did I put my list of Scalextric GT40s I'm missing, oh, and the Mustangs. I need all eight of those if I'm to have the Sport editions as well..... ■



# HITS AND PIECES

## Should stay in more!

Yes it's true. I visited LegoLand at Windsor with my wife and daughter in April and, lo and behold, amongst the truly amazing Lego models of famous buildings and landscapes of the world, they've constructed a new motor racing themed area.

One diorama is apparently based on Le Mans, though you'd have to squint extremely hard to believe it, featuring a couple of sports cars racing around a figure of eight circuit, concluding by parking in the pits, whereby pit crews appear from the pit garage to attend to the cars, before they make their way to the starting line again to start another race!

But it's the second display which I thought was fantastic. Wait for it - a drag strip! Yep, two top fuelers make their way to pre-stage, then

stage, followed by a Christmas tree light sequence; then on the green light, there are two large buttons for Joe and Bill Bloggs (well actually me and my daughter) to press, whereby the cars race to the finish line. And yes, they are running in slots!!

I tried to get some photos for the magazine, and as I didn't have my camera with me, I nicked my daughters camera and took a few snaps. Unfortunately, at some point I think she must have dropped the camera and the resultant prints proved non-existent. So if you want to see it for yourself, you'll just have to pay the exorbitant admission price to LegoLand and see it for yourself. Honestly, if you've an excuse to pay a visit (looks more creditable with suitably aged children in tow) then don't miss it. It's a great day out, whether you're young or old.

*Robin Clark*

## Race ahead on wire tray

Pemsa has designed a Scalextric racetrack housed entirely within steel wire cable trays. Mike Clayton, managing director of Pemsa, says: "Record times can be achieved on cable management installations. Sections are easier to fabricate on site, and you can easily go around obstructions such as ducting and concrete pillars." Bends, tees, risers and crosspieces are formed on site, eliminating the use of special accessories. Pemsa steel wire cable trays are manufactured with smooth, rounded rod ends for safety as standard, in a choice of Bichromate Zinc Plated, Hot-Dip Galvanised and Stainless Steel.



I found this one in an electrical trade magazine; could this be the answer to baseboard construction in a limited space? I will give a car away to anybody who comes up with "the most stupid way to promote your product using Scalextric".

*Brian*



**A**nother busy month for the slot-car nut that I am this month. Lots of telephone chats with Spain and much better co-operation with the Tecnitoys chaps including press releases and stuff. Great to see them taking such an interest and to be honest it makes my job a lot easier.

Thanks for all your entries for last month's competition along with your comments and suggestions. I have logged all the entries and any specific points have been passed on to Tecnitoys. They appreciate your input and the suggestions are taken seriously but commercial pressures and considerations do come first so don't expect to see all your ideas turned into reality this year!

What did you want? Well to be honest most of you appear not to be interested! Current membership is approximately 1100, and I got responses from less than 10%. Considering the amount of letters to the editor suggesting new models and such I thought I would get a few more, but no problem; those of you who did send in your thoughts had some great ideas and I hope some of them become models. Maybe you are all on holiday?

I have broken down the replies into two sections; Cars and Track and accessories.

## Cars

No major surprises, but a few great ideas that I would not have thought of. The majority of you want either Vintage type re-releases of old Exin Scalextric Spanish models; Ford GT40s, Jaguar E-Types, Lancia Stratos and Mustang dragsters to go with the new Corvette, or new classic sports cars (mainly British), MG MGAs, MG MGBs, Triumph TR6, Lotus Cortina, Jaguar Mk2, etc. On the modern front several requests to see the new shape Ford Focus WRC along with VW Mk1 Golf, Nissan 350Z, Lotus Elise and Alfa

Romeo Spyder. 'Paul Lampard' had a couple of great suggestions; two seater F1 cars (*perhaps not with Mansell*) and 'Police' and 'Taxi' versions of SCX current range of Rally cars!

## Track and accessories

Again not a major surprise, but most of you want either a new Pit stop of a re-release of the old Pit Stop along with the Goodwood Chicane, but the second most popular request and one I would agree with, is a variable power supply with separate control for each lane. Let's be honest, it's no fun being able to race a car at full throttle round the tightest of circuits only to have it eventually fly off into the wall in several bits. It would also enable kids to start at a respectable pace and increase with experience without having to remove the magnet. Other notable considerations were a scenic car transporter and protective catch fences.

This month's winner however is: John Palmer (2957/03) picked at random from the entries by my sunbathing wife in the garden! John's suggestion was for a McLaren F1 road car? (unlikely to be made - take a look at an old Ninco brochure, mind you they seem to be going for daft sums of money on Ebay at the moment!) Well done John, you win an SCX Vintage Sigma limited edition ref. 60910 courtesy of Bachmann UK. Keep your suggestions coming.

## Mystery car!

J. Melliots contacted me this month with a question regarding the SCX Williams F1 No.6 2001 car ref 60960. Last year's (and this year's) catalogue shows the car with a 'Veltins' logo on the drivers side pod. (the No.5 does not show this logo). However a quick phone call to Julie at Scale Models confirmed that (in her stock at

least) all the cars do not have a ‘Velins’ logo. Easy, the car in the catalogue was a prototype mock up, right? Wrong. J. Melliot saw an article in Model Car racing magazine where they cut up an SCX Williams car (with a logo) and repainted it as a Ferrari - Shocking! So on this evidence there appears (as Hornby) to be two versions of this car! Type A without logo and Type B with logo. I’ll dig a little deeper to find out more and let you know, but in the meantime, could you have a look at your collections and see if you have a car with the logo – take a digital pic and forward it to me for reference – thanks. (If you have both, even better). The model is still current in the range so look out for both versions next time you go shopping.

## Shopping

Talking of shopping, I was out with Tecnitoyz this week visiting several model and toy shops in the South to get traders feedback and a general feel for the market. We visited several shops in Guildford and came across a bit of a bargain that I thought you might be interested in!

## Cheap as Chips!

Modelzone are having a sale of SCX sets, I bought an Initiation set (basic oval loop, controllers, transformer and two cars, Renault Mégane and Seat Ibiza) for £24.99! Yes that’s

£25.00 to you and me! They were £45 at some time. Cheaper than buying a single car! They also have other sets at massive reductions; Acropolis set (figure of eight with Seat Cordoba E2 and Hyundai Accent WRC) at £49.99 (was £79.99), Rally Australia set (large figure of eight, Dirt effect Subaru Imprezza WRC and Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 7 and an electronic timer) at £69.99 was £99.99 – this set is worth getting just for the cars – to my knowledge it’s the only way to get a Dirt effect Subaru and Mitsubishi! Also the Le Mans set at £69.99 was £109.99 again containing set only models. I’m not on commission from Modelzone, but thought I should let you know.

That’s about it for this month, apologies for the delay, but the review of the SCX DTMs will have to wait until next month, I have one, but am still waiting for the other. This month’s SCX review is on the Vintage range, by the time you read this the Vintage LE Corvette should be on sale so I thought it appropriate to round up all the Vintage releases to date.

Just so you know the Tecnitoyz Club car has been released in Spain recently, it’s only available to Spanish Club members, but I have seen several for sale on eBay already, daft money, so anyone with Spanish relatives or friends should start being friendly to them!

See you at Goodwood? ■



## Vintage Corvette Stingray Dragster Ref 61180 Limited Edition

Review

SCX

BY GARETH JEX

As a way of explanation for the uninitiated, every year, for the last 12 years, SCX through the Vintage Series Collection, retrieves from their 40 year-old archives the original mould of one of their cars manufactured in the past. The tooling is then restored and fine-tuned ready to bring to life 'for one season only' a special limited edition car.

This year, SCX takes us down memory lane with their new Corvette Vintage, a limited edition of 4,000 units, individually numbered, to remember the Corvette Stingray Dragster, a model SCX introduced back in 1975 and which

was last manufactured in 1982.

The beginnings of this American sports car date back to 1953, when its creator, General Motors Chief Designer Harley Earl, influenced by European sports cars, believed that America needed its own luxury two-seater sports model. The first of four generations of the Corvette was born, each more daring in design and more technologically advanced than its predecessor.

A saga spanning over 50 years and a long string of models give this unique model a distinct personality. SCX's model to 1:32 scale is a reproduction of the 3rd generation and dates





from the autumn of 1967. Life-size manufacture of this model reached 543,000 units and meant consolidating the success of its predecessors.

SCX has tried to recreate all those details which made the original car stand out, except for the livery and exhaust pipes, which are SCX's own contributions, and the new RX-1 engine incorporated. This year's model, race number 27, is painted in an overall blue with white and orange flames on the bonnet and a white roof.

This is the 12th Vintage model to come out and I thought it would be a good idea to run through the other Vintage range of cars.

- 1991/92 Seat 600 TC – Red – no. 36
- 1993 Mercedes 250 SL Sport – Red – no.24
- 1994 Jaguar E-Type Green – Green – no. 4
- 1995 Seat 850 – Red – no. 95
- 1996 Ford GT 40 – Light Blue – no. 6
- 1997 Chaparral GT – White – no. 66
- 1998 Porsche 917 – Orange – no. 23
- 1999 Ferrari 330 GT – Red – no. 1
- 2000 Tyrrell Ford P34 – Blue/White – no. 4  
'First National City/ELF'

2001 Mini Cooper 1275S Rally – Red – no. 177  
'Rallye Monte Carlo'

2002 Sigma Grand Prix monoposto F1 – Silver

2003 Corvette Dragster – Blue/White – no. 27

## Little boxes, little boxes

At first the cars were packaged in the normal boxes of the time, Exin, Tyco - Match box, then Tecnitoy's brought out the Ferrari GT330 in a special cardboard box with the limited edition number printed inside. Following that, Tecnitoy's have made a different box with each new edition. The Tyrrell came in a blue box with separate booklet inside giving a description of the real car and some history. The Mini Cooper came in a round red box, again with a history and the Sigma came in a silver tin box, again with a history booklet about the car.

In 2002 Tecnitoy's celebrated the Scalextric/SCX 40th anniversary with the production of a special boxed collection of a Vintage Seat TC 600 in pale blue and a Fiat Abarth 1000 in red. In the box was an excellent book (in Spanish) ⇒

giving the history of Scalextric in Spain. The whole collection was only available in Spain, but it's really worth tracking one down even if you can't (like me) read Spanish! Not strictly a Vintage SCX, but worth knowing.

The vintage collection is worth collecting in its own right. Early examples, Fiat, Seat, Mercedes can prove difficult to come by and the more recent Tyrrell seems to be fetching vast amounts of money on eBay. This year's Corvette will no doubt be just as popular if your feedback regarding vintage cars is anything to go by.

How does it drive? – well to be honest it's not really designed to be raced is it? Mine won't be, all that lovely chrome is just begging to be broken and spares are not available! The only Vintage SCX I have raced is the Sigma and that wasn't exactly the best in class (classic Spanish F1). If you do intend to race them however, make sure you give the RX-1 motor a really good run in and oil.

## The Original

This vintage release is based on the original Spanish Exin model ref 4050 first released in Spain in 1975 in Burgundy/Red, Light Blue and Green. It was also produced in Mexico, ref 5550, available in similar colours with the addition of yellow. The 1975 model had a

similar flame design on the front bonnet, race number and Chevrolet logo. The door panels had "Red Devil" transfers applied along with a wave coach line over the rear quarters. The wheels were chrome with big fat tyres on the rear and smaller tyres to the front. The new vintage tyres on the front do look to be slightly bigger than the original. The driver's head was a typical Spanish full face helmet type, this has also changed on the vintage release to a more modern type. The chrome parts are notoriously easy to damage or lose and often the chrome comes off the plastic mouldings - the air intake in particular is very easy to lose. Spare parts are available, but always seem to look too new! The cars were available separately and in 2 sets ref GP65/3165 and SR40/3140.

To my knowledge, the cars were never released in a set with its matching car, the Ford Mustang Dragster, which was introduced a year earlier. The car was never officially released in the UK. Ultimately (in my opinion) both the Corvette and the Mustang represent everything good about Spanish Scalextric of that time, different cars, great build quality, dripping in chrome, great fun. How long did it take the UK to catch up to this level of quality?

Next years model? – who knows, but as soon as I do – you will. ■

# Parma Economy Controller upgrade

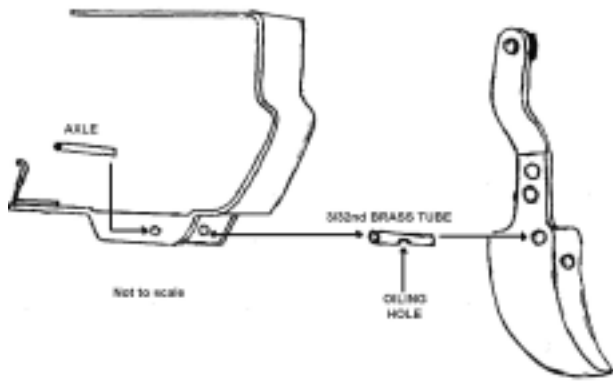
BY TERRY BLACKMORE

Having raced slot-cars for many years, and having recently returned to the hobby in a format that doesn't require endless hours of scratch building to build a reasonable race car, I notice that many racers are still using Parma Economy Controllers.

As good as these are, they most certainly will show signs of wear in the trigger mechanism. Depending on how much use and abuse that they get, depends on the length of time. I'm still using my original controllers brought some 35

plus years ago, long before Parma were the makers, most of mine still bearing the old Russkit logo on the handle. The only change has been with resistors, having changed the old 6/10ths ohm resistors for 45 ohm resistors for my current format of racing.

Controllers are the most important item in a slot-car racers box. Even more important than a good race car. Many a race has been won, or lost, on the demise of someone's controller. Many years ago I started to think on how to



improve my then Russkit Controllers. Easiest, and most useful, mod is to remove the pin from the trigger mechanism. Strange as it may seem, it isn't anywhere near round. Drill out the hole in the trigger to 1/8<sup>th</sup> of an inch. Measure, and cut a piece 3/32<sup>nd</sup> of an inch inner diameter brass tube (this normally has a 1/8<sup>th</sup> of an inch outer diameter) to a length just slightly loose of the width of the inner dimensions of the controller chassis. Centre, and solder into place in the hole in the trigger. A hole can be filed into the centre of the brass tube to allow for easy oiling. Modern axles used in commercial cars such as Scalextric are made from mild steel. We all have at least one in our box, where one end is completely useless. For some strange reason we don't throw them away. Just as well, as the good end can be utilised for the pivot point of the trigger mechanism. Find an axle that is a good fit to the brass tube, not too loose. Locate the trigger back in its place in the controller chassis, and push the axle through the trigger and chassis. Mark the length required, and cut off the unwanted part of the axle. Mild steel is much easier to cut and solder than the drill blanks I originally used in my controllers. Solder the axle to the chassis, avoiding soldering the trigger to the chassis.

Line up the resistor to the face of the trigger wiper, oil the trigger mechanism, and one should have a much improved controller. Further improvements can be made by replacing the Economy Resistor with a Pro Resistor, which can also be further improved by using a very fine flat oil stone to make its surface nice and flat. Using a "Z" shaped piece of piano wire soldered to the chassis to mount the spring on so that it has a straight pull also improves the feel of the controller. A small piece of soft sponge pushed into the centre of the spring holds enough oil to keep the spring well oiled.

When racing, one should not be able to feel the wiper grinding against the resistor. If it is, all isn't well with your controller. Controllers need to be maintained before each race meeting/club night. A small flat piece of the finest emery cloth can be placed on the resistor rough side up, and the wiper run across a few times to make it smooth. Clean the face of the resistor with lighter fuel, and rub on a small amount of WD40 to stop it rusting. Don't forget to oil the trigger and the spring. Reset the wiper arm if need arises.

I've taken Parma Controllers in the past to their ultimate at the time, with ball raced trigger mechanisms, double micro switches, and home built resistors. Though I must admit the resistor idea was an almost exact clone of another I saw.

35 years on, my controllers are still working as well as they ever did. Perhaps not quite as bright and shiny as when new, but they are still a lot more reliable than most controllers seem to be.

If anyone in the Essex/East London area is interested in joining a club, GT raceways at Southend-on Sea, the club I race at has over 140 foot of 6 lane Ninco track. It's very fast, flat and great to race on. Ring Graeme on 01702 551225 for details. ■

# NINCO

## track test

**N50300 Renault Clio super  
1600 "elf"  
Reviewed by Alan Slade**

This test is not as thorough as I would have liked it to be for two reasons, i) I only had a day in which to undertake it and ii) the car broke down.

This lack of time also meant that I had to take the pictures after I had tested the car - hence the missing mirror in the pictures! My first impressions of the car were very favourable.



Very clean, clear and precise decorations and with a very high gloss finish. It is only when you look with a magnifying glass that you can see some blurring on the printing. But whatever, the rally plate informs us that it is car No. 7 on the Rallye de Wallonie 2002.



The interior also has a pleasing amount of detail with 3/4 figures with full harness and open face helmets, dashboard detail, roll cage, fire extinguisher and spare wheel. I suppose purists would also want the intercoms and may also question the rather weak looking rollcage!

Outside details are also in abundance, there is a radio aerial at the back of the roof (which survived my testing!) and nice exhaust detail which unfortunately does not show up too well in the picture. There are separate mouldings for the grill, bonnet vents and windscreen wipers, roof air vent and rear high mounted wing.

The driver seems to be thinking as his hands are not on the steering wheel but resting on his knees, maybe they are waiting at a stage start.



The navigator has a very detailed set of stage notes showing distances and tulip arrows.





One other feature I particularly liked were the drilled brake discs. All I have to do now is figure out how to get them to glow red when braking!! All things considered first impressions were very good.



I was very interested in the suspension, especially after my comments last month. Taking the body off I had a good look at how it all fitted together and wondered why the shock absorbers are set at an angle and not acting in the vertical plane of movement. It is probably that there just is not enough underbody clearance for vertical mounting. I measured the axle travel at 0.9 mm at the back and 1.2 mm at the front. I was surprised to see the sprung guide system as surely this should be unnecessary with the suspension?

On spinning the front wheels they felt very tight and in fact would not rotate freely. This, it transpires, is caused purely by the suspension bearing down directly on the axle. Remove the springs and everything is OK. Remove the motor and you find exactly the same problem at the rear of the chassis. And this is with the 'soft' springs!

What this translates into is the fact that this chassis has a tremendous amount of built in friction which can only mean a slower car. With the blue 'medium' and yellow 'hard' springs the effect can only be worse. If the Hobby Co. would like to send me some blue and yellow springs I will do some torque tests on the axles to produce a definite comparison chart.

This car is fitted with the NC-5 SPEEDER motor, which Ninco has developed for the Spanish Rallye-Slot series, hoping it will become the engine of choice. It is a very responsive motor, not so fast as the NC-3 and 4 motors but it has little inherent braking, relying instead on the chassis magnet to slow it down. This is OK on commercial slot tracks but a problem on a wooden / copper tape track. And even more fun on a mixture!

## And so to the track test

Not having a 'Scalextric room' any more has meant that Knockhill has gone to a new home, but this is a rally car so what better test than on a rally track? And where better to go rallying than in the garden, especially on a lovely sunny Scottish evening.

My rally track is approx. 70' long with a mixture of wood/copper tape and SCX/ Plexytrack. It is designed to be challenging and is very rough in places. The start section is wood/copper tape, then onto Plexytrack, some more wood, then some SCX track to finish. A good time is around 12.5 seconds.

In common with my normal practice of testing, I adjusted the braids and loosened the body screws a half turn and just made sure everything was running freely - well as free as could be in this case.

## Whoops!

From the start there is a short straight to a tight 90 right and then a 12' smooth, flat dash to a tight 180 left. Hitting the Go button the car behaved like a kangaroo on steroids, leaping all over the place and almost not making the first corner. It settled down but appeared quite slow up the straight and then I found out about the lack of inherent braking, ending up in the straw bales!

Back on the track it took the next twisty, fairly rough section quite well and then onto the Plexytrack. The first bit is a short straight and then up over a hill, not wishing to deslot on the other side of the hill (for some reason the track is not quite straight) I did not give it full power.⇒⇒

Mistake! Half way up the hill and the magnet welds itself to the track and that is it. Push it over the top and carry on, a bit of throttle and remembering what happened before lift off early for the 90 right - car stops dead. That magnet again. Back on the power, down the straight towards a 90 right. The clever bit here is that the Plexytrack stops just before the bend and then it goes back to a wooden track so it is important to get your braking point right. The missing mirror proves that I didn't always.

The next section is very tight with a home made sandtex type of surface, and the Clio was not at all happy on this bit, not negotiating the corners very well and getting stuck and leaping about all over the place. It was in this section that at one point the car stopped and would not go again. As there was no sound from the engine I assumed that either a wire had broken or maybe my controller had failed. After investigation I found that the back axle was locked up solid. I can only assume that somehow all the bouncing about had made it ride up over the pinion and jam up. The final section is made with SCX track and culminates in a hump back bridge, which nearly every car with a strong magnet fails to negotiate as the magnet just welds itself to the track.

I had about 30 attempts and only cleaned it twice with times in the mid to high 16s. The trick with the Plexytrack section I discovered was to take it all flat except for a minor lift approaching the 90 right. The magnet just kept the car bolted to the track and it appeared to be very much faster than on the wooden sections.

Why did I stop after 30 attempts? Well I think the following picture shows why. There were all the right motor noises but no forward movement, so I just gave up at that point. If you

look very closely at the picture, not only will you see a nicely stripped crownwheel, but also a quite damaged pinion. And all this with only 2000 feet on the clock.



## Conclusions

This brings me rather abruptly to the end of the test and in the best Top Gear traditions - would I buy one and would I recommend you to buy one?

Well if you want a good looking car to sit in your display case - definitely yes. If you want a car to go roundy roundy racing on a flat, smooth commercial track with gentle bends - possibly (but then what is the point of all the suspension if you stay on a smooth track?). If you want to go rallying on real rally tracks - no, unless you have a very good sponsorship deal with a gear supplier, and even then don't expect to win many prizes with an unmodified car.

My next job is to get the gears repaired and sort out the chassis so that I can see how close I can get to the magic 12.5 seconds.

Watch this space. ■

# Basic race car preparation

BY JOHN WATTS

When preparing a race car the first thing I do is take a look at it from all angles. I make sure that all four tyres clear the body; the rears are normally fine but the fronts can sometimes rub on the wheel arches. If they do, and your club rules allow it, then sand them down; it shouldn't need much plastic removing. I do it with the body still on; by wrapping emery paper around the wheel with the rough side out. Only remove enough to give clearance. If necessary the rears can be given the same treatment.

Next, remove the body. Make sure that the front wheels are tight on the axle, if not then Superglue them in place. The front tyres should touch the track and roll when the car is pushed along in the slot. If they don't, check that the pick-up braids are as flat as possible - i.e. close to the guide. Bend the last 1/8th of braid towards the track; it's amazing how many racers don't know how to get the best from these items. Believe me they are as important as rear end grip.

By now the front end of the car should be fine so now check the motor. The pinion should be tight on the shaft and you need to check it has not split when being assembled. If it spins on the shaft then carefully Superglue it on, making sure that you keep the glue away from the teeth! The motor should be a tight fit in the chassis; any movement will affect the car. If it is loose you can either glue it in or use a pair of pliers to bend the mounting. Superglue is easy and quick; it doesn't have to be permanent as solvents are available. The other option involves making the holes for the motor slightly smaller with pliers. Pinch the edge of the holes in the chassis then clip the motor in.

Now move on to the rear axle. First check that the contrate is tight; if it isn't, replace the entire thing or use Mr. Superglue again. Next check for free play in the bearings - the only way to overcome slack here is to replace them which is fine if you have a lot of spares. Otherwise you are going to have to live with it. Now check that

the bearings are a tight fit in the chassis; once again glue or pliers will sort it out. The rear wheels need to be tight and straight on the axle i.e. no wobble. Once you are happy that all is shipshape then oil everything.

The tyres need to be sanded flat but you don't need a special block for it, just a flat surface. A marble chopping block is ideal - buy one of your own as the other half will not be amused when she finds tyre shavings in the dinner! Hook the car up to a power supply, place some sandpaper on the block and carefully sand the tyres flat. Don't rush; it is very easy to strip gears and burn out motors if you are not careful. Remember to round off the inside and outside edges of the tyre as it helps the car to slide smoothly.

Replace the body but don't overtighten the screws; they are only going into soft plastic. All that's left is to adjust your driving style to suit the car. This is probably more important than all the waffle you have just read. All cars are different and have to be driven accordingly.

Finally, you will notice that I have not tweaked the motor, just oiled it; that is all that is really necessary. Hopefully you now have a car that is smooth, quick and handles well. Simple isn't it?

**I have recently joined my local club at Mussel Bay Raceway in King's Lynn in a forlorn attempt to improve my racing skills. The upside for the other members is that they will probably get some free publicity and they can take the piss out of the editor unmercifully!**

**The downside is that they are badgered to write articles! This is the first result - John Watts is a mega racer and was Green Oaks club champion as long ago as 1966. He was also BTCC (standard car) champion in 1996. Apart from that he is a thoroughly nice guy who is more than willing to help slot-car novices like myself.**

**Hopefully I can persuade him to write some more articles about race preparation; it may be the only way to slow him down so I can finish less than three laps behind him!** ■



Dear Brian,

I am writing in response to Noel Harris' cry for help (June issue) regarding his problem of connecting his new laptop to his Scalextric RMS.

I read his letter and a cold shiver ran up and down my spine as I saw 'RMS' and 'New laptop' being mentioned in the same sentence! How familiar is that (thought I!) Now I am no whiz kid when it comes to PCs, but I do have a reasonable level of competence. Despite this, I simply could not get it sorted. Thankfully, I have the benefit of a couple of mates who were willing and able to help, and so I finally arrived at a solution.

I shan't go into all the detail of two months worth of disappointment, grief and frustration (not to mention an ever increasing pile of adaptors and various other bits and pieces) suffice to say that there is a fix and anybody having similar problems, please contact me by email and I will try and help (Just to take the shine off your weekend though; it will set you back about eighty big ones!)

Now this whole experience has got me dusting off the soapbox because for me the question of how can I get this to work has been superseded by the question 'why did I bother? I was really looking forward to the arrival of RMS to replace a none too elegant light/sensor type arrangement that had been in place up until then. Despite the former's lack of charm, it was however accurate and reliable - despite the odd crane fly interfering with the lap counting by breaking the light beam (by the way, we call that a 'racing incident' to give some idea of the social nature of our club!)

Since throwing sixty quid at the Scalextric RMS I have had nothing but problems. They began with the well documented software issues (which were addressed by downloading patches from the Scalextric website) Fine, but hey, some pretty basic testing should have picked that up. Then problems with laps not being recorded. No obvious reason, so, call to the help desk (very helpful chap) who suggested that the sections needed to be very flat or the cars could be lifting off a little and miss the mechanism, particularly on fast sections. Well, my track is fixed permanently to MDF, so didn't seem to be that. Dismantled the sections to look for mechanical defect - no obvious problem here either, so back to the help desk. At their suggestion, returned the section for testing. They found no problem, but kindly sent a new section anyway. So laptop sorted, new track in place, testing time (club meet fast approaching - already cancelled twice - not a popular man!)

Out came the trusty 962s and 'C' Class Mercs, set up a ten man championship to reflect a typical race night and Hey Presto! - it's working! So onto the BTCC class - same test and Hey Presto! - missing laps again!! I'll try the Fly Le Mans class - same test and ..... You guessed - missing laps.

So, in short I've had it with RMS, a real shame with all the tremendous quality improvements in Scalextric product over the last year or so, this product (I feel) has really let them down. Maybe I've just been incredibly unlucky, but one thing's for sure - we'll be looking out for crane flies at our next meet!

Any advice would be gratefully received.

Chris Holt (c.holt@ukonline.co.uk)

Dear Brian/NSCC,

Recently, I decided to sell some of my unwanted slot-car items through a succession of adverts using the free service provided by the NSCC – thereby shunning the popular Internet auction site phenomenon.

It could be argued that by using the club facility, members are perpetuating the original ethos of the NSCC, and in the process providing a welcome service to those without access to the worldwide web. I was certainly delighted with the response that my adverts generated, and can report that all transactions were completed without encountering any problems. Therefore, I'd like to thank everyone who contacted me - even if some of you missed out on items that were snapped up almost the moment the Journal hit the door mat. And that's really the only drawback to this particular system, as some members receive their copy of the Journal later than others. However, that factor is mainly due to the inherent nature of the postal service used, rather than a measure of the club secretary's competence.

In conclusion, I'd urge you to support the club, whenever possible, and use the members advert section to either buy or sell slot-car items. And remember, from a buyer's point of view, it's reassuring to know that, unlike most Internet auction sites, club rules dictate that a seller must send goods 'on approval!'

Regards  
Peter Novani

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Dear Brian

I was reading through some old copies of the Journal and came across Neil Dunham's article on the Cooper Climax T51 (July 2002).

I have two race tuned C88 Coopers which have slight differences; they are both red but distinctly different shades. The most interesting point is that they have different sized filler caps; the darker one has small filler caps and the other lighter shade has larger ones. Is this a type 2?

Keep up the good work  
Peter Youd

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Dear Brian,

Just to prove that I do read the Journal, could I make an observation on the "National Racing Colours" article by Dave Sykes.

I understand that the colour used by Germany was white until the late thirties (I forget the actual year), when the famous paint scraping incident took place due to an overweight car, a Mercedes if I remember correctly. I must admit that, although I knew countries had racing colours, I didn't know all of them, and this article comes under the "you learn something new every day" category.

Perhaps we could have a competition to find a photo of a car in the colours of Luxembourg. I could of course be very wrong (it wouldn't be the first time), but I somehow I don't think the postbag will be bulging with replies.

Happy motor racing.  
All the best,  
Ray Harper

**OK - lets go for it. I have a plain green beetle (as mentioned in Margate messages this month) looking for a good home so first photo of a Luxembourg racing car wins it.**

# Traders travels

BY ROBERT LEARMOUTH  
(WESTWOOD MODELS)

Something a little different in Madrid this month - my first ever outdoor swapmeet! But then when the temperature is nudging 100°F and there isn't a cloud in the sky it makes perfect sense!

The venue was the compact courtyard of a diminutive Anglican Church in the swish Salamanca district of the city. A large lime tree provided the shade in the fierce heat for the tightly packed tables, well most of them anyway. Phil Smith had a good laugh when he advised Steve Cannon and myself that as the new boys in town we'd been given the worst table position. Well it seemed okay to me, it wasn't completely in the shade of the tree but the sun was (at that stage) hiding behind a building anyway. Halfway through the morning though it poked its head round the building and we were looking at a potential case of fried car. We then spent the next hour as it moved further, constantly repositioning the table and contents to get things back in the shade. It must have been quite funny to watch and I swear the grin on Phil's face was getting wider all the time. However it was wiped clean off when the English gentlemen I'd been speaking to turned out to be non other than the church chaplain who, sympathetic to our plight, promptly procured a pair of large parasols from his store!

## Budget Fly

The swapmeet was intended for all types of model motor vehicle so alongside the plentiful Scalextric there was also Dinky, Airfix and similar. Such a mixture seemed to work very well. It was another good opportunity to stock up on Spanish spares, which were plentiful there. It was also nice to finally meet some of the faces behind the emails. Steve managed to sell a large pile of budget Fly, no mean achievement when the factory is just a few miles down the road! Trading was brisk all day and we were the last ones out by some way, much to the annoyance

of the Spanish guy who was trying to lock-up!

## Cup Final

As a Southampton supporter I'm duty bound to follow-up Peter Novani's report of a Cup Final feature on Sky, featuring wannabe Scalextric racer Theiry Henry of Arsenal. Wayne Bridge of Southampton has been a bona fide racer for sometime and regularly seems to get column space on his interest, including another Cup Final piece in The Sun of Saturday, 17 May. All fantastic free advertising for Hornby though I'm less sure of Virgin Trains new billboard advert proclaiming their new stock is 'More horny than Hornby', now really...

By the way, Henry's actual car used in the Sky interview was being auctioned on Ebay as I write this. It was a red standard GT40 with the player's initials on the roof, letter of authenticity from Hornby and signed box lid. Unfortunately the auction (# 3135902117) was due to close after the copy deadline so I'm unable to provide info on the final selling price.

Ebay bargains of the month included a C349 Audi Quattro used/unboxed for just £170 and a pair of Pink-Kar 2CVs in bog standard yellow and blue for just £122. Meanwhile there was a mouthwatering line-up of items described by the sellers as 'rare' including; C272 Lap Counter, pair of C178 Skid Chicanes, C23 Arrow, C466 Joker's Porsche and C348 Audi Quattro (very rare apparently). Good old Ebay!

## South Park Audi

Of much more interest was the appearance of a white Audi A4 with South Park (cartoon) graphics tampoed on roof and bonnet. I have it on very good authority that this was produced at Margate. Around 1999-2000 the factory was trying to occupy its production capacity with outside work and was producing mobile phone facias, some with cartoon character designs. Put the 2 together and hey presto. ➤➤

Allegedly, Bart Simpson is also out there occupying the roof of another Vectra and being chased by a shark on the bonnet...

## **Italian Job**

If you want an Italian Job Mini (without the need to buy the set) then you may want to try and put your name on one now (due Oct/Nov around the release of the movie). Current advice is that these cars will be produced in limited edition Sport variant only with no standard edition. That will push up demand as will the crossover into the world of Mini and movie

collectors. Production numbers aren't confirmed yet but recent Sport releases have been 7000-8000. This release could well be more (Hornby reserve the right to vary at will) but if not, remember Scalextric has a global market these days and only a minor percentage of this figure will land on each shore (including the UK). So I suspect this release could be a hot one but production circumstances could change and my view may be wrong. So don't blame me when they start giving them away with a pack of cornflakes! ■



# MRRC NEWS



**P**endle Slot Racing have recently been appointed as U.K. distributors for MRRC and Sean has sent me the following update.

All MRRC production has now been moved to China starting with the first two cars to be released Mc001 and 002 which should arrive in July. The Cobra body has been re-tooled which has resulted in a much sharper body without the seams which were visible on the previous versions. The chrome front and rear bumpers have been replaced with overrides; chrome surrounds have been added to the headlights; windscreen wipers are now moulded separately and the driver has the added protection of a chrome roll bar. As expected the paint and printing is first class down to the minute size of the Cobra badge on the boot lid. The chassis remains standard as fitted to the previous releases but will be powered by one of MRRC's new range of red can Scaleauto motors.

The Toyota is due for production in July with release dates in August. This will feature a sidewinder chassis set up allowing full interior detailing - more details next month. MRRC schedule for release:

2003 Mc001 Legends - Ltd Edt Shelby Cobra with Carol Shelby Figure in display box ; Mc002 Team Shelby Cobra 427 red #96 standard car; Mc003 Toyota Celica LB Turbo Grp5 # 68 standard car; Mc004 Shelby Cobra ltd 427 40th Anniversary Limited Edition (production 3500 only October); Mc005 Shelby Cobra 427 blue Team Shelby Replica #00; Mc006 Toyota Celica Grp5 #1 standard car(Sept); Mc007 Toyota #56 standard car (Sept); Mc008 Legends - Ltd Edition Chaparral with Jim Hall Figure in Display Box (November) Clubman Special kits will not be produced in China until 2004.

Sean has also kindly donated one of the limited edition Cobras as a prize car. ■





# In the beginning

BY TONY SECCHI

This is a story of two events - one life changing and one very pleasing. They are both tied together but span forty seven years so if you, dear reader, are sitting comfortably I will take you back in time to nearly half a century ago - long before some of you were born.

In 1956 I was twenty four and had just left a small building/contracting firm and moved to a structural engineering consultancy. I was still at evening classes three times a week (no university for working class blokes at that time) studying for my engineering degree. I was, like everybody else in my position, a proficient, able draughtsman and had been in that position since 1949 when I started my working apprenticeship.

Along with other 'juniors' I was allocated a drawing board and was lucky enough to be next to a guy of similar age called Ian Alexander, who originated from Battersea but had just got married and moved to Midhurst in Sussex. Ian was madly interested in motor racing and being near Goodwood was a regular spectator. He drove a Jaguar MkVII 3.4 saloon which had been mildly breathed on and, in those days of no speed limits, was a quick and efficient driver. I had just bought my first car - a Jaguar 2.4 (after saving for a year) so we instantly hit it off.

At his suggestion, I went to stay with him for the '56 Whitsun weekend, part of the attraction being my first visit to a motor racing circuit - i.e. Goodwood. I knew a little of the sport - Stirling Moss, Mike Hawthorn, BRM, Ferrari etc. but was really a novice. Little did I know that this visit to Goodwood would change my direction in life and embark me on a passion which I still pursue today.

I have only fleeting memories of that day, but the one thing that stayed in my mind as if it was yesterday was the duel between Mike Hawthorn and Colin Chapman (yes, he) in similar Lotus Elevens - (the Eleven was the first of Chapman's sports racers that did not use Roman numerals in its title i.e. IX, X, etc). In those days Colin Chapman was up amongst the

most serious drivers such as Jack Brabham, Cliff Allison, Lea Leston, Innes Ireland and a dozen others.

Chapman's big number came up on that day, in that race. Hawthorn had driven a works GP Ferrari from '53 to '55 and had led Jaguar's Le Mans team to victory in the latter year. In 1956 he had a fruitless year with BRM, returning to Ferrari in 1957 with the late, great Peter Collins as his F1 team mate. In 1958 he became the first British World Champion only to retire and lose his life in a road accident a few months later. So he was of the highest class - right up there with Stirling Moss and Fangio.

On that Whit Monday the sun shone brightly upon a duel that passed into mythology and into my memory to become the one single event that converted me into a race fan for the rest of my life. Both Mike and Colin found themselves, as I say, in identical 1500 cc Lotus Elevens and the race was electrifying, the lead swapping again and again sometimes twice a lap. It was a fantastic dice and they were in such close company a coming together was inevitable. It happened on the penultimate lap at Madgewick corner, both cars spinning and finishing up side by side. Hawthorn visited the pits to check for damage and although he rejoined the race in second place Colin was not to be denied and ran out the winner of a most memorable contest.

Even as I sit down today and write this I am right back there at Goodwood hanging onto the wooden fence and jumping up and down like a big kid. I have since seen some of the 'greats' in some really close races but that day is etched upon my mind (and heart) for all time.

However, I did say that this was the story of two events and the second happened on the evening of Sunday March 30 when David Yerbury phoned me about his latest creation - the Lotus Eleven.

Informed and enthusiastic members will know David for his 'cottage industry' products of car bodies in vac. formed plastic. In fact I have⇒⇒

written a few articles about his model bodies and how good they are. Recently he has moved on to producing fibreglass resin bodies and the Lotus Eleven is his latest creation. Waking me up from my regular evening nap, he asked me if I would be prepared to construct and test his new baby. In view of the personal significance this request was an absolute pleasure and I agreed immediately.

A few days later David sent me a stunning detailed body painted in acrylic Lotus racing green and a Scalextric Porsche 911 underpan which had the correct wheel base and was a snug fit with the motor in place. He also sent front and rear axles complete with wheels and tyres and a clear acetate windscreen. His last sentence in his covering letter was "I hope that you have fun with it". I certainly did.

Before I recount the building process there is just one final piece of history - David had based his car on the Lotus Eleven 'Le Mans' which was the most popular race specification. Most private owners opted for the Climax FWA 1098 cc engine as the 1460 cc FWB added £200 to the price (a hell of a lot in 1956). In 1957 Lotus introduced the mark 2 with the now optional Climax FPF twin cam engine, (At Le Mans that year, Lotus Elevens finished first, second and fourth in the 1100 cc class, won the 750 cc class and with it the coveted index of performance prize. The French, who had always collared this, were well put out and cancelled that category a year later!

So, back to the build. After sorting out all the bits I started on construction. As is my way, I built up the chassis and running gear first, making sure that it fitted underneath the body and 'looked right'. I find this most important; generally, if it looks right, it goes right. I tested it without the body first to check if all the parameters of road holding, braking, handling and acceleration were balanced. I then attached the body and checked again. Sometimes this has a detrimental effect to one or more of the parameters and adjustment needs to be carried out. In the case of the Eleven it was no problem except for the tyres. By today's standards the little Eleven runs on very narrow tyres and

although this gives little rolling resistance at the front (good), it gives very little grip at the back (bad). With a modern Mabuchi's installed and a small, lightweight body, the 'grunt' is indeed substantial, emphasizing the rear grip problem. The tyres that David had supplied were finely ribbed and 4mm wide, which is right for scale. They had been made, as was the norm long ago, in two halves and had a thin protruding 'flashing' at the centre. This meant that the tyre to track 'footprint' was tiny - it was like racing a real Eleven on bicycle rears.

The answer was simple - a bit of judicious sanding removed both 'flashing and ribbing' giving the full tyre width footprint. Along with this I carefully sandpapered the thickness (inside) of the rear wheel arches which enabled me to maintain the maximum track without cutting the rear axle rod.

Performance was instantly improved. I tested the car without a magnet (as it should be) and it was pretty good. It was still a bit 'skitty' exiting the corners and even although you could hold it on a full broadside like the real car, if you put the power down too soon at the end of the corner it would do a rapid about face.

I did not want to 'spoil' the car but I just could not get a consistent 10 lap stint out of it. As the laps progressed so did my speed and so did the de-slots so I gave in to modern day practice and fitted a magnet. The one I used was the second version of the Scalextric brown bar magnet which is made of metal, not plastic and is about 1mm thick instead of 2mm. I put this just in front of the engine and the difference was very noticeable. The car stabilized its rear end and enabled me to have continuity of lap times without sacrificing the 'hang it out on the throttle' cornering technique - a very good compromise.

I fitted a flag guide and a tiny piece of lead in the nose to control a bit of 'front flutter' and that was it. I fitted a rear view mirror from stock, added race numbers and painted the cockpit, side exhaust, driver, wheels and headlights. There are so many versions of the real car, both factory and private, that at first I did not know which one to copy but it did not take long to



work out. Although not historically accurate (the Chapman car was a single seater version with a rear headrest) I used the race number which was his at that memorable Whitsun meeting - 28. It was my way of paying homage to a race which has given me nearly half a century of real car pleasure and led me directly to my past and present delight in slot-car racing.

I do not think that I would be writing this article today if I had not attended Goodwood in 1956. For me it was a turning point and I shall never forget it.

My thanks go to my fellow historian and

friend David Yerbury - to his vision, his skill, his enthusiasm and most of all to his respect for real and model cars. His latest effort is a superb reproduction - the proportions are good and the detailing excellent. I recently made (and wrote up) a fibreglassed bodied commercially produced "Autohobbies" body of a Maserati Tipo T61 and David's Lotus is every bit as good.

As I have said before, I have no commercial or monetary connection with David. We have never even met, but I admire his talent and commitment. Well done David and thanks for the memories. ■