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The NSCC

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The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

There's more on your doorstep than milk

It is a well known fact that, as a slot racer, I make a damn fine Editor! This is partly because I live in a part of the country not over endowed with Scalextric clubs; in fact I was under the impression that there were none within a 40 mile radius of King's Lynn. The opportunities to learn any racing skills were, therefore, somewhat limited.

At the Milton Keynes swapmeet, however, I was approached by a member called Cyril Tidswell who invited me to visit the Emneth Slotstox Club. Now Emneth is about 10 miles from my house but I was totally unaware of the club's existence. Anyway, it transpired Mark Robertson had been invited as well so I got my passport out (well I was crossing the Norfolk border!) and arranged to meet him in Wisbech for a meal before going to the club.

There have been a couple of articles in the Journal about Slotstox but I wasn't really sure what it was all about; suffice to say it is seriously good fun. We were made very welcome and I could be seriously tempted to take it up. The main point in its favour being that, just like its full size counterpart, novice drivers are given half a lap start!

While we were there another NSCC member, John Kelly, informed me that his new enterprise - Mussel Bay Raceway - was also nearing completion in King's Lynn. Thus it was that I found myself racing toy plastic cars for the second time in a week; let it be put on record that I only came third from last and actually came second in one heat. I could get the taste for this; you never know what you can find on your own doorstep, do you?

And Finally - back up to speed this month with a 48 page issue; mostly containing car reviews of one sort or another. This is partly due to the generosity of the Hobby Co. who sent me a bumper selection of Ninco cars but also because the people who actually play with toy cars are the ones who are writing at the moment. I would like some more articles on other subjects but, as always, it depends on you.

Till next month

Brian





A very quiet few weeks from Scalextric with only one new model released since I last wrote this column: C2480 Porsche 911 GT3R “N. Y. Yankees No75”

The red GT40 is rumoured to be in the shops in the U.S.A. so will probably be with us any day now together with the DTM Mercedes CLKs and Opel V8s.

There is a new leaflet available from your local retailer. Entitled “2003 Race Ready Sets” this A4 ish size leaflet shows this year’s sets, how to use the track extension packs and details of the individual track pieces and borders.

In the future

The new Minis have already changed their specification but retained the same C numbers we can now expect:

C2484 Red Mini with a full Union Jack on the roof

C2485 Yellow Mini with a black and white chequered roof

These Minis have both front and rear lights. Both these cars will be available in set C1112 John Cooper Challenge and should be available in May.

More details have emerged about the Goodwood trio of Ford GT40s – C2529A. They will be available both through Goodwood themselves and also normal retailers. Numbers are limited though so these will be quite scarce.

Further into the future a new F1 car has been confirmed. Available in both Sport and standard versions. Look out for:

C2397A Renault F1 2003 Trulli #7

C2398A Renault F1 2003 Alonso # 8

More information and pictures soon.

Club Car

Since the last Journal was published several of you have responded to my request for your preference of a club car from Hornby. However we need responses from many more of you before we can commit to such an exercise. Please take five minutes to put pen to paper or finger to keyboard and tell me what you would like to see produced. Due to the packed production schedule it will be some time before we get our car produced – but the sooner we place the order – the sooner we will see the result ! As a reminder these are the questions I would like you to answer:

- 1) Would you pre-purchase a club car at around £30?
- 2) What car would you like us to produce?
- 3) What livery?
 - a. A real racing livery
 - b. An NSCC/Scalextric livery
 Suggestions.....
- 4) Any other comments or suggestions?

Reminder

Don’t forget that one of the main reasons we have a Factory Liaison person is to put your questions and requests to Hornby. If there is anything you would like information about, would like to request or would just like to comment on - let me know. I will ask Hornby and publish their responses to the benefit of all. They really are interested in our comments and requirements. ■

Margate Extra

BY ROB SMITH

Track Markings

Have you ever noticed the letters to be seen on the underneath of each track piece? These are used by the factory to denote the pieces and form an easy aid to recognition. The table shows the letters used on the new Sport track pieces. Fascinating isn't it!

Ref No.	Track or Border	Straight or Curve	Description	Size or Radii	Length or Degree	Letter Code
C8217	Track	Straight	Power Base	Half	175mm	A
C8205	Track	Straight		Standard	350mm	B
C8223	Border	Straight		Half	175mm	BA
C8224	Border	Curve	Outer	R3	22.5°	BB
C8225	Border	Curve	Inner	R2	45°	BC
C8228	Border	Curve	Outer	R2	45°	BD
C8233	Border	Straight	Lead in L/H	Standard	350mm	BE
C8233	Border	Straight	Lead in R/H	Standard	350mm	BF
C8238	Border	Curve	Outer	R4	22.5°	BG
C8239	Border	Curve	Outer	R2	22.5°	BH
C8240	Border	Curve	Outer	R1	45°	BJ
C8279	Border	Curve	Inner	R1	180°	BL
C8280	Border	Curve	Inner	R2	22.5°	BM
C8281	Border	Curve	Inner	R3	22.5°	BN
C8282	Border	Curve	Inner	R4	22.5°	BP
C8206	Track	Curve		R2	45°	C
C8207	Track	Straight		Half	175mm	D
C8203	Track	Curve	Racing	R2	90°	E
C8215	Track	Straight	Electronic Lap Counter	Half	175mm	EA
C8216	Track	Straight	Pacer	Half	175mm	EB
C8220	Track	Straight	Race Station	Half	175mm	EC
C8143	Track	Straight	RMS PC Interactive	Half	175mm	ED
C8200	Track	Straight		Quarter	87mm	F
C8246	Track	Straight	Side Swipe L to R	Standard	350mm	G
C8246	Track	Straight	Side Swipe R to L	Standard	350mm	H
C8201	Track	Curve	Hairpin	R1	90°	J
C8202	Track	Curve		R1	45°	K
C8211	Track	Straight	Leap Take off	Half	175mm	L
C8211	Track	Straight	Leap Landing	Half	175mm	M
C8204	Track	Curve		R3	22.5°	N
C8210	Track	Crossover			90°	P
C8222	Track	Straight	Converter	Half	175mm	R
C8235	Track	Curve		R4	22.5°	S
C8236	Track	Straight		Short	78mm	T
C8234	Track	Curve		R2	22.5°	U
C8278	Track	Curve		R1	22.5°	V

Practical slot racing - Part 2

by D.J. Laidlaw Dickson

Model Maker June 1959

FROM VINE FENNEL

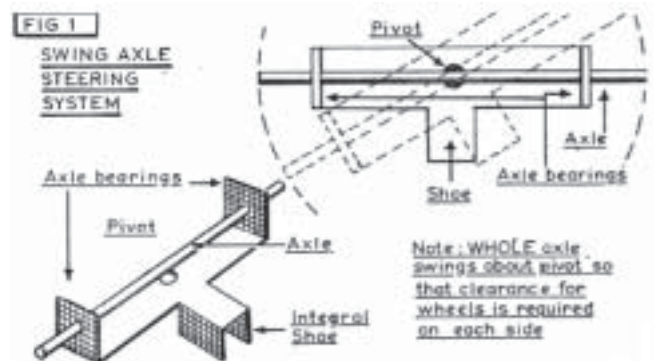
To steer or not to steer, has been a burning question ever since electric model car racing was first introduced. In the ready-made commercial field, one system, Scalextric, is non-steering, the other, V.I.P., has delightful Ackerman type steering installed. So where do we go from there? We believe there is room for both schools of thought.

The beginner who is anxious to get a car running will forget all about steering and concentrate on getting a simple car that works going around the track. However, we know that the really keen enthusiast will not be content for ever to build allegedly scale model cars and omit vital scale essentials; the pleasure of seeing Vanwall, Lotus or B.R.M. actually turning wheels at the corner will tip the scales. If he is a slot man then ever more realistic slides are possible with steering plus additional corrective power. Scalextric the non-steering people, cheat a little here, their front wheels hardly touch the track surface, the main weight of the car being taken by the centrally-placed gimbal pick-up.

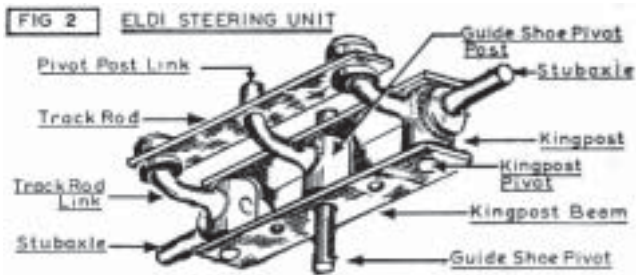
Elementary types of steering

Those lucky people who are well equipped with the necessary tools approach the subject of steering construction secure in the knowledge that they can make anything they lack. Most modellers, with only limited workshop facilities, must rely on their ability to adapt any common object readily to hand to serve their purpose. We hope to be able to help them in their quest. First let us consider what a steering unit has to do on a model car, and what parts are required to make it up. Basically, the guide shoe, or slot pick-up, according to type of track, must be linked in some way to the wheels, so that any bend in the track causes them to turn, in other words they will be actuated exactly like a car driver turning his steering wheel.

So elaborate a link-up is not, however, required in our case, so that worm or cam systems can be happily forgotten. Let us concern ourselves with the very simplest linkage that will produce results. This gives us the swing axle system produced by the very first builders of successful electric model cars. (Fig 1). It is really so simple it needs no further explanation. Limitations should be equally obvious; the wheels do not turn, they swing in an arc, which means that only cars without mudguards, i.e., Grand Prix types, are possible. Owing to the space required to allow this movement they cannot be built truly to scale, it is a compromise arrangement which will not suit the purist. For sports racing cars with enveloping wings it is quite impossible.

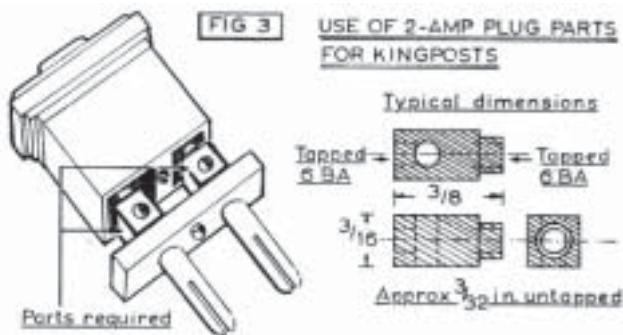


We must, therefore, explore further and develop a method of turning wheels in situ as in full-size car practice. This means stub axles and a means of anchoring them and of turning them in response to the guide shoe movement. The basic parts of such a steering unit are given in Fig 2, which shows the Eldi steering unit, a commercial production for those who desire a ready made article of low price and reasonably good performance.



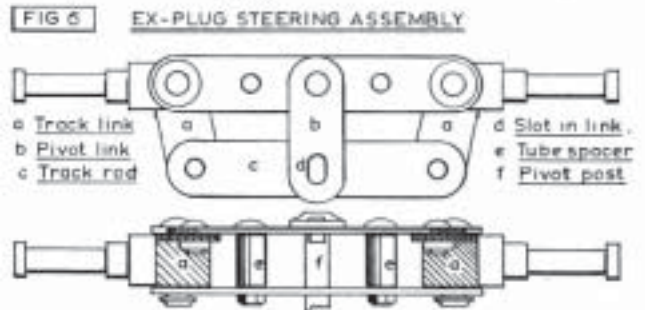
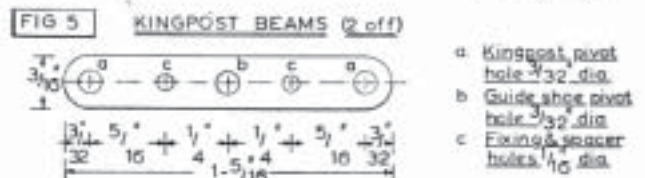
Many people will prefer to make their own units, which can then be built to suit their particular car and scale. Our first unit then is offered to those with the barest minimum of equipment and entails nothing more difficult than drilling a few holes, soldering a joint or two, and wielding a small saw, file or tin snips.

For stub axles, we turn to the electrical junkbox and search for a 2 amp. or 5 amp. 2-pin lighting plug. The two pins (positive and negative) will be found to comprise the round pin part and a small brass cube into which it screws to locate itself through an insulated plate. Through this cube goes a hole intended for the bare flex to be inserted and then screwed tight. This hole is unthreaded and will take a king post pin of about .11 in. (just over 3/32 diameter. (Fig 3).



The threaded hole into which the original pin went was found, happily, to be threaded 6ba; we now need a round or hexagon headed bolt of this size about 1/2in. long, if not threaded right up to the head so much the better; this is to form a stub axle and at the same time retain the wheel in place with its head. (Fig 4.) The king post needs to be fabricated from light brass sheet, nothing thicker than 20 gauge is needed and thinner may well be stout enough. Cut two pieces as in Fig 5, drill them where indicated.

Where the king posts go in, it is as well to drill two holes with the pieces clamped together; and also the holes which receive the upper part of the guide shoe. The lower part of the beam will need a couple of holes for bolts to fix it to the chassis. Since these retaining bolts will serve the dual purpose of locating the spacers, the holes should again be extended through the upper piece. This makes five holes altogether, all matched on each piece. Fig 6 shows the parts made or found so far screwed up with the fixing-locating bolts on which have been threaded two short lengths of brass tube as spacers. The guide shoe pivot post can then be inserted. This piece will require its guide shoe to be added later, so need only be tried for fit. There remain the track rod links for steering to be made: it is important



that the three links should all be the same length, and that movement is free without being sloppy, or the car wheels will tend to wobble on the straight, when the car should be travelling its fastest (Fig 7).

The same light gauge brass used for king post beams should be used for these parts. Note the centre steering link is slotted. It will work with a larger round hole, but this involves a degree of play which is undesirable.

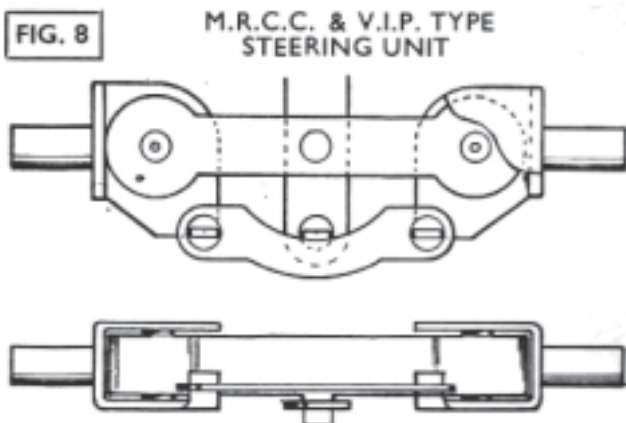
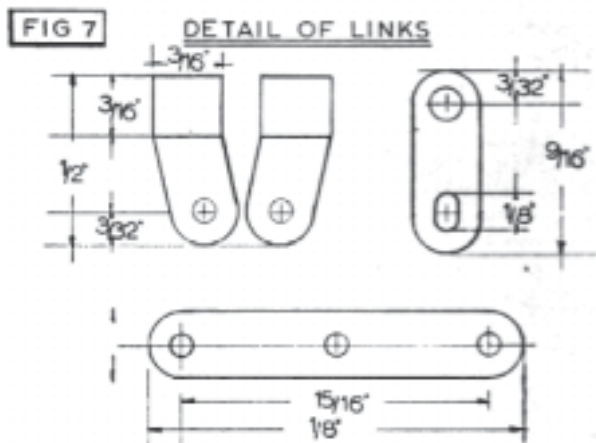
This very simple axle will, of course, fit any scale by adjusting the track width. It isn't beautiful, but it should do the job. =>

More advanced

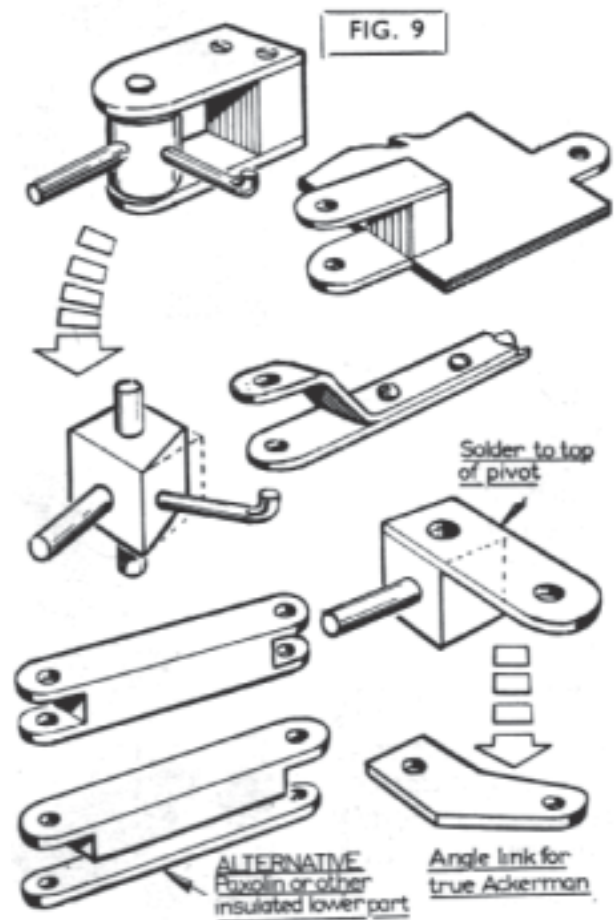
We now come to more advanced types which should be of more interest to the purist. First of all there is what we call the V.I.P. style which has recently been followed very closely by M.R.R.C. of Boscombe with their unit. This introduces a true Ackerman type steering, that is to say, the arc followed by the inside wheel is smaller than the radius of the turn of the outside wheel. This is achieved by turning the track links slightly, assuming we are working on a centre point for the turn on the back axle line.

Fig. 8 shows this particular form of axle and steering unit, where clever use has been made of bent-up metal pivot points, instead of fabricated pivots. It is quite simple to make, and can be easily cut up, but we would say that it requires more care than usual at the risk of binding. The diagram shows the basic parts. The complete unit is available so cheaply that many would rather buy it ready made.

Next comes the type which has always been very popular with the Southport club, that is the stub axle with a separate beam on each side.



This is particularly suited to cars which have a plate type of chassis, and involves very little more work, indeed it is in some cases a good deal simpler. The stub axle can be made in a variety of forms, possibly the happiest is to drill out a piece of square section brass, drill out the stub axle on the one side, and drill out at right angles, where the square section helps, to make the link, and then right through the centre to take the actual pivot post (Fig. 9.)

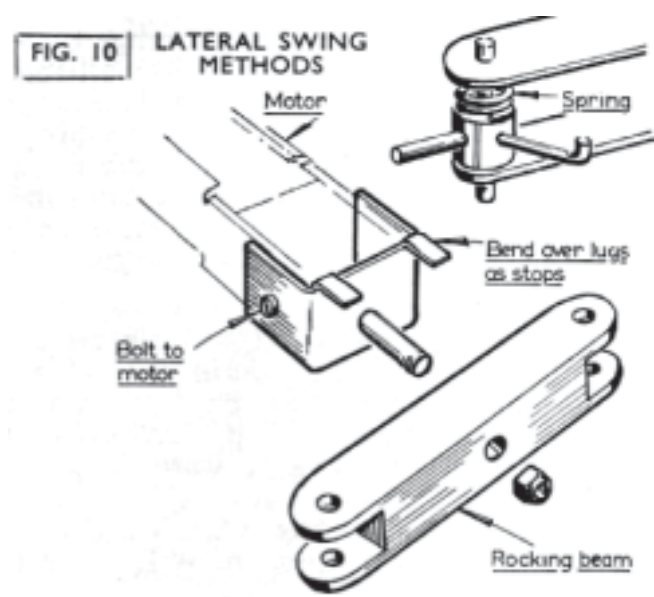


This can be rather a finicky job, particularly if there are not many tools available. The man who has a Unimat or similar type of small lathe, is really on Easy Street, but the ordinary chap with a hand-brace and a bit of care can achieve very fair results, if he is prepared rigorously to scrap anything not quite up to standard. This type involves a separate beam over the top which is held away from the stub axle pivot posts by spacers in between, something like that we have just described in the simpler form. A variant of this has the beam as an angle, each side having

a separate angle and being retained by the same bolts that hold the lower part of the axle. This is often a very good idea, again with the plate type of chassis, or can be adapted for channel section brass.

Then we come to the type of king post which is cut from the solid, filing out U-shaped pieces at each end of a solid bar, which are in turn drilled through to take the king post pivots. This is rather harder work perhaps, but does make a good solid beam. It has been made, not only in metal, but in non-conductive materials such as Bakelite, Tufnol, and this connection has the advantage that it can be used for attachment of the positive pick-up, which must be insulated from the chassis.

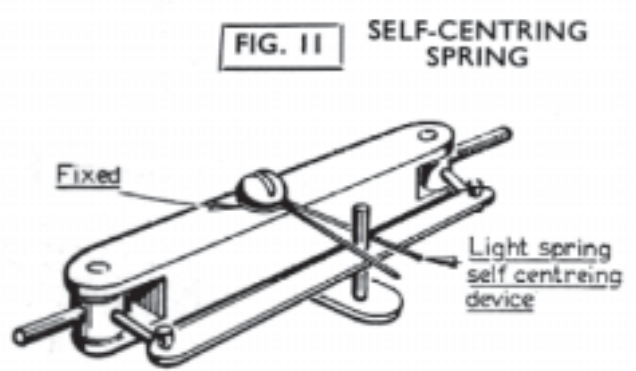
The introduction of chassis-less cars has introduced a new factor, that is to say, some form of attachment of a complete steering unit to the front end of the motor. This has advantages, as it is possible to build in a lateral swing to the axle which overcomes any inequalities of track surface, and even defects in building (Fig. 10).



The lateral swing to the axle can be very easily studied in the V.I.P. type of axle, where it

is carried out most skilfully. It can be copied simply, and is to be recommended. Another refinement, which has doubtful advantages, is a sprung stub axle where a small spring, which can be taken from car type Schrader valves and can be used to give anything from a 1/16th to a 1/8th movement of the wheel. However, we prefer the tilting form of front axle just described if movement is required here.

Finally, on steering refinements there is the self-centring device, where a simple hair-pin type of spring can be employed. The tension required must be a matter of experiment (Fig 11).



Wheel Attachment

Front wheels are usually secured with a soldered-on washer and should be so arranged, that there is no noticeable sideplay. This can be achieved very simply by putting a tissue paper washer between the metal washer and the wheel. It prevents the washer inadvertently being soldered to the wheel, and gives just the right amount of play.

Those using fairly thick front axles may thread the ends and screw on a retaining nut which acts as a dummy hub-cap. This looks attractive, but is not really so strong as the solder method, though, of course, easier to remove the wheels should that be desirable. The V.I.P. people offer a clip-on type of circlip-cum-hub-cap which is, again, an attractive finish. ■

Dreaming of Le Mans

BY TIM AINSLIE

The second hand on the big clock jumps towards the hour, the Tricolor drops and there is the deafening noise of the start of the 24 Heures Du Mans.

The circuit has a mix of 1960s track and modern scenery. Aston Martins and Ferraris sliding and twisting around the bend at the end of the Mulsanne straight, a Mercedes CLK takes off flying elegantly over the Armco barriers landing in amongst a copse of Britains' oak trees. Steve McQueen steps out of the wreckage of a Porsche 917 to be narrowly missed by four cars from a later era fighting for position. I can see them clearly, a 1996 Jöest Porsche with a navy blue and orange colour scheme is the lead car, followed by a white BMW V12 which is closely pursued by a pale blue Audi. Coming up fast behind is a flash of lime green and the letters MG.

Unlike most dreams this one stayed with me when I woke up and gave me the idea for a track test of the four cars which, coincidentally, I just happen to have in my collection.

I recently obtained a Scalextric MG Lola (standard version) and was impressed by the ease with which it was able to circulate my twisting home circuit, the smooth power delivery, with the stability through the Goodwood chicane and around radius one curves, was particularly impressive.

Birthday present

An SCX Audi R8 in Gulf colours was a recent birthday present from my wife. I have always liked the way SCX cars handle and their power delivery, even if the finish tends to be slightly rough, but this one has the simple but distinctive Gulf scheme which has none of the tampo glitches that I have noticed on the recent F1 offerings from SCX.

The BMW is a Ninco NC2 powered model, the Fina version with the engine outline on the

rear panels. I have never quite connected with Ninco cars, the finish and the drive have never really captivated me (apart from the Austin Healey which, although a trifle fast for a car of that era, is well balanced and beautifully decorated).

The last car was a Fly Jöest Porsche, given to me as a leaving present from a job in 1998; it still has its Hamleys price tag of £35 on the box (were they showing us an early glimpse of the Fly prices of the future?)

My recollection of the car was that it went like a missile and seemed to be glued to the track.

The cars are all recent Le Mans cars, designed without a roof. The slot versions are from different manufacturers as are the real cars so an interesting mix to test.

I used a Scalextric Sport lap timer to give the best time over 20 laps for each car; this is incorporated into my classic circuit with the aid of a piece of converter track, The same lane was used on the circuit, each car had its rear tyres and braids cleaned with lighter fuel prior to being run for the 20 laps.

SCX Audi R8

I ran the Audi first and it drove smoothly with a controllable power delivery that makes it a pleasure to drive. It returned a best lap time of 8.7 seconds but I have to admit there was probably more performance in reserve that I did not use. The reason for this was due to the experience I had the two previous occasions I had run the car. On losing the tail at high speed the car had managed to dislocate the guide with the mechanism coming apart inside the car lifting the sprung copper contacts up inside the body, rendering the cars motor unable to make an electrical circuit with the track. Taking the car apart reveals a flimsy V shaped spring that was stuck to the magnet; both times I have =>

had to take the body apart to realign the guide. The mechanism would appear to be a poor design that must have been tested on long fast tracks but not on tight curves which apply torsion on the guide set up. This rather spoils the car for me as I had wanted it for track use rather than as a mint specimen to display.

Fly Joest Porsche

Then came the Fly Porsche. What a difference. It is a pig to drive, being gripped to the track by its magnet and then ripping forward as the motor outmuscles the magnetic pull. It also tended to tail out without warning, something I do not remember from when I used it regularly. I have noticed the tyres seem to have lost the original stickiness, something that has also happened to the tyres of other Fly cars that I have used in the past such as the Marcos and Viper, the compound has become hard and smooth. The Joest Porsche returned a best lap time of 9.6 seconds (would it have been improved with new tyres?)

Ninco BMW V12

Then came the BMW, again what a difference, the NC2 as smooth as silk and quiet, unlike the roar given off by the Porsche. But what a contrast in performance, the car runs on at speed when the throttle is released unlike the Fly Porsche which almost stops dead. The BMW would flip over if I tried to push the performance, there is definitely more power there to be used but not on my circuit. This mirrors the findings of others who consider the NC2 to be more suited to long fast straights and big sweeping curves. It returned a best lap of 11.3 seconds.

Scalextric MG Lola

Finally the MG Lola, at first glance an attractive model, if you like this style of car. Closer inspection of my model shows a run in the laquer and evidence of a clumsy attempt by someone to scratch the blob of laquer off the body (at least someone is paying attention to the details of quality control at the factory!)

The headlights are a mess with the glass being a poor fit and the lights inside being an unsightly square white block easily visible through the glass. What was wrong with the neat unobtrusive head light used on the Cadillac?

There were no faults with the performance, it was stunning, being able to cope with being pushed harder on each lap. I was able to consistently get the double bleeps that signify the fastest lap and I did not get to the limit of the performance during the 20 laps; it returned a best lap of 7.1 seconds.

What did the exercise tell me?

- There was an amazing variation in the speed, power delivery and the stability of the cars. My circuit is approximately 45 feet in length and there was a difference of 4 seconds between the fastest and the slowest lap times (I also tried out my 60's C37 BRM with a new set of Ottmann rear tyres and this returned a best time of 12.8 seconds!)

- I would question the wisdom of putting NC2 motors in Ninco cars as standard, for the majority of home circuits it would seem to be an inappropriate choice.

- SCX have designed a guide mechanism that cannot cope with the car reaching full lock at racing speed, anyone else come across this frailty?

- The tyres on my Fly cars go hard and slippery with use, even if the car is stored in ideal conditions.

- Scalextric have spoiled the MG Lola by using unsightly lights.

- I really must stop eating cheese before I go to bed at night! ■

Trader's travels

BY ROBERT LEARMOUTH
(WESTWOOD MODELS)

Hopefully last month I whetted your appetite for overseas swappies and in particular, the Dutch event located in Dordrecht (near Rotterdam) at the end of March. Said event has now been held and what a cracking day it was. John Van Bodegom stripped out his Seat car showroom near the town centre and filled it with approximately 50 tables plus a large racing layout. The venue was packed with people throughout the day and an excellent time was had by all.

We're now also a little more familiar with Dutch drinking patterns from our excursion into town on the Saturday night. Bemused by the lack of activity in a town packed full of bars we quizzed the locals. Apparently it's quite normal not to start your session over there until midnight and to keep going until 6 am! Sure enough it had livened up by 1am when common sense dictated we turned in ready for the next day's activities.

As I write, our next stop is Barcelona though Turin, Stuttgart and Munich all hosted events recently too. Barcelona is a long trek by car and we'll be flying instead so the Samsonite suitcase (with highly recommended optional anti-baggage handler steel plating) will be dusted off and packed carefully with goodies. At the current time I'm aware of 7 UK based traders making the trip over which should be quite entertaining. Last time out in November it proved an excellent opportunity to stock up on spares.

The Spanish stall-holders had a wealth of useful parts on sale and of course we made sure we checked into the recently relocated and enlarged premises of Slotmania. For those not familiar with Slotmania's spares range it has to be seen to be believed. Injection-moulded chromed/coloured parts for dozens of vintage Spanish cars which are hard to distinguish from the original parts. Not to mention the extensive car collection, including many rare variations, on display in the glass cabinets.

You will no doubt have read about the three

car Goodwood GT40 set by now. This is the first time Scalextric have ventured into the multi-car, limited edition market and we weren't sure how it would be received by a market growing increasingly tired of formulated releases. However it looks like Hornby have hit the spot again. Interest has been strong and there are unlikely to be enough to go around despite this being a £100 set with a 10,000 unit (worldwide) release. We can't wait to see the Corvette L88s in the flesh either - the Confederate flag version looks fantastic. Hadn't Hornby better do a Union flag version too?!

Ebay steal of the month goes to a C281 Motorcycle combination in red at £1,169 - yes, you read that right. If anyone else has that kind of money to spend would they please show some consideration and direct it at one of my auctions instead. ■

The trials and tribulations of club membership (part 2)

BY STEVE JONES

You may recall I first wrote about the trials and tribulations of club membership back last May. Here I am again giving you an update nearly one year later.

Yes we are still going as a club, in fact, dare I say it, close to closing the books and having a waiting list!

It's been a very interesting 11 months. If you read my last article you know how much of a problem it was to gain extra members to our club; in fact we came very close to giving it up.

We continued the uphill struggle for a few months, advertising at local newsagents and also putting up A4 posters at model shops in the locality (Cardiff, Bridgend) this eventually gave us a few desperately needed members. Adrian Norman's web site has also given us coverage, in fact Carlton Television had my telephone number from the site, and duly asked if myself and another member from our club would like to take part in a television programme they were filming for Discovery Home and Leisure called "Short Circuits". We accepted and the rest is history. At least the Welsh came second..... I'll say no more (Paul Darby watch out next time!)

Check the membership update

One good tip, which has gained us additional members, was to look each month at the membership update to see if anyone had joined the NSCC who lived close by. If I spotted anyone within a 50 mile radius I would ring them. This has brought an extra three regulars (Thank you NSCC)!

It seems that the first few members are always the hardest to find. Now we have established numbers we are gaining on average a new member each week we race. This is through word of mouth from existing members; obviously the more members the more people they can tell.

The local council from whom we hire the hall has always been interested in our activities because of our junior members. They were glad to see us giving them a hobby and pastime, and because of this they have been very helpful indeed towards our club.

For the first nine months they gave us a reduced hourly rate on the hall to help us establish the club. Each month they would ask how our club was going. One evening when I went to pay I explained that because of the increased membership the current hall was too small for the amount of people racing.

The following night I had a phone call from them saying that the local Karate Club had folded which occupied the larger hall not far from ours and there was a spare night available if we wanted it. We could use a back room for storage as well! We jumped at the opportunity. Our new hall is over double in size and we now have plenty of room. One downside was the hall was double in price to hire! This didn't worry us too much because we now had more people to race to cover the additional cost.

The club was now self-funding, all costs were being met and we were no longer subsidising the hire of the hall out of our own pockets.

There was one additional cost that we would have to pay for. The track was now more than a year old and the constant putting together and dismantling had taken its toll; quite a few sections required replacement.

Grants

It seems that our luck was in once more. I had a phone call one evening from the chairman of the council committee asking me if I had ever applied for a grant to help run the club. I explained that I had never realised that there was such a thing available. He said that he would send me the relevant forms to fill in and they would let me know. ➡

As promised the forms arrived a few days later; they were quite simple to fill in - just a few questions on what our club was about and they also needed the club's financial accounts over the last 12 months. I always kept records of that luckily enough and they didn't make good reading - lots of red ink and minus signs!

I completed them and sent them back. About two weeks later a committee member turned up at our club to present us with a cheque for £400! We couldn't believe it; we now had the finances to really improve the track instead of funding it ourselves.

We now have an extended track with lots of nice new flat sections. I hope that this article will

give others out there encouragement to start their own club. It all takes time and effort but persevere and you will succeed. Also try to find out what grants, if any, are available in your area and also see if you could get reductions on the hall hire costs for the first few months until you can establish your club.

I would like to take this opportunity in thanking our local council for all their help they have given us; without them we wouldn't have a club. Also to all our members for their continued support, and for their help and involvement that they give. Good luck! ■



Nice one Steve: a pleasant change to read about a club that is prepared to work hard at increasing its membership instead of moaning about lack of interest. I trust the prize car will be put to good use.



BITS AND PIECES

Scalextric on TV

I **don't** get out much - the story book in CITV's "Ripley and Scuff" has the two halves of the C265 hand throttles stuck to the cover. I noticed this while switching through the channels, honest!

Catalogue #44

Is it just me or is the driver of The Toyota F1 #25 a bit on the short side (page 11). Can he see where he is going? Thomas Neile... who? ... the photographer for the catalogue, how come you didn't notice the grille/vent was missing from the bonnet of the Ford Focus (page 29).

Rare car

Has anybody found the 'super scarce' Ninco front wheel drive Porsche 356 on page 60 of the 2001 catalogue. Check the pinion position on page 57, flip over three pages and ooops!

Request for Roger Gillham

Do Hornby have any pictures of the "cars that never were" - Lancia Delta, XR4i, Rolls Royce, Bugatti EB16 etc.?

Some of these cars exist as mock-ups; some are just in price lists and T.B.A. They would make an interesting chapter in the 6th edition if stories connected with the cars can be officially attributed.

Question for Adrian Norman

Did you ever find out what the blurred red car was on the box lid of the Argos C1080K Speed Extreme set?

No gripes now

Well, just one! The 'A' Sport specification cars availability is a joke. I keep hearing that the reason for the lack of them in the U.K. is that two thirds of them are sent to the U.S.A. Can we have some of the Australian V8 supercars instead please Mr. Kohler?

A selection from Graham Smith (Bless him!)

Sex for sale

I'd wondered why my recent advertisement in the local Trade-It paper had so much interest... *writes Robin Clark*....one of the perils of reading out an advert over the phone I guess.



Club move

After almost 11 years in "The Stables" Eastcote Scalex Club made its last appearance there on Wednesday 30th April. The club has moved to its own permanent venue in Northwood Hills. The new venue brings a new track - 8-lane Ninco in excess of 130ft running length!

The address is 21a Ferndown, Northwood, Middlesex. This is behind the shops adjacent to Northwood Hills station.

Whoops - date cock-up!

You may have noticed a small error in the "Swapmeet update" piece last month - the dates for Evesham were given as 22nd or 29th of September. This may prove a bit tricky as both of these are Mondays! The date has now been set for the 21st September.

Back copies wanted

Has anybody got any old issues of the NSCC Newsletter going spare?

I have a volunteer/loony who is prepared to index the lot but he only has copies from 1997 onwards. If you have any from 1981 to 1996 that you would be prepared to lend or donate to the club (photocopies perfectly acceptable) I would like to hear from you.

I often get requests to reprint old articles so this is your chance to provide some raw material for the project. Please drop me a line if you can help and I will arrange collection.

Brian

1954 Cooper Bristol Mk 2

BY DAVE YERBURY

In 1950 John Cooper decided to get involved in the new 2 Litre unblown Formula 2 championship. At first he tried a 1100 c.c JAP twin cylinder in a stretched Formula 3 chassis but it was soon realised that this car had not enough stamina or speed to be a serious contender in Formula 2.

Cooper approached the Bristol car company and managed to procure some engines to develop for F2. Cooper's idea was to build a batch of cars using this engine to sell to private entrants for the coming season. Unlike all other Cooper cars the engine was in the front driving through a 4 speed box with open propeller shaft to the Lypoid rear axle which was a rigid mount in the back of the frame. Rear independent suspension with a transverse leaf spring acted as a top radius arm to support the rear hubs. With the bottom wishbones having the same effective radius as the top spring, it gave a vertical roll centre at ground level, so when cornering the wheels rolled with the car.

Lockheed hydraulic 10 inch brakes were used with the drums integrally cast into the light wheels which, on occasion, could be very unpredictable. The early cars were box section while the later cars used a proper space frame to increase rigidity. The bodywork had a small frontal area but this was cancelled out by the driver seated high up in the car. At the time these

cars were being built, a young man, who had spun a Connaught during his test run and been turned down by HWM persuaded Cooper to build him one. Hawthorn was the name; he did have a bit of help from his father Leslie who had overseen the car's engine build at the Bristol car Co. and ensured that the head had been tuned to burn Nitro-boosted fuel unlike the works cars. This probably gave Hawthorn an extra 15bhp but he did the rest himself and this best kept secret turned him into a legend. The year 1952, the date 14th April, after an allnighter to recut warped valve seats, Hawthorn was second fastest in practice for Goodwood's Easter meeting. The Cooper Bristol was only headed by Froilan Gonzales in the Thinwall special with 400 bhp on tap.

So brand new car and driver left the rest of the British racing fleet in their wake; a slow getaway in his first single seater race led to a win in the six lap Lavant Cup race by 22 seconds. He then repeated the dose in the Formula Libre Chichester Cup. His third race in the Richmond Trophy was a spirited chase of Gonzalez in the Thinwall special.

What a day for the novice! The morning papers echoed his achievement and everyone wanted to know this handsome and carefree star with the bow tie. They would find out soon enough. ■



Shipment from

Spain

by Gareth Jex

Not too much time this month for a long article, been away in the States for work, but I did manage to pop into Rad Trax in Las Vegas to look around and pick up some bits for the collection and racing. One thing it makes you realise pretty quickly is how much cheaper slot-cars are in the UK/Europe; most of the cars over there seem to cost about \$45 each.

Getting back to the UK, not a great deal to report this month, I think most of the large manufacturers are getting ready for some major releases over the next two months and SCX are no exception.

Last month (April) saw confirmation of the new range for 2003 along with proposed release dates, what I thought I would do is give you a heads up on what to expect this year and give you an idea of when to expect to see the new models in the shops. As always production/shipping can change the dates products actually go on sale, but the info is as up to date as I can get, by the time you read this some of the cars should be already out.

For those of you with access to the Web the newly updated SCX UK web site is worth a look; it has photos of all the new models, release dates and listings of all available accessories and spares: www.scx-cars.co.uk

Also announced are details of an SCX Roadshow. Held between April and October the road show will travel around various UK retail shops with a mobile SCX track layout, compete on the track to win prizes and see the range. Full details of the dates and venue are on the Web site, but here are the next few:

7th June Cheltenham - Gloscat Collage

25th July Cardiff - Ian Allan Store

Thanks for your emails this month; I will endeavour to answer your questions as quickly as possible. One tip or answer to a question: if you intend to race any of the 'Dirty' or 'Mud' effect rally cars, make sure you change the tyres! The tyres that come with the car will have been sprayed and then lacquered leaving lacquer over the edges and in some case over spray on the surface of the tyre. I replaced mine with the pro spec SCX tyres and the difference in grip is well worth it. All the best, Gareth.





**New SCX Models for 2003:
(I have marked the reliveries with an *)**

Ref.	Make/model	Livery	Date
Rally Cars			
61200	Hyundai Accent WRC	“Dirt Effect”*	May
61210	Mitsubishi Lancer EVO	“Monte Carlo”*	May
61220	Citroen Xsara WRC	“Monte Carlo”*	April
61230	Subaru Impreza	“SWRT”*	July
60940	Ford Focus	“Costa Brava 2002”*	Released
(note: this model appears to be difficult to get hold of; it’s not officially a limited edition, but is already sold out in most places)			
61240	Skoda Octavia	“Eriksson”	April
60510	Peugeot 206 WRC	“Dirt Effect”*	Released
61250	Peugeot 206 WRC	“Twice world Champ”*	April
61360	Peugeot 206 WRC	“Rossi”*	April
61190	FIAT Abarth	“Gulf”	June
FORMULA ONE CARS			
61020	McLaren/Merc MP4-17	“Kimi Raikkonen”*	April
61280	Minardi F1	“Malaysia 2003”*	July
61140	Jaguar F1	“De La Rosa”	July
61150	Jaguar F1	“Webber”	July
LMP SPORTS CARS			
61300	Audi R8	“Sport Japan”*	Released
61160	Dome S101 Judd	“Holland”	September
TOURING CARS			
61310	Audi TT	“Red Bull”*	April
61100	Opel Astra DTM	“Schneider”	April
61130	Opel Astra DTM	“Menu”	June
61170	Mercedes CLK DTM	“Vodafone”	July
Vintage Limited Edition Release 2003			
61180	Corvette	“Dragster”	May

**SCX****By Lawrence Attril**

SCX McLaren MP4/16, #4 - David Coulthard

This is the 2001 McLaren, finished in the 'Non-Tobacco' version of the West McLaren F1 livery. From the side the car profile looks accurate, with the rise and drop of the nose being noticeable. Other details like the small air vanes near the airbox are missing, and the driver, although not full body, does sport a 'DC' helmet colour scheme.

Although the car is sold as a MP4/16, it is also close to being a MP4/17D, the car that started the current F1 season. The paint job is done to a reasonable standard, although the colour fades are sometimes clumsy - however we are talking a mass-produced car, so this is more of an observation than a criticism.

The car is built in the same manner as the other existing SCX F1 range, with a one-piece upper body shell, a running frame and a separate underpan. The frame is a one piece moulding incorporating the front wishbones, the engine and rear axle mounts. Compared to the Minardi, the wheelbase is about 4mm longer, but the cars share common wheels and axles, and the standard SCX F1 front wheel steering.

The dimensions of the car are pretty consistent with those of the Scalextric version, with only the wheels letting down the overall appearance. These wheels are the small existing SCX F1 pattern, which don't look right on the latest F1 cars. For the purposes of this review I measured the diameter, and then scaled up the values. The Scalextric McLaren MP4/16's wheels would be 672mm, whilst the SCX version's is 608mm. Real F1 wheels are allowed to be a maximum of 660mm (670mm for the wets), so you can see that the SCX car is running



on unrealistically small diameter wheels. In fact the wheels would be near perfect if 1:35 scale, as they then scale up to 665mm at that scale. However this is a 1:32 scale car.

The car was tested on the club track, where the SCX Minardi I normally race had ruled supreme in the F1 Super Magnet class last season. I took both cars along, and got some practice in with the Minardi before trying my hand with the McLaren. Now I have to be honest in that I had tried a different SCX McLaren before this test, which belonged to a fellow club member. The performance of that McLaren against the benchmark Minardi was disappointing to say the least, so I was hoping to find out if the difference was in that one car, or the design. After a couple of gentle laps, more for the engine's sake, the McLaren was launched on a hot lap. The acceleration was as good as any SCX F1, but by turn three the car had de-slotted, and wasn't showing a great deal of promise. A few more laps followed, and the car continued to tail slide or de-slot at corners where



the Minardi had no problems. I put the car back into the box, and finished the test knowing that this car wasn't going to become the race car of choice.

The next evening I had the car in front of me as I started to write this review, and, picking it up to have another look, I started to examine the wear on the rear tyres. It was then that I noticed the awful play in the rear axle, where one of the axle jaws was nearly open enough for the bearing to simply fall out. Whilst this could account for some of the bad handling, this sort of problem shouldn't exist on a new car. My other five SCX F1s were all checked and none displayed the same sloppy rear axle as the McLaren.

The SCX McLaren MP4/16 does have direct competition in the form of the Scalextric version (C2263), and on reflection I have to say that the Scalextric version is better value overall. The SCX version is let down in looks by those

small wheels and in "out of the box" enjoyment by poor quality control. SCX will need to raise their game if they are to compete against Scalextric and Ninco in the future.

Postscript by Gareth Jex

Since Lawrence tested this particular car I obtained another model (of the same car); the rear axle jaws on this model was noticeably better and the handling was improved. Several club members put in a number of hot laps around the club track and felt that the car was pretty good. Hopefully this is just a one off, but I would welcome other members' thoughts or comments. One tip when racing the SCX F1 models is to reduce the strength of the clip used on the guide suspension. The nose has very little weight and the suspension tends to push the body and wheels up so the wheels don't touch the track. Remove the guide flag and just push down the metal strip a little. ■



Dear Brian,

I have had some response from my request for set pictures for inclusion in the 6th edition book currently under construction, but I still need an early motorcycle set picture.

What is required is a good quality digital image or 35mm photo of a set box top for early motorcycles, either MC1 or MC31, preferably on a light plain background.

Thanks

Roger Gillham

.....
Dear Brian,

I will be taking a four lane 65 foot Scalextric layout to the Model Railway exhibition in the Sands Centre, Carlisle on the 9th and 10th of August. Normally I take a railway layout but the organisers are trying to make the exhibition more family orientated – hence the Scalex this year. It will be free to have a go and there will be prizes generously donated by Hornby Hobbies for the fastest 10 lap race. Timing will use RMS. So, if you live in the area or can persuade your other half that a holiday in the Lake District is the in thing this year, come and have a go.

On the subject of a club car my preference is for the new Mini in British Racing green with white roof and bonnet stripes. The NSCC winners wreath logo to be on the bonnet and doors (where the racing number normally goes); on the sun visor the Scalextric logo, on one door sill the club web address, on the other door sill Hornby Hobbies web address and on the roof miniature national flags of all the countries in which the NSCC has members.

The idea being the mini is a uniquely British car both for everyday and racing use (even though the current real one is German and the model made in China!) and BRG is the British racing colour. The NSCC and Hornby Hobbies have had a very friendly relationship since the club started and I think the car should reflect this with the logos and web address being to the advantage of both. The number flags would show how international the club is even if some countries may only have one member although I am sure there must now be a lot more international members than the handful when I was International Secretary in the early 1980's.

Out of interest, although Scalextric is now been made in China for a few years, the first Scalextric in China itself was probably two cars and a circle of PT84 track I took out to a Hong Kong member in 1983. I went to work in China so rather than post the parcel I took it with me but unfortunately the plane only refuelled in HK so I lugged the lot for nearly 5000 miles round China for several months until finally managing to give it him on the way home!

Regards,

Rod Moore

(Cumberland Toy and Model Museum)

Dear Brian,

Since writing an article some time ago; 'Sport Track; Home user report', I have read with great interest the comprehensive test reports by Tony Secchi and Chris Angold that followed.

I would just like to say that after over 6 months of somewhat rigorous use everything on our home circuit is working very well, apart from a couple of broken hand controllers (result of over excitement!)

We've had a number of Scalextric party nights when a diverse bunch of friends have been let loose on its 4 lanes, many of which have never set eyes on a Scalextric circuit before (remarkable I know, but true). It's under these conditions I feel the track has well and truly been put to the test. I'm pleased (and relieved!) to say it has stood up incredibly well.

We generally race Fly Interserie 917s or Scalextric Nascars, which, incidentally, now look as though they really have done 500 miles at Daytona! I certainly do understand the current debate around levels of grip. We always race with magnets so it's not really so much of an issue. The racing never seems any less exciting and I'm often relieved our cars do have magnets when I watch with horror the way they're 'driven' by our 'friends'!

Everyone really enjoys themselves and always want to come back for more. It might be the prize of a bottle of fizzy wine and a box of chocs that lures them, or even the smell of burning plastic and neat meths, but I've been assured it's the irresistible temptation of racing and winning that gets them. It never ceases to amaze me just how competitive some people are when they get to grips with a hand throttle for the first time! But the important thing is we all have stacks of fun and a really great time. (Plus the odd glass of vino, naturally).

Regards,
Dave Wisdom

.....

Dear Brian,

Many thanks to you and Robin Clark for my Christmas Quiz prize - the Ferrari picture from last year's Le Mans Classic.

Due to a mess up with holidays I was unable to go to the inaugural event and was green with envy hearing first hand reports and watching the TV coverage. I will certainly be there in 2004 but, in the meantime, the Ferrari picture has pride of place in my hobby room; all credit to Robin - it's a beauty!

Cheers
Phil Barry

.....

Dear Brian and Rob,

Many thanks for my prize for winning the NSCC Scalextric Christmas quiz. The car now takes pride of place in my display cabinet.

My wife is also delighted to know that all of the time I spent searching in the loft for the elusive Playstation Porsche GT1 (question 8) has been so generously rewarded!

Yours sincerely
Roger Halms

NINCO NEWS

BY PETER SOLARI

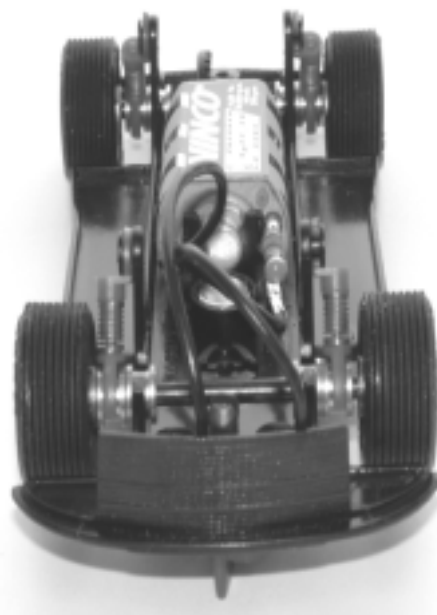
Welcome to the first edition of “Ninco News”. This feature aims to bring you news, reviews and the latest information about the Ninco range of products.

The Hobby Company - *Ninco's UK distributor* - kindly furnished me with a current catalogue and latest glossy brochure showing five new sets and two all new cars due for release this year. As well as listing all the sets, cars and accessories you are likely to find at your local store, the catalogue has a “History” section listing all the cars produced up to the date of printing. This list shows a picture with title, reference number and year of issue. For a current listing, the Ninco website includes the cars released since the catalogue was printed. For those with access to the internet, www.ninco.com is well worth a visit. The site is available to read in English, Catalan, German and of course Ninco's home language of Spanish.

2003 marks Ninco's 10th anniversary of producing 1/32nd scale slot-cars, track systems and accessories and in this time, they have established themselves as a highly popular brand. Most clubs include at least one Ninco class within their race schedule and it is common to see national and international race events specifying Ninco cars. Today their range includes Classic, DTM, F1, GT, Karts, LMP, Rally and Road Cars. Already this year, eight new cars have already been introduced but this milestone year is to be marked by Ninco's introduction of a totally new development; *4 wheel independent suspension*.

The “Proshock” system is to offer three suspension settings; soft, medium and hard, and will feature in their new Rally-Raid models, the first of which will be the 4WD Mitsubishi Pajero. This new model will also feature a drop-arm guide system to maintain contact with the rails when negotiating off-road track surfaces and will be powered by a higher torque NC7

“Raider” motor. Suspension has also been included on their recent 2-wheel-drive, Renault Clio Super 1600 Showcar and will no doubt be included on other future Rally class cars. The Showcar is also one of the first cars to feature the new NC5 “Speeder” motor which boasts 20,000rpm and 290g.cm



It is interesting to note that Ninco's first car released was the Renault Clio (50101). At the time of writing, the latest Ninco car to hit the scene is also a Renault Clio (50297) - So how have the cars evolved over the past 10 years?

The first thing that strikes you is the major difference in how the cars are presented. The 1993 Clio is packed in a shiny maroon and gold cardboard box with the contents identified only by the label on one end. The presentation has over the years developed from this, through to cardboard-sleeved plastic cases, to the now familiar, large clear plastic display box, showing the car slightly tilted, offering all-round visibility.

Visual inspection of the two cars side by side show an amazing difference in the quality of decoration and finish, the most obvious being the change from vinyl stickers to lacquered ⇒⇒



pad-printing. Mould lines are less apparent and the fit of head and tail-light lenses are much smoother. Detail is generally finer on the new Clio and includes window washer jets, door locks, window wipers and chromed “Renault” diamond badges on front and rear of the car. Even the wheels now include disc-brakes. Inside the cabin detail has also improved; the driver is no longer just head, shoulders and arms but now exists down to the knees and has painted gloves and seat belt. The 2003 version has the addition of seats, separate steering wheel, roll cage and printed dashboard. Interior detail is still not excessive and it is clear that the car is designed primarily for racing.

Four more developments are evident when the chassis is examined. The bright-pink NC5 “Speeder” motor replaces the NC1 of the original Clio giving over 25% more rpm and four times the amount of torque. The guide blade is spring-loaded to help the braids stay in contact with the rails should the car pitch or roll during racing. On the inside of the chassis, four red independent suspension struts connect the axles via bronze bearings. Finally, the new model incorporates a removable magnet mounted just in front of the motor enabling improved grip and faster cornering speeds.

Towards the end of this year, Ninco will be releasing a limited edition, specially decorated, 10th anniversary version of their original Clio released in 1993.

Sets released this year stay with the familiar layouts previously offered in their Speedway, Golf and DTM sets with the addition of a figure-of-8 layout. The Speedway set will include two Mercedes CLKs in place of the BMW V12s and shares its oval layout with a new Junior Rally set supplied with the Fiat Punto and Citroën Saxo. The Mini set includes two race liveried Mini Coopers (*new shape*), complete bridge, chicane adapter and banking supports. An M3 Racing set will include new 55ohm controllers better suited to the NC2 motor and 1500GM magnet supplied in the angle winder BMWs. This new controller is also supplied with Ninco’s largest set - the GT Max - based on the 9.3m DTM layout. This set will also include the Sprint lap counter and two Porsche 911 GT3 race cars.

Please let me know what you would like to see covered in “Ninco News” or send in any questions or requests and I’ll do my best to accommodate. You can contact me directly by e-mail - PTSolari@aol.com - or through our Editor, Brian Rogers. ■

NINCO *track test*

**50289 Fiat Punto
"S. Vallejo"
50294 Fiat Punto
"Dallavilla"**

Reviewed by Mel Turbutt

The latest release in Ninco's range of rally cars is the super 1600 Fiat Punto HGT kit car. "What's that, a kit car?" I hear you ask. "Does that mean I have to glue it together before I can get it on the track?" Well, no. In reality these cars are purchased from the manufacturers as a 1/1 scale kit including all the stuff you need to turn it into a Junior World Championship rally car. You build your car, hire a promising young driver (maximum age 28), a co-driver and four mechanics and you can participate in the seven rounds of the World Rally Championship that incorporate the junior series. The price of these kits is capped at 100,000 Euros (about £63,000) so Ninco's version is a hell of a lot cheaper.

If you've never seen one of these cars in action you should try; there's a class for them in the British Rally Championship and they'll be competing in November's Rally of Great Britain. With their oversize wheels and flared wheel arches they look like a boy racer's dream, but it's the noise that they make that will really get the adrenalin pumping. The 1600cc, 210bhp engines rev up to 9,000rpm (nearly twice as much as a turbocharged 4 wheel drive World Rally Car) and boy do they sound good! Anyway, enough of reality. On with the test.

Ninco have chosen two colour schemes for the Punto, the white number 3 (50289) and the red number 52 (50294). Let's start by looking at each in turn.

White car

This Fiat is crewed by Sergio and Diego Vallejo from Spain. The car is depicted as it ran in the Spanish domestic series competing in the Rallye Rias Baixas. Most of the sign writing confirms the fact that it's a Punto and that it wears Dunlop tyres. Flashes of blue and yellow break up the

basic white colour scheme. Add metallic black wheels and the car looks pretty yet purposeful. The standard of tampo printing is very good. I only noticed some slight over-spray when I used a magnifying glass to read the rally plates. The windscreen pillars (or A posts) look a little on the thick side. This may be because the side window rubbers are moulded in the same colour as the bodywork. A carefully applied line of matt black paint would soon improve matters.

Red car

This is the Daniel Jean Richard Watches sponsored car of Italy's Andrea Dallavilla and Giovanni Bernacchini which won its class in the 2001 San Remo rally. Ironically, Dallavilla switched to a Citroen Saxo for 2002 and was pipped to the junior crown at the last gasp by the similar RACC car of Dani Sola, which is also available in the Ninco range. The overall red livery is broken up by a white "nose" which could have done with another pass by the paint sprayer, as it looked a little pink on the revue car. Otherwise the tampo printing is excellent. The A post problem doesn't seem as pronounced on the red car.

Both cars carry the mandatory spare wheel, have colour co-ordinated roll cages and brake discs which are visible behind the wheels. The crew are $\frac{3}{4}$ rather than full length (a good compromise in my opinion) and look very convincing. Using the magnifying glass again, you can even read the "tulip" diagrams on the co-driver's pace notes. Perhaps the driver should have his hands on the steering wheel rather than resting on his legs, but perhaps he's waiting for the start lights to turn green?

As far as the "running gear" is concerned, spring loaded (but not self-centring) guides are fitted together with a very strong magnet and ⇒

(of course!) NC2 motors. I won't start on that subject again, but refer you to my article in February's Journal. The treaded tyres are 10mm wide and feel quite soft. I have a number of Ninco rally cars in my collection and have always found their tyres to be very good. They don't seem to "go off" as quickly as some other manufacturers (notably SCX). Two screws at the front and one at the rear secure the body to the chassis. Those who prefer "floating" bodywork can slacken these off without any ill effects. The fitting of the NC2 means that these diminutive little cars are quite heavy for their size, much heavier than an earlier Ninco F2 car and almost the same as an SCX World Rally Car. The front axle has plenty of vertical play, but despite this the car doesn't tend to nosedive into corners, even without the magnet fitted, probably as a result of that big heavy motor.

On track

I started my track test on the Oakwood Park circuit with the red car straight out of the box. The magnet is sited immediately in front of the motor. This not only allows you to brake desperately late, but also to get the power down early and slide the back end. As long as the magnet is kept almost in line with the contact

rails, the car will stick. This would be difficult to do with a rear mounted magnet without the car standing still with the rear wheels spinning as traction is momentarily lost. Even with that NC2, straight-line speed is nothing special.

Off track

Now I hope you'll forgive me if I wander off track for a moment, but this is relevant. Recently I was talking to a friend who had just bought his young son a Scalextric F1 set containing the current McLaren and Williams cars. I invited him to have a go on my layout and he was amazed when I told him that I removed the magnets from my rally cars. I let him have a go and he was shocked at how controllable they were and how they could be driven at walking pace. He told me that his F1 cars needed almost 1/2 throttle before they'd even move. Then they'd shoot off like a scalded cat, usually as far as turn one where they'd become airborne and meet a sticky end against the sideboard. This was really frustrating his young son. Could the reason for this be those powerful magnets? The motors fitted in these cars are becoming increasingly powerful, but they're expending much of that power in pulling that magnet along. It's a bit like towing a big caravan behind your road car.



Hence the reason that the Punto wasn't exactly "mega" down the straights. Remove the magnet and it would beat most dragsters.

The point I'm trying to make is that it worries me that children are being introduced into the hobby that we love, but are being disillusioned by the very devices that are meant to make the cars easier to drive. It's all right for us big kids. We can tinker with the cars and make them run smoothly. When was the last time that you ran a car straight out of the box and didn't have to adjust anything, because that's what kids do? I'm not convinced that more powerful motors and magnets is the answer.

Back on track

Suffice to say that with the magnet fitted the Punto shoots round corners like a rocket ship, but if you have an accident it won't be a small one. The delicate little door mirrors look particularly vulnerable. The midships-mounted magnet also pulls the guide deep into the slot and if, like me, you use Scalextric track you may have to trim the guide. Strangely I had to do this with the red car, but the white one was OK. For the record the best time with the magnet fitted around Oakwood Park was 8.62 secs. compared to the outright record of 6.99 set by one of those awful looking (but incredibly fast) SCX Ferrari 333SP's, but a scale average speed of over 140mph isn't bad for a 1600cc rally car!

Unfortunately I couldn't test the cars on my Penmaendyfi rally stage with the magnets fitted for two reasons:

- 1) It incorporates 2 hump-back bridges, a high hump and a pretty severe crest which caused the cars to stop as the magnet pulled the chassis hard against the contact rails and,

- 2) I was worried that the scenery (which has taken many hours to build) would be severely damaged by the inevitable major accident when the Punto was pushed to its limits.

So it was a case of un-hitching the caravan (removing the magnet) and away we go. As I mentioned earlier, the little Fiat now flies down the straights, but (obviously) corners have to be shown more respect. You can still brake quite late and get the power on early, but with its short

wheelbase it will just twitch and lurch through the bends. The secret for a competitive time on the fast Oakwood Park and the more "technical" Penmaendyfi is to be smooth. Early braking and smooth acceleration (waiting for the car to straighten out before applying anything near full throttle) is the order of the day for really quick lappery. In fact full power is almost out of the question on the rally stage as there isn't enough time to brake for the next corner.

The best time by the Punto (sans magnet) was 10.18 for Oakwood Park compared to the Formula 2 record of 9.89 set by a Ninco VW Golf (also NC2 powered and with 2 wheel drive). The outright record set by a 4-wheel drive SCX Citroen Xsara stands at 9.42. Perhaps a fairer comparison is the 10.29 for a Ninco Citroen Saxo super 1600.

On Penmaendyfi the Punto achieved a time of 22.25. That compares with the Formula 2 record of 20.50 (Ninco Mégane) and an outright record of 19.62 (SCX Corolla), 4 wheel drive cars having a definite advantage here with its tight corners and slippery forest section. Once again the fairest comparison is with the Saxo which managed a 21.69. However, it must be stated that the Citroën often de-slots at that sort of pace whilst the Fiat rarely left the road. I think I can fairly say that the Punto is very competitive against similarly sized cars.

Conclusions

So there you have it. On the behalf of all us rally fans it's a big thank you to Ninco for introducing a range of Junior World Rally Cars. My own rally championship already includes classes for World Rally Cars, Formula 2 and Group N, and soon it will include a class for super 1600s. At the risk of pushing my luck, will we see any more of these little pocket rockets? After all, nine manufacturers make these cars.

As well as Fiat and Citroën there are Renault, Suzuki, Opel, Peugeot, VW, MG and Ford. Indeed Ford are looking to replace their existing Puma with a Fiesta that looks like something out of a Mad Max film. So go on Ninco, go for it! I'll beg if necessary. I'm down on my knees now... ■

NINCO *track test*

50288 BMW M3 GTR 'Leo's Jeans' Reviewed by Dave Diamond

It's well known that Ninco make very usable cars (though I must agree with other contributors to this fine periodical that NC2 motors are not appropriate for Minis, Saxos and Puntos.....) they look nice, go and handle quite well, they're mechanically and constructionally simple and they're not so expensive that you daren't give them a right good thrashing! O.K., you might scratch the finish if you give it a good tumble but you don't get a million bits flying in all directions like certain other companies' offerings.

Now I don't know whether they're accurate scale models down to the last millimetre and I don't care; they look nice belting around the Scalloway track and if I do barrel roll into a retaining wall the chances are I can just put it back into the slot and keep racing. Like I said, good useable cars.

So, the M3 GTR: Straight out of the rather large box the car has a smart looking black and silver finish with what I take to be an accurate and detailed rendering of the original's livery. It has a simple but effective interior which includes a roll cage and a fire extinguisher, crisply moulded 10 spoke wheels (in chrome) with an impression of brake discs behind the spokes, separate parts make up the inset grills in the bonnet and the fuel fillers and neat side exhausts exit through the right hand sill. The mirrors have the 'glass' painted silver - I was wondering when manufacturers would get around to doing this - it saves me having to do it myself!

Underneath, there's a very plain, flat chassis with the magnet mounted almost centrally between the axles, slick tyres. an NC2 motor and ...wot's this?..... the motor's mounted at a funny angle! It must be one of them "anglewinder" things. (I wonder if in-line mounts are called "straight winders", just a thought!)

Time for a lap or two; the circuit is about 50 feet long and is made of ply and tape. It covers an area of 12ft. by 5ft.5ins. and if you think about that you'll realise that it's got a lot of bends! Nine, in fact, only one of which is less than 90 degrees and that's got the smallest radius. The absolute, flat out, do or die lap record is 6.870 seconds and what I need to get good lap times (i.e. anything under 7.5 seconds) is a car which accelerates like a scalded cat, brakes like someone's thrown out an anchor and handles like all four wheels have magnets! Incidentally, the lap record holder is a Fly Ferrari 512S long tail. HmMMM!

Track powered up, timer on, controller plugged in (Parma 25 ohm) car onto lane 2, warm-up lap. Ye Gods, this car is noisy! Pick up car, shake it - no, nothing loose and rattling, slacken off both body mounting screws by half a turn, try again. Still as noisy but a little faster than the first ten or so laps (7.808 secs down to 7.690)

We'll have a short pause in testing here while I explain how I test cars. The track is a "folded in on itself" figure of eight and can be reversed. In describing the testing the direction is taken by which way the car is travelling on the front straight. In the first run this is right to left. The cars are tested for 20 laps in each lane in each direction so theoretically you should be able to get close lap times for both lanes in both directions..... We'll see!

So, we've done 20 laps in lane 2, right to left and got down to 7.690 secs. Time for lane 1. 20 laps later we're down to 7.477 secs. Nice and quick for a brand new car straight out of the box but, as it gets faster, I notice it's getting bouncier - wonder why?

Here's a simple test which will let you know if the wheels and tyres are true, (more important

for the rear wheels). Put the car on the track and push it slowly forwards. As you do so look at the wheels; if you push it at the 1:32 scale equivalent of 30mph you'll be able to see if a wheel is out of true, even if you can't see it, you'll probably be able to feel it.

Apply test to BMW... aha!... the left rear is running eccentrically - explanation of bounce and noise in one fell swoop!

Because of the grippy surface of the track (deck paint) and the numerous tight bends this car will never reach its full potential with a wheel running so far out of true. However, I just happen to have an M3 roadcar which is run in and has much truer wheels and tyres than the test car so I'll give you the best times that it has done on the Scalloway track:

Right to left		Left to right	
Lane 1	7.252	Lane 1	7.199
Lane 2	7.175	Lane 2	7.241

Given that this is an inexpensive "out of the box" car without modification, except for loosening the body mounting screws, it's pretty

much up there on performance and I'm sure I'll improve those times as it gets more use. As for the test car, it looks more attractive than the roadcar and if it wasn't for that unfortunate rear wheel I see no reason why it shouldn't be as fast. I'll probably buy a replacement wheel/axle set in the hope that this was a one-off. Pity, though.

Oh, yeah, that anglewinder arrangement; It's nice to see Ninco doing something different and I'm sure that the club racers out there will notice a difference in performance, weight distribution etc., but for the average chap who acquires an M3 the advantage is going to be that, because the motor pinion meshes along a greater part of its length with the axle gear (bevel gear) than an in-line mount, there should be noticeably less wear on both components and that in itself makes it worth having.

Would I have bought the car? Yes, without a doubt. Will I be giving it back to Brian? Let's put it this way: I live in the Shetland Isles, so if he wants it back he's welcome to come and collect it! ■

NINCO *track test*

Karting a-go-go

50285 S-Kart HP
50286 S-Kart Bridgestone

Reviewed by Max Winter

I think the editor must have taken my comments about a new found interest in karting a little too literally. What arrives in the post the other day? A couple of Ninco's latest "Go Karts" and instructions to do a review.

Last year a couple of friends had co-opted me into their team, racing 80 m.p.h. "Thunderkarts" class machines at the wonderfully scenic Buckmore Park venue. Now 80 m.p.h. may not sound so much, until you consider that this speed is conducted through downhill swerves with one's backside about 2 inches from the ground, on a road no wider than an "unlisted" country lane and without those security inducing items, sheet metal and glass, surrounding you. Oh, I nearly forgot to say, one is doing this with 20 other hotheads swarming around you doing the same thing on this same little bit of winding tarmac. Hey, but we do these speeds every day on the motorway, what the heck. Strangely one's initial reservations and inhibitions about this situation are soon overcome, in about as long as it takes the brain to engage and decide to make your foot hit the loud pedal. As an acquaintance who is more used to racing real, hairy cars says, "Go Karts, now they are way too much fun, I wouldn't trust myself in one."

I was not unfamiliar with Ninco's Kart. Only problem was that the two I have owned for the last three odd years have not got out of their boxes yet. Shame on me, never judge a book by its cover, as they say. Ninco are distinct amongst the other myriad of slot-car manufacturers out there in actually majoring on providing fun to use and a still raceable product out of the box, while making a fair fist of producing a good scale rendition of the subjects they produce. An element that seems to be sadly lacking in one or two much touted products of late.

I'm no expert on the minutiae of Go Kart detailing but a quick look at the "Karting" website provides all the information required to check out the general accuracy of what Ninco have produced here. And what a remarkable tour de force they have done. OK, they have the benefit of working in 1/18th scale with this one but given that the physically resulting package is no bigger than the slot-cars we are used to they have done a remarkable job. Someone at Ninco has taken a sideways glance at the modern competition Kart and done a "what if" in a big way, and then gone about carefully designing and sourcing all the right bits.

First off, what we have is a very accurate rendition of a 100 cc non-gearbox Kart. The chassis is spot on, right down to the diameter of the tubes and the chromed "nerf" bars, they even detail in the Hex nuts that hold the floorpan in place. The little motor and exhaust match up perfectly and small details like the drilled disc brake, chain guard, linkages and fuel tank are all there. Ninco have even taken the opportunity to build in steerable wheels with drag links that are perfectly to scale. Topping this all off is a beautifully proportioned driver figure in the right type of quilted driving suit. His right foot is hard down on the accelerator with the left balanced and ready over the brake pedal. The arms can even be raised to give a victory salute or "pitting" warning, but I think the latter signal is highly unlikely with one of Ninco's products.

And we have the further fun element with these particular releases in that they are neat little tie-ins with the current Grand Prix scene. The two Karts passed to me for review are done up in passable imitations of the current Williams and B.A.T., sorry, B.A.R. team livery. Their respective drivers would appear to be a certain

chap showing an allegiance to the Colombian flag, the other would now, uncharitably, be referred to as one who is of the “cheese eating surrender monkey” persuasion. The tampo printing of these liveries and drivers’ decoration are of the highest order, with no deletions, and the finish on the “bodywork” is smooth and blemish free without any unsightly “witness” lines on the mouldings.

If I have a quibble, and let’s not be a killjoy here, Ninco have decided to cloak these little wonders in wind deflectors and a rear wing that are really only the province of 250 cc gearbox Karts. But who knows, someone has probably run 100 cc karts this way. If you are that fussy stick with Ninco’s earlier versions which are right on the money in this detail. I also think there is the element of a devious marketing person’s mind creeping in on one of the liveries used; Promotion of the evil weed, and that’s coming from a hardened 30 a day man. This is a product aimed squarely at family fun - would you be a happy parent if you thought someone were using an innocent toy as a means of subliminally emblazoning their corporate logos on your youngster’s mind for some future peer group bonding exercise? Yes, just about every model car we buy is going to try to pull this trick, but where it is applied to a subject that need not carry this identification is it really right? Just a thought.

Having got over marvelling at this product as a model it was down to the serious business of running it. Is it just a case of all show and no go? I had not got past this stage with the two earlier variants that I own, remember? What are they like as slot Karts?

First thing that strikes one is the extreme flexibility that Ninco have built in to certain parts of their Kart. My first thought is, “this isn’t going to last long,” until it dawns on me that this feature is not a sign of fragility. It’s their very clever way of ensuring that this little gem of a model can stand up to the rough and tumble of day to day use. Though I’m not sure how long some of its extremities will last when subjected to the exploring little fingers of a five year old “destruction tester in chief”, but then what



product will? But you can hurl it to the floor and at the walls and it still comes up a runner. This flexibility, also built into the chassis, allows it to comfortably accommodate the sort of camber changes that are encountered on figure eight layouts and old distorted tracks. I sometimes wonder what some modern slot-car products are developed on given some of the disappointing experiences I have had of late. Ninco, though have obviously thought this one through. Oh, and the steering feature does not come apart on this one either.

Part of the success that Ninco have had in carrying off its modelling feat is due to the small open frame motor that they have sourced. But size isn’t everything. The little motor with its tiny gears and its clever angle winder installation, and here Ninco are showing they are true slot racers at heart, has no problem hauling 58 grams of slot Kart around the track. It also gets its power down well through some very grippy scale recreation Kart tyres. Now here is another thing that marks out Ninco’s products, while others are busy creating glued to the track kamikaze missiles they have gone the route of using a magnet in a more subtle way. The one installed far forward on the Kart is shaped to ➤➤

direct its attractive powers to the two individual pick up rails and cause minimal drag effect. Its main purpose seems to be to minimise de-slotting and add a degree of control to the short wheelbase Kart's natural "twitchy" handling on the limit, the traction and cornering abilities imparted primarily by the aforementioned grippy tyres.

So how does she go? Surprisingly quickly it turned out. Given a few laps to "scrub" the tyres and get used to the Kart's handling it was time to do a few banzai laps. On my scenic layout one of my thoughts were that running an 1/18th scale model on a track detailed entirely for 1/32nd would be a bit like Gulliver rampaging recklessly round Lilliput, terrifying the locals. Funny thing is, a bit like real Karts, once the finger presses down on the trigger you focus on what's ahead of you and stop admiring the scenery. So no drawbacks there, and catching sight of its front wheels steering into a tail slide out of the corners is a delight. On my track a "fresh from the box" out and out magnet car usually returns a time around six seconds. The Kart with its tyres cleaned and run on a well "swept" line turned in a time of 6.6 seconds first time of asking. Definitely a lot of go along with the show, and a lot of fun too. Without constant cleaning of the tyres times settled down to around the 7.5 sec mark, which goes to prove that this Kart is getting a lot of its performance from the tyres and not the magnet, where one would see less of a drop off in times if that were the case. But as I said it was still a lot of fun, which is more than can be said for some of the stuff that has passed my way of late.

If the Ninco Kart has a drawback as a racer rather than a solo fun runner it's the rear track width of 71 mm, leaving only 6 mm between a pair of them on anything but Ninco's wider spaced lane system and some track developed for 1/24th scale cars. But then they do have the real life regulation in-fills between the wheels to stop things getting too tangled up in the corners. And they cope with tight radius curves and all manner of old wiggly "Scalextric" track sections as if they were born to it too.

As a quick comparison I ran one of my

original, true to scale, 100 cc guise Ninco Karts too. It seems that Ninco have actually improved the handling in wider radius turns by fitting the heavier, by 4 grams, shrouds and wings to this new variant of the breed.

In conclusion I have to say that Ninco have evolved a product that not only satisfies, as most of theirs do, from a running perspective but also is a remarkable, and ingenious, achievement for a volume producer in the pure modelling stakes. If you haven't got one yet at least try one for a little fun diversion. I could see these going down a storm at any home or club to add a little variety to a race night's staple fare of GTs, Tourers and F 1s. I remember, from when I used to race 1/24th scale on commercial tracks over 30 years ago, a favourite antidote to some of the over competitive types; the "Thingie" race class. The top performer in that one was a, real speed, 70 m.p.h. frying pan scouring pad!

Now if only I could get these two Karts off my track, they have become favourite runners. It makes me wonder why I never got the first two out of their boxes 3 years ago. Now let me see, a tad more weight at the back, glue and true the tyres, maybe even try and loosen the driver mount and get him to "float" a little..... ■

An old warhorse (like me!)

BY TONY SECCHI

Those of our esteemed membership, who read my modest efforts at writing will know, from previous experience, that my first and lasting motoring love was, and is, Sports Cars. Yes, I have been to many Grands Prix over time, both in this country and Europe, and I have a great collection of a dozen or more 1/12 scale static kits of that genre along with my vast collection of 1/24 scale Sports cars, but I am afraid it will always be the latter for me.

In 1982 the (W.E.C.) World Endurance Championship took on a new structure and a new name. It became the World Championship for Prototype Sports Cars - the W.S.P.C.

Starting with an upgrade of the old group 6 to C1 class and later adding the slightly less powerful but more nimble class 2, it was this Championship that brought the factory backed, Tom Walkinshaw entered, Jaguars back to world racing prominence, winning the overall Championship in 1987, 1988 and 1991 plus the 24 hours of Le Mans in 1988 and 1990.

But it is not the fabulous XJR9s and XJR12s that are the subject of this tribute, but the car that participated most frequently as a factory entrant and provided many private owners with entries helping to keep the Championship both interesting and exciting here and in the USA. It competed from 1984 until 1991; it is, of course, the Porsche 962C.

On our home track, my friends and I run six classes of ten WSPC cars each. They are chronologically arranged from the early (e.g. Lancia LC2, Jaguar XJR6) right through to the current (e.g. Audi R8, Bentley Speed 8). Of these sixty cars, twenty-three of them are variants of the 962C. We race every Scalextric issue (except the road car) including the two "wild threesixty" models which have been converted to standard slot-car mode. We have also reliveried some twelve 962s including entries by Canon, Taka-Q, Torno, Blaupunkt, Hydro Aluminium and Jaegermeister so that we can relive the halcyon days when, as young

tearaways, we travelled all over Europe to watch this great and entertaining form of competitive racing.

The 962 is, I think, the most ubiquitous model ever produced by Scalextric and, in standard form, one of the most pleasurable to drive. It is quick, stable and with its long tail can be made to hang its rear end out in huge power slides. Along with the five variants of the Jaguar XJR 9 produced at the same time (and often sold together in boxed sets) it is a simple but satisfying slot-car for both beginners and the more experienced alike.

The real 962C was a logical development of the successful 956, which ended its production run in 1982. Testing of the 962C started late in 1983 followed by a brief shakedown at the Paul Ricard circuit prior to its debut at Daytona USA in 1984 when Mario Andretti put it on pole by more than two seconds. Mario and Michael Andretti then led the race until the gearbox seized during the night.

From the start, Porsche had made the car available to private owners to offset development costs as they had done previously with many models in the past. Within this arrangement the car contested both the WSPC (Europe) and IMSA (America) Sports Car Championships until it finished its career. It also took part in the all-Japan Sports Prototype Championship, where among others, Nissan, Toyota and Mazda cut their competitive teeth.

In 1994 the Le Mans rules were changed and a "street legal" Porsche 962C CT LM developed by Jochen Daur under the aegis of the Factory, won not only its class but also the race overall. That was the very last professional appearance of the 962.

As previously indicated the slot-car is a classic. It is a big, wide, low car with an overall length of 150 mm and a width of 62 mm. The wheelbase is 82 mm, the front and rear track is 60 mm overall and the maximum height is 38 mm. The pick up guidepost (which can be of ⇒

the fixed 'eyelet' type or the latter replaceable blade) is 15 mm back from the nose. The tail overhangs the rear axle by 40 mm (all Scalextric 962s are of the high-speed 'long tail' version as opposed the short tail 'sprint' alternative supplied by the factory for some circuits). This overhang gives the car its characteristic "rear out" cornering attitude that is compensated in some small measure by an oblong brown bar magnet recessed into the underpan just in front of the rear axle. I think that this car (along with the XJR9) was the first common innovative use of Magnatraction in Scalextric models.

Both sets of wheels, front and rear, are the same size as was the norm in the nineties when the 962C was made. The tyres are 19-mm dia. x 8 mm wide. These specifications also apply to other WSPC models that Scalextric produced about the same time - the aforesaid Jaguar XJR9 and the later Mercedes C9.

In this form the car is a very good performer but, if pushed to its limits in competition, it can spin out quite violently. Also, the front end can be susceptible to an undamped oscillation which will slow the car over the track section junction points.

This depends tremendously on the life, and consequently the compound, of the front tyres, which as time progresses become harder and less able to absorb shocks. This gives an unstable and skittish ride which in extremis can deslot the car. We have, therefore, instigated a number of modifications which I am pleased to say have given this model a much better overall balance.

Starting at the front, we have left the pick-ups as standard, finding no performance difference between the original type flag guide (eyeleted) and the later disposable version - (incidentally, we do not dispose of these, we just fit new braids and re-use them). In fact our fastest 962C uses the later type guide and has managed several 10 lap runs on the outside (longer) lane of our current circuit at under 40 secs. This is on our new Sport track layout and only half a dozen of our 100 plus cars can replicate that.

If the standard front tyres do not resemble rubber concrete, we leave them in-situ, but if

they are too hard we change them for the excellent "Pink Kar" 17 mm dia. fronts which just touch the track surface and keep the nose stable.

We replace the rear Scalextric flat bar magnet with a Pro-Slot PS6001, which is more powerful and has the advantage of being the same size, so is an exact replacement. On some models, if needed, we re-use the original brown bar magnet half way between the rear of the pick up and the front of the in-line engine.

The biggest modification occurs at the rear axle; here we remove the standard wheels and tyres (19x8) and replace them with Fly Venturi type assemblies (20x12). This not only gives the car a more realistic, true to scale look, but with the PS6001 gives the car better rear end grip, the Fly rubber being very compatible with our new Sport track surface.

Unfortunately, the Pro-Slot PS6001 bar magnet can be hard to source. I got mine from Sean Fothersgill at Pendle Slot, but after a time he became frustrated with the intermittent supply and now has his own version made.

Modified thus, these cars are a match for any current proprietary model produced today. On my short track the best of my old 962s was quicker than my new Vanquish MG Lola T260! OK, part of that is that I am more used to driving the 962 than the T260 and that the former is a tried, tested, well sorted and run in slot-car whereas the latter is still finding its feet, so to say. Nevertheless, the facts and race times speak for themselves.

Along with the Jaguar XJR9 and the Mercedes C9 the Porsche 962C is a classic forgotten in time. Real examples of these famous cars are still competing today in both America and Europe in the Group C revival series masterminded by the Aston Martin Owners club at British tracks such as Donington, Silverstone and Brands Hatch.

Finally, in conclusion, I noticed in Pendle Slot Racing's latest Newsletter the following Item "Slot It - New Models announced for 2003 include the Porsche 956/962"

So maybe this "old Warhorse" has not yet finished its useful life-span. I sincerely hope so.■