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# The NSCC

www.nsc.co.uk

The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

### Westcountry ramblings

Ah! Summer holidays; a week at Anglers Paradise in glorious Devon. No work, no phone, no hassle - just fishing, drinking, long walks over Dartmoor and the all important cream tea research!

Unfortunately there was a slight embarrassment as we unloaded the car this year; "Dearheart, why is your box of racing cars hidden under the fishing tackle?" Somehow I had quite neglected to mention that I had been invited to pay a visit to East Devon Slot Club while we were in the vicinity!

Vince Feeny (aka Vine Fennel) had generously offered to put us up for the night so, after an excellent meal and a significant helping of alcohol, we departed to play with toy plastic cars. Our respective partners, Chris and Anna, declined to come with us for some strange reason so we left them chatting in the garden.

The events at the club will have to be recounted in a later episode of "Crap Racer" but we did eventually return to find the ladies, still talking, in the company of several empty wine bottles so I think they also enjoyed themselves. Vince and myself share the same passions - real and miniature motor racing - so, long after the ladies had departed to the land of nod, we sat discussing all things with four wheels and an engine.

Now the NSCC is a multi-faceted club but our evening in Honiton reminded me exactly why I have been a member for such a long time - you meet so many nice people! Long after I retire from this job and my editorial ramblings are but a distant memory I shall cherish the friendships I have made and the great times we have shared. Scalextric is truly an extraordinary toy!

Many thanks for your hospitality Vince and Anna (not to mention the dogs); I look forward to the next time.

**And Finally** - speaking of retirement, this issue completes my fourth year in the hot seat and I believe it is time to begin the search for my eventual successor. I am perfectly content to carry on for another year but I shall probably have run out of ideas and enthusiasm by next September. Anybody fancy the job?

*Till next month*

*Brian*





## New Cars

The new Minis have made a long anticipated appearance this month and already there are four of them.

The Sport versions are:

C2484A

Mini Cooper “John Cooper Challenge” No5, red with Union Jack roof

C2485A

Mini Cooper “John Cooper Challenge” No6, yellow with black & white chequer roof

And from the Argos exclusive set -

C1118 Mini Mayhem.

C2526W Mini Cooper red with black & white chequer roof No 2

C2527W Mini Cooper blue with white roof & Union Jack No1

The next Indy car is also released with a great red white and black livery.

C2443 Dallara Indy “Corteco” No7

For rally fans we have two privateers, the yellow Impreza and white Evo 7:

C2492 Subaru Impreza WRC Battery+ “No28”

C2495 Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution 7 WRC “FACOM No119”

Argos have another unique car available today too. This a red/white Vauxhall livery from the BTCC. It is in a Argos exclusive set C1122 Champion Tourers:

C2528W Vauxhall Astra Coupé No5

The set also contains C2392W the silver and black Mercedes CLK DTM “AMG” No2.



However, this is in the same specification as the standard solo version and is not de-specified. Quite expensive at £99.99 the set is a circuit 4.

Another exclusive new set arrived in Toys-R-Us this month. Thanks to Steve Williams for bringing this one to my attention. The set is C1124 GT Pursuit and contains:

C2535W Porsche GT1 white with blue wing. No32

C2536W Porsche GT1 blue with white wing. No22



## Packaging

Hornby are experimenting with new ways to pack cars in sets to avoid damage to them in transit. Both the Mini and Tourers sets from Argos have the cars packed carefully in a close fitting clear plastic moulding lined with paper and then packed in a cardboard box. Apparently the movement of the cars was scratching the finish. The only downside from a collector's viewpoint is that you cannot display the pair of cars in those nice polystyrene trays.

## Kits

Within days of me writing that the Hornby Kits were now scheduled for release in September they arrived! The "A" versions without paint and glue are the first to have been released.

K2000A Chevrolet Camaro

K2001A Ford Focus WRC

K2002A Ford Boss 302 Mustang

K2003A Mitsubishi Evo 7

K2004A Porsche 911GT3R

K2005A Subaru Impreza

## Coming Soon

Argos have three more sets due in September containing TVR 400s, Subaru Imprezas and F1s. More details next month.

Don't you just hate information changing at the last minute. Just after the last issue went to press Hornby rang to say that the Collectors Centre car for this year would be the Red Bull Indy car after all and that the yellow/black GT40 is another story altogether. More news on that one later in the year.

Those of you waiting for the Challenger system will have to wait just a little bit longer as this is now expected in the fourth quarter. Continuous testing has been refining the product further to make it even harder to beat.

Design of the missing curve borders is now complete and they should make the shops later this year. A new track piece is also on its way.

This is a 22.5 degree inner curve – great for 8 lane circuits.

## New features

Back at the beginning of the year I mentioned that the new TVR400 features something new and that I was sworn to secrecy. Now that the first version is out we can discuss this feature – a new guide blade system. Designed to give the electrical connectivity benefits of a hard wired system but still the easy change mechanism of the current system.

The new guide blade consists of two parts. The guide flag is permanently attached to the car and doesn't need removing to change the braids. It offers a much larger angle of turn than the current system – a direct response to your requests. It is still self-centring but not sprung vertically. The wires from the motor are attached to this piece with spade connections to give really good connectivity. Beneath the car you see a circular plate about 10mm in diameter with plates for contact with the braids and the vertical flag. Beneath this piece is the quick release bit with the braids. This is also a disk about 10mm in diameter that clips over the flag forcing the braids against the contact plates. When you buy replacements you will get this disk with the braids already attached. The idea is that there is no movement between electrical connections. The wires attach to the flag and turn with the guide and the braids are pressed against them. The aim of the modification is that more of the electrical current will get transferred from track to motor in a much smoother way. Expect to see this new system on all future releases too.

## Club Car

The club car has been chosen and discussions are progressing further with Hornby. All I can say now is that it will be available in more than one colour and that work on the livery design will start by Hornby soon. ■



**A**s I am sure you will realise by now I am not the world's best writer and my infrequent journeys into print often turn out rather stilted and official. If it were not for the sterling efforts of my wife, Christine, and Brian, our editor, and his Christine I can assure you it would be even worse! However here goes and let me see if I recognise it when it gets published!

### **Members survey**

First of all many thanks to well over 200 of you who have returned your survey forms to Rob. We have begun to analyse them to see what you like about the club and also what you don't like, what you want to see and what you want to see less of - by the way the answer to the last one is Race Reports! This kind of information is fundamental to the running of the club and the committee really does need to know. The information you have provided has already helped us in an important decision that I will come to later, but to those who have yet to return the survey form please do so as only by receiving your views can we run the club how you would like. Regarding the Committee I would like to thank Robert Learmouth of Westwood Models who has bravely volunteered to join as the traders' representative and made a valuable contribution at our recent meeting.

The next highlight of the year as far as I am concerned is the Evesham Swapmeet run by Steve Pitts, which we find to be the friendliest event of the year. It reflects Steve's attitude and enthusiasm for the hobby and this permeates the whole event. I always find something interesting or unusual to buy. Talking of buying, one car I

have always wanted but never found is the Cummins Jaguar but just recently it has been added to my collection. This car was produced as a short promotional run by Hornby when the cars were still made in Margate and was one of a number of cars such as Vectras, Lagunas liveried for local firms. I know Rob Smith is intending to write an article about these in the near future so will say nothing more having hopefully whetted your appetite.

### **Ramsgate Weekend**

The reason why Rob's article may appear a bit later is that he is rather busy organising the NSCC/Hornby weekend at the end of October. For those of you who have attended in previous years I am sure you will endorse my opinion that it is a great weekend, even though it is held at the end of the biggest cul-de-sac in England called Thanet! It is interesting and fun because you have the opportunity to meet fellow enthusiasts, chat to employees of Hornby, often see early mock-ups of new cars, race against fellow incompetents who sometimes look as if they have never put a Scalextric car on the track (please see the Editor on this element), win prizes donated by Hornby, see if you can outbid everyone for a "rare" Scalextric item in the auction, and finally walk away with a free, very limited, Scalextric car. Now does that sound like a good weekend or not, because this year there will be even more with displays of items from members and a new venue to test? If you like the sound of this please complete the application form and return it to Rob as soon as possible and then wait to see if you are drawn out of the hat for the limited spaces we have available.



## Swapmeets

An issue that has been troubling the NSCC Committee for some time is swapmeets - our role, what the members want and what we see as the future of the Club in this area. As you may have noticed there are an increasing number of swapmeets solely focused on slot-cars that are not, or are planned not to be, under the NSCC "banner". In the early days of the NSCC, and here we are talking about some 23 years ago, there was not the seemingly limitless opportunity present nowadays to buy and sell Scalextric cars. The Internet had not been invented, Ebay did not exist and the general toy fair at weekends was only a glimmer in someone's imagination. The NSCC therefore began to organise and run its own swapmeets for the members, the first being held in Birmingham and I remember attending one in the very early days in a school hall in Worthing (I think).

As the hobby developed it was decided that the actual running of these events, which were becoming more popular and well attended, had moved beyond the scope of the club to actually run itself but that the NSCC would "license" events organised by members for members. At that time there were no other such slot-car events and the NSCC decided that a maximum of three a year should be endorsed as this was believed to be what the membership wanted, which then increased to six a year as the Club expanded. As interest in slot-cars has grown the pressure from those within the Club meant that last year we moved to seven events with the addition of Newark. This year the demand from members and non-members to run swapmeets has exceeded all expectations and our role in such events needed resolution.

Underlying all the Club's decisions is that it exists only through its members and only for its members. In the early days the Club was able to provide something, i.e. swapmeets, that did not exist elsewhere. The Committee believe that this time has now passed and we have to recognise that with so many slot-car related events being organised both within and independent from the NSCC it is time for us to re-evaluate our role

with regard to swapmeets. This does not mean that we are abandoning our involvement altogether but that we are changing our stance and responsibilities in this area.

One of the functions of the club is to promote the hobby wherever it can. To this end the committee has decided that organisers of all slot-car related events can advertise them within the NSCC through the monthly magazine. Normal advertising rates will apply to these promotions. Of course, as the NSCC is not involved in the organisation of these events, the club can have no responsibility for the location and timing, the quality of the event or what is offered there. We hope to promote the NSCC at these events and enrol new members into the fold as allocating a table at the event to the NSCC is a condition of advertising in the Journal.

We shall continue the practice of having NSCC events run by members exclusively for members. As at present this does not stop non-members attending but they have to join the NSCC before access to the venue is permitted. These events must follow a simple and straightforward set of rules aimed at ensuring the best possible event for NSCC members.

Organisers of such events will have the privilege of free advertising in the Journal and all stall holders and attendees will benefit from the usual protection provided by the NSCC for transactions between members. In addition, the Committee will be pursuing alternative activities similar to the Hornby weekend but at different venues and with different emphases. We will also be looking for other opportunities so that the NSCC can continue to support its members, provide them with what they want and allow us to meet the club objectives of generating interest in slot-cars. Key areas are increasing the colour content of the Journal and developing our contacts with other manufacturers.

I hope that you found this chat interesting but please do keep us informed of what you want and what you don't want, we can only help if we know! We don't have E.S.P. yet but watch this space. ■

# F.O.C.C.

BY CEDRIC WHITING

What have the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and racing slot-cars got in common? Not much, except that children whose lives are still very much affected by this event love racing slot-cars. This year a group of slot-car enthusiasts decided to set up a club of their own and hired a room from the Gosport Methodist Church. The room was generally unused by the church except for once a year the charity, Friends of Chernobyl Children (FOCC) use it.

We thought at our newly formed club, The Solent Slot-car Club (SSCC), we could organise a racing championship for them.

Our track is a 6 lane “classic” Scalextric layout. We built the circuit by collecting up our spare track. We cut the track borders out of hard board. The whole circuit was landscaped and covered with that grass stuff you use on model railways. The grass goes right over the hard board borders and on the outer lanes when you drop a wheel off the side if the track there is still enough grip. We contacted Hornby Hobbies who generously provided 16 cars for us. The nature of Hornby’s latest cars means that when they crash they don’t do so lightly. None of our

club members had tried going up the bridge at full speed and not braking at all. The Formula ones became airborne projectiles. The children also managed to hurl the cars through the model scenery. The cars stood up to it well with only the loss of cameras from the Formula 1s.

To give the children more variety we made up a class of six Scalextric Ferrari F40s and six non-magnet, SCX, four wheel drive rally cars.

Over three Thursdays in July they raced and the points were totalled up. Prizes were awarded on the 3rd Thursday. They were racing to our club rules which means 6 points for 1st, 5 for second, down to 1 for sixth place. They each race on all six lanes. If you crash at our club your car is not put back on, this rapidly improves your skill as a driver. The children had a great time racing as did some of the families looking after them. Life is very hard for these children as they live in Mogilev in Belarus which is a radiation hot spot. Much of their food is contaminated and many of their friends and family have died. Thanks to the FOCC for giving us at the SSCC a chance to contribute something worth while and thanks to Scalextric for donating cars. ■



# Ninco's new suspension units

## or, Pogo sticks, high winds and guffaws

BY MEL TURBUTT

I'm sure that many of us have been waiting with bated breath for the release of Ninco's new range of cars fitted with "independent suspension". Well, in the same week that my copy of the July journal (containing Alan Slade's review of the Renault Clio) landed on the doormat, I also took delivery of both the Clio and the Mitsubishi Pajero. I don't get up in the loft much in the summer months. For one thing it gets dammed hot up there (despite having a window fitted) and for another it seems a shame not to be outside when the weather's nice. Luckily the arrival of the new cars coincided with a cooler spell, as I couldn't wait to give them a quick spin.

Alan's track test was very comprehensive, but was conducted solely with the magnet fitted. The first thing that I usually do is to remove the magnet from rally cars. However, before doing so, I placed the bare chassis of the Renault onto the track and noticed something very strange. The magnet was so strong that, in pulling down the rear of the chassis, it almost completely compressed the rear springs. Perhaps it wouldn't do this if harder springs were fitted, but the standard fit soft ones would appear to be pretty useless. Still, this shouldn't be a problem if I'm going to remove the magnet. So out it popped and the body-shell was re-fitted. Back onto the track and guess what? Now there's another problem. The sprung guide lifts the front wheels clean off the road. Yes that's right, just like those Scalextric Formula 1 cars of the 1970s- a permanent wheelie! Just as well the Clio hasn't got realistic front wheel drive. So let's re-cap; with the magnet fitted the rear suspension is compressed to the point where it is useless and without the magnet fitted, the front suspension is pretty pointless if the wheels aren't touching the track. It's not looking good is it?

One point that Alan made that I'm not sure that I would agree with. He questioned the need

for a sprung guide in conjunction with the suspension system. I'm no engineer, but I would have thought that if you have suspension in order to keep the wheels in contact with the track, then the body/chassis is going to move due to centrifugal (and other) forces. So if the chassis is allowed to move more in relation to the track surface, then surely there is more need for a sprung guide. Anyway, all of this is pretty irrelevant if the wheels don't even touch the road! Undeterred, it was back to the track to see just how badly this car would handle.

### Boing! Time for bed

DOH! It's actually not that bad to drive. Having heard stories of these cars bouncing all over the shop, the only time that I noticed a bit of hopping was when accelerating hard out of corners. This looked like it might be vibration from the spinning tyres being amplified by the springs. Then it dawned on me..... Ninco's suspension system is no such thing. What they have done bears a closer resemblance to a pogo stick than it does to a vehicle suspension system. The reason? No dampers! Real suspension systems require a combination of springs and dampers (or shock absorbers) that "dampen" and control the movement of the springs, together with things like anti-roll bars. If you removed everything but the springs from your road car it would bounce around like Zebedee on steroids! On the track the Clio isn't that bad. Lap times are similar to the earlier Citroen Saxo or Fiat Punto, and there's the rub. This, so called, suspension system serves no purpose. It is more likely to create handling vices than it is to cure them. Until Ninco can produce an effective 1/32 scale damper, this new feature will be no more than a gimmick which only provides a means by which the retail price can be increased. A working 1/32 scale damper? Would you like fluid or gas filled? Yea, right!

⇒19

On a more positive note, although I haven't done as many "miles" with this car as Alan did, there doesn't appear to be any excessive wear on the transmission. Perhaps removing the magnet reduces the strain on the crown wheel and pinion. If the rear springs are permanently compressed by the action of the magnet, then maybe they aren't allowed to mesh properly.

## Pajero

So next it was out with the Pajero. First I did a few laps with the magnet fitted. This is a big, chunky beast. In fact it's almost too big to fit the track. First time around Oakwood Park it demolished the Dunlop bridge! First time around the Penmaendyfi rally stage and the door mirrors clipped all the road signs. So the Dunlop bridge and the door mirrors are removed and try again. A couple more laps building up speed until, what's that? Why is it suddenly blowing a force nine gale in the middle of July? Stop driving the Pajero and the wind stops. Then it dawns on me. What I can hear is the sound of those big cross country tyres whining on the track surface. I wonder what it's like without the magnet? This could be really tough. The Mitsubishi has got "sort of" 4 wheel drive via Ninco's drive belt system, those gale force tyres that don't look very suitable for use on tarmac, (though at least they all touch the road), that big chunky bodywork with the same centre of gravity as a block of flats and the Zebedee suspension system. Oh blimey! It sounds like a recipe for disaster, but..... this is THE most fun car that I've driven in nearly 40 years!

Once in a while a slot-car comes along that is such fun to drive that you find a stupid, inane grin spreading across your face, right? Well go out and buy a Ninco Pajero, remove the magnet and drive it around the most convoluted, bumpy circuit you can make. Forget the grin, you'll be in hysterics! Remember when the drop arm was all the rage in the 60s for keeping the guide in the slot? Well this car's got one of them, only now it's spring loaded. And this means that you can drive it around bends on two wheels! Through the Goodwood chicane it's left wheels

up, right wheels up, right up again and then the left again. Through Oakwood Park's Bridge Corner and clear daylight under the left-hand tyres before- clunk! It's wedged itself under the Grande bridge, still on two wheels! Any clubs out there want a fun event to fill-in between races? How about "who can do the most tricks with a Ninco Pajero?" I could drive this thing all day. The other half is wondering what the hell is going on in the loft. All she can hear is the sound of a force nine gale and me, laughing like a drain. This car is a real enigma. It's a lovely model, but at first glance all the ingredients seem to add-up into something that should be a nightmare to drive. Truth is, it's the most fun you can have with your clothes on. And that's before you've been able to try it on Ninco's new cross country track that it's been designed to run on.

My message to Ninco then? Don't try to con us with "independent suspension" on your rally cars. It's a brave attempt, but it's a blind alley. DO give us more desert raiders like the Pajero. You've struck gold! There is, however, one more thing that I would recommend, a warning sign on the box. "CAUTION! Repeated use may result in the need for replacement underwear". ■





Dear Brian,

Just a quick note first to bring another testimony about the poor ageing quality of Fly tyres as mentioned by Bill Grigg and Tim Ainslie in previous issues of the Journal.

I would simply have to add that noticing a couple of years ago(!) their becoming rock hard and shiny on Vipers, Venturis and the first generation of Porsche GTIs, I decided, wisely I think, to remove the tyres from the hubs and, lo and behold, I found out that they also gave out a kind of smelly greasy juice. They were quickly placed in a plastic bag far away from the cars. I happen to make silicone repro tyres so I won't have any problems replacing them and at the same time improving the grip and roadholding qualities of the models which my friends and I race without magnet now. I have not made all types of tyres yet because of sheer lack of time and because my fellow home racers and I have rather shifted our allegiance from Fly (stunning quality cars and stunning prices too!) to Scalextric and SCX, preferring the Spanish motors though which are slower than the Mabuchis but offer better torque and braking effect. To conclude on the matter it's a shame that we might have to store Fly cars, or at least the tyres, in temperature-controlled rooms like precious bottles of Bordeaux or Bourgogne...

Secondly to add on David Sykes' interesting article about national racing colours in the June issue of the Journal, here is a little and exotic contribution. Madagascar colours seem to be a white body with, in the middle of it, a dark green stripe running all along the bonnet most probably to the rear of the car if I can trust the couple of photos found in a book about Ferraris. To what extent is it reliable, I can't tell. I am afraid I won't be able to compete for the national Luxembourg car photo as Ray Harper proposed recently; had it been Madagascar I may have tried my luck.

Finally a question: where could I lay my hands on a chequered flag (genuine or fancy one)? Can anybody help?

Best regards  
Pierre Collange

.....  
Dear Brian,

I was pleased to read Andrew Davis' article last month, and fully endorse his views and experiences of Ebay. Nice one Andrew!

I am delighted also to find that I am not alone in spending far more time on Ebay than I really should, and at times have been accused by my other half of preferring the company of my computer to her! Incidentally, what happens to members' sale items? Are they all sold each month, as I never seem to see "repeats" in succeeding months.

Regards  
David Phillips

Dear Brian,

Having just spent a week in the Lake District I must bring members' attention to the Cumberland Toy & Model Museum in Cockermouth. Run by NSCC member Rod Moore this museum is packed full, quite literally, with interesting toys and models that many of us remember from our childhood.

Every corner is stuffed with some interesting displays and many of them have some operational element. The biggest display of all is a large Scalextric layout absolutely crammed with cars. These range from the earliest to the most recent models released and there are many rare and unusual cars to be spotted. Rod made Lorraine and myself, together with my parents, very welcome and we spent a couple of hours wandering round reminiscing.

The museum is run on a shoestring budget and was badly hit by the foot and mouth crisis and needs support. If you are ever anywhere near Cockermouth do take a diversion and have a look, you won't be disappointed. See <http://www.toymuseum.co.uk> or phone 01900 827606 for more details.

Best wishes  
Rob Smith

**Quite right Rob, it is an amazing place. We went there a few years ago and Chris had to drag me out in the end because I wouldn't stop playing with the exhibits!**

.....

Dear Brian,

There have been several articles and letters in the Journal on the new Scalextric Sport track. Here is my impression after using it.

I have been taking a Scalextric layout to school fetes, etc. for many years with great success and this year was asked to take it to the model railway exhibition in Carlisle. I designed a four lane 20.41m track using the RMS track designer and assembled the layout on the Friday night, this being the first time I had used Sport track.

It worked perfectly first time with no power drops or dead sections and for the whole subsequent two days in spite of overenthusiastic young marshals pressing down hard and accidentally knocking it in their haste to get to deslotted cars. The RMS, although a bit idiosyncratic in some ways, also worked perfectly; in fact three cars in one race ran literally less than a cars length between them for the whole race with their final times only a few hundredths of a second different. Set up time was much quicker than using Classic track but taking it apart I found took just as long but was easier on the fingers.

The NASCAR cars I used ran very well without even having a pickup change, held the track but could also be slid round corners if you wanted. Lots of prizes were won thanks to Hornby Hobbies (cars), the Sands Centre (pantomime tickets) and I gave family tickets to the Toy Museum. Ages ranged from 4 to well over 70; everyone who had a go enjoyed themselves and went away with simple tips to enable them to get the best out of their Scalextric. We tend to take for granted what we always unthinkingly do such as build the layout but do not connect the last joint so you can find any duff joints by simply running a car round or not damaging the pickups by pulling a car backwards.

Would I do it again? Of course, I have already been asked to take it next year so how about one or two of you coming to help as it is bloody hard work on your own!

Yours sincerely,  
Rod Moore

PS Your article on slot racing was the best I have ever read in the journal, but for your name it could have been me!



Dear Editor,

I have searched for several months now trying to find information about any clubs that might exist in the Chesterfield area.

I've heard that there is supposed to be one but have failed to find any information about it so now I'm wondering whether one really does exist or not. Does anyone reading this know of such a club, or one that isn't too far away from Chesterfield? So far the nearest I've found is the Quorn club 40 miles away. I'm presuming that as I've not been able to find out about any others that are closer, then that one must be the nearest but does that mean this is an area where a club is needed? I would be willing to set up a club in this area if there is anyone out there who would be interested in either helping me in running it or attending a club should I set one up.

My initial idea is to use Plexytrack which would be put up and taken down each time we race which would enable a different layout to be used each week. If there is enough interest, once a month or maybe once every couple of months I'd like to run an oval for the Nascars and Indy cars. Obviously this is only an idea, and if people aren't interested in that sort of thing then it doesn't matter. Another idea I have is to run a track dedicated to rally cars with lots of twists and humps and jumps, possibly using some of Scalextric hump backed bridges, rough terrain track, crossovers and chicanes. I think to start with the club would have to run four lane racing with at least one race in each lane per evening for everyone. As quite a few other clubs run six lane racing and everyone gets at least six races a night then, naturally I'll do what I can to match that or even beat it!

I'm sure if there is enough interest and the club could generate enough funds, then six lane racing would be a possibility for the future in which case everyone would have at least six races. I would be willing to run any class of racing people want whether it be F1, Sports/GT Saloons, or whatever, I personally enjoy running the original Minis and although they don't handle too well, they are a lot of fun and I would love to see a class just for them one day. As long as there are at least four cars (one for each lane!) then I'll be willing to run a class for them and hopefully a championship run over several weeks! I am quite aware that if there is a lot of interest (who am I kidding!) then several different classes may not be possible in one night but that's a problem I would have to resolve when the time comes.

So if anyone out there is interested in joining a club in the Chesterfield area, I'd like to hear from you and if we can get enough people willing to attend on a fairly regular basis, then who knows? You can contact me on 01246 208193, or on my mobile, 07866 116542.

Thanks  
Paul Roach

# Paddock Test

BY ROB SMITH

Well I can't exactly call it a track test can I? In theory at least these new releases from Hornby don't actually move. I'm talking of course about the new range of kits released recently.

They are based upon six popular Scalextric cars but are intended as static models. They are branded Hornby and not Scalextric – a missed opportunity to my mind.

I have built a couple of them and found it an interesting experience. As one might expect the quality is very high. The packing is nice and bright consisting of a shrink wrapped box with an image of the Scalextric car on the front, containing a plastic tray with all the bits inside. Unlike the Airfix kits of our childhood the bits are not attached to sprues but instead are in sealed plastic bags ready for assembly. Not that there are very many of them – assembly is not rocket science. Anyone else remember building the Airfix HMS Victory or Saturn V rocket?

The parts are extremely sharp and accurate with no flash or moulding marks whatsoever. They consist of a number of white plastic parts,



clear plastic window and light lenses and rubber tyres. The chassis is nicely detailed underneath with chassis rails, exhaust, sump guards, etc. The

instructions are clear and easy to follow and there is a set of waterslide transfers included too. However, there are no chrome parts – essential for Camaro bumpers, or etched metal parts for grills, or drivers – despite the seats having holes to locate them.

Assembly is trivially easy but I did have some difficulty getting the parts to stick together with polystyrene cement and resorted to superglue in the end. Completed they make great looking models and are absolutely perfect for populating the paddock on your scenic Scalextric layout.

Of course, for many of us this is only half the story. All parts except the chassis are identical to their Scalextric counterparts. They are made of a different plastic – Styrene as opposed to ABS which will make them slightly more brittle but easier to glue together. A completed body and interior of the Camaro weighs in at 28g compared with 32g for the Scalextric version but this was without the driver and his huge head!

Being identical the kit bodyshell fits perfectly onto a Scalextric chassis and I am sure that many of us will do just that, discarding the kit chassis and using them to create self decorated Scalextric cars – especially when appropriate spares become easier to buy. The tyres in the kit are identical in shape and material to the Scalextric versions.

In conclusion these kits are a great addition to the Scalextric range and I'm sure you will have lots of fun building and decorating them yourselves. With a recommended retail price of just £6.99 they are good value for money too. However a plea to Hornby:

Please, please, please can you include chrome and etched metal parts, coloured glass and a driver figure in future releases so that we can make an even better static model and likewise, please can we have Scalextric cars also sold in kit form so they can be decorated in our own racing liveries. ■



# Variations on a theme

BY ROGER GILLHAM



Thanks to Phil Smith's expertise I can now answer Peter Youd's query (July issue) on C88 Cooper filler caps. This model would normally have a large filler cap but the earlier C58 had smaller size caps. As mentioned in my letter in the last journal it is likely that either it had been lost and replaced by one from a C58 or it was an early C88 and they were using up old stock. It is also possible that

one version was in a set only and the other as an individual release. I don't think this will qualify for a type 2.

Whilst writing I have identified different liveries on the single seat racers, high and low nose C613 and C698 (see pictures). Perhaps readers could contact me if they have either one of them, just to confirm that the second livery is not a one-off special. ■



# Race car preparation, hints and tips

BY DAVE NORTON

Sitting quietly on Bank Holiday Monday, relaxing for once in life, I was contentedly passing a couple of hours reading some of the more recent back issues of the NSCC Journal when I noticed some of the newer members letters were requesting information on the mystical art of race car improvements. It occurred to me that a reprint of a couple of articles I wrote in the late 80s dealing with race preparation may now be in order, but in the best tradition of backups, the disk I had carefully stored said articles on would not open in either mine or my daughter's computer; so grey matter willing what follows is from memory!

Most of my "serious" racing took place from about 1985 to 98 when I raced the lot, F1, rally, GT, saloons, lorries and even bikes; absolutely great times having some right battles with the likes of Steve Carter, Jamie Pleasance and Paul Darby, and (in the words of our Editor), "ten different weird liquids and a toolkit capable of servicing the space shuttle" were very much the order of the day. Nowadays I only have time to play at Quorn Slot-car Club but even at club level the competition is seriously fierce and car prep. is a must, it can be quite disconcerting for visitors as they are lapped two or three times! However with a bit of "knowledge" passed on vast improvements are made and we normally gain another member! It doesn't take much to improve a slot-car but one has to be realistic, ... in a basic saloon race the Scalextric Escort XR3i will always be stuffed by a Ninco Audi A4 and a Metro always yields to a Renault 5!

The tips and hints contained here are applicable to just about all cars, and are aimed at the "box standard" type of event as the list is endless when considering modified cars; a perfect topic for my next article. In addition I have not considered the effect of Magnatraction, as I am from the "magnets are for kids' toys"

camp.....so apologies to all those that enjoy their Magnatraction, it's just not for me;..... besides magnets don't work too well on a wooden track!

How far you go with these is up to the individual and although some may be obvious, here goes:-

1. We are racing what is effectively a mass produced plastic toy (although you'd never guess that by today's prices), so check it's put together correctly. Most important are rear wheels/tyres that are running true, otherwise your car will bounce wildly under acceleration and cornering speed will equally be compromised. You don't hammer down the M1 with unbalanced rear wheels and expect a smooth ride, so don't try it on the slot track

2. Check the front axle spins freely and the front tyres do not rub on the arches (when sitting on a piece of track) as this will slow the car down and is commonest reason for "front end chatter" when blasting down the straight. Old worn tyres or those turned down, using drill and sandpaper, to a smaller diameter will prevent rubbing and ensure car weight is transferred on to the guide blade so keeping it in the slot. Old perished tyres are perfect for the front axle as they will stop the front end of the car gripping as it corners and so tipping it over.

3. Ensure the guide braids are of equal length and flat, not bunched up pointing in different directions! I used a small pair of long nosed pliers to check this after every race as bunched braids prevent the guide from fully sitting in the slot. A cornering car leans on the buried face of the guide so depth is important for speed as pressure increases on the guide.

4. Carefully oil all axle bearings and ⇒⇒

motor drive shaft ends with a small amount of oil, excess amounts unfortunately encourage dirt to gather and clog up. Use only light WD40 type oils as 3 in 1 and similar are too thick. If you can get some, sewing machine oil is perfect.

5. If your car has wires connecting the guide to the motor check these are not trapped by either the bodywork, interior detail or fouling the front axle, particularly catching the inside edge of the tyres

6. Clean your tyres after each race. Track surfaces get very dusty and grip is obviously vital. Watch the top boys, they are always using Stain Devils, dry cleaning fluid, Zoff or even just lighter fuel to remove residue from their tyres. If you don't then you're at an immediate disadvantage, especially in the first few laps when the freshly cleaned tyres are most effective.

7. Use lighter fuel to clean your braids, to ensure the greatest electrical contact at all times.

8. Glue the motor in by using an impact adhesive such as Evo Stick or better still invest in a glue gun! This will prevent the motor from "twisting or jumping" as you accelerate out of a corner. A moving/loose motor is normally the problem behind a bouncing car assuming you've dealt with point 1. If necessary a blob of glue can be applied to the rear axle bearings.

9. To greatly improve the handling of any car, loosen (half to one turn only) the screws that fasten the body to the chassis, so the body can slightly "rock". This creates a very crude but effective form of suspension and stops any vibration transferring from the chassis up to the body.

10. Assuming car and motor choice are correct, the combination of points 1, 8 and 9 are almost the "key" to car preparation. A smoother

handling car is more stable, easier to race with, gives you greater confidence and is, therefore, ultimately faster; the quickest car in a straight line will not win races if it handles like a supermarket trolley around the bends.

11. Although not strictly related to the car, driving technique is a hugely important part of wining races. "Bloody obvious!" I hear you all cry and that may be but when the lights go green (and the red mist descends) most just "go for it". However advance planning can play dividends and it's vital to study the drivers/cars you're up against. Never give up, even if one guy is clearly quicker than you, he may break down, get legged up by back markers or just lose it and deslot, .....at which point you pounce! Unless you have the fastest car and can get there in front, try to hold back into the first corner as you can almost guarantee some will lose it and "hey presto" you're a place or two up as you avoid the crash. Drive consistently and smoothly, feeding in the power through the bends.....none of the top drivers snatch at the control trigger! "Rear end out" when exiting a corner looks impressive but you are actually going sideways and unsettling the car; keep the car pointing in the direction of travel.

A really fast car is great but can be a real handful to control on a twisty circuit; I have seen so many races won by slower cars that simply stayed on. I always felt Steve Carter was the past master of this art; if his car was not quite "top dog" he'd simply drive consistently in all his races while all those around fell off! Steve picked up many a trophy this way.

Well that's enough ranting for now, but I hope some of it has been useful. The "racers" within any club are normally a great bunch of blokes (possibly quite sad and mad) and given the opportunity we will strive to help any new novice improve, so don't hold back, if you ever fancied having a crack at racing... in the words of Lord Nike.... "Just Do It" ■

# Crap Racer's progress

BY THE EDITOR

**M**y article last month seems to have struck a chord with fellow incompetents as I have had more correspondence about it than any other article I have ever included in the Journal - mostly from people who insist I was writing about them! It must be some sort of Bloke thing; men are never prepared to admit they are rubbish at something unless somebody else "comes out" first.

Anyway, suitably encouraged by your comments, I will continue the tale. First, though, a few words on the different levels of racing ability I have come across. At the top of the tree are the "Super Racers" like John Watts at King's Lynn. You will find at least one of them at virtually any club in the land and, if you have the misfortune to visit Wood Green, Quorn or Pendle clubs you will probably be up against five or six of them! People like Steve Carter, Jamie Pleasance, Derek Cooper and Sean Fothersgill are, to all intents and purposes, unbeatable by the average racer. They have a natural talent which sets them apart, not to mention decades of experience and the ability to set their cars up perfectly. It is a real pleasure to watch these people in action - they are smooth, exceedingly quick and, most importantly, they hardly ever fall off.

Next are the competent/up and coming racers and there are a lot of them about; some are older racers who have reached their level and some are youngsters with a natural talent who have not yet gained the experience to join the top ranks. They are quick but still prone to the occasional 'off'.

Finally, at the bottom of the heap, are the rest of us - we haven't got a clue how to set a car up, can put in the occasional quick lap but lack consistency and we fly off the track - A LOT! In fact, during my early weeks at the club, I was unable to stay in the slot for more than three laps at a time and this is the real key to the game - each trip into the scenery costs you half a lap by the time you are marshaled which means a six lap deficit over the course of a normal race.

Now I may be a crap racer but I am not stupid so I set out to improve in this area by making sure I got as much track time in as possible. During practice the other members have a job to prise me away from the hand controllers and it is surprising how often I have to pay a visit during the week for "business" purposes! Also, after the serious racing is done for the evening, I am always the last to leave - the fun races provide an excellent opportunity for more practice.

I was also taught another important lesson by John - don't try to keep up with people who are quicker, you will inevitably forget to brake and bury your car in the Armco yet again. At all times it is best to concentrate on your own lane and ignore what is going on around you; I have found this exceedingly hard to do but it definitely pays dividends.

## A cunning plan

As I mentioned last month I finally managed to claw my way off the bottom rung of the ladder simply by staying on the track for longer. On a good night I can keep my off-track excursions down to four per race and 3rd place is now a regular occurrence with 2nd a distinct possibility provided I am only up against one of the top dogs. On the rare occasions I come last these days I still have my usual retort available when the others take the piss - "Can you edit a magazine?"

However, in order to get up to the next level it is necessary to improve your car; yet another pitfall for the novice such as myself as I just don't know where to start. The other members are more than willing to do a basic set-up for me but they are not daft enough to provide me with a replica of their own superfast machines so I needed a plan worthy of Jack 'Foxy' Cunning, Professor of Cunning at Cunning University.

There was only one person to approach really - Jim Brown of Slot-Tech who sells race prepared cars! A quick email pleading for help and within a short time a Proslot Ferrari F1 =>



arrived on my doorstep. Not just any old Proslot Ferrari though - he sent me the car which won the 2002 championship at the Pendle club!

Now Jim maintains that the average racer with a Slot-Tech car can beat a good racer with an average car but it remained to be seen what a totally useless racer such as myself would do with the thing!

Unfortunately I had to wait for three weeks before I could use it in anger but, eventually, the results spoke for themselves - A WIN, two seconds and a third (totally lost the plot in that one)! Without a shadow of a doubt this thing was the puppy's undercarriage; warp factor nine down the straight and so much grip round the corners you would think it had traction control. I beat my previous best F1 laptime by over three seconds and lapped Jack, the lippy teenager, four times in one race - I was tempted to give a quick rendition of "You're not singing any more" but restrained myself!

Just how good the car was became apparent in a race in which I came second to Jamie Kelly by just two seconds. He is John Kelly's young son and is the second best racer in the club; in thirty year's time he could well be one of the top men providing he doesn't get sidetracked by 'Sex and

Drugs and Rock'n'Roll' and normally puts at least two laps on me. He also runs a Proslot Ferrari but I was faster than him and with one less 'off' under pressure I would have beaten him - let's hope he finds out about the pleasures of the flesh fairly soon!

Unfortunately my advantage is likely to be short lived as the minute the other members read this article Jim is going to be deluged with orders for cars. Yes, I admit it - despite their pleadings and offers of money, wives, daughters and/or houses I didn't let on where the car came from! I wonder just how many people out there are winning races with Slot-Tech cars and keeping quiet about their origins?

Before I get delusions of grandeur it is worth pointing out that John Watts beat me by two laps then borrowed the car and lapped over a second faster with it than I could manage! Like I said at the beginning of the article, the top men are in a different league altogether. Mind you, I might be able to give his bloody motorcycle a run for its money now though!

In the meantime I will savour the triumph - cast your eyes over the following result sheet - the editor, crap racer of the highest order, wins his first race! Thank you Jim, you made my day! ■

Track Name	Green	Blue	Red	Yellow
Position	<b>First</b>	Second	Third	Fourth
Driver	<b>Brian</b>	Steve	John K	Eddie
Car / Team				
Laps Completed	<b>20.00</b>	20.00	20.00	20.00
Lead Laps	<b>19</b>	1	0	0
Reaction Time	<b>0.392</b>	0.421	0.471	0.358
Average Time	<b>9.679</b>	10.144	10.901	11.550
Av Speed (MPH)	<b>225.4</b>	215.1	200.1	188.9
Best Time	<b>8.850</b>	9.534	9.402	11.228
Best Speed (MPH)	<b>246.5</b>	228.8	232.0	194.3
Distance (Miles)	<b>12.1</b>	12.1	12.1	12.1
Elapsed Time	<b>193.574</b>	202.889	218.015	231.000
Lag Time		9.315	24.441	37.426

# BITS AND PIECES

## Swapmeet Calendar Co-Ordinator

Elsewhere in this month's journal the Chairman has outlined the changes which will take place around swapmeets and the NSCC. As part of these changes a new role has been identified to get swapmeet organisers working together to arrange dates as sympathetically as possible. Steve Cannon has agreed to take this role on and will endeavour to encompass NSCC, non-NSCC and significant continental European events.

Co-operation is obviously voluntary for organisers of the latter two as the NSCC has no jurisdiction but it would seem to be in everyone's best interest to give it a go.

The Journal calendar will, in future, include all slot-car swapmeets, not just NSCC events.

*Robert Learmouth*

## 'Bargain Hunt' at Newark Swapmeet

Following the success of the 'Bargain Hunt' auction at last year's Newark swap meet, we are looking for competitors for this year to go head to head with the previous winner.

The format is simple, it follows the idea of BBC TV's Bargain Hunt antiques show. We are looking for competitors, either individuals, or a team of 2 people to be given £200 at the opening of the swapmeet (10.30am) which they can spend in one hour on what they consider the best buys at the event. These items will then be auctioned off in an open auction at 1 pm. The winners keep any money they make over the £200 and the kudos of winning.

Anybody wanting to have a go, please email me at: [stevecannon@proweb.co.uk](mailto:stevecannon@proweb.co.uk) or call Roger Barker on 01636 892954 with your name, telephone number and why you would make an ace 'Bargain Hunt' competitor.

Like last year, this should be a lot of fun.

*Steve Cannon*

## Tyres

R/S Racing have added replica tyres for the Scalextric Porsche 956/Sauber Mercedes/Jag XJ9R to their range as this has been a very popular request at NSCC swapmeets.

These tyres are apparently impossible to get as spares from Scalextric. They are made from the usual high grip material and cost £2.50 a pair.

I think they also fit the last of the motorcycle combinations (as well as Tommy and Trinie, Blinky and Pongy, Pinky and Perky etc) as they also had the "star" pattern wheel as fitted to the above mentioned cars.

*Colin Spark*

## SCX Competition

SCX is running a competition to win a Rally Experience at a UK venue with tickets to a motor sport event when you purchase any SCX set at ModelZone.

For full details, pick up a leaflet at your local store - good luck!

*Gareth Jex*

## Enthusiasts guide

The 6th edition of Roger Gillham's book is due out in Spring 2004 and will contain dedicated chapters on Australian Scalextric and Scalex boats plus 140+ world wide images of sets, many more cars, more historical info etc.

Visit [www.rogergillham.co.uk](http://www.rogergillham.co.uk) for release information.

*Roger Gillham*

## Evesham Update

A traditional part of the Evesham swapmeet is the "pre-swappie" meal held on the Saturday evening before the event in a local pub. There are still a few places available this year so if you fancy a social get together away from the dealing floor then give Steve Pitts a ring on 01386 443370.

# MORE BITS AND PIECES

## Club Survey

A huge thanks to all of you who have returned the form included in the January magazine. The response was massive and we received nearly 300 replies. This is the biggest response we have ever received for anything!

A special thanks to the many overseas members which really shows the international nature of the NSCC today. Likewise to those of you who wrote letters and extra comments too. The feedback is extremely positive with some great suggestions for improvements and new things for us to do.

We have already discussed some ideas that were raised and hopefully you will see them appear in club publications and activities. However, some of you are quite mad - the Turtle Hawklord knows who he is, and some ideas from others are interesting to say the least, a Playboy type centrefold seems a popular choice!

The response has been so good that I haven't had a chance to analyse all of them and a detailed report on the findings will have to wait until a later time but until then a big thanks to all of you who took the trouble to respond.

### Winners of the prize draw are:

2250/97 Mike Ronald

2009/96 Kenneth Bailey

962/91 Leon Brebois

Brian will send your cars as soon as possible.

*Rob Smith*

## Competition reminder

Don't forget that there are two competitions running at the moment:

1) MRRC limited edition Cobra - see last month's MRRC Update article - closing date September 25th. I have not received a huge entry for this one so you are in with a good chance.

2) No entries yet for "The most stupid way to promote your product with Scalextric" - see Bits And Pieces, July issue.

*Brian*

## Ebay special

\*SCALEXTRIC MONACO \*HORNBY  
\*BOXED\* FERRARI\*



"You are bidding on a Scalextric set in good condition. The set contains :- track, 2 cars, 2 controls, perimeter boards with adverts and power pack.

It comes complete in original box which is in fair condition. Extra track and accessories could be added to make a larger course. These are sold on ebay.

The cars are Ferrari and Benetton styles. The Benetton car requires extremely minor attention to front wheels to make perfect. Small plastic support attachment may just need glueing. Otherwise everything in very good condition."

In the light of recent Ebay articles, frustrations etc. the above was spotted recently by *Ian Langridge* and is reproduced exactly as listed. Seller was *fitleisure2000* with 100% positive feedback!! It was standing at £10 with about an hour to go. Expect to see a wanted ad for spoilers very shortly!

Anybody else got a better one? As nobody has managed a picture of a Luxembourg racing car I have awarded the green Beetle to Ian for this submission. I will give another prize car for the best Ebay horror story I receive.

*Brian*



First up let's get the apologies out of the way! A few journals back I set a competition to see what SCX car or accessory was top of your wish list. Then the following month I announced the winner! No problem except I stated the closing date as 16<sup>th</sup> July – which only gave a few days. A few more entries have been received and all have been put back in the hat (except the first winner) and the winner (picked at random) is Gary McDonald. Like many of you he wanted updated Pit Stop and Rally turn around track sections and Vintage F1 and rally cars like the Ford Escort MKII. Look out for more competitions from SCX in the next few months with some great prizes!

It's been a bit quiet this month, Spain and most of mainland Europe seem to take most of August for holidays and some of my contacts are on vacation. However, we have a review of the recently released rally accessories and track sections this month. Thought it would make a change and, to be honest, photos on web sites and brochures don't tell you the whole picture. Lots of you requested more track and trackside accessories so here are some of SCX's offerings. Over the next few months I will try to take a look at some of the F1 and Electronic accessories.

A few months back you saw photos of prototypes of many different cars, most of these are now in the shops. However, the F1 Jags were slightly delayed as individual cars (although the

De La Rosa version can be obtained in the Monza Set) but both cars will be available shortly. The Vintage Corvette and the Fiat Abarth seem to have sold out in most places, more Fiats are on their way, but the Vintage Corvette is a limited edition of 4000, so if you want one – be quick!

A couple of bits of info you may like to know:

One of the accessories shown in the 2003 catalogue has been withdrawn from the range; Electronic Hand throttles SCX Ref: 88390.

### Printing error

There is a printing mistake in the 2003 catalogue regarding SCX Mercedes CLK DTM Ref: 61170, the catalogue shows this model with steering, this is not the case, the car will be issued without steering (as per the other DTM cars). Thanks to one of Scale Models' customers for asking this question.

Look out for the SCX roadshow over the next few weeks, see the web site ([www.scx-cars.co.uk](http://www.scx-cars.co.uk)) for full details, but here are a few dates for you:

4 <sup>th</sup> October	Reading	'Hobbycraft'
11 <sup>th</sup> October	Basildon	'Hobbycraft'
18 <sup>th</sup> October	Stockport	'Hobbycraft'
25 <sup>th</sup> October	Preston	'Hobbycraft'





Review

SCX

by Gareth Jex

This month's review is on four of SCX's track sections and static (or not so static) accessories. All the items have a Rallying theme.

### Adjustable Hump Bridge/Dip Ref 88020.

**Contents:** 2 no. 175mm (half) straight track sections, 1 no. 350mm (standard) straight flexible track section (brown), 4 no. bridge side sections (yellow) and two moulded grey/green plastic (rock) support sections.

Basically, this is three accessories in one! The contents make up either a "Hump" bridge, "Dip" bridge or a standard "Horizontal" bridge. Although strictly speaking any of the variations are not really a bridge because the clear height under the track (when horizontal) is approx. 45mm less than the height of any of the SCX Rally cars, so you can't use this (in standard form) to cross another track section underneath. There is nothing to stop you from building up the two supports either side on your scenic rally layout.

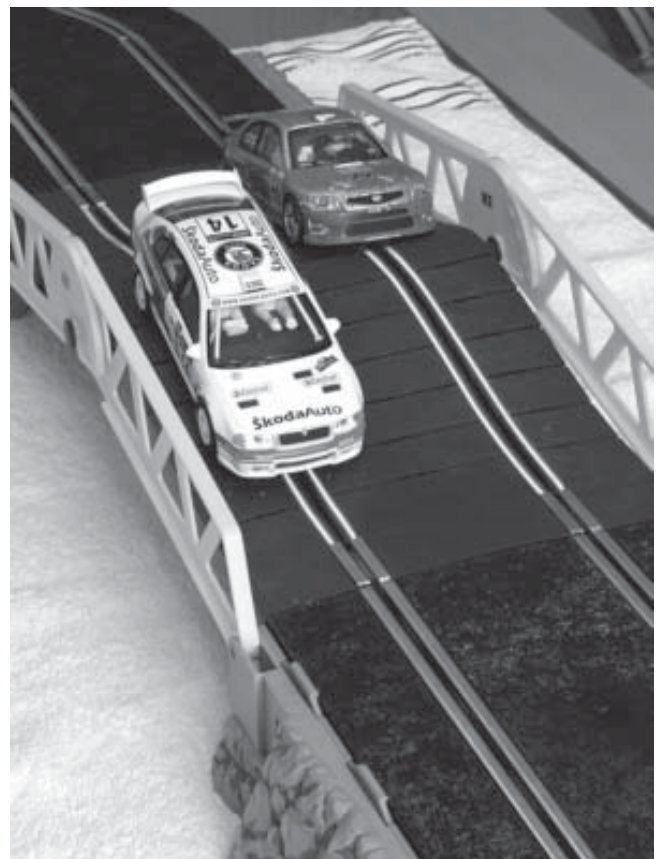
The bridge support sections are moulded with a rock style on the sides and approach and have four retaining clips to hold the half straight track pieces firmly down flat. Also incorporated into the supports are the fixing points for the adjustable bridge sides. The bridge sides pivot in the centre and have three fixing positions moulded into arms that locate in the support sections. The central flexible track section has a locating lug, which connects with the sides. Very easy to put together (not too easy to describe – sorry).

The Flexible track section is designed to mimic a wooden bridge with slatted sections that

bend up or down (in fact you can get a little twist in it as well), power is transferred to the pick ups via metal coil rails (a bit like a tightly wound spring). The coil is metallic and your magnets will still stick to it.

Taken at average speeds your rally cars will stay on the track and in the groove, too slow and they are likely to either bottom out with the wheels spinning but not touching the track or get wedged between bumpers again with the wheels spinning. Too much speed and your pride and joy will get launched off the track. To be honest too fast is pretty difficult, there is a slight drop in power when you get on the flexible track section.

In summary a good addition to any rally spec layout or track, don't be tempted to try the



F1 cars! Two sections together? Who knows – suspension bridge? There is one other possible use for the flexible section, all those layouts you dream up only to find that the annoying last section is just shorter than any of the standard track pieces - pop it in and any minor difference in length can be taken out with a small hump!

### **Super Sliding Curve Set “Ice Effect” Ref: 88120**

**Contents:** 2 no. Lead in/out chicane standard length straights, 4 no. Standard curve radius chicane curve track sections, 4 no. Outer curve Borders, 2 no. Lead in/out straight Borders and 4no. Clip on barrier rails.

This is a Chicane curve set with a difference. It’s based on the weathered effect rally cars and compliments them very well. The track sections begin with a relatively normal lead in/out chicane which starts in the usual black plastic, as it narrows the track surface is weathered to look like Ice, Snow and Mud. You then get to the curved track sections, these are completely different to any other SCX track sections.

The track surface is completely smooth! The central area around the guide rails is brown in

colour (mud) this blends out to white on the edges of the track. The border sections are also mainly white, these are weathered as are the red track barriers!



So four nice sections to slide about on then? What about the magnet effect I hear you ask! Well this is the clever bit, the power rails are made of aluminium (or something very similar) and therefore those powerful magnets on your rally cars have no effect! The lead in/out track sections rails are made of the normal metal and work with magnets.

What’s it like? Great fun! I set up a small circuit and blasted around for about an hour (any excuse). Using SCX 4 wheel drive rally cars (Skoda, Subaru & Citroen) you really can have a lot of fun. Entering the curve you can push the cars into a sideways slide very easily, but try as you might, it is virtually impossible to do a full doughnut (360°). The back of the car will just clip the barrier and pop you back in the right direction. The surface appears very consistent, when driven at constant speeds the cars perform in exactly the same way time after time. To achieve more dramatic effects just go slow into the corner and blast the power down all the way round, lifting just before the lead out section. All the track, border and barrier sections in this set are unique to the set, each has its own reference number. This is the only curved chicane track section available from the current SCX range. A smooth “Ice” straight section would be nice to expand the range. ➡



### Rally Figures Ref 88410 (Green)

This is the first time I have seen these in the flesh, the photos in the SCX 2003 catalogue are of real people in jump suits! – I can confirm that you do not get 6 real 1:1 scale people turn up at your house when you order! What you do get is 6 1:32 scale rally figures in your choice of colours; red, blue and green. (Citroen, Subaru and Skoda?) and a wheel/tyre cart.

The figures are made of a semi flexible plastic allowing slight repositioning of the arms and legs etc. The arms are not spigoted so you can't move them like an Airfix kit. The standing figures have small green pads to assist them standing.

You get 3 standing/bending figures, 1 kneeling and 2 figures lying on their backs (working under a car). All the figures are fully painted (green overalls), light grey coloured boots with painted laces, hands are either flesh coloured or in black gloves. Faces are painted flesh colour with eyes and eyebrows and black or



blond coloured hair. On the figures' backs is an SCX logo. Each one has his own task, moving a tyre, pushing the cart, changing a wheel, working under the car or polishing the windows.

They are generally good quality figures that will bring a little life to any layout. SCX also produce figures for the F1 scene ref: 88270 and figures for the F1 Grandstand ref: 88320.





### **Rally Box Ref 88400 (Blue)**

You might have seen the photos I took of the prototype of this new accessory a few months back. It looked much better than the computer generated image in the catalogue and I think the real thing looks better than the prototype!

**Contents:** Coloured base (either red, blue or green), Fabric roof section (R, B, G), 4 no. silver plastic uprights, 2 no. silver plastic wheel ramps, 2 no. plastic axle/car stands, 2 no. Oil drums, 2 no. sign hoardings and a set of self adhesive logos.

The set comes in a self assembly form and takes about 2 minutes to assemble! No glue is required, everything is push fit with simple instructions included. As far as I can see the different colours available do not have separate reference numbers, the colour inside is indicated

with a coloured sticker. You will also notice that the box design shows “XTREM COLLECTION” and “RALLYSPORT” logos printed on the roof section – this is not as they appear.

The constructed Rally box is 230mm wide x 175mm deep x 160mm high. Each different colour represents a current Rally team and their logo is printed on each face of the roof section with an SCX logo above. The base has two slots running the depth of the unit for your guide flags to sit in. All the accessories and decorative fittings push together and can be removed after you have finished your scale rally!

With the Hump Bridge/Dip Super Sliding Curve Set, Rally Figures and Rally Boxes you have most things you need to host your own WRC stage at home. ■



# **NINCO** *track test*

## **50306 Mitsubishi Pajero "Masuoka" Part 2 - Drive it**

**BY PETER ZIVANOVIC**

I guess that one of the more enjoyable parts of the Editor's job is taking the stuff rained on him by distributors and sending it out to other members in return for a review. It always feels good giving presents but, more importantly, he should get a few pages of copy to help him fill the Journal.

Brian asked me to review the Ninco Pajero because he knew I had an interest in off-road slot-cars and that I could give it a good thrash on something other than black track. There were three flaws in this plan - four if you include my sending the final copy and photos three days late, after the first (smaller) version had already been typeset. Whoops! Sorry Brian.

In the first place, I don't have a permanent track set up nor ready access to one. Secondly, between agreeing to do the review and the car arriving, my mother in law died which (apart from anything else) rather knackered any opportunities to play with cars. But the biggest flaw is rather more basic.

As my old pal B.O.F. said (and I paraphrase) "You know, the thing about some of you guys that write for the Journal" (here he added a couple of names that I won't repeat) "is that you're all crap racers." Well B.O.F., this is a *collectors* club. Some members will never put their cars near a track and, of those that do race, some will be better than others. We enjoy racing some of our cars so just be thankful we're so useless, it makes you feel better that you have someone to beat. Since I was about to hand B.O.F. a chunky cheque, readers might also think that he could have served his own interests better if he had kept these thoughts to himself. Just wait, I may be a crap racer but I'm pretty good at nerfing and I have found some new (Clio) wheels that will make my "cheating

bastard" Pink Kar Ferrari GTO go even better.

Incidentally, the sobriquet B.O.F. comes from his constant banging on about the evil of magnets. I reckon it's just that he's too old to keep up with the faster speeds that magnets allow. And I can be as rude as I like about him here because one of his boasts is that a very large proportion of his collection of Newsletters and Journals is "Mint in Envelope".

Whatever else I might think about the old duffer, he is unfortunately right. I am not a good slot-car racer and so the results of any testing I have done on this car have to be seen in that light. Whatever I managed to do, it's a pound to a penny that many others (particularly those I race against) could do better. At least the performance of all the cars tested will have been subjected to the same abject level of skill in their driving.

### **On the (black) track**

From simple inspection of the car, it seems to be aimed at black track, rough track and track covered in small obstacles. It is likely that these last two challenges will be provided by Ninco's new raid track pack, which is not yet available in the UK.

I looked at the Pajero's performance on black track first. I had access to a Ninco circuit 26.7 metres (87' 8") long. This included 2 straights of 3.2 metres (10' 6") each and a variety of curves and shorter straights. It is fitted with Ninco Pole Position lap counter/timers. It was a 4-lane circuit and I used one of the inner lanes for all the timings. I have never timed any cars on this track so I took along a Clio (Speeder motor with Pro-Shock suspension) and Golf (NC2 motor with 4 wheel drive) to compare to the Pajero.

With the magnets still fitted, I ran all the cars for two minutes and noted the fastest lap time of each. I then removed the magnets and noted the fastest lap for each car during a three-minute run. I also took the opportunity to see how the Exin TT Buggy and Nissan Patrol compared on the same track. All the Ninco cars had sprung guides; the original red guide in the Golf was changed for the later grey guide so that it would register on the infra-red Pole Position sensors - doh! The TT cars were perfectly standard; they have never had magnets.

### Fastest Lap - seconds

Car	Magnet	
	With	Without
Ninco Mitsubishi Pajero	12.3	14.3
Ninco Renault Clio	10.2	12.2
Ninco Volkswagen Golf	10.7	12.7
Exin TT Buggy	N/A	14.7
Exin TT Nissan Patrol	N/A	15.2

The Pajero was noticeably quicker on the straight without its magnet but as expected, the overall lap time was longer. Spookily, the difference of 2 seconds was identical for all three cars. Others (B.O.F.) have reported that the Pajero tended to slide rather than roll like the TT cars but this was on a painted, copper track (the sort he likes - where magnets will never work). My experience on the rougher Ninco track was that with its heavily treaded tyres, the car would roll before it slid - with or without its magnet. The Pajero's lower motor made it much less prone to rolling than the TT cars. These would certainly roll at the slightest opportunity - of which I gave them many.

The big surprise to me was the Pajero's sluggishness compared with the other Ninco cars. For sure it is heavier (105 grams compared to 85 grams for the Clio and 90 grams for the Golf) and higher so I expected the Pajero to be slower when running without magnets. I had expected the rear mounted, rectangular magnet to improve performance over the central button magnet but it seems to make little difference. Compared to the Pajero without its magnet and

given their older motor, lower gearing and higher centre of gravity, the slightly lighter TT cars turned in fairly respectable times. I would have liked to try the Pajero with the stronger springs but sadly, I didn't have any to fit at the time I had access to the track.

Alan Slade reviewed the Clio in the July and August issues. At the risk of treading on his toes, I really liked it. It is one of the best cars I've driven straight out of the box - with or without its magnet. Its small wheels give it better handling, acceleration and braking. Presumably this would mean a lower top speed but on most tracks, this would never matter. Since its rear springs are almost completely compressed (!), its suspension is probably limited to the sort of extent that applies when racers loosen the body screws. How well this means it will perform on the rougher raid track we will have to wait and see ... and wait ... and wait ...

### On the rough stuff

The next test was to try the same cars (except the Golf) on Exin's bumpy, textured TT track. Briefly, this track system included ramp jump and elevated track (rope bridge) obstacles as well as concave and convex track pieces to build high, elevated sections or hills.

TT track is compatible with SCX and Scalextric Classic track so at home, our TT circuits also include green Scalextric track, particularly hump back bridges, which the TT cars go over nicely. Perhaps this test is unfair since the Ninco cars were not designed to go over this track but it is bumpy - and available.

Straight away, I could put the ramp jump and elevated track back into the box. The Pro-Arm is simply too short to allow the Pajero to get over these. I also wondered about the hump back bridge and concave and convex sections. A quick look showed that, with their magnets fitted, there was no chance of either Ninco car (with their low chassis) getting over either of these two types of convex track. I decided to try both cars without their magnets first to see whether they could get over these obstacles. ➡➡



*The Pajero got over the TT hill but not as quickly as the TT Nissan Patrol (rear)*

I assembled a circuit of about 11 metres. This was constrained by my living room and was essentially a long, bent oval. One metre was Ninco track so that I could use the power taps and Pole Position lap counter/timer again. Of the remaining 10 metres, around 35% was green track including a 180° chicane curve and a hump back bridge. The remainder was TT track including a hill and both standard and exterior curves. No borders or barriers were fitted.

In fact, the Pajero did not cope well with either the hump back bridge or TT hill. The best lap time I could get was 7.75 seconds compared to 6.60 and 6.46 respectively for the TT Nissan Patrol and Buggy. I didn't even bother to try the Clio on this layout.

I then replaced these two obstacles by flat track sections and ran all four cars.

#### **Fastest Lap - seconds**

Car	Magnet	
	With	Without
Ninco Mitsubishi Pajero	5.33	6.19
Ninco Renault Clio	4.73	6.50
Exin TT Buggy	N/A	5.90
Exin TT Nissan Patrol	N/A	6.16

Without magnets, the Pajero scored on speed and acceleration but the TT cars handled

better on the TT track so could hold their own (and then some) in terms of fastest lap time. It is fair to say though that the Pajero was easier to drive than the TT cars; I found it was much easier to keep it on the track. The Clio was a nightmare to drive on this surface without its magnet. This rather surprised me as I imagined that its suspension would handle the bumpier surface well. In fact, its small wheels were a distinct disadvantage on TT track. The larger tyres of the other three cars would ride over the tops of the bumps; the Clio's wheels were too small to do this. There was also a problem going between the green and TT tracks. The bumpy surface effectively raises the level of the TT track surface and this sudden change caused the Clio to de-slot regularly despite its suspension and sprung guide. With their magnets, the Ninco cars fairly streaked away but again, the Pajero could not keep up with the nimbler Clio.

#### **♪ Her name was Lolo ♪**

Until Ninco's new raid track arrives in the UK, that's the Pajero review done. From the sills upwards, Ninco have produced a well-made, well-detailed model. My main beef here is the poor representation of the drivers. This car was driven by a Japanese man, the companion car (50305) by a German lady. It would be asking a





***The Mitsubishi Pajero can handle this jump but the Ninco version can't!***

lot to expect to be able to recognise each driver in overalls and helmet (and not all ladies fill their cars as much as Lolo fills her Maserati) but in both cases we get a featureless male. At least the drivers' overalls are in the correct colours. The most encouraging thing is that, after all the spills my feeble efforts induced, both mirrors are still intact.

Below the sills any resemblance to an off-roader vanishes. The Pajero is a high vehicle so simple physics will limit how fast it can go around bends. Ninco have chosen to try to keep the model's speed up by setting the motor and magnet almost as low down as they would have been in a Le Mans car. This compromises its appearance badly but I guess they have judged that they will sell more cars by doing this. I would have preferred them to give the model more ground clearance at the expense of speed. After all, the Pajero is in a class of its own (the remove) on black track anyway.

As I said at the beginning of part 1, I'm a sucker for off-road slot-car systems. I am

interested in their complexity and variety and they offer different challenges to ordinary slot-car racing. The TT system gave us ramp jumps, elevated tracks and hills as well as cars capable of negotiating them. STS had all these obstacles as well as a ford, centre obstacle, see-saw, a chicane with mountains each side and the magnificent suspension bridge. STS also had small obstacles (looking like logs, barrels and sacks) that clipped into holes in the track.

The boulder obstacles that Ninco will be offering are probably equivalent to these but, since the Pro-Arm guide is so short, it seems unlikely that we will ever see the sort of variety that the earlier off-road systems offered. Whilst I find this a bit disappointing, I wish Ninco well with their raid system. It is certainly different and variety in our hobby is always welcome.

As ever, thanks are due to the Hobby Company for supplying the car for review. Finally, a shameless plug. If anyone is interested, you can find "The Anoraks' Guide to sts 4x4" on my web site: [www.zcarslotracing.co.uk](http://www.zcarslotracing.co.uk). ■