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THE INDEPENDENT CLUB FOR SLOT-CAR ENTHUSIASTS

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Stolen Thunder

Slot-cars seem to be popping up everywhere these days and Rockingham Motor Speedway has added it to the list of attractions. As if pop concerts and fairground rides were not enough distraction from the motor racing!

On a recent visit I discovered a large commercial eight lane Ninco circuit pulling in the punters. Hornby would seem to have missed an opportunity here - with 40,000 plus customers and their own Ben Collins in attendance, not to mention ASCARs to promote, a visit by the Scalextric Roadshow would probably have been a good idea.

The circuit itself was very good - pity the same could not be said of the organisation. I will spare the blushes of the firm running it by allowing them to remain anonymous but the cars were a complete dog's breakfast (Puntos running against CLK Mercs!); there were not enough marshals and they really weren't very good at their job. Also, at £2 for three laps, it wasn't exactly value for money.

As you have no doubt guessed, I joined the queue and had a go - did your editor streak away from the field? Not as such! I deliberately held back at the start and waited for the inevitable first corner crash; picked my way through the debris and led the first lap by a mile. Halfway round the second lap my elderly Punto ground to a halt and, by the time a marshal had coaxed it back into life, was relegated to the back of the field. I eventually finished fourth - middle order man that's me.

However, in spite of its limitations, the circuit was extremely busy all day - it really is amazing how popular these little toy cars are. No wonder we are in the middle of a slot-car boom. Long may it continue.

And Finally - Prior to having a go myself I was standing at the side of the track when two cars came off in front of me. Without thinking, I had them both back in their slots before the marshal had even moved. I might be a crap racer but I know how to look after a corner!

Till next month

Brian





This month has a very two wheeled theme as the MotoGP bikes have been released. The first ones are three Hondas and a Ducati:

- | | |
|-------|------------------------|
| C6000 | Honda Valentino Rossi |
| C6001 | Honda Max Biaggi |
| C6003 | Honda Sete Gibernau |
| C6008 | Ducati Loris Capirossi |



There is no doubt that they are beautifully produced with a wealth of detail. The larger scale and the liberal use of etched metal parts will surely make these desirable amongst the collectors of static bike models. Performance in a straight line is phenomenal but cornering is an art. Of course, this is like a real bike and you can't expect them to handle as well as the new Lister. Apparently they handle quite well on smooth Sport track but are a little unpredictable on bumpier circuits. Never ones to rest on their laurels, Hornby have an on-going product development team and they are keen to get your feedback and ideas on how to make the bikes even better in the future.

The rest of the range will follow during the year but should include the following items:

- C6002 Makoto Tamada (Jpn) Honda Camel Pramac 2004
- C6004 Alex Barros (Bra) Honda Repsol 2004
- C6005 Valentino Rossi (It) Yamaha Gauloise 2004
- C6006 Carlos Checa (Esp) Yamaha Fortuna 2004
- C6007 Colin Edwards (USA) Honda Telefonica Movistar 2004
- C6009 Troy Bayliss (Aus) Ducati Marlboro 2004
- C6010 Shane Byrne (UK) Aprilia Grand Prix 2004
- C6011 Jeremy McWilliams (UK) Aprilia Grand Prix 2004
- C6012 Neil Hodgson (UK) Ducati Team D'Antin 2004
- C6013 Ruben Xaus (Esp) Ducati Team D'Antin 2004
- C6014 John Hopkins (USA) Suzuki Grand Prix 2004 (will be available in 2005)
- C6015 Kenny Roberts (USA) Suzuki Grand Prix 2004 (will be available in 2005)
- C6016 Nicky Hayden (USA) Repsol Honda 2004
- C6017 Marco Melandri (It) Yamaha Fortuna 2004

Coming Soon

It's not often that there are *no* new cars to report this month but that is the case this time. However, our friends in Margate are not idle and there are lots of new items to look forward to. =>

Collectors Centre Car

The Collectors Centre car for this year is C2568, a Mercedes CLK DTM car in a blue livery. Keep your eyes open for this one reaching your nearest Collectors Centre. Estimates of when the release date will be are varying widely.

Maserati and Vanwall

The Maserati and Vanwall historic F1 cars will be released soon. They represent the cars raced by Fangio and Moss at Nurburgring in 1957. Fangio won and Moss was 8th.

The interior detail is indeed fabulous. The suspension has loads of detail and the skinny tyres have the correct profile of a Dunlop racing tyre. The cars have wire wheels with different spinners on each car – triple on the Maserati and double on the Vanwall. There is a shroud around the new guide painted matt black to be as inconspicuous as possible.

Although there are standard and Sport versions (suffix A as usual) they will all be in Crystal cases. The sleeves differ and the Sport sleeves are in a Goodwood style. The standard versions should arrive in August and the Sport versions in September in time for the Goodwood Revival race meeting.

Maserati

The modern Maserati GT car has reached the resin phase and a sprayed mock-up has been approved by Maserati. Teams represented may change from those shown in the catalogue.

Corvette

C2575, the road specification Corvette is white with a pale blue stripe. The Scalextric version models a standard road car with all the race tuned add-ons available at the time. It was developed by Chevrolet but never sold. There are lots of new details such as the tiny Chevrolet flag badge printed on the filler cap. It is a hardtop with lights down and the new driver figure has no helmet.

Starsky and Hutch

There are two versions of the Starsky and Hutch Ford Torino available in four different ways.

Firstly we have C2553 in standard form in a crystal case. Then we have C2553A, the Sport version available in a presentation case with C2602A, a black Corvette hardtop with lights and flames on the side and bonnet. This set is in the same box as last year's Goodwood GT40 trio, obviously decorated as Starsky and Hutch. Then we have C2553W, the same specification as the standard car but in both the normal set and a special Marks and Spencer set. The black Corvette in the sets is C2602W

Mustang

C2574 is the Mustang street car. It features new wheels and wing mirrors and, of course, the louvred rear screen. This version should also be available soon.

Porsche Boxster and Audi TT

These low cost new releases feature some new packaging. Like the MotoGP bikes the box is all cardboard with a stiff cellophane window. It is primarily purple with the yellow and black flash.

Williams F1

Set C1139 Formula One X4 contains a unique Williams F1 car. This is as described in the catalogue as C2583 – last year's car with the 2004 livery. As the number C2583 has been re-allocated to the 2004 Williams this car is C2616W. As this is one of the most expensive sets this car is going to be quite hard to find.

Kits

The first of this year's Hornby kits have started to arrive. They are available with and without paint (suffix A). A version of the GT40 is being sold through Marks and Spencer. With paint it is reference K2006. Although the kit is no different from the general release it is in different packaging. The full range will be:

K2006 M&S GT40

K2007 standard GT40

K2008 Mercedes CLK

K2009 Corvette

K2010 TVR

K2011 Mini

K2012 Caterham

Catalogues

There is a Superslot catalogue for 2004 only available in Spain. Similar in style to last year's catalogue it is landscape in format. It shows photos of the new DTM Opel Vectra cars to be released in the fourth quarter.

Whilst on the subject of Spain, Sport specification cars are unusual out there. It would seem that the MG Lola and Toyota F1 cars were released as Superslot Sport in the blue boxes but this practice was discontinued. Some standard H reference cars were then released with sport specification axles and bearings but this has stopped too and now no Sport cars are available in the Superslot range. However the converse is true. H2578 is the standard crystal case version of the GT40 released in the UK as C2578A – Sport version only. Hornby currently have no plans to release a standard Scalextric version.

Australian V8s

Surprisingly there are four new Australian only release V8s due during August and September. These are:

Castrol #11 VY Holden Commodore

Pirtek #1 BA Ford Falcon

Caltex #9 BA Ford Falcon

CAT #6 BA Ford Falcon

Pictures can be found on several sites including Jim Berry's Armchair Racer. The Caterpillar livery on the Ford Falcon looks especially good. Although they are described as having the A suffix I don't know if this means a Sport specification and packaging or not.

Dallara Indy Car

Finally news has just arrived of C8302 with pit crew in silver and a Scalextric Sport liveried Dallara Indy Car. The crew are in silver with yellow helmets and the car appears to be silver and black. ■

Traders travels

By Robert Learmouth
(Westwood Models)

The last month has been a busy one for swapmeets. In particular, not one, but two events within the space of three weeks in Madrid.

The first event in late May was a new one and based in an out of town shopping arcade. The event certainly got off to a bang, literally. While waiting outside for the doors to be opened, an 8'x4' plate-glass, steel-framed panel collapsed and fell on a frightened senseless Spaniard. Fortunately he'd seen it fall and managed to get his arm up to protect his head, otherwise this could have been very messy! There was certainly plenty of people in the event itself though how many were genuinely buying was difficult to tell as shoppers were freely mingling. The event was biased towards new cars and price-cutting is just as frightening in Spain as it is in the UK.

The second event in mid-June, by contrast, is more vintage biased. This one is held in the quaint English Church in the very smart Salamanca district of central Madrid. Steve Cannon and myself bought woefully too much stuff there.

Following the first event it was a mad dash back home for Liphook the following day. The day's highlight was Phil Smith's collapsing auction which attracted fanatical interest. For those of you who don't know how this works - there is one price for all cars on the table and the price drops by £5 every half an hour. With the price set to drop to £5 at the end of the event the majority of people in the hall gathered round the table waiting for Phil to give the word. As the lights turned green 20 pairs of arms descended on the table with several people losing their balance in the frenzy and nearly sending the whole table and contents onto the floor! This spectacle was only topped by the look of horror on Phil's face who sensibly jumped several feet backwards to avoid injury!

Ebay

Prices on eBay continue to be subdued. At the peak of interest there were around 5000 Scalextric auctions running at any one time. This is down to 2500-3000 these days. And various people have related how they are 'jacking it in' as sellers. But, if you analyse it carefully, prices are just experiencing an adjustment back to the more sensible level they once sat on. Five years ago, pre eBay, a black C52 Escort was worth £15. It was only supply and demand on eBay which drove prices up to circa £40. Now they are back down to that same £15 level.

MotoGP

The eagerly awaited Scalextric motorbikes have arrived this month. I don't think any Scalextric release has ever received such polarised views before. Opinions range from scathing to appreciating the bikes as a good bit of fun. Certainly I don't see any point comparing these things to cars. Apart from having the enormous advantage of inbuilt stability, cars have also had over 40 years of evolution! And didn't we all love Scalextric that little bit more when they made hopeless but strangely charming cars in the 'good old days'? It's all part of the product!

Striped Tomato

Much less likely to attract criticism is the very attractive Starsky and Hutch two car set which has just arrived. As ever, not the best of timing when the movie finished its run at the cinema several months ago but I'd be surprised if this didn't turn out to be a good seller for Hornby. In fact it's been a busy month with the new pit figures arriving too. Gee I'm gonna miss the old guys but Hornby certainly had their money's worth out of the mould! ■

BITS AND PIECES

NSCC Race Championship Update

Several clubs have already started their mini championship; news reaches me that Scale Models club are approximately half way through their first rounds and the racing is close!

Farnham Scalextric Association has also just started their first mini championship using the MG Vanquish, Ninco and Carrera cars in their second league. I will be competing in this one but my results will not count as I can't enter!

Don't forget to keep us up to date with your club's activities so we can promote it in the Journal. Just eight months to go now before your heats need to be completed!

Gareth Jex

Ebay lunacy

A few weeks ago I saw an eBay item headed 'Scalextric Caravan Racing!' There was a picture of a section of track with two Scalextric new Beetles, each towing one of those somewhat less than 1/32nd scale 'Made in China' four wheeled plastic caravans you can buy complete with tow car for £2.99 in Milton Keynes market.

The narrative said it was just the caravans; cars and track for display purposes only and something to the effect of 'buy now as the seller might not manage to get any more of such an, implied, rare commodity'. The bidding was up to about 12 quid! I have resisted the urge to buy up MK market man's stock and make a killing.

I also saw two standard curves, in 'good condition', with about half an hour to go. There was a photo of two of the most disreputable bits of track you've ever seen: rusty metal rails with sort of mildewy white track surface either side where someone had long ago tried to clean off the rust, probably with a Brillo pad. There had been two bids and the current price was £0.01. So what was the first bid and who was barmy enough to be prepared to pay the postage, oddly stated as £1.01. Strange times.

Bill Grigg

Maintenance?

Sticker found on bottom of Ford Taurus box - "If the electric motor in the car becomes jammed, remove the car from the track and let it cool down. Do not touch the motor casing."

Does it then become "unjammed" when it cools down? Strange!

Graham Smith

Advert time

Newspaper adverts really don't scan very well but you should be able to get the gist of this one. Spotted in the Sunday Mail by *Dave Smith*.

Did Mercedes pay a fee to use the Scalextric brand name I wonder.

Ebay watch.....

By Tony Frewin

Highlight of the past month for me was a mega rare mint boxed V3 Bentley set with green/black cars (but listed as GP33?)....as a collector of everything Scalextric Bentley, I had high hopes of getting my mitts on this rarest of sets,that is until the price went up and up and out of my limit, eventually topping out at a giddy £906.

I say highlight for me because I'm sure there are rarities popping up on local ebay sites around the world; as I said last month if you find anything unusual please let me know on tony_frewin@hotmail.com (an underscore, not space, after Tony)

Other highlights last month included the obligatory James Bond set in only goodish condition making £1201 and a totally empty James Bond set box, in VG+ condition, fetching £387.....The SCX TT range of Buggys, Peugeots and Nissan Patrol 4x4s continue to prove a good investment for those lucky enough to have them gathering dust, fetching £50-£75 for MB, and occasionally over £100 with enough bidders.

A word of warning, take care that items are described correctly; I've recently seen a 'MB' red vintage Alfa Romeo..... with sidelight and radiator mascot obviously missing in the photo and a white Mercedes dressed up in James Bond repro parts described as.... a 'James Bond Merc'.....

Here's a selection of Ebay sale results from the last month. Next month I'll focus on some sales results of slot-car makers other than Scalextric.

C92 Porsche R/T white. Near mint	£117
C65 Alfa yellow	VG £416
SCX Tyrrell 6 wheel 'vintage'	MB £132
C53 Datsun blue	VGB £30
GP33 Bentley set	MB £906
C64 Bentley black	VGB £156
C57 Aston DBR red	VGB £59
C59 BRM red	VGB £52

NSCC club grey Datsun inc decals M	£75
C405 BMW M1 silver	MB £86
C347 BMW M1 black	MB £40
C84 Triumph TR4	fair £83
C83 Sunbeam Tiger	v/poor! £85
SCX TT Peugeot 405 blue	MB £73
SCX TT Buggy white	MB £54
C2534 GT40 German L/E	MB £52
C9 Ferrari red	VG to MB £55
C61 Porsche spyder yellow	VGB £63
C22 Porsche 917	VGB £23
007 James Bond Set	G to VG £1201
007 James Bond Set empty box only	VG £387
C2317 Porsche 2000 range pres	MB £125
C2413 Camaro 'Bob Jane' Aussie	MB £36

Happy Ebaying!!!!





Sir,

Thanks for the Christmas competition prize!

Yes, I know it seems a trifle late but it only arrived today, 26th May. Having not received the April issue (the first one to go walkies since I joined the club) I contacted Bob Bott and a replacement arrived two days before the May edition.

Reading Rod Moore's letter reminded me that I was on the list of winners so I phoned Brian and was told that he had posted my parcel in early April. I will leave it to him to elaborate on the subsequent fiasco.

(It's a long story - suffice to say that Graham's recorded delivery parcel had enjoyed a month long stay in his local post office and on its return to King's Lynn our wonderful Royal Mail wanted to charge me £6 for the return of my own property! The words 'arse', 'up' and 'stuff' were mentioned.)

Anyway, I now have two posters, a shelf edge piece, two balloons, the largest Scalextric sticker I have ever seen - oh, and an SCX Sigma.

Thanks again,
I am, yours etc,
Graham Smith (yes he!)

.....
Sir,
Thank you for the Christmas competition prize. I especially liked the "lucky dip" in the packing peanuts to see what other point of sale goodies you'd enclosed. I only entered in the dying hours of the competition so it goes to show it is worth doing.

I am, yours etc,
Dave Smith

Dear NSCC

Sir,

I thought the membership might like to hear about a recent bootfair find - a 1965 publication entitled 'Simple Electric Car Racing' by Vic Smeed.

The author was by all accounts a leading light in 'Model Maker' magazine through the fifties and sixties. Here he charts the emergence of slot racing out of 'the slot v. rail argument which raged through 1959 and '60' and goes on to provide a mass of technical information and guidance for the pioneer self build slot racer.

Best of all though, viewed from 2004, this little book affords a charming snapshot of 'slot culture' as at 1965. There are plenty of (b/w) photographs showing period cars (and haircuts), formica chassis, and a guy called Alex Gee hard at work constructing the Clarendon Circuit from timber whilst wearing what looks like a pin stripe suit!

There are also some fascinating shots of the finished product - does anyone out there recall racing on that I wonder? What's more Mr Smeed's delivery is wonderfully deadpan, and I quote, "Experiments with moving the pivot point (of the guide) well ahead of the axle produced a car which held the road well, but when it did break away it did so in a big way, with no chance of recovery." Ah, perhaps slot racing hasn't changed so much after all!

I am, yours etc.
Phil Lanham

Sir,

Following our success at running the British round of the Grand Prix European Series 2004 at St Margarets (near Dover), we have now opened the track in Tottenham (North London) to be raced on twice a week.

It is a six lane Sport track, about 200 foot long, all computer controlled. We currently run on a Monday and Thursday night, from about 7pm, racing starting at 8pm. We run two rounds a night from the normal classes i.e. F1/Indycars, Sportscars, Touring cars and Rally. We are also hoping to race Muscle cars and other classes.

The track is set up for normal three pin controllers. We are looking for new club members of all abilities; we have some very talented drivers, including the current European champion and a past European champion, who will assist you if you have any problems. The track is also available for corporate hire.

There is the possibility of an endurance event on August 15th. If you are interested, please contact Ian Newstead on 0208 808 4350 or mobile- 07939482183. We look forward to hearing from you.

I am, yours etc,
Graham Eldridge

.....
Sir,

I enjoyed reading Tony Secchi's informative article on building Dave Yerbury's Ferrari 330P but, adverts on a 1962 Le Mans car? Those contemporary gentlemen of the FIA who are no longer with us must be spinning in their graves!

I am, yours etc,
Bill Grigg

.....
Sir,

Having received my competition prizes all I've got to say is that you have spoilt me. The chequered flag is huge and so is the Scalextric sticker. Everything I needed to decorate my track room - once the new house is built, erm!

I am, yours etc,
Pierre Collange

Sir,

Since Hornby announced the arrival of the GP bikes earlier this year, the talk amongst the members of Jersey Slot Club had been that they hoped that they wouldn't be another of Hornby's silly gimmicks that failed miserably.

Sadly, our fears have been realised. The bikes are nice display models but complete 'pants' on the track and collectors are being asked to consider buying a load more later in the year - not a chance from my perspective.

After a few years of making great strides in the quality of car production, we were obviously due a few daft ideas from Margate, so MotoGP, plus Digital appear to be it for 2004. The digital system appears to be no more than an expensive miniature fairground dodgem ride with resulting pile ups and damage to the cars. Plus, Sport World.....please! Surely the whole point of our hobby is the communal aspect of meeting with others to race and share our enthusiasm. The thought of connecting to the Internet to race against a remote foe is simply bizarre.

Sorry to rant, but I feel that to expect enthusiasts to pay out for expensive system upgrades for Digital is simply too much. As for the SCX proposals, are we really going to pay for a complete new system with no compatibility with existing kit? I know some will, but it'll be interesting to see how quickly the stuff ends up on eBay afterwards. As the saying goes, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'. Hornby/SCX, please take note.

I am, yours etc,
Richard Painter

Everyone is entitled to a rant now and then but I do wish contributors would avoid vague generalisations - Hornby would be much more inclined to listen if you explained exactly why you think the bikes are 'pants'.

Personally I think they should be congratulated on their current development programme - not everything will be commercially successful but at least they are trying to explore the boundaries of slot racing.

From Peter Solari

The second race-liveried Porsche 934 is released this month, modelled on the 1976 Porsche Cup Champion car of Frenchman Bob Wollek (50331). Sponsored by Europe's leading heating technology company - Vaillant - Monsieur Wollek finished the majority of his races in the top three positions, amassing a total of 258 points that season. He has since won the Porsche Cup a further six times.



The Ninco car is beautifully finished with a high gloss lacquer over the sponsor's green body colour and logos. As with the previous 934, black rubber bumper inserts are fitted back and front. The chassis is fitted with all round "ProShock" suspension and the powerful NC-5 "Speeder" motor. The chrome and gold BBS hubs are now available as spares (80713) and really add to the superb appearance of this race car.



New body

The latest addition to the CART/Champ Car series is the Reynard-Toyota (50340). During 2000, the No.96 "Telefonica" car was piloted by Oriol Servia who finished runner-up in the "Rookie of the Year" awards. It was the same season that Oriol recorded his first podium finish, beating the likes of Fittipaldi, Montoya, Andretti and Blundell. Ninco have produced this totally new car to compete alongside the three Lola-Fords produced last year. Key features include front wheel 'steering' and new NC-5 motor. Wide slick tyres provide good grip and smooth handling.



"Unbeatable"

Following on from last month's scoop, the first official picture of the new ProRace Mercedes CLK GTR (50339) has been released. The car is produced in plain silver with only a race number and 'Mercedes-Benz CLK' printed on the bodywork. The GTR is one of my personal favourites... with its wide, low stance, it just appears to hug the track whether it's moving or not! The ProRace specification aims to improve on an already popular choice of GT car for racing. The hardened axles will be held in the chassis via ball-race bearings to give smooth =>



transition of power from the NC-6 “Crusher” motor (80611) which is also now available as a spare part. It is fitted with a 24-tooth crown gear in place of the standard 27-tooth and body-roll can be accurately adjusted with the new metric screws. With such a high specification, it will be interesting to see how it compares with other makes straight out of the box. Unbeatable? Watch this space...



Ups and Downs

The latest track extension from Ninco is the Dune Kit (10506). This is an off-road track that can have extra mud and stone obstacles clipped to its surface. It is fully compatible with standard track and is supplied with two “transition” straights to gently blend from black to brown. The convex and concave track sections can be joined together to make a number of different combinations of climbs or drops. The design makes it easy to add that 3rd dimension to your circuit - definitely more fun and a lot more versatile than a bridge!

Special Offer for Collectors

As mentioned in last month’s journal, Ninco are offering a limited number of their Club Car to NSCC members at a reduced price. To take advantage of this, contact me by email at PTSolari@aol.com or drop me a line via our editor (address on page 1). ■

NINCO *track test*

**Venue: Silver Hatch Circuit,
Southern England
Driver: Ken Elston**

**Vehicles: BMW M3 GTR
'Amplex Racing'
BMW M3 GTR 'Euro GT'**

Silver Hatch circuit in the south of England hosted a series of official NSCC test days in May 2004. The purpose of the event was to evaluate the latest BMW M3s to be released by Ninco. Specifically the differences (if any) in the performances of the two types of motor used.

Heritage

The programme notes had this to say on the car and drivers on which the models being tested were based: Amplex Racing ran the car in the Japanese Touring Car Championship in 2002 for renowned Asian tin top racers Kwan and Hashimoto. The car was never what could be termed a front runner, however it did finish a credible 7th in the Suzuka 1000k.

Hans Aubam competed in the 2002 Euro GT championship driving the BMW M3 GTR, the highlight of which was a class win in the last round at Zandvoort.

Presentation + Technical Specification

BMW M3 GTR 'Amplex Racing'

Although mainly black the white striping and the bright yellow and white paint used for the decals come together to good effect as you can see from the picture below. I have no idea if the driver's helmet in reality is solid red but somehow I doubt it. The rear spoiler is pretty solid on both models so I would expect it to be able to cope with a few spills and thrills. ⇒



BMW M3 GTR 'Euro GT'

This model wins by a country mile. The white bodywork, white stars on a red roof and the blue wheel arches and skirts make a striking first impression as it became my favourite before it even left the box.

The printing is very clear and has good definition, something we can now take for granted in the slot-car world. As with the "Amprex" model I have no idea if the driver's helmet in reality is solid blue.



Here is the technical specification for the cars:

Length	142.9 cm
Width	59.8 cm
Height	42.3 cm
Weight	94.1 gr
Magnet	8x5 Cylindrical "MS" (1.500 gm)
Guide	With suspension spring
Motor	"Amprex" NC-5 (20,000 rpm) "Euro GT" NC-2 (18,100 rpm)

Track Test

The Silver Hatch circuit consists of 3 long straights, an elevated section and a twisty infield piece to complete the lap. A good test of the cars' all round drive-ability.

Each run consisted of 12 laps on each of the 4 lanes and the average time calculated.

BMW M3 GTR 'Amprex Racing'

Here are the results of run 1.

Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4
8.84	8.84	8.63	8.79
Average 8.775			

After sanding the tyres and cleaning the braids the car was ready for its second run.

Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4
8.85	8.73	8.51	8.84
Average 8.7325			

As can be seen there was no appreciable difference.

So what conclusions can be drawn from these figures? Firstly, the middle two lanes have produced the fastest times which is the norm however 0.3 seconds over a near 9 second lap is hardly a big difference; therefore the car's performance is unaffected by tight cornering! A tribute to the strength of the magnet I think.

BMW M3 GTR 'Euro GT'

Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4
8.84	8.68	8.52	8.79
Average 8.704			

After sanding the tyres and cleaning the braids the car was ready for its second run.

Lane 1	Lane 2	Lane 3	Lane 4
8.68	8.57	8.68	8.96
Average 8.725			

Conclusion

Despite the additional revs the NC-5 motor made no appreciable difference to the performance of the Amprex car. The longest straight on the test track is 2.8 metres (8 x standard straight); therefore a longer straight may produce better figures.

In terms of the finished product I think these are two really fine racing models. Both would be a worthy addition to any collection.

Well done Ninco. ■



Ford Mustang "Vintage" 61480

By Gareth Jex



This is the 13th in the Vintage series and once again TecniToys have dusted down an old Exin mould, cleaned it up and reproduced a classic 1970's slot-car. Now at this point I must come clean! TecniToys send me every new SCX car to review and I pass these onto NSCC members to play with and write a few words for Brian, but each year, well, I keep the Vintage car! I just think the whole idea is a sound one and I love old Exin models, whenever you compare them to their competitors of the day they are just so much better! Why other manufacturers don't look out for some of their older moulds I don't know.

Back to the car in question. More or less this is an exact remould of the original Exin ref 4049 that was first released in 1974 in yellow, white, violet, pale and dark red. The 1974 version came in two liveries "Thunderchief" and "The Winder Drag", it was also released in Mexico (with the same number) in silver, yellow, red, pale red, blue and white. In all a basic 22 to collect – I have not seen them all!

This new version in many ways improves the original, the moulding looks cleaner and more crisp probably due to the tampo printing in silver of some of the finer details like the window frames and vents etc; the originals were left in the body colour. Whilst talking about the tampo printing it's worth pointing out that the overall colour is a metallic maroon with yellow flame design and "Hot Rod" graphics, everything is tampo printed unlike the original stickers. The model displayed at the toy fair (see NSCC Journal March) had very crude mock up yellow sticker flames and until I saw the car in the flesh I wasn't 100% sure that it would be tampo printed, but thankfully it is and it's up to the normal SCX high standards.

The engine and exhaust pipes are chrome plated and the ends of the pipe and the rocker covers have been painted metallic red. Wheels differ slightly from the original all chrome to chrome trims and black wheels.

Turning the car upside down reveals the classic RX-1 motor, screw in guide flag and black chassis. The chassis (as most, but not all Vintage releases) is stamped with your individual number (in my case 600) this corresponds to the limited edition number printed in the booklet that comes in the box. This years run is 4500 number in SCX with more being produced in the Spanish version (probably 4500 also).



The booklet gives a very detailed history of Ford Mustangs, Lee Iacocca and a write up on Hot Rods along with technical details of the real cars and a brief history of the original Exin model.

How does it go? – well I did actually put it on the track, let's just say it goes! I was never going to thrash it round the track and I don't think many of you will either, but if you do, I would recommend a good running in and oiling! Overall another great collector piece to go in the cabinet and will sit very nicely with last year's Corvette! ■

Several new liveries this month and a few collectors items worth looking out for. First up is a new SCX boxed set called **“X-Treme Rally”**- a simple figure of eight track with two cars. Mitsubishi Lancer EVO V11 ‘SCX’ and Seat Cordoba ‘Auriol’.

Now there aren’t that many Tecnitoy’s cars that come with SCX printed on the sides and this is an SCX version of the Spanish ref 61600. The bad news is that this set will not be available to the UK due to licensing agreements.

Next are two re-liveries:

**Citroen Xsara WRC ‘Sucecia’
Ref 61510**

Modelled on the car driven by Carlos Sainz in the Rally of Sweden (where he finished 5th), this model is finished mainly in red with OZ wheels, 4 wheel drive with an RX81 motor plus all the normal SCX features. The SCX Citroen Xsara is one of the best 4x4 rally cars in competition and is also eligible for the NSCC Championship.



**Minardi F1 “Melbourne”
Ref 61520**

Based on Italian Gianmaria Bruni’s number 20 entry in this years Australian GP. Overall in black with white side pods and ‘Willux’ graphics. An unusual choice for SCX this one, Bruni is no doubt a good driver (see his results in F3000) but he is having a tough time this year, 6 retirements in 9 races, best position 14th! But who knows - his team mate scored in the USA GP so there is hope! The SCX model comes with steering front wheels, RX-F1 (RX-41) motor and adjustable/removable magnet.

Both of the above models should be on sale now.

Out in Spain only this month are several new boxed sets and one brand new car with a new motor! The Seat Cupra GT comes with an RX-42 motor. Unfortunately I can’t print a picture and could not get hold of a car to play with in time for this month’s journal, but it looks great!

I have also received notification that the SCX 61660 Citroen C2 and the Mitsubishi Lancer SCX 61630 will not be released this year and have been rescheduled for some time in 2005.

Ladies - start your engines

By Annette Goodman

In reply to Brian's editorial in the May issue re 'ladies' and slot-cars, I thought it might be interesting to explain exactly how I ended up with more than a passing interest in our 'four wheeled friends'. For those that know me, please stop laughing at the term 'lady'!

In my younger days I'd always been more interested in 'boys toys' rather than dolls, they were much more enjoyable and actually did something. Whether this was because I spent a lot of time with my father, an engineer who liked to tinker, I don't know. One of the earliest Christmases I remember was when I received a Hornby train set in a big blue box. I must have been about four or five then. Admittedly this was probably as much to do with Dad wanting one as me, but I was thrilled with it and would get the track out as often as possible. As I was brought up with the understanding 'if you break it, you won't get another one', I still have the original train and carriages to this day, admittedly well worn but working! Dad would spend hours servicing the trains with me watching. I can remember being taken to Model World at the Brighton Centre, and to other events such as bus depot open days and the various vintage vehicle rallies that we have in Brighton. Sadly Dad died when I was 9, and such pastimes fell by the wayside, but I think the seeds had been well and truly sown by then.

Fast forward to 1999 – I'd just started going out with Tony Fishlock, a Computer Engineer, who, unsurprisingly, also liked to tinker. One summer's day, in what must have been a real fit of boredom, we visited Toy-R-U's. Both of us had mentioned that we'd always wanted a Scalextric layout when young, but neither set of parents had been able to afford one. It was then we ended up making our first joint purchase as a couple – a £55 Rally Racing set. This was a big decision for us – what if we split up? Would one buy the other out? Would we take a car each? Would we have to sell and split the profit?

Decisions decisions! Luckily we never did have to reach a compromise on that one, as we're still together today.

Shortly after this first purchase, we revisited my old haunt of Model World, and as well as bringing back fond memories, we also brought back a pair of cheap Fiestas. The rest, as they say, is history!

We now have a house which, I think it's fair to say, is full of Scalextric. Three display cabinets, countless sets, track as far as the eye can see, and I've no idea how many cars! We found it was a hobby that rapidly grew on us, that we could both enjoy. From searching out bargains at boot fairs, to restoring grotty old cars from the local tip, we've spent many an afternoon with the lounge floor covered in spares boxes! While Tony deals with the wiring (I have tried the odd bit of soldering, but I usually end up burning my hair, fingers or both!), I'm in my element cleaning up old cars, then hunting round trying to find all the parts I need to bring the cars up to scratch. I can often be found at swapmeets, spares list in hand, rooting around in boxes under desks looking for that elusive bit of chrome or spoiler. I think half the enjoyment comes from making something from nothing.

We're not really racers, though both Tony and I enjoy the odd run round the floor, especially when we have friends over. Our real interest is collecting and restoring, and while Tony loves all the old 1960's stuff, I go for the more quirky releases; yes, even those turtles are fun after a couple of glasses of wine! I think my favourite at the moment though must be our black Bentley. We acquired this car in quite poor condition, and between us have almost restored it to its former glory (I'm still waiting on an exhaust!) and it looks stunning.

So is it all plain sailing? Of course not! I do get annoyed when I open what used to be the Hoover cupboard, only to have 20 boxes fall out on my head (yes, ok, some might be mine but ...!), and I've given up trying to move or →

vacuum round track now – if it's down I'll just Hoover over it! But I also think that having the cars on display round the house is much more interesting, and definitely more fun, than little china figurines!

People often ask me if I get annoyed with all the cars and the money spent on them. The answer is 'no' (it'd have to be, as I'm probably as bad as Tony at buying cars!). The way I see it there are worse hobbies to have – I'd much rather Tony buy a new car than drink or smoke his money away. I see the cars as a good investment (if we ever do have to make that

decision, I'll be rich!), as well as good fun and a great talking point in the lounge. We've also met some wonderful people through this hobby, and I'm glad I can join in with their conversations, usually at the same level, though I don't know my 'C' numbers off by heart!

And finally, as a postscript to the above – has the NSCC thought about couples membership? I'm not sure of the demand as there weren't many of us on the NSCC weekend last year, but I'd like to be able to contribute 'in my own right', but feel it would be a waste for us to receive two copies of the journal, good a read as it is! ■



Norman's conquest – revisited

Norman Griffiths, who oversaw production at Havant from 1964-1971, recalls the developments – some good, some bad – that took place across the 60s Scalextric range.

Paul Strange reports

Part 6: gimmicks, innovations and the Johnson blue can motor

From the E1 lighted Lister Jaguar of 1961 to the You Steer cars of the early-70s and the Wild 360 Porsche 962s of the mid-90s, Scalextric has always relied on innovation and gimmickry to increase sales.

The mid-60s was a vintage period for this – a glance at the 1967 catalogue reveals a mix of conventional models (such as the C68 Aston Martin), the unconventional (the C76 front-wheel drive Mini), a touch of innovation (the race-tuned series of cars with the advanced A/262 hand throttle), and the innovative verging on gimmicky (the much sought-after James Bond 007 set).

Norman Griffiths, Scalextric's general manager between 1964 and 1971, flips through the eighth catalogue and smiles broadly. "I remember these," he says, as we continue our chat at his home in Broadstairs, Kent. He points at a picture of the Set 45, with two C76 Minis going hammer and tongs at each other. "Terrible things those front-wheel drive Minis! Always overheating." He turns on a few pages. "And that James Bond set . . . the snag with it was that it was made for banging around, so I can understand why few sets would still exist today. You see you had your bread-and-butter lines, which were going to bring in money all the time, and then you had to have some innovation, which bore another set of interests. And that's always been the case with Scalextric."

I ask him where gimmicks and innovations – such as the James Bond set and the race-tuned series of cars – originated and how they were brought into production.

"We had a man in charge of development," he says. "Bill Langley was a genius at the shape of things. Often someone would come in with a good idea and Bill and his team would fully develop it. When an item was going to be marketed, there would be a meeting of all the relevant people involved. Bill Langley would be there, I'd be there because I was overseeing production and had done all the tooling in the old days, the directors would be there, plus the sales team giving us forecasts of how many they could sell. Remember that the biggest sales on Scalextric sets at this time were to mail order – they were very big customers indeed. It was incidental that Hamleys, Gamages and other toy shops were taking Scalextric. The main money was in the mail-order house.

"During the meetings, decisions would be taken over whether a particular car would sell, what volume it would be and if it would go into a set. From then onwards we'd take it up. I'd be given a budget, the sales people would tell me how many they could sell. Say it was 100,000. I've got to lay on production then and the tooling department have got to be capable of producing the number of items."

When a new project was mooted by management, invariably two or three teams seemed to work on it simultaneously. "There was an awful duplication of effort," says Norman. "The top brass would decide that they wanted a new Mini. We would make a scale model. So would Development. Someone up at Meccano in Liverpool would also make one. At least three teams would make a Mini! Now you only need one model and it seemed so silly that the group wasted money on these sort of things." ⇨⇨

Once new models emerged as prototypes, they were put through their paces by using local children as test drivers. “We’d arrange for a local school or anywhere where kids congregated. You’d let them have a bit of a layout and let them run the cars to death! There seemed to be a feeling at Lines Brothers that children were the users, so therefore they made the best test bed! The same with the racing. We all had to go into the development department and learn how to operate the cars and the controls, so we could always beat the life out of visitors and so on, who arrived at the factory!”

Scalextric’s new products were modified and tweaked in this manner – including perhaps the most important development of the 60s – the introduction of the Johnson blue can motor. It first emerged in various incarnations on the 1966-68 Hong Kong race-tuned series of cars (the C77 Ford GT40, C78 AC Cobra and C79/

and worked well in non-underpan cars. The cost savings were immense, and, not surprisingly, the motor soon became a Scalextric mainstay, relegating the trusty RX engine off to the second row of the grid and eventual retirement.

“We had a Scalextric office in the States and I think the Johnson motor was an innovation over there to start with,” says Norman. “One of the directors would go over to America, and come back with other manufacturers’ cars and engines for us to look at. They would have come back with the blue can and said, ‘Look we can get this motor for such and such a price. It’s made in Hong Kong – go and find out all about it.’ That would be the way we operated. The directors took a lot of note of the States.

“Having got some samples in of the blue can motor, Bill Langley went over to Hong Kong where the one we were going to buy was being made. We found that we could buy a blue can



C/77 FORD Grand Touring (Blue or White)

C80 Offenhausers, etc), and its influence over the years is incalculable. The race-tuned cars offered a vast improvement in performance, particularly when used with the impressive A/262 race-tuned throttle (an advanced hand controller that even more than 30 years later can still give modern-day counterparts a run for their money). The Johnson blue can was also cheap, could be adapted to fit a wide range of models

and have it in-house for 8d, whereas the RX motor was costing us 1s 10d. The blue can appeared to be a more powerful motor, it could be adapted into a number of the models, was certainly cheaper and just as good and therefore the powers that be decided to adapt the designs accordingly.” ■

Next month: the Power Sledge

Do we not all race slot-cars?

By James Cleave
(BSCRA Committee Member)

It happens time and again in real racing circles. There are disagreements between drivers, teams and organisers and successful racing series are split in two and try to compete with each other for support. The most recent case being the American equivalent of Formula 1. Both the I.R.L. and CART have struggled for support since they split a few years ago, racing very similar cars on similar tracks, hence one of the reasons for the boom of NASCAR.

This got me thinking about our hobby and why we have two major organisations, both with the goal of organising and promoting slot-car events, but with each one going about it in their own separate way, not communicating with the other. Surely there must be benefits to a more communicative, unified approach to the promotion of slot-cars. Cue Gareth Jex, your very own promotions guy.

I have been racing slot-cars since the age of five, when my parents bought me a Scalextric set for my birthday containing a green Porsche 911 and a black Ford Escort Mk1, both with lights! (I still have them today) When I was old enough, I joined a club at my local recreation centre, advertised in a leaflet sent to all schools in the area. When the club finally closed down due to the lack of a leader, I had been lucky enough to make contacts with a Slot-car club in the Vauxhall Motors factory in Luton. It was through this club where I found out there were



Luton Slot-Car Club Track

many other slightly mad people in the world who actually like racing slot-cars. I couldn't believe people came from all over the country to race these cars in a National Championship and when I heard foreigners did it too I was in awe.

I am now a member of the BSCRA (British Slot-Car Racing Association) and we do exactly what we say on the tin! We like racing slot-cars of all types and sizes. It is at this point where some of you may say, "Those jelly mould blobs that go so fast you can't see them!" and you would be correct in your statement. What you may not have considered is that as a slot-car racing association, we are actually trying to promote and enjoy the same form of entertainment as the NSCC. In fact, many clubs and drivers who are members of the BSCRA are also members of the NSCC. Many of our clubs up and down the country race Ninco, Scalextric, SCX, etc. week in, week out, because that is what their members want to race. Whenever someone asks me what I do for a hobby, I find it extremely difficult to explain without the use of the word "Scalextric!" Try it. It is not possible.



A BSCRA Concours Winning Body Shell. All hand painted, on the inside!

Our two organisations have traditionally concentrated on different aspects of slot-cars and it is clear in both their names, what their main focus has been:

National Scalextric **Collectors** Club and
British Slot-car **Racing** Association. ➡

With the increasing interest in actually racing, not only collecting, all types of slot-car, maybe it is time to consider what we have to offer.

We have very clearly defined and well thought out rules for all our current classes of slot-car; many years' experience and knowledge in the organisation of race meetings and club nights and links with tracks all over the country which race slot-cars on a regular basis.

We organise regular championship events at all levels from local, through national, up to the world stage and we provide a bi-monthly magazine with product reviews, news and features of race events, technical information and much more.

Last, but not least, our friendly, informative and helpful members are only too pleased to give your racing career a kick start.

If you are interested then have a look at our two official websites:

www.bscrea.fsnet.co.uk

http://uk.geocities.com/slot_racing

We would also like to hear about what you have to offer. What do you like racing? How do you race? Where do you race? Do you modify the cars in any way?



A BSCRA Production Car, cost approx £40

I hope that with closer relationships between the two organisations we can promote a united front towards slot-car racing in this country, with both the BSCRA and the NSCC using each other's strengths to get more people involved in our enjoyable hobby.

Feel free to e-mail me as any communication and opinions on 'the way forward' will be gratefully received.

jcleave@wootton.beds.sch.uk



Type 63 Cooper Monaco

By Dave Yerbury

The first Monacos began racing in 1959. This particular car is the improved 1963 version and named the Type 63. The car was designed to run with the Coventry Climax 2.7 engine, as used in the 1961 Indycar driven by Jack Brabham, which produced 250 bhp at 6,200 rpm. The chassis was designed to use various power plants such as Ford, Buick and Chevrolet V8s.

At the time it was a fairly modern design with a mid engine and weighed in at only 11 cwt less driver and fuel. With its F1 derived suspension a top speed of 180 mph was claimed, so it was no slouch. It featured a tubular space frame chassis wide at the centre to include 2 seats and the 28-gallon fuel tanks were hung on the outside of this on either side. The whole thing was clad in an aluminium welded body with the rear chopped and rounded and the front a typical Cooper. The manufacturers bucked the current trend and opted for the blunt tail probably because an effective aerodynamic tail would have been impracticably long. The front wings were smoothed out from the original elbow design as this created too much air disturbance around the cockpit. The ducts in the front cooled the disc brakes. The screen was blended into the rear engine cover to keep the aero dynamics smooth.

The suspension was unequal length wish-bones front and rear with coil-spring damper units. The splined drive shafts are virtually the same as on the F1 car.

The 2.7 Coventry Climax engine is canted over by 30 degrees to the right with a 7.25-inch clutch and 5 speed gearbox with ZF differentials. Wheels are the usual Cooper mag bolt-ons with Dunlop 5.00 x 15 fronts and 6.50 x 15 rears. The steering is by rack and pinion. All this makes a compact car but with a wheelbase identical to the F1 car at 7 foot 7 inch.

Quite a few of these cars made their way to the States and, with modifications, became the King Cobras among other things.

This the prototype and it was prepared in British Racing Green with two stripes down the bonnet. The Climax engined cars were the most successful - holding lap records at most British circuits in the 2.5 to 3 litre class.

This was an easy car to make. I had wanted to do the Bobtail Cooper but as of yet I don't have enough information. Anybody out there who can help on that one?

Preparing Glass Fibre bodies is not that daunting if you take a bit of care and time over it. After all, the hard work has been done by the producer. The dark green body was achieved with a great car boot find of dozens of spray cans, mostly unused, for the princely sum of a quid. Ninco came to the rescue with the Porsche 356 chassis which fits a treat with the usual front and rear pegs araldited into place. The chassis was then screwed in and a set of SRM alloy wheels and tyres provided the finishing touch. Scalextric Caterham minilites would look just as good. ■



TRACK TALK

by Steve Carter

In last month's editorial Brian drew comparisons between Ferrari's current dominance of F1 and an inexorable slide of Scalextric racing towards the BSCRA version because of the emergence of special race versions of models by companies like Fly and Spirit.

My first thought on this is that, unlike F1 or BSCRA competitions, Scalextric club racing has no governing body or one set of rules. Thus, clubs can decide individually how they wish to organise their racing and best deal with any potential problem cars.

In F1 it is always a problem to make rule changes because of the need to satisfy the Concorde agreement. For example, everyone knows the show needs improving and that really means promoting overtaking. The current response is a set of rule changes centred on reducing electronic driver aids, which they say will mean drivers will make mistakes and result in overtaking.

In fact, agreement was easily reached because these measures will reduce costs, something all the teams want, but overtaking will only ever return by reducing the influence of aerodynamics and here no agreement is reached because the big teams are protecting the ground they have won by investing heavily in wind tunnel development.

In BSCRA too, like F1, people have found ways around the technical rules to constantly make cars go faster and, similarly, rules have not been tightened because going slower was seen as a backwards step.

Just as aerodynamic grip is the issue in F1, so it is that sponge tyres and goop gave slot-cars the kind of grip level they required to use ever more powerful motors. By sticking to plastic cars and rubber tyres Scalextric racing should not go

far wrong. To use quicker motors you need more grip and so the single most notable development to make Scalextric racing more like BSCRA has been Magnatraction. Happily most clubs seem to frown on it.

This great fear of a slide towards the more extreme end of slot-car racing is something I have heard many times over the last 22 years I have spent back in this hobby, which followed a 15 year break, during which all forms of slot racing went into the doldrums.

This decline was blamed on the BSCRA or BCRA racing as it was then, which is partly true but, to be fair, radio control racing also played a big part in it.

I can still remember the first words that greeted me when I walked into the London Scalextric Club 22 years ago. The chairman and founder, Roy Charlesworth said, "We only race standard cars here." I had never met him before - how did he know?

Just because you are paranoid.....

There has always been a kind of paranoia that permitting anything apart from 'box standard' is the start of the slippery slope, to the point that some people even resisted the use of dynamic braking. Relax and remember - plastic cars and rubber tyres!

Brian described the new spec cars as 'built purely for racing'. Well yes, I know what he means but let's not forget that's what slot-cars are supposed to be for.

With slot-cars, just as in life, when things go in one direction there will follow a radical swing the opposite way. Fly's race specials are a reflection of how far their normal models had become static display items. That's also why Ninco and Proslot cars have been favoured at →

clubs, but it also has to be said that Slot.It have really got the balance right with a super product that appeals to all tastes.

Why all the fuss?

Anyway, let's have a closer look at one of these problem cars, namely a Fly Capri, and see what all the fuss is about.

The first thing to say is that the appearance is really naff. There's no excuse for this when you consider the price. The body is lighter by a few grammes but this is a bit of a sales gimmick as a normal shell fitted with a flat, lightweight driver/cockpit, but decorated in the usual way, would be better received.

The chassis is restyled with the motor mid-mounted in line and with a solid front axle. Just like a Ninco really! The motor is of the same type and really no quicker than the current NC5 fitted in Ninco cars.

The guide is also recessed to sit the car lower in the track but this is not always an advantage. It depends on what type of track you are racing on. It does, however, give you the option to select a suitable ride height by choosing what type of guide to fit; with or without a collar or even one with a spring.

The wheels and axle are an obvious reason for added expense since they are precision machined parts and, as such, should improve performance. However there is a weight penalty to pay.

It's difficult to criticize a car because it has straight axles and true wheels; what do you do - insist on the opposite? So really it is only the ride height that really separates these cars from a Ninco or, more particularly, a Proslot car.

In my own club we decided long ago that we wanted Fly cars to be able to compete so we allowed motors to be relocated using a Ninco mount and flat cockpit detail to replace intrusive full depth elaboration. Thus these race specials have had little impact on our own racing.

It is also about categorisation. We put the Capri into the GT class where it is better suited racing against Proslot Ferraris and Porsches, Saleens, BMW M3s, older Ninco GTs and the

Calloway. This works well on our Plexytrack; it might be a bit different on your circuit but that's another variable you can change if the cars are getting too quick. A fast open track design will encourage quicker motors.

If one car dominates a category you can always hobble it with a slower motor rather than ban it. We did this with the Proslot Toyota.

If you want successful inter-brand racing then consider permitting ballast since weight distribution is critical to performance.

Enjoy

Today we are in an enviable position; we have a flourishing model slot-car industry that 25 or even 30 years ago we would not have thought possible. We also have the benefit of hindsight to enable us to know where to draw the line.

So enjoy it and remember - plastic cars and rubber tyres! ■

Racing relics on a budget

By Oliver Hopkin

I've always loved old cars; my daily drive is over thirty years old and my weekend wheels are over forty five years old. So when last year I finally got around to racing at Mussel Bay Raceway I was faced with the choice of buying all new cars or adapting some of my favourite old ones to run on the copper tape wooden track. And yes - joy of joys - it has solid barriers, the death of so many good cars.

Having a lot of other very expensive hobbies and living some way away from my club track most of my year's race budget goes on petrol. So a few old cars and a few new cars it would have to be. Recently at Mussel Bay we started racing the new box standard Scalextric IRL cars, nice, but very fragile, twenty minutes practice later, on a track with solid barriers, just by deslotting and dropping in someone else's slot I had broken the rear spoiler in two and I had already loosened it from the body. I also had broken the camera and one of the feeble front axle assembly mounting lugs. That was before my first race and previously at home I had burnt the motor out; in about ten laps of my Scalextric four lane figure of eight which covers an area about 27 FT by 5 FT and it just slowed down and stopped. When I picked it up the motor was very hot and had shorted out. It had sounded a little tinny but I put it down to new brushes and new armature. I certainly didn't expect that to happen, it never has done before, and hope it never does again. When I first got the car and opened it up I noticed that the screw mounting turrets in the pan had split. The next time we raced them I broke off the other feeble front axle assembly mounting lug and smashed the whole axle assembly then knocked the rear axle out of line.

Now I've been racing my old '96 C585 McLaren Mercedes MP4/10 no 7 - yes the one with the fragile looking air box mounted mini wing on it - for about five months now in the F1 class and so far not one breakage or any sign of damage. So I think there is a lot to be said for racing relics.

Racing older cars make a lot of sense, if you are new to solid barrier circuits the old cars seem to take more punishment in general than the new ones and they are cheaper and easier to tune. Take my GT car for instance, yes please take my GT car, first made in 1980 the Porsche 962 although mine is the slightly newer "Take Fuji" version; brand new, boxed it cost me the princely sum of £6. With no lights and strong construction it makes a great GT car for beginners or anyone new to this type of track. I can slam it in to a solid barrier or even put it on the floor with no damage so far.



How to get it to work well

Now I'm no tuning god; far from it, I'm more your tuning monkey. First I stripped the car right down and laid the floor pan on a piece of glass to check it for level. As it had a slight twist I heated the pan with a hair drier and twisted it straight and re-checked it when it had cooled. I then replaced the motor and ran hot glue down each side sticking the motor to the floor pan. I fitted some new softer braids on the guide and put some conditioner on them.

For a long time I used the original tyres but they used to go off quite quickly and the back end of the car would skip about like Julian Clary running for a bus; I was forever re-sanding and re-oiling them. As far as I know they are only available as new-old stock and once rubber is manufactured it starts to deteriorate straight away, so I purchased some Slot.It P2 compound SIPT05 racing tyres and applied a thin smear ⇒

of impact adhesive to the outer hubs and the inside of the tyres and left them for fifteen minutes. Then with a splash of lighter fluid in the tyres and over the hubs I slipped them together. I pushed the centre of the axle onto a hard flat surface to squeeze out any air bubbles or pockets of lighter fluid and left them for twenty four hours. Next I ran the axle assembly down a small piece of channel to check it was straight and glued the bearings into the floor pan. I superglued the wheels to the axle so they protruded 0.5mm from the body, sanded the tyres and put a little 3in1 oil on them.

With the motor running I dropped some electrical cleaning fluid in the top two holes and let it run for thirty seconds - this cleans the armature and the brushes. Then I oiled the motor and the back axle.

Moving on to the front axle I flattened one side of a piece of 2.4 aluminium welding rod, placed it in the bottom of the front axle cradles with the axle on top of it and placed the car on the set up block so the front wheel and the guide both sat on the block. After this I flattened

another piece of welding rod to clip into the top of the cradles to hold the axle down. I took a small piece of 1.2 aluminium welding wire flattening the ends slightly and put it into the front of the cradles in between the axle and the bottom rod to stop the lateral movement. I ran some hot glue over the insides of the cradles onto the new axle assembly to hold it in all in place; this means no more movement when it has dried. A liberal dose of oil completed the job.

Finally I used impact adhesive to stick four small weights to the floor pan - two right at the front either side, and two just behind the screw mounting turrets either side. I run it with the body shell quite loose, backing the front two screws off one turn and the rear screw one and a half turns.

I have had a lot of enjoyment with this car and several wins. It is cheap and reliable and good to race. I hope this article may help anyone new to racing, returning to racing, changing their type of track or just having some fun with a cheap old car. ■