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## Club class

Exactly how many slot-car enthusiasts/collectors are there? Recent discussions, both public and private, have left me wondering. Obviously there is a huge boom in sales at the moment but the number of people who wish to get more involved in the hobby would seem to be very small.

Let us examine the figures: The NSCC is the biggest collectors' club but our membership has hovered round the 1000 mark for several years now. On the face of it this is a recipe for terminal decline - if you are not growing then you are going backwards - but, on the other hand, we have only had a total of 3100 members since 1981 so our retention is not all that bad.

Other clubs around the world have much smaller membership - The Dutch SLN claims 150, the Australian organisation has just 120 home-grown members and the French one has about 500. I cannot get figures for Spain (anybody know?) but I suspect it is on a par with our own. Even the power of the worldwide web doesn't attract significantly higher numbers - the most popular European site, Slotforum, has only 1700 registered users. Also bear in mind that they do not have renewable membership - once you sign up you are there forever - the number of active members is probably much less.

Then there is Hornby's 'Racer' - not really a club as such but more an extension of the Scalextric marketing department. My research suggests a figure of 8000; mind you the Hornby train equivalent is strongly rumoured to have twice that figure which puts slot-cars in their proper place!

Thus it would appear that the vast majority of buyers are content to play with toy plastic cars on their living room floor - food for thought perhaps, but if anybody has any ideas on how to persuade more people to join us I am sure Gareth would love to hear from you!

**And Finally** - If you are going to the Milton Keynes swapmeet please bring your membership card with you. You will find your entry seriously delayed if you forget it.

*Till next month*

*Brian*



# **THE BIGGEST SCALEXTRIC EVENT IN THE UK!**

## **NSCC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary slot-car weekend**

21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2005

Toyota (GB) Plc Headquarters, Burgh Heath, Epsom , Surrey

The event for collectors, racers and enthusiasts of 1/32<sup>nd</sup> scale slot-cars.

Exhibition displays from the leading manufacturers including:  
Scalextric, SCX, Ninco, Carrera, FLY, Vanquish MG, MRRC, Slot.It®.

Slot swapmeet on both days with NSCC members' and traders' tables  
Finals of the NSCC International Race Championship on 5 massive tracks  
The latest Digital tracks displayed in one area  
Technical tuning and advice areas  
Free to play/race slot-car tracks  
NSCC Rally track fastest lap competition  
NSCC Exhibition display of some of the rarest slot-cars  
Scratch build and kit conversion competition display and racing  
Preserved double decker bus running between local train station and event  
Real Toyota F1, Rally, GT and Le Mans cars on display  
Toyota Sit in F1 Race simulator

Excellent facilities with café, restaurant

Big screen TV showing the F1 qualifying and race live from Monaco plus the  
FA Cup final.

### **OPEN EVENT**

All are welcome, bring the family for a fun day out!

Adults £3.50, Children under 16 £2.00, NSCC members £2.50

A percentage of any profits made from the weekend will be donated  
to charity.

For more details see our web site [WWW.NSCC.CO.UK](http://WWW.NSCC.CO.UK).

**Alternatively and if you wish to book a table (£50 for the entire weekend)  
call Gareth Jex on 01252 720 001.**

by  
**Rob Smith**



## MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

**A**fter Hornby's frantic last few weeks before Christmas when new cars seemed to be released every other day, January has started at a more relaxed pace with only a few new cars to report on. However January is the Toyfair season and the team from Margate were all at Excel in London for the UK event and are now packing up their stand to go to Nuremberg in Germany.

All of the new cars released since my last report have been Minis! The next two to be released will be Minis too – the NSCC club cars are due any day now.

### C2631 Mini Cooper S Modelzone No12

The Modelzone chain of model shops have commissioned their own car each year for a while now and this year's model was the first of the new Mini Cooper S' to reach the shops. Due to the rush of new models before Christmas they held it over and brought it out to kick start the new year. Obviously based on C2565 it shares an identical black, silver and red livery but decorated with the familiar Modelzone logos. A gold limited edition sticker on the purple sleeve gives the edition as 1000 cars. ➡➔





### C2633 BMW Mini Cooper S Range Presentation 2005.

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual range presentation car is based upon C2564 in cream with a black chequer pattern on the side. The roof is white with a huge Union Jack flag across it. Of course, the race number is 8. 250 of these cars were given to dealers who visited the factory in Margate in January to place their orders for 2005.

### C2664 Mini Cooper S XNRG & C2656 Mini Cooper S Broad Oak No17.

These two new Cooper S' both represent cars racing in the John Cooper Challenge series in 2004. The black and silver car C2656 is particularly attractive and features sponsorship from a firm local to Hornby – Broad Oak of Canterbury. If you ever wonder how Hornby choose what liveries to produce it often starts with a visit to a race meeting. On this occasion the Broad Oak team were met in the Brands Hatch paddock and an agreement was quickly reached. All of these new Mini Cooper S' feature a rear wing at the back of the roof which

easily differentiates them from the normal Cooper models and the Italian Job Cooper S released last year.

**C2562 & C2563 Marks and Spencer**  
Right at the last possible moment before Christmas two Scalextric cars appeared in the larger M&S stores around the country. There was nothing special about the cars – just standard versions of C2562 (green Mini Cooper with the English flag on the roof) and C2563 (red Mini Copper with the Welsh dragon) however, they came with unique M&S sleeves. These sleeves are a greeny-blue colour with the usual yellow chequered flash. On the inside, behind the car is a bold “Mini Cooper”. There are Marks and Spencer and Scalextric logos but no mention of Hornby Hobbies Ltd.

### Catalogue 46

Each year's new Catalogue release is eagerly anticipated and Edition 46 does not disappoint. It is once again beautifully produced and the illustrations and photos work well to convey the

excitement of slot racing. Working from the front I'll try to highlight the new releases for 2005 with reference to the exhibits on Hornby's stand at the UK toyfair. Of course there will almost certainly be additions, deletions and changes to the published information and as the catalogue, price list and dealer order form don't agree with each other (as usual...) watching out for the changes will be a fun challenge.

### Sets

There are two new sets containing unique cars. C1155 John Cooper Challenge is an X1 set with a blue Mini Cooper S and C1161 Le Mans is an X4 set with two Dodge Vipers. The red and white #88 car is unique to this set.

### Drift

C1156 Powerslide is a modern take on the Wild-360 theme. It features two radius 2 loops forming a figure of 8 circuit with the crossroads in the centre. The cars, two Nissan 350Zs, feature a guide that rotates through 360 degrees with contact being maintained via two circular tracks on the chassis. The magnets can be placed in several positions from far forward to a more normal position at the rear. The aim of the exercise is to powerslide around the track knocking over piles of tyres but without over cooking it and spinning right round. Prototype cars and the track were at the Toy Fair and it was great fun to try. The guide can have its rotation limited for more normal racing. In the catalogue, the two cars are C2670 and C2671 shown with attractive Scalextric liveries but at the Toy Fair the prototypes had bright orange and green decoration. They do feature blacked out windows and painted lights to make them nice and robust.

### Batman

Hornby have climbed on the "Batman Begins" band wagon with a new Batmobile and Police Car. Due to size issues these are more like 1/43<sup>rd</sup> in scale. As well as in set C1157 the Batmobile will be available separately as C2635 and in a twinpack with the police car as C2669A.

### Classic Grand Prix

The Vanwall and Maserati have new racing numbers but more excitingly they are joined by two new cars. C2640 Ferrari 156 and C2639 Cooper Climax T53. The Cooper is providing the Hornby designers with a real challenge because it is absolutely tiny.

### F1

The big F1 news for 2005 are the Ferraris of Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello. We will have to wait until the end of the year for these to reach our tracks. Not illustrated in the catalogue but on the price list are the 2004 liveries of the Williams, Renault and McLaren F1 cars too.

### Endurance

A brand new model is the Maserati MC12 – their new GTS challenger. It will be available in both race C2630 and road C2678 liveries. This has to be one of the most detailed slot cars I have ever seen with amazingly detailed fins and vents on the bonnet. It features the same independent chassis as the Lister. I still think they should have made the Aston Martin DBR9 instead which will trounce the Maserati at Le Mans in June. No, I'm not placing any bets. There is a new red and white livery for the Lister LMP C2658 which ran at Le Mans last year and a red, white and blue livery for the MG Lola C2660.

The Porsche GT3R has been updated with more aggressive rear haunches and two new liveries C2664 and C2665. It will be interesting to see how much it will have changed. Two Maserati Cambriocorsa Coupes will also be released in Q1 with a third livery at the end of the year. Apparently these models have proved very quick and stable in testing. A red version, C2661, of the Ford GT is also in the catalogue this year. Identical to the white version but in red with white stripes.

A big surprise is the announcement that Hornby will make a Mercedes McLaren SLR this year. There are no more details at this stage and we will have to wait until Q4 for its release.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ferrari in Hornby's line up is the 330 P3 in red C2641 and yellow C2642. I shall await this one with anticipation.

⇒→

## Rally & Touring

Although several manufacturers are producing a Peugeot 307 rally car Hornby have taken an unusual approach. The car has a front mounted side-winder motor driving the front axle with a belt then taking drive to the rear axle. Who knows what effect this will have on the handling and it will be interesting to track test. We won't have long to wait as it is scheduled for release in Q1 and both cars were there for inspection at the Toyfair. C2561 also features a weathered, muddy finish. Hornby tampo print their mud rather than hand spraying it as they do in some Spanish locations. This enables them to apply it more realistically and it does look extremely effective. The Opel Vectras announced last year will finally appear in Q3 as C2529 and C2593

## USA Classics and NASCAR

On the classics front there is a new blue Corvette C2653 and red Mustang C2656 both due in Q2. Starsky and Hutch are going racing with C2655, a NASCAR version of their Ford Torino.

Two completely new NASCARs are the Chevrolet Monte Carlo and Ford Taurus. There are two versions of each C2597 and C2598 for the Chevrolet and C2594 and C2595 for the Ford. These are shown in the catalogue with plain bodies as the liveries are not yet chosen and the licensing agreements still need signing.

## Trackside

Great news are the four new plastic trackside buildings. There is a modern grandstand, a pit garage and a control tower. Tantalisingly the fourth is described as a pit wall but this has not been illustrated. A red pit crew will also be available to service your Ferrari.

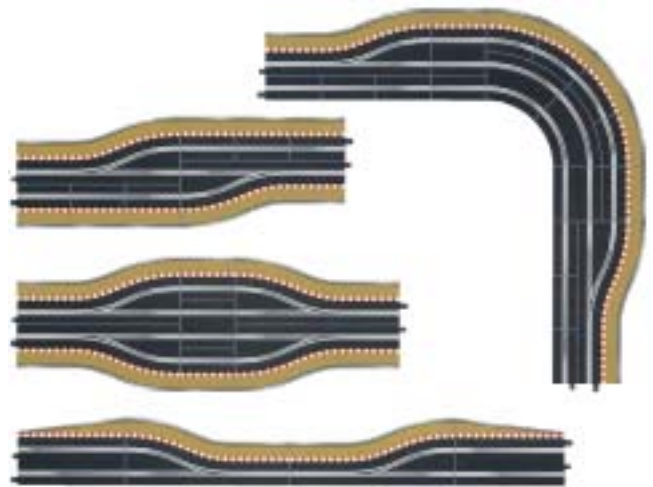
The only new ordinary track piece for 2005 is a half straight starter grid with two staggered start positions. For Sport Digital you could need three of these for a full grid.

## Sport Digital and Sport World

The new innovation in digital racing is the pit lane. Calling it a pit lane really doesn't do it justice as it can be used for so many things. There are 6 elements:

- 1 & 2. Right hand and left hand entry junctions. These start as a single lane and split into two lanes with a digitally operated lane changer. They come with border and barriers.
- 3 & 4. Right hand and left hand exit junction. These start as two lanes and merge into one. They come with border and barriers.
5. Single lane half straight
6. Single lane curve – this fits outside a radius 2 curve. A border is available for this piece.

The picture describes how they might be used much better than I can. One possibility not described in the catalogue is to change between lanes 2 and 3 on a four lane circuit.



Finally we have Sport World. This is a hardware and software solution enabling track design including scenery, virtual test driving, car collection management, race and championship management to name but a few of its features. It enables the user to take part in races across the Internet with up to 6 others or to participate in fastest lap (or laps) competitions hosted by Hornby. You can store the telemetry of your (or someone else's) fastest lap and then let it drive the other car for you to race against. More details nearer release date in Q3.

## Conclusion

So we have another exciting year ahead with plenty of interest for both the racer and collector. Life will be made slightly more difficult for the collector as only the very first issue of a new mould will be available in the special Sport packaging and these will be available in much smaller numbers. ■

# **Carrera Corner**

By Colin Spark

**W**elcome back to Carrera Corner. Firstly, apologies for the lack of report last month, but to be honest there wasn't anything to mention and the pressure of being a retailer, during the run up to Christmas, meant that time was at a premium. There was you thinking that I just messed about with slot-cars and tyres for a living. I wish.

Now that January has gone and February, the dullest month of the year, is here, we need no excuse to spend time indoors playing with our toy cars. Carrera, like all the others, are still holding back at the moment, pending the London Toy Fair, so I can only tell you about the snippets of information I've been given.

## **Pro X**

I suppose the word on everyone's lips is "digital". We already have SCX and Scalextric with Ninco, I believe, on its way. If you're Carrera minded when it comes to track then you'll possibly be pleased to hear that Pro X, Carrera's digital system, is on its way. The demand for Pro X in the German speaking market was so huge, when it was released late last year, that the factory struggled to keep up. It was for this reason that the release of Pro X was delayed in the UK. Like all digital sets, don't expect to be able to run your current cars on it. Carrera have been busy re-releasing some of their current range in digital form into the German market and I've noticed they are also available in the USA, so I guess stocks will be ready for release alongside the sets when they hit the shelves here.

At the moment I don't know if you can connect standard Carrera track to the Pro X system, so this is one of the questions I hope to answer when I meet Jon Burcham, marketing director of Nikko, at the Toy Fair. If you are

considering buying Pro X and can't wait until my report next month then have a look at the Carrera website as there is a short demo on there, clearly showing how it works.

## **2005 Releases**

On the normal side of things, for want of a better term, we can look forward to an Audi A4 DTM and Mercedes C Klasse DTM, both with working head and tail-lights. There are also many new Ferraris and Maseratis in the pipeline. For the Formula 1 fans there will be new 2005 cars released during the year and some more British and American Classics will accompany this lot.

## **WRC**

The rally cars I mentioned back in December are now out in the shops. Rally cars seem to be very popular worldwide, which is a result of rallying being a truly International sport. I'm just hoping Carrera don't get sucked into the current merry-go-round of endless re-liveries of WRC and DTM cars, as I started off my first Carrera Corner saying how Carrera were following a different route to the big three. Let's hope I don't have to retract that statement.

While on the subject of rallying, I have received my first two samples from Nikko, both WRC cars, and one has been despatched for review at a later date. The other car, a Peugeot 307, I've given a quick spin around the club track and can report that it is superbly smooth and fast, straight out of the box.

It is the number 5 car of Marcus Grönholm that he raced in the Monte Carlo Rally of 2004. The colour is a good strong, deep red and the tampo printing is just fantastic! ⇒

Along the bottom lip of the front spoiler is where the registration number lives and despite the tiny font size of the lettering it is crystal clear, with every letter and numeral being legible. I know I mentioned this in my review of the Ferrari 575 but it continues to amaze me.

Full size, white, multi-spoke wheels fill the wheel arches with grip being provided by rally tread tyres. Unusually for Carrera, the tyres are reasonably pliable but they are quite a loose fit on the wheel and I felt there was the possibility of the tyre rotating on the wheel. During my test laps on the MDF circuit I managed some really life like tail out slides for virtually the whole corner. Brilliant fun.

Build quality is excellent and there is the now familiar double magnet system. The chassis is noticeably less bulky and has lost that chunky chocolate bar effect that previous models suffer

from. The roof aerial is way too fat and looks more like a toothpick and the box for the roof-mounted camera is missing. I also think the car is too slim and when put beside the offerings of Ninco and SCX it looks positively anaemic. On the other hand, their cars might be too fat. Beauty, as they say, is in the eye of the beholder.

The driver and co-driver , both full length, sit in a well detailed cockpit complete with fire extinguisher, roll bar and safety harnesses. They both have the Carrera staaare. I've heard of people having jobs where they have to cross the "ts" and dot the "is" but imagine the poor sod who works in the Carrera factory just dotting eyes all day!

Anyway, the reason this is such a brief review is because I wanted to keep the car in mint condition so that one of you lucky, lucky readers can win it.





## **Come on down!**

The following six questions are all connected to the Peugeot WRC of Marcus Grönholm and the Monte Carlo Rally.

All you need to do is either send the six correct answers to me by post or email them. My contact details appear at the end.

All correct answers will be put in a draw for the car pictured here.

Entries need to reach me BEFORE next month's Journal deadline, so don't hang about.

The winner will be announced next month.

### **Competition Questions.**

1. What position did Marcus Grönholm achieve in the 2005 Monte Carlo Rally?

2. What caused Marcus Grönholm to lose his comfortable second place in the 2005 Monte Carlo?

3. After the first of 16 rounds of the 2005 WRC how many manufacturers points have Peugeot and what position does this give them? (Peugeot, not the driver).

4. What is the name of the famous stage of the Monte Carlo Rally where spectators like to drop snow on the road?

5. What position did Marcus Grönholm finish in the 2004 Monte Carlo Rally?

6. Name the driver of the other Peugeot 307 (Grönholm's team mate) in Monte Carlo 2004.

Send your answers to :

Rally Competition

"Hens Roost"

Rhododendron Avenue

Culverstone

Kent

DA13 0TU.

Or email them to me at:

[colin.spark@btinternet.com](mailto:colin.spark@btinternet.com).

That's it for this month. I'm off to the Toy Fair with camera and notebook on Sunday. Thanks to Jon Burcham for the invite and the cars this month. ■

# Traders Travels

By Robert Learmouth  
(Westwood Models)

**T**he first ever Swindon Swapmeet in January appeared to be a welcome addition to the calendar. Running as an open event, an incredible 410 paying visitors came through the door. We had a good turnout of traders too with 45 tables taken and three international dealers. There were also a good number of first-time stallholders, which was great to see, as it was one of our main goals for the event. Complementing the stalls were four circuits with the main one being an extremely large four-lane routed club circuit provided by the local Four Lane Blacktop club. There were also digital circuits from Scalextric and SCX and the NSCC rally circuit. The Scalextric digital circuit proved extremely popular and Adrian was kept on his toes throughout the day.

Several dealers reported an extremely good day and the event drew praise for creating a good buzz. The vast majority of the visitors were new faces with very few NSCC members apparent. We advertised heavily in the local area and this would appear to be where many visitors came from. The 'one hour' travel time really is a deciding factor for many visitors now and with Swindon's geographical location the catchment area is substantial.

## Press coverage

We had very good coverage of the event in the three local newspapers during the following week attracting large spreads with several colour photos - check [www.westwoodmodels.com](http://www.westwoodmodels.com) for these. So hopefully we will have interested a few more people for next time that read the articles but couldn't make the event. We are resisting the temptation to stage a second event this year but put 8th January 2006 in your calendar, as the hall is already booked!

Steve Cannon and myself have decided against running a Slough event this year. There is no other natural calendar slot for the event

with the NSCC weekend occupying the mid-May date this year. However we have been talking about doing something completely different during the summer months. Ideally this would be an outdoor event, held for instance in the gardens of a pub where we can create a social feel to the day. Or perhaps at a classic car rally or similar where there are other aspects to the day. The emphasis will be on encouraging collectors and the smaller traders to have a table and really just having a fun day. If anyone has any thoughts on developing this idea or for a suitable venue then either of us will be pleased to hear from you.

## Toy Fair

Slot-car presence at the Excel Toy Fair in late January interestingly reflected how I see the actual market place. Hornby – big, bold and way out front. Carrera – increasing in presence and confidence. Revell – a small but nicely presented range including a fantastic Lotus Cortina. Slot.it – a small but very proud presentation with several new moulds lined-up for the coming months. SCX – hugely disappointing, the range launch has been put back to Nuremberg. Will there be anything interesting when it does appear? Ninco – no presence at all. Fly/Gaugemaster – ditto.

Excel is rated by the toy/model industry as being of secondary importance to Nuremberg. But the fact remains if you don't put your product in front of people then you can't sell it. There was plenty of evidence of model shops looking to join the slot-car bandwagon at Excel – what brands do you think they will want to explore first!

Rumour had it that a prototype of the new Batmobile was knocking about on the Hornby stand. Hornby have been obeying image rights protocol by not releasing shots of their model yet. There are images of alternative (static) =>

models kicking around and you only need to see one of these to know that this might just prove to be the ugliest slot-car ever produced! But Hornby will make its sales for this model (as always) within the toy sector where thousands of younger fans will have a much more favourable view than us lot. However a sample of the new drift cars was on display and in action. This uses a 360-degree guide blade to replicate the motion of the real cars. For those who have never seen

this fascinating form of motor sport before, it's all about keeping your car going sideways round the bend for the longest. Apparently certain Japanese models make the best drift cars though from personal and involuntary experience I can confirm that Seat Alhambras are also more than capable of giving it a go...

In fact talking of van like vehicles, this year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Transit. Now there's an idea for something different on a slot-car track. We've had racing rigs so why not!? ■

# Ebay watch

By Chris Arlow

**T**his month I have decided to focus on limited edition cars that appear on Ebay. You will no doubt have seen these elusive cars for sale at swapmeets. They tend to be those models displayed inside glass cabinets, out of reach at the back of the stall. It's usually a struggle to read the figures written on the small pricing stickers. At this point, I have to ask, "how much is that one" and sometimes I am shocked by the reply! This is where I smile politely and start thumbing the broken cars at the front of the stall.

The rarest of the limited editions in my opinion, would be company commissions and those for club organised events. These are a small-scale production run of a model usually incorporating a company logo or featuring a promotional event. The most consistent run of limited editions are the range presentations. They produce around 300 of these cars, which are distributed once a year to some Scalextric retailers. As these models are handed out within the retail industry, it is only natural they will end up in the marketplace! Since 1998, Hornby has supplied a variety of cars for this purpose and as to be expected, many collectors are keen to track them down. So how do they fair on Ebay?

## Range Presentation

1998 Lamborghini	Ltd 300	£67 - £120
1999 Jaguar XJ220	Ltd 300	£100 - £140
2000 Porsche GT1	Ltd 300	£101
2001 Mercedes CLK	Ltd 300	£98

2002 Cadillac LMP	Ltd 300	£65 - £95
2003 Ford Mustang	Ltd 250	£180 - £220
2004 Ford GT40	Ltd 250	£190 - £220
2005 Mini Cooper	Ltd 250	£240+

## Other Special Editions

2000 Crystal Classics Lamborghini	Ltd 100	£100 - £130
2001 Crystal Classics Jaguar XJ220	Ltd 100	£160 - £190
2000 Hornby employees gift TVR	Ltd staff only	£160 - £230

All prices quoted are for items described as mint/boxed.

As you can see, prices on Ebay can fluctuate wildly! When you attend your next swapmeet, take a closer look at the models in the glass cabinet. They can often be purchased for less than you would spend on Ebay. Swapmeets also offer many other benefits. Firstly, you are able to inspect the model thoroughly before parting with your hard-earned cash. You can also compare prices of each stall, haggle, chat with other NSCC members and grab yourself a nice cup of tea!

Finally, I would like to remind members that the Journal has a section where you can buy/sell slot items. I used to regularly purchase items from other members but it seems the advertisements are "drying up". I'm sure nobody wants to see this section disappear from our Journal so if you have anything to sell, why not try your luck here first! ■

# BITS & PIECES

## **NSCC Pendle Chassis competition**

Just to confirm that Vac formed bodies are eligible for entry into the Resin section. The chassis can be adapted in any way and do not need to remain standard to qualify for entry.

Anyone got any progress reports? - send them to Brian, Gareth's efforts at the Airfix Ford 3L are taking longer than planned! Don't forget that 100% of the entry fee for this competition goes to charity.

## **NSCC Championship Update**

So far we have received around thirty finalists' details. The closing date for your heats is the end of February; you then must get your results, entry forms, money etc to Gareth no later than 13th March.

You will then be sent invitations to race at the finals on or around the 28th March - qualifiers names will also appear in the Journal. Final preparations are being made for the tracks at the finals, but Gareth could do with one extra routed MDF four lane track - please contact him if you can bring one along.

## **NSCC 25th Anniversary Slot Weekend**

This is shaping up to be BIG! Gareth is on the hunt for volunteers to help set up and run the event. If you have any free time, Friday 20th, Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd (especially in the evening) please contact Gareth. Don't forget this is an OPEN event not just for NSCC members, please tell one and all about it we hope to make this the biggest slot-car event in the UK and raise money for charity at the same time!

If you would like any flyers Gareth will have a bundle to give out at Milton Keynes, please ask your local model shop to display one in the window - thanks!

Gareth will be taking bookings for tables at the 25th Anniversary weekend at Milton Keynes any members interested in booking a table please get in touch.

## **MG Owners Club magazine**

The January issue contained an article by Gareth Jex on MG slot-cars and a plug for the NSCC. We would like to approach other car clubs with similar articles; would any members interested in writing manufacturer specific collecting articles please contact Gareth.

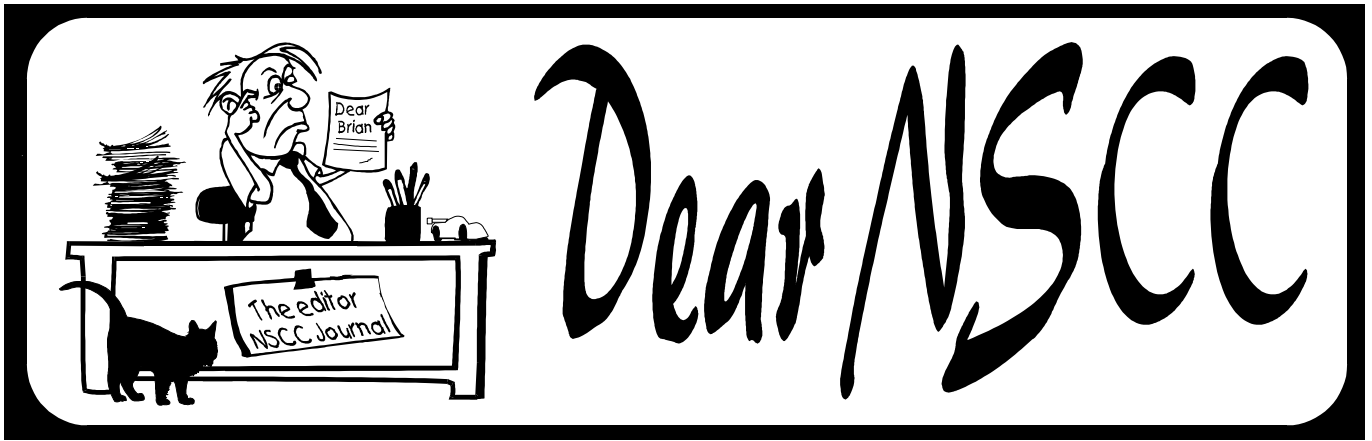
## **New club?**

Roger Gillham would like to know if there are any members around Wantage, Abingdon, Faringdon or Swindon who would be interested in starting a Scalextric racing club. He can be contacted at: [roger@rogergillham.co.uk](mailto:roger@rogergillham.co.uk) Roger also informs me that a Spanish publisher is likely to print a Spanish language version of his 6th edition Scalextric book.

## **Christmas competition update**

I have now received a very healthy number of entries for this but there is still a bit of time left if you haven't sent yours in yet - closing date is February 19th.

Archie, the editorial cat, would like to thank the many people who sent him little gifts (bribes?) - he was particularly pleased with the catnip mouse. Whether this will affect his choice of winners remains to be seen!



Sir,  
 January's issue of the Journal contained many words about 4WD slot-cars. I am thoroughly confused about this feature for two reasons. To begin with, I can understand the off-road variety of slot-car such as sts, TT or Ninco's Raid cars having 4WD but what is its purpose or benefit in cars that will only run around flat tracks? Does it really improve their performance? Alternatively, does the increased weight and friction as well as the front wheels pulling straight ahead when the guide wants to turn the car spoil its handling? I am such a crap racer that I could never tell the difference. I would appreciate a considered view of its benefits from someone who can tell the difference - if any.

My other confusion is the use of belts to drive the front axle. This is so 1980s. I can see the benefits to the manufacturers; it's probably cheaper than the Tecnitoy's system of pinions and contrates at both ends. It might also be more flexible in that it allows small differences in wheelbase between models. But the plain fact is that rubber bands will transmit no torque to the front axle unless it stops or slows relative to the rear so that the "pulling" side of the band gets tighter. Whilst the front axle is stopped or slowed, the back axle and its gears has been doing all the work. The likelihood of this being a problem on a flat circuit is slight so I still find myself asking - why bother? (I have now learned that Margate's imminent 307 has a sidewinder-driven front axle with a belt to drive the rear. Apparently it will be really fast.)

But using belts to effect 4WD on off-road cars as Ninco have done seems particularly perverse. Here, it is important that the front

wheels can drive the car over the bumps, etc. that feature in these circuits. For the reasons outlined, they do nothing to help get the front of a car over these obstacles. In this case, the load on the rear axle gears is much higher and they must be under much more stress than is good for them.

The only thing I find more irritating than seeing belts used for off-road 4WD slot-cars is seeing all our letters signed off.....

I am, yours etc,  
 Peter Zivanovic

Who's Queen? As no one else wants to be editor then you will just have to put up with my little eccentricities!

.....

Sir,  
 The picture on page 42 of the January Journal shows the Leicester team that won the 1969 National Championship, at the Harry Mitchell Centre in Birmingham, November 69. The picture shows left to right, Dave Cockerton, John Riley, Arthur Blow, Paul Rodgers and Derek Cooper, seated at front is Steve Blow.

I claim my prize although I suspect this may not be a proper competition but just a ruse to show embarrassing pictures of me aged 18 in an Edwardian frockcoat.

I am, yours etc,  
 Derek Cooper

Correct on all counts Derek!

Sir,

In a recent thread on SlotForum.com there was an interesting discussion about how big the slot community is. The discussion veered about and ended up on how the NSCC could ensure that we retain a greater proportion of its subscriber base year on year. While there has been over 3000 people join the NSCC Brian indicated that at its peak we had about 1200 members in a year and currently about 1000.

So I'm writing with some ideas on how renewing the NSCC membership becomes a must for everyone rather than just the core. I accept there will always be those that move on to other hobbies (heretics!) but how do we minimise loss?

1) Those members who have had continual membership for 3 years, 5 years, 10 years etc get increasingly reduced rates.

2) Offer reduced subscription rates if people sign up for 2 or more years.

3) I believe the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Minis are a brilliant draw – this needs to continue with the same high quality offer year on year. Advertise the car in Oct/Nov time and only make it only available to subscribers of the following year.

4) See if retailers would be willing to offer a discount for current NSCC members.

5) Use the buying power of the membership to get one or two desirable (always subjective) cars a year at a great price from a distributor/retailer. For example choose a car and negotiate an ever better price if 50, 100, 200, etc. members take up the offer.

6) Ask retailers/online forums to publicise the NSCC. Ask online retailers to include a leaflet when they send products out and send publicity flyers to members asking them to put them in local model shops.

I think the magazine is great and while it can never be as up to date as the internet I believe

just being something tangible (i.e. the magazine) is a huge benefit and I really look forward to my copy every month.

Finally I realise the committee is not complacent either and I for one appreciate their efforts with the magazine, swapmeets, the NSCC championship, the Minis, etc. I only hope my ideas spark other even better ones.

I am, yours etc,  
Matt Tucker

.....

Sir,

Are there any members in the Stockton On Tees/Middlesbrough/Darlington area who are considering going to the Milton Keynes swap-meet and would be interested in sharing a car and costs to get there?

Please ring me on 01642 761713 if you can help.

I am, yours etc,  
David Bell



From Peter Solari

**S**till fairly quiet this month as Ninco prepare for the Nuremberg Toy Fair (10-15<sup>th</sup> February 2005). However, I can report on the introduction of one new model, two new liveries and a fantastic Rally event!

### '56 Chevy

News of a totally new "Classic" car, a '56 Chevrolet Corvette (50347) has just been released. The Ninco model appears to be based on the number 6 car of Ray Crawford and Max Goldman raced in the 1956 Sebring 12-hour endurance race. This was one of four Corvettes entered in that race and finished 6<sup>th</sup> in its class, 15<sup>th</sup> overall. The Corvette was greatly improved that year and received its first real face lift since its introduction in 1953. As well as the sporty new look, it now had more power, better handling and greater reliability. As soon as the Ninco car is available, it will be interesting to see how it compares with other cars such as the Jaguar and Healey..

### Classic colours

February sees the arrival of another classic Porsche 911. Already Ninco have produced these cars in the familiar liveries of Jagermeister, Brumos and Vaillant... now it's time for this popular car to be presented in the Rothmans team colours (50362).

### It's a Raid!

The latest Raid car on offer is a re-livery of the Mitsubishi Pajero. Based on the car driven in last years Qatar Baja by Spaniard Joan "Nani" Roma, the striking colours are of their main sponsor, Repsol, the Spanish petrol company. This Raid was entered to enable the Mitsubishi's new team member to gain as much experience before the 2005 Dakar Rally.

### Arrows competition

Thanks to those who have taken the trouble to send me pictures of their re-painted "Arrows" F1 cars. Just a few more weeks left for those of you who wish to enter as the deadline is the end of this month. Rules are simple:-

- 1) Get hold of a bargain price Arrows F1 car,
- 2) Re-paint it,
- 3) Send me a photo of it!

A new 2005 edition Ninco car will be awarded to the best re-livery and remember, it can be based on fact or fantasy!

### Club Tracks

I was very pleased to hear from various clubs using Ninco track or holding Ninco events this year. Where possible, I will feature these clubs in future issues.

### Rally Event

The recent rally event staged by Nic Picot was great! For those of you who missed out, the competition was open to any Rally car - vintage or modern - with magnet and non-magnet classes. Although it was an individual event, each driver appointed their own marshals and so you moved around in teams of 3-5 people.

There were three courses to navigate in both directions, making up the first six stages. A final stage utilised the third course with a rather evil hazard added to it (*probably designed by Dick Dastardly & Mutley!*). Each circuit was made up of Ninco track with approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> Raid section and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> standard track. All were quite twisty and made use of just about every type of Ninco track section from tight inner curves to Dune sections.

I entered two cars, both new Ninco Peugeot 307 rally cars, one with and one without a magnet. Each car was powered by an NC-5



motor and fitted with treaded tyres which gave maximum grip on the rough surface. It was interesting to see how the different cars coped with the Raid track. The ProShock suspension system fitted to the Peugeots gave me the confidence to push the cars a little harder on the rough sections. Happy with the choice and set-up of my cars, I was setting my sights on a finish in the top half whereas normally I'd be content with a middle-place finish.

On stages two and five, the Dune sections led on and off a bridge. With the right amount of power on the approach, it was possible to lift the car completely off the track and land it back in the slot on the bridge. To witness the car in flight was quite thrilling - it looked just like the real thing!

Stage six included an oval comprising of a chicane curve and two crossover sections. The route would take you from an outside lane to the inside, around the chicane curve and back to the outside lane again. Not too difficult? Well, with a "cops & robbers" chase taking place on the opposite lane, you had to slot in between the two cars and drive around the oval without coming into contact with them; if you did it was a 5 second penalty!

The final stage included a similar hazard but this time only the police car was going round the oval. Mmmm, that must be easier then? No... the police car was now travelling in the opposite direction!! A collision on this stage would result in a 10 second penalty. I'm pleased to report that I achieved the fastest time on this stage - it must be all that real-life practice I've had driving around southeast London!

When everyone had completed the final stage, the results and awards were given out. No one was more surprised than me to learn that I'd achieved the second fastest time in the magnet class! Well done to Nic and his troops for organising an excellent day's racing.. I can't wait for the next one. ■



Who's a clever boy then? 2nd place car and trophy



# London Toy Fair

by Gareth Jex

It's that time of year again! You know - when you call all the slot-car manufacturers and ask them for news for the NSCC journal and the standard reply is "wait until the Toy Fair, I'll see you then". Well I waited and finally with Rob Smith, Adrian Leggett and Richard Winter we trotted off to Docklands for this year's 'trade' only Toy Fair. We decided to go on press day, Thursday; after all we are press and going on any other day seems to net you less information as companies are, understandably, trying to get new orders from customers.

It's worth pointing out at this stage that not all the usual suspects exhibit in London. Ninco, FLY, Vanquish MG and Auto Art choose to announce most of their new product the following week at the German Toy Fair. In fact the only manufacturer that exhibits is Hornby; all the others are UK distributors representing the manufacturers. I'll come back to this later!

The show is split across two exhibition halls with most of the slot manufacturers in one hall. We arrived nice and early and met up in the foyer for coffee prior to going in. 9am and in we go - first thing I see? An exhibition stand with its night sheets on and no one manning it, now I know I'm slightly biased (designing exhibition stands is my day job) but any company who can't turn up on time for the first day of a show is asking for trouble. Passing the sorry excuse for a company we headed for the rear of the hall where Hornby, Bachmann and AB GEE are located. First stop AB GEE.

AB GEE is a pretty massive toy distributor and in addition to Scalextric, Carrera and other non slot brands they are the UK distributors for Slot.It. I'm pretty sure we were first onto their stand and arrived just as Mr Maurizio Ferrari from Slot.It arrived with a box of prototype models for display. Maurizio is a genuine slot-car fan and is one of the most enthusiastic manufacturers with a passion for what he produces. Pre production examples he showed us included Jaguar XJR9, Lancia LC2 (Martini

and Totip liveries TBC), Nissan LM, Sauber C9 and a wonderful limited edition three car pack of Porsche 956s from the 1982 Le Mans - these will feature 'Racing' instead of 'Rothmans' for fairly obvious reasons, but looked great. In addition to these new cars there are new replacement gears for Ninco angle winders with rounded teeth for smooth performance. No confirmed dates for the new cars to make it to the shelves, but I don't think the Le Mans set will be too far away.



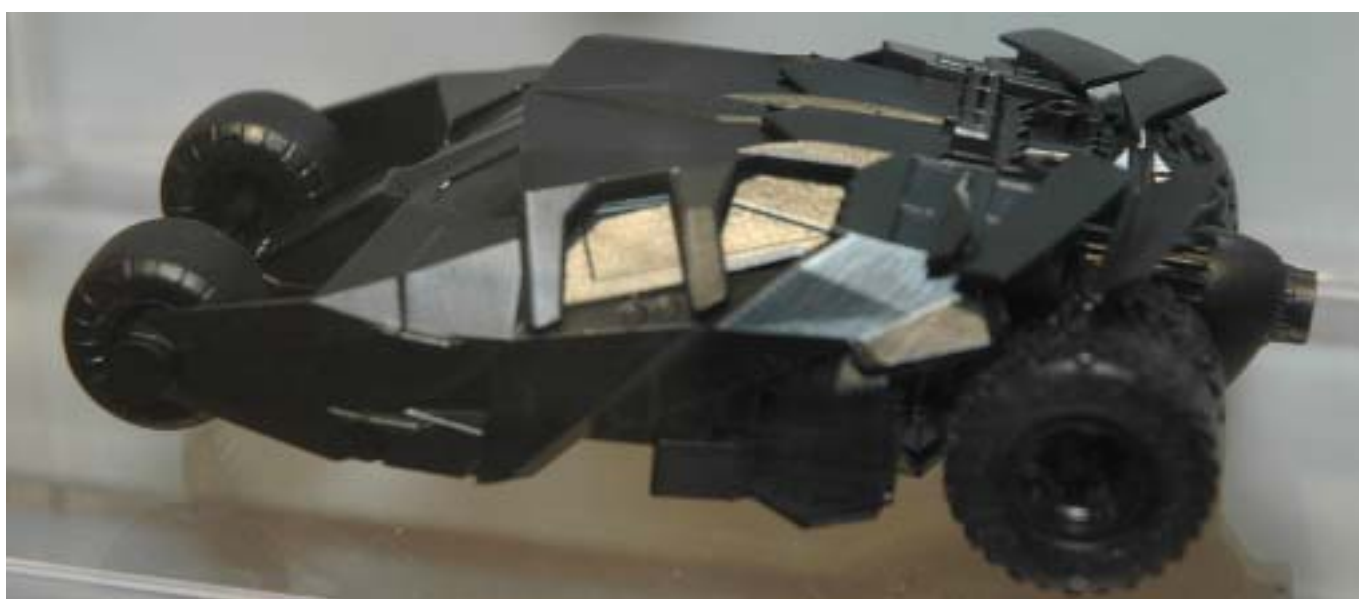
Next stop - Hornby. By far the biggest slot-car manufacturers' exhibition stand, if not one of the biggest at the show in general; their stand was split into two, model trains and Scalextric. The front of the stand was, predictably, promoting their digital range and featured prototype examples of the new digital system pit lanes, the new Nissan 350Z 'Drift' cars (360



degree cars, like the old Porsche) and the bikes were also displayed on a separate Sport track. There were also displays of the new Sport World PC Internet Racing along with prototype examples of some of the new cars. Hornby were making a big push of their new licensing agreement with Ferrari, but no actual examples of the new 156, F1 or P4 were on display, just a poster with pictures of the real thing. Other poster displays announced the other licensing agreements for 2005 'Batman V - Batman Begins' and yep .... 'Turtles'; thankfully the latter has been confined to the Micro scale. The prototype model of the Batman car/blob/thing was on display and we chatted to the designer who explained that whilst the car will be released in the normal Scalextric range (as well as Micro) it won't be 1:32 scale as this would not fit on the

track, subsequently the 'Gotham City Police Car' that partners the Batmobile will also be a smaller scale to comply with the licensing agreement. I'll leave Rob to fill you in on the other specific details and new releases.

Next to Hornby was Bachmann the UK distributors of SCX. Our friend Luca from Tecnitoys was on hand to explain that they had decided not to announce any new SCX product at the London show and all new cars, would be announced in Germany. I knew this in advance and was a little disappointed to say the least; no new catalogue, no off the record details of new cars, no info on the vintage release - nothing! Well not quite. On display were examples of the new SCX Digital pit stop section, which allows for four lane digital racing as well as Le Mans style starts. Also for digital was the new inner ➤➤





# Best in show

Carrera Chrome Merc DTM and Revell Lotus Cortina





# Highly commended

Scalextric Maserati MC12 and Slot.It Nissan



radius curve, borders will follow shortly. There was a small display of the current range including the Lancia Delta, Ford Fiesta and Opel DTM cars (the Lancia is reviewed elsewhere in the journal). But the most interesting news was buried deep in the Bachmann price list!

Back page - SCX Digital - 'Ferrari Set with Pit Box', 'Ferrari 550 Maranello', 'Alfa Romeo 156' and 'Audi A4 DTM'. So it would appear that someone else has a Ferrari Licence! Also listed are digital cross overs on the curve and a new Chronometer (timer). Why none of this was being shouted from the rooftops I don't know, but I got the impression that we were not supposed to know until Germany! Lets hope the Ferraris and others are not just digital, but are released in standard analogue as well. By the time you read this we should know, I'll fill you in next month.

Next on the visit list was Nikko who are the UK distributors for Carrera. A big stand with a large Carrera Digital track in the centre flanked by standard Carrera track and their small-scale system. All the existing range was nicely displayed in open cabinets and their new offerings for 2005 include: 'Ferrari 512 BB', Audi A4 Mercedes DTM, reliveries of the Ferrari 575 and a metallic Blue Enzo. Again no new catalogue as this was in production for Germany. We were given a demo on their new Digital system using the F1 and Yank tank digital cars. The track featured some new components including a longer (double) straight cross over and a pit lane system which when hooked up to the black box can be used to simulate refuelling

and brake repairs etc. Richard managed to launch some of the smaller 'Go' cars into orbit prior to leaving the stand. Thanks to Jon for showing us around. Again I suspect more news will be forthcoming next month at Nuremburg.

Last on our list of slot-car manufacturers was Revell. If last year's range was a toe back in the water of slot-cars this year Revell have dived in with an impressive list of new cars on offer and new liveries of their existing cars. Top of most Brit's list will probably be the new E-Type Jaguars ('63 and '64 Le Mans) and the wonderful Lotus Cortina. It's good to see a manufacturer making new models of classic cars and the list continues with the NSU TTS, BMW 320i, Porsche 550 Spyder (including a limited edition James Dean version), Shelby GT-350R and, a bit more modern, a March 83G. New liveries are also planned for the Greenwood Corvette. Revell promised to keep in touch to keep us up to date with developments over the year; I'll let you know as more info arrives.

Not in their slot-car range, but nevertheless interesting, is a new range of 1:32 scale plastic kits (ripe for conversion!). Two new ranges announced in the 'easy kit' series (to accompany the current DTM's and WRC cars) 4 Rally Dakar models 'Nissan Pick Up', VW Race Touareg, BMW X5 and the Mitsubishi Pajero. 4 'Ferrari Challenge - Gentlemen Driver' Ferrari 360's. All the Easy kit range comes with 'Rolling Wheels' and can easily be converted into slot-cars. There are also construction vehicles, dumper trucks and figures in 1:32 that may be useful for the scenic layouts. ⇨





Whilst on 1:32 scale non slot-car products, 'Britains' displayed their range of 1:32 farmyard figures, animals and vehicles including quad bikes, Ford Transit vans, liquid tankers, JCB diggers and an entire range of Land Rovers from Series 1 through to the current Freelander and Discovery - great trackside pieces. I could not resist the Farm Buildings sets as well - canny how they look like Silverstone in the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s - well you know what I mean! A quick trip to the Airfix stand confirmed some disappointing news for scratch builders, no 1:32 scale cars for 2005 or 2006! They are looking at re-releasing the Ford Escorts in 2006, but for now the only 1:32 scale vehicle is a world war one bus! £10 says we don't see that entered in the Pendle Chassis competition!

And that was that; there was a stand showing a RC track based system using the old Artin track sections without the rail, but all in all pretty poor. With the exception of Slot.It and Revell I knew of all the new releases displayed long before the show and learnt very little from my day out. Too many of the companies employed freelance staff to man their stands and demonstrate the product. When you asked a question about the product they simply could not answer and when they did the answer was

not correct or total bullshit! One tried to convince me that the 1:32 scale car I was holding was in fact 1:24 scale! Companies should also have product accessible. It was great to be able to admire the detail on the Slot.It cars in your hand, but Revell's were locked behind glass - not for touching!

I know that we are enthusiasts and don't represent the entire market for slot-cars, but a little more effort from the manufacturers would make a massive difference. We were lucky on the day, we knew most of the right people to talk to and approach and as such we were looked after and given guided tours etc, but anyone just wandering on interested in the product may not be so well looked after.

The show is supposed to be trade and press only, but obtaining tickets is very easy and I wonder just how much of a return (from traders) exhibitors get. I left the show feeling pretty disappointed, promises of good things to come, but no examples or info now. Next year I may not bother with London and use my day off to take a trip to Germany. The good news is that most of the companies exhibiting at the Toy Fair are displaying exhibits at our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend, so if you want to see the latest kit, come along in May. ■



## Scalextric Ford GT 2003 Reviewed by Reuben Forrester

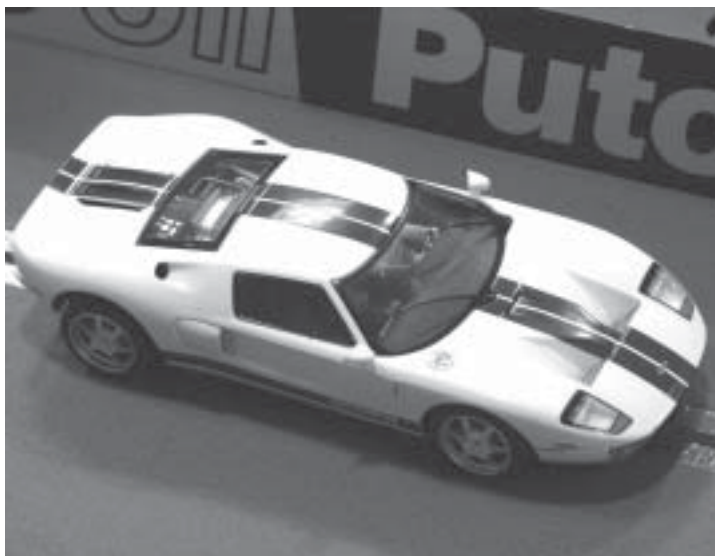
**T**he Ford GT40 built up quite a reputation in its successful racing career and like other 60's legends such as the Mini and the Beetle it has recently been released as a new version. At the 2002 Detroit motor show Ford unveiled the GT concept car. A year later, in time for Ford's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the concept was to become reality in the form of Ford's centennial super car. It was a totally new design but retained essential elements of the original GT40 and features, among other things, a modular aluminium body construction powered by a 5.4 litre V8 which develops over 500bhp. This makes it capable of 0-60mph in 3.6 seconds with a top speed of over 200mph - the fastest production Ford ever.

### The model

When I first opened the box and saw the model I thought - wow; it looked as if it was going to be quick but with amazing detail too, in fact I think the detailing is some of the best I have seen on a Scalextric model. I do not measure cars to make sure they are in perfect scale; if it looks right in my opinion it is a good model and this GT is certainly that. Starting at the front the car has outlined headlights, spotlights, real mesh grilles and a front splitter which comes off when the car is taken apart. On the bonnet there are two huge air ducts and a fuel filler cap and, going back further, there are the two wing mirrors which look new (I have not seen them on the any other Scalextric models) and the door shutting lines which follow onto the roof. Behind these on the side of the car are a pair of air pods (one on each side); then we move further back toward the rear window which covers the wonderfully detailed engine. Either side of this window is another air pod which looks poorly cut out (possibly the models only aesthetic problem but it is very hard to notice) and, behind the window, sit two vents which curve up to the rear wing.

When you turn the model around to reveal the rear end you see yet more mesh and the circular rear lights leading down to the rear bumper. There are some rear air splitters which also come off when the model is unscrewed. Glancing through the windscreen and the side windows reveals the interior which is also very well detailed with a full length driver, the dials and gauges with all the silver detailing, a hand brake and gearstick. My only problem with the interior is it features a driver with a full face helmet, racing overalls and harness in a road livery car.

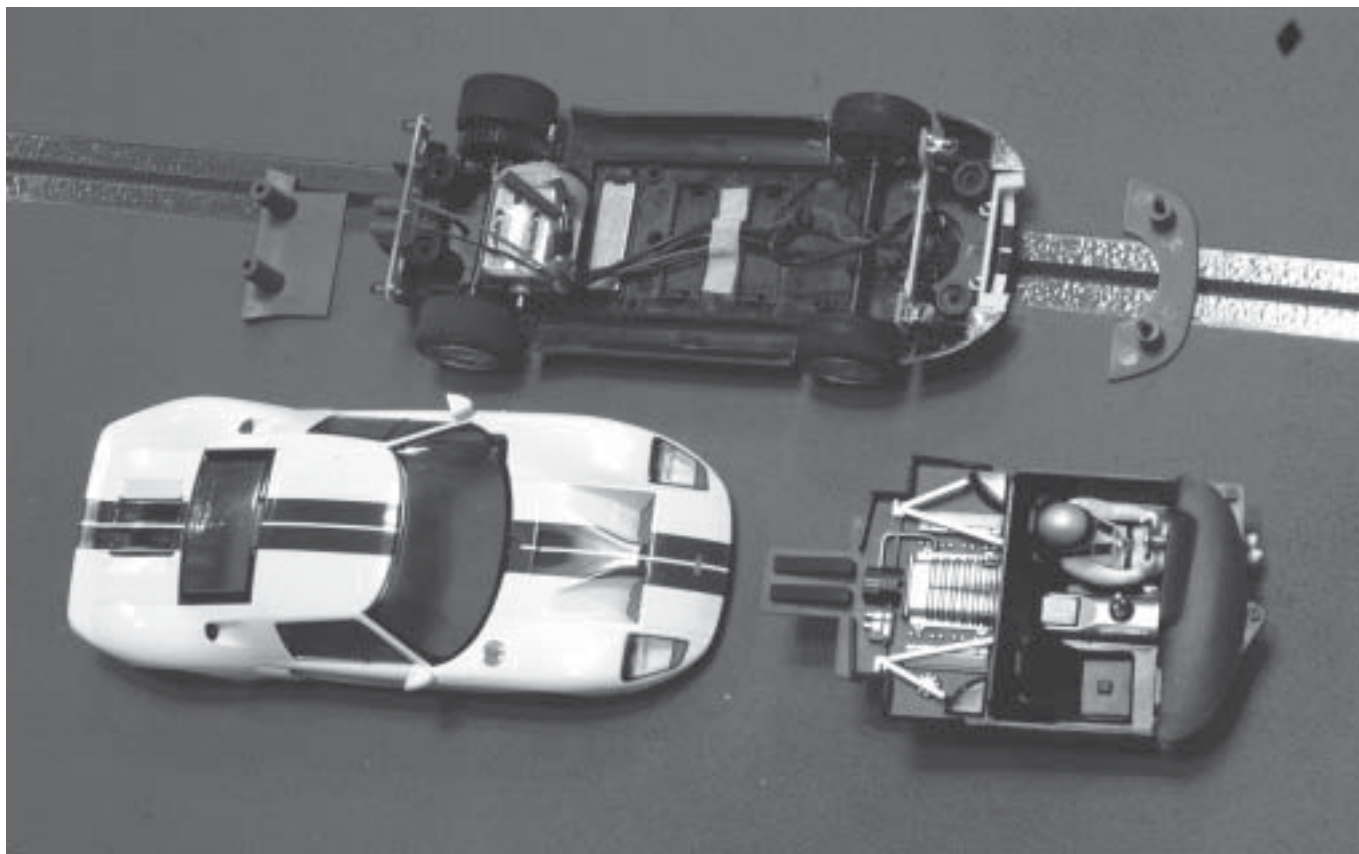
When you put the car on the track you realise the car is actually quite big in comparison with the models of the old GT40 - it is quite a bit longer and wider and is also taller.



### On Scalextric Sport track

After some quick comparisons with other cars on the track it was time to use it. The first thing I noticed, apart from the incredible straight line speed, was the unpredictability of the car through the corners. On one corner the car would slide beautifully, on the next it would stick, the next it would simply de-slot and the next - who knows? This unpredictability made me feel I needed to drive the car slower to keep it on.





So I thought a good old preparation trick was in order - with a sport power base and some sandpaper I set about making the rear tyres true and taking off the first layer of rubber. I am not sure why but the performance difference was remarkable, taking nearly half a second off the lap times immediately. It also became far more drivable - nice and slidey even with the magnet.

Ford GT (before tyre truing):	0:04:66
Ford GT (after tyre truing):	0:04:17
Ford GT40 (Scalextric):	0:04:34
Ford GT40 (Fly):	0:05:22

### **On routed MDF with copper tape**

Next it was down to the Bolwextric track to test it without magnets. I put it on the track and it de-slotted at the first corner! I put it back on and tried again but it just kept de-slotting; in fact even at low speeds I could not string together 20 laps. Some of the de-slotting was down to my driving, but a lot of it was down to the back end bouncing and sliding around. After this I decided a bit of weight was needed in the front

so, after weighting it, I returned to the track where the de-slotting decreased a lot but the car itself was still pretty poor. The back end was still very unstable and still bouncing around; I tried weighting the back but it had no real effect. I decided this was a car that relied heavily upon its magnets (which surprised me as many of the newer Scalextric releases have been pretty quick around this track) and therefore was not much good on copper and MDF track. Although I eventually recorded a decent time the car was just too unstable to race competitively. Here are the comparative lap times:

Ford GT:	0:11:51
Ford GT40 (Scalextric):	0:11:46
Ford GT40 (Fly):	0:11:46

In conclusion the Ford GT is a superb model in a very handsome livery with wonderful detail which, with a small amount of preparation, will run well with magnets and will look good doing it. But if it is to be raced without magnets it would need substantial modification and I fear this would ruin the aesthetics of the car, but all in all a very nice model. ■





## A901 Porsche 911S

Reviewed by Dave Wisdom

Considering the vast number of Porsche variations Fly have modelled during the past few years, the 911 is certainly something of a late arrival. Having said that, judging by this recent release of Dr Ferdinand Porsche's design icon, it's been well worth the wait.

Fly A901 represents the car driven by Michael Keyser, Jurgen Barth and Sylvain Garant in the 1972 Le Mans 24-Hours. The team ran strongly throughout the whole race eventually finishing in 13<sup>th</sup> place overall and 6<sup>th</sup> in the GT class. After covering 2413 miles around the 8.476 Le Sarthe circuit the little 911S was, by all accounts, puffing and blowing towards the end. However, of the seven 911s that started, it was by far the best performer and indeed the only one running at the finish. Several Ferrari Daytonas, winners of the GT Class, finished ahead of the Keyser car along with 2 works Ford Capris in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. (Come on Fly, a 1972 Capri RS2600 next please).

Of literally hundreds of 911s that raced in the early 70s this was a curious one for Fly to start off with. American Michael Keyser drove numerous sports and GT cars including 911s throughout the seventies and eighties with some degree of success. Jurgen Barth is a German veteran who later finished first at Le Mans in 1977 co-driving with Jacky Ickx and Hurley Haywood. Frenchman Sylvain Garant co-piloted numerous 911s at Le Mans and other endurance races during the 70s and 80s.

As for the model, well I think Fly have done a smashing job on this one. I confess to being biased, I like the Fly Classic range and I've always been a big fan of early racing 911s. As well as that, my home circuit layout is inspired by Le Mans and is modelled around a late 1960s, early 1970s theme, so this car looks just right in the paddock and on the track. It's one of the best proportioned 911s I've seen. I admit to not having got the slide rule out or anything,

but it looks very close to scale and sits on the track beautifully. Compared to other 911s modelled in recent years this one simply looks the right shape in length, width and height. The motor is located in exactly the right position, which is over the rear wheels just as the real version... ooh if it only had that glorious flat 6 throaty howl of a live 911S...

I've not found many photos of this car. The only one I have is in black and white and not good quality so it's difficult to judge how accurate the livery and logo decoration is. However, the tampo printing is sharp with extremely fine detail, of which some is only visible with the aid of a magnifying glass. I'm sure there is a member out there who is able to confirm its livery accuracy with a good colour shot. A look through the driver's door open window reveals the highly detailed cockpit comprising of good steering wheel, gear lever and dashboard detail. The driver is protected by a purposeful looking rollcage and I like the way the seat belts are anchored to the rear bulkhead.

Michael Keyser (identified by his name written on the crash helmet) is in the driving seat holding a very determined posture, head down with a firm grip of the steering wheel. '24 Heures Du Mans' is a long way in one of these things!

On the outside is the usual high standard we've come to expect from Fly. The wheels are excellent little replicas of the classic 911 5 spoke gems any fan will appreciate. The drilled disc brakes can be seen through the spoked alloys and the tyres have 'Firestone' tampo printed in gold on the walls. There's a pair of driving lamps attached to the nose to assist with the night-time stints, which gives it that genuine endurance racer appearance. A shame they don't light up. The chassis pan has some fine detail of the gearbox, sump and exhaust system. Again, all nicely finished with great attention to detail. My only criticism would be regarding =>

the overly chromed windscreen wipers. A dab of matt black and alloy silver paint would soon correct this though.

## On the track

Our home track is 'Circuit Le Crescent', a four lane 'Sport track' of approximately 56ft in length. It's based on layout design SCX.1236 taken from the 2nd edition of '101 Circuits'. Timing is managed by a DS Slot infrared lap counter and a respectable lap takes about 3.5 to 4.5 seconds. Fly Classics generally lap around the 4 to 5 second mark.

The car was very quick straight from the box and made one helluva racket! The magnet fitted has a firm grip, but you can still ring some opposite lock out of it round the bends. With a little TLC and lubrication the car felt much smoother and less noisy. It ran beautifully once run in and soon got down to times well within

Handling was then altered considerably and probably more akin to how the real thing may well have behaved. Lap times rose considerably and it was prone to popping out of the slot unexpectedly. In fact, it was a real handful. I tend not to tinker with slot-cars too much these days as I don't have the time or patience, but for those of you adverse to magnets and keen to make the necessary modifications I can assure you this is a very easy car to work on. The body is easily detached from the chassis by removing 4 retaining screws and slips off and on with no trouble at all. Once removed the bodyshell reveals a very neat and tidy chassis pan ripe for any alterations.

To sum up this is a fine representation of a truly classic GT racer and as mentioned earlier is probably one of the most accurately scaled Porsche 911s modelled to date. Hopefully we can look forward to further Fly models of the



the usual Fly classic pace. I compared it with a sorted Fly Ferrari Daytona and the two ran well within a few tenths of each other per lap, although by the end of the test the Porsche was proving the faster by  $\frac{1}{2}$  a second or so. Following a couple of 20 lap sessions the 911 was ahead by a whisker finishing on a best of 3.798 compared with the Daytona best of 4.140.

I then ran a separate test without 'ground effect', namely whipping out the magnet.

911S, Carrera and RSR including those driven by John Fitzpatrick and Erwin Kremer, probably amongst the most famous raced during the period. If you collect 911s then this is a must, even if you don't it's a great model for any collection of classic sports and GT racers.

You can read Michael Keyser's own account of his 1972 Le Mans experience driving the Porsche 911S by visiting [www.club-arnarge.co./keyser.htm](http://www.club-arnarge.co./keyser.htm) ■

# NINCO

## track test

### AC Cobra "White Racing" (50352)

Reviewed by Colin Spark

The AC Cobra. Some, like me, might say it's the epitome of classic two seater sports cars. Sexy, swoopy bodywork, mixed with big muscular wheel arches, which seem to be struggling to keep the wide Halibrand wheels with massive three eared spinners within them. The deep throaty rumble of the 427cu.in. motor exiting turned out, slash cut, side pipes which run the length of the body on both sides, only stopped in their tracks by the bulging rear wheel arches.

Huge, fat tyres that'll spit gravel in your eye so much as look at you. A beautifully sculpted bonnet scoop that says "there's something big under here", and a gaping mouth, unrestricted by a grille or bumper, that will swallow anything that gets in the way.

All this brute force and muscle is topped off with a functional screen just big enough to keep the flies out of your teeth while you sit in a basic cockpit with a smug look on your face. You can tell I like them!

Now, a genuine classic AC Cobra will set you back £150,000 or more, so the only way to get your hands on one that isn't a static model is to buy a slot-car version. OK it might not be the real thing but let's give it a go.

#### Review part 1

The obvious thing to do with a review car is take it to the club track. 110ft of six-lane MDF with a surface that standard tyres just hate. I decided that I wouldn't change anything on this car, but just run it out of the box. I left the magnet in place in an attempt to retain some kind of adhesion to the track. I also needed something to compare it with and, as I have a large collection of AC Cobras, it seemed a good idea to test it against an earlier Ninco version. I could have chosen MRRC, Reprotac, Revell (Daytona



version), or Monogram kit conversion, but I came across Ninco 50207 "Racing Black" still mint in its box and this seemed like an ideal competitor. An old style, black label, NC2 lurked in the chassis along with the circular magnet.

I started with the "White" and was very surprised at how smooth the NC5 motor propelled this little gem around the circuit. The power was instant which meant that corner approach speed was greater than expected, and as I entered the first corner too fast I waited for the inevitable crash. I let go of the trigger and was amazed as the rear end tried, unsuccessfully, to overtake the front and the car fishtailed to a stop, still in the slot. I think we could have some fun here!

After another couple of bends I quickly got the measure of the power and excellent braking capabilities of the NC5 and I was away. Every corner was a joy, with the tail sliding out in a graceful arc and then straightening up again as the power was gently applied on the exit. This must be like the real thing? I certainly had the same stupid grin on my face that I've seen on those lucky enough to drive a full size Cobra. The lap time was acceptable at 10.9 seconds, considering the grip wasn't at its best.

Next up was the minty "Black". I was very confident now as I was "in the groove". The lights turned green and I grabbed the trigger for a shot of power down the start straight. ➤➤



Oh Sh..! I wasn't expecting this. The NC2 was awful. It had no manners, was as rough as anything and the noise was unbelievable. At the first corner I was out of the slot and across the track. The same with the next corner and the one after that. In the end I had to stifle my enthusiasm for my favourite sports car and creep around the track to produce a miserable 11.10 second lap of no deslots. Where's the "White" one??!!

### Review part 2

I'd decided to enter Nic Picot's Rally Event, which was held on Sunday January 16th 2005 and, while browsing through the rules and regulations, I noticed that one of the cars allowed was the AC Cobra. Now I can't say that I've ever seen an AC Cobra in a real rally, in fact you'd have to be completely barking to enter one. Hmmmm....well it would be rude not to.

Another look at the rules and I noticed that all cars must have a co-driver. Ninco half-man, sitting in the Cobra, has an empty seat next to him so I made a quick call to Nic to confirm this rule. "Yes you need a co-driver" came the reply.

Out came the spares box and there he was, Fly Classic man, all resplendent with proper legs and boots. Next problem was fitting Fly man into a space designed for legless, backless Ninco half-man. It's sad I know, but I almost felt squeamish as the Dremel tool bit into Fly man's legs, just below his knees. After another couple

of shots of Highland Malt, for anaesthetic purposes, I removed his spine, ribs, vital organs and half his bum. A splash of paint and I had Ninco half-man 2, co-driver. With a home-made map fitted into his fisherman's tale hands he was glued into place ready for rallying.

It was at this point that I realised that the car looked wrong in its pristine "Racing White" condition. I searched again in the bits box and found a full set of chrome Scalextric Escort Mk1 rally lights which pushed perfectly into the lower grille of the Cobra. To finish off I removed the magnet, oiled everything and applied a mud effect along the sides and up the bonnet.

I entered the car into the non-magnet classic class and was expecting the worst. The Rally had three different stages to complete, two of them containing Ninco Raid track and hill climbs. I won't bore you with an in depth record of my times, suffice to say that by the end of the day the Cobra was holding its own and was a lot easier to control than my other entry, a 4wd Subaru with magnet. The Cobra produced some fantastic tail out slides but still remained controllable thanks to the smooth NC5 motor.

So, in conclusion, it might just be another AC Cobra from Ninco but it's definitely the best so far. Thanks to The Hobby Company for the car and top marks to Nic Picot and all his team of marshals and helpers. It was a brilliant day and something totally different. ■



## Smooth Operator!

# SCX

### SCX Lancia Delta Integrale ref 61570

Reviewed by Gareth Jex

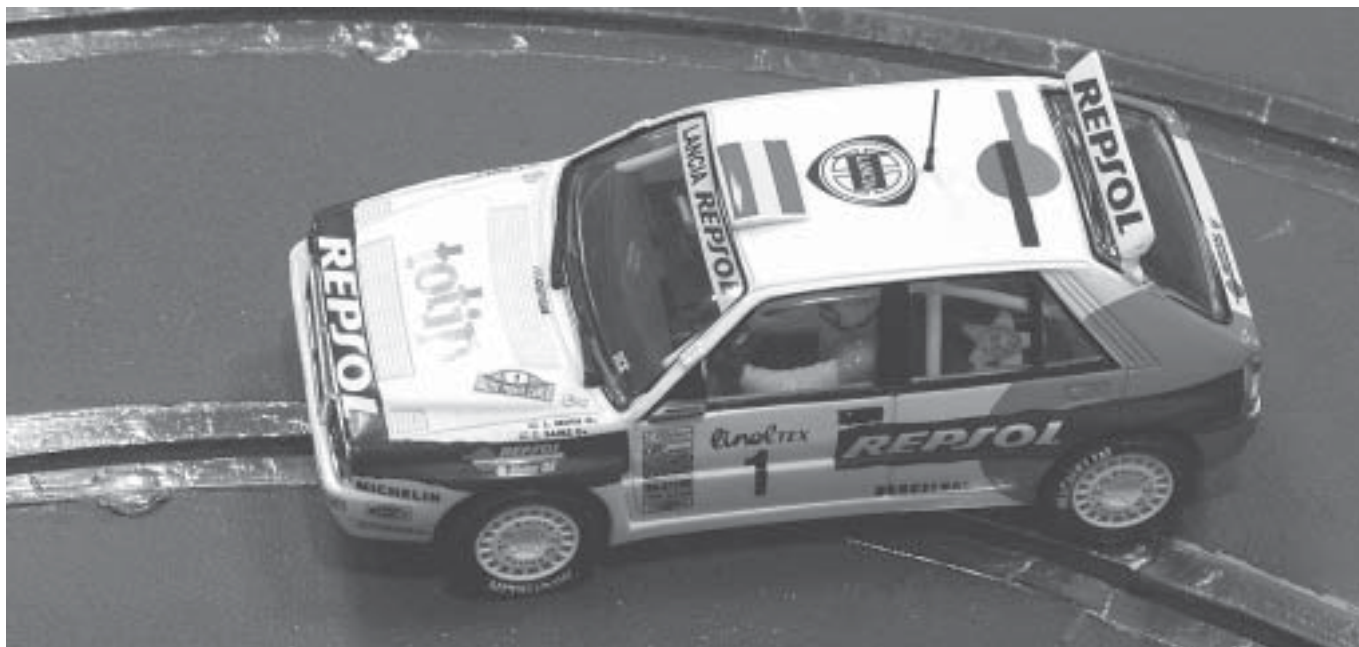
**B**efore I got back into slot-cars I followed rally events as much as I could over the years and several cars and manufacturers have always stood out for either dominating the series or just looking great. In my opinion the Lancia range of rally cars are one of the greats! Stratos, Delta and 037s all look great and you don't see them that often on the roads which adds to their rally appeal. How bored are you of the Subarus?

So when I got back into slots and started buying cars by the box load and then bought my first edition of Roger's book imagine my disappointment that Scalextric decided not to release the Delta because it didn't look right at 1/32! I bought the excellent Exin Stratos and 037s and was very pleased to see them re-released in the various Miticos magazine series etc. During the last London Toy Fair SCX announced their intention to release the Delta and I had high hopes of a flood of classic Group A/Group B WRC classics. Well it's taken a year for them to deliver, but I think it was worth the wait.

Fresh from his second WRC championship win with Toyota the year before, Carlos Sainz joined the Lancia team in 1993 with high hopes of continued success. The Monte Carlo Rally was the first major event and his 8<sup>th</sup> place finish set the tone for what would not be one of his best seasons. This is the car SCX have chosen to base its new release on (hopefully the Martini livery will follow?). White overall with the orange and blue livery of Repsol and the green Totip logo on the bonnet. The tampo printing is very good and all the sponsors logos and livery seem very accurate. The shape looks spot on, but I don't bother with the tape measure to check! The only area of possible niggles are the wheels and tyres. SCX have decided to print OZ racing on the wheels that are not a true representation of those used by the team and the tyres never had Michelin plastered all over them. Picky maybe! Overall excellent – does make you wonder why Scalextric thought it looked odd?

Like all recent SCX rally cars it comes as four wheel drive with adjustable magnet, lights, return to centre guide, detailed chassis etc. ➤➤





However it has a new motor! The RX91. I'm not entirely sure why they put this new motor in, the wheel base on the model is less than 1.5mm shorter than the normal RX81 version so unless they were going for greater accuracy I can only assume it's for performance.

So how good is this new model with new motor? Only one way to check. Give some time on the track. Luckily I had an opportunity to play at the Slot 32 Rally Challenge recently and, whilst the car wasn't eligible to race, there was a Ninco practice track spare. Straight out of the box, quick oil, magnet left in for a few warm up laps. Very quick and didn't want to fall off at all, but this is not the way to see if it's really any good. Take the magnet out and try again, same result! This is good, good acceleration, excellent natural braking (my controller is not wired for brakes) and all round consistent handling. Back in the box with very good first impressions. More time required to give it a real test so off to the Bolwextric club to borrow Tony's Kelvin light test bench. Below are some results from a quick test session with Tony's nearly new Lancia and a range of my other SCX rally cars. All tested at 12V on the rolling road. Rpm at the wheels.

RX91	(new)	5430 rpm
RX81	(run in)	4500 rpm
SCX Pro Turbo (4x4)	(well used)	5500 rpm

Old RX4	(well used)	4740 rpm
RX41	(well used)	4800 rpm

To put this into context, I normally race a well sorted SCX Citroen Xsara with a Pro Turbo motor and Pro Tyres on the rear and well worn SCX tyres on the front. This is normally in the top two when I race at Farnham on Ninco track and performs well on Wood and Copper at the Bolwextric track. A quick ten laps around the latter shows the Lancia consistently half a second per lap quicker than my Citroen and very predictable. With more time and rounder tyres this will only get quicker and like most SCX motors the more you run them the better they get. One quick point make sure you give the tyres a good sanding the first time you use it. In my opinion recent SCX tyres seem to come with a glossy overcoat and this needs to be removed to give the best traction.

To sum up, if you hadn't already guessed, this is a great car, probably the best I have tested so far this year! And such a great looking model; good speed, good handling, well printed, and looks right. My only concern is what to race it against? TeamSlot have just released a 205 T16 which is the right era, but I hope SCX bring out something else to go with it or another livery.

Thanks to Tecnitoy for sending the review sample. I have a spare Lancia that I will take along the next time we use the NSCC rally track so you can have a try. ■

# Carrera Streckenplaner

By Steve Westby

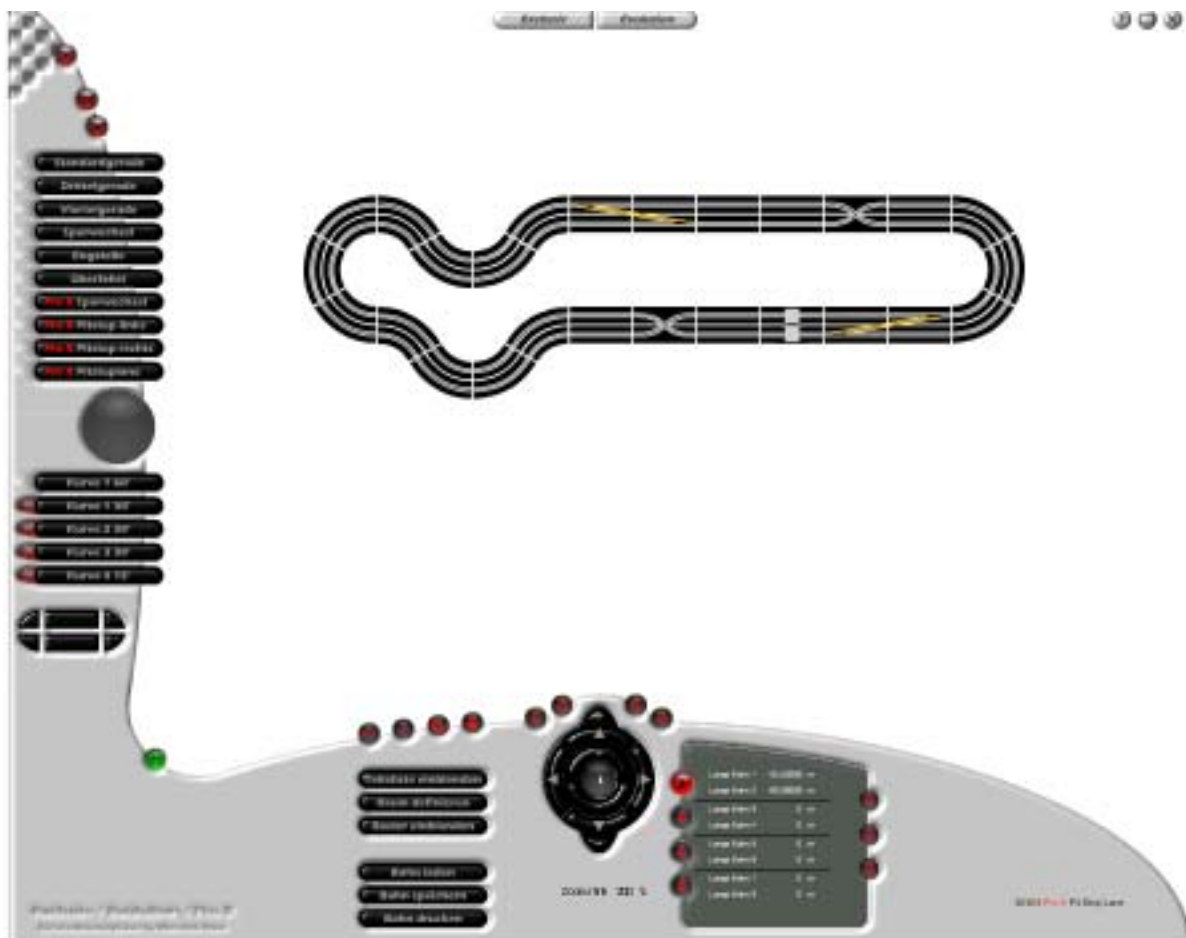
Since seeing the Carrera digital system (Pro- X) at the London Toy Fair last January, I've been eagerly awaiting its arrival, so that I can convert my Carrera track to the digital system. Although the release has been delayed in the UK, it is now widely available elsewhere, mainly the F1 set in Germany and the vintage NASCAR one in the USA.

Given however that my order had to battle its way through the Christmas post, I needed something to keep me busy while I waited for it to arrive, So when I saw a track planner for sale that could handle the new digital sections, I downloaded the demonstration version and was immediately impressed, so I ordered the full version which sells for 9.95 Euros.

I have used Andy Sykes S-Plan track planner for some time and would recommend it to anyone who wants to tackle Scalextric Classic

or Sport, or Ninco layouts. However, while it also handles standard Carrera track, it doesn't yet include the digital sections that are needed if I'm to design all those fantasy tracks that I'll never have either the space or the money to build. So I was eagerly looking forward to getting to grips with this new tool to do that and also design something a little more realistic.

The tool is fairly intuitive and easy to get to grips with, even though I don't speak any German. Because it only supports the one make of track, you can get straight into your design, without having to select any options first. After five minutes exploring the buttons I had got the hang of most of it. The only thing I struggled with was setting the insertion point. The extensive website help system has not yet been updated to reflect this latest version of the tool, but a visit to it still sorted out my problem, identifying a button I had failed to notice. ⇨⇨



This brings me to my only major criticism of the tool. Although the overall presentation is good, the icons and labels are all very small and a bit of a challenge for those of us who are due to have our prescription for reading glasses updated. That said, this is only really a problem while getting to grips with the tool and once up and running it has its advantages. Much modern software has so much clutter round the edges of the screen that your work area becomes too small to actually do the job. Keeping all the control elements small does mean that you have plenty of screen real estate left to design the track, which after all is what it's all about.

One aspect of the tool that is not intuitive is saving your track designs for later reuse. Although it's easy enough once you have got the hang of it, it is a bit fiddly and I would never have discovered how to do it without the clear instructions provided. You need to call up the layout specification and save it in a text file. Updating your track inventory is similarly fiddly.

A feature I liked was the little preview window that shows the type and direction of the track piece you are about to add. I always seem to start my bends in the wrong direction. Comparing it with S-Plan there are a number of differences in the secondary features relating to

room definition and measurement of distances. I don't normally use these, but if they are important to you, you would need to look at the demo version to check them out. I did miss having an auto-completion feature to match the ends up when you get close enough.

The tool can handle up to 8-lane tracks and this seemed to work well, though I only really dabbled with it. An area I did find problems with was in making extensive revisions to a layout, deleting a lot of sections and adding new ones. Although it looked fine on screen, the inventory got confused (it seems I need minus 357 pit stop lanes for my latest layout!) and the layout appeared corrupt when I saved it and then reloaded it. However, closing down the tool and restarting it sorted out both of these problems.

Overall, I found it a good addition to my toolset and at 10 Euros, with a chance to try before you buy, you can't go far wrong. If I ever get around to purchasing the official Carrera tool, it will be interesting to compare them.

Mark, who provides the software, is very helpful and either speaks good English, or has access to better translation tools than I've yet found on the Internet! He can be contacted at [info@carrera-streckenplaner.de](mailto:info@carrera-streckenplaner.de) and the website address is: [www.carrera-streckenplaner.de](http://www.carrera-streckenplaner.de) ■



# Pendle to the rescue

By Tony Secchi

**A**irfix, Autohobbies, Taylormade, Supershells, AA Bodies, Team Slot, Slot Classics, Top Slot, AZM, MMK - what have all these manufacturers got in common? Well, they are some of the many slot-car and private constructors that produce plastic, Lexan, resin or fibreglass body shells for slot-cars.

These shells have to be fitted to a matching chassis before being raced or displayed, and if a retailer stocks a good number of these bodies (and most do) then it can be a time consuming and arduous task finding a corresponding item from the myriad of proprietary slot-cars which is exactly compatible in terms of length, width, wheelbase and fitting so that the product can have the variability to be marketed for sale as a body only or a complete kit.

This problem is particularly magnified by the need to accommodate the retro 50s and 60s single seater bodies in addition to the relatively narrow saloon and sportscars that epitomized that era. A cheap, versatile and adjustable chassis would seem to be the answer and to this end Sean Fothergill and his team (including Tony and Nick) at Pendle Slot Racing have designed such an item and had it manufactured by a local engineering firm.

This adjustable chassis is marketed under the reference PCS/32 and Sean has generously donated a few of these as prizes to the winners of our annual Christmas quiz featured in the December '04 issue of this Journal.

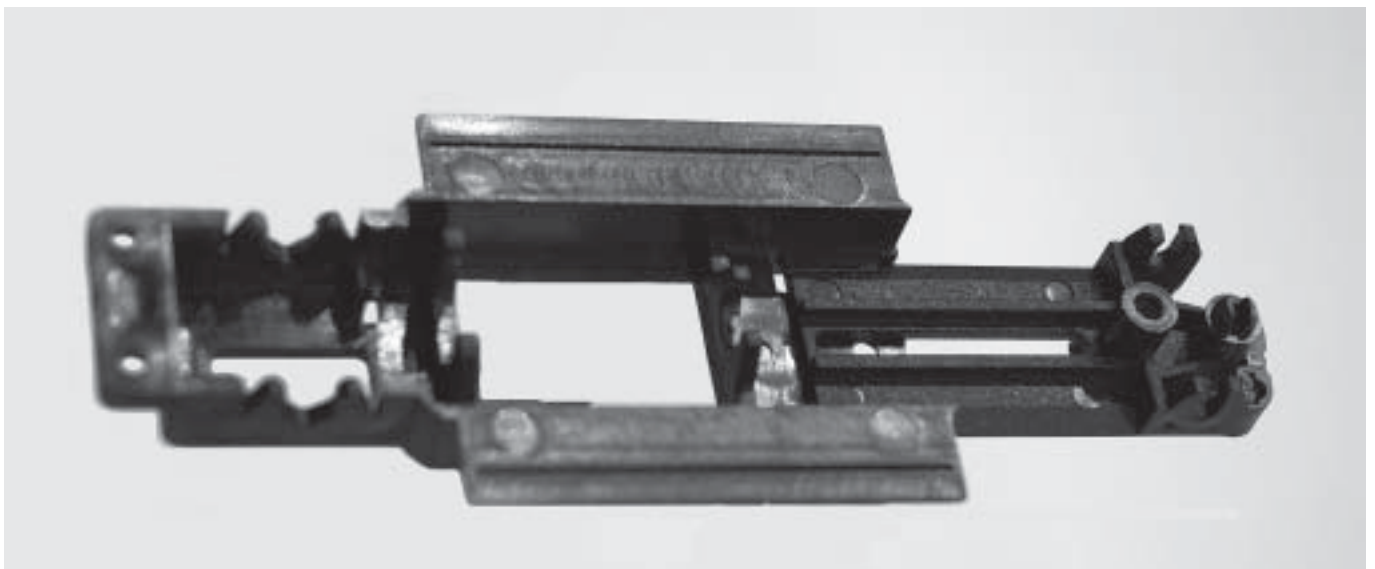
Our esteemed Editor, Brian Rogers, phoned and asked me if I would review this item and produce an article for publication. He then sent me down an example of the chassis. Sean is a good friend of mine and supplies the vast majority of our slot-car wants, so I was only too pleased to agree.

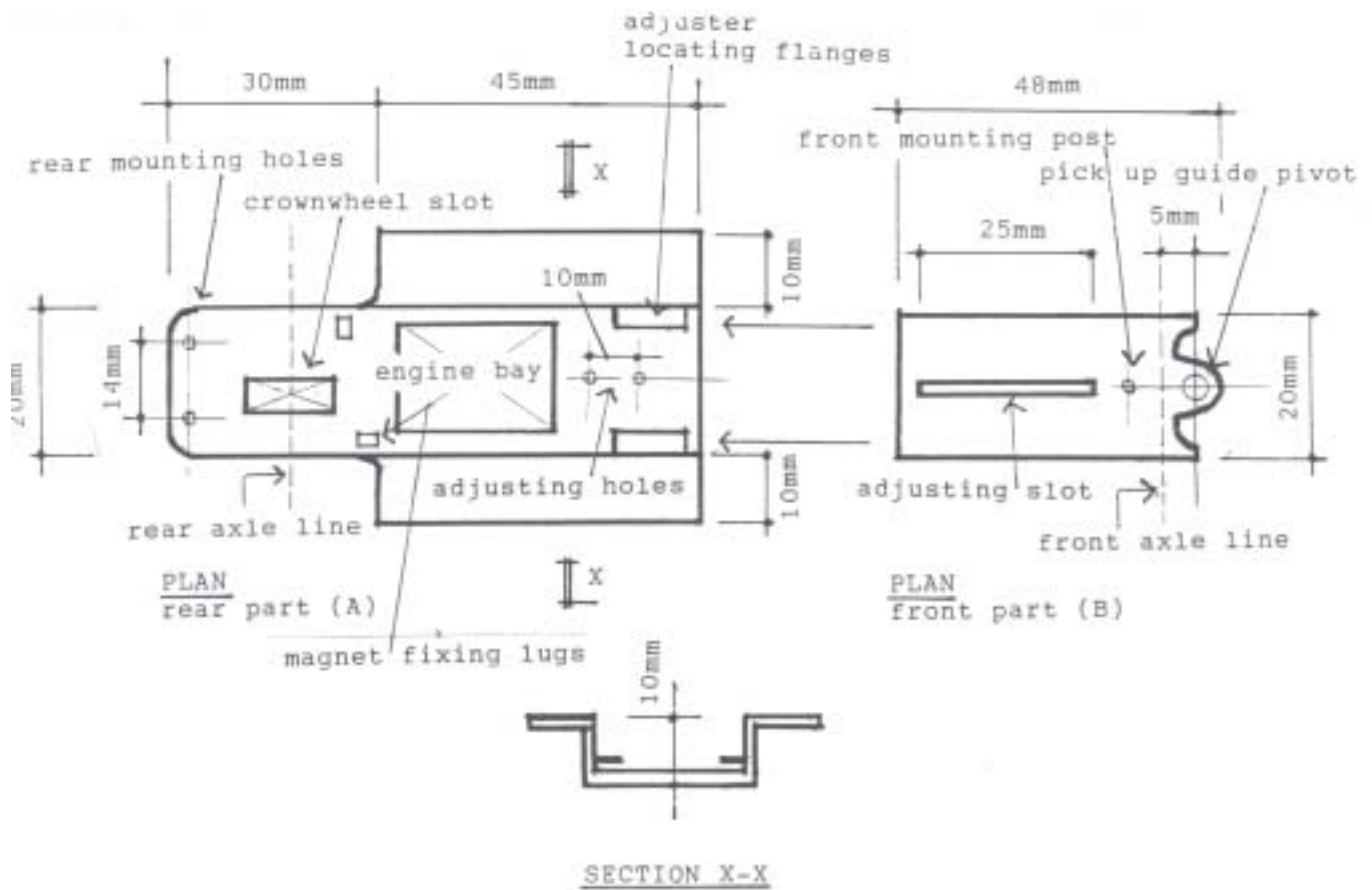
However, before commencing my review of this interesting chassis I spoke to him to get his slant on the project. Sean told me that the item was not designed as an out and out competition unit but more as a solution to the problem outlined in the first paragraphs of this article.

However, as both of us run slot racing clubs, he agreed that a timed test using his chassis and a donor body would be of interest to NSCC members and others.

Designed, I think, about the Mabuchi engine this chassis allows the use of any can motor that has the endbell at the same end as the pinion shaft. This should allow a wide range of ability levels whilst keeping a sensible cost and skill parity.

⇒





### Dimensions

The chassis is made in 2mm thick plastic and comes in two pieces, the engine bay and rear axle mount (A) being separate from the front sliding adjuster panel that contains the front axle mount and pick up guide pivot (B)

The two parts of the chassis are firmly connected by sliding part (B) into integrally incorporated 10mm long flanges either side of part (A). This locates the adjusting panel which has a 25mm long slot matching two holes in part (A) which are 10mm apart. A screw and nut secures the two parts through one of the holes once the required wheelbase for the donor shell has been achieved.

Using this sliding system the range of wheelbase adjustment is from 82mm (mm) to 92mm (max). This should cover the majority of bodies but the wheelbase can also be shortened further by trimming the length of part (B) so that it can be slid further towards the rear.

The width of the front and rear axle mounts is 20mm which allows for the narrow width of retro car axles. The kit includes the

fixing screw and nuts referred to above plus six circular spacers, two of each in three thicknesses -2mm 3mm ; 4mm to allow for varying axle widths.

The rear part (A) of the chassis is formed in a 'bathtub' shape of which the sides are 10mm deep and there are two horizontal side pieces at the top of the tub to stiffen the unit and possibly help with mounting. These can be removed if single seater usage is required. This 'tub' has openings for the engine (in line) and the crown wheel. Brackets with half round cutouts secure the engine fore and aft in the usual manner.



The chassis is inherently very stiff because of its narrow width to wall thickness ratio, and although the small width and adjustable facility allow little room, space has still been allowed for a Fly type rectangular magnet (ref.B73) sited between the engine bay and the crown-wheel slot. There are two fixing lugs to locate and retain the magnet which can just slot in. Pendle also produce their own magnet for this purpose.

Mounting points are provided by a circular turret just behind the front axle mounts and by two holes in a raised bracket behind the rear axle. Both of these mounts have recessed holes so that a certain amount of body tilt can be incorporated.

Standard diameter axles(Scalextric, Ninco etc.) can be used without modification, slotting into the front mounts and by means of standard white nylon collared bearings at the rear.

It is a neat, compact little chassis, well designed, engineered and very well made. It fits cosily into a necessary but void niche in the market. With a little bit of work it can be made to fit practically any bodyshell around - except for the very low slung and wide sportscar/saloon/GT shells representative of the past few years or so. Anyway, that type of car is well covered by the many ready to race complete models provided by the host of proprietary manufacturers today. This chassis is not for your Audi R8 or Mercedes CLK/LM but going back in time it can be used with bodyshells from the not too distant to the very distant past and that is not a bad thing, is it?

## Running test specifications

**Bodyshell:** 1/32 Lotus Eleven - 115 long x 50 wide (AA body in fibreglass by Dave Yerbury)

**Motor:** Mabuchi 'S' - standard plastic pinion

**Rear axle/crownwheel:** standard Scalextric plastic type

**Front axle** standard Scalextric

**Wheels/tyres** MRRC/Monogram/Ferrari 275P

**Pick up guide:**standard Scalextric eyeleted type

**Distance:** 10 laps of two lane 55ft Scalextric Sport track

**Notes:** No tyre goop, no Magnets

**Times:** lane 1 (inside) - 47.13 secs.  
lane 2 (outside) - 49.39 secs.

## Comments

Any 10 lap stint on my circuit that is run in under 40 secs. is competitive. The very fast cars average 34+ and we have an outright record of 32+ on each lane. These figures are just a yardstick because this project was never going to get anywhere near those blistering top times that were set with a modern, much modified, magnetised SCX Jaguar XJR/14.

The wheelbase of the Lotus Eleven donor shell needed to be 70mm so I chopped 12mm off the front sliding adjuster part (B) before securing it. The overall front and rear wheel/tyre width needed to be 43mm to fit inside the shell which has partly covered wheel arches so that the wheels do not protrude and affect the aerodynamics - typical Colin Chapman and Frank Costin (for older members). The narrow width of the Pendle chassis (20mm) at the front and rear axle locations allowed this with ease, using a couple of the plastic spacers each side.

The side pieces were a tight fit in the body shell so I trimmed 3 to 4mm off each side and this allowed for the small amount of tolerance that I needed to position the chassis correctly within the shell. The usual post and screw method was used to secure this.

## The test

I ran the chassis without the shell - no running in was needed as the transmission and motor had been used before but, as usual, the rear tyres with their narrow width proved a problem. I superglued some lead sheet on each vertical side of the 'tub' and a small piece behind the front axle. This improved matters, but cornering was still in the lap of the gods. ⇨

I do not have a stock of narrow retro tyres to try any alternatives, so in a frantic effort to improve grip I resorted to Colin Spark's "Ortmann" tyres again. I decided not to get a new set specifically for the project because I had a few sets of his '44' tyres which I had been using on my 80/90s sports cars.

These tyres are 10mm wide and the width of the MRRC Ferrari tyre I was using was 5mm, so I just cut one of the Ortmanns in half and superglued each half to one of the rear wheels with the lipped shoulder outwards. These tyres were almost the right diameter and a small amount of stretching facilitated the fitting. Once the glue had set I sanded them flat for maximum grip and hey presto! - we had reasonable if not great rear grip.

After the usual familiarisation laps I did several 10 lap stints returning the times shown in the schedule (47.13 and 49.39). These are reasonable times for a project such as this.

To reiterate - Sean Fothergill's original statement that this is not a chassis explicitly designed for racing meant that my construction of the car and its times are not meant to be taken out of that context.

Having 'lived' with this chassis during the time of reviewing, testing, building the model and compiling this article, I have come to the conclusion that Sean and his team at Pendle Slot Racing have achieved what they set out to do. i.e. marketed and made available a very good, cheap, versatile and much needed chassis to the many people who want to build a one off simply for the joy of using it in gentle competition or just to run around the track.

In all honesty, I could find no significant fault in this item and I offer my congratulations to all at Pendle Slot Racing for a worthy contribution to our hobby. ■