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No Smoke Without Fire

The law against the promotion of tobacco products, which was updated in July last year, must be a nightmare for slot-car manufacturers but it has caused me much amusement over the years.

Scalextric abandoned ciggy advertising on their cars over 25 years ago but I think they were more worried about bad publicity than a real fear of the law. They still manage to make the odd cock-up though - the recent Le Mans Torino carried a Winston Cup logo on the door so, in theory, they are committing an offence.

The Spanish firms, on the other hand, don't seem to worry about it; Vanquish MG went for the full Monty with their Lotus 72. They not only did a complete JPS livery but Lucky Strike and Player's Gold Leaf versions as well! Slot.It were slightly more circumspect with their Rothmans Porsche 956s - the real livery was covered with removable 'Racing' logos. Fly have used a similar trick on occasions.

However, I am still not sure whether manufacturers would actually be committing an offence if they included full cigarette livery on their classic cars - they are merely marketing a replica of a historic racing car which carried tobacco advertising at a time when it was not illegal to do so. If we follow the problem through to its logical conclusion - are magazines going to have to airbrush the offending logos out of photos they publish? 'Motor Sport' is going to be in serious trouble every time they do an article on Le Mans or 70s F1!

So, are Hornby going to bite the bullet with their promised 2006 release of James Hunt's McLaren M23? Will they produce it in all its red and white Marlboro glory or wimp out with a fictitious livery and be subject to hoots of derision from the assembled masses? Time will tell.

And Finally - a new year and a new front cover - yes it does look familiar and yes, I have got copyright permission! My thanks to our new designer, Mark Sanderson.

Till next month
Brian



by
Rob Smith



MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

I hope you all had a good Christmas and received all of the Scalextric items on your lists. I somehow doubt that you did as many of the best items for 2005 didn't make it out of the Margate warehouse until the very last minute and only Christmas Eve shoppers would have got them.

2006 is set to be another great year with 10 new moulds spread throughout the year.

C2646 BMW Williams F1 2005 No7 & C2647 BMW Williams F1 2005 No8

Completing Hornby's 2005 F1 grid are the BMW Williams. The are beautifully finished in white and metallic blue with silver detailing and show how fine modern moulds can be. The main body of the car is the same as the Walrus nosed cars, C2583 and C2584, but with the current nose cone and back wing with the end plates well behind the car. With such excellent printing on the car the plain drivers' helmets really look second rate. When I put this to Hornby they did agree and are working on the problem!



C2641A Ferrari P4 Le Mans 1967 Scarfiotti-Parkes No21

For many people this classic car will be the highlight of 2005 and wow, what a car. The shape is just gorgeous and again, the detailing is superb. Read the review for more details. This Sport version is a limited edition of 6000 pieces worldwide. Look out for the standard version and the red and yellow car early in 2006.



C2632A Mercedes Benz SLR McLaren Road Car

Coming bang up to date is the McLaren Mercedes road car. This first release is in silver but look out for a black one in 2006. Once more, the moulding is very crisp with very fine detailed louvres on the front wings and on the bonnet. There are lots of details to the interior too. My version shows some moulding problems and there are two depressions on the boot lid where the plastic has sunk slightly above the body mounting posts. This is very surprising for Hornby these days so perhaps it is an isolated case.

⇒→



**C6014 British Superbike Suzuki
GSXR 1000 John Reynolds &
C6018 M Plant Honda Racing CBR
1000RR Fireblade Michael Rutter**

The bikes have been absent from the range throughout 2005 whilst undergoing improvements but the British Superbikes arrived just in time for Christmas. Both the Honda and Suzuki are brand new moulds and if anything they have even more details than the MotoGP bikes of 2004. The Honda is black, orange and silver and the Suzuki is an eye catching pale blue.

The MotoGP bikes came in for criticism about their handling and Scalextric have introduced a modification to improve things. The bikes now have a new magnet holder positioned at the back and below the motor. The same round magnet can be placed in three positions. More noticeable are a pair of wire stabilisers protruding backwards from the magnet holder on either side. The wires are black and their ends have a plastic coating; they are not too noticeable when the bikes are on the move. However, they have a dramatic effect on road holding and stop the guide lifting from the slot which used to cause them to go straight on at corners. If you tried an early bike and were disappointed – give these new ones a try and you will be pleasantly surprised. The new magnet holder with stabilisers can be bought as a spare part from Hornby and fitted to the earlier bikes although a small locating hole must be made in the engine cowl.



**C8319 Race+ Control Tower,
C8320 Race+ Grandstand &
C8321 Pit Garage.**

With more and more scenic layouts being built, a welcome addition to Scalextric is a new range of buildings. These are plastic, not card and are suitably modern. They are clip-together, don't need glue and are carefully designed so that many of the parts are interchangeable to suit your requirements. For instance, a grandstand section can be placed over the pits – just like the old owners' pits of yesteryear!

The pit garage has slots in the floor and it wouldn't take too much imagination or skill to incorporate it into the layout, especially with the new pit track pieces.

What's Coming in 2006

Before Christmas I was privileged to be shown an early mock-up of the 2006 catalogue, which you have probably got by now. It was a very quick look just so I could whet your appetite for the forthcoming year.

So what can we look forward to? Firstly we have all of the cars which didn't make it into 2005 such as the Pontiac NASCARS, Indy cars and several reliveries. Secondly we have lots of reliveries of current models including the Mini Cooper Porsche GT3R, Nissan 350Z. There will be new versions of the Classic Grand Prix Cooper and Ferrari 156. As usual though, the most exciting items are the new moulds – and there are lots of them to look forward to.

My highlight of the year will be the Aston Martin DBR9 and for rally fans here will be an Escort Mexico. In F1 we will have a new Jenson Button Honda and we will going back to 1976 for Hunt v Lauda in the McLaren M23 and Ferrari 312. With lots of effort going into the Spanish market not surprisingly there is a Séat León.

A press release in December announced that Hornby had secured the rights to the A1 Grand Prix series. This series is for identical cars run as country entries in patriotic liveries. Hornby aim to release the 10 most popular liveries during the year but there is plenty of scope for others only being released in far distant

countries! There is also a Nissan Skyline and the Japanese Quattro cars will be available around the world but without the pit babes included with the Japanese versions! Finally, and perhaps a strange choice is a Jaguar XK8 in a USA racing livery – presumably to appeal to the USA market.

There will be much more information next month after the annual trade only Toyfair and the official catalogue release.

NSCC / Hornby Weekend 2006

Don't forget that there is still time to apply for a place at the annual weekend held with Hornby in Ramsgate. The form was in last month's Journal. The 2006 event is shaping up to be one

of the best with a superb limited edition car and a twist to the racing that will test competitors' dexterity with a screwdriver.

Thank You's

Finally for this month, some thank you's.

Firstly to Hornby for all of their help during 2005. Without their willingness to support the NSCC we would be a much poorer club. In 2005 they again joined us for a weekend in Ramsgate with our special Mitsubishi and produced the superb Mini Coopers as our club car.

Secondly, to all of those of you, who write, email and phone with questions, suggestions and information – it's what makes this job fun so please carry on. ■





As a new year begins, Ninco ready themselves for the Nuremburg Toy Fair due to open next month. They have a reputation for displaying innovative ideas and products at this show and 2006 will be no exception following their recent announcement that their Digital system is to be launched during the first quarter of 2006. Personally, I can't wait to see how the Ninco product compares; if the currently available literature is to be believed (*and why shouldn't it?*) the new Ninco Digital system promises to be the only digital system to have.

'05 Review

Looking back at 2005, Ninco released some really fantastic models; from the re-liveried classic Porsche 911/934 to the totally new Mitsubishi Lancer. So how many cars did Ninco release last year? 15?.. 18?.. 20?.. Well, excluding set cars but including special editions (Ninco Club NSX - 50372, Mas Slot X5 - 50361, Historic Rally 911 - 50365 and Salo Hobby Toureg - 50403) Ninco released no less than 36 cars during 2005 – *that's an average of 3 per month!* And they were not just re-liveries; the range covered fifteen different models, six of which =>



were based on an entirely new body and chassis. Each of the six “race” categories saw the introduction of something new: the CART section saw the Lolas feature the new oval set-up body with small front aerofoils and a single wide rear wing. In the Classic section, totally new hard- and open-top versions of the '56 Chevrolet Corvette were released. For me, two of the most exciting releases were the Supra and Mégane which sit nicely in the popular GT category. The Toyota Supra has already become a racer's favourite, as witnessed in the first Ninco GT World Cup. Moving to the Raid and Rally groups, the Pajero EVO, VW Touareg and Lancer WRC were once again completely new designs for Ninco, all of them featuring full, all-round suspension. Finally, the Road category has evolved into a “Tuning” group with the introduction of four stunning road-racers, two of which are based on new designs.



With Rally events growing in popularity, last year saw the Raid track take a more prominent place in the Ninco range. It is now offered as one of the two Master Track sets and you can be sure to see some of the stages at this year's NSCC/Toyota event made up from Raid track. Ninco's commitment to developing the Raid and Rally series is shown by the fact that almost half of all their cars released in 2005 included the interchangeable ProShock suspension.

Perhaps one of Ninco's greatest advances was the introduction of their ProRace series of spares. Now a full range of light-weight wheel hubs, different compound tyres, bearings, gears

and hardened axles can be used to upgrade and fine-tune any of their range of vehicles. The ProRace components are designed specifically for Ninco and therefore fit exactly to the chassis without the need for modification. In addition to the spares range, another innovative product was the ProRace GT and Rally kits featuring a chassis, two bodies and a multitude of tuning parts to create a car that can compete at any circuit.

Events

I'm pleased to say that the annual primary school Christmas races were once again very successful, raising healthy sums for the school fund. Paul Leagas and I ran two events over one December weekend, this time using the same four cars (Ninco BMW M3) throughout a total of 5 hours racing, mainly by 5-10 year olds, although we did manage to squeeze a couple of Teachers and Parents races in! It goes without saying that the Ninco track, cars and controllers worked without a hitch over both events.



The first event I have received notification of will be held on January 8th at MMRG (Kent). It is an open competition using the club's Ninco cars from the JGTC series. It will involve a combination of sprint, mini-endurance and “crash and burn” races... *I'm sure this will be reviewed next month!*

Watch this space for news of the second Ninco World Cup and please let me know of any club events planned over the coming months. (e-mail: PTSolari@aol.com) ■

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!





As is always the case just after Christmas the news from slot-car manufacturers is in short supply. Just out in time for Christmas was the lovely SCX Fiat 124 Spyder Ref 6189. This is the first in their "Classic" range, no doubt more will follow (probably the Séat's I mentioned last month).

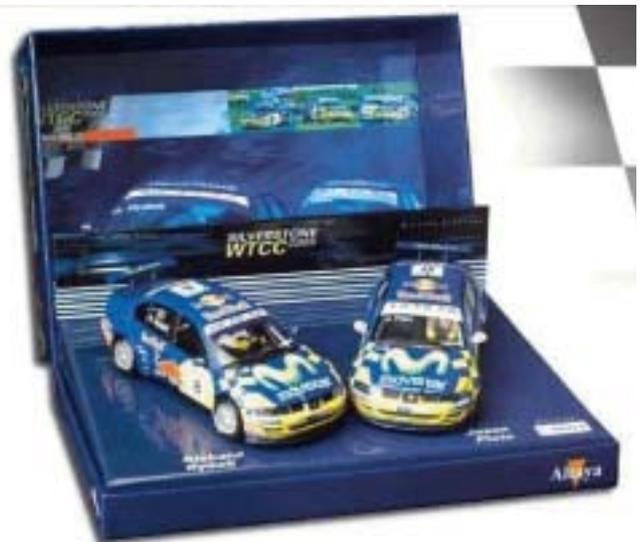


I couldn't wait for the SCX version to arrive and thankfully a friend was in Spain for the weekend hence the Spanish logo on the screen. Phil Insull used one of the first cars to arrive in the UK (a friend shipped it from Australia) at the recent Wolverhampton Winter Rally. The car seemed to perform well, just the front axle to sort with some spacers.

That's the lot for December releases, I have been told to expect new cars at the London Toy Fair, but no clues as to what they are.

News from Spain this month in the form of another Spain only 'Altaya' release. Rather frustrating this one. It features Rickard Rydell's and Jason Plato's Touring Car Championship Seat Toledo WTCC in the fantastic Movistar/Red Bull livery. It's a limited edition of 3000 and is called "Silverstone WTCC 2005". Now I completely understand that this is an Altaya

release and not Tecnitoy's, but why on earth this is not released in the UK is beyond me. I was not alone in asking my contact in Spain for more info on the UK release only to be disappointed. See <http://www.altaya.es/public/A0419/silverstone.html> for full details.



SCX/AEC Models Competition

Thanks to all those who sent me email and post cards with their entries for the SCX Digital set. Lots of suggestions for new SCX models in fact not one the same! I will pass on the suggestions to Tecnitoy's at the London Toy Fair. The winner chosen at random by calling out names until my daughter made a noise which vaguely resembled 'stop' (anything did after going through the names three times!) is Gary Buesnel from Jersey who suggested Paris-Dakar Trucks. Well done to Gary, I will contact you soon to arrange collection of your prize. ■

4th London International Slot-Car Show

By Phil Smith

After the problems of 7/7 two days before the last show in July I was a little apprehensive in the week leading up to this fourth event and I wasn't going to be disappointed. The weather forecast for the weekend was snow and ice for the whole country! Luckily the South East was not affected and Saturday was clear and fine.

Only two table holders were unable to attend due to the weather, Angus Heeps from Scotland and Guus Rauwerda from Holland, although Marcel Zuiver was able to make it from Holland. With Jorde Pruna from Spain attending, the 'International' tag was deserved!

A total of 35 tables had been booked and the enthusiastic tableholders who were already waiting outside when I arrived at 7.45 am were duly let in out of the cold at 8.15. Soon the smell of frying bacon filled the air as the girls in the kitchen prepared breakfast for those who were hungry after their long journeys. The doors were opened at 10 am to the public and there was a steady stream of people all day and in all 118 people came through the doors plus many under 12s who weren't counted.

There was a good choice of slot-cars on display, the normal heavily discounted new cars which are a regular feature of these shows were available on many tables, but Scale Models had decided to take the collectors' route this time and they had some very nice items on display including an impressive line-up of 1/24 scale Scalextric cars. Derek Cooper has recently bought in some very interesting collections and had a fine display of sixties American slot-kits from Cox, Monogram, Atlas etc. Tony Stacey had a good selection of H:O cars for sale, something you rarely see at swapmeets nowadays.

A new company, Formulaslot, who sell replacement racing parts took the opportunity to launch their new range of racing spares and, after a frantic search for an adapter for their non-UK plug, had a video display of the new products showing.

The NSCC stand was busy all day with eight new members signing up and many people renewing their memberships. Also next year's NSCC SlotRally GB meeting was announced, which will basically be a re-run of last year's anniversary meeting - and they said they'd never do it again!

Not much came through the doors for sale but what did was highly desirable - a small collection of 1/24 cars, including the Holy Grail of US slot-cars, a Cox Chaparral 2E, all built perfectly in the late sixties and never run!

All the table holders seemed to have a good day with one saying it was his best ever show! Here are some quotes sent to me by email after the show,

"From a traditional swapping point of view this was the best meet I have ever had doing such deals, not only with members of the public, but traders also."

"My takings were the best at a swapmeet, aside from Milton Keynes or Swindon, for several years."

This coupled with the many favourable comments from the public attending made my previous apprehension disappear and I am now looking forward to organising more events in 2006.

The dates are already fixed and will be Saturday 1st April and Saturday 25th November. ■





A reasonably quiet month, with the International Toyfairs just round the corner it is definitely a lull before the storm.

Carlos Sainz

Now available is the Carlos Sainz special edition Renault 5 (E1201). This differs from the previous "Team Renault" car in that it only has yellow down both sides and rear. The previous version had a yellow bonnet, where this is white. Another notable difference is that the spotlights are in a different configuration. I'm not sure of the quantities made but it will surely sell-out like the previous model.

Alfa Romeo

The third version of the classic Alfa GT series is now available. This is the first GTAj (A1501), following hot on the heels of the GTV and GTAm.

Most of the visual differences, compared to the others, are in the frontal area with a revised grille and headlights. This latest version is mainly in white with green logos. It was driven by Luigi Colzani, "Pooky" and Vittorio Venturi, competing in the 4hr race at Jarama 1972 and finishing 7th overall.

Other Releases

Just missing last month's Journal was the Renault 5 "Calberson" (A1204). A striking colour scheme in yellow, red and black. This comes supplied with a transfer sheet of a well known cigarette brand for you to apply.



Also the "Zakspeed" Porsche 911 GT1 98, Evo-3 (Fly104) in green. This is a re-livery of a previously released standard edition model but has no racing number.

Team 12

Just to clarify on the two Porsche 917s depicted in the "Martini" Team 12 set. The 917K will be the car driven by Juan Barazi, competing in the classic enduro race at Monza 2004, race #31. This is different to the previous release of the same livery (C55), race #35, which competed in the 6hr race at Watkins Glen in 1970.

The other model depicted in the set is a 917LH, driven by Gerard Larrousse & Willy Kauhsen competing at Le Mans in 1970, race #3. They finished 2nd, 5 laps behind a Porsche 917K, race #23, which has also been modelled by Fly (C53).

This set will be available in January. ■

Kits 'N' Bobs

A round up of recent kit and resin releases

By Phil Insull

A fair number of new releases on the kits 'n' bobs front so far this month, including new manufacturer Redline, who have released their first kit, which is the gorgeous Aston Martin DBR9 from Le Mans 2005. It is available in either unpainted or pre-painted form with transfers for either the Enge/Cox/Lamy 58 car or Brabham/Sarrazin/Turner 59 car and is designed to fit onto the Slot. It HSR Chassis. As you can see this is a fine looking kit, and should go well with such excellent running gear underneath it.

American Trans-Am specialists Reinecke Motor Sports have added the 1970 AAR Plymouth Barracuda as raced by Dan Gurney and Swede Savage, and the 1968 version campaigned by a number of drivers late into the 1970 season. Available only as unpainted kits, these two bring the total up to ten in the series and make fine running mates for the Hornby Mustang and Camaro. (Particularly as they are designed to fit on the Mustang or Camaro Chassis).

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Redline Aston Martin DBR9 assembled kit.



From Spain comes the new Team Slot Audi Quattro, and GOM's new Toyota Celica to keep all us rally fans happy, hopefully I will have pictures and more details on these two next month. I do, however, have pictures of Spirit's two new versions of the Peugeot 205 T16, first is the Juha Kankkunen 1986 World Championship winning Evo-2 version, although bizarrely the co-driver is shown as Nicky Grist, when it should be Juha Piironen. (Grist replaced Piironen in 1993 when the latter retired due to illness). The second version is the double winged 1987 Pikes Peak car of Ari Vaatenen in its yellow and blue Camel livery. With four-wheel drive, aluminium hubs and drop arm as standard these are starting to become the rally slot vehicle of choice for many racers.



Spirit's two new versions of the Peugeot 205T16

The long awaited Revell-Monogram MKI Lotus Cortinas have also arrived this month with classic green over white works livery, and the pretty red and gold Alan Mann Racing version. These are nice looking cars but the decision to apparently build them to an exact 1/32 scale makes them look a tad small compared

to other slot cars built to an approximate 1/32, and the gorgeous but tiny minilite wheels are not going to do much for its on track performance I fear.



Revell-Mongram's MKI Lotus Cortinas

Finally, from Barcelona, is Spanish newcomer Sloter Mini Models with their new Ferrari 312 PB. Available in two liveries from the 1972 Daytona race as driven by Peterson and Schenken (No 6) or by Andretti and Ickx (No2). These are very tasty cars and if looks translate into performance they should prove a real hit with slot car fans. ■



Sloter's new 1972 Ferrari 312 PB

I got an email a little while ago about a job offer. It was from Brian asking if I wanted to contribute towards the Ebay column as I have sent the odd item of interest in before. So here I am giving it a go.

Whilst I do spend a "fair bit" of time browsing on Ebay and making the odd purchase or two, it is going to be nigh impossible to cover everything that is slot related between each issue of the Journal, so any worthy items you see please send them into the Editor who will pass the information on for the column. Likewise if there are any aspects of Ebay that you would like me to cover then by all means write in and I will do my best to oblige. Why does the column need some help you may ask?

Well, at the time of starting to put together this article before Christmas I thought I would look at a few statistics. To my surprise there were some 17,000 listings completed in the previous 30 days as well as a low for the month of 3,000 current listings from the peak of just over 7,000 in early December. This did narrow down to 10,000 if the search was refined down to "Scalextric" titled items only, so you can see the scale to which Ebay is being used in the slot world, and this is the UK site only!

So what has been happening this past month or so? Well incentive listing days (lower priced than normal listing days to the novices out there) have certainly encouraged more listings in December than most months as mentioned above, with some pretty fancy prices being asked at times. It seems these are being used by some sellers to take a gamble that someone out there will be mug enough to buy the item without checking around first, so buyers beware. Top price being asked was £1000 for a 1/24 Scalextric Ferrari F1 which did not attract any bids. Similarly no bids were made for an E2 Viper Pace car at £650, TVR Speed 12 NSCC

weekend car £275, a sealed CK1 Cobra kit at £425 and a 1/24 Cox Ford Galaxie at £585. So as it was coming up to Christmas when people tend to splash out on presents I will continue on this theme and look at the top prices being paid by buyers. There was some £21,000 spent on items where the auction value finished above £75 covering many makes of cars, as well as several large set layouts of £200+ aimed at the Christmas buyer. Some of this month's top realised prices along with the seller description, which are often great reading themselves, are:-

Rare Vintage Playcraft Open Lorry 3301 blue	£265
"Ultra rare" Any Slot pair Bird Cage Maseratis	£250
Minic Motorway M1580 Car Water Ferry Set near MB	£245
C64 Black Bentley	MB £241
Green Bentley French Excellent	£220
VIP Stock car racing set	£207.88
1/24 Scalextric Alfa Romeo	Ex/B £182
Ninco Renault Clio, NSCC Limited Edition #401 "rare as hens' teeth"	£165
Scalextric 1960s C65 vintage Alfa Romeo	Ex/B £175
Fly Porsche Team Gulf "V.rare" new	£159
and £144 and also set of 3 cars	£210 and £140
Scalextric C40 Chaparral GT "blue condition"!	£146
LM01 Fly Lister Marcos Joest Porsche Ltd Ed (Scalextric)	£142
Spanish Scalextric Tyrrell P34 6 wheels Scheckter *mint (Coches Miticos car actually)	£92.01
C83 Sunbeam Tiger	£89.50
C67 Fly 908/3 Gulf "rare"!!!	£50.99
Carrera Batmobile	£66.56
C465 Batmobile Scalextric	MB £65.50

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Last but not least there was one seller listing a selection of Scalextric spares who in fact sold several lots with exactly the same contents at various prices between £25 and £35. Besides 40+ tyres, half a dozen drivers and 100+ braids the more avid Scalextric collector may want to know the lots included untampoed Scalextric shells of a light blue Subaru (I believe this had surfaced before a couple of years back), a red Porsche GT1 and a black TVR Speed 12. I did try and get some more information from the

seller after winning one of these lots as to how many there were of the shells, but he would not let on. However, it looks as though there are at least 30 or so judging from the auctions from him so far.

Well that is it for my first column. My tip for this year - if you are after the more rare and expensive items is get out to a swapmeet and check out the dealers who advertise in the Journal, as invariably they can be a better bet than Ebay. Happy New Year to you all, and happy Ebaying too! ■



Sir,
Watching Eurosport in the early hours of Sunday 20 November I and the best part of 60,000 Guernsey people were thrilled to have a British World Champion in our very own Andy Priaulx. Brian, I am sure, after reading many of his editorials will appreciate that Andy is a racer who wins by overtaking other drivers!

Any of you who have been on holiday to Guernsey and have driven on our roads will know why racing in Macau is no problem for Britain's new champ! Now - manufacturers - as none of you lot brought out a model of Andy's BMW when he was European champ last season perhaps, now that he's World champion, we will see two models of the RBM Great Britain team BMW racing cars; one in the usual livery with the Union Jack over bonnet and roof, that I can race, and one as raced in Macau in white and green, Guernsey's own colours, so I can put it on my mantelpiece and say, "YES!" every time I walk past.

I am, yours etc,
Roy Snell

Sir,
A request for information - are any other members interested in Formula Junior cars?

I specialise in the Scalextric Formula Junior cars, having some 80 different ones. I mean the C66, C67, C72, C73, C81, C82, C85 and C86. I think there may be more types than those mentioned in Roger Gillham's book so I'm trying to contact other collectors who specialise in these cars. When putting all the information together we can perhaps make a more complete listing. I think there are several attributes we can consider for determining all the types - guide type, rollbar type, made in England/France/no made in, wheel hubs, colour of the cars/nosecones, with or without white stripe, form of the rear arch apertures, number and form of holes in bottom of car, name of the car mentioned on bottom?

Exchanging cars, documentation, spare parts and information would be interesting.

I am, yours etc,
Hans Vandeveld
(Hans.Vandeveld@scarlet.be)

Sir,

Re - the AGM review - I am grateful for the opportunity that is given me to say a few things about our club as a tiny contribution to this new way of hearing from the members who don't usually attend the meetings. I do think that this virtual AGM is a bloody good idea; especially, as I was hinting at above, for the "far-away" or overseas members. I also hope you will get more feedback than in a usual "physical" AGM.

I must say that I am quite satisfied with the Journal. The colour pages are a definite improvement as long as it doesn't endanger the club's credit balance of course. But if the Journal can afford this "luxury" on a regular basis it is a definite plus that I enjoy very much. The same goes for the quality paper that it has been printed on for some time now.

On the other hand I wish 80% (more or less) of the Journal's contents weren't articles about the new releases each and every month. First, all models are not that interesting, especially when they come by twos or threes according to the different makers (think of the Subaru, Peugeot 307s etc). I don't mean the Journal should drop "current affairs" altogether either. To stick to that point why not review more "extraordinary or exotic" models.

This leads me directly to the second point which is that I would appreciate to read more articles about DIY tips or scratchbuilding (techniques and models) which could also be of some help to newcomers. I am more interested in original cars made by the more talented/experienced among us than reading twice or thrice the same review about identical products. But of course it all depends on the good-will and courage of each and everyone to write for the Journal and I am not an example to be followed in that matter! I only wrote three articles for the Journal I think.

I regret the slow but expected demise of the classified ads at the end of the Journal which enabled me in the past to create quite a few relationships with British members. I also particularly regret the loss of "Members' Moments" which disappeared quite a long time ago.

I'd like to say a word about swapmeets. I don't know if what I am going to say is of any value because, as a French member, I must confess I very rarely attended swappies and I am ill-placed to say what a British club and its members should do or which stand to adopt. I reckon that the club should still retain a number of NSCC only events, if possible, sensibly chosen and geographically located to touch a maximum of its members, in Britain or from the Continent, not to mention those coming from even further away. Even if Internet transactions and particularly Ebay have seen a tremendous increase and if it is probably the unavoidable path to the future of our hobby, I don't totally adhere to it. I feel that there's nothing like meeting actual people, exchanging views, opinions and tips, even going as far as making friends and last but not least "seeing that obscure object of desire" in plastic (flesh) and metal (blood), thinking, as everyone else dreams, of that elusive Bugatti or James Bond set or 1/24th cars. Communication via Ebay or whatever is usually limited and only business-oriented. Very rarely do I get more acquainted with slot fans and keep in contact with them. The virtual (and commercial) world, to my mind, has its limits even though I admit buying the odd car on Ebay myself (for lack of "physical" events not hundreds of miles away from my den!) now and then. Should I try the "Slot Auction" or Hornby site by the way?

Well that's about it. I hope I have not bored the pants off my reader(s). But for once I had the courage to put pen to paper, or rather finger to keyboard and I think this review was a wise move.

The committee do a great and thankless job, especially with the NSCC anniversary weekend. I hope I can attend one in 5 or 10 years' time... Who knows. Miracles sometimes happen. Thanks again for the opportunity you've given everyone to say his (her) word about the club we all belong to.

I am, yours etc,
Pierre Collange



Wolverhampton/NSCC Alpine Rally Event

By Phil Insull

This event was held on Sunday 11th December 2005 on three prepared and “snow” covered Ninco rally special stages all of a high degree of fiendish difficulty dreamt up by yours truly and the team at Wolverhampton. Eighteen entrants including the NSCC’s very own Gareth Jex, and Rally Team Farnham comprising of Gareth, Scott Brownlee, and Jim Moyes took part in the rally which was split into three categories - pre-1975, 75-86, and 86-present, with winners for each class, and a combined result for all three classes together. Drivers went one at a time against the clock with penalties for outside assistance from marshals. A wide variety of cars ran in the three classes including both ready to race and home brewed specials.

Before the event started I demonstrated Curusa Models new Hummvee H1 with its immense torque generated by twin motors, although even with its bags of power ‘snow’ on the pick up still proved a problem as it did for most cars.

On to the action and first up were the pre-75 cars with such items as an Escort, Lancia Fulvia, Stratos, Renault Alpines, Healeys, Jaguar, Ferrari 250 and a brave choice by Jim Moyes who tried a Mini Cooper. The class was won by the Wolves youngster Andy Tyrer using his Fulvia, from my Fiat 124, and Gareth’s Ferrari.

Next up was the 75-86 era with lots of group B stuff including plenty of Peugeot 205s, Audi Quattros, Ferrari GTB, and Ford RS200s, mixed in with a Fiat 131, Stratos, and Porsche 911s. This time it was Jim Moyes flying RS200 that won, from Wrexham’s Rob Davies and Gareth both using 205s.



The Winners

Finally onto the post 86 class and here Jim ruled the roost again with his Toyota Corolla, from Scott and Gareth’s Lancia Deltas.

After all the slip-slide action Gareth had come out on top overall for the NSCC and Farnham, followed by Rob Davies and myself. Gareth kindly presented trophies to the class winners Andy and Jim, with NSCC prizes of white Subarus going to Andy, Rob and myself. A great day seemed to be had by all and thanks to everyone who helped make this unique event special. Even more exciting was the news from Gareth of a major slot rally event being organised by the NSCC in September 2006. Book up quick, it should be terrific fun. ■



Cursa Models Hummer H1

By Phil Insull

Now I know that quite a number of you have possibly not heard of Cursa Models as, until now, very few of this small slot-car specialist's products have reached the U.K. However Cursa Models is a Barcelona based company owned by Juanjo Moya who has to date produced some fine 1/24th scale models for the Spanish market such as Saleen S7, Alpine A110, Seat Cordoba, and Renault 5. Recently however Juanjo has turned his skills to 1/32nd scale products, first with his rally raid "Jeepster" and now with his amazing Hummer H1.

Designed for rally raid the Hummer is based on the incredibly bright yellow "Rock 107 WIRX" radio sponsored version that took part

in the famous Baja 1000 raid event. The Hummer is available as ready to run or kit versions in Spain, but Juanjo is looking for a possible distributor in the U.K. and kindly arranged for me to obtain the one for this article direct. The model has a tough one-piece body shell moulded in yellow, with a deep chassis located by two screws at the front and back of the vehicle. The interior includes half body driver and co-driver figures and crisp well fitting lexan windscreen and side windows. Exterior details include wipers, mirrors, lights and a winch moulded into the front just below the grille. The wheels are resin cast and very like the real thing, shod with Ninco rally raid rubber and Ninco yellow suspension springs/double





bearings are fitted at all four corners to provide plenty of suspension travel. The spring-loaded guide is mounted onto a very long drop arm that pivots from about half way down the chassis allowing the Hummer to maintain contact over bumpy raid track sections. The unique feature of the Hummer is not just that it is a four wheel drive raider, this baby has two enormous Boxer motors mounted back to back in the chassis, powering the axles at either end. The torque developed is simply phenomenal, and this beast could literally perform a vertical take off if you hit full power from a standing start.

Having unveiled the Hummer at the recent Wolves Alpine event where, like every other car you needed to stop and clean the “snow” off the guide, I took the Hummer back once the track had cleaned up a little and tried it against the latest Ninco VW Touareg, and the Pajero with their magnets removed. On the tighter infield chicane sections set up for the rally the Hummer lost out a little as it is both physically bigger and heavier than the Ninco raiders, and could not change direction quite as quickly. However, up

the hills and along the straights the power of those two motors simply blitzed the Nincos into submission once I'd got used to the Hummer's amazing acceleration. Over the rough terrain sections all three coped admirably with the suspension and drop arms soaking up the bumps, even at high speeds, although again the Hummers weight and width made it feel far more stable. Over a flying lap of the longest stage (110ft) the Hummer managed a best time just over a second quicker than the Touareg, with the Pajero a few hundredths further back. Impressive considering that this is, as far as I know, the only one in the UK at the moment and I almost certainly didn't take as many risks with it as the mass produced rivals. This is a truly awesome beast, the styling and colour may not be to everybody's taste but it stands out from the current rally raid crowd and how.

Having sampled Cursa's Hummer, I'm hoping that Juanjo can arrange for a UK stockist, and hopefully we'll see a few more of these magnificent raiders along with their next 1/32nd release, a Honda Civic Type R. ■



Mercedes Benz SLR McLaren Road Car C2632A

By Robin Clark

So, what did *you* get for Christmas? Well, if you got one of these new SLRs, then you know that Santa had his listening ears on.

For a measure as to how good this car is, I had mentioned to my 10 year old daughter that it was on my wish list and if we were lucky, it might arrive before Christmas Day, basically because I had heard reports that Santa was having problems keeping up with demand, so was having to send some of his presents by post

this year. Anyway, on the last Wednesday before Christmas, a package duly arrived. However, I was at work when I received a call from my daughter to say that the car had arrived and could she open the parcel! Well how could I say no?

By the time I got home, it was sat on the table, unwrapped, with her staring at it, uttering a single word – “Cooool”!

⇒→



I have to say she's absolutely right. Dressed in silver and chrome, it sits beautifully on the track and really looks the biz. Being a Mercedes collector, for me this is the perfect addition to my stable.



Facts 'n' Figures

A few facts about the full sized model first:

- Cost: £313,465
- Specification: Front-engined twin-screw supercharged 5.5-litre V8.

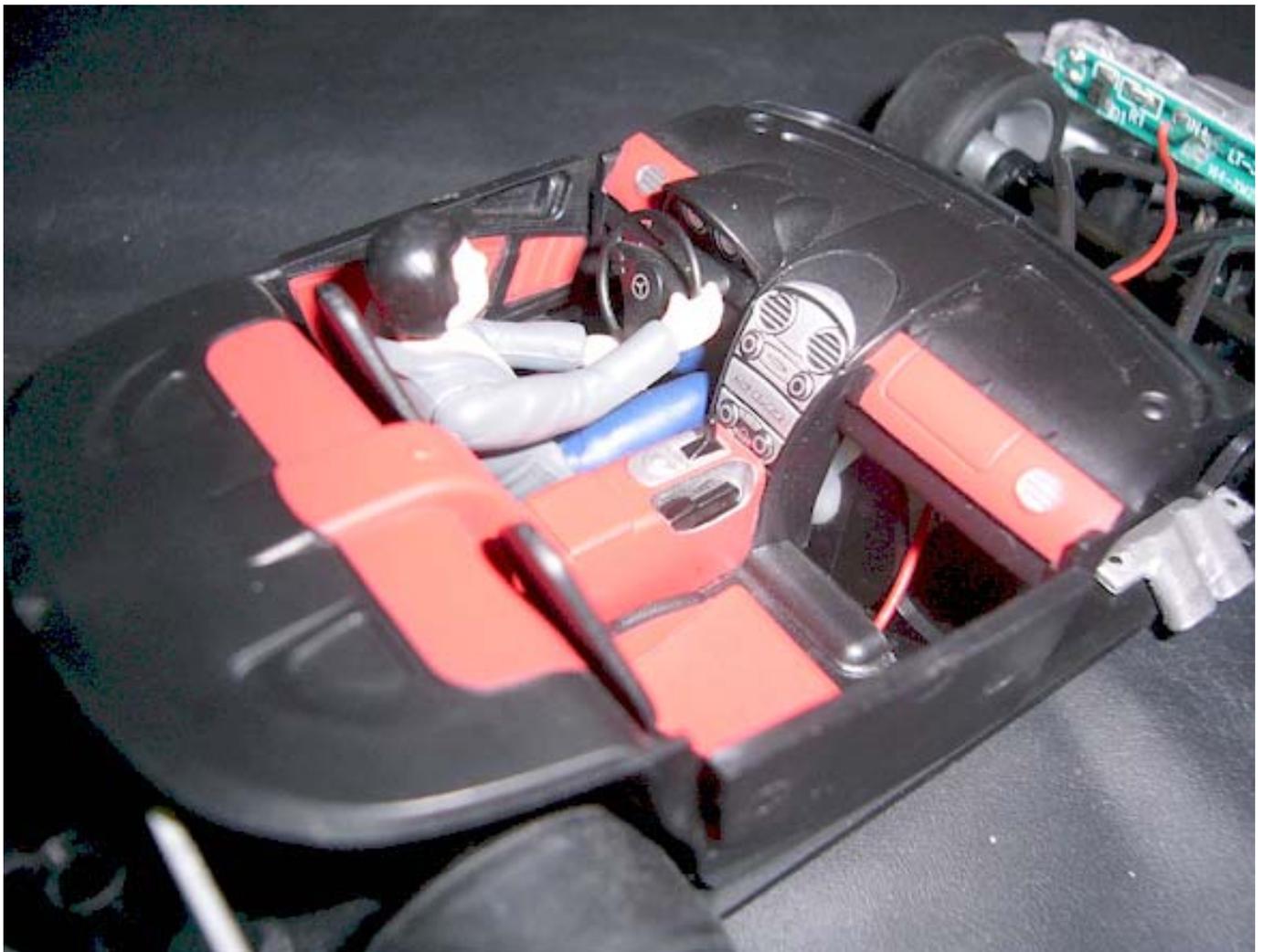
The compact 24-valve V8 itself has been developed by AMG for the project: 626bhp at 6,500rpm, 574lb ft at 3,250rpm (or more significantly 515lb ft at just 2,000rpm), and all this at the Euro IV emission requirement thanks to twin towers of all-metal catalytic converters on either side of the block..

- McLaren expects to build 3,500 SLRs over the next seven years.

Now for the Scalextric version:

- Cost: approx £30.00 (Interestingly the scale cost works out at £9,795.78 – so quite a bargain then!). Look around though, I've seen it on-line for £27.50.

- Specification: Front-engined in-line Mabuchi Sport motor.



Scalextric expects to build 4,000 Sport versions and given mine is no 3913, I guess they've all been produced and are in your local store now. I wonder how many of these will find their way to garages in the Middle East?

Externally, the body profile is tremendous. The wheels are the correct profile. The door mirrors with their twin stem mounts are 1st class and the use of metal parts sets the model off a treat. The car has lights front and rear and comes complete, of course, with a strong magnet and self-centring guide blade. The interior detail on the model is, I think, fantastic getting as close as they reasonably can to the full-size interior, complete with 'Silver-Arrow' leather (which is in fact, red). No racing driver this time, but a t-shirt and jacket clad fella in jeans; in fact I reckon it's Clarkson himself!

On the Track

Mmmm. First problem. I have to admit to not having bought too many Scalextric, Ninco, Fly or SCX cars recently. I've been mainly salivating over the Carrera American Muscle. So how would I compare its performance?

Then it came to me; I remember seeing a programme on the telly when they took a sports car for a lap of Silverstone, but pitched it against a full-race spec version, as well as a F1 car. In real life they actually staggered the starts, but for this test, I would simply run them for five laps each. So there was the answer. I would race this new SLR against the F1 McLaren Mercedes 'David' car and the Mercedes CLK LM Road Car. Interestingly, all three cars would be venturing onto the track for the first time out of their boxes, so what better comparison?

In the real world of course this new SLR wouldn't stand a chance, especially with all the weight it's carrying in optional extras. So how would it compare to the 1/32 scale competition?

Well, Clarkson, eat your heart out, because this Silver Arrow has a point to make.

First out of the box, David's F1. After a few warm up laps, I set to task and recorded a fastest lap of 16.54s. Next up, the Mercedes CLK LM, which turned out to be quite a disappointment,

recording a best time of 19.05s. Finally, out came the McLaren SLR. After bedding in all the moving parts, I managed a best lap-time of 17.20s. I reckon I could have gone a little faster, but was afraid of damaging those to die for door mirrors!

Conclusion

This car is without doubt a pleasure to behold and as such definitely collectable. On the track it trounced the CLK and was only 0.7s behind the F1 car. Now this may be in part down to the technological improvements made in the Scalextric product over the last couple of years, but still, very impressive! Put it this way, I can't see Clarkson wanting to give this car to the Stig too often!

Finally, I have to tell you, with Christmas Eve approaching, my daughter announced quite nonchalantly, whilst we were wrapping a few 'extra' presents for mum, that she doesn't believe in Father Christmas anymore. Well I was shocked – who could have told her such a terrible lie? WE ALL KNOW THE TRUTH, DON'T WE? ■





Track Designer CD

By Rob Smith

Hornby's Track Designer Version 1 software is an addition to the 2005 Catalogue and shows just how far the hobby has evolved from the days of the old track plan booklets. Track Designer is a subset of the SportWorld race management hardware and software product just being released.

As you might expect Track Designer enables you to design your tracks and take a test drive on your PC before ever touching a piece of track.

You can start immediately designing tracks but an optional first step is to define your room layout. A number of sample room shapes are provided and you can provide the dimensions for each wall. I began with a simple 8' x 4' board as the basis for the NSCC / Hornby Weekend 2006 track. Preferences for units can be set to Metric or Imperial but you still get a grid in feet!

A floating toolbar carries all of the tools you need. The dropdown at the top allows you to choose Sport or Classic track, borders, scenery and the environment. We will cover these last choices later on.

Starting with the virtual powerbase kindly provided by the system you add track pieces, which are organised by straights, curve radius and special track pieces, by clicking the icon on the toolbar. Flyouts from each group show all of the track pieces available in that group. You can change between Sport and Classic track at will and the system has the intelligence not to connect pieces which don't match. The same is true for chicanes too. The Sport Digital (SSD) curves are there too but not the pit lane pieces yet. When the last piece gets within tolerance of the first the track automatically closes.

Like all good software users I initially paid no attention to the help files but it is worth making the effort to do so. Track Designer won't pass any Microsoft Office Compatibility tests and there are some interesting quirks to the

interface and the meanings of some icons are hard to guess. The help file is just a simple pdf file that seems well written and comprehensive.

Whilst building your track you will need to move around to view it from different directions and this is achieved with the tools in the bottom group on the toolbar. In addition to zooming in and out and panning around you can spin the view in 3D and view it from any angle – very impressive. There are plenty of undocumented features here too – page-up and page-down, zoom in and out and a right mouse click goes straight into the 3D mode.

With a basic layout completed I next added the borders. By clicking the first track piece and then holding down the shift key and clicking another piece, borders can be added in groups saving lots of time. At any time you can take a driver's eye view by pressing the Tab key – another undocumented feature!



The scenery setting allows you to add buildings, trees and people and you can get really carried away creating your own virtual race venue. The classic plastic buildings are all included as are the more recent cardboard ones but the latest plastic releases are not there. Perhaps Hornby can add these at a later date and it would be nice to see the 60's kit buildings



too. In addition there are several fictitious buildings including simulated populated grandstands. There are models for trucks, additional cars and TV cameras. Finally, there are models for trees, bushes and people. These are 2 dimensional rather than full 3D but are very effective none the less.

The final stage is to add an environment. This has several parts to it starting with an overall colour scheme and a sky dome. This gives an overall colour with a realistic sky and a horizon. You can then start adding texture and colour by selecting them and painting with the brush tool. These textures and paint tools are very effective and even the most un-artistic can easily achieve great looking effects.

However tracks are rarely flat so terrain can be added too. Both the track elements can be elevated and the ground around them. Lifting the track itself is a bit hit-and-miss and the results are difficult to predict. With a little practice suitable effects can be achieved. Making the earth move is much easier and the results

can be spectacular. However, the placing of scenery on the terrain is very poor and you can end up with floating trees!

Don't expect photo realistic rendering though. Any users of modern gaming software will be disappointed as there are no shadows or other lighting effects. There is no anti-aliasing so there are dreadful jagged lines everywhere and the objects are untextured.

Links are provided to the various Scalextric web sites and forum for those on-line and a tour of the SportWorld is also provided.

In conclusion this is a major step forward in Scalextric track design. The scope of the product is great and it does everything you could want and much more. The user interface is quirky but easy enough to learn. The graphics quality is truly appalling (but after 20 years in the CAD software industry, that is my specialist subject). Value for money is high and with an SRP of just £9.99 you can't go wrong. Give it a go and have fun designing to the limits of your imagination. ■





Scalextric Ferrari 330 P4

By John Kelly

Having been a lifelong lover of anything and everything Ferrari, the news that Hornby had acquired a licence to produce a range of Ferrari cars was most welcome. My imagination began to run to all the possibilities of new cars and upgrades of previously released Ferrari models.

Hornby have been busy and have wasted no time in releasing new models this year, already the sharknose 156 and last year's F1 F2004 are available in the shops.

So when Brian (our esteemed editor) offered me the chance to test and review the new Ferrari 330 P4 I jumped at the offer. These cars represent the four stunning cars that raced in the 1967 Le Mans 24hr race at which they finished in first, second and third places.

The model I was given was of C2641A Limited Sport Edition No 21 P4 Le Mans 1967. The model is nicely finished as we have come to expect from recent releases from Hornby with excellent wheel and external detailing. It is fitted with the now standard quick change braid plate. The car is powered by a rear mounted side-winder Mabuchi SP motor rated at 18,000 rpm.

Although it looked the part I believe a model is made to race and it was time to see how well this one would perform on track.

I took it to test at Mussel Bay Race-way in King's Lynn, the track uses Scalextric Classic track so this would provide a good test of the cars performance with and without magnet.

Straight from the box the car ran well with only one minor problem; this being the depth of the guide blade which kept bottoming out in the slots. This was easily sorted out by carefully removing a small amount of material from the bottom of the blade. This would not be a problem if you use Scalextric Sport track.

The car handled well with just enough Magnatraction to provide grip but still allowed the tail to slide around the corners. This produces a car that looks right on the track; it cornered at realistic speeds and was fun to drive.

With the lap timers on it was time to see how quick it would lap the 52ft track and after a few laps a creditable time of 6.043 sec was reached.

With the magnet removed performance was quite disappointing with the car easily rolling out while cornering. Lap times obviously ➤➤





suffered and a fastest lap of 8.223 sec was the best achieved. I'm sure however this could be improved upon with further setting up and should not discourage anyone from running it without magnets.

It was now time to see how it would perform while racing in earnest. I took it to our Friday night race night where a real comparison could be made.

We raced "classic" sports cars and the Ferrari was pitted against offerings from Carrera, Ninco and Fly. I was really impressed by how well it performed straight from the box, being very competitive with several wins to its credit and extremely good fun to race. The car

proved to be very capable of resisting crash damage, even with my driving, thanks mainly to the lack of fragile small parts.

All in all a nicely presented and fun car to race and a good addition to any collection. I now wait in expectation as to what the next Ferrari offering will be from Hornby but just keep them coming. ■



BITS & PIECES

New Webmaster

As of this month Mark Sanderson will be taking over the reins from Adrian Norman, who has been an excellent long serving Webmaster:

“A new year brings a new era; with our club growing and becoming a more prominent figure in the slot-car world through events like Epsom, it is time the website had some changes.

Rather than ploughing head long into this new venture, I stood back and thought: ‘Why not ask the members what they would like to see on the NSCC website?’

So, now is your chance - just drop me an email with suggestions or ideas for the website. You may have ideas of what would you like to see, maybe articles that are exclusive to the website, competitions, mini-forums, galleries or monthly changes? Do you like the overall structure and navigation? I am open to any suggestions. The email address remains the same:

webmaster@nsc.co.uk

I look forward to hearing from you all.”

Mark Sanderson

So, Farewell Then, Sport Versions?

One notable absentee from the 2006 Scalextric list is any mention of ‘A’ versions or ‘Sport’ cars. Does this mean that the Ferrari 330P4 and McLaren/Mercedes SLR are the last of the breed? No doubt these cars will soon appear on Ebay described as “Ultra Rare”!

In truth the “Sport” version was nothing of the kind - just an ordinary car in a fancy box with a higher price so it really should have been called a ‘Collectors’ edition.

Mind you, I bought a lot of them so the marketing hype must have worked!



Thanks to everyone who has already called and written to try and book a place in Slot Rally GB. The classes have not been decided yet (London Toy Fair) and entries are not being accepted yet. I will announce the classes and print entry forms as soon as I can. Also thanks to the dealers and manufacturers who have already confirmed their attendance.

Rolf from Slotfire has already confirmed that he will be coming again from Germany and will be displaying two new products including his digital track system. Those of you lucky enough to have played on his track system last year will no doubt be interested to see his new product.

Gareth Jex

Toy Story

No doubt a fair number of you were watching James May’s programme at Christmas about his boyhood toys. I thoroughly enjoyed it - high-spots for me were the ‘sinking of the Airfix Bismarck’; Adrian Norman polishing the world land speed record Scalextric track by skating on it with a piece of cloth and Graeme Thoburn’s reaction to being beaten by his daughter Meg. It’s only a bit of fun Graeme!

Incidentally, the scenic Scalextric track featured belonged to NSCC member Max Winter.

For those who missed it the Scalextric part of the programme can be found at:

<http://upload3.putfile.com/videos/35418442327.wmv>

I wonder how much it would have cost Hornby for a peak time advert of that length at Christmas?!



SCX Tuning Car By Dave Sykes

To begin I must say this car is not, well, my cup of tea. Some of you might recognize my name from a number of resin cast bodies from the fifties or earlier; however I do race models of all ages at the Scale models' circuit at Goyt Mill, Hazelgrove and have an all too big collection of all types, makes and ages of slot-cars. I have also, for the last year or so, written a weekly race review for the club website which is apparently how I got this job.

Well last Thursday as I entered the club I noted Mark running around the club circuit a brightly lit model with neon lights underneath which I immediately recognized as an SCX tuning car and discounted as I wasn't interested in owning one. I began to set out my cars for the race that night, cleaning braids and tyres and oiling up bearings when I noticed a presence beside me. It was Mark and he asked me to review this car for Gareth Jex. My first thought on seeing it was what had I done to upset Mark so badly, closely followed by, "It's horrendous", followed by, "Oh my god, what has the driver been taking". I did however agree, never being one to turn down a challenge or a free dinner.

I was going to begin with, "It's got a very nice crystal box", and end there but that wouldn't be fair so I really ought to spend a little time on the car and look at it from as many angles as I could bear. Anyhow folks - what is it with boxes? Why does everybody have to produce a different size and shape one each year. Trying to pile them up on my shelves is a death trap. Again why waste good plastic on the box there's at least another model's worth there.

The Box

Well it's the new clear plastic affair with a central angled ramp for the car. A red card insert carries very little detail about the car, no spares and a list of six features. Lights, magnet, centring

guide blade, sprung guide, body rock and underbody lights. A peg locks the car in place, which is removed with a coin. However the chassis is even then still pegged to the stand and needs a very firm tug to release. The details on the box are sketchy and I was not sure that I would not break the car trying to release it.

The Model

The body of this 3-door hatch, which may have been based on a Séat Léon, is painted purple which in itself is not a bad colour and then decorated with silver flames in the style of modern tattoos with a thin white border. The body kit extensions to the front, extremely large and gaping spoiler, and rear and also the wiper blades are painted yellow. Now purple and silver can be worked together to give a good livery - think Dairy Milk and Cadbury or Silk Cut but it just does not work here. The silver may be just a little grey, emphasized by the white lines, or the whole pattern a little too busy but it doesn't suit the car's panel lines. The tampon printing is just a little off as well with some panel lines filled with paint and others clearly showing through. Then there is the yellow which I just do not understand, it doesn't fit with the purple and looks like a last ditch attempt to make the car interesting. I have always found problems with painting things yellow especially on top of a dark colour. To get the yellow to show you need to use a lot of paint and that seems to have been SCX's problem here. The yellow on the front spoiler is so thick it has chipped off from a front-end impact and that on the yellow plastic wiper blades obliterates the detail. This use of colour is immediately reminiscent of the Joker Porsche from Scalextric, which always made the cars look like toys and "plastic" as it does here. Other detractions - well there are a few - the front lights look awful, chromed with holes for the LEDs nestled up against a grey plastic radiator grill.





The rear end of the underpan has been painted silver and dimpled through the rear yellow body kit but then has two large chromed exhausts or something either side.

The wheels are chromed five peg, which look impossibly thin at the centre point and are very Bling. The chroming process has covered some detail and I suppose makes them look slightly toy car. No sign of brake discs or calipers, which would have improved the look.

The interior - well, well isn't he a "nice" boy? The driver figure has spent many a year on steroids, or possibly in a wheelchair due to his body ending around his diaphragm. This figure has more muscle definition than Arnold S, he wears a sprayed on white vest and black shades on his shaved or bald head. It may be that the shades indicate that he has a visual impairment, which may explain the colour of his car, or it could be that there is nothing else in the cockpit than a steering wheel and the top of two-bucket seats. It is while peering in that you notice that the door pillar is painted on the interior glass and this doesn't meet the bodywork leaving a clear gap.

Now to the casual reader it will look like I am slating this car. Well, so far, yes. The colour

is wrong; I thought that perhaps they had bit of blue and a bit of red plastic left at the factory and ran this off purple just to use it up but no. On opening up the model the basic shell was white and has been sprayed purple so somebody sat down and designed this! To be honest I think they tried too hard. After a few days with this model I can see past the paint and quite like the shape so if they had stuck to purple and silver or even just yellow or purple and yellow the car would look a damn sight better. As to the driver figure well he is a little camp or generously Vin Diesel like but there are much worse figures out there on the market; a look in most makes' slot-cars sees the driver as an afterthought and with my own models I know that getting the body shape right is very hard.

The Racer

On the track, unadjusted, the magnet gives a fair amount of grip. This item is contained in an adjustable carrier just behind the car's motor. In fact the whole motor magnet and rear axle assemblies are carried in a separate sub chassis which is loosely clipped in to the main chassis allowing it to rock five to ten degrees in a way similar to loosening the body mounting =>

screws. Drive comes from an RX-41 motor mounted at 90 degrees to the axle line. Electrical power is taken forward via the now standard SCX copper rails to the motor from a sprung guide blade. The guide blade is sprung only by the copper rails and I have had problems with these systems not holding the guide in the slot whilst racing, allowing the car to just spear off in a straight line. That said, I do not think it would be a serious problem in this case. The guide is fitted with a self-centring mechanism, which is different from the Scalextric one and has also given problems in racing so is often removed. This one seems weaker and so less prone to ignoring corners. The front axle is a solid unit with nylon bearings. There seems to be a little wobble, which may be removed with a little tyre truing. My only other worry with the model for racing is the rear mounting peg which is weak and flimsy and would not take many high speed shunts. I cannot envisage racing this model under the club's current regulations. I think that, for it to race, a whole new class would need to be developed as even with the light system incapacitated the RX-41 will struggle against any car in our GT class. However if more tuning models are released it would make an interesting class for racing with the club lights dimmed.

Running around the track with only the standard magnet setting the car ran well but would still easily deslot. However, the car had not been run in or messed about with - a little tooth paste for half a day and the rear contrate would be silky; some switch cleaner on the commutator, the tyres trued and this car will gain pace and running ability. A bit of testing with the magnet position and it will begin to stick through corners so it has potential as a race car. It was not terribly fast but made a terrific light show and to be honest after a bit I began to enjoy running it. In a few of the corners you could get the magnet to break free and the car ran out about 30° and had a controllable slide which raised a happy smile. With the lights dimmed you couldn't see the paintwork for the

ultra bright headlights, the red tail lights and the neon blue under the sills - this was the model's element.

The Toy

This I think is where this model belongs. Most adults would balk at the paintwork and leave the model on the shelf, preferring one of SCX's other better-coordinated and finished products to the purple and yellow monster. Yet to the 8+ market this little model is cool; its shiny wheels, shade wearing driver, the ultra bright main beams and, best of all, the neon blue underbody lights are topnotch. The only thing missing would be a regular and monotonous bass from a speaker in the rear hatch. Electrical things have fascinated my five-year-old nephew ever since he worked out that light switches worked the room lights. He loves watching slot-cars and working out how they work. This would be the car for him and he will love it and any faults I could see are irrelevant to his eyes. Talking of the lights, incase any of you are thinking they will look great under my BMW I had better explain them as well. I had expected to open the car up to find a mass of wiring reminiscent of Carrera cars but no, SCX have done a really neat job. In the top half of the car just under the driver platform is fixed two extra copper rails, which have two drop down sections to the rails feeding the motor. These feed three printed circuit boards, one at the front, back and amidships, each about 1cm wide and 4 or 5cm long. They carry a number of resistors and diodes as well as the LEDs, which give the effects. At the front two high brightness 5mm LED go through the holes in the front lights. Amidships two blue LEDs face downwards feeding their light to two clear plastic panels along the sills of the model which act as diffusers for the light and give the glow effect. At the rear two flat white LEDs feed light through the tail light panel.

So would I buy one? For myself, no, there are too many other models that interest me and are better looking for me to waste cash on. However, for my nephews and to get them hooked so I have someone to race - well yes. ■





Carrera Ferrari 512 BB LM

By Pete Edwards

I was glad to be asked to do this review having waited for an endurance car to come up for testing. Although I considered myself an expert on cars from Le Mans, this car falls between the golden days of the late 60s/early 70s with the great manufacturer battles and the technological marvels that were Group C of the late 80s. The Ferrari this car is based on was created from the 365 road car that was Ferrari's first large, mid engine road car. Approx twenty-five 512s were built for rich gentlemen racers and independent teams. This model is based on the 3M sponsored car chassis number 26685 raced in the IMSA over 2500cc Silhouette class at Daytona and Le Mans in 1979 - running in 12th place there until the rain started in the night, but sadly did not finish either race.



26685 at Cottesbrooke

The early talk of this car in the Journal led me to think it would be ugly but what a beautiful car it is. Even though I believe all Ferraris should be red, the car is fetching in light grey and red. Yes it looks a bit big and clumsy but long distance racers are built for straight line stability at 150mph+ and so this model features the elongated tail modification for Le Mans.

It is housed in a standard Carrera Evolution plastic box with a mirror built in allowing you to see both sides of the car. It also has a secret

compartment built into the rear of the moulding for the mirror containing an owner's manual, (more of this later), and a spare guide flag indicated on a slip of paper inside the plastic bag as a replacement for non "Carrera" race tracks. Looking at this packaging from a display point of view it is both good and bad. The good point being a strong clear plastic box that will protect the car from dust and damage, however the box is quite big taking up about twice the space of a Scalextric one. It has an information sticker on it warning the buyer only to use 14.5V flowing from a Carrera transformer, and another across the top of the mirror advertises the working headlights. Both of these are not stuck on straight and the 14.5v one is creased. A collector might possibly remove these, but on the other hand this will probably devalue its resale value for a serious collector. Of more concern is the special Ferrari and "Hot Wheels" badges, which a displayer would want to keep, the Ferrari badge is not straight and the Hot Wheels badge is curling up at the edges and would probably fall off eventually. Whilst Carrera would argue that this is a toy and the packaging would be thrown away five minutes after getting the car home, if going to the trouble of fitting labels, they might as well be adhered correctly. ➤➤



The Collectors' View

The usual screw into the base holds the car rigidly in the box, incidentally the car hovers 5mm above the road of the box floor, which makes some of the underside visible. The driver is wearing a plain white helmet and has had his legs removed. Through the front and side windows bits of detail such as traditional Ferrari gate on the gear shift and fire extinguisher can be seen, and through the glass “tail gate” the 5 litre V12 is visible in all its glory.

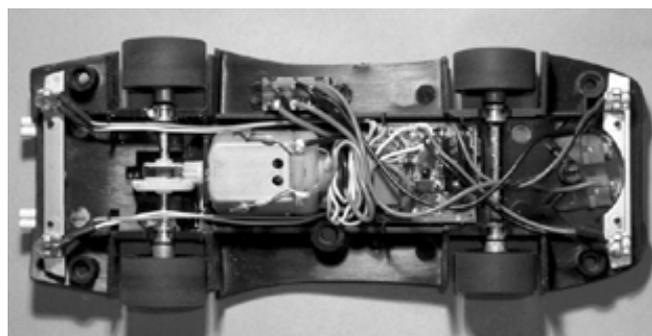
With regard to the accuracy of the car’s paintwork and stickers, I was unable to find any pictures on the Internet of “26685” competing but the chassis is now currently doing the rounds of concourse Ferrari meetings. It is from such a meeting in 2002 and a picture of its sister car, No. 62 from 1979 that I base my observations. The model looks to have all the correct decals in the right places including the scrutinising stickers. The grey paint work on the car’s rear flank has a white bird flying across and this is replicated well as on the real car it almost looks like a shadow.

Comparing the model to the full size car it is a bit big, being nearer 1/30 scale except for the weight where the model is a scale 1/10873 times lighter than the original and the engine a minuscule 1/13888th of the V12!

The mirrors on the doors look out of scale and prone to breaking off. However, after a lot of testing they were still attached to the body.

The car is fitted with the standard two magnets Carrera system. Out of the box it is claimed in the owner’s manual they are set for the beginner. Tilt testing the car it started to slide at an incline of approx 60° but if placed on an inverted track piece it will hang up side down.

I removed the four screws holding the car’s body.



The Interior Wiring

The body came away in one piece and revealed a rat’s nest of wiring, which on close inspection showed the wires to the headlights were hampering the rotation of the guide. There was no perceivable float in the bearings and the in-line motor was secure. At a later date I will reroute the wires but for the purpose of this test I gently bent the light wires away from the guide before replacing the body.

The instruction leaflet is a one page, double sided fold out sheet in nine languages. It gives a brief explanation on how the car’s magnets are set up and can be adjusted, and how to change the power braid. It also explains how to do minor repairs and includes an exploded picture detailing the parts. Unfortunately this picture is of an F1 car so does not show the lighting of the saloon/sports cars and, more importantly, does not explain what a “grinder” is (braid I think) that must only be changed “one at a time”.

Although the real car is a big car, it is said by its drivers to be fast, reliable and predictable to drive. So how does the Carrera version live up to these claims....

The car looks race ready so the next step was to give it a run out....

My test track Ridgeway Park is just less than 30 feet in length and has two fast sweeping straights linked at one end by a tightening right turn, a short straight and a slow 90 degree bend. At the other end a tight S bend and uphill fast curve open out on to the home straight. The cars are powered by a twin regulated power supply that is adjustable for volts thus giving a good adjustability for different cars and skill levels. I find that without super long straights and a nice smooth supply, 10 to 12 volts and 50 ohm controllers are enough for most cars. For the purpose of this test I also increased the voltage up to 14.5 Volts as instructed by the sticker on the box.

The formal tests were run over 10 laps with the fastest lap (Scalextric electronic lap counter) recorded on both lane 1 and lane 2. Lane 2 is usually a bit faster although very slightly longer as the car can lean on a barrier round the slowest corner the esses. I don’t have any real contemporaries in my stable so it was compared



against a Carrera Bentley Speed 8 and my favourite car the Ninco BMW V12 LMR. As it was a Carrera with reversing switch, I was going to run it both ways. The low ground clearance has caused me to break my rule of tuning the car to the track and I resorted to resurfacing one bend and adjusting track banking and camber just to get the car to complete its allotted runs in one direction. Time did not allow me to repeat the adjustments to enable to run both ways. For a further comparison "The Stig" in his black Challenger was allowed a few laps at each voltage.

Out of the box the car was placed on the track for a few installation laps. Initially, with the standard magnet set up, the car was so stuck down it would not move until 75% power was applied and then it shot forward like a scalded cat and hit the barrier at the first corner. The car was then placed on the track with a full straight before the corner to give the driver time to tame the throttle. Off the car set as before until it got to the tight 90 degree bend and then the guide jammed up. At this point I decided to change the standard Carrera guide for the supplied replacement. Despite this looking like a simple job, this is where the problems started, suffice to say the five minute job took over an hour and was one of those tasks that make you wish you had three hands!

Test results

	Out of Box		Clockwise Lane 1			Clockwise Lane 2			Average
	14.5	12V	10V	12	14.5	10V	12V	14.5V	
10 laps									
512	5.9	5.6	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.2	5.6	5.6	5.433
Bentley			6.5	6.2	6.1	5.3	5.3	5.5	5.817
BMW			5.7	5.7	5.5	5.8	5.2	5.2	5.517
Challenger		Slow	X	6.7	6.1	7.2	6.2	5.9	6.420
		Fast	X	6.3	5.5	6.6	5.6	5.3	5.860
GT40	Lap Record Holder		4.4	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.233

As you can see from the table the 512 was the fastest of all the cars tested. At the higher voltages on my track both the Carrera cars were very hard to drive consistently fast and the powerful motors would cause the cars to spin

coming out of the tight bends if power was applied too fast. This resulted in faster times at lower voltages where the cars were more controllable. To put these times in perspective the lap record is in the low 4 seconds by a Scalextric Sport GT40 on 12v. The Ferrari ran noticeably quieter than all the other cars and impressively the lights, which are independent of the applied power, stayed very bright all the time the car was moving.

One point to note when using it on Classic track is the very low ground clearance of 0.25mm, which is low enough to ground out on the track and leave the driven wheels high and dry! This ground clearance scales up to 8mm on the real car and if to scale I am sure this must have caused problems for the real car over the rumble strips at the Le Mans Ford Chicane.

Thanks to Bob Rackham, I was able to give the car a run on the Carrera track at the Ashford slot-car track. On this big layout it stretched its legs and was very drivable and much faster than the Artin car driven by the "professional" running the track. In his hands the 512 really flew especially when the rear magnet was replaced. So much so that the wing mirrors that had survived many a tumble during the Classic track running were soon broken off!

In conclusion, would I be pleased if I had actually paid for this car? Yes, after the initial disappointment with the performance out of the box, and with a bit of fettling of both car and track and running in, the car is very good. Carrera should be applauded for bringing out a car that had no big time race success. It is different from most of my normal endurance racers showing close resemblance to the road car while being a thoroughbred race car. The low ground clearance was a problem on my Classic track but now the test has ended this will be cured by grinding off the plastic sump from the V12 under tray.

Thanks to Colin and Brian for the chance to review this car and Bob at Ashford for his time and Helmut Schug of www.barchetta.cc for the picture at Cottesbrooke Hall. ■

Departure should be sudden!

By Peter Novani

That rather pithy comment was once uttered by Benjamin Disraeli, a former Prime Minister of Great Britain. But in the context of slot-cars maybe the heading should read 'Doing a Phil Etgart' after that well-known slot-car stalwart abruptly retired from the hobby a few short years ago. And sadly I too am bidding farewell to the hobby.

Although not in the same league as Phil when it came to matters concerning slot-cars, I have nonetheless always tried to give 100% to any activity undertaken, be it organising public slot-car charity events, visiting the BBC London studios to do a radio show on the subject, writing for the Journal, commissioning Hornby Hobbies to produce a range of Scalextric Crystal Classic Jaguar XJ220 limited edition slot-cars, or even getting my track layout featured in various magazines and the 5th & 6th editions of the Scalextric reference books (courtesy of Roger Gillham).

However, with all that now well and truly out of my system, I made a conscious decision a couple of years ago to curtail such activities. Since then I have to confess that my interest in the hobby has steadily waned. And aside from public events my track layout was rarely ever used for actual racing at home. In truth neither of my children really caught the slot-car bug, despite my best intentions. And there were only so many buildings and accessories that could be added to retain my interest – buying slot-cars to display rather than race never appealed to me.

Having sold most of my static model car collection in recent years, I recently set about tackling the task of selling my track layout plus associated slot-car items. The space gained in the room it once resided in could be better utilised for the plethora of computer gaming paraphernalia and musical instruments that the children have acquired over time. Arguably the sale of the track layout was the ultimate

expression of my self-proclaimed less-is-more philosophy adopted towards model cars. That said, I still consider myself to be something of a collector, but these days tend to confine the habit mainly to my extensive book collection – especially those based on motor racing.

However, given my involvement in the hobby it would be inappropriate of me to take my leave without thanking fellow members of the fraternity and those who have supported my activities in some way. Forgive me for not mentioning them by name within this brief appreciation, but I am sure they will know who they are. For example, the companies who generously provided donations for the charity events I organised, the dealers who have imparted useful information about slot-cars matters and/or provided cars for my occasional 'Wheelspin' track tests, plus those individuals who offered encouragement during my all too brief literary phase.

In addition I would like to thank the racers at my local slot-car clubs who made me feel welcome during my sporadic forays into the world of competitive slot-car racing. And of course I must not forget the NSCC committee, the Journal editors and members – past and present – who all selflessly gave up their spare time to help make the club such an important part of my life, and the Journal such an informative read, during the period of my membership.

And yet there is one important name I would like to mention here. Sadly, he has now passed away. But nevertheless, I will always be indebted to the late Fred Francis for actually inventing the Scalextric product. Without his undoubted vision I would not have met so many interesting people and enjoyed participating in a hobby that, even today, still manages to fascinate and enthral young and old alike. Long may it continue! ■



Can you make a Carrera car perform better?

By Steve Baker

My friend Richie manages to come across lots of cheap stuff. I don't know how he finds everything he does. Anyway, a couple of weeks ago he'd been told by his other half that he had to get rid of some stuff, so obviously he started in his 'spares box' as would be natural to most of us in this position. Maybe first I should say that Richie has only recently got married - yes it does explain a lot doesn't it.

So he asked if I wanted the box of bits he had with him; upon inspection it was crammed full of car bodies, most had engines and axles though not many had tyres or guides, some had other bits missing too. But in with the usual bodies were a few more complete cars. Three Carrera cars in particular stood out, a Porsche GT, Camaro and vintage Thunderbird. All were missing tyres, the Camaro was also missing its bonnet and the Thunderbird its roof (but the windscreen was still there). He didn't want much for it so, yep OK, a deal was done and I took the box home.

Closer inspection of the contents revealed an amount of Airfix bodies including an unbuilt, complete vintage Mercedes, two Hornby Ford GT40s and a pair of Eldon stock cars, though sadly these both had damage.

Now I like the Carrera cars. Of all the slot-car manufacturers, I've felt that (until recently) Carrera are probably the best engineered, and now having totally stripped and rebuilt a couple of them, I'm still of this opinion. But not many Carrera cars run that well when compared to virtually everything else, so I thought, "These haven't cost much, what can I do to make them run better?"

Well, once I'd looked inside, and established that the motors were fine, it was a case of the running gear. So first to the Porsche GT, all that

this needed was tyres and a guide flag, so what tyres do I have in my spares box that fit? On the front Hornby tyres from a wrecked Subaru, and for the rear SCX - "Scalextric 19 3/11 2 015" is what it has on the tyre - doesn't mean much to me though and it was a bit of a stretch getting all of them on the wheels. Next the guide flag. Well I don't have a home circuit and the club I go to uses Ninco track, so I had Ninco guides. In went a standard Ninco guide and that was that, just sent an email to Alec asking him to take his standard one along so I had something to compare it against.

Now for the Thunderbird; a strip down of this car shows why it handles so incredibly badly - height. Looking at the chassis shows that the front wheels, even without tyres on, are the same level that the guide would sit, and with the axle, like all Carreras having virtually no movement, the slightest body roll would lift the guide out. So very low profile tyres on the front are required. Rats, I hadn't got any low enough profile tyres that fitted the wheels correctly but hang on, maybe a previous 'favourite fix' would work, and it did. It's not ideal, but from the outside it looks alright. Stretch a pair of the only Hornby small tyres (from Minis, Escort Mexicos etc) over the wheels - great a 'perfect fit!'. Well maybe not perfect, but who's worried at this stage? Now for the rear tyres, these present another problem in that they have to fit inside the rear wing. After much searching and trying of various types, the best ones were an old pair from the spares box, don't ask me what type these are I haven't a clue. I think these would normally fit a Merc 250SL. Lastly the guide, this time a Ninco sprung guide to give that extra bit of depth. One last piece of decorative 'adjustment' was made by removing the roof securing points from the top of the windscreen with a modelling scalpel, or Stanley knife as it's also known. ⇒→

Now all finished, just the testing remained, so off to the club on race night, get there a bit early for testing, and WOW! The difference is truly amazing. The Porsche is one of the older ones with the higher gearing so it still has problems, but oh boy is it better now. It has the handling to cope with more of the engine's power and can now get round the corners without needing the magnet in its lowest position. It creamed Alec's standard car to the point where there was just no point in trying any more. It still came off the track, but now it was because of bad driving. A quick comparison of the tyres showed that the fronts were about the same size as standard, but the rears I'd put on were in fact a little taller. So in effect the only changes from standard were the guide, and a different compound rubber tyres. Here's hoping that the Thunderbird is improved by that much,

and it has - if anything this now goes too well for a period car. I was overtaking the cars the other guys were testing. I think this one has the later lower rated gearing, as it is now easy to drive at speed and is, in most respects, even more stable than the Porsche. That's about the only thing we didn't do, put the two of them head to head.

So in summary to make Carrera cars hugely more useable put some eyelets on the wires and a Ninco guide flag in. Fit lower profile front tyres and you have a winner unless, of course, everyone else does the same. Having done this and improved the cars so much, I've actually ended up losing some of my admiration for Carrera's engineering. The thought it left me with is, "Well if I can improve the cars so much with my limited skills, and available parts why can't they deliver them like this in the first place?" Such is life. ■

