Chairman
Richard Winter
Editor
Brian Rogers

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TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS.....

Archie the editorial cat was asleep on the heap of discarded proof copies; Daft Idea Animal was chuckling in the corner -"Wouldn't it be a good idea to have a Christmas crossword?" and I was silently cursing the person who sent me an incorrect crossword puzzle for the newsletter. I hope I have sorted it out now so have a go. It's on page 4 & 5.

Well, another one off to the printers - I think I've nearly got the hang of it now. Thanks once again for your contributions, I ran out of time before I ran out of articles this month so I have a few in hand for January. Keep them coming - they will all find a home.

I have included a large article on the construction of MDF tracks which was sent to me by a non member, Ken Stanton. I thought it might be of interest to those of you who yearn for a better racing surface than plexytrack. Please let me know if you would like more of this type of detailed construction article or whether it is a bit too technical for you.

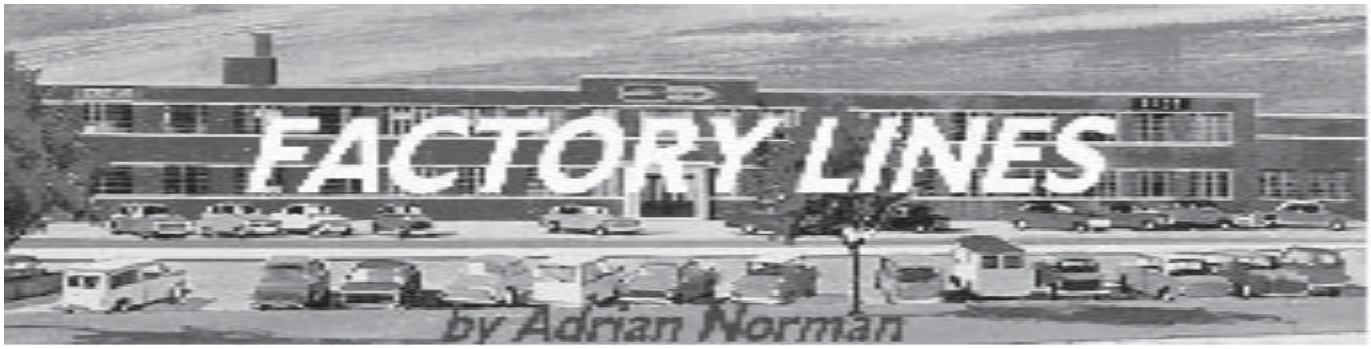
You may like to have a look at a magazine called "Collect it" which includes a 3 page article on Scalextric this month. The cars featured in it are part of Gary Clift's collection. I also understand that the Channel 4 programme "Collector's Lot" are about to film a new slot on our hobby.

Don't forget that the copy date for the next issue is early due to the long holiday, and **please don't phone Bob** if your copy is not on the doorstep for the first day of the new century. It is unlikely to get to you before the 2nd week of January.

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and I hope Santa brings everything you desire.

See you next century

Brian.



DIGGING DEEP

Already passed its auction date is the Vauxhall Vectra 'Pudsey Bear' car. Only ten of these cars were made as a very limited edition for the annual BBC 'Children in Need' appeal. I wonder how many among us found the auction details in the Radio Times magazine. I wonder how many NSCC members dug deep enough to secure these cars?

IN THE SHOPS

The Beatties 40th anniversary red Mini (C2249) is unusual in that the chrome work is gold and not the usual silver. The C2148 Rangers Ferrari F40 shown in the Beatties catalogue shows a car with a large red tick on the roof and not the word 'Pepsi'. This car was a factory mock up for the photograph.

Ferrari F40 football cars are being offered at Hornby concessionaires outlets at an attractive price, where a 10% loyalty bonus card is also available.

TRACKSIDE

All track accessories such as the Pacer unit, Electronic Lap Counter/Time etc., have now standardised their lane numbers. That is, Lane No. 1 will always be nearest the control box. This means that the introducing of extension packs for a 4 or 6 lane layout could now be a possibility. I believe that the first batch of Pacer units and the Sound Centre have Lane 2 nearest the control box.

REFERENCE LIST

This month there are no additions. No, really!

GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS

As liaison officer I was involved in organising a world record attempt on the longest Scalextric track. Sean Fothersgill and his racers from the Pendle club did the important work of assembling the track and ensuring that it would work for the best part of a week without any problems. The event took place in Leeds for a promotions company working on behalf of their client who wanted to raise awareness of the availability of office floor space for rent. Having been given the office floor dimensions, I used Andy Sykes' "S-Plan" track designer program to best fit over 1600' of track in to the available space. The venue was a large office block of which one of the fourteen floors was duly covered completely in Scalextric track by Sean's team. The previous record was 1459 feet and the plan was to reach at least 1600 feet. On the day the record was broken and officially recorded at 1704 feet, 1 inch. A report and pictures will follow. Though this particular event was aimed at the business community in Leeds we, the NSCC, are planning to be involved in a follow up event next year where we hope NSCC members, if they wish, can be part of another record-breaking team. This event will be a public occasion. Keep your eyes peeled.A big thank you goes out to Sean's club members for making the November event possible. - Thanks, guys.

REFERENCE LIST REVISITED

OK then, just one amendment! Please delete the following item from your records. This was issued in error - C2186 Pontiac GP.

THE SCALEXTRIC ASSOCIATION CIRCA 1960-69. CONT….

For those of you interested in the history of Scalextric this story continues from last month after a copy of a letter from Minimodels was handed to me at the Bishops Stortford swap meet. The letter heralded the demise of the Bulletin style information sheets before the advent of the catalogues.

The undated letter read; "Dear sir or Madam, replying to your enquiry, we regret that, owing to pressure of business, we have been unable to issue a Scalextric Bulletin since last Spring. We would advise you, however, that a Bulletin is in the process of being printed and a copy will be sent to you as soon as supplies come to hand. Please note that this will be the last publication.

We confirm receipt of your Registration card, and would apologise for not acknowledging same, but this was due to the many thousands received. Our latest literature is enclosed."

So, this led to the annual publication of a catalogue, now in its 40th year. I suspect that a policy decision was also made later not to go ahead with the formation of the 'Scalextric Association' as well due to the success of this new toy (see November issue, page 13). All part of the growing pains of new and successful businesses, I guess.

'And what of a 41st issue?' I hear you ask.....

.....Catalogue 2000

Yes, I suspect most of you will be very pleased to learn that a catalogue for the year 2000 will be produced. The 41st edition , a landscape format as per the current one, will be available in January.

AND OTHER EPHEMERA…

The Scalextric foldout leaflets were recently revised to advertise the Lotus 7 and Caterham cars. The first pamphlet of this year clearly indicates '1/99' on the front page corner but the second edition has, you guessed it, '2/99' printed there. The pamphlet, available in most Scalextric outlets is otherwise identical with the exception of the Caterham and Lotus cars.

AND FINALLY

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this Factory Lines report throughout the year. From the staff at Hornby Hobbies Ltd., to all the NSCC members who drop me letters, emails, phone calls and the odd word or two in my ear. Thank you and have a nice Christmas break.

NINCO CHALLENGE REPORT

BY JEFF DAVIES

We met up at Aust Service Station at 9:00 on Sunday 17th and travelled up to Pinewood Raceway. When we arrived there I was amazed by the facilities, the main raceway track was absolutely magnificent (this had been built at a cost of £8,000 and looked worth every penny). The Ninco Challenge was held on a slightly smaller wooden track in a room off the end of the main track. When I first saw the track my heart sank, it looked like a schematic of a Morris dance, full of tight twists and sudden swerves. Driving a car around it was even worse, the car behaved as if someone had told it the track was really a skating rink and it had believed them. I couldn't get over the total lack of grip, the Ninco Ferrari F1s were wheel spinning down the straight, and falling off on almost every corner. It was a nightmare.

During practise the solution became apparent. Spraying lighter fluid over the back wheels of the F1 cars restored their grip to something like normal level, and helped lay down a layer of rubber around the wooden track. Previously I have raced cars with sponge tyres where I have used lighter fluid on the back tyres but this was the first time I had tried it on cars with soft rubber tyres.

The procedure was that we'd line up the cars at the far end of the straight with the starting grid then wheelspin the cars as hard as possible on the way to the start. The car then had sufficient grip to race properly (obviously, this put a severe strain on the cars yet we didn't have one single failure all day). The format was 2 minute races with the winner being the person who had covered the most distance. The first race came. I lined up on the grid alongside Jenny, Phil Barry and three members of the Pinewood/B.S.C.R.A. team. The race started and the cars roared away, only for the other five cars to fly off into a multi-car pile up on the first hairpin (which my son labelled 'Doom Corner') and so I sailed away, leaving the marshals to see to the broken legs of the other racers. So half way through the first race I was absolutely amazed to find myself comfortably in the lead and was praying for the time to run out quickly so I could get to the end first, which I duly did. Jenny was well placed which I was really pleased about as she had very little practise due to other commitments. In the second race Phil Fields came first and Andy Meredith came second. By the end of the first six races we were in the lead by 54 points to 45. Even though in the second half of the competition Dave Mayo's team won the last three races with Nigel Barrow, Dave Mayo and John Smith all winning their last race we were still the same number of points in front as at half time. Dave Mayo's team won more races, 7:5 but we came second in three quarters of the races and came last in only four races compared to their eight, so the whole team scored well. Phil Fields scored the most individual points by a single point from Nigel Barrow. This challenge could easily have gone either way as in the second half both teams scored the same number of points. This proved that there is precious little difference in the skill level of the people who race standard production cars like Ninco and the people who race the B.S.C.R.A. metal chassis cars.

Ninco had kindly agreed that all of the winning team would receive one of the new electronic hand controls and Phil Fields would also receive the connecting straight and a small trophy. During the competition a photographer turned up from one of the English newspapers and proceeded to take many photographs with us draped over the track looking like idiots.

In conclusion, this was a brilliant event. Everybody loved taking part and personally I think this is the future or the way I would like to see it go for a number of competitions between different organisations like the N.S.C.C., B.S.C.R.A. and the B.S.C.C. as all of these organisations are run by people who love racing slot cars and I am sure in the future there will be a far greater degree of cooperation between these organisations than there has been in the past. I would like to thank Ninco for being farsighted enough to sponsor this competition.

SCALEXTAX

BY RICHARD DAVIES

The Government needs money. Money to spend on schools, hospitals and the things the Government really spends money on, like private aircraft for Tony Blair. What has this got to do with slot cars? Gordon Brown will tax them next.

Realising that he has failed to tax everything to do with cars to a standstill, he will immediately correct this oversight and slot car collecting will become twice as expensive. Soon we will be paying track tax, and every track will be forced to have a portion with miniature cones all over it and roughened surface to slow the cars down. This area will be moved around the track at random until the point of maximum inconvenience is found, at which time it will become a more or less permanent fixture. The cars will have scale tax discs, and people in plain clothes will arrive at meetings to check all the cars used have current ones. The cars must be taken to a centre to check they are all in good working order, of course, and grateful as we are for this fantastic privilege, we won't mind paying for it. More money for the Government!

Every car will have an internal gauge and the electricity used will be taxed as well. And people with beards and psychedelic clothing will but the Government's deviousness at finding things to tax is only exceed by their ability to give themselves pay rises. If they introduce legislation that requires us to insure the cars they can tax the insurance companies! Brilliant! Any drivers under the age of 100 will of course be charged more for their insurance because of their inexperience and youthful spirits.

By now the Government will probably have raised enough money to totally rebuild the NHS. It won't, but they'll enjoy having enough money to do so as it means they can have a really big party on December 31st 1999 and can give themselves another pay rise. However, they can get still more money by careful management of the Police Force. By redirecting all Police from where they might actually catch a criminal stealing something, in which case they'd have to spend money feeding them in prison, they concentrate all their efforts on prosecuting motorists who drive through a 30 at 31 m.p.h. as they can then get even more cash in fines. Why not introduce speed limits on tracks? They can use radar traps to catch cars going at the dangerous speed of 1.7 m.p.h. in a 1.6 m.p.h. zone and fine them.

I'm building a secret room in my garage where I can illegally race slot cars without wearing a seatbelt and hide all my cars without tax discs to confuse the inspectors. Build yours while you can. You have been warned.

NINCO REVIEW

BY RICHARD AND JEFF DAVIES

Ninco were kind enough to send us three of their latest cars to review: a Porsche GT1 Blue Coral, a Porsche GT3 Walker and a McLaren F1 Day Off. I will review two of these and my son Richard the other. On the eve of the Millennium what a Quantum Leap slot cars have taken over the past two years with all cars now being tampo printed and performing in a way that wouldn't have been thought possible just a few years ago. The next few years should be fascinating.

PORSCHE GT1 BLUE CORAL

The first Ninco Porsche GT1 I saw was at Evesham NSCC swapmeet several years ago and it was the silver road version, which I really liked. This proved to be an excellent performing car with a low wide track and really all the attributes that you need to be a good slot racer. I prefer the road car to the subsequent Le Mans versions with their transfer decoration. The Blue Coral car is very nicely finished in a deep, dark blue with yellow tampo printed logos and design. This is a car that's raced in the Privilege GT Championship by the G-Force team. I like to see models made of cars that raced in British race series. I really love the wheels on this car. They're beautifully gold plated and far nicer than the gold coloured painted ones on the Le Mans cars. I tested this car on my Ninco test track as it's the first Ninco car I've ever tested that came complete with very soft compound slick tyres that seem to grip extremely well. One thing I really like about Ninco cars is that they seem to use softer compounds for their tyres than other manufacturers. A nicely finished attractive model for people who collect Porsches as I do.

WALKER PORSCHE GT3

I like this car as I am a fan of all Porsche 911s and the Ninco model is a particularly nice one. This car differs only in colour scheme to the original Supercup Porsche GT3. I like the colour scheme on this car as I feel the tampo printing nicely compliments the basic blue colur of the bodyshell.When I first looked at this car I could have sworn it was wider and lower than the original silver car. I was so convinced I had to put them upside down, wheelbase to wheelbase to check they were the exact same size, so complete was the optical illusion created by the different paint schemes. This is the first time I have ever thought this. I feel this and the original silver car would make a brilliant Porsche Cup set. I quickly erected a Ninco test track. My test track is chemically clean by running sponge tyred cars round and then cleaning the tyres with sellotape or packing tape, so that the track is just about as abrasive as a piece of sandpaper and runs on 14.8 volts with a Ninco electronic handcontrol.

The Porsche GT3 performs exceptionally well on this kind of layout. I do feel that the car would probably perform slightly better on slicks like the tyres fitted to the Blue Coral GT1. I'd also like to see one of the Porsche GT3 colour schemes include one where you could use the gold plated wheels fitted to the Blue Coral GT1 as I love these wheels. I have no particular preference between the silver GT3 and the blue one as I like both equally as much. Mechanically, this car is identical to the silver car with an NC-2 engine, super magnet and soft tyres. I don't think it's going to be too far in the future before all Ninco cars are made to this specification, as all the new car underpans will only accept NC-2 engines.

MCLAREN F1

I'm a sarcastic person by nature. Give me any situation, any time, and I'll have a sarcastic comment for it, but I can't be sarcastic about the new McLaren F1 for the simple reason that it is the best car I've ever seen. It is beautiful. If the Greeks had seen it they would never had named the planet Venus after their God of Beauty because the car would have the name already. It is a lovely glossy black with red stripes and the wheels are a matt bronze colour. If Satan popped out of the ground in a black suit, this is the car he would drive: forget style, McLaren F1 will be in the new Oxford Dictionary as **McLaren: like style only more stylish**. Top shelf magazine stars will have it tattooed on their chest to improve their ratings.

It is a massive improvement over the original McLaren in almost every measureable way. It is tampo printed instead of stickered, which makes it look much better and the plastic of the cockpit is no longer a dull black but a greyish silver with two inset black panels. It is, not to put too fine a point on it, gorgeous. And it goes well too. Gone is the bar magnet and the screw in NC-1 engine mount, which was a pain as it meant if the engine was replaced by an NC-2 the car couldn't be fixed to the box. The car now has a NC-2 as standard, a round high power magnet similar to those in the Ferrari F1s and has kept the huge sticky tyres on the back. Put it on the track and you will find it handles like a nuclear tipped ballistic missile. Captain Kirk would drive one on his day off. There are few cars I really like. Out of my top ten cars only two or three places are filled because I either like something or adore it, but this car is straight in. A fantastic car showing just how far cars have progressed recently. Buy it or be left in the dust.

Roy's Reviews

By Roy Butchart

C8003-PACER UNIT

The idea of a pacer unit has always appealed to me. I remember sitting in my bedroom by myself, unable to race anyone because my pals were away on holiday (everyone say ahhh!) I even tried wiring up a train set controller which worked fine until you reached a corner; so when i read about this unit I knew I had to try it out.

My first reactions on reading the instructions was to throw them away as they looked far too complicated. Having assembled it by guesswork I discovered that it was surprisingly easy to use, once you get the hang of the flashing lights and the extra speed control dial.

The unit is great; why didn't they bring it out years ago? My only criticism relates to its use on large tracks where an extra power pack is essential.

C8045-LAP COUNTER AND TIMER

At last, a lap counter and timer that you can understand! There have been many attempts in the past, but the original piece of red track, which counted from nought to ten laps took a lot of beating. Apart from the fact that it invariably missed one lap in five and had a tendency to break guide blades it was perfect!

The Think Tank had similar problems but the worst one was the Pole Position sound machine which would tell you that you had failed to qualify, like a demented arcade game, just after you had completed the fastest lap in history.

However, this unit does live up to its claims. The cars pass over it smoothly, the laps count down perfectly and the timing is spot on. After two solid days of testing I must admit that this is the best thing that Scalextric have produced for a long time.

TRIUMPH TR7 - A BRIEF COLLECTORS GUIDE

By Phil Etgart

Long regarded as the ugly duckling of the TR series, in some people's eyes not "a real TR", certainly not as collectable as it's earlier cousins, the TR7, might just be coming of age judging by the number of beautifully restored examples that I have seen during recent summers. Admittedly the restorations have been predominantly dropheads, but there's little doubt that once those candidates for restoration have dried up collectors will move on to the more affordable Tin–Tops.

In some respects it's a shame Hornby didn't produce a drophead. However, in the light of increasing interest in the real thing, it seems like a good time to review what variations were produced, of what has often been viewed as a difficult to drive and unattractive model (sounds like the real thing, but then at least the engine on the Scalextric version doesn't have an aluminium head to warp!!!).

Key things to look for when buying Scalextric TR7s are fairly limited but consider the following points. The underpan locates into the body at the rear, via a lug each side which locates into the rear quarter of each side of the body, (replicating the vents on the real car). These lugs are difficult to get into position, due to tight fit, and consequently they often snap off. Occasionally a body has a split in the seam between side panel and rear panel. The other weak points on the chassis, in common with many cars of the era, are the motor mounts and the narrow sections just ahead of the guide mount. Whilst a few underpans were available in the early 1990's when the 'Toys R Us' production run was in circulation, they are now difficult to find. The other common problem is the front bumper, disregarding snapped pins, resulting in glued on bumpers, the main problem in the wrong bumper being fitted to the car. Halfway through it's life, the tooling for the TR7 was amended to produce a car with it 'Headlamps Up' (replicating a real TR7 with it's headlights on). At this point the tooling for the bumper was also amended. 'Lamps Down' cars should have a bumper with four spot lamps (two below & two above). Whilst 'Lamps Up' cars should be fitted with six spot lamps on the bumper (two below & four above). This is further confused because when producing the final version of the TR7 (the Toys-R-Us limited edition) Hornby discontinued the practice of chroming the lamp 'Lenses' on the bumpers. All cars with the exception of the Toys-R-Us cars should therefore have bumpers with chromed headlamp 'Lenses' be they four or six spotlights.

I must admit I didn't think there was so much to say about TR7s, and we haven't even got to the cars yet!

The TR7 first appeared in the Scalextric range in 1978 illustrated in catalogue 19. The debut was as…….

C130 white or red. This was one of the last models produced where different colours shared the same C numbers and so in some respects was at the end of an era (immediately prior to the demise of Rovex). The car itself was in a fairly typical livery of the period with bold graphics on the side panels and a bold stripe across the bonnet. The blue & red 'Burmah' livery on the white car replicated a TR7 being campaigned at the time by Tony Pond. The two colours of this model were shown in catalogue 19 & 20, and in 1980 were combined in set C632/3 with the imaginative name 'Set 300'. At this point they became set cars and ceased to be shown in the catalogue as separate boxed items. They were replaced by…..C113 Red, C114 Yellow.

These cars appeared as separate boxed items in 1980 and remained in the catalogue for two years (catalogue 21/22). Their graphics were similar to their predecessors, this time

having fully tampo'd side panels and a herringbone type designed tampo'd on the bonnet. Of the first four TR7s the Yellow is probably the most appealing to the eye. As with

the previous pair of TR7s these models made the transition from boxed cars to set cars in 1981, and were shown in catalogues 22 & 23 in set C656/7 'Rallycross'.

With the deletion of the separate boxed items in 1982, a new boxed TR7 livery was introduced….C294 Blue. This model was the first of the TR7s to remain available only as a separate boxed item, which probably explains it now being a little harder to obtain than the first four TR7s which are readily available. It was also around this time that the familiar 'Black Box' packaging was introduced. (When buying a boxed C294 be aware it should have an expanded polystyrene inner <u>not</u> a card tray). The car itself was a bright blue colour with a broad white stripe up over the rear roof pillars & across the roof (similar to the Starsky & Hutch red Ford Torino). Being pleasing to the eye however did not guarantee longevity and after one year in the catalogue it was replaced by…..C309 Yellow.

This is by far the rarest of TR7's. The car itself was based on a yellow shell (slightly lighter than C114) with black & red stripe running diagonally from rear N/S to front O/S corners of the car. The car exists in two variations, having been produced in both 'Lamps Down' and 'Lamps Up' versions.

The first version 'Lamps Down' is by far the rarest, and whilst one or two have been put into boxes from 'Lamps Up' versions, a genuine 'Lamp Down' boxed car is yet to be found to my knowledge. These cars normally turn up in the area surrounding the factory, which suggests that the 'Lamps Down' version was probably never in general distribution.

With modification to 'Lamps Up' the C309 appeared (with six spot lamp bumper!) as a boxed item. It only appeared in one catalogue (No. 24 1983), and from its rarity, it can be assumed it was a fairly short run. These cars do not surface for sale very often. Around the time of this models production another pair of TR7s must have also been in early stages of production as they also changed from 'Lamps Down' to 'Lamps Up' very early in their existence…….C321 'Spiderman' yellow &

C322 'Spiderman' red

Although not appearing in catalogue until 1984 (No. 25) it is likely these were produced at the same time as C309 (shown in catalogue 24, 1983), as there is no other logical reason for both versions to exist. The cars were shown as available in set C672 'Spiderman' which was unique in that the set contained <u>white</u> plexytrack. It is conceivable that the first version of this set (containing 'Lamps Down' cars) were a rush batch for a mail order customer (as happened

in a much smaller scale with set C742 Le Mans 24Hr – where the first handful of sets were rushed out with cars with stickers instead of tampo printing to meet customer deadlines). The 'Lamps Down' version featured a half figure of Spiderman punching the air. For some reason the 'Lamps Up' version had a new tampo design of the bonnet featuring Spiderman crouching. It is not clear why the bonnet logo changed as it would have been relatively easy to remove a small piece of spiders web on the original tampo design. Prototypes of the Spiderman cars have been seen in both blue & white (the white car is actually illustrated in a 1984 sales leaflet), but these are plain shells with hand painted liveries (not tampo'd bodies). The set appeared for only one year and presumably did not sell well, as Hornby were selling off the remaining stock of white track for a number of years. Both colours of the 'Lamps Up' version subsequently appeared as separate boxed items (although never appearing as such in a catalogue). The 'Spiderman' cars were the last of the TR7's to appear until in 1991 we got an unexpected Christmas present……C281 red & C282 black

During autumn 1991 it emerged that Toys-R-Us had commissioned an exclusive pair of limited edition cars. Triumph TR7 in red or black with complete appropriate 'Laurel' design in gold on the bonnet. They were produced in a batch of 500 of each colour only, and quickly sold out. These cars are already relatively difficult to find mint boxed, as a reasonable number of them were sold as toys (GOD FORBID!) before NSCC members became aware of their existence. In common with later versions of C309/321/322 they were 'Lamps Up' with the six spotlight bumper **but** this time the lamp lenses were not chromed.

This pretty much covers the TR7 story except to mention a few oddities. Plain untampo'd bodies have been seen in black, red and both shades of yellow. Chromed examples are in circulation which are alleged to have been produced at some point for either a TR7 owners club or members of the TR7 register (the Triumph TR7 owners club). This is however unsubstantiated.

So, far from being an 'Ugly Duckling', the TR7 includes a number of interesting versions for the collector, not least of which is C309 yellow 'Lamps Down', one of the rarest cars produced in any era of Scalextric's rich history!

KEEPING YOUR BODIES IN TRIM

BY DAVE RICHARDSON

Keeping the bodywork of your cars in pristine condition is a tall order with todays high class tampo printing. We all know the feeling when our new car rolls over on its roof or slides on its side, damaging the paint work. By then it's too late, it's already second hand.

To prevent this happening and before it goes on the track, give it a coat of clear varnish. Humbrol No. 35 or Revel No 1 clear lacquer and using a 3/8" wide fine haired water colour brush will protect the printing from scratch damage. It will also enrich the colours and to some extent takes away the overall plastic look. I do all my cars which receive quite a lot of abuse and most of them still look in excellent condition.

A word of warning though. White cars do not like varnish, a slight yellowing occurs. However I only coat the roof and the decals.

Tyres – A thin coat on the lettering on the side walls delays deterioration. However it does take a couple of days at room temperature to dry out.

"REQUEST TO FLY"

Could you stop staking in the rear aerofoils, as on severe impact they break off. If you make them a push fit they won't be irreparable after impact. You did it on the early "Marcos"!!

Secondly how about making the mirrors a push fit, "A la Scalextric", so they can be removed prior to racing and refitted afterwards. I'm getting tired of sticking them back on!!

Members letters

Dear Brian,

As an ex-editor to a current one, thanks for taking over and stepping into the breach, it was worth listening to Daft Idea Animal after all. I hope the membership keep supporting you in the way they have for the first couple of editions. Mind you if you keep giving them helpful prompts then I'm sure that they will!!!

You will also no doubt have already received a letter informing you that the car Jeff Davies was offering for sale in the November edition was a forgery as Steve DeHavilland has never made any cars. All he has done is commissioned Scalextric manufactured reissues.

I would just like to comment on things in the last couple of editions. I totally agree with you (and it seems 99.9% of responding members) that the NSCC should in no way get involved in sponsoring racing drivers, even if they were a member of the club. If any support should be given to anyone, then it would surely be better down at school level where we are looking for new members. But before I am jumped on I am not suggesting we do!

I can think of numerous schoolchildren who race karts and travel all over the country to race at school championships and have a struggle to find the necessary finance to participate. When Adam (my son and likewise a non-NSCC member) was karting at school I spent a long time organising sponsorship deals for him but never asked the NSCC for any money even though there were NSCC stickers on his kart.

In reply to Mark Phayers comment regarding an NSCC presence at major motoring events and Regional Reps. The NSCC have had a free presence at the last three UK Motor Shows courtesy of Auto Trader, two members and a nonmember and that may be extended to the European events very soon. These same three people have also been approached and asked to organise a race meeting for 4000 people, and surely some of those will join!

In response to comments from members, I contacted various members of the then National Scalextric Collectors Club, with a view to giving new members a local point of contact with the club. The idea was that they should look for opportunities for promoting the club in their areas and to maybe organise local meetings between members. Somehow it never really took off and is now, to all intents and purposes, dead.

I would also like to correct the comment from Jeff Davies regarding the Ninco Challenge. 132 Racing were approached by Riko International three years ago to run such an event as a National series of meetings for the general public. This was agreed and set up, but due to a change in personnel at Riko was never actually run.

Regards,

Alan Slade.

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Dear Brian,

I have only been a member of the NSCC since Goodwood, but would just like to say that I have found your newsletter to be very informative and enjoyable to read and is giving me plenty of things to learn about this hobby. I have just returned from the swopmeet at Bishops Stortford, which was my first event and it was really great. Keep up the good work.

Regards

Terry Woodham

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CH1 4LH
Tel: (01244) 371214

Dear Brian
Since 1995 I have been engaged in a lengthy and harrowing legal battle with the prestigious Writers Guild of Great Britain and have been unable to pursue my normal writer's trade.

During this period I met Phil Etgart at a collector's fair who introduced me to the NSCC. I have now won my case for unlawful exclusion from membership of the Guild and have produced my first literary work in two years. This is a book entitled "THE GOD OF SCALEXTRIC" an enchanting short story for Christmas and the Millenium for adults/children and collectors, privately printed in a limited first edition run of 199. With a beautiful glossy cover, the signed and numbered copies are offered exclusively to NSCC members this Christmas.

My previous work has been bought and broadcast under copyright permission by the British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Telefis Eireann, and South African Broadcasting Corporation. I have reserved several copies for friends and one complimentary copy for Phil Etgart.

Order early for Christmas. £3.95 per copy inc postage. A classic Christmas present for collectors, rarer than a black Bentley.

Paul Sheen

.....

Dear Brian
I am currently trying to wire the new Ninco variable hand controller to a three pin plug with little success. I think that the transformer might be wired differently to the normal system. Can anybody help with this. I have asked Ninco but they have not replied.

Peter Lague

0ther people have had the same trouble and the only current solution seems to be the use of a Ninco power straight with adaptors to Scalextric track. Are there any electricians out there who could help?

.....

Dear Brian.
I read with interest the letter from Robert Torres and the reply from Peter Morley. I am preparing a new edition of my Scalextric Book and would like to mention again my request for any new information, types etc. so that I can ensure the book information is up to date.

As the originator of identifying differences by 'Type No' it must be remembered that when I first penned the book 19 years ago the information I had at the time was the best available.

It must also be remembered that the book is intended to be of interest to all enthusiasts - actually quite a small number of books are sold to collectors and too much information will be very boring to the majority of the purchasers. Very detailed differences required by collectors is well catered for by the NSCC and the excellent articles produced by Phil Etgart.

Also I decided at the outset that to qualify for a different 'Type No' there should be changes in the mould, engine or guide type etc. As with any company making a product minor changes during the production run will vary and different wheels, heads etc. could be fitted according to availability at the time.

It is disappointing that as a founder member of the NSCC and author of the Scalextric Book that 'real' variations are not advised to me. PLEASE contact me with advice or details of other model versions etc. found.

Roger Gillham - 01367 718388.

TACHS AND REVS

BY TONY SECCHI

Like all members who race, over the years you collect a veritable plethora of spares - pick ups, braids, wheels, tyres, chassis, bodies and in my case engines.

At present I have a dozen or so Scalextric Mabuchi motors and my method for testing between good and bad is by sound. In theory, the higher the pitch the higher the revs, and the better the unit. But as a retired engineer, I know that this supposition can be at fault. A noisy engine may sound higher in pitch but it may be noisy because something is out of sync. and causing friction.

Looking for a more accurate method of testing, I was browsing the wonderful Pendle Slot Racing catalogue (by Sean Fothersgill) and came across the Spanish HUS@slot Tachometer — or rev counter if you prefer. This is made for small electric motors and is a hand held unit, battery powered, with three circular armatures with magnetic ends that fit onto shafts of varying diameter by a small Allen screw.

In practice, you can test the Motor unloaded (by fitting to the pinion shaft) or loaded (by fitting to the rear axle). Once fitted, the engine is then powered up and the hand held unit, which has a protruding shaft, is held 2/ 3mm from the revolving , magnetic end of the Armature. This reads the revs on a digital display.

That's the hardware, now for the tests which make interesting reading. Sticking to Mabuchi Engines (because these are what we race)I tested all of them unloaded (Armature attached to central shaft).

The Mabuchi '5' Units varied from 28,000 to 25,000 revs, with one example reaching 30,000 yes 30,00O! The ordinary Mabuchi's varied from 25,000 to 19,000 revs.When attaching the Armature to the Axles the friction from the gears and drive train reduced the revs. by some two thirds ! The best Mabuchi 'S' revs at just under 9,000 (the 30,000 one came in at nearly 10,000).

Of course with mass produced products variations are expected but the difference shown by my small sample surprised me. Naturally, gear meshing does improve with use up to a point but it eventually wears and the same applies to the commutator brush contacts. However, there did seem to be a constant percentage drop between the loaded and unloaded conditions.

All loaded tests were made using standard Scalextric gearing with the same chassis and pick ups and using the same rear axle. So the next time that you are racing with Scalextric motors and your opponent pulls out two to three lengths on the straight, he may just have one of the 'magic' high revving units installed.

The Tachometer is a tadd expensive, but then we all spend money in different ways chasing performance, so if you can load test your engine before installing then I think it is money well spent, and it certainly saves time testing and removing motors in situ trying to find a fast one.

"FLY" MODIFICATIONS

By Dave Richardson

As some people know making a car go very fast is one thing, keeping it in one piece whilst doing so is another. 'Fly' have achieved the first part brilliantly, but now that they have been around for sometime, serious flaws have emerged.

The first thing I noticed was how slack the front wheels were in their locations, allowing the tyre to chafe on the underside of the wheel arch. Plus there is too much contact with the track causing drag and a high risk of de-slotting at high speed, Not Good!! How serious this problem could be was the fact that after a 'Marcos' was given a couple of hours thrashing on the track, the front left hand wheel sheered off flush with the hub!!

There are three ways to solve this problem.

1. **Rear engined cars conversion to a solid axle:** Remove (and keep for future use) the front axles. Using either a drill blank or welding rod (.093/.095" diameter). Cut to required length and fit to car. **Note:** New cars are already being fitted with solid front axles.

2. **Front engined cars:-** Remove one wheel, hold the axle steady with your thumb against the side of the motor and the head of the axle, then gently file about 020"off the wheel end of the axle. Refit the wheel. Repeat this process until the clearance between the axle mounting and the wheel hub has been reduced to a minimum. Repeat the operation on the other axle. Even if you take too much off the axles it is better to have the wheels a bit on the tight side than too slack. Have a go, 'it works'.

3. This method is to have the axles made of either steel, brass or aluminium and fit them as in 2 above, so if you have a mate who is a precision engineer this is just the job for him. **(See Fig 1)**

As a footnote, you must remember that as the axles are prematurely wearing so is the internal part of the mountings. Modify the parts as soon as possible otherwise it will mean a new chassis.

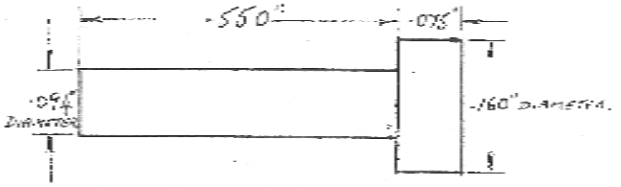


Fig.1 specifications for front axles - not to scale

The second problem concerns the drive shaft coupling on front engined models. At first sight this appears to be a novel and cheap method of joining two shafts together. However after rigorous thrashing round the track, the motor end of the coupling let go and I was left with a stationary car with the motor screaming its head off.

I discovered that the coupling was fitted too far down the drive shaft leaving only a small amount to fit on to the motor shaft. Super Glue solves the problem temporarily, but since the motor shaft has rotated inside the coupling, the tightening by torque action is lost. Fitting a new coupling is the correct thing to do but it's a real pain, so I decided to modify the whole thing by making and fitting a metal sleeve. I know it adds weight and may slightly affect braking due to increased inertia, but it won't break and fall off and will only slip if you haven't tightened the screws properly. It works very well, so good bye copper coloured springy thing. **See Fig 2** for the specification. Please note that the holes at "A" and "B" should be drilled and tapped to take 3mm Allen Grub screws. Also note that the left hand end of the sleeve fits to the motor shaft.

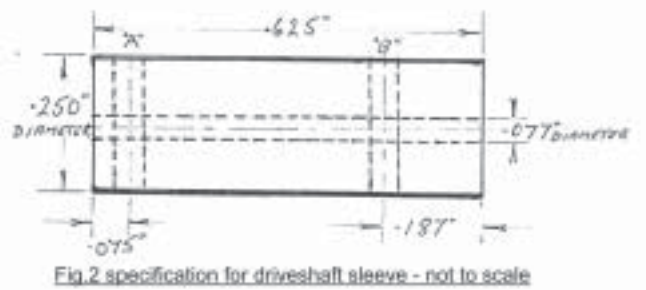


Fig.2 specification for driveshaft sleeve - not to scale

MDF SLOT TRACKS

BY KEN STANTON

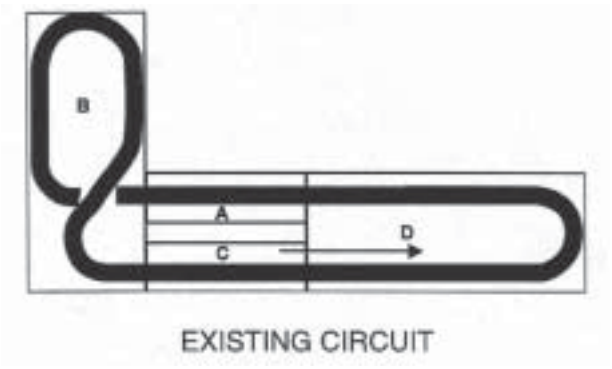
The Dunton Slot Car Club is located at Ford Motor Company's Research and Engineering Centre near Basildon in Essex. Several of our members are NSCC members so I get to see your magazine on occasions and saw that the request for information on MDF slot tracks had not generated a response. I hope you don't mind an outsider's contribution.

Our project was not as 'grand' as some I am aware of (The Viking Club's track, Trackmasters tracks etc.) but what we have constructed provided us with a reasonable 'learning curve'.

This article is not intended to be a definitive guide to building slot tracks in MDF. It is just describes how we tackled the job and what we felt we learnt from the experience.

The plan was to refurbish an existing track to extend its life until we acquire sufficient funds to build a new one and to learn some lessons where it would not be an expensive exercise.

Our track was originally constructed around 1970 -75 using a 1.75" x 1.75" frame with a 0.5" chipboard decking. The slot was formed by cut sections of 0.25" plywood screwed to the chipboard. The racing surface was Sandtex.



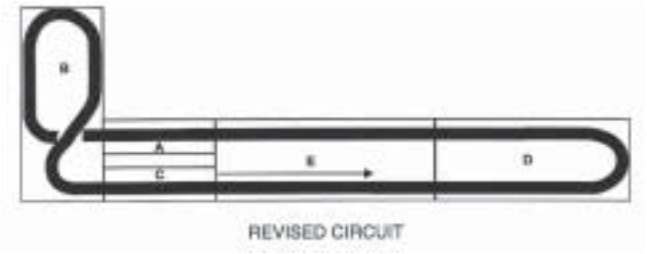
EXISTING CIRCUIT

This portable track was in 4 sections. Our biggest problem was the down slope from Section C to the hairpin on Section D. The joint was not 'shaped' in any way, just two flat surfaces, one horizontal and one sloping down. This, combined with the surface of Section C having warped to a concave form in all directions, resulted in cars becoming airborne and not taking-off in a straight line either.

An improvement had already been demonstrated by one member when replacing the chipboard decking with MDF on Section A to install the timing sensors for our Slot-Master system. The plywood racing surface was retained. So two of us proceeded to replace the warped racing surface of Section C using MDF as the primary surface by routing the slots into it. Little did we know what we had started!

The success of this was immediate. Only the faster cars would now leave the slot because the 'fall-away' of the slope from horizontal to was too severe. The car's 'ballistic trajectory' was following a line higher than the track surface.It seemed an easy task to reshape the slope and hairpin on Section D to make for a more gradual drop from Section C, but we had some suspicions that the chipboard decking for the hairpin would be similar to the section that had already been worked on. It was, in fact worse. If you are a Weetabix person you'll know what we had to deal with!

With access to a plunge router and the 3 mm bit already purchased for the last project we felt that it would be far easier and cheaper to start from scratch and build a new section. We convened a quick lunch break planning session around my desk and decided that, if we were going to do this, we should do a proper job. A few hours with Corel Draw on my PC and we had the basis of a design to build TWO new sections; one to take a 2.1 metre slope (total length 2.35 metres) and another section of 2.4 metres to take a new hairpin. An evening review session in my dining room finalised the design. The timing sensors were relocated closer to the hairpin on Section D. We now have a 3.5 metre run to the first bend which has reduced the number of 1st lap incidents here.



REVISED CIRCUIT

We run faster cars in our 'Modified' class and were concerned that they would still become airborne on the new slope. A little research in our Technical Library produced a formula to calculate the 'ballistic trajectory' of an object. This was fed in to an Excel spread sheet to predict (for a given 'take off' speed) how far a slot car would drop from horizontal over 250mm stages from the point of 'launch'. We determined that the combination most likely to reach the fastest speed at the end of section C was an OZ Race equipped Ninco GT with 3:1 gearing. This worked out to be approximately 22 m.p.h. disregarding any speed loss due to friction etc.. To give us some safety margin a figure of 25 m.p.h. was fed into the spread sheet and the output would be used to mark out the supports for the slope. The idea was to keep the track surface above the trajectory line. The theory worked ! Even a Pro-Slot GT2 Porsche with an EVO3 motor stays on the track.

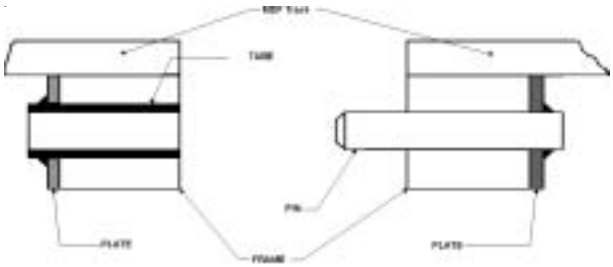
Frames:

We built the frames with 45 x 18mm planed white wood except for the interfaces to other boards which were 45 x

45mm. The corners did not have 'proper' joints but were glued and screwed to 45 x 45mm blocks.

The sections are aligned with metal dowels. The principle behind installing these is ingenious. Alan Graham, my partner in crime for this project, is a handy metal worker. For each joint he made 4 plates, two with tubes and two with round steel pins. The tubes and pins are inserted through holes in the plates before being welded from the rear of the plate which gives maximum strength and results in a 'through hole' with the tubes. The tube internal diameter was slightly smaller than the pin diameter. The tubes were then drilled out to the same size as the dowel pins (12mm in our case).

The end of the frame on ONE section was drilled to the size of the tube outer diameter and the plates/tubes screwed to the back of the frame with the tube pushed through the frame. The mating frames were then carefully aligned and clamped together. Once this was checked and OK the drill bit that was used to size the tubes was inserted through the tube and used to drill the other frame. The tube acted as a drill bush and we had a perfectly aligned hole for the pin which was pushed through from the back of the mating frame and screwed in place. The frames just push together and are secured with over-centre clamps on the outer edges (ours are from Pro-Tex).



FRAME TUBE & PIN

Racing Surface:

Section D was constructed using 18mm MDF and Section E (which was split along its length - one half flat and the other with the slope) used 12mm MDF spaced with 6mm plywood pads to equalise the height. 12mm MDF was chosen here because we had to shape it to lose 100mm in height over around 2.1 metres in length. We were surprised how readily the MDF took up the shape of the flattened '5' shape of the supports. These were cut from 2.4 metre x 120mm x 18mm white wood planks. Horizontal sections 150mm long at each end of the slope were screwed down to four transverse supports to anchor the ends and to take the bending loads. This also ensured that the track was horizontal at the joint faces. Intermediate supports provided extra strength where the slope flattened out.

We opted for a 3mm slot, 8 mm deep but check what standard you wish to comply with. The BSCRA have a National Standard for Slot form and Lane pitch. If you want your track to conform to this standard check the latest specification (http://www.arunet.co.uk/bscra/).

The hairpin was routed first using a home-made adjustable trammel for the router (Alan's handiwork again and his router!). Remember, it is easier to align straight lines to curves than vice-versa provided that the curved slots stop in the correct place. So careful planning and much checking is the key here - "measure twice and cut once".

Cut in ONE direction only, don't reverse the router after a cut is made. It will cut wider on one side and shorten the life of the cutter, check the Router handbook for direction of cut.

Straight slots were cut using a 1.8 metre length of 75mm square aluminium tube (part of an old patio door frame I think) as a guide. A two person job this. The guide was firmly clamped in position and one person pushed the router along, the other gently pushed it against the guide to prevent any excursions. The slope was routed before being attached to the frame of Section E.

Using plywood pads under the 12mm MDF meant that we could position them to provide gaps under the lanes to allow a wrap around which brought the tape ends under the MDF and inside the frame. Section D had slots routed into the frame end for the same purpose.

After Sections D and E were complete we had sufficient off cuts of MDF to rebuild Section A and attach it to Section C on a common frame.

Once the MDF sheets were routed, any slight misalignment (caused by compression of the plywood pads) were corrected by light sanding and the surface was coated with white primer. White was used so that we could mark out the positions of the lane tape and to make the copper tape visible through the masking tape.

We elected to attach the copper tape before the main painting was done. The thinking here was to use the thickness of the paint to get the track surface closer to the surface of the lane tape to reduce the possibility of tape damage. Another move was to position the tape 1.5mm away from the edge of the slot so that a departing slot guide was less likely catch the edge of the tape. There were side benefits to this:

(1) using 6.4 mm lane tape resulted in 3.0+1.5+1.5+6.4+6.4 = 18.8mm which is just under the width of 0.75" masking tape

(2) it lined up the copper tapes with Section B which has a 6.4mm slot (huge or what?) with 6.4 mm tapes. 3 x 6.4 19.2mm.

(3) the 1.5mm strips between tape and slot were available for painting lane colours making a neat, easy to see, stripe.

Lane Tapes:

Another bit of ingenuity, mine this time. Take a piece of 3mm plastic sheet 8mm deep with the length of a guide flag. Glue a 1.5mm thick strip 10 mm wide at right angles to the top edge and make two holes in the horizontal strip 1.5 mm and 8mm from the slot edge. These holes are sized to take a pencil or pen tip. Put the gauge in the slot and the pen/pencil in the holes and push it round the slot. Result: two lines to position the tape and a check for 'tight spots' in the slot at the same time. Repeat this for the other side of the slot and you're ready to lay your tapes.

We used Dunlop's 'Thixofix' because it gives you a chance to realign the tape if it wanders off line. We attempted to prepare more than two sections at a time for the straights and found that the adhesive had cured off too much after two sections of tape had been applied. For the curves we tackled them one at a time because we found that the second one would lift when being 'bent' around the curve for the same reason.

When cutting the tape to length allow extra for the wraparound under the MDF into the frame area. Applying the tapes is another two man job. One to keep the tape tensioned, one to align the tape to the marks and bend it round the corners when required. For the hairpin we split each slot into 3 sections using a point about 150mm before and after the curve. This was to ensure that tape repairs on the bends did not require lap joints or the removal of the whole piece of lane tape. At these joins we made slits 3mm wide through the MDF across the full

width of the tape outer edges. The straight portion before the bend gives you some anchorage to take the tension when working the tapes around the curves. A 75mm portion was allowed for passing down through the slits for connection under the track. After laying the tapes they were burnished down with a wallpaper edge roller.

Connections to Wiring Loom:

Electrical connections were now made. All 'loose ends' of lane tape had wire 'tails' soldered to them before being passed through the gaps under the MDF and into 13 Amp or 15 Amp multi-connectors for household electrical wiring. These were used because they could be easily attached in 8 connection groups and were large enough to take 2 or 3 wires in to one connection without a struggle. The 'tails' were secured using a hot glue gun or trapped under a strip of 6mm ply screwed to the underside of the track.

Painting:

The Sandtex surface was removed from Section B to allow all four sections to be painted in one session. Painting commenced with masking of the lane tapes. The 19mm wide tape was attached and aligned carefully with ONE outside edge of a tape. Any that overhung the opposite tape was trimmed off by running a Stanley Knife along the tape using the edge of the copper tape as a guide. The same principle was used to cut the masking tape along the inner edges of the copper tape. The centre strip can then be pulled out for painting the lane colours. If you are going to use brushes to apply the top coat of the racing surface then you can just carry on. We elected to use paint rollers so we had to wait for the lane colours to dry and re-mask the centre strip. The undercoat was then applied and allowed to dry.

We had decided to use a gloss finish and chose a dark grey Alkyd Resin Gloss from the Johnstone range of Professional Products. Be warned! If you have never applied gloss paint with a roller try it on a piece of scrap MDF first! We thought it would be as easy as emulsion! We learnt how to avoid a carpet of air bubbles very quickly.

Once the top coat was dry the masking was removed. The result was well worth the effort. 6mm ply was used for the side barriers to finish off.

Setting up time for a meeting is now 10-15 minutes compared to 30-40 minutes with old track which was bolted together from under the track. We have much better joints as well. The first time the track was tested we forgot to connect the electrics together and all but one lane ran all the way round. The tape to tape contact at the joints was making the circuit!

The next project is to rebuild Section B. With our success in constructing the slope we intend to build a flat bridge unit to mate up with the Section C and build a new section with plenty of interesting bends and a curved slope to bring the track to the upper level of the bridge. A short transverse portion on the lower part will complete the joint from this 'new' section to the 'old' track.

Please be aware:

- MDF is very easy to work with BUT, use a face mask when drilling, routing or sanding MDF. You will create vast amounts of dust and you **don't** want to be breathing it!
- Take all necessary precautions with sharp tools and power tools. Always wear eye protection.
- Follow the Safety recommendations for Paint and Solvent Based adhesives.

Good Ideas?

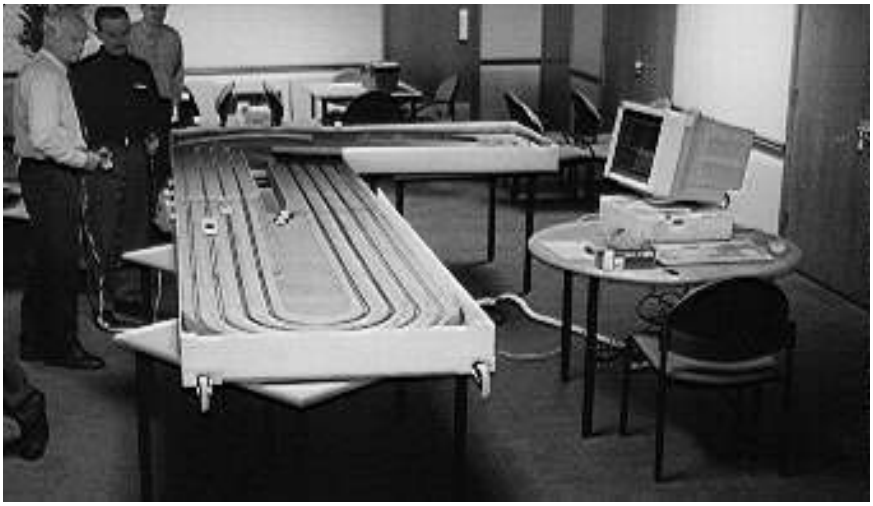
- With our next phase of building we will probably opt for 12mm MDF. With a well designed frame in 45 x 18mm it is just as rigid as a section using 18mm MDF but is many kilograms lighter.
- Get a 'Screwfix' catalogue http://www.screwfix.com/. They not only have very cheap screws and fixings but have the occasional special offer (a Plunge Router for £49-99 I). Also a range of heavy gauge pressed steel corner braces which we will look at in lieu of wooden corner blocks. Plus Frame/Mitre Saws for silly money and Cordless Screwdrivers etc.. (No, I'm not on a commission!)
- Don't get electrical connector strips

from places like Homebase, try your local hardware shop or electrical wholesaler or Screwfix again. £2-65 versus 65p for a 13 Amp 12 connector strip here.

- Shop around for wood. Again, places like Homebase are pricey. We saved £42 by going to the local Wickes for ours.

As I said, this is just our experience in upgrading our track. Our members think it was time well spent. Racing now is more enjoyable. We have a track that is 24 feet longer per lap and a surface that does not tear tyres to shreds and is proven to have more grip. We learnt a lot, but not necessarily anything others already knew; and we may have not used the best methods. I hope that it may encourage others to have a go. One little homily though: “Fail to plan equals plan to fail!” spend some time up-front and save on wasted time, effort and cost. With proper plans you can split the work. In this case, the frames were made remotely from the rest of the assembly.

BEFORE.....



... AND AFTER

HOW TO CONVERT THAT KIT!

BY DAVID NORTON

Part Two. Connecting the bits together!

Having successfully modified your Ninco chassis as per part 1, the next major stage in converting a model kit in to a slot car beckons, connecting the chassis to the body!

This is done using the same technique as Ninco and most of the other manufacturers employ, by the means of plastic posts and screws. As with chassis shortening the job is straight forward as long as a little ***patience*** is exercised and some basic procedures are followed.

The first thing to do is take your "Blue Peter" chassis *("Here's one I made earlier")* and fit the motor, axles, wheels/tyres and guide as these will aid positioning when gluing the chassis to the body. Offer the completed chassis to the body and you will see that in most cases that the original front mounting hole/column on your chassis will come somewhere on the underside of the bonnet area of the kit and the rear hole will likewise line up with the boot area; perfect locations for plastic mounting posts. Note, I always use 2 posts at the rear (one is OK at the front) so chassis "rock" across the rear axle can be easily controlled assuming you intend to race your model. Ninco originally only need two mounting posts on most of their models as the chassis "rock" is checked by the close fitting body work, a luxury you don't have, hence the need for three (or more) posts. Two holes will need drilling at the chassis rear and normally one on either side of the original hole will do.

The plastic rod I use for the new posts is bought from my local model shop, it comes in 300mm lengths costing about 50p, is about 4mm outside diameter and is pre-drilled (luckily) ready to accept Ninco body screws which easily self-tap the rod due to their coarse thread. Please note on some models the rear mounting posts will need fixing to either the underside of the driver's platform or to an additional internal brace if the rear window area is large and/or sloping, resulting in no "boot area". The Dodge Viper is a good example and models like this are a complete pain as you will need to almost finish your kit before attempting this stage and "Sods Law" dictates that no matter how careful you are, the file/scalpel will slip as you trim something!!

However, I digress; place your kit on its roof and locate the chassis so the wheels sit centrally in the arches as it's time to ascertain the length of the three mounting posts. Take an old axle or thin screw driver and drop through each chassis mounting hole in turn noting the depths dipped, add at least 5mm to the lengths, cut three plastic rods to suit, and finally screw them to the chassis. If you now put the body and chassis together the posts will be obviously too long but this is no major problem, simply keep offering the two halves together, carefully trimming the posts until the lengths are nearly perfect. I trim the posts with a "Dremel" cutting tool but a scalpel/file combination will work without problems. As soon as you are happy with the fit of the chassis apply "SuperGlue" to the ends of the three posts and using the guide blade and the wheels to centralise/locate the chassis above the body (a tip here is to hold the body in position on your work surface by lumps of "Blu-Tack"), slowly lower into position. Now relax and put the kettle on!

When the glue has set undo the screws and you'll see that posts are now attached to the body in perfect position and the job's complete:- almost! Using epoxy resin ("Araldite") pack around the joints between the posts and body to provide strength and once set the posts can be carefully filed that last 1mm or so to provide the exact length needed for the chassis to sit perfectly within the body.

"And that's all there is to it" to quote a famous game show host; you have now built a slot car from a kit, all that was needed was a little patience and as long as you carefully **check** each operation as you progress your kit conversion will sit level and square and drive/ race perfectly. Happy building!

Next month, some modelling "bits and bobs".

AIRFIX KIT CONVERSIONS

BY PETER BLASIO

I have recently converted four Airfix 1/32 models to slot cars and I thought my methods may be of interest to other members. The cars in question being:- Porsche 917, Ferrari 250LM, Aston Martin DB5 and Ford 3 Litre GT.

I use small pieces of softwood, drilled out to accept plastic wheel bearings which are then glued in with Araldite. Then, taking the kit chassis I cut a square hole to allow room for the rear axle and contrate to rotate freely. Two holes are drilled between the chassis and wheel arches to allow fitting of axle and the wood/wheel bearings are glued to each arch and allowed to dry.

WARNING: Do not use any form of heating equipment to speed up the drying process as this will warp the chassis and cause major problems when matching up the body and chassis.

The motor is installed next; line it up with the contrate and mark out its position on the chassis. Roughen this area and again use Araldite to glue it in place, being sure to tape over the air intake scoops first. Match up with contrate and allow to dry.

I use an electrical terminal block, cut in half for the guide mounting. A suitable size hole is drilled in front of the axle, in the centre of the chassis, in which the terminal block is glued. A little silicon grease on the guide blade shaft will help reduce friction when the car is in use. Small blocks of wood fitted with axle bearings can also be used for the front axle fittings, but I usually fit a solid front axle as the wheels are usually lifted above the track by the guide blade. Two small holes also need to be drilled either side of the guide to fit the motor wires. The rear wheels are now fitted and the motor powered up to check everything runs properly.

Next the upper body is assembled and fitted with windscreen, driver etc. Small pieces of wood are also glued to the inside of the body sides to allow for fixing to the chassis. Two pilot holes are drilled through the bottom of the chassis which is then matched up to the body. Some sanding may be necessary to ensure a good fit.

Very small self tapping screws are used to hold the whole thing together; I use a battery hand drill to make pilot holes in the wooden inserts on the inside of the body. The kit is then painted and decals applied. It is also advisable to put some cooling slots round the motor if you are going to run long races.

The Scalextric race tuned accessories pack plus a pair of Ninco axles provided all the parts needed to motorise these kits. I have had great fun building these cars; I am sure other members will find better or easier methods of construction but the important thing is to have a go. As a first time builder I get immense satisfaction racing the cars on my home track, especially when I put in a good lap time.

Incidentally don't worry about the parts being fixed in if something goes wrong; just use a stanley knife to cut it out and glue a new piece in. Its not cutting edge technology but it's challenging and it's fun, which is what the pastime is all about. Why not try your hand and maybe you can pass on any improvements to the rest of us.

TRAINS , PLANES AND SLOTCARS

BY CEDRIC WHITING

Crofton Racing Centre had been on local television before and that is why it was approached to take part in a TV series called "People and their passions. " The programme was about hobbies and the instalment we appeared in was about adults who played with models and toys. Our programme was subtitled " Playing for real " .

The reporter, Richard Jones came to the track and asked if it was OK to tape us racing one Wednesday evening. He even joined in with the racing so we agreed. I wasn't keen, I thought he was going to make us look like a load of movers and shakers.

Early this summer we arrived to find Richard with camera and lighting men already set up for their first shot. They wanted all of us with similar metal tool cases (used to carry the cars) to walk up the stairs to the club room past the camera.There was just enough room to go between the camera and the bannister so you had to carry your tool case in front of you. Ian elected to carry his behind him and it caught in the bannister. Leaning back and tugging on the case he managed to free it but with the sudden added momentum he lurched up the stairs.The rest of us passing the camera were in fits of laughter. "Can we have another please" called Richard up the stairs, we do it again.

In the next shot we had to place the tool cases in a line in rapid succession. A few goes at this and Richard is happy with the shot. I then had to open my tool case and remove the H-H Frentzen Williams from it. The next bit was actually the hardest and that was to place the Williams on an exact point of the track followed by the other five racers placing their cars in an exact straight line. It took several goes to get it right because of the speed Richard wanted it done. The camera man then sets up the camera and the lights on the start line and Richard said he wanted us all to drive round to the line and stop exactly on it. Everyone zooms round at near racing speed I decide to try and stop the car exactly on the line without coming in slowly and edging up to it. Perfect, it stops abruptly on the line, unfortunately Ian has forgotten to stop and his Jordan sails on down the straight. "Cut. Can we have another" says Richard. Second time around the Williams stops well short of the line and I edge up to the line. They filmed the start of the race then just had us going round for what seemed about an hour while they took shots and interviewed Mike Pack, Kevin Rowe and Ian Linford. They also brought two small DV cameras that could be placed by the track for some more dramatic shots.

A few weeks later the programme was broadcast to the Meridian area. It featured Subbuteo, model trains, us, radio controlled power boats, historic warship displays, yachts and aircraft. We first appeared briefly in an introductory montage. Six minutes into the programme was the main part on us. The entire sequence of walking up the stairs through to stopping the car on the line was fourteen seconds long yet it seemed to take an age to light and record each shot .

Richard asked Kevin " Why are you so good? " .

Kevin "If I tell you that they'll be beating me, I just try and stay on the track and be consistent.".

Ian was then introduced and referring to Scalextric said " I mainly bought the stuff for my son and it just carried on from there ".

The main segment in the programme on slot car racing was then done, a massive one minute and forty four seconds.

Near the end of the program we reappeared as the subject of anoraks is brought up.

Ian, "we're not anoraks, we're slot car racers " .

Mike, "I'm not an anorak I enjoy the racing too much. It's serious but I don't have to win every race." .

Another massive thirty four seconds of

screen time for the Crofton .

The last part of the programme was comments on the other hobbies featured .

Ian,"No enjoyment in trains, they don't come off, they don't crash. Well, when the children get hold of them they do.".

One of the model train enthusiasts said, " I had a Scalextric set once, it was a bit of fun I guess. I'm not looking for a frantic, speedy hobby." Maybe the cars went past too quickly for him to write the numbers down!

Overall the programme was very good and didn't send up the participants at all.

Racing is every Wednesday, 19:30 start, at the Crofton community centre in Stubbington near Portsmouth, as seen on TV.

0.K. lads who was taking the free kick then?

DUNDEE COLLECTOR AND RACER CLUB REPORT

BY ROY BUTCHART

Friday 22nd October and it was time to set up our track for the exhibition. We had been asked to participate in this by Dundee model railway club. This was their 50th anniversary and it was advertised as their biggest exhibition ever with fourty three working layouts. My old Sierra was loaded up with everything from Goodwood chicanes to figures and grandstands.

On reaching the hall we entered through the stage door and went up in the lift with a great trolley full of track and accessories. The exhibition was being held in four halls which were packed with railways, model boats and aeroplanes. We were in one of the smaller halls which was something of a blessing as none of us had set up an exhibition stand before.

Anyway, some three hours later we finally had a stand of which we could be proud. The track layout consisted of five long straights interspersed with a generous helping of S bends and 45 degree curves. There were a pair of crossover sections on the main straight, to even the lanes up, but we left out the chicanes etc. in order to produce a good driving track that was easy to marshal. The layout also included a Pacer system and electronic lap counter. The cars we used were Calibras which had been modified with magnets and lead ballast in order to help the general public stay on the track.

During the two days of the exhibition we had over five hundred visitors to the stand with more than half of them having a go at driving. At times we were extremely busy with people standing three deep round the stand. The cars stood up very well to the inevitable knocks - several people managed a good impression of Peter Dumbreck's aerial excursion at Le Mans.

The fastest time set by the public with a Calibra was 4.2 seconds. This compares well with the fastest time overall which was achieved by Alistair who put a Fly 911GT1 round in 3.2 seconds. Christopher also managed a creditable 3.9 seconds with an SCX Volvo.

All in all it was a very worthwhile experience and my thanks must go to my brave volunteers (Alistair, Neil, Christopher, Peter and the two Alexs who all worked very hard) and of course to Dundee Model Railway Club for inviting us.