

N S C C

The independent club for everyone interested in all aspects of 'scalextric' type cars in all scales.

Editor

Alan Slade

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There is quite a retro feeling to this months newsletter with 'How it was' articles from two members, let's have some more articles like these please.

It is also one of the biggest issues for a long time at 52 pages, and I still have plenty left over for the June issue which is almost full already unless I run to even more pages! But don't let this stop you writing in with your personal stories of your home track or whatever, there are still the July issues onwards to fill.

Even though I am writing this in Loughborough I cannot comment on the AGM as it is still three days away. I have returned to my old stamping ground at Loughborough University for a few days as I am working with some of my old colleagues on a project. It was good to return and meet up with everyone again, but I just do not know how the 'southerners' cope with the traffic. Is it really that much busier or am I just getting old. I think I will just confine myself to playing with model cars, that way at least I can step over the traffic jams!

On that note I am pleased to say that Knockhill is completed at last (well, as David Wisdom tells us, a track is never really finished is it?) and I hope to be able to find some time to write my own 'Home Track' article soon. In the meantime I am working on the next one, a rally track (that should really be two but I am hoping to be able to farm one out!). As they say watch this space.

The first Scottish get together is planned for May 29th. at Callendar, and I would like to remind those members north of the border who still have not contacted me that they will be able to collect their Jaguar there. This may well be your last chance – so you have been warned. It is also a very good incentive to come!!

Well I think I will close now and go and find some dinner. My next chance to meet up with members will be at the NSCC /Hornby Hobbies event at Margate, but why must it be so far South? All that traffic!!!

Alan.

COLLECTING IN THE EARLY NSCC YEARS

BY TONY FREWIN

I started to write this article last year for the 200th Newsletter, but I have just got around to finishing it. I hope it is of interest to both new and old NSCC members.

I was introduced to the NSCC in 1981 following a visit to view Lou Chaparrelli's impressive Scalextric collection – on a subsequent visit he showed me a genuine Scalextric Bugatti for which he had to pay the lofty price of £100 to complete the collection! This chance meeting led to an unbroken NSCC membership of 18 years, during which time I have gradually built up my slot car collection, which is 99% Scalextric.

Collecting during the early 1980's was the most fun, and looking back was the time I picked up most of the rarer cars at bargain prices, although it did not always seem that way at the time. Before I joined the NSCC, prices of obsolete Scalextric was high, and I was fortunate to attend an early 1980's NSCC swapmeet at Liphook where I recall Steve deHavilland adopted a trend setting 'pile em high – sell em cheap' stance; my purchases included a good C46 Porsche 917K for £3 and a mint UK C48 Tyrell for £10. This put a few noses out of joint – well done Steve!

Liphook provided me with many memorable buys. Jeff Spencer and I haggled over the price of a MB unmade CK1 Cobra; it was up for £20, but I bid £15 and Jeff in true spiv style said it was worth at least £25, so we tossed a coin and it was mine for £15! Liphook also provided me with my only prototype car, a C366 Duckhams Metro being sold for £10 by Eddie Collins who was unaware of its rarity. The livery is the same as the production car, but is in a kind of permanent Lettraset and has number 2 instead of 1 on the door. It was one of two cars in a sampler set and I think Julian Bowden Green bought the other one. Talking of Julian (where are you now?) he sold me a very nice E5 Marshall's car with slightly enlarged rear arches for £15 which I have to this day. On another occasion an unnamed member came up with a plastic bag full of cars, "psst, wanna buy a green Mirage". I replied in the negative as I already had one "I don't think you've got one of these", and with that opened up the bag which was full of lime green C15 Mirages at £6 each – how often do they turn up now?

One of my more daring purchases was at a local second hand market, while wearing my suit during a work lunch break. I spotted a MB blue K1 Go-Kart on a stall for £9 and quickly handed over a £10 note. With that, a guy built like a brick s**t house turns up and tries to snatch the car from my hand, saying he had bought the car earlier, and had gone to his car to get some money. Sorry I say, possession is 9/10th etc, and walk away forgetting the £1 change and trying to look brave. With that, the guy hurls an ice cream at me, and scores a hit, but the Go-Kart was mine. Moral to this tale is a Go-Kart in the hand is worth a cone down the neck!

During the early 1980's I tried advertising in the press for Scalextric generally, but was getting nothing scarce, so I tried specific advertising, and on two occasions got a result. The first of these was an advert in the local newspaper 'Wanted – James Bond set, £50 offered'. During the last of three weeks insertions, I get a bite and was offered a mint/boxed 100% complete set for £50; nice!

Flushed with this success, I tried my luck in Motor Cycle News of all places (my other hobby) 'Wanted – Scalextric Bugatti £100 offered' and much to my surprise I get a call "yes I have a Bugatti you can have, light blue isn't it?" "Yes", I babble back. We agree to meet the next weekend at the guys house in Leicestershire, as he says there is 'other stuff as well'. Now this is a 3+ hour drive for me, so by the time I get there the juices are well and truly flowing. A cup of tea, talk of the weather, and I can wait no more, I need to see this car badly. Matey then walks in proudly holding a light blue..... C65 Alfa Romeo. You muther, I thought, but then politely explained the error of his

ways. Anyway, shock over, it turns out he has over 15 mostly MB cars from the classic Scalextric era, including MB green & black C64 Bentleys, MB C65 Alfa, motorcycles and early catalogues, which I purchased for £100 – a fair price at the time, so I was sort of happy! However, a genuine Scalextric Bugatti still eludes me.

In the early years I made lots of mistakes, as most of us do when starting a new hobby. I parted with lots of nice cars including a beige & white C32 Mercedes and a lovely green C7 Mini with spotlight, when I thought I would be collecting one colour of each car – the lesson here is only part with cars if you really need the cash. The other mistake was dithering over purchases, only to have the car snatched from under your nose – lesson here is keep the car in your hand while bargaining, or pay up if Ivor Bigwallet is sniffing over your shoulder.

Over the years I have made many good friends within the NSCC and am pleased to see the focus of the club, the monthly newsletter, continue to improve. As a previous NSCC Newsletter editor, I urge a 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' approach. I hope the next 200 Newsletters will be as enjoyable as the last. Cheers!



Q: I have some track with 'Made in Argentina' stamped on the underside. Did Hornby start production in Argentina or is this an illegal copy?

A: Hornby tell me that in the early 70's they sent two track moulds to Argentina, the standard Straight and standard Curve. The idea was to start up production there to avoid the shipping costs of exporting goods to the South American continent. I asked if there were any other moulds, especially those of cars, sent to Argentina but I was informed that only the two track pieces were sent.

Q: What are the reports about the 'Senna' cars seen on the Hornby trade stand at the German toy fair?

A: The cars, chiefly painted in Yellow/Green or Blue/White, are the Diablo, Audi A4, Subaru and the 'Sally Ferries' style F1 cars. The cars, available in sets, will be available throughout the world, although probably not in countries where Scalextric is already established. The reason for this is that Hornby Hobbies Ltd. are using the new livery theme to establish a presence in new markets.

NASCAR mistakes: I incorrectly gave details of possible new cars last month. Erase these from your mind it never happened. I should have said that the C2020 Valvoline and C2021 Exide cars were completely new in the guises of C2141 & C2146. Very nice too!

PROTEC PROJECTIONS

Hornby have confirmed that they are not axing the new Protec range despite some rumours to the contrary. I was told, however, that they intend to expand the range as planned. I'm not sure what the next car will be but either more BTCC cars or perhaps GT cars would seem favourite.

RUMOUR CITY, ARIZONA

Hornby Hobbies Ltd., have confirmed this week (April 15, 1999) that car production is not going to China. Rumours also abound regarding the relocation of the factory as well as the axing of Lotus 7/Caterham, Mercedes CLK GT1. All of these claims are unfounded.

COMPETITION CORNER - ODD ONE OUT

The question is this: Which livery of the following cars is the odd one out?

- a/ Brabham BT44 'Kotzting',
- b/ Ferrari 312T 'Stone Avionics'
- c/ Ferrari 312 T3 'Tyler Autos'

Close date May 30th, answers on a postcard to Adrian Norman. Include your membership number and name and address. The winner receives a car donated by Hornby Hobbies Ltd. In the event of a tie I will be looking for the entry with the most correct information to substantiate the answer.



C2138 Porsche GT1 (Blue)



C2139 Porsche GT1 (Butterscotch)



Continued from last month

Unfortunately these days it appears that sought after does not always equate with more valuable. When you think how hard it is to find some of the early Fly cars (for example) it is surprising that cars like the blue Marcos and No. 25 911 GT1 haven't shot up in value. I would not advise that you stock up on SCX trucks (there will be a surprising number in circulation) but there are some recent cars whose current value doesn't reflect their scarcity.

I also found the factory prototypes and some drawings for the SCX trucks – pure coincidence that. These include a wooden, vac form, plaster and plastic mock-ups and a few assembly drawings. Together with the mock up and some sketches for the SCX tri-cycle!! It seems like they thought about making an off-road style tri-cycle..... At least the motor/guide assembly works, but I'm not sure how they would have hidden that within a motorbike. Now an off-road quad bike that might work....

Finally a few random thoughts to fill the page!!

Given that we are nearly a quarter of the way through the year (when I'm writing this) it is disappointing that we haven't got any of the new models that we have been promised. We are still waiting for a new model rather than a re-paint of an existing car – mind you I can wait for the new Mobil 911 GT1, you know the one

painted in the colours of the 1998 car, somehow I don't think that will make the best seller list – if they painted the old XJR Jaguar or Sauber Mercedes in these colours it would look more like the real car, which is much more like a Group C car than the recent Le-Mans 'roadcars'.

Autosport has a picture of the Scalextric sponsored Renault Spider, now I think that the Spider is a dreadful car but what is the point of sponsoring something, that you could easily model, and not making the most of it. Rather than inventing new liveries for old cars wouldn't it be nice if they could produce a few more cars – the Lotus/Caterham 7 should be a good start (but I suspect it will be so small it looks odd) hopefully they will continue to develop new cars along these lines.

I bet the person who decided not to take the licence on the Stewart F1 car is kicking themselves now, given that their Winter testing performance carried on through the Australian GP the licence fee must have shot up now!! And it is good to know that slot cars anticipated Formula 1's flexible rear wing years ago – I've got loads of slot cars without rear wings!! Perhaps someone should point out to Max Mosley that, despite what he says, F1 gets much more interesting when you take the wings off the cars!!

NINCO news

I received samples of the latest Ninco product the other day. The Blue Coral (which is now known as the Blue Carol car, as it is the first slot car that Carol has EVER said she liked - there's hope yet!) Porsche GT1. It is one of



the nicest GT1's I have seen and the wheels are stunning. My only criticism is that the yellow printing is a bit bit weak and could either have done with another hit or re-mixing.

The second car was the 50176 Toyota Corolla 'Rally Portugal'. This is the Loix/Smeels car, and like all the Ninco Corolla's is a nice little mover - certainly well liked at the Dundee club! At first I was convinced that the



wheels were different, but on closer examination they are not.

The third car was the first genuine new car, 50180 Seat Cordoba WRC 'Repsol'. It has the same wheels and tyres as the Toyota, the usual NC-1 motor and a front mounted magnet. The detailing on the car is very good and I particularly liked the air slots in the bonnet, it's just a pity that the spotlights do not work. Maybe soon! This could be the first car to receive the white LED treatment that I mentioned last month.

My only complaint is as with the Porsche that the Tampo printing is washed out in places, especially the multi-printing on the bonnet.



Hopefully the full production cars will be better.

This car did rather a lot of laps of the Dundee track when I took it there and everyone was very impressed with it. The only cars that it could not live with were the Fly GT's, SCX Ferrari 333P and the Ninco CLK, but they don't go rallying do they?

It seemed a very well balanced car that



would forgive those odd moments when the red mist took over and the driver left his brains out! Certainly a car to watch out for in forthcoming rally events.

Members letters



15 Disley Street
Sudden
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Lancashire
OL11 4PU

Dear Alan,

So, you've been criticised for running a 'trade journal'?!

Take no notice, the NSCC is a great magazine, and anyway, you're right, with over 1200 members there should be no shortage of material. If everyone did a couple of things each and they got published at, say four per issue, there would be sufficient for the next 50 years' newsletters!!

The 'Home Circuit' column could become a regular feature, besides being an interesting monthly read, we may see a time when the NSCC could publish its very own '101 Circuits! - written by the members for the members (or anyone else who cared to purchase it!).

As I write this, Eddie 'Swerving' Irvine has just done his best swerve to date, onto the top step of the winners podium. Maybe Eddie is the Brit with the best chance at the Championship this year, admittedly the McLaren's were faster before they retired, but even with last years reliability they were still nearly caught by Schumacher.

All the best,

John Rawstron.

Thanks for the comments John, you can relax now for the next 50 years as you have done your bit!!!!

7 Bloreng Road
Abergavane
Monmouthshire
NP7 5TA

Dear Alan,

Please can some of our more knowledgeable members advise me which transformers should I use on my four lane track? I am at present using four C922 black box type which were recommended for Scalextric cars in Steve Carter's series on track building in the June 1994 Newsletter.

I don't want to use a battery and charger yet, and as Fly and Ninco cars seem to be "the" cars to use at the moment, would there be any benefit in using the C919 round tub type with 18VA & 16V DC or is the C918 blue box type still the one to use? If so I'll need four. If any members have got spare ones to sell please let me know.

The list of transformers in 1994 was as follows:

C912	14VA / 14.6V DC	C918	11VA / 16.5V DC	C922	10VA / 16V DC
C919	25VA / 14.3V DC	C919	9.6VA / 16V DC	C919	15VA / 16V DC
C919	18VA / 16V DC.				

I'd very much appreciate any information.

Cheers,
Phil Barry

14 Oakwood Close
Benfleet
Essex

Dear Alan,

I have just received (march 25th) the March/April edition of the Scalextric Racer through the post and seen the new! “readers offer” of unsponsored, old stock Scalextric Cars.

A C203 type? Ford Escort Cosworth, a Ferrari F40 (C590 Kenwood) and the all yellow Opel Vectra (C2000 Promarkt). For the grand total of £23.49 you have a car you can redecorate “Create your own distinctive racing livery” with the supplied decal sheet. This can be done by anyone spending considerably less money buying whatever donor car they want and some car ‘colour restorer’ (Dyna-Cut, T-Cut, etc.). If Scalextric have lots of unsponsored old stock, why not sell it through the dealerships/race centres at sensible prices. The £3.50 per car p&p is very expensive for a small plain cardboard box, which takes an unprotected car box inside.

Before anyone says “costs, delivery, staff wages”, I also recieved today a TVR Speed 12 in alarger box, wrapped in about 2” of bubble wrap and the postage was £1.17. These people can afford to send it! (yes I know the other car is sent recorded delivery, but I have had 3 or 4 cars sent recorded and First Class for less).

Can you ask Hornby hobbies/Scalextric Racer why they are so expensive.

Writing letters to the Racer magazine is a waste of postage unless you start your letter “Dear Scalextric, I am 8 years old and think your cars are great”. Thankfully the NSCC readers get more intelligent letters printed.

I wrote this letter just prior to getting the April NSCC newsletter.

Point 1: you realy are a slow reader!

Point 2: you get a Scalextric car with your membership renewal. (A lovely? blue Ferrari F40, WHEN it arrives around February.).

Graham Smith

48 Craigmount Road
Dundee
Scotland
DD2 4QF

Dear Editor,

Would anyone be interested in taking part in the Dundee Grand Prix. As yet I am trying to find out how many people would be interested before I start to make any definite plans.

The event would be held over two or three days either in October or February and would incorporate a swopmeet. Although the event would b eopen to the general public, club members will get preferential treatment.

Will anyone interested please contact me? Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Butchart

Telephone 01382 622012 [home]

01382 462375 [work]

0410 737326 [mobile]

Hi Alan,

Just a quick note to say how much I like the format of the newsletter, especially this months with the colour centrefold! You can really appreciate the work that has gone into the finishing of the Nissan - black and white would not have been a fraction as good. And the quality - were they digital photos or did you scan them?

I am all for the manufacturers paying for the colour front cover. The way the catalogues are going, it will be the only way left to see the different cars and this year's colour schemes. So long as they keep putting their web addresses, then I shall be happy.

Which leads on to the Racer. I fully agree with your comments about the time to read the thing and the back page! and the regular contributors. With the latter, it's nice to see them writing to a wide audience and NSCC does get lots and lots of plugs. Who knows, we may get a surge in membership as the youngsters from the back page grow up and have money to spend on their hobby. [where have I heard that before?]

No, I subscribe to the mag. because of three things; the freebie car, the car release details, the pictorial content - old set boxes, catalogues, etc.. For £13 , I can stand the faults and read it through once or twice. With the NSCC, I scour the readers ads, do the telephoning and then read the other bits while the post office does their work.

Regards

Austin Pilkington

Topsejlet 58
3070 Snekkersten
Denmark

Dear Alan,

Regarding my first letter, I've have some more information regarding the C50 JPS. There are not three but four different ones. Type 1: No. 8, RX motor; type 2: No. 8 Johnson motor, different body fixing and different motor aperture to RX model; type 3: No. 1 tampon printed but otherwise the same as a type 2 in body construction; type 4: new design on underpan, 2 slots to guide wires from guide post at an angle to each other, front spoiler and new colour on chrome, engine matt black type of chrome as on the C121 Tyrell.

Also there is another good colour variation to look out for with the C75 Mercedes 190sl. The elater type 3 James Bond mould was also available in a very good green colour, not blue in another shade but a light green.

How many colours was the A245 Fuel Load Gauge available in? I have green and red and a friend has a blue one. Was there also a yellow one so that you could have a different colour one for each lane?

Yours,

Jens Chr. Lillelund

MY HOME CIRCUIT

BY JOHN RAWSTRON

This circuit is the latest stage of an interest started by my Dad and Grandad almost as many years ago as I am old. It occupies a space 15' by 12', and, in an ideal world, the user would sit to the left of the circuit as we look at the plan, affording easy access to all parts of the track for marshalling purposes. The loft is, in this respect only however, not ideal, and this area is in fact occupied by the loft hatch and chimney breast. Seating is therefore at the bottom right of the track.

The start/finish line incorporates the Think Tank, and so needs to be within reach of the user, so although the instructions imply a straight to be the ideal place, the Thinktank is in fact between two curves. This does not impair performance and means that the start line is just prior to a bend, similar, for instance, to Imola, which I like.

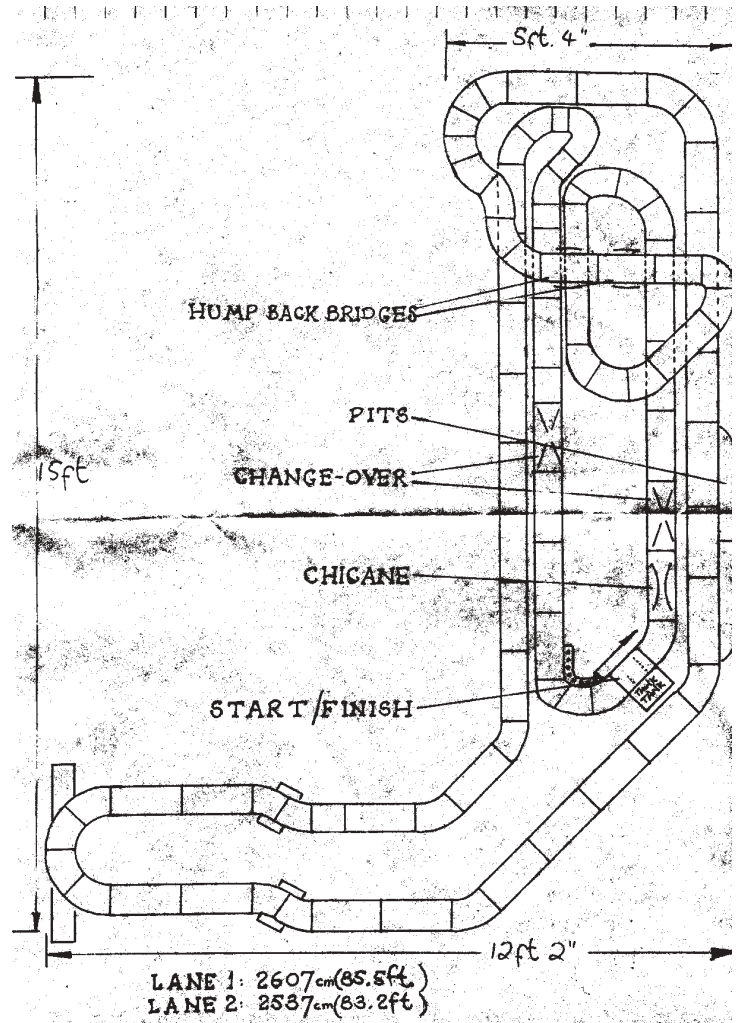
The design of the circuit was based primarily around having features I particularly wanted to include, as well as trying to fit a fairly long running length into a comparatively small area. The former included a humpback bridge complex, at least two longish straights, and sufficient corners and chicanes to make a lap challenging without it being too hazardous to cars that don't take kindly to sudden changes of direction.

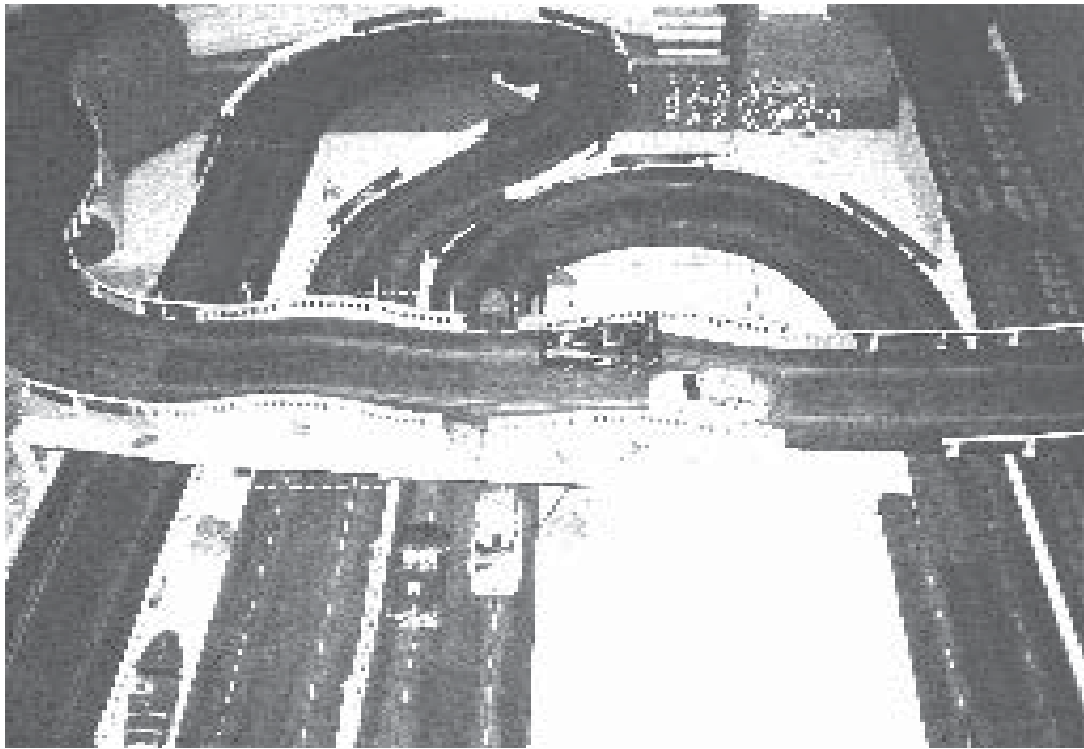
The result is quite a varied lap with a scale distance of a little under two miles.

The start takes us into a left hand bend, from which we exit into a skid chicane and crossover in quick succession. There are flag-waving marshals and hay bales and tyre-walls a-plenty just here.

A short straight takes us under the bridge and to the scenic part of the lap, commencing with a 45° curve which elevates us to an altitude of 5", and over the humpback bridge complex, past the Britains range of ducks and Lego trees. Some cars are pretty much airborne for much of the two hump bridges, but need to rein it in for the standard curves left and right and then the 180° right hander that takes us into 'gable-end straight' where we pass numerous Scalextric buildings, including the control tower and the time keeper's hut with 'time-remaining to race' buzzer. The crowd in the grandstand are literally on the edge of their seats as they roar us on down to the fastest and, at nearly 10 feet, longest straight, sloping down past the pit lane to a gentle right hander. Not so gentle, however, that it would not trap the unwary, and suitably dynamic braking is needed to avoid deslotting after having slowed down from a speed of probably about 10 feet per second.

We are now onto a recent extension to the circuit, an extra 14 feet past the loft hatch and back, taking us round the Britains military band, who managed to march all the way from their previous position at gable end straight for the new section of track. Care is needed at the chicanes;





they were included in this track solely for the purpose of negotiating two hangar trusses that support the roof.

A left hand bend, a short straight, another left hander, and we are on long straight number two, which takes us at speed down under the bridge and to the tightest bend of all, a corner that needs

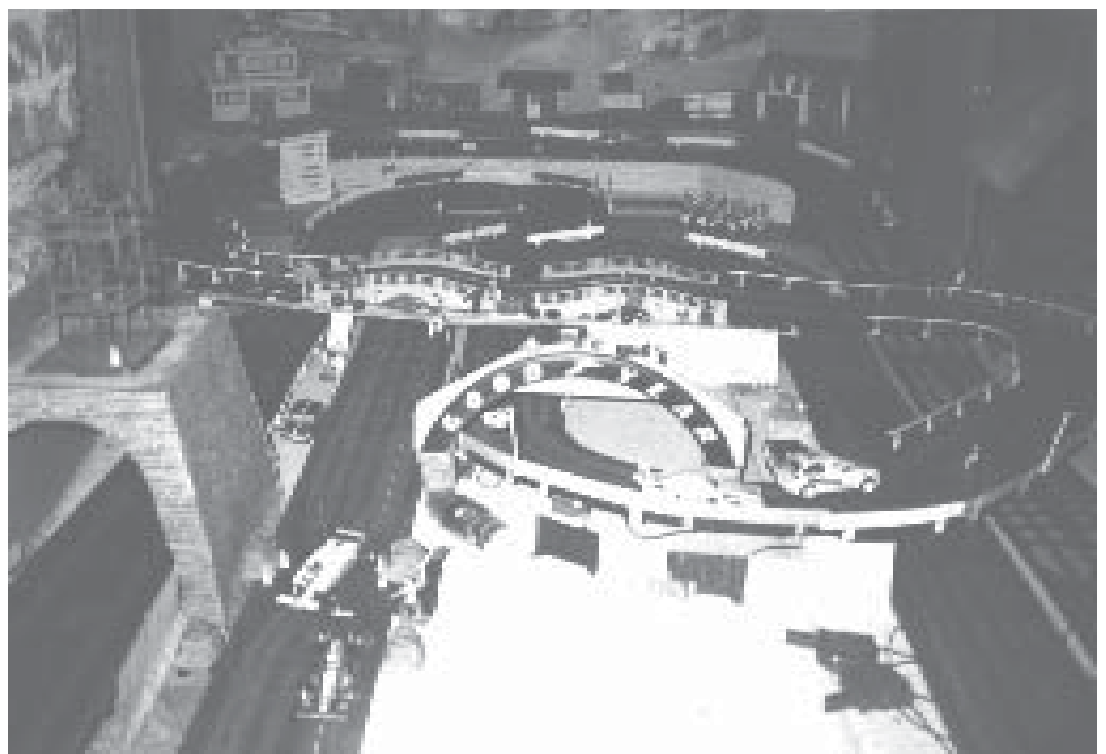
special care with the Bentley and Alfa Romeo because it is slightly banked and there is a minimum requirement of momentum to get these two particular cars round it.

A final straight with another crossover leaves one last corner round the oil-drum section, and that is a lap round my loft.

It's a fairly twisty circuit in places; the Scalextric F1 Benetton takes 13.40 seconds to get round it, an average scale speed for a flying lap of a shade under 139 m.p.h.. Other notable performers include the Scalextric C281

motorbike (magnet), the Ninco Jaguar XK120 and the Scalextric rear-engined Offenhauser (both non-magnet).

This circuit does not have a name, but in view of its location and in the tradition of Brands Hatch, probably something like 'Lofty Hatch' would be appropriate. Hmmm.....!



HORNBY HOBBIES' TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

HELD AT BRANDS HATCH
ON FRIDAY JANUARY 28TH.
1999

Brands Hatch may be closed at the moment whilst track improvements are made but that didn't stop the finalists to Hornby Hobbies Touring Car Championship proving who was best on Plexytrack. Brands was the venue, the culmination to last years contests held at each round of the British Touring Car Championship around the country in the Scalextric Roadshow.

A top floor corporate suite overlooking the Brands Hatch circuit was the ideal venue for the final.

The twelve finalists would soon know who was going to lift the big prize - an all expenses paid trip to the Australian Grand Prix.

A four lane circuit covering 3 by 5 metres was laid out and decorated with grass, trees, pits,



Practice. Time to get use to the track and work out how to gain an advantage.

buildings, etc. and looked quite presentable. A short spell of practice gave way to qualifying heats. The tension mounted but very soon all competitors were enjoying the occasion.

The cars to be raced were standard Audi A4 cars sprayed in one all-over colour to suit the lane markings. This aided marshalling as the competitors' parents or friends would have to join in the fun and put cars back on the track. The cars were standard in all other respects and apart from losing wing mirrors stood up to the challenge without need for repair apart from the odd guide change here and there.

Each driver was timed in the qualifying heats. The driver with the fastest lap time would be able to choose which lane he raced on in the forthcoming heats. The second fastest driver for that same heat would get second choice of lane



The finalists line up for the big prize, a trip to the Australian Grand Prix!

and so on. This gave each competitor something to go for, it was no good holding back during qualifying!

The heats and semi-finals were raced in good spirit but there could only be four drivers for the final. Eventually, Lewis, Andrew, Gary and Jamie lined up for the grand final.

A short break for tea and biscuits gave those finalists of a nervous disposition time to freshen up before they were called forward to take their place at the start line. The final was to be raced over 50 laps. For the duration of the race and despite quite a few accidents most

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Andrew, from the Medway club, and the only NSCC member to qualify for the days big race, receives his prize for second place. A TVR Speed 12 hot off the production line, one of the first TVRs to come out of the factory.

of the field remained within a few laps of each other. However, Lewis' almost faultless drive brought him home in first place with Andy finishing on the same lap in second place with Third and Fourth places hot on his heels.

All finalists received a hearty cheer as the race ended. All drivers performed admirably. Presentations were made to the finalists, pictures taken, interviews extracted. The runners up received the brand new TVR Speed 12 as their consolation prize.

The winner, however, got the big one - a trip to the Australian Grand Prix! Well done Lewis. I'm sure Lewis didn't believe just what he had won. He stayed cool and collected throughout the entire tournament, an excellent racer. He still had enough energy to enjoy a game of football on the edge of Clearways as everyone started to drift home. Well done Lewis. Enjoy your trip to Australia.



Lewis receives the prize for 1st. place and contemplates which girl to invite to Australia whilst I jostled with the unrelenting vicious onslaught of the dog eat dog world of the paparazzi!

ROOTS OF SCALEXTRIC

THE MINIMODELS YEARS 1947 TO 1959

BY PHIL ETGART

Anyone who has read any of the articles I have written will know how enthusiastic I am about the range of tinsplate models produced by Minimodels under the Scalex, Startex and eventually Scalextric brand names.

Whilst most people are aware that the Minimodels was owned and operated by Fred Francis and eventually sold to the Lines Brothers Tri-ang empire. Little is normally known about the early output of the company.

Minimodels was formed in 1947, and was based at Tennyson works, Tennyson Road, Mill Hill, London NW7. The company was one of a large number of toy producers operating in and around London. Whilst the smaller toy companies were primarily focused on Die-Cast and slush moulded toys e.g. companies such as 'Johilco' (John Hill & Company) and 'Crescent', a number of operators produced toys that were based on a combination of tinsplate and Bakelite. The majority of these toys were generally push along toys or key wound clockwork models.

Toys with any degree of inter-activity or innovation were rare, and indeed it was not unusual for small companies to survive making crude copies of the more prominent brands.

From the beginning of Minimodels Fred Francis was obviously approaching things from a slightly different perspective. The company's first product was a charming lithographed tinsplate toy typewriter, which was launched under the name 'Mini-Type'. It is unclear how long this model remained in production but the 1952 trade catalogue that follows this article suggests that it was already out of production even that early in the company's history.

It is difficult to assess exactly what was issued and in which sequence, but the catalogue

clearly shows the company's transition toward model cars and its continual innovation.

Fairly soon after 'Mini-Type' it is believed the company introduced its range of tinsplate lorries. Absolute clarification of what was issued is lacking, and information from the broader toy trade is conflicting, but all of the items shown in the trade catalogue are known to exist.

The tinsplate articulated lorries are reasonably easy to locate through specialist antique Tin Toy dealers. Although expect a little paint or very minor corrosion damage. Mint-boxed items are generally not around!

The 'Autotip lorry', a tinsplate Tipper Truck with working forward/reverse gears, working tipping bed and driver who peers out of window, is a different story. Whilst I know of one or two examples in collections I have yet to see, let alone find an example myself.

The 'Traffic Car' turns up reasonably frequently although I am not sure how rare respective versions with & without working windscreen wipers are. Presumably Minimodels were also unsure of the market's desire for a car with working windscreen wipers as it was unique for them to issue two versions of a model with & without specific features.

Whilst the 'Traffic Car' was the company's first venture towards model cars, it was not really indicative of the direction the company was going to develop in. That was provided by the company's next release which was what should be regarded as its first venture into producing replicas of competition cars.

The model in question was a key wound clockwork tinsplate replica of John Cobb's land speed Railton powered streamliner. The model appears to exist in three versions. Sprayed Silver with UK & US flags crossed on the nose. Sprayed Silver with plain Blue flags crossed on the nose. Plain polished metal with usual screen painted flags/signature on the body.

These cars are hard to find in anything that would normally be regarded as approaching VG to Excellent condition. Boxed examples are extremely rare as the boxes were manufactured from particularly thin card. Surviving examples

are worth tracking down as the box art is especially nice with line drawings of Cobb & his car and a brief passage of text regarding his land speed attempt.

Following on from the Cobb Railton was a model of Lt./Col Goldie Garner land speed MG streamliner. The MG was produced in two colours, Red or British Racing Green. The Green being especially difficult to obtain. Boxed examples are even more scarce than boxed Cobb Railton's. The MG was notable as it was the first model in which Fred Francis fitted his patented fifth wheel self winding clockwork mechanism, which was to form the basis of the soon to be issued Scalex series.

The 1952 trade catalogue clearly illustrates that as with Fred Francis recollections on the Scalextric video, the Jaguar XK Roadster was indeed the first Scalex model to be issued and appeared in 1952.

The Jaguar was soon joined by a tinplate model of an Aston Martin DB2 and in turn by an MG TF, which was unusual in that the complex body shape demanded an aluminium rather than tin pressing. The three sports cars were then joined by two Grand Prix cars a Maserati and a Ferrari. All of the models featured the patented fifth wheel winding mechanism.

Subsequently Minimodels issued two more models in the Scalex range. An Austin Healey 100/4 and the seventh and last in the series a Jaguar 2.4 Saloon.

The Healey 100/4 can be difficult to find a nice example of, and the Jaguar 2.4 is by far the rarest of the Scalex range. The Jaguar was only produced for a brief period before the Scalex range was superseded by the Startex range.

Early 'Scalex' cars came in a Dark Blue/White print box, but this was soon replaced by a very colourful box which had a press out panel to make it into a pit building. Consequently, boxed Scalex cars can be hard to find. Boxed Austin Healey 100/4's turn up occasionally and boxed Scalex Jag's are virtually impossible to find.

Around 1955 Minimodels introduced a

new series of models, it's 'Startex' range. This comprised of re-works of two earlier 'Scalex' models and one completely new model. 'Startex' differed from 'Scalex' in that it no longer utilised the innovative fifth wheel winding mechanism and now relied upon a cord winding system. This was either disguised as the exhaust pipe (in the case of the Healey & Jaguar 2.4) or the steering wheel in the case of the Sunbeam Alpine Roadster.

The Healey was modified from the Scalex range by changing the shape of the grille to replicate a 100/6 and through the addition of a windscreen & screen frame. The Jaguar 2.4 lost it's pressed tin interior and gained smoked out windows, but retained it's delightful appearance.

The Startex Jaguar's turn up reasonably frequently, but boxed examples are rare. The Healey 100/6 is rare in any condition boxed or unboxed!

The Alpine appears to have been the biggest seller of the Startex range by a large margin as they turn up regularly. Screens on the Alpine are particularly vulnerable as they were often broken by a swiftly released winder cord hurtling back toward its resting place on the dashboard.

By 1956 it was becoming apparent that Minimodels needed a new product. The toy market was beginning to change rapidly in the light of high quality low cost pocket/pocket money toys such as Lesney's newly introduced range of 'Matchbox' toys.

Fred Francis had already noted the popularity of wire cars & rail cars being raced by specialists clubs and the idea of a buried rail track system and electric motor powered 'Slot Cars' was born during a visit to a trade fair.

Minimodels initially introduced Scalextric (Scalex Electric) with a rubber track system utilising battery power and push button controllers (no graduation of power supply. Just on and off!).

The cars were a modified version of the tinplate Scalex Maserati which was fitted with an electric motor which was mounted around/over the rear axle and a gimble pick up (like two half spheres sandwiched together).

The 'Scalextric' system was an instant success and the Maserati was soon followed by a motorised version of the Scalex Ferrari. As with the Maserati, this car also came fitted with a rubber driver.

During late 1958 a publicity leaflet appeared which announced three additions to the Scalextric range. It showed electric versions of the Jaguar 2.4 saloon, the Austin Healey 100/6 and the Aston Martin DB2. The Healey soon appeared, but it was around this time that the takeover of Minimodels by Tri-ang put paid to the tinsplate Scalextric range due to Tri-ang's existing injection moulding capacity. Underpans for the tinsplate electric Sunbeam Alpine and Jaguar 2.4 saloon eventually surfaced (see page 22 of Roger Gilham's book) but no further trace exists. Whilst the existence of a tinsplate electric Aston Martin DB2 in an NSCC members possession has been suggested, it has never been substantiated.

Whilst with painted models it can be difficult to be certain what was produced (e.g. 'Matchbox' Friday afternoon specials) the table at the bottom of this page represents a list of models & colours that are known to exist.

The tinsplate range finally ceased production in 1959 drawing to a close the first chapter of the history of Scalextric.

My thanks to John Carmichael for providing the photocopies of the 1952 trade catalogue which follows this article.

The development & marketing of the product was supported by the production of a 'Scalextric Bulletin' often referred to as tinsplate newsletters. These ran to six editions (although an issue eight is alleged to exist), issue six being the one which announced the cessation of the tinsplate range and introduction of plastic bodied cars post Tri-ang's takeover of Minimodels.

The owners club also produced an enamel broach, which is now extremely difficult to find, as are the 'Bulletins' themselves.

Range	Model	Colours
Scalex	Jaguar XK Roadster	red, maroon, mett blue, green, light mett green, cream
Scalex	Aston martin Db2	maroon, mett blue, green, light mett green, cream
Scalex	MG TF	maroon, mett blue, cream
Scalex	Maserati GP	red, green, yellow
Scalex	Ferrari GP	red, maroon, mett blue, green
Scalex	Austin Healey 100/4	red, cream, mett blue
Scalex	Jaguar 2.4 Saloon	red, silver, mett blue
Startex	Sunbeam Alpine	red, bronze, mett blue, cream
Startex	Jaguar 2.4 Saloon	red, cream, silver
Startex	Healey 100/6	cream over red, blue over cream, red over cream
Scalextric		
MM/C51	Maserati GP	green w. red nose, red w. yellow nose
Scalextric		
MM/C52	Ferrari GP	mett blue, dark green
Scalextric		
MM/C53	Austin Healey 100/6	blue over cream, red over cream

Members letters



8 Enville Road
Ridgway
Newport
South Wales
NP9 SAE

Dear Alan,

Recently in the NSCC newsletter there have been many comments written about the sheer volume of products available this year and which people are likely to spend their hard earned cash on. As it is now verging on the impossible to buy one of everything released, even if this is financially viable, you have the problem of where could you store all the cars? Personally, this is a far bigger problem than the actual financial outlay.

My current favourite brand is FLY but even though I have a FLY trade account I cannot purchase all the limited edition cars, i.e. 511 Porsche 908 as Gaugemaster are importing these in such small numbers there are not enough to go around the dealers, and I certainly wouldn't purchase one off another dealer at a vastly inflated price, therefore making it impossible to obtain a complete FLY collection. Another example of the sheer number of variants on any car is the Dodge Viper. I set out to collect all the different liveries but gave up on the tenth car, when I realised there was about another ten to go!

As Phil Egart recently remarked, Ninco aren't really going anywhere with their models this year, so this has ruled out Ninco's new releases. I'm not a great fan of the new SOX cars as generally I find them less than impressive. I can't remember the last time I bought a Scalextric car but fortunately I've reviewed quite a few lately and they have been fine, but not impressive enough to make me part with my own money for one. I dislike the TVR as the grill seems the wrong shape. It may be an accurate model, but I find it less than aesthetically pleasing. If the Caterham 7 comes out right however, I would certainly buy one of these.

The majority of models I intend to purchase this year are made by the smaller companies like Pink-Kar and Reptec. I have ordered both a yellow and silver Auto Union and a British Racing Green Bugatti as a lot of my favourite cars were pre-WWII Grandprix cars. I wish several of the major manufacturers would look at producing models from this era. Why has nobody made a slotcar model of an E.R.A.? Just to give one example, with narrow tyres, no magnets, these cars would be really fun to race. Another pair of cars I'm considering purchasing are the 1:24 scale pre-WWII Mercedes and Auto Unions being released later this year by Carrera. I have seen mock ups of both these models and they looked most impressive.

Obviously I will be purchasing at least one of the Lola T70 and Porsche 917 models released this year by FLY. Personally I find models of the current Grandprix cars totally uninteresting to look at. In conclusion, if manufacturers expect me to part with my hard earned money they must produce well made scale models of interesting cars from interesting periods.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff Davies

MY HOME TRACK

BY TONY SECCHI

As some of you will know, if you read my Dec.. 98 article, upon retirement I returned to Scalextric racing after some 35 years and set up my own 2 lane track in my spare Bedroom. A few mates come round once a week and we compete - not a Club in the strict sense of the word, but we have rules and parameters that are strictly adhered to. Some of that later but first to the main thrust of this Article - the Track Layout.

Not having a computer, I could not take advantage of the current software on track design, so I had to devise a method by which I could set out the track by hand and which would ensure that when I purchased the track sections they would fit together as planned.

Firstly, the available space I had was approx. 12'0" in length (3660 mm) and because the track had to be lifted up when not in use, a maximum of 5' . 3" (1600 mm) width to avoid hitting the ceiling when upright.

I purchased a copy of on Scalextric track plan layouts and track sections and decided on a layout based on the old Monza circuit (a cross over giving extra length for the confined space). I included the two banked curves but kept them flat so to reduce the height of the track when stored upright and leaning against the back wall.

I wanted to ensure that no two curve radii were the same, that I could use as many curve variations as possible and that I had at least one tight section that would make the drivers think about control and not just power. I amalgamated several bits of layouts from different plans and after much trial and error decided upon the layout shown.

To make sure that this all came together I used the track section book and Xeroxed the sections, enlarging them to 3" to 1'0" (1/4 full size). I obtained some tracing paper and stuck it to my dining room table. Using Tee and right angled squares I laid out the maximum border length and width to scale. I then put the Xeroxed track sections underneath the paper and traced off.

This system allowed me to change and modify as I went along. The net result was that I had a large scale layout custom designed and giving me the longest straights and most challenging corners that I could include.

The base of the track is made from 3mm Hardboard sheeting braced with 60mm x 6mm softwood battens. It is supported on a ledge at the rear and by drop down legs at the front.

I assembled the track sections on the Base board and they fitted exactly I Then using countersunk central screws I fixed each section to the base. I stuck the cross over and tunnel under to the base with a hot glue gun. This ensured that when stored in the vertical nothing fell off. I used my own power boost connections because the track length is approx. 55' 0" and I installed a DSII lap counter /timer (recommended by Sean Fothergill and endorsed by me).

I filled the track thickness by using display board to the same thickness profiled to suit and painted black (this is Loam filled and very light). A few safety barriers either side of the cross over and a stiff cardboard upstand of 2" around the exposed sides of the track were the finishing touches. The whole thing is very light and reasonably stable allowing me to lift it up or down and install the power sources in about 2 minutes flat. The track is operational for most of the year as I use it for testing when it is not in racing use. Low level strip lighting on the rear wall and strategically placed high lighters provide illumination for evening meets.

I had started planning this venture some months before I retired and by keeping a weather eye on the many office refurbishments in my area, managed to obtain all the base materials apart from the Hardboard, from rubbish skips, i.e. timber edging strips, battens and various offcuts of display board. I even got the three strip lights.

As for the racing - cars are strictly kept to Scalextric running gear and motors to keep equality

on performance and price. Bodies can be anything - Scalextric, Ninco, SCX, etc.. We allow magnatraction but no tyre gunk or braking.

We have races of 10 lap duration on each lane and we try to have different makes in the same category (we do not want six F50's competing). The categories we race are: modern GT (Ferrari F50) vintage GT (Ferrari GTC) modern Le Mans (Nissan R390) vintage Le Mans (Porsche 917).

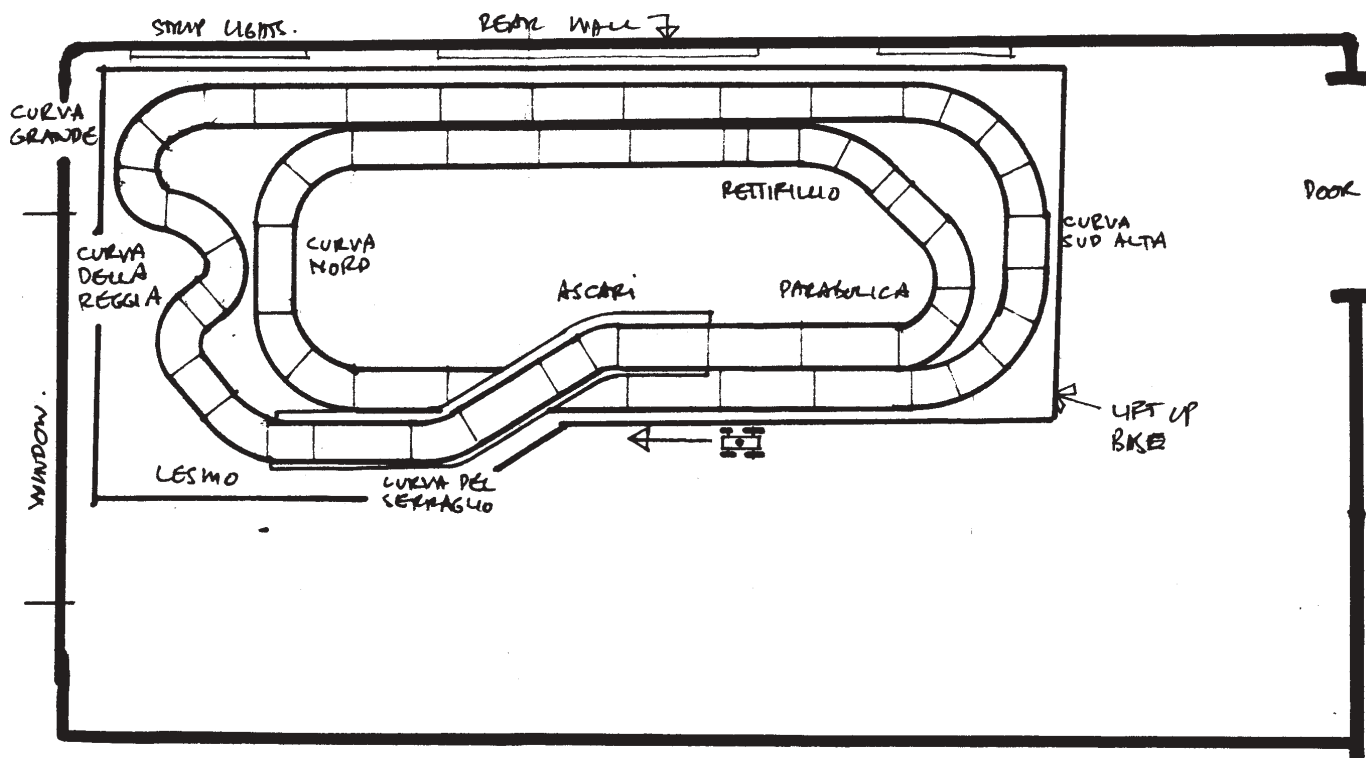
Each championship consists of 6 races an each lane with scoring as per current Grand Prix rules. We have 4 championships each year read over 3 months. Each championship has an individual winner and the one with the most points from the 4 events is the overall champion. Later this year we will add a one off 2 or 4 hour race and a Formula Libre one off where anything goes. Great but good. The circuit is asuccess. It is demanding fun to drive. Sit back and I will take you round.

You start, clockwise, on the short near side straight just before the cross over - too quick a start and you spin out at Curva Nord. Careful control is needed to get out of here and blast down to the Rettifillio and Parbolica curves which are quick. More care is needed on the crossover rise and sharp left not to de slot at Ascari. Same caution as you descend into the complex of Lesmo, Reggia and Curva Grande at the termination of these rapid opposite lock turns to control your exit speed on the back (longest) straight. Brake late for Curva Sud and let the car's inertia roll it round until you can put the power on for the dash to the line.

As I said before, the length is approx. 55' and lap times dependant upon car are about 6 secs allowing for lane difference My best times so far are 5.44 inside lane and 5.67 outside lane, set with a hand assembled Panoz ABS shell Scalextric chassis, wheels and Mabuchi 'S' motor.

My only regret is that I never had enough room to accommodate a 4 lane circuit though I could knock out the wall between the two bedrooms !!

Anyway article provides interest and encouragement to anyone with a restricted space and plenty of time. It is certainly worth it.



MAGNETS

WHAT'S THE ATTRACTION?

BY JOHN RAWSTRON

I have mixed feelings about magnets on the undersides of cars.

If their purpose is to improve handling, they fulfill that purpose admirably. I removed the magnet from the Fly Marcos, just to 'see', and although speed seemed unaffected (The adhesion isn't sufficient to slow the car down, then), handling was inevitably worse.

But what about the magnet's secondary purpose of adding realism ?

Admittedly, the full size car would not have a massive magnet underneath it but there are nonetheless, particularly in Formula One, numerous ongoing ways of improving downforce, or magnet-like adhesion to the track. Perhaps one most analagous to magnattraction was the side-skirts of a few years ago which seemed to do their job, though were ultimately banned.

There is more than one type of realism, however. There is the visible one, detailed bodywork, correct livery, driver in cockpit, etc,

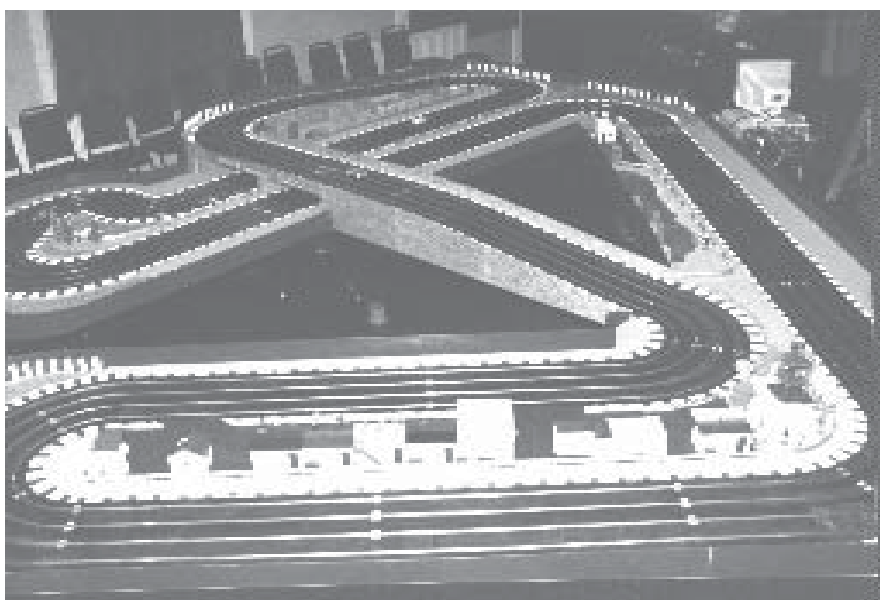
trying to outweigh the less realistic aspects of slots in the road , drivers glued permanently to their seats, and so forth. Then there is the less visible, but no less tangible, sort of realism, that of the philosophy of motor-racing.

Formula One for example is forever committed to improving performance in the pursuit of a championship, and you would not see one of the top teams sacrifice a downforce advantage just to make the car more fun for their drivers.

Similarly, a slot-car championship of some importance would be pursued with all the legal downforce means at one's disposal.

But a hundred laps round the loft on a Saturday afternoon can be more fun and more of a challenge with the 'nervous' handling of, say, the rear-engine Offenhauser or the Parmalat Brabbham both of which still put in very creditable lap-times, and the newer Nincos, which also perform superbly.

All of the above is not intended to argue the case for or against magnattraction, but just to voice the thought that, whilst it may or may not enhance enjoyment, depending upon the individual and the circumstances it may well merit its place on the grounds of realism alone.



For those members attending the Wye Valley round of the South West GT Championship, this is a drivers eye view of the new 86½ foot long track.

Nevil Hall Hospital is well signposted and is situated on the western side of the town on the A40.

Enjoy yourselves, and someone please write in and tell us all about it!!!!

T45 STORY

BY RUPERT KENT

Peter Chambers was the Product Development Manager for Multipart. He managed to persuade the marketing guys at Multipart that a Truck Race was the ideal way of promoting themselves. What resulted from Peter's efforts was the 1984 Multipart Truck Grand Prix, the first of its kind in the country.

Peter had been motor racing since he was 18 years old, and during the 1970's and early 1980's being an engineer at heart. He used to design aircraft at what was then BAC in Warton and Samelsbury in Lancashire, and helped out with the development of the Lotus and TVR's that my Dad drove. Peter suggested that my Dad drove the truck, and the seat was his alongside a "professional truck racer" Mel Bacon. I use inverted commas, because my Dad outperformed this other guy by a country mile, so the number one seat became his - Mel forgot to tell Dad that the brakes were knackered for the final which didn't go down well.

The weekend of the race came and Donnington Park saw its biggest motor race crowd EVER. 130 000 people crammed in and the M6 and M1 were jammed up for miles and miles. Compare these figures to 60 000 for a typical TOCA race and 90 000 for the European GP a few years back. My Dad qualified on Pole position, outdoing the likes of Barry Sheene and Martin Brundle. There were other names in the pack like Richard Walker and Steve Parrish who still do it today. On lap 5 of the 20 lap final, my dad's brakes were knackered so he dropped back to 5th. An astounding result considering he had no brakes for 75% of the race...! Top Man...!

I have photographs including all the original Promotional material for the Donnington Race. It wasn't a series then, just a one-off marketing stunt. I even have the video that was produced. I will be creating a web site entitled The John Kent Motorsports Page that will have lots of stuff in, including the Truck race.



A778 HHG in the Donnington paddock

I can't remember the number of the truck my dad drove, but the registration was (I think) A446 HHG. It was painted in the Union Jack colours, and was not to be confused with its lower-powered sister known affectionately as "Number Thirty - Dirty Gertie" because of the racing number she wore and the clouds of smoke that plumed from the exhaust stacks of that truck. Gertie also used a lighter, almost sky-blue colour in the blue of the Union Jack, whereas my dad's truck had a darker royal blue colour.

Uncle Pete also designed, and was responsible for the building of the Multipart Leyland Skytrain Wheelie Truck, which, if my memory serves me correctly, still holds the world record for the longest wheelie by a truck. He also designed and built the Leyland Cabrio. A showpiece Cabriolet Roadtrain used for PR at the 1984 Donnington event.

The Union Flag design was used by Lucas CAV for their truck racing team, and Gertie, and Gertie Mk II were driven by Stan Hart.

MEDWAY CLUB. RACE REPORT

BY ALAN GREEN

This is the start of a regular feature. It will inform you of each series of racing and people's views on the cars used.

History

The club formed in August 1988 and has raced regularly on Wednesday evenings since.

The track is standard Scalextric fixed to 12 large boards with six lanes. Each lane has its own power supply and is 'Wired for braking'. The average lane length is 90 feet with cars lapping in approximately 9 to 10 seconds.

Racing is controlled by a computer that identifies race position, lap times and league status.

Members supply their own cars. There is a basic rule of racing 'Box Standard' which means that a limited number of alterations can be made to the car. There are 30 members in the club with an average of 20 on a race night. Members are split into three leagues A, B, and C with relegation and promotion at the end of each series of racing.

A series consists of five races with the best four weeks scores counting. We are at present racing 10 series for this year.

1999 Race Schedule

Scalextric F1	Ninco Saloons
SCX Saloons	Scalextric Saloons
Scalextric GT1	Ninco GT1
Ninco F1	Fly Challenge

Report: Scalextric F1

Eligible cars

Williams FW20

Team Rahal Hogan

Team Texaco

Williams FW15C

Team Duracell Team Pennzoil

Benetton B189.B193

Team Kwik-Fit

Team Eurosport

Tyrrell 018

McLaren MP4/10-97-98

Ferrari 643

Jordan Peugeot 197

A Group

Week 1: Peter roars away with the win. Stuart (Racer of the year) struggles to keep pace. New kid on the block Phil does extremely well in his first week as an A Driver

Week 2: Same as they was last week.

Week 3: Same as they was last week again except that Alan G missed this week. Is there a written rule not to change places in A Group?

Week 4: Same as they was last week again except that Peter missed this week. There is something going on. Stuart looks destined to be relegated to B Group.

Week 5: Terry and John push Alan G down to Fifth this week but it does not effect the overall result. Peter was unstoppable in this series. Phil showed that he has what it takes to race with the best. Stuart resigned himself to B Group with the quote 'I am still the FIRST Racer of the Year'

B Group

Week 1: Chris G roars away with the win. Where were Dave and Andy? (On Holiday?) Neil gets frustrated with his Williams, Jordan, and McLaren. Oh he tried all the cars.

Week 2: What did Dave and Andy get on holiday? We all want some. Only Chris could fend them off with another win. Where was Paul this week? He lost his way. Still Neil was still the strong man, holding everyone up at the bottom.

Week 3: Did Chris have a puncture this week? Or did he take his eye off the prize? Paul bounced back with a second place. Yes Neil didn't come last this week. Is he making a recovery?

Week 4: Is Chris pacing himself or is there really a problem? He was pushing Richard forward to win this week as Dave was again in good form. However there was a dead heat for first place. This means that Chris has got to beat Dave next week. Can he reverse his current form? Has he got the staying power and nerve that is required for A Group?

Whilst all the action was at the front no one could believe it! Neil was up there fighting for the lead. What had he done to his car?

However the pressure is on to fight for a relegation battle between Alan B, Robert and Neil.

Week 5: Chris bounces back this week with a win, promotion and the title. Paul takes last place this week. Neil cannot produce the same form as last week and therefore scraps it out with Alan B for relegation with Alan B loosing out on count back.

C Group

Week 1: Robert is back. Showing he has not lost his track skill. Chris A gives a good race this week. Series favourite Lee B trails in a disappointing fifth stating 'I'll be back'

Week 2: Lee B does not look back showing the opposition a clean pair of wheels. Lee P keeps up the pressure with Chris A a steady third.

Week 3: Lee B gives a repeat performance of last week. He reversed the places of week one with Robert who could only manage fifth. Lee P is still in contention however Chris A has fallen away. Dave A takes third.

Week 4: Lee B again takes first with a commanding performance. Only needs a good finish next week to secure promotion. Lee P was second, but this now seems a huge task to take first place. Dave M puts in a good show this week with third. Chris's machine is defiantly faltering and is now out of contention.

Week 5: Lee B secures the top spot with a runaway win. Lee P picks up second place with Dave A third. This was inspite of Dave A beating Lee P into second spot this week.

Fastest Laps

Lane	Name	Time
Orange	Adam St John	7.52
Green	David Myers	7.14
White	Chris Gardner	
	Alan Bird	7.69
Blue	Chris Gardner	7.69
Yellow	Phil O'Gorman	7.97
Red	Robert Humphreys	7.31

Racer of the Year

Racer of the year was intended to show who was the most consistent driver throughout the year. All points gained for each race are totalled and the highest points gained at the end of the year takes the trophy.

1998 top five final positions:

Place	Name	Points
1 st	Stuart Hatcher	1258
2 nd	Terry Battersby	1241
3 rd	Andy Moore	1125
4 th	Peter Day	1034
5 th	Phil O'Gorman	1001

This is the start of the second year and after the first series the top five are:

Place	Name	Points
1 st	Lee Baldwin	177
2 nd	Lee Packham	154
3 rd	Chris Gardner	148
4 th	Phil O'Gorman	147
5 th	Dave Askew	144

Members views on the cars:

These cars went best when the aerofoil on the front was taken off, as when racing it normally broke off.

Best Cars: Jordan 197, McLaren MP4/10, and Williams FW15C.

Worst Cars: Williams FW 20 and Indy cars did not go well even with modification.

Next Series: SCX Saloons

