

N S C C

No.221

August 2000

EDITOR CATCHES 6LB TENCH!

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That's it then; he has really lost the plot this time! What on earth has fishing got to do with slot cars? Has the computer finally driven him round the bend?

Well, firstly I am finding it increasingly difficult to think up a silly headline each month and, secondly, the following tale may have something to teach us about perseverance in all walks of life. I have been fishing for over forty years now and have caught specimen fish of virtually every species except one; until recently a six pound tench had always eluded me. I was beginning to suspect it would forever remain out of reach but I have just joined a new syndicate and, on my very first visit, landed fish of 6lb 2oz and 6lb 12oz - what was that about buses?

Similarly with Scalextric collecting; have a look at Rob Smith's article on page 27 about his pursuit of James Bond cars. It is easy to get despondent and think that all the great finds have passed you by, but, even now, many desirable models are languishing in attics just waiting for the enterprising collector to hunt them down. Never forget that Scalextric cars are toys and most of them were produced in vast numbers so there are still many survivors out there somewhere.

And Finally - when the computer is working properly I really enjoy this job; I have made many new friends and, on the odd occasions when the Journal arrives without major cockups it gives me a lot of personal satisfaction. However, this month has been a particularly happy one, simply because I was able to put two old friends in touch with each other. When Dale Tremble sent me his piece for Backtrack he happened to mention that he had lost touch with Luigi Ciaparelli many years ago; by great good fortune Roger Gillham had already given me his phone number so I was able to pass it on. They are now back in contact with each other and Dale is finally in possession of Luigi's mother's recipe for Spaghetti Bolognese!

Till next month

Brian

Happening Ten Years Time Ago

Phil Egarit wades through the NSCC archives of August 1990

Anyone old enough to remember the song will strongly deny it and anyone too young doesn't know how lucky they are, but to paraphrase The New Seekers 'All of Life's a Circle' and the world of slot cars is no different.

Chances are that by now you will have heard about Mark Scale's new Guinness Book of Records Entry (no not for most red wine consumed!) for the world's longest Scalextric track. The August 1990 NSCC newsletter contained a review of a previous record attempt. The event was 'The Festival of Fun and Sport' which was held at the Stour Centre in Ashford in Kent. The track length was 98.24 metres (A scale distance of 1.95 miles). The track apparently took over 8 hours to put together and the record was eventually set at 1 min. 19.4 seconds. The record attempt, which was supported by Hornby Hobbies, was submitted for entry in 'The Guinness Book of Records' and the review hinted that there would be an attempt to increase the record the following year.

Another small piece highlighted that even 10 years ago people were already hankering for the days when the hobby was simpler. It announced a weekend retro meeting 'Retroslot', which was a formula designed to "recreate the pre 1970s era". With the current project to build a late 40s/early 50s style 'Rail Car' track for the event at Brooklands this month it strikes me that the further forward we move the further back we look. The real question is who is going to be first to attempt to rebuild the 1920s Leicester Square commercial raceway mentioned in the Roger Greenslade book!

Hot news from August 1990 was that at the then recent Milton Keynes swapmeet there had been a gleaming blue Bugatti type 59 on Graham Perris' table. The two-page advert in the centre of the newsletter referred to it as "the first replica Bugatti" and it was to be manufactured in dental resin and painted. It

came in a replica 'Vintage Series' box (Even though the real thing has only ever been seen as a boxed item once and that had been a reps sample and was in a Formula Junior type box). Sadly in spite of Graham's good intentions NSCC members were still chasing cars they had paid deposits for five years later (Indeed I still have a deposit certificate from a member whose car was never delivered!) and whilst actual production figures are not known it is likely that only around 120 of the 200 limited edition were ever built.

There were a number of newly released items announced in the newsletter of August 1990, not least of which was the final arrival of the 'Batman' sets. The most cost effective way to get the Batmobile and Joker cars was to go to 'Toys-R-Us' and purchase the smaller of the two sets (The 'Batman Leap' set), which was being offered for just under £44. It would be another few months before it was announced that the models were to be offered as separate boxed items.

Also newly arrived at the time was the Spanish limited edition Silver Porsche 959 (For my money the silver car is still one of the best looking Scalextric models ever produced). Its arrival at the Milton Keynes event was something of a surprise. Nowadays, when information is so rapidly available that you virtually know what Peter Newey is having for lunch before he has decided, it is hard to imagine that a car could turn up at a swapmeet totally unheralded!

The August 1990 newsletter also included the third part of Malcolm Parker's history of Srombecker slot cars, clearly illustrating that even in the days before Fly and Ninco there was life beyond Scalextric. Perhaps it is time to republish some of these earlier articles updated with the benefit of another ten years knowledge. As we said at the start of this article 'All of Life's a Circle'!



Following up an article in last months journal about the Lorry that was being developed about twenty years ago whereby a Ford Capri could drive in to the box-van trailer and then drive out again, I was able to gather some more information from the factory. What the article couldn't reveal was the reason the lorry wasn't put in to production, amongst other interesting points.

The lorry/car development was being considered as a 'Knight Rider' theme set. After lengthy discussions the factory decided that this, when considered alongside the rest of the range at the time, was moving too far away from the essence of what Scalextric is all about. Racing! So, the project was dropped. The Knight Rider Pontiac car was produced though as part of a 'chase' set. There was an unexpected by-product which lived on out of this abandoned project. The Ford Capri used in the development had the underpan modified and a new slot guide developed to allow 360 degree rotation. This by-product wasn't wasted and the Mini Clubman stock racers and Stock Cars were developed and released in the 1980s. Later in the 1990s the 360 degree idea was again re-introduced but fitted to Porche 962 GT cars.

Now to more recent news:-

NASCAR

The Super Speedway set C1055 with two Pontiacs (C2226 Interstate Batteries and C2185 Home Depot) could be on sale in the U.K. Set C1054 will contain the Ford Taurus cars of John Deere and De Walt.

WORLD RALLY SETS

Set C1048 will be available from the Empire Stores catalogue range, and C1057K from Argos. Both sets have the standard rally cars C2295WA Ford Focus in red, and C2296WA Corolla.

MERCEDES CLK SET

Set C1050M for the Great Universal Stores catalogue will contain Mercedes CLK cars C2081WA and C2082WA.

A Carlos Sainz Ford Focus No.6 has been produced for Superslot as H2179 but should also be available through Scalextric Service Centres as C2179.

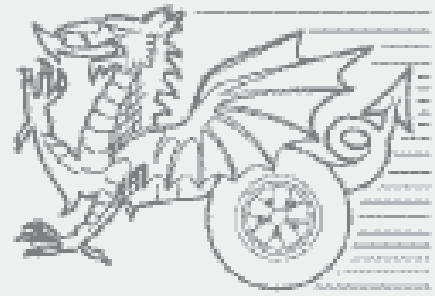
The Williams BMW, available later this year, as C2264 (N0.9) and C2265 (N0.10) is an FW20 liveried as the Compaq sponsored FW22.

C NO. UPDATES

C2109 unallocated
 C2254 Mercedes CLK GT1 - Scalextric Racer
 C2331 Caterham 'Drive @' No.1
 C2332 Caterham 'Drive @' No.2
 C2333 Caterham 'Drive @' No.3
 C2179 Ford Focus 'Carlos Sainz' No.6
 C0494 Mini Cooper - Green (White roof/white bonnets strips) Available in twin pack set, Same as C0328W.
 C2280 Ford Taurus 'De Walt'
 C2281 Ford Taurus 'Exide Batteries' 2000)
 C2283 Ford Taurus 'Valvoline' (2000)
 C2284 Pontiac GP 'Lycos.com'
 C2312 Toyota Corolla 'Zucchetti'
 C2183 Toyota Corolla 'V Rally'
 C2313 Subaru Impreza 'Norisbank'
 C2255 Subaru Impreza 'Works 1999' No.6
 C2257 Subaru Impreza 'Works 2000' No.3
 C2310 Opel Vectra 'Opel Line'
 C2309 Vauxhall Vectra BTCC 2000, No.5
 C2311 Ford Mondeo BTCC 2000, No.3
 C2264 Williams BMW No.9
 C2265 Williams BMW No.10

TOP GUIDE

By Richard Davies



HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS

Most people, at some point in their lives, are faced with a hazardous situation. It could be in a train, it could be in a car and it could be in the bathroom but wherever you are, by the law of averages, one of these is bound to happen at your club. This, rather than being the disaster as many interpret it as, can be an opportunity for boundless enjoyment. Below is a guide for club disasters and how to take advantage of them.

(i) Fire: grab your cars, hand control, and tools and put them outside. Call everybody outside for an important announcement and then tell them that the building is on fire and is too dangerous to re-enter. If these procedures are followed all of your opponents equipment will be melted down into a sticky plastic goo, leaving you as undisputed ruler of the raceway.

(ii) Flood: Dive for the Yellow Pages and phone for dial-a-stripper to distract the members. If these procedures are followed the water will reach the transformers without the racers noticing and blow their cars to smoking chunks of plastic.

(iii) Gas leaks: offer a £5 prize to anybody who can track down the odd smell using only a lighter and a box of matches then evacuate yourself. If these procedures are followed any number of opponents are incapacitated while providing immense amusement.

(iv) Bomb alerts: Evacuate your belongings then invite your fellow members

down to the nearest pub for a drink. If these procedures are followed you will be at a safe distance when the building explodes, turning your opponent's race tuned cars into intricate plastic puzzles and best of all, they will be too drunk to care.

(v) Suspicious persons: Invite them in, then when they are not expecting it hit them over the head with the keyboard of the race computer, tie them up with the lane marking tape and leave them at the nearest charitable institution. If these procedures are followed they will not interrupt the racing too much and will not bother you again.

(vi) Suspicious packages: Give your principal opponent a hearty slap on the back, inform them for their unceasing success over you they have won a clock as a surprise present, point in the direction of the package and run. If these procedures are followed there is a good chance you will win the next race.

(vi) Accidents to self: call an ambulance then promise a car out of a limited edition of three to the first person who calls you an ambulance. If these procedures are followed a small war between members struggling to reach the phone will result for your entertainment until the ambulance arrives.

(vii) Accidents to others, the environment and the workplace: blame everyone else. If these procedures are followed everyone will be too busy arguing to realise whose fault it was.

WHAT HAVE HORNBY EVER DONE FOR US EH?

Well they give us some super prizes for competitions.

Yes I suppose so but apart from prizes?

There's the Ramsgate weekend.

Granted, Reg but apart from prizes and fun weekends?

Club limited editions.

Yes, but....

Simon Kohler spends time every month keeping Adrian up to date with Factory Lines.

Well there is that I suppose but what have Hornby ever done for us?

That new Ford Focus is a bit special.

The Cadillac should be pretty good as well.

Then there are the Nascars and they can't make enough Caterhams to keep up with demand.

All well and good, but apart from prizes, Ramsgate weekends, limited editions, Factory Lines, Fords, Cadillacs, Nascars and Caterhams

- What have Hornby ever done for us?

Beetles?

Oh shut up I'm off to see the stoning!

And now for something completely different - yet another letter moaning about Scalextric.

“Dear Membership

It is time to have a moan about Scalextric and their apparent, perhaps unintentional, lack of interest in manufacturing current Formula 1 model cars. There has been a healthy supply of new models from manufacturers such as Ninco, Proslot and SCX but what have Scalextric given us ?

In the last few years, Scalextric have released only two new models - the Jordan (C2079) and Williams (C2161). They have also given us is the thousandth re livery of the Benetton 193, Ferrari 643 and the McLaren MP4/10 - cars that raced in the early 1990's. SCX have already released a contemporary car from the 2000 season with their Minardi.

With countless new releases of Nascars' and Caterhams', has the marketing strategy

changed ? Are the licences that the Constructors release too expensive ?

Later this year, Scalextric have said that they are going to release models of the 2000 Williams. This is a great idea as it will be very popular with Jenson Button fans. But when will it be ? Has anybody seen prototypes ? Will Button still be with Williams when, and if the car is released ?

The 'Nascar initiative' has been aimed at the American market. As Formula 1 arrives at Indianapolis, the first race on American soil for a decade or so, why not release more F1 cars in an attempt to pick up on the American scene ?

Finally, I wait with anticipation to see the quality of the new Williams. Will it be produced with the detail now familiar with Ninco and SCX models ?

I hope that this covers some questions members interested in this area of our hobby will be keen to have answered.”

Paul Taylor.

I have published this letter because I believe every member has a right to air his views and I have some sympathy with them as my own collection is almost entirely based on F1 cars. I would love to be able to buy the full grid every year but, unfortunately, we have to take into account the basic commercial facts of life. Hornby are a P.L.C. involved in the manufacture of toys in order to make a profit for their shareholders. They do not exist to pander to the various whims of a small minority of collectors.

The reason they release a number of repaints is because an F1 licence from a leading team is extremely expensive. Add the cost of moulds and it takes an awful long time to recoup your investment. Furthermore, the average buyer is not concerned with total accuracy - so long as the shape is approximately right and the livery is correct they don't care if the lefthand sidepod is 2mm out. Moulds are updated when sales drop off - it is as simple as that.

Yes the Benetton is getting somewhat dated now but do you really expect Hornby to junk the Williams FW20 mould after just 18 months use? Even hardcore enthusiasts would find it very difficult to tell the difference between the FW20 and 22 if the liveries were removed.

Anyway, why are SCX and Ninco held up as shining examples? The contemporary Minardi mentioned is a repaint of last year's car, as, no doubt, the forthcoming 2000 Arrows will be - no change there then. Have you forgotten SCX's previous history - how many Jordan 192 reliveries did they give us? Their latest F1 cars are very good; I have bought all of them, but they are back of the grid teams. I doubt they can afford the necessary licences for McLaren or Ferrari either.

Similarly Ninco's first attempts at F1 cars were excellent - providing you didn't mind the fact that their front wings fell off every two laps. It would also appear that they have shelved plans for any further F1 cars this year so they also can't afford the licence fee. Apart from F1 their recent offerings are nothing to write home about; the new 289 Cobra is the wrong shape and has side exhausts and a roll hoop that never existed on the real car. Putting the driver on the

wrong side doesn't help either!

It is very easy to be negative about any of these manufacturers if they don't happen to make the cars you are interested in but the basic fact remains that they all have to show a profit or they will disappear. Each makes a commercial judgement about the items that will sell and Hornby's latest profit figures are 6% up so they must be getting something right.

Our current relationship with Hornby is relatively good (unlike SCX and Ninco who virtually ignore us) but if I were Simon Kohler, reading a continuing diet of negative comments every month, I would be strongly tempted to end it completely. I believe that we need them more than they need us and it is about time that they received due credit for the good things that they do for the club.

I know for a fact that Simon welcomes constructive criticism about his products so why can't we help him with improvements instead of constantly carping that Scalextric don't do this or that? After all every member must like some of their models or they wouldn't be part of the club.

Anyway, enough preaching for one month, I'm off to a committee meeting of the Judaeon People's Front - Splitters!

ANORAKS CORNER



Here is a variation on the Renault Megane theme. The car on the right is C2094 Diac Megane No7 bought as a new boxed car. The other version came in a small collection and is probably the set car. Spot the difference in Esso and Total above the number 7 - otherwise they are identical. Any other variations known? Details of any similar differences between cars is always of interest - please let us know.

Rob Smith



BACKTRACK

NO.4 DALE TREMBLE

When I first embarked on this daft quest for notable members of the club I was convinced that the original secretary/editor, Dale Tremble, would be difficult to find and so it proved as nobody had heard of his whereabouts for many years. However, I was idly flicking through some early newsletters one day and came across a membership list with his name on it. I thought I might as well give the phone number a try and got the shock of my life when Dale answered it! He was still living at the same address - DOH! Sometimes I amaze myself with my own stupidity at missing the obvious answer. Anyway, we had a couple of very pleasant phone conversations and a little while later a large parcel arrived. It contained Dale's recollections of the early days and a wealth of paperwork, including several newsletters from the London Scalextric Club (collectors branch) plus hand written drafts of the May and June 1981 NSCC ones. Also included was a copy of the Collectors Gazette from February 1981 containing the earliest advert yet to surface for the formation of the NSCC. I will look after these precious items and pass them on to any successor in due course.

Dale has promised to visit me later in the year and I look forward to showing him the "editorial suite" so that he can see the progress the club has made since those early days.

"How did it all start? Well, my first set was a Christmas present from a cousin and contained two tinplate cars, a cardboard battery house and push button controllers. I played with it for a while before other toys took over and it was relegated to the attic.

Some years later my aunt found it during a loft clearout and gave it back to me, whereupon I decided to build a permanent track. There used to be a model shop in Hawkwell which sold second hand track and cars and there were plenty of junk shops in Southend with good stocks of Scalextric. In order to acquire track for my layout I also had to buy cars as they always sold them together so, before very long, I realised that I had a collection.

I next got involved with the London Scalextric Club run by Roy Charlesworth at his ballroom in Wood Green where I met many other people interested in the collecting side of the hobby. In fact the racing club had already expanded to include a collectors' branch and several newsletters were produced during 1979/80. Members included John Fingland, Trevor Livingstone, Lee Stokely (from California) and Reg Palmer, all of whom went on to become involved with the National Scalextric Collectors Club.

In order to expand my collection I placed adverts in English and foreign model magazines as well as publications such as Exchange and Mart. I made many friends and contacts through this, particularly in France and Spain. Eventually, with people phoning me from all over the country for sales and swops I realised that there was a need for a national club to bring everyone together.

So, with the help of Luigi Ciaparelli, who lived nearby, the NSCC was born and I produced the first newsletter in January 1981. The initial swopmeet was held on 15th March that year in Luigi's dental surgery in Romford. Unfortunately I was obliged to sell my collection and bow out of the club after just six months but I passed all my paperwork and contacts to Luigi so he could continue the good work.

I have remained very involved in modelling but, these days I build scale boats which I compete with nationally.

I must say that I am very impressed with the way the club has developed over the years and I admit that after reading the 200th edition of the Newsletter and Roger Gillham's Backtrack article, which you were kind enough to send me, I'm starting to get the bug again - who knows?"

Dale Tremble

Members letters

Dear Brian,

Many thanks for printing my letter last month; the response has amazed me - one phone call to date and that from Dundee! (Thanks for the words of encouragement Roy.)

To reiterate, we already have a working six-lane track and now a possible temporary venue but with just two of us to share the costs of room hire a regular club is a long way off. We are surely not alone in Oxfordshire, are we?

Our intention is to mimic the competitive but fun atmosphere of the Maidenhead club and not be too serious. So if there is anyone out there a little curious about club culture but unsure of what it's all about, I still go to the Maidenhead club on Mondays and if you want to tag along and give it a try, give me a call on 01993 898016 or drop me a line at our embryonic club website; <http://freespace.virgin.net/peter.folley/club>.

Fingers crossed.

Peter Folley

.....

Dear Brian

Just a brief note to say congratulations and thanks to the winners of the Le Mans 24 hour enduro race which was held on Saturday and Sunday 17th/18th June at the Ford Park Raceway, Bognor Regis, Sussex and sponsored by ourselves and Ninco.

The winning team was made up of Pete, Carlo, Gary, Kyle and Mick using the Proslot Toyota GT1 cars. Well done to all who took part in the event; not only for giving up their time, but also for going the full distance and enduring the heat (reported as being the hottest days in forty years!) and missing the real race in the process. I think they all enjoyed it and even after twenty four hours they were all still in good humour - which was probably down to the grand job done by Dennis' wife and children keeping a constant supply of much needed refreshments.

Also a note of thanks to all those marshalling - sometimes we forget that without people willing to marshal none of these events would be possible.

Regards

Colette

.....

G'day Brian

I've come into possession of 4 Scalextric Mondeos, 2 with Aussie Shell livery and 2 with Aussie Valvoline livery. I'm NOT a slot car collector so the cars are of little use to me except for spare parts. They are all unused set cars in mint condition but unboxed, as far as I know they come from the Bathurst set.

Do you know of any collectors or racers over there who might be interested in buying these cars? I'm offering them to UK members because I understand these cars are very difficult to obtain there.

Catch ya later mate.

Wayne Bermingham

Anybody interested in these cars please get in touch with Wayne (he is editor of the Australian Newsletter). The price is AU\$40 each plus carriage which is about £18 all in. His e-mail address is: clublines@telstra.easymail.com.au

Members letters



Dear Sir,

As the Journal has published a request for a 'web' reporter, may I add to the debate as to how the internet can help slot car enthusiasts get more from their membership of the NSCC. I would suggest that the committee looks at publishing the Journal electronically as well as by hard copy.

I can understand that somebody would have the task of entering all those members who have email addresses into his address book and then take responsibility for sending a digital version of the Journal. Points to consider would include, copyright of material (any member can then copy it to whom he/she wishes, with no immediate membership income benefit to the organisation). The speed with which some members would be able to respond to adverts (competitions?) and, potentially, snaffle up all the bargains before the rest of the membership have received their snail mailed copies (although of course this is still a problem because of the differences in postal services enjoyed even by those of us in mainland UK, much less the rest of the world). Some members would also prefer to receive both versions of the Journal, or one only, making database records of preferences necessary. It would allow full colour articles to be seen as intended, bearing in mind the limitations of greyscale printing.

If the aims of the NSCC are to increase understanding of the hobby/pastime, electronic publishing would perhaps indicate that even if some cars are old fashioned, the NSCC is not cautious of change. Once the database of those preferring the Journal delivered through email is established, then this might encourage them to participate more fully through this medium. The NSCC web site, with some back issues available for download is a good step forward.

I would not like this communication to be seen as any form of dissatisfaction with the current setup, but more as a mild catalyst of change or progress in a fast changing world. It does of course presume that the Journal is produced in its entirety on a PC, by an Editor who enjoys the task. I have limited experience of producing newsletters for other activities and do not claim to have all the answers, my Trade Union (AEEU) offers this option of emailed journals and other publications, I am sure it is not alone in understanding the pitfalls and promotion opportunities this offers.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Beane

Interesting idea Patrick. Perhaps Alan Slade, our webmaster, would care to comment on the feasibility of such a proposal. It has taken me nearly a year just to get to grips with producing the thing on paper and I really haven't got a clue how it could be done electronically. Personally, and I know I am just an old Luddite at heart, I really prefer to read my magazines as tangible paper copies. Somehow, looking at a monitor screen doesn't give me the same pleasure. However I remain open to new ideas and would welcome any further comments on the subject. Incidentally, the pictures are all done in greyscale (or in my case - black blob scale!) so glorious technicolour would mean producing two separate copies. Anybody want a job?

SLOTSWAP#3 – MILTON KEYNES

SUNDAY 2ND JULY 2000

PHIL ETGART RAMBLES ON AIMLESSLY ABOUT SLOT CARS!

Sunday 2nd of July 2000 saw the third in the series of 'Slotswap' events and the swapmeet also marked the first anniversary of the events that were originally started to try to refocus to a greater degree on the older collectible side of the hobby.

As with the second event in the series the swapmeet was held at the familiar Woughton Campus venue in Milton Keynes that is also host to the NSCC February swapmeet each year. The main contrast between the February event and the 'Slotswap' events at this venue are that by deliberately restricting the number of tables available at 'Slotswap' events it is considerably easier to move around the venue and to see what items are on offer!

Visitors were in attendance from three continents, with Alberto Martorell from Barcelona and globe trotting Nasseem Mahomed from South Africa travelling to the UK for the swapmeet. Based upon the mileage Nasseem clocks up I would suggest that he is a candidate for Derek Cooper's assumed mantle of 'World's most internationally travelled slotcar dealer'. The title is obviously a matter of great importance as Phil Smith also hotly disputes it. Reassuring to know that we are focused upon the really important stuff!

As with previous 'Slotswap' events there were limited edition cars produced for the event (following hot on the heels of the Set of MG Maestro's from 'Slotswap#1' and the plinth mounted XJ220 from 'Slotswap#2'). This time the limited editions were based on Fly Car models. They were a numbered pair comprising of a red Lola and a white Porsche 908 both of which had the Slotswap#3 logo on a decal on the nose of the car and a number 3 decal on each of the doors. As with previous 'Slotswap' limited editions these were code 3s (i.e. post

factory limited editions). As usual the production run was strictly limited, this time to 70 numbered pairs. Unsurprisingly they very nearly sold out on the day.

As far as collectible Scalextric items for sale on the day goes, whilst there was a fairly healthy selection of vintage slotcar stuff available, it is fair to say that the choice was not quite as strong as at previous events. This is due in part to the increasing difficulty of finding quality 1960s items and in part to the fact that there is one very significant buyer operating at the moment who seems intent upon buying every decent 1960s item that becomes available. The consequence of this is that having identified himself to the main dealers, most quality items are now being sold to him before they even get as far as the table!

In spite of this there were a few 1960s accessories available including TV Towers, Timekeepers Huts and Entrance Buildings. However as these items are significantly more difficult to find than a year ago the prices were also somewhat inflated from those of twelve months ago. There was discussion at length about the rarity and thus anticipated price of certain items. One of the prime examples of a constantly in demand and never available item that was discussed was the kit 'Control Centre' which in mint boxed sealed condition (should one ever surface in that condition again) has probably doubled in price in the past twelve months. There's a sobering thought!

One well known slotcar dealer recently found around 50 of the HP1 accessory set from the mid 1960s. They were gathering dust in a dark corner of a warehouse and are absolutely mint sealed still in their mailing outers. In the current climate he has decided that they should remain in storage for the time being!

There were the usual selection of Healeys, Mercedes 190SLs, Aston Martin DBGTs and Ferrari Berlinettas. These included a small number of French Ferrari Berlinettas in green and two yellow Aston Martin DBGTs (one near mint and one heavily used, but probably the cheapest one you will ever find!).

There were a smattering of Auto Unions, but no Bugattis. For a change there were a number of yellow vintage Alfa Romeos on offer, although all remained unsold. On the day you could also have purchased all three of the original NSCC Scalextric limited editions, including an absolutely mint NSCC Escort XR3i, the rarest of the club cars.

More contemporary collectibles were also represented with the first of the Fly Car Mini Auto grey Lolas arriving. Allegedly this year's limited edition will only be available via the magazine subscription and is strictly limited to 700 pieces. If this is true it makes this car one of the shorter Fly Car production runs and a consequence of this was that the handful of cars available were fairly expensive. Also seen on the day was an E.51 (sold in a set with E.52 and E.53) and a Dodge Viper 'Pace Car'.

Another handful of the gorgeous 'Chicane club' limited edition Porsche GT1 in metallic blue (the club's 2000 limited edition) surfaced and unsurprisingly the majority of those found

new homes very quickly. There was also an example of the Scalextric 'Motorist's Centre' metallic green Subaru on offer. This was surprising as the label states that it is a limited edition of 50 pieces and if so this is one of the shortest production runs Hornby has ever produced, therefore, it is not the sort of car you would normally expect to find offered for sale.

Other in demand Hornby limited editions such as the employee 'Millennium' TVR or the all clear promotional XJ220 did not surface. Likewise there was still no confirmation of the car alleged to have been produced for the subcontractors involved in the manufacture of the track (I need to find both of these last two cars, anyone help?). One new limited edition that was uncovered on the day was the pair of Jaguar XJ220's produced for the 'Gamleys' chain of toy stores. The production run of the attractive cars is unknown at the time of writing, but most stores I have visited to date are 'out of stock' at present. The two cars are orange and blue, racing numbers one and two respectively, with the 'Gamleys' logo on the rear spoiler.

The day passed quickly and soon it was time to take all of my finds home!

Many thanks to Nigel Copcutt for his sterling work in organising the event and here's looking forward to Slotswap #4 the international event near Heathrow on December 3rd 2000.

www.SlotSurfing.co.uk

by James Penton

The boot fair enthusiasts amongst you should be familiar with the thrill of the chase feeling; up bleary eyed at 5am every Sunday, walking round a damp field hoping to find that elusive black Bentley or red Mercedes Wankel. Online chasing has that same feel – wondering whether another collector has beaten you to it, or worse still, if Joe Bloggs has just bought it for Joe Junior to thrash round the track with his mates.

Online, these thrills are provided by auction houses. Most brick and mortar auction houses work by charging either the vendor or the purchaser, or more likely both, a small percentage of the hammer price. Online, most auction houses including Ebay make no charges for a basic auction. Their profits (about 80% gross) come from enhanced listings, credit card facilities, featured auctions, advertising and other premium services. Add to this the 24 hour, geographically unlimited benefits and there is a pretty strong case to use these services.

To make things more complicated, the different sites offer a totally different proposition to the slot car collector. The biggest, most popular auction site on the planet (18th most visited site) is Ebay. Here, much like at a specialist slot car swopmeet, you are always guaranteed to find a good selection of cars – whatever your particular interests. Unfortunately, just like the swopmeets, there are also plenty of other collectors on Ebay wanting the same cars as you and hence the price rises.

At the boot fair, slot car collectors are much rarer beasts, hence the demand and therefore the price of slot cars when they do surface is much lower. For this reason, some of the lesser known auction sites could be worth a visit. Like the boot fair, you don't have the reassuring certainty that you will find a bargain and your efforts may not be rewarded. But every now and again you stumble across a gem, which makes it all worthwhile.

This is not to say you won't find any bargains on Ebay, at the time of writing, you could have a Fly S12 Porsche 908 in chrome for \$20.50 (about £14) and last week I bought a very good green AC Cobra for £31 from Australia.

Hidden dangers - like real auctions, you should always be careful when buying online. For example, with Ebay, it appears that buyers and sellers work under pseudonyms to ensure anonymity, however all buyers and sellers should have a contact e-mail, so if your e-mail address is john.smith@yahoo.com, it may well pay to create another email address to stay anonymous. Hiding your real identity helps prevent problems – for example, if a dealer is the winning bidder, the seller may be reluctant to sell as they know the item is clearly worth more than the price the dealer is paying (assuming the dealer expects to make a profit). Buyers and sellers can also create more than one identity; this can be used to push the bidding up on their own auctions, to hide bad feedback from other users or even to create parallel auctions to gain multiple listings for the same item, then simply take the highest bidder.

To read this article online visit www.slotsurfing.co.uk

Auction Sites

www.ebay.com - **Site of the month**

www.qxl.com

<http://auctions.goto.com>

<http://auctions.yahoo.com>

www.auction2000.net

www.auctionsus.com

www.amazon.com

www.auctions.com

www.buysell.net

CHAPARRAL 2D BY TOP SLOT

BY DAVID LAWSON

At the Liphook NSCC swapmeet I bought a Top Slot Chaparral 2D resin body. I had always thought they were a bit pricey but having seen the quality and accuracy of the bodyshell I thought that it was worth it for one of my particular favourite racing cars from the 1960s, especially as I already had a spare MRRC Chaparral 2C for the donor chassis.

HISTORY

The 2D was first raced in 1966 and like all the other Chaparrals from the combined genius of Jim Hall and Hap Sharp it featured unusual thinking within its design. The car had a fibreglass chassis, automatic gearbox, an engine airbox and an adjustable tail spoiler. It arrived for its European race debut at none other than the car-breaking 14 mile mountainous Nurburgring yet with minimal practice and preparation time won the seven hour 1000km endurance race against competition from Ferrari, Porsche and Ford. Proof of the car's superb performance and excellent design.

MODEL

When you open the box you find a crisply moulded resin bodyshell, vacuum formed windscreens and interior, clear spotlights and headlights, an injection moulded driver figure and a set of decals.

The body needs minimal preparation. For those of you not familiar with resin moulding it is essential to very thoroughly wash it with a strong solution of washing up liquid to ensure that all the release agent is cleaned off. This ensures that when spraying, the paint adheres completely. You also need to clean out the window apertures and wheel arches with a model knife, sanding sticks and wet and dry paper to completely clean off some very minimal mould flash. This entire process only took half an hour, testament to the production quality of Top Slot.

I next offered up the MRRC Chaparral 2C

chassis to the body and carefully marked the positions of the holes in the body mount posts for the body screws before drilling them with my minicraft drill. Resin is a fairly soft material so when sanding or drilling go slowly and carefully.

I sprayed a couple of coats of Halfords acrylic primer followed by a few coats of Halfords appliance white which gave a very good colour match to the white in the race number roundels in the kit decal set. The excellent quality decals were applied next. If



you are a stickler for detail and you are using the Nurburgring race numbers, don't follow the placement of the rear number on the Top Slot instruction sheet. This number should be put on the side of the offside wing behind the wheel arch and not on the top of the rear bodywork.

Simply paint the interior moulding, the driver figure and the light interiors before trimming and fitting the light lenses and the windscreens, I use very small amounts of five minute epoxy as it dries clear and doesn't fog clear plastics. The finished result is a very accurate looking slot racer of an attractive racing car and a useful addition to my collection which also includes the MRRC 2C and SCX 2E.

If anyone is a bit hesitant about buying a resin kit, I would say that they are no more difficult than an Airfix kit so give one a try.

SCALEXTRIC WIDOW 2000

BY ANNA FEENEY

“Confessions of a Scalextric Widow”:- de ja vu or what! My widowhood started before we were even married. While Cupid’s arrows were still quivering in my back I offered to let Vince turn my spare bedroom into a ‘hobby room’ complete with work bench, Anglepoise magnifier and spot lights etc. to build and work on his slot cars. Unfortunately the local school doesn’t offer evening classes in ‘ slot car speak’ so, like Mandy Leachman, I have had to learn as I go. It’s a bit like having a child, you say “Yes dear, that’s interesting, what really,” and hope the responses are in the right places. That way you can carry on doing something really fun like watching Emmerdale!

Then there was The Wedding; I drew the line at asking the Vicar if we could put the track up in the church, but we held the reception in the room which is normally home to the track. The Stag Party; not on the night before the wedding because Friday nights are race nights for East Devon Slot Racing Club, and the Honeymoon; out of this world, best time he’s ever had.... not because I’m a Pamela Anderson look alike, but because he found a Fly Chrome Marcos in a shop in Spain!!! He’s still trying to persuade me to holiday in Barcelona because

about ten years ago he found a really good shop there with lots of lovely slot cars

I used to go to Friday night meets with him, not for the stimulating conversation, I can’t tell if a car is standard or modified, whether it’s running on tyres or ‘rubber bands’, or get ecstatic over a Lola T70 someone has turned up with. I even started to help with the marshalling but they used to laugh when I patted the rear of the cars as I put them back in their slots. Seriously though, they are a great bunch, and at least I know where my husband is in the evenings (even if I couldn’t guess from the smell of resin or solder wafting down the stairs sometimes). I don’t even mind getting up early some Sundays to go to Shepton Mallet or Westpoint Exeter to visit Toy & Train fairs, though it is embarrassing when he stamps his feet and sulks when I won’t let him buy too many cars (going red yet Vince?)

He has got the ‘other halves’ of two couples, who are great friends of ours, interested in slot car racing, so now when they come round of a Saturday night for a natter and a glass or two of vino, all the men folk disappear upstairs. If they look through the windows the neighbours must wonder what kinky games we get up to.

My poor friends are now well on the way to becoming Slot Car Widows themselves, so Sandra and Janet.....join the club!!!



This is earliest advert for the club that I know of - anybody got an older one?

Woodside, London SE25

WANTED Startex, Scalex, Scalextric tinfoil and plastic, any condition, can collect - Telephone 0702 217162. Special interest in Scalextric, Bugatti and James Bond set, any condition. Also French made Scalextric

by collector, any makes/quantity, collections purchased. Excellent prices paid. Anxious to contact other tin collectors - 79 Oak Road, Oldbury, Warley, West Midlands. 021 422 3800

SCALEXTRIC National collectors club now forming - Further details telephone 0702-217162

WHAT IS THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN JAMES BOND CARS AND BUSES ?

BY ROBERT SMITH

Answer: you wait for ever for one and then three come along together. This may seem rather far fetched but it actually happened.

The James Bond set is one of the holy grails of Scalextric collecting. Released in the 60s with a modified Aston Martin DB4GT in white, complete with ejector seat and a black Mercedes 190SL with overturning mechanism. Complete boxed sets are very rare and command big prices. The cars are easier to find on their own and are available at most swap meets from at least one of the well known traders, albeit at a hefty premium.

So where did these three pairs of cars turn up. The first was actually part of a complete boxed set and was advertised in a local paper. The owner knew what it was worth and I therefore paid a substantial, but not unreasonable price. The cars were in mint condition and complete with original bumpers, baddies, etc.

A couple of weeks later an old colleague phoned me. He had been given a big box of old Scalextric for his kids. None of the cars worked but he thought they might be of interest to me. There were the usual couple of formula juniors and bits of a Vanwall and a Lister and a white Aston and black Mercedes. They were in bits but not in bad condition. Bumpers were broken and a few bits missing – nothing that a visit to the BTS stand at a swapmeet wouldn't cure. My friend was delighted to receive some brand new cars and trucks for the kids to play with together with modern, safe hand controllers and powerpack. A satisfactory exchange.

You can imagine my amazement when the following week I found another box of

similar old stuff at a local junk auction. Despite some fevered bidding a very reasonable bid of £40 won and I staggered home to examine my find. The cars were in slightly worse condition than the others, but not too bad as the photo shows.



The boxed set and the best cars ended up in the display cabinets but what to do with the others ? The next NSCC swapmeet saw some genuine swapping and a nice boxed Auto Union and a red De Havilland Bugatti were soon on display at home too.

The reason for telling this tale is not to gloat, although that is quite satisfying, but to encourage you to keep searching – you never know what will turn up if you persevere!

Footnote: This story was written in 1998 – it has just taken me a long time to send it in. A couple of months ago a fourth James Bond Aston turned up in a box of bits. Unfortunately not in such good condition, never raced or rallied – I think not !



PRIZES SLOT INTO PLACE!

BY PETER NOVANI

VIP TOUR OF THE TEN TENTHS CAR COLLECTION

It seems ages ago since the Prize Draw took place at the London Classic Motor Show in March. However, 40 year old Garry Sadler eventually visited Nick Mason's Ten Tenths race and classic car collection in May.

Garry, who hails from Buckhurst Hill in Essex, was naturally surprised (stunned, gob smacked, over the moon etc.) when told that he had won. The prize was offered in conjunction with racing on my slot car track layout in aid of Capital Radio's 'Help a London Child' charity. I was able to join Garry for the VIP tour so that I could take some photos etc. Upon our arrival we were greeted by Nick Mason (Pink Floyd drummer/car collector) himself. He had very kindly allocated some time in his busy schedule to show us around his collection. And what a diverse array of historically important cars, covering different eras and categories of motor sport. I am referring to cars that shaped motor racing history. For example, the Bugatti T35, Maserati 250F, Jaguar D Type, or more recent Le Mans racers such as the Porsche 962C or Porsche 935 K3, and of course, Nick's well known Ferrari 250 GTO. Garry was allowed to sit in one of the world's fastest, and arguably, greatest contemporary GT sports car, the rare McLaren F1. However, this example was rarer still, a special £750,000+ racing version, the F1 GTR. Incidentally, the closest I've ever been to a McLaren F1 GTR was when racing a Ninco slot car version! In amongst all the full size cars nestles an assortment of racing memorabilia such as crash helmets, posters, sculptures, model cars, a couple of highly detailed miniature Bugatti T35 children's cars, even musical items, including a drum kit or two. The fact that each car in the collection has not only been personally

selected by Nick, but also, on occasion raced by him adds an intriguing dimension to the collection. You can find out more about the collection if you read his excellent 'Into the Red' book plus audio CD. It really is the next best thing to having your own VIP tour. After a couple of hours perusing the collection, it was time to thank Nick Mason and his staff for their generous hospitality. Before we left, Nick presented Garry with a personally signed and dedicated copy of his 'Into the Red' book. A fitting memento of a rather unique occasion. The visit exceeded Garry's expectations. No doubt he will be bragging about the visit down at his local for sometime to come! Incidentally, Ten Tenths asked me if I could provide my four lane track layout as an attraction for the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Child) 'Magic of Children Party' in London's Battersea Park. Naturally, I was only too happy to accept their offer and return the favour.

'MAGIC OF CHILDREN PARTY' SLOT CAR CHALLENGE

The four hour party was held on Sunday, June 4th. About 1,000 guests, including more than a few TV/film celebrities, enjoyed a plethora of 'fun fair' type family entertainment, both indoors and outdoors, plus the Chitty Chitty Bang Bang film car and a 'Boy Band' pop group! My track was located within a massive marquee, complete with potted plants and carpeting - very plush. As is now becoming a regular feature of my attraction at charity events, a 'Fastest Time of the Day' race format was organised. Although it was rather short notice, Hornby Hobbies Limited kindly donated a Scalextric Rally set as the main prize. In addition to which, Monarch Lines Limited donated a fine selection of Proslot slot cars. Colette Clarke, who runs the company, made the donation without any prompting from me to do so! I had phoned her about some other slot car matters and mentioned that I would be attending the NSPCC event. Before I knew it she was offering to send me some Proslot cars as prizes and a few cars to race if required. True to her word a parcel arrived a few days before

the event. I was amazed at the myriad different car/motor/chassis/tyre/magnet combinations available. Was it to be Porsche GT2/GT3s, Alfa Romeo 156s or Ferrari 355s, EVO 1 (13,500 r.p.m.), EVO 2 (21,500 r.p.m.) and EVO 3 (26,000 r.p.m.) motors, slick tyres or grooved tyres, standard or more powerful magnets or even cars without magnets? Insufficient time precluded me from making a considered judgement as to which combination to actually race. Ideally, I would have liked a week or so to evaluate, prepare (fettle) and test the race cars thoroughly, plus a possible repaint or two to match the lane colours and a good supply of spares! Having said that, Proslot cars certainly look the part and have excellent handling characteristics allowing the tail end to slide out through a corner in a controllable manner - in my opinion that equates to a FUN to race slot car! I also like the thinking behind Proslot's use of different EVO motor specifications. For obvious reasons the slower EVO 1 powered slot cars would be the most appropriate for use at a public event. Undoubtedly, a club racer would probably opt for the very powerful EVO 3 version for maximum performance on a club layout. Not only can you feel the differences between the various motors through your hand controller, you can also hear the differences. The high revving EVO 3 motor, for example, sounds not unlike a miniature Formula One V10 engine! I am reliably informed that some exciting additions to the Proslot range are imminent - so you'd better get that credit card ready!

I digress. Before the party began Nick Mason, accompanied by his wife and children, stopped by the track layout to say hello. Needless to say his children were rather eager to try out their skills on the track which they duly did once the party was officially under way at 11.30 a.m. Shortly afterwards Ten Tenths' mechanic, Charlie Knill-Jones, sauntered over to check out my layout. Charlie had brought along a clown/Keystone Kops vintage car to entertain the children - the type that has bits and pieces falling off or flapping open etc. Sounds

like some of those old slot cars that we raced in the 'good old days.' I took great pleasure in showing Charlie some of the subtle mechanical and detailing variations on the slot cars. All this was probably lost on him as he is more conversant with 1-1 scale V12 racing engines, rather than tiny electric motors and Tampo printing etc.! Anyway. The 'Magic of Children Slot Car Challenge' started at 2.00 p.m. Races of 15 laps duration were run for about 50 minutes. The objective being to win a race in the fastest overall race time. This eventually boiled down to the inevitable half a dozen really competent youngsters who were all intent on winning that Scalextric Rally set. However, it was Joe Nettleford from S.W. London who finally scooped the much coveted set. He comprehensively beat the opposition by an incredible four seconds. Admittedly, his race was relatively trouble free with no major time consuming mishaps to speak of. However, he showed all the necessary requirements to win races on a regular basis i.e. coolness of thought, patience and an ability not only to stay on the track, but also keep out of trouble. Seen spectating during Joe's race was former BTCC saloon car champion Will Hoy. He was busy chatting to Joe's dad and quite possibly passing on some useful race craft tips! Once Joe was presented with his set, the other boys who had achieved fastest race times were allowed to choose two cars each and try them out on the track if they wanted too. Quite a frenzy developed as they selected the cars and colour schemes of their choice - almost as exciting as the actual 'Challenge.' My thanks go to Hornby Hobbies Limited for donating, at short notice, the Scalextric Rally set, and also to Colette Clarke at Monarch Lines Limited for (spontaneously) providing the Proslot slot cars. I hope that 'our' contribution to proceedings helped the NSPCC in some way. The whole event raised well over £50,000. So, all in all, a worthwhile Sunday afternoon's work for everyone involved, and a great deal of FUN too!

PAST TIMES

BY TONY SECCHI

The few members who read my feeble attempts at writing may have noticed, possibly with some relief, that I had not contributed to the July issue. I was on holiday in May and on return started decorating my flat so I had precious little time to compile anything.

However, during this sojourn, I got to thinking of the remark in John Gavin's response to my June article on Ci/C2 sportscars in which he talked about trying to wean his two boys off their playstation. I began to reminisce (you do at my age) about my long lost youth racing Scalextric and real cars and how different it seems today.

Yes, for my sins, I had a few seasons of competition racing, a 1000cc mini in the B.R.S.C.C. 'Mini Miglia' class. I also did a stint in a 12 hour race at the old Silverstone (no chicanes) in an 'E' type Jaguar which was raced on a weekly club basis by our Scalextric track owner/director.

He ran a small surgical instrument manufacturing business in Hackney, and above his workshop, he built a 4 lane circuit on which we raced every Thursday evening. He never raced. I never saw him even try it for fun. He ran the club, did the starts, the stats (pre computer), collected the subs., organised the printing and trophies and sorted out the gripes. However, as I said, he did race for real in a modified but road going 'E' type, driving it to the circuits, racing and then driving it home.

To get to the relevance of model car racing and its values at that time needs a circulatory route. We were all, first and foremost, car enthusiasts - we owned them, we serviced them, we modified them and we raced them; the same attitude went for our model cars too.

As I have stated in previous articles, there were very few models that you could race competitively fast at that time. You could buy box standard, but if you wanted to compete in the various classes at the highest level (in our club anyway) you had to build your own. From a variety of static kits, kid's toys, and

Woolworth's 'push push' models you constructed, tuned, painted, race tested and ran your car just as in real life.

I cannot convey the feeling of immense satisfaction that one incurred if a race was won (let alone a championship) using a car that only a few weeks before had been a pile of bits and pieces plus an idea in your head.

One of the fastest cars in my present collection is the Proslot Toyota GT1 - the road holding and throttle response are awesome and it wins on a regular basis. But another of my cars is an airfix static kit of an 'E' type jaguar with Scalextric running gear which I built from scratch. This car is only a whisker off the Toyota's pace and adhesion. Guess which car I get the most pleasure from racing?

Today, we see, both in real cars and in models that the driver can become almost second place to the technical aspects of the car. (If the car is straight-line fast then you can take it easy in the bends). Having spent all of my working life in engineering, where computer technology was rife, I now find myself in a rather retrograde position. I do not have a p.c. I do not therefore, have the latest software. I do not press buttons or push a joystick to manipulate an image on a screen that has been created by someone else.

In my model world everything is hands on - cars are re-liveried, performance enhanced, roadholding increased and pick ups improved. All this, of course, can be done on a computer — but it is not the same.

One could say that I carry on like I did in my 'old fogey' 60s and 70s days - and that is possibly true. But then because everybody was in the same boat and competition was levelled out you had good and bad days and one driver rarely dominated. It was very democratic. Just take an instance - if your rear tyres wore down during the season to a point where the car's performance was suffering, there was no guarantee that you could replace them with a set exactly the same. Consequently, in a couple of events, you could go from a front to a rear runner. If the same thing happened today, you could keep the car up to scratch and go on

winning by just replacing worn out items as a matter of course.

Our hobby is a unique and original thing. Whether you oil the gears of your Scalextric Bentley or change the magnet position on your Fly Porsche, you are doing it by hand and you are accepting the consequences of those actions on the track. As you would in a real car, you are adjusting the braking points, deciding when to put the power down and when to feather the throttle as well as reading the track surface. Through your finger (or thumb), you are feeling the model as you would through the seat of your pants in a real racer. But you are doing this with your fellow competitors standing, swaying (and sweating) alongside. The cars are door handle to door handle and you need all of your skill, concentration and race experience to stay in the slot let alone finish.

We racers all know the feelings of exhilaration or disappointment that can come through this experience. I believed then, and I still do today, that it is directly on a par with the real car racing that I did in parallel with slot cars. It was a real fun time - slot cars on

Thursday evenings - Mini racing on Sunday afternoons. On Mondays we stripped the cylinder head, final drive and brakes for the next Mini race and on Wednesdays we stripped down, oiled, tightened and checked our slot cars for Thursday evening. No matter how real your computer programme is you do not get your hands dirty running it.

The foregoing may give the impression that I am anti-computer but that is neither the case or the point. They have an important role to play and our day to day lives would be less enjoyable and convenient without them. However, they are not essential to me and my personal view is that like any other technological advance no gain is made without sacrifice. I would be very sorry to see the eventual diminishment or demise of our hobby due to those advances.

So, back to John Gavin's point in his letter. There is everything right with his boy's participation in 'virtual' pastimes and also in his efforts to introduce them to 'real' ones.

I just hope that both forms of fun can be equally venerated in the future.

AUTOMOBILIA EN MADRID

17 JUNE - NOVICES FIRST VISIT TO FERIA

BY STEVE BARNETT

Who says slot collecting is 'COOL', it certainly wasn't in Madrid with temperatures soaring close to 40 degrees. My very first visit to a slot car FERIA (fair) and being some what of a naive beginner, I was armed with memories of phone conversations and a mind full of Web page lists as what to look for.

The event was discretely mentioned in Mini Auto (Spanish Miniature car magazine with Slot Car content) last month, I also happened to see a note on Derek Cooper's Web page 'see you at Madrid 17 June' . with a quick email to Derek, he kindly gave directions and explained the event as a very small but friendly occasion. As it happened, Marie and I intended to visit Madrid soon, and managed to convince her this was the weekend to go!

Within minutes of walking through the entrance into the Plaza of 'Iglesia Britanica de St. George' (English Church), I was immediately hit with the enthusiasm and dedication of everyone, stall holders, dealers, collectors, enthusiasts, they were all there bustling with excitement. Is this what collecting is all about, if so, I wanted more, and promptly joined in. I have to admit, I really didn't have a clue as to the rarity and value of most of the cars, but several stood out and significantly raised my desire in wanting to own them.

For the first time I was seeing cars in the flesh such as, Fly pace car, black Bentley, Bugattis, Pegaso, Ferrari shark nose, BRMs, Lotus, Vanwalls, and even a FLY 917 test mould in black (which I just had to have, being a 917, Porsche & FLY enthusiast). I could have spent hours there, and I'm told this was a very small event, I now can't wait to visit my homeland England to a meeting in the near future.

Although, as I'm told, this being a small event, it goes to show that there must be thousands and thousands of cars on the market in the hands of dealers, traders, enthusiasts and collectors. Notably, at this event, there were some beautiful outstanding examples of craftsmanship, from both manufacturers' production cars and individual built kits, and along side them, what appeared to be junk, carcasses, worn tyres, damaged bodies, broken repaired parts and so on, all piled in boxes. The irony of it, one day it will all be desirable and valuable.

I found the visit a most worthwhile experience. Being able to actually see the cars, although in general not really knowing what I was looking at. Therefore I will continue to acquire cars from the few dealer contacts I have so far fortunately made friends with, although never met in person.

As an observation, 'why do people leave finger prints on cars'? I noticed sufficient finger print grease on a majority of the cars on exhibit to lubricate the crown wheel of a slot racer.

My conclusion to this event, from my personal point of view as a novice collector, a superb gathering of friendly, helpful and attentive people, with no hard sell tactics, simply most obliging. With the bonus of a weekend in Madrid, a city well worth visiting, I thoroughly recommend it, especially the famous 'Plaza Mayor (beautiful square)', Plaza de Oriente over looking Palacio Real (Palace) and Puerta del Sol, the centre of Madrid. Not forgetting the Museo del Prado (Prado Museum), Parque Retiro (Park), and a Sunday morning visit to the Rastro, an enormous open market. The Spanish are most welcoming and hospitable people.

TRACK TALK

by Steve Carter

THE SLOTIT PRO AXLE SYSTEM

It seems there are more cars and slotware available at the moment than many people know what to do with. You thought the 60s were great; this is better.

At the Liphook swopmeet Colette of Monarch Lines provided me with some of the latest go faster bits from Slotit to test. Their range of slotware is designed to be easily interchangeable with standard marque equipment so you can tune your cars' performance to your own preferred specification.

You may already be familiar with their range of brass pinion gears which give a choice of 10, 11, 12 and 13 tooth sidewinder gears, and 8, 9, 10 and 11 tooth in-line gears. The clever bit with these is that, irrespective of the number of teeth, the diameter remains the same - 6.5mm for sidewinders and 5.5mm in-line. This is important because all the current marques in-line models use a fixed position contrate gear that utilises the motor shaft to centre the rear axle. Similarly their sidewinder models have a fixed alignment between motor and rear axle. In both cases there is no adjustment possible to allow for different sized pinion gears.

So what is there to gain from adjusting gear ratios? Well, different race tracks require different top speeds, acceleration and braking to produce optimum performance; the best way to utilise a motor's output on a given circuit is by having the correct gear ratio - or at least the one that suits your style best.

Slotit's latest offering is the Pro-Axle system, metal contrate gears in 34, 36 and 38 tooth sizes, as well as a ground axle and bronze bushes, which all slide together perfectly. Instead of being a tight fit on the axle, like

moulded gears, they are fixed in position with a tiny grub screw using the allen key wrench.

It is obvious from the sizing and design of these products that they have been produced with Fly models in mind but you can use them with other makes. I fitted a 38 tooth spur contrate, axle and bushes to a Scalextric CLK which gave me better acceleration at the cost of a little top speed. Hornby's standard contrate measures 18.85mm diameter, which is closer to the size of the Slotit gear than a Fly item at 18.45mm. I did have to fit Fly rear wheels and tyres to get enough ground clearance.

The Slotit spur contrates all size up at 18.95mm irrespective of the number of teeth. They mesh direct with the standard Fly 11 tooth pinion, but, by using the range of Slotit pinions you can obtain up to twelve different ratios ranging from 2.6 to 1 (using a 13 tooth pinion and 4 tooth contrate), to 3.8 to 1 (using a 10 tooth pinion and 38 tooth contrate).

There are a few complications should you wish to use these products on Pro Slot cars since their motors sit closer to the rear axle. This enables them to use smaller gears and, consequently, they can fit lower profile tyres. Their contrates measure 17.7mm but you can mesh a Slotit one providing you also use an in-line size pinion instead of the normal sidewinder type. You will have to retain the Pro Slot bushes as they are an integral part of the chassis construction and the wider Slotit contrate will push the rear wheel out by 1.5mm on the gear side. This means a spacer will be required on the other side to retain the balance and your car's axle will now be around 3mm wider. You could sand down the sidewalls of the tyres to compensate or fit narrower wheels and tyres.

Slotit spur contrate gears give a nice mesh and, with the teeth being narrower than standard moulded items, they offer less friction which translates to more speed. The complete package

of gears, axle and bushes can only improve the car's performance since moulded parts are being replaced with precision machined parts of high quality.

SLOTIT ALUMINIUM WHEELS

Also available are aluminium, grubscrew fastening wheels which take a plastic insert to give a BBS wheel pattern. Plastic moulded wheels, lovely though most of them are these days, are renowned for running out of true as well as splitting and coming loose on the axle. Having a good gear mesh and a truer running axle can be spoilt by wheel problems - careful wheel selection, glueing and truing the tyres is a common practice among the winning racers. So, it makes perfect sense to offer precision wheels as well as axles, bushes and gears.

The wheels are of the same high standard as the other parts and look good on a car that suits BBS style wheels. You can choose gold, silver or black inserts, and either alloy or black rims.

One thing I do not quite understand is that they have been sized to accept the once standard tyres found on models from Hornby, Ninco, SCX and Team Slot - that is around 16mm diameter. Whilst this is fine for in-line chassis they do not offer much ground clearance for sidewinder gears.

Slotit really need to offer bigger rims to

accept Fly rear tyres in order to complete the range.

V12 BOXER MOTOR

Slotit V12 replacement motors have, up till now, been of the Mabuchi type fitted to Hornby and Fly models or the original NC1 Ninco motor. This new boxer type is meant as a replacement for a Ninco NC2; gold in colour it looks almost the same but it is not quite the same size and fitting it to my BMW V12 Spyder was not quite straightforward. The solder tag terminals are a little closer together so plastic had to be trimmed from the front motor mount before it would fit.

The forward end plate is a slightly different shape which means it is not such a tight fit as the NC2 so I glued mine in with Evostick just to be safe. This is quite common practice amongst racers anyway. You have to fit your own pinion, whis is o.k., but the shaft only just reached into the contrate location.

Something else to watch is the wiring of the terminals. They are colour coded red and white, presumably for positive and negative, but need to be connected the other way round or the car will go backwards.

However, once fitted, this motor's performance is quite dramatic. Many people feel the NC2 is a handful; well this Boxer is even quicker, just what you need when you are racing with a strong magnet.

My thanks to Monarch Lines for giving me the opportunity to test these quality products.

AN AUTO UNION RAIL RACER FROM CHARLIE FITZPATRICK'S COLLECTION (SEE PAGE 40)



A VISIT TO CHARLIE FITZPATRICK

BY JEFF DAVIES

The Brooklands Memorial Races are in no small part due directly to Charlie Fitzpatrick so as part of the preparation to the event I decided to travel up to where it had all started and meet Charlie, who up until this point I'd only ever spoken to on the phone.

It didn't take long to find his home as he had given me very good directions. Unfortunately a personal tragedy had overtaken Charlie the day before which meant that we didn't have time to do everything I'd planned to do. He is no longer physically a young man but in his heart he is still as passionate about models as ever, and really Brooklands is as much a celebration about people like Charlie as it is about those who are no longer with us.

He showed me his workshop where he moulds a lot of the bodysells and has a huge stock of parts from over the years and has amazing recollection of how it was when it was just starting, which was really useful to me to get a picture of how it all came about. The Southport Model Engineering Club was originally a train organisation and Walkden Fisher had a layout in his basement. Charlie told me the story of how it all started when MRRC had called in the lawyers on them for breaking their patent and they were seriously worried that they were all going to end up in jail! Charlie was laughing as he said it, but I'm sure that at the time it wasn't as funny!

He told me how in the beginning Walkden Fisher had been writing magazine reviews for the very earliest slot car parts, often receiving parts from America, and was very secretive about the parts in his car. The car's underneath was taped over with black cardboard so when the car crashed one day and the body came off everybody present dived at it to see what lay inside.

Walkden Fisher was also present when Mercedes were setting speed records on the Southport sands in the 1930s, and he had been very impressed with their engineering. It took a very long time before such powerful cars were seen again.

Walkden Fisher used to run around in a Morgan 3 wheeler and Charlie showed me one of his paintings which was really good. The rail racing meetings in his basement were incredibly popular, with about forty people present and another fifty waiting outside on the lawn. Any slot car club in the UK would kill for these kind of numbers.

Charlie then took me up into his attic, which he had converted into a room, and showed me piles of old photographs of how it had been. Several of these are the original prints of pictures that had appeared in Roger Greenslade's book (I feel that Roger could have made it more clear which pictures were his and which he had borrowed to make the book).

It was fascinating to see the old pictures with Walkden Fisher, Harold Griffith and one with Ted Martin in. He also showed me a picture of Walkden Fisher's son. Harold's car box and cars will be at Brooklands along with almost certainly the largest collection of rail racers seen since they were last raced in the sixties. Mac Pinches is also coming with three rail racing cars, one of which I'm using to test the track. He competed at the last ever rail race Grand Prix, held on the Oaklands Park track in 1964, coming second in the Grand Prix with an Auto Union borrowed from Alan Hartley. The caption in the model magazines was Mac Pinches, who pinched the show.

It was interesting to see in the late 50s and early 60s everybody competed in a shirt and tie, mostly in suits. I photographed Walkden Fisher's original Auto Union which is still exactly as he raced it on the rail tracks and Charlie Fitzpatrick's Auto Union (now converted to a slot car), probably the one car above any other that I would really like to own as it is beautifully made and inside is more like a watch or a work of art than a slot car. I collected a Lancia Ferrari bodysell for Phil Barry to build and Charlie showed me one he had given to another racer to build for a concours competition, which it had won.