

# NSCC

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

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## Long Distance Information

It pays to have a 'cunning plan' available at all times, especially while on holiday. We recently spent a few days in the Frozen North (sorry - Lake District) and the joys of walking up the side of a mountain in horizontal rain soon began to pall. Fortunately I had secreted about my person a brochure extolling the attractions of Cockermouth, birthplace of William Wordsworth.

It also happens to contain the Cumberland Toy and Model Museum, run by Rod Moore MBE and NSCC member, but I neglected to mention this until we had actually arrived! I thus managed to spend a pleasant afternoon playing with Scalextric and Hornby trains instead of cruising round Lake Windermere in an open top boat. It really is an excellent museum and I can thoroughly recommend a visit if you are in the area; it is stuffed full of every imaginable toy but I have a sneaking suspicion that Rod started it to house his Scalextric collection and the whole thing got out of hand!

Anyway, on to the point of the story; while we were there Rod gave me an article he had written in 1999 - now I know the post is bad but waiting for the editor to drive two hundred and fifty miles to collect it is pushing things a bit far! As the next issue of the Journal will be a bit of a rush job, due to the Christmas shut down, I have held Rod's article over to give me a head start.

In the meantime there is plenty to read in this month's issue; I particularly liked Tony Secchi's account of a trip to Monza when he inadvertently became Scalextric Champion of England and, in response to a member's request, there is an excellent article on car restoration from Robert Learmouth.

**And Finally** - On behalf of the committee may I wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thankyou for all your contributions to the Journal over the past twelve months; I hope you have enjoyed reading it as much as I have enjoyed putting it together and I look forward to hearing from you in 2001.

*Till next year  
Brian*

# Bishops Stortford Swapmeet

**Julie Scale is our reporter on the spot**

Speaking to a collector from abroad last month, I was advised that Phil's Swapmeet reports were so good, you really felt you had been there, seen the stalls and met the other collectors - a hard act to follow, but here goes.

It has to be said to anyone reading this, that if you have never been to Bishops Stortford, you really do not know what you have missed. I noted one young member who was obviously a fan, as he seemed to have as many of Brian's swapmeet badges as he was years old!

The venue is superb; a nice large hall with a reception area, all packed to the limit with stalls covered with nothing but slot cars. A good bar area, hosting an excellent test track, and a very interesting display area. Hot food and drink is served all day - (I overheard one male of the species, point out that this is an excellent place for the women to sit and chat!)

## **Rare items**

On display this year were some very interesting pole racers; these would have been tethered to a pole and then run in circles around it, powered by an internal combustion engine. The best examples are now very sort after- I know Mark was green with envy. Scalextric speaking, there was a red C129 6 Wheel March Ford, a brown Cougar - maybe this is a mix in the mould of the orange and blue? Also a beautiful example of the Spanish triangle wedge shop cabinet - filled with a true 'School of Champions' it held the rarest examples of the 4 vintage cars, including an original race tuned Bugatti and Auto Union, yellow Alpha and French Bentleys.

Also for those of us who love the old shop displays of childhood, there were two 60s card displays, one English one French, both standing about two foot high, depicting a slot racing track and room to display the models.

We were pleased to have a large selection of Phil's collection on display, and quite a few rare items found new homes.

The new Scalextric F1 Williams triggered interest, when the eagle-eyed collectors noticed that a few stray set cars seemed to be tamponed in more detail than the standard boxed car.

## **Stall round up**

Sean from Pendle Slot Racing had a superb selection of stock for the racer, with lots of spares and some very well priced Pro Slot cars.

John Jude's stall, was once more displaying some beautiful hand built slot cars. I understand that Elaine had been up all night to ensure they were finished!

The new Carrera range was also reported to be selling well; the 300 SL proving very popular, also a few examples of the new E81 Limited Edition Fly Viper were seen in the hall at around £80.

## **Auction time**

Bishops Stortford would not be complete without Brian's wonderful entertaining auction at 2pm. Some very interesting items were snapped up; an Ascot set for £15; a Traffic game for £2; a box of 'old tat' for £6 and a box of BP Metro's for only £3 each! A very nice example of the 911 Rescue set (the Micro set that never was) failed to sell! Many of you will know of Mark's weakness at auctions; normally it's vintage motorbikes, and spares, but Brian managed to entice him in, and we came home the proud owners of yet another slot car set!

Visitors from overseas were well represented; with members from Belgium, France, Spain and South Africa all making the trip.

Well done as ever to Brian and team for yet another wonderful event. Make a note in your diaries now folks to attend next year.

We hope to see you at Leeds but, if not, have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.



# BACKTRACK

## NO. 7 DAVE YERBURY

**A departure from the usual subjects this month - Dave has never edited the newsletter or served on the committee. He was, however, one of the very early members and a regular stallholder at the swapmeets of the 80s. Indeed, when I joined the club in 1983 he was the first person to sell me a car and we became good friends over the years. He has always been more interested in the modelling side of the hobby and often contributed interesting articles on the subject in the early days. I hadn't seen him for some time so it was a real pleasure to meet up again at Brooklands; unfortunately for him he was then forced to write some articles for the Journal! I will include them in later issues but, in the meantime, here are some reminiscences from "a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away":-**

"My interest in motorsport started at an early age as my father was a regular spectator before and after the war. He often went to Brooklands which was why I was keen to attend the rail racing event held there recently. After a walk round and a look at the banking I just couldn't believe they raced there at such speeds in such primitive cars - total madness!

My first Scalextric set, in the early 60s contained a Vanwall, BRM, Cooper and a C63 Lotus; I have managed to hang on to three of them to this day, but, unfortunately the Cooper was a victim of my first attempt at modifying cars.

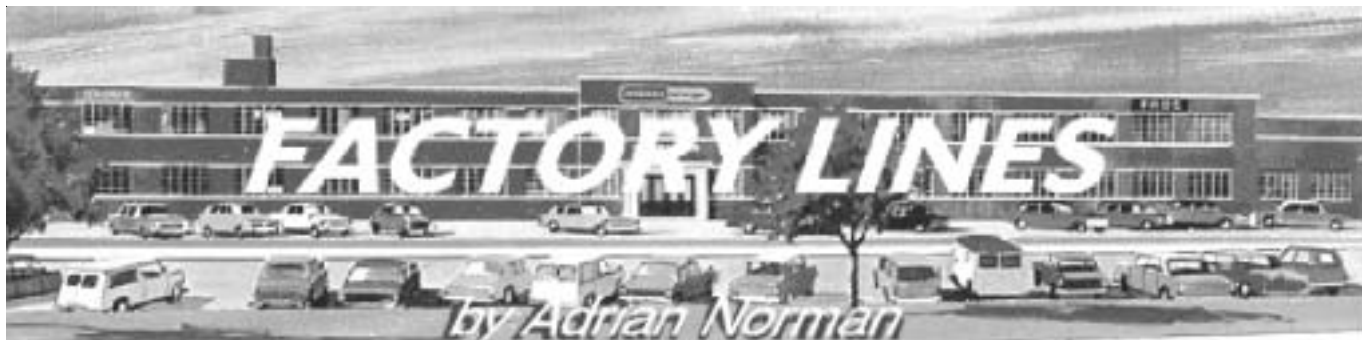
I did not realise there was going to be a boom in slot racing so I joined the navy in 1963 and two years later I was celebrating my 17th birthday in the Far East and Scalextric was definitely on the back burner. There was some racing in Singapore but most of the time we were at sea, so, when ashore, the other hobby called, Tiger beer would always take preference! I should have enjoyed the climate and scenery more as the last seven years of service was spent in submarines; not really much room for a track down there! Mind you, we could have done with one as we would spend six weeks at a time underwater. To this day I can't stand confined spaces for very long.

I did manage to get back to England in late 1965 which was handy as my brother was working at the Revell factory. Saturday mornings were spent trying out the latest cars and parts on Beatties' track at Southgate.

I rejoined the human race in 1974 and the first thing I purchased was a secondhand set containing two Shadows for the impending family - allegedly! Over the next few years I managed to pick up a few cars but it was not till "Auto Modeller" appeared that I really became interested. I advertised for early cars in it and, one day in 1981 Shaun Claremont contacted me for a swap. He gave me Rob Brittain's address so I joined the club and have been a member ever since.

In the late 80s I started making models of cars I liked and got into vac-forming with the help and advice of former member David Illand. Over the years I managed to produce a wide range of cars for my own amusement and, after a while, other people asked to buy them so in 1995 I started AA Bodies. I make all the moulds and the models are vac-formed in 30 thou Plasticard; I have had a great deal of fun making the cars.

I have enjoyed being a member of the NSCC and have met a lot of interesting people through the club. I have no doubt that I will continue to enjoy my hobby just as long as grown men think that editing the Journal is a good idea!"



## **Cadillac due for Christmas week launch.**

Be sure to visit your slot car supplier at the end of December to get the first Scalextric Cadillac Northstar LMP sports cars. You might expect me to say that they are stunning to look at and excellent to race. I don't need to; the buying public will be the final judge of that. I'm confident which way the jury will vote.

## **Headline from Hornby's local area newspaper**

During October, the local paper made the following item front-page news, underlining just how significant Hornby Hobbies is to the social and economic fabric of this region:

### **'Hornby jobs go as firm tries to sell site'**

Manufacturing comes to an end today (Friday) at Hornby Hobbies' Westwood site with the closure of the moulding shop after 46 years of production.

This week the company revealed it is planning to relocate. The Finance Director said: "The site is for sale and, as the manufacturing side has gone, it would make sense for us to relocate, ideally in the Thanet area – it is the preferred choice. But we cannot say anything for certain."

The company has already spoken to various parties about the sale of the site, but nothing has yet been agreed. "If the right offer was made we would consider it", said the company spokesman.

Over the past years the company has shifted its manufacturing to the Far East, where labour costs are lower.

The closure of the moulding shop means a further eight jobs will go. Hornby will retain

its packing, distribution, print decoration, engineering and sales marketing operations in Westwood.

## **Underpans**

The underpan of the Subaru has been changed to take the round magnets. This means the brown bar magnet is fast disappearing from the range. The three position round magnets are to be found on the No.3 WRC blue rally car with 'stripes', the Police car, Norisbank and Belgacom cars onwards. No doubt there may be some crossover of underpans as old stock gets used up.

The change was made so that the WRC rally sets would contain cars of the same specification with regard to the magnet.

As with the Subaru, so the NASCAR underpans are changing magnets too. This time though, the change is a little less obvious but still significant. The brown bar magnet is being replaced by a stronger rectangular magnet. It is of the same size and located in the same place and is visually easy to spot, the magnet being of a bright steel appearance.

This modification has been made to satisfy demand from the USA for a stronger magnet. It has been fitted to the 'NASCAR 2000' liveries onwards.

## **Trivial stats or stats trivia?**

Here's some information to amuse those of you who like to know about the peculiarities.

Issue 18 of the Scalextric Racer magazine and the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of the 41<sup>st</sup> edition Scalextric catalogue has the following minor errors:

C2273 Subaru Police Car is noted as being 134mm in length and not properly as 139mm. C2331 Caterham and C2310 Vectra have the dimensions of a Laguna.

## **A less obvious issue?**

C2081 Mercedes CLK on the front cover of Issue 17 has race no.17 instead of 1 or 2!

C2201 Caterham on the front cover of issue 18 has, (have you guessed it), race number No.18 although the car is actually produced with race number 27!

To be honest, I hadn't noticed this trend until one of our valued members asked me to enquire. Following a few phone calls after referring to my copies of the Racer magazine, the factory tell me that, where necessary, each front cover design has been digitally altered to give the car the same number as the magazine journal number. I wonder what car and race number will be on Issue 19!

## **Total Value Racing**

The Racer club membership car for the year 2001 will be a TVR. Membership to the club continues to be, to my mind, a **Total Value Racing** bargain.

## **The NEC Motor Show**

Not just 1:1 scale cars were at this year's annual car show. The NEC Motor Show in October at Birmingham was the venue for Scalextric to display a large scenic four-lane layout based on the Monza circuit, where racers of all ages would battle it out in 32<sup>nd</sup> scale. The Telegraph newspaper organization got together with Orange, F1 Racing, and Hornby Hobbies to provide an attraction at the car show enjoyed by thousands of visitors. Four Formula 1 Ferrari 643 cars were provided solely for the racing, in black, white, yellow and blue liveries with the names of the companies involved printed on them. These were for racing only, not for sale. As you can imagine, by the end of the two weeks they were probably rather second-hand!

## **Technically speaking....**

The Cadillac Northstar LMP is another important stride forward for Hornby Hobbies. Various innovations on the Cadillac may or may not prove successful to the racer or collector. Nevertheless, they are innovations. A business doesn't move forward in a competitive market without embracing change and looking for areas where it can gain an advantage over the

competition. As I wrote in last month's issue, feedback from our membership does reach the development team. Even if the feedback is about a fault or improvement they are already considering, the feedback will strengthen their resolve to continue with the upgrade.

## **Passion**

Nor, technically speaking, is it the start of the Millennium yet, but as far as Hornby is concerned a new era has begun. The year 2000 has been an important date in the life of Scalextric. Forty years have passed and change was hard to bear. But often, to survive, change is vital. Production has now moved entirely to China. In Thanet, many jobs were lost at the factory and many a tear shed. It was painful for those involved at the Margate plant.

This year, I have seen optimism and passion rise out of the desperation and uncertainty that had enveloped the factory and its staff over the last three years. Both the Hornby trains and Scalextric cars ranges have had a face-lift with higher detailed and better performing products. Confidence has risen dramatically in the knowledge that the first examples of a new range of quality products are entering the range that will maintain Hornby and Scalextric as a leading brand.

## **Focus on the future**

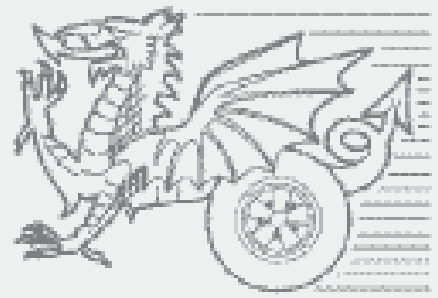
The end of a real factory production line at the Margate factory also sees the last Factory Lines report. Who said 'Hoorah'? I will still be bringing news from Hornby on a monthly basis but now the January edition will see this column renamed Factory Focus. I would like to thank the editor, Brian, for the dedication and hard work he has committed to the journal this year.

## **A Day in the Life of a Scalextric car**

Throughout this year I have been gathering data from the factory. In January I will be publishing the first of a series of monthly columns entitled 'A Day In The Life'. The year long report describes how a Scalextric car is made, from idea to shop shelf, and includes some interesting insights in to how production techniques have 'shaped' the cars over the years.

# TOP GUIDE

By Richard Davies



## Chrysler Viper GTS-R Silverstone 1999

The very first time I heard of FLY was at a model show in August 1996. They had just began production of the blue Dodge Vipers and, as my father and I walked around we saw one for sale on a stand.

A lengthy debate followed about whether the car was a slot car or static: I contended that it had to be static while he, who had had a close look at it, held it was a slot car. We bought the car and sure enough, it was a slot car.

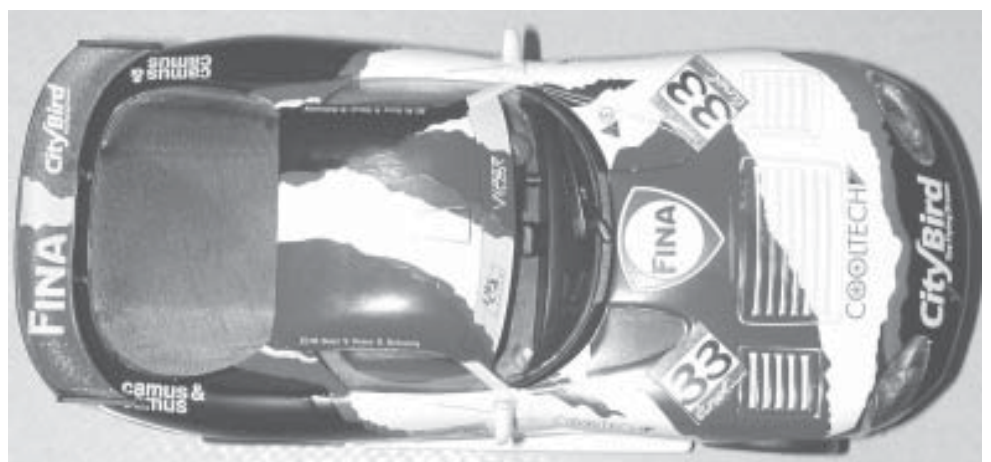
I was deeply impressed by the quality of the car, superior to any other at that time. After that I collected the Vipers, reaching ten before I reluctantly concluded they were being turned out too fast for me to keep up with but I loved the shape of them and modified my original blue racer in an attempt to keep up with the Venturis, and later on the Porsches to no avail.

It seemed the days of Vipers racing competitively were over when I heard that a new model was being released with an updated chassis, fast enough to be a serious race car again. I was extremely pleased and decided to get one. Just before I left with my father to go to the Derby HO Le Mans 24 hour race I went to a race meeting at Abergavenny, where a pair of new Vipers were very much in evidence and were keeping up with modified GT1s and with this proof of their speed and handling I purchased one from Barry Johnson, of Midlands HO (Britain's largest HO importer) at the Derby event.

Even had I not wanted one for all of the reasons given I would still have bought this car. The paint scheme is complex, rendered in colours which have different finishes yet it suits the strong lines of the Viper to perfection. The standard silver wheels are used but the tyres are of a different compound and are much stickier. The body is elegantly crafted into the familiar lines of the Viper, intricately detailed with the various vents and grilles we've come to expect from FLY.

The mechanics of the chassis are unchanged, with the spring joined propshaft connecting the forward mounted motor to the back axle. A drop of solder on the spring stiffens it and helps prevent it flexing and slowing the car.

Straight from the box the car is difficult to beat and I am confident that it will become a favourite of racers very quickly. With the introduction of the modified chassis Vipers FLY has come full circle, from its tentative beginnings through a most amazing range of cars only for the Vipers to once more take the crown.



# If Microsoft produced slot cars!

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

**A**t a recent computer expo (COMDEX), Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the slot-car industry and stated “if the slot-car industry had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be racing £2.00 cars that could reach 1,000 miles an hour.”

In response to Bill’s comments, Inter-Slot Cars plc, renowned for their superb product range of leading edge, technologically advanced slot-cars issued a press release stating:- if the slot-car industry had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be racing cars with the following characteristics:

- For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash twice a day.
- Every time they released a new set, you would have to buy a new car.
- Occasionally your car would die on the track for no reason. You would have to strip the car down, remove windows, restart it, and put the windows back on before you could race. For some reason you would simply accept this.
- Executing a manoeuvre such as a left turn would frequently cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.
- Only one person at a time could race, making a mockery of competition, unless you bought “SlotCarNT”, but then each racer would have to purchase an individual racing license from MS to compete in a ‘multi-user’ race.
- The electronic pacer and lap counter displays would all be replaced by a single “General Protection Fault” warning light.
- New throttle controllers would force everyone to use a left-handed hand grip.
- Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your power supply, pacer unit or lap counter would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously hold the throttle trigger [Ctrl] down, turn the power to AC [Alt], and deliver [Del] a rousing rendition of the Star Spangled Banner .
- Every time MS introduced a new car, racers would have to learn to drive all over again because none of the handling characteristics would be the same as those on their previous one.
- You’d have to press the “Start” button to turn the engine off.

## Members letters



Dear Brian

May I become one of the many members to say how sad and surprised I was to read the news of Phil Etgart's sudden retirement from our hobby? He will be a massive loss, not only as an expert historian with a megalithic fund of knowledge and experience, but also as a recorder of events, models and people.

Through his network of contacts, he has helped me complete my range of racing slot cars by finding and providing several rare and obsolete models in mint condition and at a very competitive price. I have never met him in person, but am pleased to have this opportunity to put down in print my personal tribute to a venerable giant of our hobby.

I hope that he fulfils his priorities in life and I am sure that his family and friends will welcome his decision. I would like to wish good luck, good health, and goodbye to the 'Enthusiastic Collector'.

Sincerely  
Tony Secchi

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Dear Brian

I recently attended a toyfair at Meadowbank Stadium; no old Scalextric unfortunately but I did come across a slot-car book of which I was previously unaware.

It is called "Vintage Slot Cars" by Philippe de Lespinay and is basically a look at cars and kits, mostly American, available in the 60s. Makes featured include Cox, Monogram, Russkit, KB, Revell and AMT. There are ninety six pages and more than eighty colour photographs which are worth the cover price of £9.99 in themselves. It was published in 1999 by the MBI company of America.

Also worth a look are the Index catalogue Vauxhall Vectras - silver/blue and black/silver - and both featuring some very smart chrome eight spoke wheels.

Yours faithfully  
Dave Young

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Dear members

We are in the process of organising a slot car exhibition to be held in the Marrayat Hall, Dundee on the 13th May 2001. There will be approximately 25 spaces for track layouts and cars; traders are welcome to take part.

To the best of my knowledge this is the first slot car exhibition to be held in Scotland and if any NSCC members or clubs would like to take part we would be delighted to hear from them. Please ring me on 01382 467375 or 01382 622012 if you would like more information.

Yours sincerely  
Roy Butchart



# Members letters

## **Slot racing - What is wrong? An open letter to the membership from Nigel Barrow**

This could be called a passionate plea from the heart; Pinewood Raceway, based at Pinewood Centre just to the south of Wokingham in Berkshire, has now been in operation for some 2 years and we are proud of the fact that we have the finest customer built slotcar track in the country. Commissioned from plans developed by a member of the club, this was built by Steve Ogalvie in Canada, for racing mainly 1/24<sup>th</sup> scale slotcars, six lanes and 130ft-lap length. The slotcar club is thriving, clubnight Friday evenings have a regular 20 - 25 members racing. We have kept it simple with product chassis and control motors, none of these high complexity, hand built, highly expensive missiles associated with BSCRA slotcar racing. It has worked but here is the problem; the clubhouse is big and dedicated to slot racing, we have 2 main rooms the first as you enter the club houses the Ogalvie track. Walk past this and you enter the second room, here we have a second custom built track this time built by the club members. A 6 lane 90 ft lap length built exclusively for 1/32 hard bodied cars, initially painted with a polyurethane surface but now sandtexed, we built this due to the interest in racing these cars seen throughout the country, but people won't play, we cannot get them past the Ogalvie.

Easter of this year we widely advertised a 3 hour race on this track, a good sized full page ad in NSCC magazine brought one enquiry and no entries. We scraped together 6 teams from the core membership of the Slotcar club, but no others. Sunday mornings were covered in the local paper, about six new members arrived took one look at the Ogalvie and that was that. Summer holidays are not the best time to try for new interest but with 250,000 people living within a 10 mile radius of the club we posted promotional posters in all the toy, hobby and related shops. The local paper ran an article all through the summer Wednesday nights, 2 new people, same story. What are we doing wrong?

The track flows well, but is technical; we have enough magnetic braid to redo with this to give magntraction, if wanted. If nothing improves we will start to consider the fate of the track; we have tried to bridge the seeming chasm between BSCRA and the Hard bodied scene. We raced a team put together by Jeff Davies, at Pinewood and Addlestone. Steve De Haviland's small shop is only a couple of miles down the road, and once more he has been kind enough to display an advert for some months now. Is there not someone out there who can help? I have enjoyed racing these cars especially the new Proslot cars made for Dan De Bella, a long time supplier of top end slotcar equipment, he reports great sales throughout the globe, with reducing sales of the Slotcar side of the business.

We want to make it work. Talking to Andy Browne - Searle of Riverside Raceway in Newcastle he has a thriving core of Scalextric racers, mainly in the 8 - 13 age group. They want to race these cars in preference to the 1/24<sup>th</sup> slotcars. They even race on both their 1/32<sup>nd</sup> track and the big 8 lane Ogalvie track there. We can do that if you wish out here, Nincos and Proslots work well on the bigger track.

Surely there is room for both at Pinewood. We are a good bunch of people and will help with the setting up of a 1/32<sup>nd</sup> racing club. How about it readers - anyone interested in taking up the challenge? E-mail me on [Barrow@tesco.net](mailto:Barrow@tesco.net) or drop me a line at 99 Barkham Ride, Wokingham, Berkshire **RG40 4EP** and by return I will send info on the track.

# One person's junk is another person's memories

BY STEVE WESTBY

Out in the garage, next to some of my other winter projects, is a box, which even I would have to admit, contains a fair bit of junk. Shelley, my better half, regards a large proportion of what comes in the door from boot fairs, slotswaps and auctions as junk. Usually I hotly defend my purchases on the grounds of their rarity or being just too good a bargain to miss. On this occasion though, I have to admit that she does have a point. This box contains a lot of stuff I would probably have walked straight past at a boot sale, broken car bodies, rusty motors and rubber trackside accessories that are proving to be very biodegradable!

Yet when I consider my small collection, this box ranks right at the top, even above my Scalextric Bryan Meats NASCAR set, until now the most prized item.

So why is this box of junk so important to me? Well like many collectors my first contact with Scalextric was as a toy in my youth. Pocket money was saved for additions to the layout and Christmas and Birthdays would occasionally make highly desired contributions of new cars or special pieces of track. Eventually, I moved away from home and the set languished in my mother's loft, to be passed on to my brother when his children were old enough.

A few years after we got married, Shelley bought me a Scalextric set for Christmas and this rekindled my interest enough to buy a pair of Toys-R-Us Aston Martin DBRs. However although these were bought for racing, they never made it out of the box. I failed to make a convincing case for making the circuit a permanent feature of the dining room or spare room. So restrictions of space, combined with extreme laziness, meant that the new set spent most of the next 10 years in the loft.

It might have been there still, if we hadn't decided a couple of years ago to buy a house jointly with Shelley's parents. It took over a year

to find the right place, but eventually we moved in. Due to my phobia about the loft ladder in the new house, the set languished in the garage. Now we had the room, I would get round to setting it up, eventually. Then one day this past summer, I came home to a surprise. My father-in-law had built a table and he and Shelley had set the circuit up on it and got it going.

From there on it was all downhill (or perhaps uphill from Shelley's point of view, I think she wishes she'd left the set where it was). Within a few weeks, the layout had been expanded to need another table (I'm waiting for the right moment to break the news that two more will be needed for the 4-lane track.). I'd joined the NSCC and I'd made my first purchase on e-bay, a pair of Superstox, because the full size versions had sustained my interest in motor sport in the intervening years. It was wonderful, I could finally buy all those cars I'd lusted over in the catalogue all those years ago. After an initial feeding frenzy, I settled down to gradually building a collection of cars that interested me.

Then I began to think about the set that I'd had all those years ago. The original track, then the plexytrack. The early sports and Grand Prix cars and my later favourites, a very fast Revell Chevy Camaro built from a kit and the ones I most enjoyed racing, a pair of Airfix prewar GP cars. They weren't fast, the guide posts needed modifying and you had to keep adjusting the braids, but they were just enormous fun, sliding the tail out round the bends. Especially the Auto Union, where I could pretend I was one of my childhood heroes, Rudolf Caracciola.

A series of phone calls round the family established that my brother still had a box with a lot of my old stuff in. It turned out that I was just in time, as he was getting ready to move house and the box had been destined for a boot sale! Various attempts to arrange a trip down to see the family and collect the box failed due to

holidays, floods and fuel crises. Then finally the plan came together and my brother and his wife came to stay with us for a long weekend. The box had survived their house move and came with them.

Going through the box was a trip back into my childhood. The first surprise was confirmation of my memory of having a pit stop. I'd managed to get most of the other rare pieces of track at boot sales, including a paddock, Goodwood chicane and Le Mans start. But a pit stop had eluded me and I was beginning to consider whether I could bear to pay the sort of price that is now asked for them. Now there was my old one in front of me, still with the little bits of tissue paper I used to stuff in the "points" to stop them sliding across of their own volition, sending the cars catapulting into the air.

There were various other vintage bits and pieces, including track, borders, fences, a disintegrating rubber bush and a few of those old metal track clips that used to hide on the floor, lying in wait till you stood on them in bare feet. But it was really the cars I was dying to

see. Only one of them was still complete, a blue Race-Tuned Javelin that I'd never even managed to run-in properly, I suspect that I never had the right hand controller. There were the bodies and most of the parts from two of my oldest cars, a Lister Jaguar and an Aston Martin. The body for an old Lotus that I'd covered in decals and then wound with sticky tape to hold it together. The body and driver platform for the Camaro, the motor is there and the drop arm, but where is the rest of the chassis?

Restoring these cars will be a labour of love. With the condition of most of them, it certainly won't be economic, given the number of parts I will have to trace and purchase. But it will strengthen the links between happy childhood memories and the pleasure I get from my current collecting.

The Airfix Auto Union? Well that wasn't there, no-one knows quite what happened to that and its partner Mercedes. I've managed to buy examples of both cars since I started collecting, but it's not the same. Maybe lurking somewhere in my mother's loft or my other brother's garage, there's another box of junk.....?



## CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

Thanks once again to the generosity of Simon Kohler and Hornby Hobbies we have three super prizes on offer for the traditional Christmas quiz.

These are pre-production evaluation models of the following cars: Williams FW22, Subaru and NASCAR which are slightly different to the final product which appears in the shops.

In order to win one all you have to do is answer the following questions about the 1966 movie Grand Prix:-

- 1) Which character is played by James Garner?
- 2) Who is his teammate at the beginning of the film when they collide during the Monaco race?
- 3) What is the full name of the team for which they drive?

**Answers on a postcard only please, to the editor, to arrive no later than Thursday 18th January 2001.**

If you have a preference for a particular prize please say so - we will try to oblige, but there are no guarantees.



Archie, my faithful editorial cat, will once again pick the winners so any bribes should be sent to him in a plain brown wrapper!

# The Italian job

During the mid sixties, when I was loosely involved in the competition side of motor racing (in a completely amateur role), I used to visit Italy on a regular monthly basis. I had a very close friend, unfortunately now deceased, called Luciano; like me he was born in London of Italian parents but he was a few years older. His family had owned a café, which he inherited, but he was mad about motor racing, so he sold it. He did various car related jobs culminating in selling them from home. During the course of his chosen career he made several friends in the motorsport arena of the day. He knew lots of young drivers in Italy, who, when they came over here, asked him to get competition parts for their cars.

In consequence, he started a sideline in transporting these bits and pieces to Italy. At this time they were mostly competing in F3 with Ford 1000cc engines and chassis by Lotus, Brabham, March, Chevron, McLaren, and Cooper. In Italy the chassis used were mainly by Matra and Tecno (not Techno!). This last chassis was constructed by the Pederazani Brothers in Bologna who later moved into F2 (1600 cc) with Clay Regazzoni and Francois Cevert, both of whom I came to know well.

Incidentally, these cars were the base for the mock F1 racing cars used in the making of the film 'Grand Prix'. We both spent an intriguing day in the pits at Monza during rehearsals, marvelling at the stuck on bits that made the cars look real (from a distance).

We used to get various F3 spares on order from Dunlop/Lotus etc. and drive them to Italy in a very 'hot' Ford Anglia filled to the brim (and roof) with racing tyres, discs, pads etc. We took a late night ferry from Dover to Calais and drove through the night to Milan, sometimes going on to Monza direct, there to have the goodies snatched off the Anglia and put directly onto the racers - it was a hectic but fun time.

Luciano often visited our slot racing club but never competed. He was just curious about anything remotely related to racing cars. During

BY TONY SECCHI

July/August 1964 I had just won a club championship using a 1/24 scale Ferrari 250 GTO (ref. My Aug. 2000 Article).

The following weekend we made our usual overnight sprint to Monza, unloaded, watched the Saturday practice for Sunday's race and spent the evening with friends and drivers in a restaurant in central Milan. We were strolling back to our hotel when, by chance, we came across a small square, which had an illuminated structure in its centre. On closer investigation we found that it was a large open air, open sided, well lit enclosure housing a custom made 6 lane slot car circuit. It transpired to be a municipal layout put up and wholly maintained by the council for the local children. Try that in London; it would not last ten minutes without being vandalised. There were a couple of adults in supervising roles and in charge of the actual racing. We wandered over to check out this unique and original venture. The kids were very young and very enthusiastic, being Italian of course, and the cars were 1/32 scale GT and saloons (no open wheelers as I recall). I cannot remember what make and models but most probably Scalextric.

Luciano started talking to the adults and I was taken by one particular youngster who had a very fast but unstable car which he kept deslotting near to a bend where I was standing. Naturally I kept putting it back on the track for him. In the meantime, my friend Luciano, who spoke very good and fluent Italian, had begun to relate to all and sundry the details of the club we had in London. He told them that I had just won a championship (which was true). He was a bit of a 'set up' merchant and before long that innocuous little championship had become 'National' and I had become the Scalextric champion of England

I heard some of this going on but was too far away and involved to do anything about it. Within minutes I was surrounded by all the children proffering their cars and asking me to give an exhibition. Backed into a corner I had

to accept. I chose the car belonging to the young boy who had been deslotting and had a good look at his set up. The braids were bent up and twisted underneath the guide, so I had to straighten and flatten them before attempting to lap.

Naturally, I had never seen the track before, let alone raced on it. It was very smooth with a polished surface. I thought that it would be fast in a straight line but 'loose' on the bends, which were fortunately very open. I started my stint and de-slotted a few times before accustoming myself to the car and the track surface. After about twenty laps I was able to keep the car on the track and circulate rapidly. I had to really concentrate hard, being new to the format and was not listening to the normal hubbub around me, but I do remember one of the supervising adults making an announcement.

I was still racing when suddenly a great cheer went up from the assembled children and I was told that I had just broken the track lap record, which had stood for some time! I was again engulfed with kids, this time shouting 'Campione! Campione! '(Champion!). To say that I was embarrassed out of my skin would be an understatement, but I was pleased for the children at the same time.

The evening went back to normal and my young car donating friend became the centre of attention of all his mates -well it is not often that you meet the Scalextric Champion of England and he uses your car to break the lap record is it? By this time it was getting late and the parents began to turn up to collect their kids. The tale was told and retold a few times with the usual Italian flair. Luciano and I kissed the children and shook hands with the parents (or vice versa) and after prolonged goodbyes took off to the bar of our hotel.

I eventually drifted out of that lifestyle and soon after when I visited Milan again the square was still there but the track facility had gone. Still, I have the memory of a magical and pleasurable evening, the like of which I had never before experienced. In addition, it was entirely due to Scalextric, which, even in those early days, could bridge the gap between different nationalities with a common interest and enthusiasm. Anything that can do that must have a lot of good within it. Long may it survive and prosper.

# May the downforce be with you!

BY PETER NOVANI

Working on the premise that the public find it easier to relate to bog standard slot-cars, I tend to avoid racing modified cars when making occasional forays into the public domain with my track layout. Other than oiling the relevant components and loosening the chassis screws there is no inclination on my part to mess about with them. However, on occasion an inherent design deficiency warrants some additional tuning to get it performing to an acceptable level.

To give you an example. A friend of mine surmised that as the full size BTCC series is, or rather was, very popular, then surely it should follow that the slot-car version would enjoy a similar appeal. Needless to say, he had not seen the BTCC slot-car range in action. Don't get me wrong, I like these Hornby made slot-cars, indeed I possess quite a few of them. Youngsters in particular appreciate the lighting systems that this range possesses. Yet offering the public the chance to race them has not been an option open to me. The reasons for this anomaly? Simple, I favour using sports cars, as they are endowed with good handling characteristics. They are, therefore, generally better suited to the rigours of racing at public events where participants have varying abilities. Marshalling cars that crash off the track more than they stay on, is only recommended for enthusiasts with masochistic tendencies.

However, my friend's sentiments got me thinking how best to get my neglected BTCC cars racing again. Undoubtedly, the Achilles heel of the BTCC range has to be a lack of road holding. Chassis improvements made by Hornby in recent years, although most welcome, have until recently been eclipsed by the advances made by rival slot-car companies. The BTCC slot cars are from the 'old school' of design philosophy. That is to say, before FLY, Ninco, Proslot and SCX threw down the gauntlet. To their credit, Hornby have responded in a positive manner by introducing a slot-car that stakes a claim to being one of their finest efforts to date

– the Ford Focus. A car that on looks alone is a sure fire winner. Moreover, it features a significant departure from the conventional wisdom employed thus far as it is blessed with excellent road holding courtesy of some useful performance enhancements. Arguably, the introduction of a sidewinder motor and powerful magnet makes previous saloon slot-cars obsolete overnight.

By their very nature BTCC slot-cars have a high centre of gravity coupled with narrow wheels/tyres and track. An excessive amount of weight in the interior area, plus the fact that they are burdened with lighting paraphernalia, are all mitigating factors which prevent them from being 'stonking' on track performers. Therefore, the challenge was to find a subtle way to emulate the Focus' excellent road holding characteristics without resorting to club type modifications.

Although I am conversant with the methods club racers use to eliminate the poor handling that afflict many saloon cars they are invariably the consequence of club rules dictating that the magnet should be dispensed with altogether. Initially, this renders a car completely undrivable. So, to compensate for the lack of magnetic downforce, fundamental changes need to be made to the chassis and running gear. This can be done by adding strategically placed weight, trimming the bodyshell and chassis, sanding and fitting ultra low profile tyres and so forth.

All are worthwhile improvements which bestow upon the tuned slot-car the ability to compete successfully (with any luck) at club level. And in that context, much of the interest and enjoyment is gained from the actual tuning and fettling process. It could even be suggested that adding weight actually mirrors a similar system utilised by race teams to balance a full size race car. Having said that, the simple (easy) solution I eventually settled upon was to continue with the magnet theme by replacing the existing magnet with a more powerful version. Following some helpful advice from

Sean at Pendle Slot Racing, I decided to try Proslot and Slot.it® magnets. Both magnets are suitable for fitting into the existing rectangular aperture on a Scalextric chassis without additional modifications. For all intents and purposes a car remains completely standard. Unfortunately, the Proslot version is half the thickness of the standard Scalextric variety. So, unless the aperture is ‘packed’ to get the magnet to fit flush with the chassis edge, it sits rather too deep within the recess. Consequently, its efficiency is greatly reduced.

In that respect, the Slot.it® magnet is a much better proposition as it fills the entire aperture without the need for such ‘packing.’ This unusual magnet features a novel concept. One side is entirely smooth, whilst the other side has the middle part much thinner than its outer extremities, hence the term ‘C’ type. The idea is that with the ‘C’ type side facing the track surface, it should provide the car with progressive handling characteristics. In effect you get a rather more magnetic downforce when the car attains a tail-out attitude negotiating a corner than when it sits directly over the slot and in a straight line. With the tail-out attitude the car has the thicker more powerful outer edge of the magnet positioned over the rails, at which point the stronger magnetic effect should correct the slide. Confused?

It’s an interesting theory and one well worth pursuing. Having elected to go with the Slot.it® magnet I subjected a modified car to some on track testing. Initially, I fitted the magnet as suggested, but the feel of the car was still too loose through corners. However, using some lateral thinking, I decided to fit the magnet with the smooth side the wrong way round so that it was facing the track surface. Now the car performed as if ‘painted to the track.’ In fact not dissimilar to a FLY car. Just what I was looking for, an (almost) idiot proof saloon car. Modified cars profit from a superior level of performance when compared to their standard counterparts. An unexpected bonus being a reduction in tyre wear, or degradation as they say on ITV’s F1 coverage. However, there is also a disadvantage. Although the limits of

adhesion are impressively high, once surpassed it tends to be a case of ‘hello’ crash barriers big time as the cars are cornering at a much higher speed.

Magnatraction slot-cars lend themselves perfectly to having this straightforward conversion. Simply remove the standard magnet and install the more powerful alternative, or vice-versa to return the car back to standard specification. It would certainly be interesting to try this conversion on one of the hobby’s ultimate aberrations – the Ford RS500. What type of conceptual genius was responsible for that especially poor handling slot-car?

As a comparison between a modified and standard car, I have included times taken from a brief track test session featuring two Scalextric Renault Lagunas and using the notoriously difficult inner blue lane with ‘dynamic braking’ connected. Inexplicably, both Lagunas were supplied with rear tyres fitted as standard to the front wheels. These were immediately replaced by lower profile front tyres, similar to those found on Vauxhall Vectras and Audi A4s.

#### **C1021 (STANDARD) RENAULT LAGUNA**

Fastest lap = 5.0032 sec

Total time for 20 laps = 1 min 50.8035 sec

#### **C2166 (MODIFIED) RENAULT LAGUNA**

Fastest lap = 4.4103 sec

Total time for 20 laps = 1 min 35.5809 sec

Believe me, the standard version was always on the ragged edge, and in stark contrast to the confidence inspiring cornering capabilities of the modified car. Given more time to acclimatise to the new set up, lap and race times should be reduced significantly. Such is the magnet’s strength that racing a modified car on a layout without ‘dynamic braking’ will produce equally impressive results.

Buying Slot.it® magnets has saved me from consigning my old Scalextric BTCC cars to that great car park in the sky – the loft. It has also given me the option to race them at public events if required. So, what am I waiting for, I’d better get out there and Slot.it® to ‘em!

# Going Ninco . . .

## Paul Strange reports from the Ninco circuit at this year's Bishop's Stortford swapmeet

I've always enjoyed the Bishop's Stortford swapmeet. Smaller, less frantic and more intimate than Milton Keynes, the bar area is usefully located adjacent to the hall and has sufficient space for displays of rare cars and - most importantly - a track.

It may sound obvious but slot cars - no matter how detailed or rare - are designed to be run on a slot track. Whether you choose to run them or not is another matter, but at a swapmeet, amid the flurry of intense trading, it's nice to be reminded of what our hobby is really about. In previous years at Bishop's Stortford, we've seen Scalextric 1/24th three-lane, Scalextric 1/32nd four lane and Carrera circuits, but to date we hadn't had a Ninco circuit. This year, old friend and fellow club member David Nunn was determined to correct this, and, hopefully, show other club members the advantages of switching from Scalex 1/32nd to Ninco for your home circuit. Both Dave and myself have recently done this, finding Ninco track a vastly superior system to Scalextric, which, let's face it, hasn't changed in design since 1963 and is now seriously outdated.

### Advantages of Ninco track

Dave outlined these in "Racing and Reminiscing" (NSCC Journal, February 2000). For those that missed his article, or need a quick refresher, the advantages we've found are:-

- Wider track allowing modern cars more room to manoeuvre with less chance of accidental nerfing. By adding borders you can run cars from many manufacturers, including current 1/24th Carreras and difficult Scalextric vehicles - like the C64 Bentley and trucks with trailers - without dropping a wheel.

- The slot has a black plastic sleeve, giving a virtually seamless ride with no clicks, bumps or dips on straights. The sleeve is particularly kind to older guides, such as the Scalextric round-pin, allowing you to run sixties Scalextric cars

with more confidence as there's much less chance of deslotting.

- The Ninco track surface seems to give better traction to hard tyres, particularly useful for older sixties cars.

- The 14 volt DC power supply gives a slightly higher top end.

- Standard Ninco hand throttles have braking and are vastly superior to standard Scalextric throttles.

- Magnatraxion cars normally have slightly less downforce on Ninco track, allowing a tad more tail slide and requiring more skill.

### Disadvantages

The only ones I've come across so far are:-

- A very slight narrowing of the black plastic inner sleeve at track junctions and halfway through a standard straight. If running Airfix cars or American cars with thick guides, you have to file the guide slightly more than for Scalextric track, but it's worth the effort.

- The 14 volt DC power needs to be used with care if running older, delicate engines, such as the Airfix cube or Scalextric Formula Junior. Keep your revs to a sensible limit to avoid burning out a delicate engine.

- Scalextric tinplate cars don't appear to work on Ninco track. The gimbal can't pick up any current due to the black plastic sleeve in the slot.

By the time I arrived at Bishop's Stortford, Dave had just finished building the circuit. Old friend and fellow club member Martyn Hey helped me add the finishing touches - barriers around the outside of all the borders - and we were in business. Dave's design - on an area roughly 30ft by 12ft - deliberately packed in as much



track as possible, but still allowed a very long back straight. He achieved this magnificently with a basic oval shape on one side followed by a series of sweeping curves leading back to the long back straight.

The circuit was quite a test, each bend requiring thought and practice to achieve consistency before one quick squirt down the back straight. I got to know the circuit quite well as prior to the swapmeet opening I had a good 20 minutes of practice, running old Airfix cars, Scalextric rarities and other vehicles. The joy of drifting my big Airfix Ford Zodiac and Lotus Cortina around this large circuit was definitely one of the high points of the year. These cars are quite magnificent and majestic when set up well - it was just like being at the Goodwood sixties revival meeting a couple of years ago! Then I moved on to an Airfix Maserati 250, and it was even better! Big drifts, but a surprising amount of power once I managed to collect the thing together in a straight line. Terrific! I then tried out a Scalextric Matra Jet, and adored the idiosyncratic handling and the purr of the old Race Tuned motor before testing a Scalextric Sunbeam Tiger that I've been restoring for some time. This was my first major test of the car and it boded well, a joy to handle and looking the utter business. My Revell Corvette Stingray and Aston Martin were next up. Both required a lot of sanding of tyres, but once trued and with more bite, they fair zipped along, and were great against each other. My Ninco modifieds - the Mercedes and Alfa tourers and McLaren GT1 - were rather tail happy, probably because they're set up for a wooden track, but were fun nonetheless.

All too soon the swapmeet opened and my proper task began. Dave had asked me to keep an eye on the circuit, and suggested that I should run some displays during the day, showing the wide range of vehicles that perform well on Ninco track. Predictably the circuit proved a magnet for members' children, and it was sometimes difficult to get track time for these displays, but it was certainly great fun. I ran displays for a few minutes every half-hour, and the line-up included the aforementioned Airfix

saloons, Fly classics (Porsche 908 Flunder and Lola T70 - utterly superb and lightning quick), Carrera 1/24ths (a bit lumbering for me, but intriguing nonetheless) and towards the end of the day the fastest cars that Dave and I have ever used on Ninco track - the SCX Arrows F1 and Minardi F1. These things are amazing, straight out of the box. With their strong magnets, double braids and 2cm guide they stay glued to the Ninco track, and achieve extraordinary speeds. They verge a tad on Micro Scalex in handling, but boy are they fun! Dave and I had one particularly fine ten-lap race during the swapmeet. Those that saw this race or used the SCX F1s themselves on the track had open mouths. All in all a great day, a confirmation of Ninco track's current superiority, and a lot of very happy kids (me included).

Many thanks to David Nunn for setting up a terrific circuit and to Brian Walters for putting on yet another cracking swapmeet. See you next year, maybe with a four-lane Ninco track.



“If you are the kind of person who likes to crop wheel wells, do ‘lighter fluid’ fire burnouts, or run your H.O. slot cars without oil for 3 squealing hours just to see an awesome ‘smoke show’, you are our kind of people....”

Welcome to the H.O.M.T.P.A. home page. I am referring of course to the HO Monster truck/pullers association. Tractor pulling involves strapping as many big American V8s to your tractor as possible, feeding it full of rocket fuel, then dragging a ‘plough’ as far as possible and accelerating in a time which would put most hot hatches to shame. Now divide everything by about 64 and you have a pretty interesting new form of slot car racing.

Complete with a mini-plough, mini tractors and monster trucks drag race down a straight piece of track. First one home or the contender pulling the furthest wins. The monster trucks are slightly different – DIY style off road

track is created by gluing small pebbles to regular track. Small plastic cars can be glued in front of the trucks, starting off with something sporty parked the right way round to help the truck up off the track. The site includes everything you could possibly wish to know about this ‘sport’ including a gallery, how to build... type instructions, rules and regulations, exhibitions and race reports.

To have a chuckle at those crazy Americans, check out:-

**<http://home.rochester.rr.com/homtpa/>**

Kids please do not try this at home – this sport is inherently dangerous and cooks motors at an alarming rate!

As usual, full details and links to the sites can be found at [www.slotsurfing.co.uk](http://www.slotsurfing.co.uk)

Merry Christmas - James

# A brief guide to car restoration

By Robert Learmouth of Westwood Models

**T**his article is intended to share some car restoration hints which I have picked up or developed over the years. It is based on a full strip down and rebuild but you should be able to skip some steps for more lightly used cars. Experiment first with any of the quoted cleaning compounds; neither the NSCC or myself can be held responsible for undesired effects!

## Strip down

Remove all running gear and loose body parts. Leave any body parts, which are secured with a heat sink (plastic weld). Take care unscrewing 60s saloons (e.g. DB4s, 250GTs) as you can damage the screw's countersink by gouging it if it is screwed particularly tight. Try squeezing the two shelf halves together lightly while unscrewing - this releases the pressure. Use a screwdriver of a suitable type and size. Keep screws in order - they are best going back later from the hole they came out. Some cars use mixed length screws and you will damage the shell if the wrong screw goes back in (e.g. to the nose cone area). Ease motors and axles out. Some underpans are vulnerable to breaking if forced, e.g. hard plastic 60s cars and more recent ones like the Porsche 962. If you are removing a broken fitting secured with a heat sink take care. Try breaking the heat sink away from the underside rather than pulling the fitting out from the top. Wipe off any excess oil or fluff before the next stage.

## Painted shells

I use a range of compounds. Model Strip (from UK) is brilliant stuff. It's not particularly dangerous (it's water based) yet shifts most paint, the only thing it can't seem to shift is metallic paint which appears to etch itself into the plastic. Also it will need 2 or 3 applications in and around detail like bonnet louvres. Put the parts in an airtight bag and leave over night. Don't

leave any longer (the plastic dulls when left for too long, certainly after 2 or 3 weeks if you forget). Don't get the stuff on chrome although tampo printing appears to be more forgiving. Obstinate marks and light scuffs come off with T-Cut (from UK, an automotive cutting/deoxidising cream).

Deeper scratches will require cutting paste. The cutting paste really is quite aggressive so be careful not to remove lighter parts of the moulding like panel lines. Cutting paste does dull the plastic an application of T-Cut will bring it back up. Experiment carefully in this area, some shells does not like being cut and polished in this way. Typically these are the polythene plastic cars like Formula Juniors and the early 70s cars like the Mirage and P4 - you will dull the plastic irretrievably. It's the 60s hard plastic shells which respond best.

## Clean up the body parts

Soak all the body parts in lukewarm soapy water (use washing up not dishwasher liquid/powder) for about 20 minutes. Do not soak cars with transfers or stickers that you wish to leave in place. Scrub with a soft toothbrush loaded with non-scented hand-soap. For very dirty or mouldy cars, an electric toothbrush with a small, rotary head is superb. Cleaning should not harm the tampo or plastic, although be careful not to break off fittings.

Cars with transfers and stickers can be briefly immersed and cleaned but rinse them off and dry them ASAP. At the end rinse all the parts in cold water, shake the worst of the water off and dry as best as you can with a towel. I leave the parts overnight to dry off. Any final traces of dirt (and mould, particularly around fine mouldings) are often best cleaned out with a cocktail stick when the shell is dry. Don't reassemble a wet car; you'll make metal parts go rusty. Again, be a little careful, you may find a car with water-soluble paint but I never have.

## Clean up the running gear

Don't wash the running gear! I pull away all bits of fluff and clean with white spirit and cotton wool buds. Cotton wool buds are a marvellous tool to have. Be a little careful with the meths., it seems to take off gold wheel hub lacquer.

## Fix the shell

Repair broken motor mounts and the like with Araldite, avoiding the fast setting stuff, which seems to be a bit brittle. Super Glue also works well on most plastics. Glue repro resin fittings back into place with wood glue though. The resin can react with certain glues and stuff like UHU will 'melt' the plastic shell. Wood glue can also be broken away quite easily later if you find an original part. Bent body parts can sometimes be coaxed back by heating slightly with a hair dryer and easing back into place. Even some body warps will respond too.

## Fix the running gear

One of the things that turn me off about buying a car is seeing it fixed up with the wrong gauge/colour motor wires and messy soldered joints. I replace damaged/shortened motor wires with new lengths in the same colour and gauge. I also remake any soldered joints that are messy looking. Using a soldering iron is an acquired skill but practice makes perfect. The trick is getting the solder to the right temperature, keeping the heat on for just the right time and holding the wire very steady until it cools. I find the best way of desoldering is to heat the joint and tap the part lightly (if large enough, e.g. a motor) on the work surface - it knocks the solder off. Smaller parts will need the solder scraping away with a small, flat-blade screwdriver

## Reassembling

Try to get everything back as it came off. For example, Johnson 111 motors always go back with the white wire closer to the track. Get the axle round the right way on open pan cars. I always fit new braids. Other common candidates for replacement are guide eyelets and motor

pinions. If a car doesn't run and you suspect it is not the motor it could well be that the wire has been sliced by the crimp on the guide eyelet. Don't force resin bumpers etc. in, they sometimes need filing with an emery nail board.

Consider swapping the front and rear tyres where they are the same. Often the front tyres remain useable, as they carry no load while the rear tyres are worn out and can go on the front where they won't cause any harm. Loose hubs can be fixed by 'wriggling' the end of the axle in a pair of pliers. Test the motor; the open RX motors need gentle coaxing back (they may not have run for 35 years). Lubricate with Electrolube and gradually increase the throttle. Once up to speed, start the motor from rest a number of times. If it fails on any attempt but gets going with a nudge a segment is faulty. Finally a quick shine with furniture polish (Mr Sheen) brings a car up just great.

**This article is also available online at:-  
[www.westwoodmodels.com](http://www.westwoodmodels.com)**

# Dundee Slot Car Club

## Model Railway Exhibition report from Roy Butchart

We were again asked to take part in this exhibition following our successful debut last year. It is one of the largest in Scotland and is held in the Caird Concert hall in Dundee.

David Bowie and Status Quo have appeared there so it was a great privilege to set up our track on the actual stage; it was quite a job to make use of all the space available as it is over 4mtrs square. We used four tables in a 'U' shape which gave a main straight 2.5mtrs long. Overall track length was in excess of 15mtrs and included chicanes, a pit stop plus the usual selection of bends.

Club member, Andy, brought along some green felt to provide the grassy infield and the layout was finished off with a good selection of buildings, grandstands and bridges. The whole thing looked great and I was sure that we would win at least one award.

We decided to run just one car at a time as it would be easier to marshal and, after some

deliberation, settled on the Scalextric Porsche 956. Although these are not from the latest generation of slot cars they hold the track well and are more sturdy than most. This was just as well as, come 10am on Saturday, they were soon flying through the air with the greatest of ease.

The two days were a great success; we had one hundred and forty visitors on Saturday alone and, at five laps each, completed seven hundred laps in one day. Sunday was even better with two hundred and five contestants completing over a thousand laps; a lot of people showed interest in our club and we have hopefully gained some new members. A young lad called Martin from Glenrothes Model Railway Club actually spent more time with us than on his own stand and put up the best Sunday time of 8.2 seconds.

Incidentally I noticed a pit stop for sale on the North East Models stand; if anybody needs one they can be contacted on 01224 649644 or e-mail [trains@nemodels.force9.co.uk](mailto:trains@nemodels.force9.co.uk)



## BITS AND PIECES

### Hornby chairman steps down

Executive chairman Peter Newey is stepping down this month after seven years at Hornby, the model trains and Scalextric group.

Newey saved the company from bankruptcy but at the cost of moving the manufacture of its famous trains and cars to China. Hornby's UK workforce shrank from 820 to 150 over the period.

Yesterday he announced half-year profits up from £253,000 to £524,000 and said "The major structural changes at Hornby are complete and having turned the company round it is time to move on. The prospects for the rest of the year are encouraging"

He confirmed that Hornby shareholders are set to receive a return of surplus funds early

in 2001. Hornby shares rose 26p to 156p.

Deputy chairman Neil Johnson is to become Hornby's non-executive chairman.

*Daily Express business news 18/11/2000*

### World's most expensive slot car?

I guess there is some merit in collecting vintage slot cars after all. A Cox Chaparral 2E recently sold for US \$12,600 on eBay.

*Russell Sheldon*

### Playtime in Batley

The Yorkshire Mill Village, a big new shopping complex in Batley, has opened a men's crèche in its menswear department. It contains Scalextric and Hornby train layouts plus widescreen T.V. and mens comics - no bar sadly!

*Daily Telegraph 4/11/2000*