

NSCC

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NSCC MEMBERS DISCOVERED IN RAMSGATE ROMP

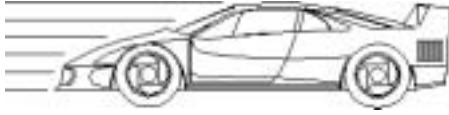
So another Hornby/NSCC weekend has passed and a good time was had by one and all. On behalf of everyone present I would like to say thankyou to Simon Kohler and his staff for making it such a memorable event. Thanks also to Adrian Norman and his team for their superb organisation; to Phil Egart for his impossible quiz; to the staff at the Jarvis Marina Hotel for their good humoured service while surrounded by a bunch of Scalextric fanatics and, finally, to the six people who suffered the full rigours of the Spanish Inquisition and were forced to write their accounts for the Journal.

Elsewhere, this month, Phil Egart has another delve onto the NSCC archives and member number 1/81, David Wells, is the subject of Backtrack. Richard Davies provides an interesting twist to the old theme of 'my favourite slotcars' and there are the usual quota of reviews to help you decide where to spend your cash. Unfortunately nobody has taken up my offer to publicise their club in the 'Focus' spot but a couple of members have expressed an interest in doing a website feature for me. Hopefully the fruits of their labours will appear next month.

I tried to persuade a number of people to write for the Journal while I was at Ramsgate and the most common responses were "My spelling is atrocious" or "I don't know what to write about." My answer to the first comment is that it doesn't matter as it is the editor's job to sort it out. The second one usually came from people who had held the dinner table spellbound with their collecting and racing tales so all they need to do is put it down on paper. I know that every single editor of this publication has said it before but it is really up to you to fill the pages. If you need any guidance about what to write then please feel free to phone me and talk about it.

In conclusion, on a different subject entirely, if anybody is thinking about going to the Coys Festival at Silverstone in July don't forget that NSCC membership entitles you to a £5 reduction on a three day pass for the event.

Till next month
Brian



BACKTRACK

NO. 2 DAVID WELLS

Perhaps this should have been the first in this series since David is the owner of membership number 1/81! This actually dates from February 1985 when Mike Pack, then secretary/editor, decided to carry out a renumbering exercise. Prior to this time there was a very strange numbering system which nobody understood. David was part of the club at the very beginning and remains an active collector to this day, although he no longer collects every single car as he once did. I was recently in touch with him in order to scrounge some early copies of the Newsletter and he kindly sent me this account of those pioneering times:-

“Just before Christmas 1977 when my son was nearly four I dug out my old Scalextric for some fun. With it was a number 11 catalogue. I showed it to him and naively asked him which models he would like. He chose the B1 and B2 motorbikes.

I advertised in the local papers and by Christmas had two Typhoons for him, but alas no Hurricane. I now had several old service lists and began progressively phoning each dealer for this item. At the time I had access to a complete set of telephone directories and yellow pages so I could check their numbers and also find a few more. Fortunately, for what was to come, I made notes on what each shop had to offer. Eventually the owner of a model shop in Nottingham said he had seen two different motorbikes in a second-hand shop whilst passing through Shaftsbury one afternoon.

With the aid of the yellow pages and a few calls I soon located the shop in Shaftsbury and yes they still had the Hurricane and Typhoon and thirty other assorted cars and loads of track and accessories. You have probably guessed they would not sell the motorbikes alone and I really wanted the Hurricane by now. A deal was negotiated and off I set.

I thought I would off-load all the excess on collectors! Thus getting the bikes for free. No such chance. I scoured the magazines and Exchange & Mart (a good source in those days) for adverts but no-one was interested in the spare cars I had although I was offered several wants lists. If I did have anything swaps were suggested and I got very little money back.

I had several catalogues and started looking out for cars I liked, I was hooked, the

Crusade started. I met Roger Gillham and Martin O’ Reilly at the London Scalextric Club at the Odeon Ballroom, Wood Green a couple of times to do some deals and enjoyed some novice racing into the bargain.

Then in 1979 there was an advert in the Exchange & Mart for like minded Scalextric collectors to form a Club. I wonder if anyone has a copy of the advert? The Club was started by Dale Tremble and Luigi Ciaperelli. Initially many of the members had affiliations to the London Scalextric Club which was run by Roy Charlesworth. There must have been some animosity between him and Dale or Luigi as to my knowledge he has never been a member of the NSCC. I did meet him however at an open Scalextric race meeting I organised at the Vauxhall slot racing club in Luton.

The first swopmeet was held in Luigi’s surgery waiting room in Romford. Luigi was, is? a dentist. Things are difficult to recall after twenty odd years. There was a short report in a later newsletter but nothing to compare with Phil’s comprehensive reports.

I remember Shaun Claremont turning up in a Rolls Royce. Paul Whitehead in a Mark 2 Jaguar and Doug Kendall on a motorbike. In the auction an orange Mirage went for around £20 to Paul Whitehead. Others I recall were Geoff Spencer, John Fingland and Roger Gillham.

It is curious that the majority of Scalextric is more readily available today, all be it at a price, than in the early days. At that time it had no commercial value whatsoever and the two main answers you received were that it either went in the dustbin or was sent to the jumble sale.”



CATALOGUES

Hornby have announced that they are looking at the possibility of a second edition catalogue for 2000. This would seem a sound idea in light of the fact that some important releases are about to hit during the last half of the year. At the NSCC/Hornby weekend on 6/7th May, Hornby presented news of the Cadillac Le Mans Prototype and two of the Focus liveries. We also know that the Williams BMW livery will be with us soon. A new catalogue to promote these and other new products would seem sensible.

NASCAR

News has reached me from the USA that there was a special production run of 150 Chevrolets dressed up to look like Pontiacs and bearing the livery of 'BRYAN', which I understand is a food chain in the USA. This was back in 1998, as far as I can tell. The Hornby NASCARS of that year were the blacked-out window versions with the Calibra under-pan. The 'BRYAN' car was actually a Chevrolet body with Pontiac markings. The livery is principally red and black with the racing number 30 and the word 'BRYAN' on the bonnet and other minor logos. The cars were commissioned by BRYAN and were used as promotional sets. Apparently, a standard set was opened, one of the two cars (Exide/Valvoline?) were removed and replaced with the 'Pontiac'.

LOOKING FORWARD

Unfortunately, there is little else that the factory staff can reveal at the moment. At the Hornby/NSCC weekend the Scalextric staff hinted at many improvements and new ideas. Let's hope many of the ideas prove fruitful. Some sounded particularly tasty.

HORNBY/NSCC WEEKEND INVITATION.

The invitation to members to attend this event was published in the journal earlier in the year. It indicated, somewhat ambiguously, that the first 36 applications would be accepted. As with the previous events, the first 36 names drawn from the hat would be the lucky ones. So, my apologies to those members who immediately wrote out their application and high-tailed it down to the post office hoping that theirs would be one of the first 36 to hit my door-mat. Your applications arrived, were put in the hat and languished there until the closing date in April.

As with similar competitions, the committee recognises that to use the 'first in the post' rule puts those members who receive their journal a day or so later than the majority, at an unfair disadvantage. This is also true for overseas members, of course.

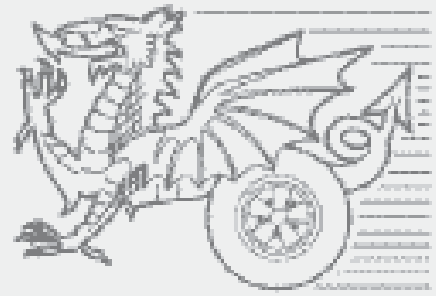
My full apology goes to those members whose expectations were incorrectly set by the ambiguous nature of my invitation.

C NUMBERS.

The Hornby/NSCC car for the special weekend event was a TVR in metallic purple. It does not have an official C Number, so, as it's based on the C2194, I have recorded it as C2194N.

TOP GUIDE

By Richard Davies



We've all got our favourite cars. As I will tell anybody who will stand still long enough to hear, I'm not attracted to the new organic style of cars. I've always liked sharp, straight lines, that really define a car's shape instead of making it look like something turned out of a jelly mould. More and more of the new cars are succumbing to this dread infliction, seeming to grow more like the bubble car with every incarnation and only a few have resisted the apparently universal trend towards cars with the style and panache of a cabbage.

A few of the designers have seemed to recognise that all the new cars designs are homogenising and becoming more indistinguishable with every addition to the global line up, but their efforts to set their cars apart have failed to take account of the simple fact that looking different to the rest does not necessarily mean that they are actually more attractive. Case in point: the Ford Focus does look different to it's competitors but in my humble opinion the stretched eye look the enormous triangular headlights gives it makes it look somewhere in between ugly and ludicrous. Anyway (rant over) I decided it would be interesting to set up a few categories and pick the cars that I would have if only I could afford them, and the corresponding slot cars. So here is my top 5:-

VINTAGE

A 1928 Bentley Le Mans 4.5 litre. If money was no object then this is the car I'd use every day. I just love the style and grandeur of the sweeping wings and elegant coach work. They can be made to go quite well too: a specially built 8 litre vintage Bentley was recorded at 172 mph. However, the sheer exuberance of owning such

a beautiful car would be more than enough for me. The day I have enough money to buy Microsoft and fire Bill Gates I'd spend it on one of these instead.

I love the Scalextric model for the same reasons as above: the sheer beauty of the design makes it impossible not to like this car, and it's fun to get away from the madcap pace of the new magnetised models.

RALLY

Without doubt, the Lancia Stratos. I just love the angular lines of this car and if I was to own one then I would have to have it resprayed in the lovely Italia colour scheme that compliments its razor sharp lines so well. It would be a little impractical to try and fit my 6ft. frame into the driver's seat as standard, but if the floorpan was lowered then I could happily drive around in one of these all day. The outlines of the Scalextric Stratos are a little indistinct, but the entire car still looks like it's straining to move when sitting on a shelf. A nice car that goes well.

RACING

The D-type Jaguar. Once while being driven along a small town road I saw a D-type going the other way, a gorgeous deep blue, almost black colour and from that moment on I have loved the car. It's sweeping lines call back the ghosts of a proud British racing heritage and you cannot help but gaze admiringly after it. I would drive 50 miles out of my way to get to the post office two streets away for the sheer joy of driving it if only I had one.

The Scalextric model of this one is really old, a classic in it's own right. We have to be honest, as the models get older they become progressively less detailed but there is a peculiar charm to it that prevents me from disliking it.

SPORTS

The Corvette Stingray. Once again my preference for sharp lines is manifesting itself but I cannot understand for the life of me why businessmen, when faced with enough money to buy a Mondeo or a classic Stingray, seem to unanimously vote for the former. At any rate, I love the ruler straight lines of the body and the pop up headlights. A silver Stingray in my garage would have me on the road 23 hours a day for the rest of my life.

Spanish Scalextric made a model of this car which is quite... interesting to look at with it's unbelievably massive engine protruding from it's boot, but a little overstated for my taste. If only FLY could be persuaded to make a model of the road car.

MODERN

The new Lotus Elise. I saw one of these for the first time while going past a Porsche dealership (heaven knows why it was in there) and I instantly adored the car. The Elise, with it's unusual concave headlights and lift out roof, seems to me to be both futuristic and classic at once, drawing on the past while moving boldly ahead with it's design. I would instantly choose the Elise out of a line up including a Porsche 911 GT3, a Ferrari F50 and a McLaren F1 because, unlike the others, it is a real car that you could enjoy.

There are no models of an Elise yet. I can only hope that someone is reading this and looking for ideas for a new model...

This strikes me as an excellent expansion of the 'favourite slot car' theme. Would anybody else like to contribute an article on their own top five, both full size and model?

VINTAGE SLOT RACERS

BY JEFF DAVIES

Building the Walkden Fisher replica Mercedes 300SLRs has made me realise that often in slot car racing it isn't the fastest cars that are the most fun to build or race. I have noticed this applies to several other aspects of life. Being in the privileged position of being lent expensive cars I have noticed that the more complicated and technically advanced the car is the less satisfying it is to drive.

In the early days of my motoring career my first sports car was a 1100cc MG Midget with a fibreglass bonnet styled to resemble the front of an E-type Jag. This car was not fast, it had Morris 1000 half shafts and one good hard standing start was enough to snap them. The whole car cost me less than I've paid for a tyre for one of my later cars but it was exciting and thrilling to drive. I drove all over the country in it and enjoyed every single mile. The same applied to a succession of Mini Coopers, Lotus Cortinas and Elans. All of these cars were incredibly involving to drive. None of them had power steering, or any of the other hundred or so mundane luxuries on today's cars.

In the same way, the one plane above all others I wish to fly is a WWII Spitfire, for the same reason as the cars. You were directly connected to the controls of the aeroplane. Bringing this back to slot cars, I love driving the early, narrow hard tyred slot cars where you can get wheelspin down the straight and slide around every corner. The sheer speed may not be there but the spectacle and the pleasure of driving is all the greater for the lack of it. I believe it's time that we went back to at least one class where we race models of 1930s and 40s Grandprix cars: ERAs, Auto Unions, Mercedes, etc with harder compound narrow tyres.

I really enjoy racing the FLY GT1s around Aberstone track, which I will be doing this evening. But even these with 20 odd volts flowing through them are so fast that by the time somebody has had an accident and left their car on your lane, you've hit it.

The response to the Brooklands event has been absolutely amazing: just about everybody I've spoken to has wanted to be involved. It is going to be televised and the car magazines are coming. A lot of the early NSCC members are also coming. I even mentioned it to my solicitor when I met him socially and he wants to come! I would like to thank Don Seigel and Russell Sheldon for their ongoing help in this project.





Phil Egart wades through the NSCC archives for June 1990

A hint of things to come in the Editor's column this month ten years ago as Norman Wheatley confessed to "Having less enthusiasm for the hobby than I did". Norman suggested that this might be down to his "Having just about everything I think I want". In these times of more new product than you can shake a stick at it is easy to forget that ten years ago you could have counted all the year's new models (including reliveries) without having to take your socks off! Within a year or so Norman had stood down from the NSCC committee and was selling his collection.

Hot news of the month was the imminent arrival of the C-462 McLaren MP/4. According to the factory mole the UK tampo printed number twelve car pictured on the cover of the years UK catalogue was due to hit the shops shortly and "Could be out this month". Whilst we now know that the car never did make it to the shops, this is a clear indicator of how late projects can get cancelled. Indeed on rare occasions cars do reappear at a later date. A good example of this is the BP Ford Escort Cosworth, which was announced and even shown in mock up form for a number of years before finally being released in 1998. The soon to be introduced Ninco Go-Karts have been around in prototype form for at least 4 years. Maybe there is still hope for the Stirling Moss Mercedes 300 SLR that they suggested would be issued in their 'Classics' series around the same time.

The 1990 Scalextric Grand Prix had been held at the Wood Green club on the 29th April and a brief review appeared in the June 1990

newsletter. The event had 80 drivers entered and therefore there had been 80 15-lap heats. Those 80 drivers represented 14 clubs including entries from France and Belgium, but by far the biggest entry was from Wood Green who fielded 27 drivers! With an entry of that size and home track advantage it is not surprising that they dominated the competition, taking five out of the six slots in both the 'A' and 'B' finals. In descending order top three in the 'A' final were Danny Hart, Pat Shuker and Paul Harwood and in the 'B' final Jamie Pleasance, Steve Nicholls and Greg Harwood. The highlight of the review seemed to be an assessment of the culinary delights consumed which included 9lbs of bacon, 7lbs of sausages and 35 gallons of tea and coffee. Maybe this is a new set of statistics we should use to judge the success of other events!

New club members announced in the June 1990 newsletter included Eduardo Casas-Alvero (currently Chairman of the Spanish 'Mini Classics' club) and Brian Walters (currently Brian Walters!). Other NSCC members 'mentioned in despatches' were included in a comprehensive list of articles that had been published and their contributors. These were listed from January 1982 (the re-launch of the NSCC after a faltering start) up to the then current June 1990 issue. There had been contributions from some 42 club members including some still familiar names such as Steve Carter, Tony Frewin, Mike Pack, Alan Slade and Bill Smilyk (Still collecting. Anyone got a white C-66 for him!).

The Australian Thunderdome Pontiacs finally arrived and were available as imported unboxed set cars from 'Model Motors' at £30 per pair. It would be another year or two before Hornby boxed up the remaining stock and offered them for sale in the UK. In these days of dealers frequently travelling to overseas events and particularly with the impact of the Internet, it is easy to forget how difficult it was to obtain some overseas issues in the past.

In the small adverts your 'Scalextric Dollar' could have bought you a pair of VG

boxed VIP Grand Prix cars for £25 (Lotus and Ferrari), or a Sunbeam Tiger with repro screen and bumpers for £80 (Not such a shrewd investment!). There appeared to be very little around for sale at that time and the vast majority of the ads were in fact want ads (Yes you can still place want ads for free!). Among those advertising their Scalextric wants was Ferry Musters now Secretary of the Dutch club 'Scalextric Liefhebbers Nederland'. I wonder if he ever got his Aston Martin Marshal's car roof light!

SLOT CLASSIC FERRARI 335

BY RON STY

I first came across Slot Classics when I bought a Pegaso which was very nice and ran well, but when I saw the Ferrari I thought it would make a beautiful model.

The finish is just superb for a resin body, the kit comes complete with body, chassis, interior, axles, wheels and tyres. You only need a Ninco adapter motor guide and braid. Everything fits very well, the body is so good it needs nothing doing to it. The chassis fits well, just needing the exhausts gluing and pilot holes drilled for securing it to the body. Wheels and tyres are well made and are just pressed on to the axles.



Once painted, a very nice grill is fitted, petrol caps, rear lights and headlights are glued in. The windscreen and headlight covers are a bit tricky as they have to be cut out and glued on but it is not as hard as it looks.

The interior comes in one piece with a separate Tonneau cover, when detailed with paint you just have to fit steering wheel, dashboard and rear view mirror.

Wheel inserts are good with nice little knockoffs, a nice little touch is the small bonnet and boot hooks. When finished with decals it really is a lovely model, on the track it is not a very fast car but it is smooth and superb to drive.

I think it is a brilliant job by Slot Classics.

Members letters



Hi Brian

Very many thanks for the superb coverage you gave to the 1/32nd scale proxy races. You may wish to know about the latest developments in this regard. Well, things couldn't get much better for 1/32nd scale enthusiasts. As you know, during February last year, resulting from discussions on the Slots DL, Bob Ward and Paul Kassens (Editor and Head Janitor of the Old Weird Herald ezine), very kindly undertook to host a mail-in proxy race. This presented "basement racers" from around the world with the opportunity to compare cars and building skills, without having to leave home!

Following on the success of "Proxy I", a second event was held in October. "Proxy II" attracted entries from as far a field as the USA, Canada, Tasmania, the United Kingdom, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates. Both events were aimed primarily at enthusiasts who enjoyed scratch-building and racing scale model cars and were held on Bob Ward's Daytona West track in Seattle.

Given the considerable amount of work involved in organising and hosting these events, unfortunately Bob does not see his way clear to hold a "Proxy III" along the same lines as Proxy I and II. Instead, Fantasy World and Hobby in Tacoma will be hosting a proxy "Mail-in Mania" for enthusiasts of Scalextric, SCX, Ninco, Fly, etc. cars, which Bob will be helping to organise. The race will be held on FW's Scalextric track during August.

Potentially, this event stands to attract considerably more entries than either Proxy I or II, since it is relatively simple to sort out the manufacturer's inherent production line defects, replace the tyres with a pair of silicones, install a Slot.it V12 motor and have a competitive car. Not surprisingly, unlike Proxy I and II, merely tuning off-the-shelf RTR's does not appeal to everyone, especially those enthusiasts who enjoy designing and building chassis from scratch, and who get as much pleasure out of the modelling aspect of the hobby as they do racing their creations.

Fortunately for us scratch-builders, Philippe de Lespinay of Electric Dreams has stepped in and offered to host a race catering to our needs. The race will be held on the six lane track located at the Marconi Automotive Museum in Tustin, CA. in October, and all proceeds from the entry fees will be donated to the Marconi Foundation for Underprivileged Kids. Since Philippe is off racing his 1:1 scale ex-Jack Brabham Indianapolis Cooper in the Goodwood Festival of Speed, the rules will only be published upon his return in July. The event nevertheless promises to cater for most tastes, and will have at least four classes which will cover vintage Grand Prix and Indy cars, Grand National and NASCAR's and vintage and contemporary sports and GT cars.

So, whether you enjoy tinkering with RTR's or whether you prefer scratch-building your own creation, you now have the opportunity to compare your building and modelling skills with those of fellow enthusiasts from all around the world.

Kind regards
Russell Sheldon

Members letters

Dear Brian,

Just a note to say how much I enjoyed reading Tony Secchi's recent article re C1/C2 sportscars and in particular the coverage given to the Porsche 962. This is a model that I feel is largely overlooked by collectors but, as Tony said, some of the variants are extremely difficult to find in VG-M/B condition. From my perspective the rarest is the white Repsol set car of which I have only ever found one, luckily mint. I would give this a rarity factor of 3-4, using Roger Gillhams guide. The next rarest must be either a mint boxed Kenwood or the Omron, both of which must rate as a 3. Next in line must be the blue Repsol or the original Rothmans liveried version in a 'clean' white condition. I believe I have all the standard variants produced by Scalextric including different style tampon prints on the 'Racing' model, however I have seen some unusual one-offs and we really need a Phil Etagart guide to the '962' for completeness to start us searching for all the other 'odd' variants which there invariably are of this model.

These cars are not only highly collectable but are very effective racers. On the home set they sit low on the track, are very quick and there is nothing which breaks off! With two young boys to wean off the Playstation the Porsche 962 is a good starter and the more common versions are still fairly cheap and plentiful. Overall a very good looking car that performs well, just like the real version. Nice article Tony.

From a general collecting view, whilst I used to search out every variant/livery of the Scalextric brand as with the 962, I have now given up on this as space and budget no longer allow. As such, having counted about 14 different liveries of the Caterham/Lotus 7's, I will content myself with one of each and they won't be silver or gold!! Therefore, my collecting theme although still mainly centered on Scalextric allows for models produced by other manufacturers such as Fly which were never made by Scalextric. However, given the excellent paint schemes of the Fly range it is proving very difficult a). to choose which one and b). to keep to the one model rule!

It would be interesting to hear of how other collectors cope with the sheer variety and quality of slot cars now on offer and different trends/themes etc.

In closing I would just like to say how good the Journal is looking and my thanks to yourself and all of the regular columnists for the time and hard work put in.

Best regards
John Gavin

.....
Dear Brian

I hope you enjoyed the Scalextric weekend as much as I did. I thought it was great and the special TVR is superb.

Adrian did a great job and I thought this year's format was spot on for our hobby. I also want to thank Scalextric for all their support and the prizes which they provided. I thought Phil Etagart's quiz was really good - I just wish that I could have answered some of the questions! If you have not put a face to my name - I was the good looking one at your table during the evening meal.

Best wishes
Phil Pell

Yes Phil, I recall that you had the whole table laughing at tales of your obsessive period of collecting - how about sharing them with the rest of the members by writing an article?

Members letters

Dear Brian,

I was wondering if any of the more knowledgeable members of the club could shed some light on a couple of recent swapmeet finds as it is probably common knowledge to most of you.

First purchase was a body shell for the Russian Novo Lamborghini,- I would like to know does this use a later type Johnson motor with plastic axle carrier or what? Also, are wheels and tyres the same as English issues down to having Scalextric on the tyres? Finally which guide and drivers head (i.e. Full or open face helmet) does it use?

The man who sold me the Lamborghini also gave me the instructions envelope for a D31 set. I can find no record of this set. It seems to be identical track to the Javelin/Electra Sports 31 set including the special inner border but also includes a lap counter. It mentions the 9th Edition catalogue so it is contemporary with the sports 31 set. Also in the envelope though of course not necessarily original is the instructions for the C/77/78 etc Hong Kong type cars. Is this a set made for a chain store or similar? If anybody can shed some light on these queries could they give me a ring on 01494 527227 or e-mail me at chris_anne@compuserve.com .

Thanks
Chris Wright

Dear Brian

I read with interest the article by Jeff Davies concerning 'rail racers' and the forthcoming Brooklands event. I gave Jeff a call and expressed my interest in attending but explained that I had no idea of the concept of rail racing as it was before my time! He had already mentioned that people were being encouraged to build their own cars and bring them along to race so that as many people as possible could participate in what sounds like a truly nostalgic event.

With this in mind would it be possible for someone to provide some plans and maybe print them in the journal so that we could attempt to build one?

All the best
Richard Marks

The only plans in existence, as far as I am aware, are contained in some articles in Modelmaker and Rod And Custom magazines dating from 1957/58. I have copies of these, courtesy of Don Siegel and Phil Barry, but they have, so far, proved beyond my limited talents to reproduce for the journal. If anybody would like photocopies please send me an addressed A4 envelope with a 50p stamp and I will be happy to forward them. I would warn you, though, that these cars are quite complicated and you will need a fair degree of modelling experience to make them.

**GOING DUTCH!
A REVIEW OF THE SLN
SWOPMEET UTRECHT
16TH APRIL 2000**

BY PHIL ETGART

Amongst the highlights of my collecting year are the trips to the overseas swopmeets. These offer a change of scenery, a chance to find something different and an opportunity to meet up with old friends again. The S.L.N. (Scalextric Liebhebbers Nederland) events are amongst my favourites and the April 2000 event did not disappoint.

Anyone who attended expecting to find a sea of rare French produced Scalextric would have been a little disappointed as good 1960s items were in very short supply. Several interesting Scalextric cars did surface including a rarely seen medium head round pin Lister Jaguar in yellow. This was close to mint and in its original French box. Needless to say this item soon found a new home. On this occasion the car had a slightly longer than average ride home as it was acquired by a member of the A.S.R.C.C. (The Australian Scalextric Racing and Collecting Club) who visited the swopmeet whilst in Europe on business. His hoard of cars also included a lovely boxed Race-Tuned Auto Union and the seldom seen 'Casio Sponsors' version of the C-350 Casio F2 car.

One stall had a selection of fairly tasty Mexican cars. These were generally in well above average condition and included not only a number of exclusive Mexican colours (blue Mustang dragster, blue Corvette dragster, green Honda and an unusual ivory white Sigma), but also a couple of seriously difficult Mexican colours (A superb C-41 Ferrari 330GT in orange and a C-38 Cooper Climax in a colour that I knew of, but had not seen previously, once again orange. Is there a Mexican Tango conspiracy!?)

Airfix items were well represented. Those sold on the day included a near mint boxed Mercedes W125, a 'Clubman Special' BRM and a factory built 'Brabham' Viva. Alongside the Airfix items were a number of MRRC models from all eras. The later output was represented by mid 1980s issue limited edition Lotus

Cortinas in red and green, Minis in metallic sparkle blue and green and one of the less seldom seen clear Minis. Earlier MRRC output was represented by mint unbuilt first issue (Line drawing picture box) 4WD Mercedes W154s (two!) and a similar 4WD Indi Novi Ferguson.

In addition there were some interesting European items on offer which included virtually mint boxed Fleischmann and Marklin Porsche 911 Police cars, a brace of Stabo Mercedes 250SLs, a tan coupe and a blister packed Police car (Being blister packed it still had its aerial intact for once!). A variety of American slot cars were also available on the day and these included a delightful Strombecker Midget.

Rare Fly car items were well represented and those available at the swopmeet included an E11 Venturi, an early test shot Dodge Viper in plain white and a mint boxed Dodge Viper Pace Car, all of which soon changed hands. Most liveries of the Lola T-70 were available including the immediately hard to obtain 'Steve McQueen Collection' car (although it has to be said that this car was only around in fairly small numbers). Also seen were a small quantity of the A1 Viper and the UK limited edition maroon Viper.

Continuing with newer product the swopmeet provided the opportunity to obtain the 1999 and 2000 Range presentation cars (dark red XJ220 and dark blue Porsche GT1) and the still relatively hard to find 'Team TTE' silver Toyota Corolla. Surprisingly two pairs of silver and gold 'Scalex Racer' limited edition Caterhams remained unsold, as did a Belgian '10th Anniversary' yellow TVR. Brand new releases seen at the event were fairly limited, but there was a lone pair of the 'Senna Collection' Subaru Impreza's, which until recently were believed to have been cancelled.

As ever the biggest battle was getting everything packed safely and back into the car (Not easy with three stallholders in one vehicle!). After an interesting journey back that included a delay due to lorries on fire on the quay at Dover we concluded that, as ever, the SLN events are a fun way to spend a weekend.

HOME CIRCUIT CRAIGMOUNT PARK

BY ROY BUTCHART

Welcome to Craigmount Park, this is a new track set in the idyllic surroundings of typical Scottish countryside on the banks of the river Tay surrounded by the Sidlaw hills. This beautiful park has to be seen to be believed, driving around is like a dream come true. Care must be taken as rabbits play happily at the side of the road, deer graze without a care and the golden eagle flies overhead.

Oh well back to reality. On Hogmanay I closed down one of my shops and stripped out all the fittings. There was a lot of wood so I decided to floor my attic and build a track. There was still some wood left over, so, using the old counter I built a table to put the track on. Initially it was going to have pit stops, lots of different chicanes, crossovers, fly overs and a humpback bridge. But if I were to use all these I would need two attics. With the narrowness of the table standard bends are out of the question so I had to use C152, C153 and C156. The C152s are used for two 180 degree corners at each end of the side tables and also on the flyover. The C 153s make up the back bends, 90 degrees each, with two C156s making up the rest.

Standard and half straights, lap counters and a Goodwood chicane make up the rest of the track. As you can imagine it is very tight but I think that I have managed to balance this out with the fly over and the long bends.

Next step is to call out the landscapers. This is quite difficult as this is an afterthought. but with some model railway grass, some sawdust and a tin of spray glue the job was complete. The ramps to the flyover are cut to size with chip board and covered with slate grey paper making it look like a plastered wall. Most good tracks are sited on the edge of a lake unfortunately through lack of space I couldn't manage one but I have a small ramp which at an inch high is ideal to use a humpback bridge and with a little drop of paint we have a burn.

Some of the grass particles were mixed in with the paint and after they dry they go black and look like little pebbles at the bottom of the burn.

Now lets see how it runs: lining up at the lap counter we wait for the overhead gantry to light up. The red lights come on and away we go and into the left hand 180 degree bend; out of this and into the Goodwood chicane; then its a long left hand bend and over the humpback bridge and into a C152 left hand bend; under the flyover, a right turn and small straight; another left, down the straight and into a right hand 180 degree corner; back up the straight and a long right hander, up the ramp and over the flyover; down the ramp, a right C156, down the home straight and back to the start.

Fastest lap was set with a Ninco Jordan F1 at 6.4 seconds. A Carrera Porsche 911 GT1 managed 6.5 as did a Scalextric Exide 99 NASCAR. All in all a great drive. Anybody wanting to try it just ring me on 01382 622012 or 462375.

SCOTTISH OPEN 29TH APRIL

Due to organisational problems this event never really got off the ground but as the prizes and hotel were already arranged we decided to go ahead and run a sort of Scottish Closed Championship for local members.

Instead of the planned MDF circuit we used Alan Slade's Knockhill track and ran BMW M3s as the competition cars. Attendance was about 20 so we divided the competitors into two leagues with the winner of each fighting it out for the overall prize.

As the cars were non-magnet they proved quite difficult to drive on this challenging circuit which none of us had tried before.

The day was dominated by the Ritchie clan with Christopher receiving a Stewart Ford SF02 for 1st place and Niell coming in 2nd. Andy Flavel set the the fastest lap time of 5.77 seconds for which he won an Audi A4 Protec. Everyone enjoyed themselves and we are looking forward to the next event later in the year.

HORNBY/NSCC WEEKEND

MAY 6TH/7TH - RAMSGATE

This was the first of these events which I have attended. If I had known how much fun they were I would have applied long ago! As you will discover from the following reports the main event was a team NASCAR race. As a slot racer I make a very good editor so Sean Fothersgill wisely kept my own contribution to one stint on Sunday morning during which I managed to lose 3 laps to the opposition! However racing's loss was the Journal's gain as I spent the whole weekend badgering people to write for me and the next few pages are the result. There is a report from each team captain, reflecting on their various fortunes, followed by the more general views of Adrian Leggett and his wife, Liz.

MOBIL ONE – A WELL OILED TEAM

CAPTAIN GRAEME THOBURN

Myself, my son Jack, Noel and James Taylor arrived at the Jarvis Bay Hotel on the morning of the 6th May and I immediately sought out Adrian Norman. He was, together with Clive Pritchard and other Viking members plus Richard Winters, busy assembling the circuit for the weekend's racing. Despite the threat of blackmail (why does he really go to Holland?) he would not divulge the car we were going to race for the weekend. All he did say was that I was a 'team manager' and all would be revealed in about one hour.

I greeted this news with a good deal of trepidation! I returned at the appointed time and sat down with Richard Winter and the other team captains, Sean Fothersgill, Alan Green and Andy Moore. The format was explained – Nascars, 1000 laps on Saturday (250 per lane) and the same again on Sunday, 10 people per team, re-fuelling, driver changes, 2 cars and some spares. We were also told we could modify the cars with whatever tools and spares were provided.

The four team captains then took it in turns to pick a member for their team, based on a seeding system, without knowing whom they had picked. The Mobil One team departed hastily to the bar where it was quickly

established that we all wanted to do our best to win, which I believe every other team did! After slight modification to our cars we went back to ready ourselves to race.

I don't wish to say too much about the racing but we were fortunate enough to get away to a good start and develop a lead we were never to relinquish, despite extreme pressure from the other teams (Valvoline/Exide, McDonalds and John Deere).

From my point of view as a team manager I found it enjoyably stressful. Watching other teams tactics and adjusting ours to suit, ie: driver changes, refuelling, car changes and performance, can be quite tiring, because to be honest, I really wanted our team to win (I even skipped a couple of pints Saturday night!)

I was most ably assisted by the following:- Kate Crighton, Adrian Leggett, Chris Gregory, Steve Langford, Phil Pell, Noel Taylor, Greg Ayliffe, Stephen Dally and Nick Fothersgill (top man!) your help was invaluable.

Thanks to Adrian, Clive, Richard and the Viking club members for setting this all up and Simon Kohler, Mike Walters and Jamie Buchanan for the discussions, prizes and showing us a couple of excellent new models.

I think the weekend was another fantastic success and the racing format a brilliant idea... and if I was asked to be a team manager again I wouldn't hesitate to say yes.

Thanks again to everyone involved in this event, long may it continue.

TEAM EXIDE THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS BUT NO LEAD

CAPTAIN SEAN FOTHERSGILL

Even before I had chance to have a cup of tea and put my feet up for 5 minutes and reflect on the 6 hour, 325 mile drive south, I was immediately summoned by our chairman Richard Winter. He had been waiting for our arrival with news that I would be a team manager for the weekend's racing. In a way I was slightly relieved, knowing that after the two previous years' victories the chasing pack were all out to beat me this year, so as a team event the pressure was off – or so I thought.

First job as team manager was to pick team members, this was done by selecting competitors listed by racing experience, the only problem was their names weren't revealed until the draw had been completed.

After the formal welcome and introduction by Simon Kohler from Hornby, each team were issued with a set of rules, two cars, a spare rolling chassis and a set of tools. Apparently sales of Nascars have been so good Hornby were unable to provide our team with two identical cars so we had to race an Exide & Valvoline line-up.

Once all our team members had been rounded up (read dragged out of the bar) it was the team manager's job to allocate tasks to the various team members. From the outset I wanted all of our team to be involved with the racing as much as possible, so jobs were allocated. Trevor May was given the job as chief mechanic and worked wonders armed with a set of screwdrivers, a pair of pliers and a set of sharp teeth! Andy Carmichael and James Taylor were charged with refuelling, the remaining team members would all play their part with racing and marshalling duties.

The racing was to take place on the same track as last year's event except as in Nascar tradition we were to race in anti clockwise direction, Parma throttles had been

added and were a big part of the track's reliability, race management was by the excellent Slotmaster race program.

Nobody really knew how the race format would unfold as there were no practice sessions so the drivers started the first of four, 250 lap races that day wondering what was about to happen. Driver changes, car changes and fuel stops (more about those later) were all allowed, but not without serving a 10 second stop/go penalty. Our initial strategy was to do the first race using the Exide car, while Trevor set about modifying the Valvoline car. Meanwhile the Exide car was performing quite well and had pulled out a decent lead with Bob Bott driving well within his limits. At this stage everybody was a little unsure how to perform the fuel stops, as we understood it the car had to come to a halt past the start line and the refuelling would begin. On our first refuelling stop we thought the process was complete and Bob set off on his merry way, unfortunately for us and to the other teams' amusement only to come to a grinding halt half way around the circuit to be informed by race control we had run out of fuel. Apparently we hadn't performed the refuelling process properly and had paid the ultimate price.

Not a good start but it did give us the chance to work on our car and get it ready for the next race. We could only use the parts supplied at the start of the race so we used the magnet off the spare chassis and glued it inside the chassis behind the rear axle. The Nascars are a very well set up car but are quite heavy and lack grip. Ideally we would have liked a set of softer rear tyres and a stronger magnet. Amazingly as the races progressed it became apparent that the standard cars were outperforming the modified ones. The three remaining races that day were shared between all but two of our drivers. Our Editor kept disappearing for long periods each time it was his turn to race – I suspect the bar had more magnatraction than our Nascar.

Yes Sean - and who spent most of Saturday afternoon in the bar with me checking the football scores? Glad to know Burnley got promotion!

The first day's racing ended with our team in second place trailing Graeme Thoburn's Mobil One outfit by less than 300 points. As with real Nascar racing, points are awarded like confetti and it was pointed out over the evening dinner that the deficit could be hauled back especially as we had hatched ' a cunning plan '

The excellent evening meal was followed by the equally excellent quiz! But the star of the show was the appearance of two new Ford Focus Scalextric cars. The Works & Iridium liveries were two of the best paint jobs any Scalextric cars have seen. Surely an indication of one benefit from Hornby's production in China.

Sunday's races started well with our team intent on securing the additional 50 points awarded for each race's fastest lap. This was achieved quite easily as our Exide car was performing very well. Our fuel stop problems seemed to be cured and all was looking good. That was until Bob took the driving seat again and I snook off for my own pit stop. I reappeared

to cries of delight from our opposing teams as our car had come to a grinding halt – again after two unsuccessful attempts to re-fuel the tank had run dry and with it our chances of snatching victory, third place seemed more likely now as the McDonalds and John Deere cars were putting together some of their best results. At the end of the second day all four teams were quite close. Mobil One had secured a worthy victory while we had consolidated in second place.

The event had been great fun; the team format was well received and everybody got involved and played their part. The racing under the watchful eye of Adrian, Clive and members of the Viking Club had been run in a competitive but fun atmosphere.

Thanks must go to Hornby for, without their support and considerable outlay in prizes, cars and track layout etc. the event would never happen. Only next year can we have Nascars with soft tyres and stronger magnets?!

TEAM JOHN DEERE - A LEEPE IN THE DARK

CAPTAIN ANDY MOORE

The day started well, arriving in the morning sunshine. Then Richard Winter pulled me to one side saying he had a little job for me! I was to be a team captain to a team yet to be decided in a race yet to be announced. No possibility of planning any agenda then.

The teams were picked blind, the only guide being an approximate driver ranking drawn up by the organisers. The style of the race was then announced. A Scalextric NASCAR event over 2000 yes 2000 laps. Then bundled into my out-stretched arms were two boxed Nascars, a spare chassis and some extra tyres and guides and a very basic tool kit. The first 250 lap race will start in 15 minutes and NO TESTING.

We quickly started organising our strengths and weaknesses and Pete D. started

to prepare the first car for racing. A driver running order was drawn up and the first race was underway. The car was appalling with absolutely no traction at the rear at all and we quickly fell down the order. We tried the spare car with no difference and received a 10-second penalty for an illegal car change (doh). I could not believe how quickly at least one of the other team's cars were speeding past us (very strange?). Another surprise being that the car's fuel consumption was being monitored by the computer and regular fuel stops had to be made. We had decided that all 11 team members would race and made 10 second driver changes at regular intervals.

At the end of the first day's racing we still could not get any traction and were very much in last place. The other teams appeared to have vastly improved their cars, could they be cheating? Overnight the cars were taken back and inspected. Points were actually awarded for ingenuity! So that's the new name for "cheating"!

Overnight a new battle plan was drawn and fresh preparations for the cars were planned. I decided to field two smaller teams of drivers, driving in two races each. This way only four changes of driver were required (saving around 20 laps per race). We also discovered a method of fuel conservation to limit the amount of pit stops. Carole Fothersgill stole Sean's spares box, it came in very handy! Gary Clift, the ace F1 photographer, took control of the fuel calculations (we never ran out, ha-ha). Fantastic drives from Richard G. and Jack T.. Henk - the flying Dutchman, Mike B. Mike S. and Liz L. all put in sterling performances. Our gallant

chairman, Richard Winter disproved the rumours and raced with the big boys! It worked, with two firsts and a second we had a fantastic second day and pulled up to third overall narrowly missing out on second. If only we hadn't been so green (stupid) on day one!

We all seemed to enjoy ourselves as the team spirit surfaced and every one contributed. Thanks to you all. The random team selection worked well and it was good to show the collectors that these cars really can be removed from the box and abused. Admittedly I got "*nil point*" at the quiz for the third year running!

Now, lets see how this TVR runs!

TEAM MCDONALDS OH BURGER!

CAPTAIN ALAN GREEN

I set out on the road to Ramsgate on a sunny day looking forward to a relaxing day of racing. I could not have been more wrong!

On arrival Richard Winter greeted me to say I had been selected as a team manager. Had I brought enough headache tablets? What was this about? I had come to race as an individual. No this was to be a team event. Nascar. 2000 laps, 4 teams, Pit stops, fuel conservation and use of team resources. Strategy and tactics would win this one.

Our team was issued with 2 cars, spare underpan, tool kit and a few spares. Tasks were allocated and we quickly identified who were the mechanics, drivers and support personnel. However our overriding theme was to involve everyone in the racing. Ross Brawn (Brad Salmon) identified the need to plan driver changes with pit and fuel stops. He enlisted the help of Adrian Newey (Andy Sykes) and Louise Goodman (Liz Lambertson) to monitor these important events. Everything was going well, a second and third in the first two races. At this point our analysts identified that we were making too many driver changes. It was felt that longer sessions would help reduce time in the pits.

At the end of the first day and 1000 laps we were in third place. Our tyres were now worn out, no wonder we could not keep up in the last race. Don 'Ayrton' Stanley and Simon 'Shummi' Aplin got to work on preparing the car for the morning.

Day two and Ross had devised a corking driver strategy with only the need for two fuel stops. Off we went on the first race with renewed enthusiasm. Then the inevitable happened we cut it too fine for our fuel stop 80 laps completed and we run out of fuel. Eddie (Alan Green) Jordan then suggested that although we were out of the race, points could be awarded for initiative. Off went Tom Wheatcroft (Keith Bass) to McDonalds to acquire promotional material. He came back with balloons and marketing material. John Surtees (Tim James) and Ayrton then got to work on preparing the balloon car. Coffee was served in the McDonalds corner and in the next race we made a splash and dash pit stop cleaning the car, the drivers forehead and coffee for the driver, for which we gained these vital extra points. At the end of the 2000 laps we finished fourth, however we all enjoyed the different format.

All in all this has been yet another enjoyable Hornby weekend. The format allowed people to mix and get to know each other. One person I did meet was Brian our editor. I hope I don't get to meet him too often, as I had to write this report.

Eddie Jordan

THE NSCC/HORNBY WEEKEND - A COLLECTORS' VIEW.

BY ADRIAN AND LIZ LEGGETT

I was really looking forward to this weekend, because being a collector and living in a two bedroom flat, this is my yearly chance of racing the cars that I collect on an equal footing with others. The trouble was, this year, the race format had changed from a 'round robin' event to a 2000 lap team event.

I thought I'm not going to enjoy this one bit, particularly with competitive, committed racers. Previous years I had raced, I was able to see how bad I was against these people and considered myself lucky to finish second to one of them, let alone win a race against other collectors.

So when the teams of ten were revealed the pressure was on. After consoling my wife, Liz who had been placed in another squad, captain Graeme Thoburn, friends Greg and Kate, and the rest of our Mobil 1 teamsters retired to the bar to prepare our car and race strategy. Our mission? To WIN! Oh no! Now I'm responsible if our team loses! We couldn't even practice the track or the cars.

With two cars ready (not with any input from me, what do I know about race preparation?) we started racing and managed to win the first event using our best competitors. The second event started and we were running a reasonable second, catching the leading car. My turn came and fellow team member Noel coached me on how to tackle the track. My sweating hand gripped the controller tightly as I waited for the signal to leave the "pits".

GO! Oh my god! The Ford Taurus NASCAR had no grip! What had they done to this car? The back end was sliding way too far out on each corner. I was deslotting it every time my finger depressed the trigger. This was a nightmare! Noel tried to get me to keep it smooth, stay on the track. That's what I thought I was doing but it doesn't work. So I slowed my pace and gently eased the trigger down after each corner. At least now I was staying on the

track (sometimes) but it was so slow. I could feel Graeme's eyes burning into my back as we lost touch with the leading car and allowed the third car to close up.

"Driver change" he cried. At last that's over. I hated it. My worst performance ever! Sod this for a game of soldiers, where are the model shops? I checked with Graeme if I'd be needed again, knowing full well what the answer would be. Liz was enjoying the racing even less than me, so we decided, along with Greg and Kate to go shopping. When the going gets tough, the collectors go shopping!

The evening meal at last allowed us to relax a bit and reflect on the day's results. Amazingly (for me) Team Mobil 1 were leading and tomorrow's another day. I was convinced though, that this year's format was wrong. Us collectors, our wives/partners can't handle or don't want the pressure when it comes to racing. Before the only people we let down were ourselves. Now, it's the team.

The conversation turned to our collections, best buys, and future plans that included a first look at the new Scalextric Ford Focus and the fantastic prototype Cadillac LMP. Fellow collector Rob Smith had a tragically butchered James Bond Aston Martin as our table centre piece and he found no takers as he tried to sell it. We also had Phil Etagart's inevitable quiz, which at least restored a sense of pride for our table with a creditable, if not a winning, score. The drink flowed into the early hours and relaxed us some more.

As racing began on Sunday morning, Team Mobil 1 had a change of tactics, putting on our best racers first we built up a 20 lap lead. I was asked if I wanted another go? Because we had plenty of laps in hand I thought, why not? I won't be on for long. Now this time it was really different. Was this the same car as yesterday? It was so much easier to drive, powering through the bends, speeding down the straights. I was still coming off occasionally but I was enjoying myself now. By the time my stint was over the lead was down to 16 laps so I handed over to team mate Kate who raced through to the end to win the race.

I was happy now and watched the other races with interest and by the time all the points had been totalled, Team Mobil 1, had won! Now came the prize giving , speeches, team photos, raffle, and of course the unique car for the event- a lovely metallic purple TVR.

After initial reservations about the event format I think it was good to change it because it made people mix and socialise. You may notice that I did not enjoy the racing on Saturday but had more fun on Sunday. If I was honest, it probably had something to do with our team winning overall and me managing to win a couple of raffle prizes. The emphasis was more on racing and once us novices got the hang of the tail happy cars, I think most people enjoyed it.

I would like to thank all the members of Team Mobil 1 for making up in spades, my total lack of ability, especially Graeme Thoburn for his patience and motivation, Nick Fothersgill for his sheer speed and consistency, and Noel for his coaching. I would also like to thank the following people:

Simon Kohler, Jamie Buchanan and Mike Walters of Hornby for giving up their spare time so that we could ask them loads of awkward questions and for donating the prizes.

Andy Moore-the John Deere team captain-for making my wife feel part of their team.

Richard Winter and Clive Pritchard for constantly pushing everybody to buy raffle tickets. All the staff at the Jarvis Marina Hotel. And finally to Adrian Norman for organising the whole event, keeping score and making sure everyone enjoyed themselves.

Now, a few words from my wife:-

Well here I am back home drinking a cup of tea reflecting on the very pleasant weekend I've just spent in Ramsgate.

This was the third year that my husband Adrian had told me we had managed to get a place on the Scalextric/Hornby weekend. The event is beginning to take pride of place in my social diary (you guessed it - I don't get out much!!). So as you can imagine I was looking forward to packing my best togs, travelling the two hours on Friday night, to be wined and dined

and to catch up with some good friends and familiar faces.

I knew what to expect. Or did I? This year the introduction of teams worried me to my very soul as this meant if my performance was poor (as it usually is) I would be letting my team down. But I received good support from my fellow team mates on the John Deere team and they encouraged me to have a go and do my best. I just hope the final result of third place was not due to my driving alone. I played my part both on Saturday and Sunday then left it to the professionals.

I had a great weekend and for me the chance to catch up with people who have become great companions is the reason I accompany Adrian. It also gives me great pleasure to see him and his fellow NSCC members talking enthusiastically on a subject they love. I've already put the date in next years diary and fingers crossed we will get a place (OK Mr Norman?)

See you all I hope next year
much love Liz

KEEPING IT UNDER CONTROL

BY TONY SECCHI

There is such a variety of hand controllers to choose from today that I thought (probably presumptuously) that I would put together a few words on my limited experience and hope that this article will jog someone into covering the subject more comprehensively.

When I joined my local Club in the early sixties, I used a Scalextric A249 thumb operated controller but found out all too soon that the sloping angle on top of the plunger could damage your thumb if used too hard and too long. Most of the successful members were using a blue or red coloured, circular tube shaped thumb operated 300 ohm controller by MRRC and advised me to do the same.

I duly purchased said item and raced with it exclusively for the next five or six years until I gave up. I have recently purchased one from Carkits International for the princely sum of £12 and use it now and again for old times sake. Incidentally, in the now famous (or infamous) Channel 4 programme about slot car racing in the 'Movers and Shakers' series our own ex racing coordinator, Steve Carter was seen using one in the G.T. Championship final - albeit converted to brakes.

Carrying on with Scalextric controllers, the next one that I remember seeing was the A262 unit which had a 25 ohm resistor as standard and a 15 ohm one as 'raced tuned'. These were also thumb operated.

I lost out on the numbers during my absence from the hobby but vaguely remember seeing, the A265 (C265) 35 ohm pistol grip unit somewhere. But the one that I experienced next was the pistol grip C180/185 70 ohm Controller which came with the 'starter' set I bought on my return to racing. This was followed by the latest C8022/8025 'banana' shaped pistol or thumb operated controller with a shorter 60 ohm resistor.

These sufficed until my own two lane 55 foot long home track was up and operating when

their shortcomings became apparent. I could not get on with the small triggers and the high resistor ratings — cars were virtually coasting down the longest straights even with a set of power booster cables fitted. After consultation with my fellow competitors we decided to go back to our (misspent ?) youth and try thumb operated units. We chose to use current MRRC controllers (without brakes) and purchased a pair with 45 ohm resistors. I personally found this controller to be excellent in itself, but too bulky for my own personal use and my thumb used to ache after a race session, probably more due to old age than the unit, but, as I say, these controllers are good, come in 15:25:35: and 45 ohm versions so that you can match them with your track length.

As we know, the larger the layout, the lower the throttle resistance required. Of course, the opposite is true, which is why boxed sets which have small track lengths have high resistance controllers (typically 70 ohms). Looking for a controller more to my use I decided to revert to the pistol grip type and consulted my friend Sean Fothersgill of Pendle Slot Racing who recommended the Parma 'Economy' throttle raced by some of his own club members.

This Unit comes in 15:25:30:35:45 and 60 ohm versions but the resistors are changeable and can be purchased separately. I bought a couple of 45 Ohm Units and two 35 ohm resistors. On my Track the 45 ohm type suited the layout better — with the 35 ohm resistor installed it became very hairy to negotiate tight turns and although faster on the straights, the overall lap times suffered.

Parma are an American made controller which were marketed as long ago as the mid sixties. A chap called Jim Russell formed a slot car company called 'Russkit' in Los Angeles in 1964 and one of his staff designed the pistol grip hand unit (the first ever I think) which became the company's best selling success.

'Russkit' subsequently folded, the inventory was liquidated and the controller sold to the 'Aurora' company who later sold it to Parma which became, and I believe remains today, the largest American slot car firm.

One of my mates has a boxed Ninco set and I have raced on this occasionally when visiting him. Ninco track is really good, especially the rubber slot insert feature and the wider racing surface. The controllers (10302) are thumb operated 70 ohm units with brakes. They can be used with a power booster (10304) consisting of a 2000 uF capacitor. These units are generally only compatible with their own Ninco track which is powered by a 14.8v transformer. If the power is 12v or less the reaction of the cars is a little pedestrian. Additionally, take care if you use other sockets than those on the Ninco power base (10101). Other types of jack plugs give problems getting a good connection. Stick to Ninco parts and the whole package is great.

I know that lots of other companies make controllers - some with sets and some without. Carrera/Evolution for example, do a nice looking thumb operated unit, but I have no experience of them.

Neither do I have any experience of the SCX Pro hand throttle which is wired for brakes and has an easy change resistor therefore making it great if you use it for home and club circuits. It comes with a 40 ohm resistor fitted as standard, but you can get both 20 ohm and 60 ohm resistors.

Finally, of course, there are the really serious racers, who construct their own units using double barrelled resistors with external Aluminium heatsinks, both of which can be changed to suit the length and complexity of different circuit layouts. Well, good luck to you guys but that stuff is way above my head. Anyway, whatever controller you use it is only a means to a very pleasurable end - so keep on running and keep on racing.



AC COBRA REVIEW



BY THE EDITOR

As Pendle Slotracing's advert says "you wait for years for an AC Cobra and then three come along at once!" I had been distinctly underwhelmed by the Reprotoc and Ninco attempts so I was not expecting too much from the MRRC version. How wrong can you be? It is absolutely 'drop dead' gorgeous! I had a great deal of difficulty retrieving it from my other half who reckoned it was far too beautiful to race. Black and white photos really don't do it justice; the metallic blue finish with white stripes is truly stunning.



THE REAL CARS

These should really need no introduction; the marriage of a typical English sports car with a dirty great big American V8 engine produced a vehicle which petrol heads have lusted after ever since its introduction in the mid 60s. There are a wealth of websites to look at if you want more information - try the Cobra site at www.personal.psu.edu/users/f/c/fcl107/ where you can download the sound of one in full flight.

THE MODEL

Body: a new departure for MRRC as they have used the mould from the current Revell/Monogram snap together kit so it is much more modern than the Chaparral which was the subject of last month's review. It thus incorporates all the usual goodies of a full length driver and dashboard detail. The downside is, of course, that static kits are not designed with

racing in mind and usually have fragile bits which break at the first opportunity. This one is no exception and I feared that the side windscreen extensions, exhausts and rear bumpers would prove very fragile in use.

The build quality was again excellent, with the exception of the driver's head which had not been fitted properly and protruded above the windscreen.

Chassis: this is another new departure for MRRC being front engined. The arrangement is very similar to that of Fly with a coiled spring piece joining the two halves of the transmission together. A floating guide blade is also fitted to help it cope with bumpy home tracks. The wheels and tyres are identical to those used on the Chaparral.

On the track: the front engine layout gave totally different handling characteristics; the lack of weight at the rear caused a degree of oversteer even with the magnet fitted. For once, I was able to rescue such a car from some quite lurid angles of attack before it launched itself at the scenery. In fact I actually found it fun to drive, which was just as well, as it was all but unmanageable with the magnet removed.

Sadly my fears about the fragility of the smaller parts proved to be well founded as, within a short space of time it had lost an exhaust and half the rear bumper.

Conclusions: a truly beautiful model which is enjoyable to drive, even with the magnet fitted. For the collector this one is a must. I am certainly going to buy another to put in the display cabinet as the sample car is no longer in mint boxed condition and has joined the racing stable on a full time basis. I would suggest that the home racer buys one of the Monogram kits as a source of the spare parts which are surely going to be needed if the Cobra is to have more than a few demonstration laps.



FERRARI 250 GT/LM COUPE 1964 CLUBMAN SPECIAL REVIEW



BY DAVID NORTON

First impressions have, and always will, count and this latest release from the MRRC stable just smacks of professionalism! Let me explain further, the cardboard sales box is colourfully printed on all sides with front, side and rear elevations of the finished car being the obvious main pictures, together with one side listing the virtues of the pictured Clubman Special Racer chassis and another detailing the chassis components in breakdown form.

Inside, the standard MRRC plastic display box is found holding all the bits which are nicely separated into 6 clear bags containing the body, chassis, “nut & bolts” motor, decals, etc. Also enclosed is a catalogue and quite simply the most comprehensive instruction/assembly sheet I have ever seen, which opens out into a double sided A2 masterpiece! I cannot really do it justice in this article but you’ll get the idea when I say there are 23 separate steps and 84 (yes 84) photographs. I took the sheet down to my club to show some of the members and all were impressed with the work MRRC had done on it. The only real mistake I found on the whole assembly sheet was the wheel base distance is quoted as 77.8mm but in fact needs to be 74.5mm. That minor fault apart, only a complete idiot would fail to get this assembly right! At this point I must mention Step/Photograph 1 which is of a plate of biscuits & a glass of milk, with the instruction, “assemble in a relaxed and stress free atmosphere”. Cute, really cute!

My overall first impressions? This has been carefully thought about, and not just thrown together like some of the other manufacturers’ cars.

Now to the car itself:- The body kit is the old Monogram 60s shell and is moulded in a “traditional feel” plastic with very little flashing. The plated parts are bright and crisp and once painted up the body is a good representation of

the 250 GT/LM Coupe. The assembly is straight forward with one exception; the headlamp covers which have no locating lugs are very awkward and most difficult to securely glue in place without making a mess and this brought back memories of the original Monogram kits I built years ago. In addition the kit has no exhausts and as all cars have them it would have been nice if MRRC had added some.

The chassis is essentially a two piece aluminium unit (which slides to infinitely adjust) that is very similar to the old Revell product of the 60s However the MRRC unit is a more rigid construction, that helps prevent “race” flexing, and overall is of superior quality. As with the body, assembly is problem free, though occasionally fiddly due to the tiny screws involved, and after a pleasant 20 - 25 minutes following the instructions you’ll arrive at Step 19 with a completed basic chassis. I say basic because you now have a choice that relates to the type of track you intend to race on. For those intending to run on Scalextric track there is a strong (neodymium) magnet which can be located at the front or rear of the chassis depending on your driving technique. If you race on a wooden slot track there is the “Handling Kit” which is a shaped steel plate that screws to the base of aluminium chassis, so lowering the centre of gravity. The ride height of both the magnet and the steel plate can be adjusted by the use of the washers contained in the kit. MRRC also provide a choice of three pinions, (8, 9, & 10 teeth) and two guides of differing depths enabling you to “tweak” the car that little bit more. Apart from filing a small flat section on to the rear axle to help the crown gear set screw grip (old habits die hard!), the only niggle I have with the chassis construction is the rear axle Oilites. These only push fit in to the chassis and really need a key or clip to hold them in place as they tend to spin in their housing when

the motor is revved up. However this is simply cured by “Super Glue”. Once the body was fastened to the chassis by the three screws it was off down to the club to see how the finished kit ran.

The Quorn track is of a wood/Sandtex construction so I ran with the deeper guide and Handling Kit and must say I was pleasantly surprised by the car’s performance when considering that the basic chassis design is approx. 25 - 30 years old! The motor, which is a Fox can unit (similar to those fitted in the Playfit chassis’), is strong and smooth in operation and propels the car at quite a rate of knots; the car is certainly no slouch when you hit a straight. The tyres appear to be more of a vinyl than rubber compound and are extremely grippy, almost too much, but ground down quite quickly on the Sandtex surface of the Quorn Track and lap times improved as the rear end was able to “give” a little. After 50 or 60 odd laps the car was lapping in the 9.5 to 10 second band (my best being 9.314) which is on par with the other classic cars raced at Quorn and driving was easier as I got used to its character.

I must confess to a minor modification and that was to fit small elastic band retainers to the

body mounting screws. As the racers in the NSCC know, to race smoothly a car’s body must not be fixed rigidly to its chassis otherwise it’ll “bounce” under hard acceleration, however if you slacken off the screws (to create “rock”) on the type of fixing used on this kit (machine screws in to metal bosses) they eventually completely undo and fall out as you race! Its an old problem, Monogram and Revell in the 60s, but as I said easily solved by using elastic bands to stop the screws vibrating undone.

The car can obviously not compete against the modern sports models which are lower, lighter, and wider but it’s not up against these cars and has to be judged against other models from its own era. In that company the Clubman more than holds its own and it is simply great to see a model of the Ferrari 250 GT/LM on the track again.

Having started with first impressions, what’s my final impression? Compared to the majority of the plastic cars of today this is almost a unique product in the market place. It is well made, great fun to build, a nice period piece and makes a worthy addition to your race stable or car collection.

