

NSCC

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

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FUGITIVE EDITOR SPOTTED AT NSCC SWOPMEET

It was reported today that the notorious editor of the NSCC Journal had managed to free himself from the chains which bind him to the computer. Archie the Editorial Cat was powerless to prevent his escape, but a tip off led his pursuers to a swopmeet at Milton Keynes, where he was successfully recaptured. Fortunately no members of the public were harmed and he is now safely locked up again.

It was very pleasant to meet so many people who were previously just voices at the other end of the phone. Sorry if I missed anybody but the swopmeet was very busy; still, at least I managed to restrict my spending for once - I don't think any of the stallholders can retire on my contributions. Thankyou for the many kind comments, it does help to know that the hours spent compiling the Journal are appreciated.

On then to this month's issue - only 40 pages, mostly carrying adverts of one sort or another (I shall be accused of running a trade journal at this rate!), but I can only print what I receive. If you want more articles then start writing some.

There are a couple of contributions about the more extreme type of slotcar raced at BSCRA clubs which I have included for two reasons. Firstly, I agree with Jeff Davies that the two sides of the hobby have a lot in common and increased communication between us can only benefit both. Secondly, I don't really have the luxury of picking and choosing articles - if I restricted the Journal to purely "Scalextric" type items you would be reading a very thin issue indeed.

Anyway - enough whingeing for one month - on to the brighter side of life. I have been talking to Wayne Bermingham, the editor of our Australian counterpart, about swopping ideas. I have sent him a couple of copies of the Journal and I should shortly be receiving copies of Club Lines from him. He has promised me an article on collecting and racing downunder, which I look forward to reading. I did mention to him that we have considerable difficulty getting our committee members together for a meeting. His reply was: "You think you've got problems, our guys live 4000 miles apart!"



TV IN MARCH

A new Scalextric interview with one of our club members by the TV show 'Collectors Lot' will be screened in March. Keep your eyes peeled.

SLEEVES

The first Audi A4 and Vauxhall Vectra Touring Cars were issued with a special cardboard outer sleeve that was produced for the purpose of launching these new cars. Typically, the outer sleeve would have suggested a limited run of say 2000 or 5000. To clear up a common enquiry from members, I can confirm that these limited issues only relate to the 'product launch' package as a whole and not to the car or car livery therein.

PACKAGING

The factory is looking at the way the cars are packed. They have discovered that it is essential that all four tyres be firmly planted on the plinth after the brass screw has been tightened. If the car is not able to move then this will help stop the brass screw coming undone in transit. If the rear tyres are airborne then the screw will undoubtedly unscrew whenever the box is moved.

JORDAN

Narrow axle Jordan boxed cars will eventually replace the wider axle cars currently still found in toyshops.

COLLECTABLE CAR

In 1998, on the European mainland, a previously undocumented model was produced for a business event. The car, produced in a handful of numbers, perhaps less than fifty, was an 'International Sales Conference 1998' Gold Corolla. No more information is known from the factory. Please contact me if you have further information.

NASCAR STP PONTIAC

The Pontiac Grand Prix 'STP' will not be available in the U.K. as a standard issue. Also, the set C1056T Super Speedway will be available in the U.K.

SENNA CARS

The Subaru Impreza cars have not yet been released to an export market – and the market destinations have not yet been decided.

MINI 40TH ANNIVERSARY

To confirm, there will not be a blue version to follow the green and red versions issued last year. Besides, it's not the 40th anniversary anymore!

FOCUS SET

The rally set C1048 World Rally will contain a Subaru and the new Ford Focus. These two cars will be fully decorated.

PERSPEX BOXES

All boxed cars will now be issued in the Perspex boxes. The cardboard boxes are now discontinued. However, don't be surprised to continue to see cardboard boxes in various shops as wholesalers release their remaining stocks from last year.

CATALOGUE

Those of you eagle-eyed enough not to need glasses spotted some errors in the new catalogue. The factory saw right through a minor mistake on page 3. The see-through Mercedes CLK has item number 8 and 9 reversed. Further on in the catalogue the Beetle reference numbers of C2214/5 are in fact C2314/5.

UPDATES

Having reported the contents of the catalogue last month, I now have a few more updates. The price list reflects a little more than the catalogue. For example, some of the discontinued items such as Trucks and Minis (and others) will be available whilst stocks last.

FROM THE PRICE LIST

Separate Boxed cars

C2183	Toyota Corolla
C2312	Toyota Corolla Privateer
C2313	Toyota Corolla Privateer
C2257	Subaru Impreza
C2175	Ford Focus
C2176	Ford Focus
C2309	Vauxhall Vectra
C2310	Renault Laguna
C2311	Ford Mondeo

(Many of the above have yet to have the livery confirmed)

AMENDMENTS FROM LAST MONTH

C2314	VW Beetle Cabriolet Silver (not C2214)
C2315	VW Beetle Cabriolet Blue (not C2215)

OTHER UPDATES

C2317	Porsche GT1 'New Product Range 2000', midnight blue, only 300 made.
C8125	Border – Straight
C8126	Border – Curve

MICRO SCALEXTRIC

TWO NEW SETS ARE ADDED TO THE RANGE BUT NO NEW CARS.

Here's, as promised last month, a listing.

Sets:

G0094	World Championship
G1003	Jaguar Cup
G1006	Super Grand Prix
G1007	Formula One new
G1008	Twin Jaguars new

Cars:

G032	MR1 Minardi F1
G079	Ferrari F1
G082	Jaguar XJ220
G083	Ferrari F40
G2001	Mercedes DTM – silver
G2004	Jordan F1 1998
G2005	McLaren F1
G2006	Jaguar XJ220 – red
G2007	Jaguar XJ220 – white

TOYFAIR- 2000

BY THE EDITOR

Daft Idea Animal paid me a visit last month; "Wouldn't it be a good idea to go to the Toyfair at Olympia?" What a complete waste of time! I haven't been to such an amateur affair for many years.

Now I know that I have no real experience of the toy industry but I have been attending electrical trade shows for over twenty five years and I know how a successful stand is run. It should be well manned by knowledgeable staff; any visitor should be approached within a couple of minutes and his buying status ascertained; new products should be on prominent show and there should be some form of active display to catch the visitor's attention. Virtually every stand that I set foot on at Olympia failed to observe even these basic principles.

The first one I visited had an interesting looking radio controlled slotless racing system on show. I tried for about five minutes to get it to work and then went hunting for a salesman to show me. I actually had to interrupt a private chat between two of them in order to get a grudging demonstration! I'm sure they would have been better employed as supermarket check out operators.

Anyway, on to the real purpose of the visit, the slotcar companies, surely they will be better. Fly and SCX first then - this stand basically consisted of boxes of cars stacked on top of each other. New products were noticeable by their absence although I did eventually manage to find a couple of poorly painted mock-ups of an Arrows F1 and this year's vintage release, the Tyrrell P34. There was also an SCX track set up but, as it was covered by coffee cups and a salesman's notebook, I was unable to find out if it actually worked. I spent ten minutes sending out buying signals by handling the product and left the stand without being approached, although I did at least obtain the new catalogue.

Next, the mighty Rikoh organisation to look at Ninco products. My initial impressions

were favourable - a large, professional looking stand, plenty of staff in attendance and a Ninco track layout to play on. This was my first experience with the track and I was very impressed with it. I think Scalextric is going to have to seriously consider updating their product before Ninco start to eat away at their market share.

However, the person who decided to put F1 cars out on the track should be shot; every single one had lost its front wing! If I was a manufacturer with such a seriously flawed product I would make sure the trade buyers never got to play with it. Once again I had sent out buying signals for ten minutes without attracting a salesman's attention so I went looking for one. I wish I hadn't bothered - no there was no information on new product; no they hadn't got a catalogue; they only had one price list of which I could have a photocopy if I could wait for five minutes. I made my excuses and left!

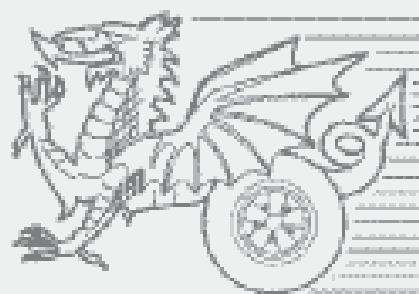
I was about to give up and go down the pub at this point, but I decided to have one last try on the Monarch Lines stand and this really provided the only bright spot of the day. The stand was tucked away in a corner and looked a bit amateurish compared to the others, but what a refreshing difference in attitude from the staff. Every single visitor was welcomed; catalogues and price lists were freely available; the models were on open display, not sealed in boxes and all the staff could talk knowledgeably about the products.

While playing on the Carrera track layout I took great pleasure in observing enthusiastic salespeople at work. Mind you I was not so impressed with the Carrera 1/24th scale cars. I know the track layout was a little small for them but I have seen more roadholding ability in a forty year old Scalextric D-Type Jag.

People tell me that this show is not highly regarded by the manufacturers because they are saving themselves for the big one in Germany, but if you can't be bothered to do a professional job why waste money by attending? Perhaps Hornby have the right idea after all - they have a private reception for their dealers instead.

TOP GUIDE

By Richard Davies



The highway code is a pretty old invention. It's been around for so long that it's practically a joke, yet in all this time an equivalent code for slot cars has never been devised. Here's my version of the highway code for the model world:

Crashes (Yours): Look right down the track, then look left down the track. Quickly estimate the time for your opponent to reach the spot where you have crashed, and then take pains to arrive there at just before that time, delaying tactics such as yawning and tying shoes may be required. Once there, be sure to 'accidentally' knock off your opponents car as you put your own on, and you have regained the lead.

Crashes (Theirs): If your opponent is unfortunate enough to crash, then a little delay is worth a lot to you. Quickly unplug their hand control from the powerpack while their back is turned and go back to driving your car innocently. Your opponent will race back to his hand control and desperately grab it. Their car will not move (ear protection may be required at this point). If your opponent is unfamiliar with this technique, suggest that they have not put their car on properly. This precipitates another dash to the car and a bemused dash back as their car is indeed on perfectly. At this point they will notice that their hand control is unplugged, but you will have by now become hopelessly far ahead and they will concede the race. Experts will immediately spot the sabotage but will still waste time plugging it back in to give you an additional advantage.

Cross-over straights: Prime targets for race preparation. Install a resistor across the wire joining the two pieces and their car will inexplicably slow down over that half of the track.

Chicanes: Two strategies are available here.

1. Your car is bigger than their car: race exactly parallel to their car and they will somersault gracefully through the air and off the track while you race ahead.

2. Their car is bigger than your car: either install a piece of lead in the bottom of your car, in which case then use strategy 1, or hang back slightly as they enter the chicane then surge forward and punt them off the track.

Mini drivers: Minis were great cars and when they were introduced by Scalextric they were actually reasonable competition for the other cars at that time, but they are now abysmally useless. To show your contempt for this snail driven piece of plastic, lap it several times and then launch your car at it in a suicide dive as it attempts to go around the corner, hopefully obliterating it from the face of the planet.

Car across another driver's lane (Your car): Shriek that your car is a unique, one off, never made prototype worth several thousand pounds and yell at them to stop, stop, STOP! Your opponent will invariably halt and wait while you put your car back on, allowing you to keep your place at the head of the field.

Car across another driver's lane (Their car): Ignore all protests as to its value and slam into it flat out, moving it off your lane and allowing you to speed away, and if you are lucky, disable it totally.

Corners: Make sure that you are on the inside for the majority of corners when choosing your lane. Race parallel with your opponent into the corner and then give the car a brief burst of full throttle. The back end will flick out into the other car and your opponent's car will go sailing into oblivion.

Flyovers: Get a small triangular shaped piece of cardboard and put it in the slot of your opponents lane under the flyover. Not only will your opponent frequently come off on the one part of the track that is hardest to put the car back on, but the flyover will also shield your subterfuge from visual detection.

PORSCHE 908 FLUNDER LE MANS 1972

This is a beautiful car. It is cleverly designed, well built and nicely painted, and it goes really well. In fact, I can't find anything at all to be sarcastic and critical about. Drat.

It is painted in pure white and greyish blue, the white being the principal colour with the blue lapping around the base and also in the form of two large arrows along the length of the body. There is a tiny Porsche logo on the bonnet and, getting out my magnifying glass, I saw that the word Porsche is indeed just visible on the badge. I examined the cockpit closely, and found a tiny set of dials behind the steering wheel and a red tampo printed fire extinguisher to the side of the passenger compartment. Once again applying the magnifying glass, I found the words "FIRE EXTINGUISHER" are written on it! I was impressed by this attention to detail; most manufacturers would not have put the extinguisher in as it is totally invisible to the casual observer.

The headlights are excellent reproductions, a vast improvement over the ones on the original Porsche 908 in their realism, although the back lights still look like square pieces of jelly glued onto the back of the car. The fins that project out from the wings of the car are gone, which I am glad about as I never liked them on the original Porsche 908, and overall the car is a definite improvement. The car chassis appears to be more or less unchanged from the first version although the mounting posts have been moved, irritatingly making the two chassis incompatible (you can't have everything). The car has good straight line speed as well as excellent cornering and I think it should be a prime choice for any classic car championships.

This car was kindly supplied for review by Millstream Raceway, Ringwood.

REPROTEC AC COBRA

The AC Cobra is a beautiful car. Ever since I was old enough to know what an AC Cobra was, I've loved the car, and naturally when I heard that Reprotect were making a model of one, I couldn't wait to see it. It's easily recognisable: when you find yourself thinking "Is that shapeless lump of orange really meant to be a car?" you're looking at it.

It's a livid orange with two yellow stripes and some badly applied 6s. You can see the colours underneath through the numbers. The exterior detail is non-existent. The cockpit is a flat piece of black plastic with the severed torso of some unfortunate driver figure glued to it. The stripes are fuzzy around the edges, the exhausts and wheels are poorly sculpted lumps of black plastic. The headlights are awful, the tail lights are worse and the mirror in the centre of the car still has a rough spike of cream plastic on top where it was moulded. There are some odd sticking out things on the front and back at bumper level - black plastic - which get snapped off immediately and the grill is - just for some variation - corrugated black plastic. Wow. I'd like to be able to say it goes well after my little tirade, (at least I would if I was a nice person) but it doesn't! The tyres are so soft they're almost liquid. They hang limply off the wheels and slump at the bottom, adding the rather appropriate illusion of flat tyres to the presentation. It does go down the straights quite well but this sole advantage is mitigated by the fact that unless the track is perfectly flat the car hops about like Tigger on steroids. Maybe, just maybe, if this was the only model I'd ever seen of the Cobra I wouldn't be so critical. However, Phil Barry bought a Cobra body at a swapmeet a few months ago, mounted it on a FLY Porsche 908 chassis and proceeded to make the most beautiful car I've ever seen. He has managed to out FLY the FLY cars themselves, and compared to his model the Reprotect version looks like a two year old's attempt at an Airfix kit.

In a time when all slot car manufacturers are taking giant strides, only Reprotect has innovatively taken them backwards.

NASCAR!

BY PHIL ETGART

Whilst only a small number of European motor sport fans have witnessed the spectacle of NASCAR racing first hand, most are familiar with it through the medium of television.

The roots of NASCAR lie way back in the prohibition era when the racing of 'stock' family cars began. These cars were worked on in evenings and raced at the weekend by privateers who operated on shoestring budgets. Legend has it that these cars were used to deliver 'moonshine' on behalf of bootleggers and that it was the income from these activities that enabled many of the participants to race. Indeed it was very often the same Auto shops that built cars for the Federal Agents as well and when asked who got the faster cars one garage owner commented "Bootleggers paid cash, the Federal agents paid on 90 days, who do you think!"

In the early days races took place at State Fairs, Race Tracks and just about anywhere that would attract a crowd. During the prewar years the hobby was informal with no governing body and more worryingly no defined safety standards. Indeed in the early days the spectacular crashes that resulted were one of the main attractions for the crowds.

Events were held all over the USA, but very early on Stock Car Racing's spiritual home became Daytona Beach. When, in 1936 the venue for the Land speed records transferred to the Utah salt flats, Daytona Beach was developed as the first formal track for Stock Car Racing. The part beach, part road course was the first step toward establishing Stock Car Racing as a professional sport.

The next significant step was in 1947 when the 'National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing' was formed. The objective of 'NASCAR' was to promote the development of Stock Car Racing through the formalisation of the hobby. More importantly this included the introduction of clearly defined safety standards.

In 1959 the first banked raceway was introduced at Daytona and 'NASCAR' racing,

as we know it was born. Indeed the introduction of the first banked speedway was to enhance the hobby even further by creating even closer racing. The first race at Daytona was so close that the eventual winner Lee Petty was only awarded the win three days later upon the outcome of a photo finish! The familiar spectacle of nose to tail 'NASCAR' racing, as we know it had arrived.

It was the spectacle of seeing familiar cars racing that helped 'NASCAR' develop, but under this exterior full on racecars were evolving. It was the increasing profile of the sport, which attracted the sponsorship that allowed the further technological development creating the spectacle that 'NASCAR' has become today.

Given the profile of 'NASCAR' it is not surprising that US manufacturers have modelled them since the early days of the slot car hobby. With the increased exposure of 'NASCAR', and with Hornby Hobbies growing penetration of international markets, it was not surprising in October 1997 when the first Scalextric 'NASCAR' models were shown at the US toy industries Chicago Trade Fair. Indeed there had been very strong rumours surrounding the introduction of these models since 1994.

These models were intended exclusively for the American market, but it didn't take long for enterprising collectors to establish contacts in the USA and obtain examples for their own collections.

The first cars to be modelled were the Ford Thunderbird and the Chevrolet Lumina. They were amongst the first Scalextric cars to be manufactured in China and whilst the models had blacked out windows and no interior detail they were issued in four colourful liveries. The cars were beautifully packaged in full colour sleeves that were based on the cars racing livery and included the driver's autograph.

C2020 Ford Thunderbird 'Valvoline' #6

Mark Martin

C2021 Ford Thunderbird 'Exide Batteries' #99

Jeff Burton

C2022 Chevy Lumina 'Kodak Gold' #4

Sterling Marlin

C2023 Chevy Lumina 'Kelloggs' #5
Terry Labonte



These models were issued in a limited edition of 2500 of each (A fairly small number when you consider the size of 'NASCAR' following in the USA).

This initial batch of models was soon followed by a 'decorate it yourself' special. C2123 Chevy Lumina Plain Black Livery (Limited edition, 1000 only)

One of the key attractions of 'NASCAR' is the colourful livery of the cars and naturally enough these change very often (sometimes from race to race, but more normally every season). This created a need for Hornby to keep the models in their range up to date with the changes on the track. Two of the original cars were re-worked fairly early on resulting in the issue of new versions.

C2135 Chevy Lumina 'Kodak Gold' #4
Bobby Hamilton

C2136 Chevy Lumina 'Kelloggs' #5
Terry Labonte

(This version had the rooster's head looking across the bonnet of the car and not facing the left front wing as the earlier version of this livery had done).

Whilst they were intended exclusively for the USA the two later Chevy Luminas were briefly issued in the UK in a twin pack, through the 'Beatties' chain of toyshops.

The need to keep up to date with the sport was also evident through the introduction of new body styles. At the end of 1997 Ford finally announced the replacement of the Thunderbird after 42 years in production. Being committed to 'NASCAR' Hornby Hobbies followed suit

and announced the introduction of models of the new car the Taurus. The first versions of the Taurus were the '98 liveries and they appeared towards the end of that year. They were a vast improvement over the Thunderbird and featured totally new hubs and tyre compound. They now had clear glass and a nicely detailed interior including a separately moulded safety net. The liveries were spectacular and in some cases required over 100 separate Tampos print operations to complete. Initial test shots of the car exist in black plastic with 'Made in England' on the base, but all production models were 'Made in China'. The liveries introduced initially were as follows;

C2141 Ford Taurus 'Exide' #99

Jeff Burton

C2142 Ford Taurus 'McDonalds' #94

Bill Elliott

C2146 Ford Taurus 'Valvoline' #6

Mark Martin



Additionally three more 'NASCAR' models were announced at the same time, but to date remain unreleased;

C2058W Ford Thunderbird Livery unknown

C2143 Ford Taurus 'Quality Care'

C2144 Ford Taurus 'Primestar'

There was a Scalextric presence at the Daytona 500 on July 3rd 1999 in order to launch the 1999 'NASCAR' liveries. It was announced that the company intended to increase the range to a total of 24 liveries by July 2000. The first of these were the two cars to be included in C1041T 'NASCAR Speedway' set, these were the 1999 liveries of the Valvoline and Exide Taurus's. Soon after this the issue of the 1999 McDonalds car was announced (This differed

significantly from the 1998 car in that it now featured a black roof). As with the 1998 McDonalds car this was not available in the UK due to licensing restrictions. An additional Ford Taurus in the racing livery of Rusty Wallace followed this. This meant that the 1999 range as it was initially announced was as follows;

C2208 Ford Taurus 'Rusty Wallace' #2

Rusty Wallace

C2217 Ford Taurus 'Exide' #99

Jeff Burton 1999

C2218 Ford Taurus 'McDonalds' #94

Bill Elliott 1999

C2219 Ford Taurus 'Valvoline' #6

Mark Martin 1999

Again these models were issued in a limited edition of 2500 of each.

October 1999 saw the issue of the most attractive 'NASCAR' livery to date the stunning two tone green 'John Deere' Ford Taurus. Followed in December 1999 by the 'Mobil One' livery. Details of those cars were as follows;

C2225 Ford Taurus 'John Deere' #97

Chas Little

C2143 Ford Taurus 'Mobil One' #12

Jeremy Mayfield

On a visit to the factory in September 1999 prototypes were shown of the third and final body style utilised in 'NASCAR', the Pontiac Grand Prix. Initially four liveries were announced;

C2185 Pontiac Grand Prix 'Home Depot' #20

Tony Stewart

C2186 Pontiac Grand Prix 'Caterpillar'

C2226 Pontiac Grand Prix 'Interstate Batteries' #18

Bobby Labonte

C2227 Pontiac Grand Prix 'STP' #43

John Andretti

The 'STP' car was issued as a separate boxed item in December 1999, whilst the 'Home Depot' and 'Interstate Batteries' cars were the first in the series to only be available in a set. The set in question, CO1042T 'Super Speedway' was a limited edition of 1200 for the US market making these amongst the hardest of the 'NASCAR' models produced to date, to obtain. The 'Caterpillar' car remains unissued.

Other liveries announced, but unissued to date include;

C2185 Pontiac Grand Prix 'Skittles' (Initially announced as a Chevy Monte Carlo)

C2186 Pontiac Grand Prix 'Hot Wheels' (Initially announced as a Chevy Monte Carlo)



As stated earlier in this article the 'NASCAR' range was originally intended exclusively for the US market, but, as shown in the 2000 catalogue, the following 'NASCAR' models are currently available in the UK;

C2135 Chevy Lumina 'Kodak Gold' #4

Bobby Hamilton

C2136 Chevy Lumina 'Kelloggs' #5

Terry Labonte

C2143 Ford Taurus 'Mobil One' #12

Jeremy Mayfield

C2208 Ford Taurus 'Rusty Wallace' #2

Rusty Wallace

C2217 Ford Taurus 'Exide' #99

Jeff Burton 1999

C2219 Ford Taurus 'Valvoline' #6

Mark Martin 1999

C2225 Ford Taurus 'John Deere' #97

Chas Little

From its roots in moonshining and beach racing 'NASCAR' has become the number one motor sport in its homeland and, with the advent of satellite television, is now quickly growing into other territories. The release of these cars in the UK endorses how quickly the sport is growing in Europe and underlines Hornby's commitment its. All that remains to be seen now is which other 'NASCAR' liveries we are to be treated to this year!

Strange that no-one has mentioned that these cars wont negotiate banked curves. It's a good job the real thing can!

Members letters

Dear Brian,

You are doing an excellent job as Editor. Well done!

I am afraid this letter is nothing but a moan, moan, moan - and Hornby is the target. I purchased a limited edition Mini that was being sold by Beatties just before Christmas. When the assistant offered me a car I had to ask to see other examples. The cars were falling apart and incorrectly put together. The magnets had fallen off. The cars were not secure in the box. The motors were not secure in their housing because the motor wires were laid in the housing. The assistant told me that Beatties had returned cars to Hornby due to these problems. I sent an email to Hornby complaining about the condition of these cars. Now I must say that I believe the assistant when told that is the way and condition that Hornby sent out the cars. To my astonishment I received an unsigned email from Hornby telling me that the cars left the factory in a secure condition, no mention of the other problems. I decided to contact Beatties head office and spoke to a Mr. Owen who works in connection with purchasing I think. When I told him what Hornby had told me he was very unhappy and I forwarded a copy of Hornbys email to him. I am sure that Beatties and Hornby have had some discussion over this point. So if anyone else purchased the mini please do not blame Beatties for the appalling condition of the car.

Now its the turn of the Racer club for some stick. Having read a letter from Sean McCreery I feel I wish to stir things up a bit more.

Sean, I am not having a pop at you I promise! Sean says he sent his reply for the Caterhams back the day after receiving it. He goes on to say it takes 5 days for a letter to get to the U.K. so lets say the same to get to Oz. So far its taken 11 days for Sean to get his reply to the Racer club. Now my secretary (wife) and I have been very busy and must have had the application form for a lot longer before she sent the reply. So how come Sean gets his reply to them before me yet still does not get the silver Caterham ? I, alas, did not get the gold. Are orders dealt with as first come first served or is there something else going on? This is, however the first time I have received a car from the Racer club that has been undamaged. Also I feel that the postage charged by the Racer club is, in my opinion, steep. I do not know anyone else that charges such a high amount for postage.

Ian Metzger

A somewhat fed up collector

I have passed Ian's comments on to Adrian so that he can discuss them with the factory. However, to be fair to Hornby, I have had no other complaints about their quality control and the cars that I have purchased recently have been perfect. Similarly, I have never received a damaged car from "Racer" magazine - perhaps his problems stem from his local Post Office. I am with him on the postage costs though, the Racer specials are dear enough already without exorbitant extras. Mind you if I were the M.D. of Scalextric I would be tempted to hang the production team at "Racer" headquarters after the latest issue. I would have thought that the editor of a magazine funded by Hornby and solely devoted to the promotion of their products would take extra care not to feature competitors' models. Apparently not - take a look at page 12 of issue 14 - the main photograph contains a Ninfo Ferrari F1 and a Ninfo Jordan and the two smaller pictures repeat the error. Still it could become a rare collectors item in the future as the remaining copies are surely destined for the shredder. Somehow I don't feel quite so bad about my own cockups now!

Members letters

Dear Brian

After 13 years as an NSCC member and a little longer as a collector, I have decided for various reasons not to renew my membership and to stop collecting.

It seems an appropriate time to bow out when the Hobby is enjoying immense popularity at the moment , unlike when I first started (in the late 70s).

Apart from the enjoyment of collecting and using my own cars, I have helped fellow collector and good friend Arthur Saunders to run his 1/24 layout at numerous events since 1989. It started as displaying cars (old and new) alongside a track and ended up as a very impressive layout complete with buildings, trees, spectators etc..

Old and young alike appreciated the layout (judging by the comments made and the smiles on the kiddies faces) providing 8 years of good PR for (mainly) Scalextric and a great deal of fun for us. A variety of events and venues included community centres, garages, village halls, fetes, schools, a college, a 2 day Event at Havant Museum celebrating Scalextric and, the most bizarre, a late night stag party at Goodwood House for the Earl of March with Arthur and Myself togged up in full dinner jacket outfits and girl marshals dressed in Marlboro T-shirts and miniskirts (Playing with toy cars dressed in a DJ - very English!).

I originally set out to write a short letter to say how much I have enjoyed slot cars and to thank all present and past committee members for all their hard work in running the club, but I got a bit carried away. So now I'm not sure if this is a long letter or a short article.

Goodbye for now and I hope you get as much from the hobby as I have over the years.

Peter Ralph

.....

Dear Brian

would it be possible to list all the club secretaries and addresses so that we can send each other details of forthcoming races?

I used to rely on the NSCC membership list but we haven't had one for ages. Also I used to use the BTCC booklet (Mervyn Palmer etc.) but this also appears to be defunct.

Time for an update methinks.

Graham Pritchard

I don't know why the membership list has been discontinued. I can put one together if enough people are interested - let me know. In the meantime, if anybody wants one, it is easy enough for Bob Bott to print a basic list from his database. Why not give him a call?

AIDS TO ADHESION

BY TONY SECCHI

Amongst my friends and fellow competitors, the two main points of contention are the Scalextric removable guide and methods of roadholding. The first I dealt with in a recent article, but the second causes lots of argument and discussion, which, with your permission I will summarise here.

As readers may know, we do not have a club, just a home circuit on which my friends and I (all now retired) seriously compete about once or twice a week. We all belonged to the same club in the early to middle sixties and we raced 1:24 scale GT/sports/ saloons with lead ballast for roadholding.

By the mid sixties we were using early 'can' type engines which (due to the 1:24 scale) were larger than the current Mabuchi 'S' and had the commutator brushes mounted in a plastic housing on the outside of the motor (Revell, I think). This allowed us to clean commutator and brushes quite easily.

Although the scale was bigger than today's almost universal 1:32 and overall weight higher, these cars could really motor for the time. The amount of lead ballast was critical.

Starting at the front, the pin guide/pick up was in use along with the (then) very thick braids. This made the car a bit high and light in the slot and often necessitated some ballast in the nose (usually Plasticine).

The rear of the car was almost universally ballasted within the bottom rear apron using lead; no one to my recollection ballasted the centre of the car in those days. This configuration gave an 'oversteering' driving style where the car could be held on the front pick up pin and the back hung out and controlled by power — similar to the front engined rear wheel drive real cars of the day in fact.

Needless to say, tyre wear was one big problem. Sometimes a championship was lost because the exact replacement tyres were not available. The many choices we have today were

nonexistent then, and early season success could evaporate when tyres were changed.

When I first returned to racing (after some 55 years) I started to use lead and Plasticine ballast, but found out by bitter experience that the 1:32 scale format we were racing, did not lend itself easily to that expediency.

The cars had changed, not just being lower and wider, the pick up braid was thinner and most of all the swivel blade guide gave a different characteristic.

You now had to drive the car in almost a four wheel drift, the width of the blade negating the oversteering technique dictated by the old style pin guide. Using lead ballast generally gave the cars the required stability around the bends but rendered them dead slow on the straights.

Among the first new style (to me) cars that I purchased were the Scalextric Ferrari F40 and the Ninco Ferrari F50 (well, my ancestors were Italian). Both these cars had magnets and I learnt a lot from driving and playing about with them.

Later on, the Fly range of cars, with very powerful motors and very powerful magnets were a revelation. Racing these cars with different magnet positions and strengths gave me more experience, and today I can usually tune the optimum compromise between roadholding and speed in one or two attempts.

We use magnatraction as standard now (no tyre gunk or throttle braking) and the main advantage that I find with this form of adhesion is versatility. With practice, the position and more importantly, the height of the magnet location in the chassis can be tuned to suit. We use either Fly circular magnets (high power) or rectangular magnets from door catches (medium power). The beauty of these is that they are 3 to 4 mm deep which allows vertical height positioning within the chassis.

In practice we use the following standard method of installation (circular magnet described):-

The position of the magnet is decided — these days just in front or behind the engine, depending upon layout, chassis length and configuration. A piece of scrap plastic is glued to the inside of the chassis in this position and a

magnet-sized hole drilled through both thicknesses. This extra thickness allows the magnet height to be variable.

The chassis is then track tested and with the magnet being a tight fit in the mounting hole the adhesion level can be varied to suit performance and roadholding by raising or lowering the magnet in its mount. When this is satisfactory the magnet can be glued in position. The same system can be used for the rectangular magnets allowing for the different shape.

I know that there are many purists out there

who run cars as box standard and I can appreciate how they will view this article. I have a lot of admiration for the values that they eschew, but if like me, you do not have the know-how to race your cars without some kind of adhesion help then I hope that this article is of interest. After all, it takes all sorts, and no matter how diverse the difference we all have one thing in common - the basic enthusiasm for our hobby and the need for further knowledge that fires that need.

PROSLOT TOYOTA GT1

BY GRAEME THOBURN

This car is finished in the "ESSO ULTRON" livery as raced at Le Mans in 1998. The body shell and chassis are moulded from plastic which is more flexible than normal. A 6.5 gramme weight is fitted between the EVO 3 motor and guide blade, just behind the front axle.

This car must be the first of its type not to be fitted with a magnet [something which will please all the racers amongst you], and it doesn't need one. I took it straight out the box, placed it on the track and just thrashed it round. This is one seriously quick car and an absolute joy to drive.

The lack of a magnet makes the Toyota tail happy but in a controllable way and the motor makes it extremely fast in a straight line.

All of the club members who actually got a chance to drive it were of the same

opinion, this is the best "box standard" car they had ever driven.

For those racers amongst you, I will be organising "THE PROSLOT TOYOTA GT1 CHALLENGE" sponsored by "MONARCH LINES" on my 6 lane Ninco track in the Southend area on Sunday April 9th.

The venue is within easy reach of both the A127 and the A13 London to Southend main roads. Would all those interested please contact me on 01702 551225 any evening after 8 p.m.

This track [as kindly mentioned by Doug Graver in last month's newsletter] is also used for club evenings on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of every month - new members needed. Hope to hear from some of you soon.

PINEWOOD RACEWAY

BY JEFF DAVIES

The first thing I noticed when the Wye Valley team arrived at Pinewood Raceway was how incredibly friendly and enthusiastic both Nigel Barrow and Dave Mayo were. After we had finished the Ninco Challenge we were invited to race their 1/24 metal chassis sports cars.

These cars run on 24 volts and are unbelievably quick, producing 6.5 second laps around a 130ft track. The speed down the straights had to be seen to be believed, they are incredibly exciting to race and thankfully nearly indestructible considering the speed at which you have the inevitable accidents. As it was several years since the last time I had raced on a BSCRA track I was surprised how much the technology had improved in the cars with much more compact and lighter engines and how well the cars cornered. If you haven't tried this kind of racing I would suggest you give yourself an early Christmas present and spend an evening at somewhere like Pinewood where Nigel or Dave would be only too happy to welcome NSCC members. For our hobby to grow and for new people to be introduced to the pleasure of slot car racing and collecting, centres like this are essential.

While I was there Dave Mayo kindly offered to build a production BSCRA car for me to try. This car is built to BSCRA regs as an entry level car 1/24 and is run as a club class and also at rounds of the annual British Open Championship.

Components used:

Champion/Parma 1/24 chassis
Parma Super 16D 12V motor
3/32 dia. drill blank long axle
Sonic 64 pitch gears - 9:38 ratio
Champion front wheels - 1/16 hole
Parma jet flag guide & retaining nut
SCD braid clips
SCD soft braids

Parma lead wire
Oilite rear axle bearings
Betta BMW 1.8 body shell in 10 thou. Lexan
Pin tube / 16G piano wire
Total component cost - less than £40

For club racing standard:

Chassis preparation

Place chassis on a block and check that it is flat.

Solder 'U' brace between rear axle posts. Solder in Oilite rear axle bearings - holes in chassis usually small - use axle to keep bearings in line.

Solder short lengths of pin tube through body mounting holes. Body is held in place with pins. Cut length of 16g piano wire for front axle and solder in place.

Fit front wheels using retainers which come with the Champion wheels.

Fit guide flag. Make sure the nut is straight, otherwise the guide will rock.

Install rear axle. Make sure it is rotating freely. Tighten gear onto axle.

Motor Preparation & Installation:

Oil the Can-end bearing, then solder bearing to can.

Remove large-pitch pinion which comes with the motor, oil the can end bearing, re-tin the shaft and the hole through the pinion. Fit pinion. Keep solder out of pinion teeth.

Tin the motor can and chassis motor plate. Install motor by soldering to top of motor plate. Check for minimal play in gear mesh. Install motor brace (small piece of 16G wire) between root of can at front of motor and top of chassis plate.

Final Assembly

Cut & install lead wire from endbell to guide. Fit braids. Run motor and check it runs in the right direction.

Fit rear wheels. Check for minimal - but discernible play between bearings. Spin tyres on sandpaper block to check they are round & to take off edges.

Oil all bearings and gears.

Fit body shell.

Pin body to chassis - easy to say, difficult to get right.

Or there is another way to do this: pay about £26 and buy a ready-made Parma Flexicar Intrepid. Both cars look remarkably similar when viewed from the chassis side with very similar looking front wheels, guides and obviously engines, the main difference being that the BSCRA car has vastly superior rear wheels and tyres, being considerably lower and of a stickier compound. The BSCRA car has a much finer pitch gear and pinions. It is also soldered and braced in several key areas to give a more rigid drive line resulting in predictably better handling. Part two of this article will be a prolonged and extensive track test of these cars to see what extent the BSCRA outperforms the standard Parma car. I would like to thank Dave Mayo for building and lending me this car.



BETTER CLASSICS

Is it possible to find a company who's list of bodyshells starts with Oldsmobile Toronado, Dodge Daytona, Plymouth Barracuda and Boss Mustang Mach 1? This is just a few examples from the Betta & Classic slot racing catalogue. Betta & Classic were started in the fifties by Charlie Fitzpatrick, the founder of Classic shells.

At this time scale model car racing was using the rail car system, where the cars were guided around the track by a raised rail and not a slot. In the early years most of the individual bodies were carved out of balsa wood. The finished product obviously depended totally on the skill of the individual. Charlie Fitzpatrick started producing 1/32 scale fibreglass shells using his skill in moulding to make excellent scale replicas of the current cars of the day, cars like the 1955 Mercedes 300 SLR.

Rail races were usually run to the Southport standards. These are listed in Roger Greenslade's excellent book 'A History of Electric Model Roads and Racetracks' along with several illustrations of both early railracers and early rail tracks. Betta & Classic list a huge variety of shells, over 500 in fact, including such things as Ford Granadas, Hillman Imps, Can-Am Porsches, 1968 V12 BRM Grandprix cars, etc. These are manufactured in clear polycarbonate, white plasticard and fibreglass. They also produce a wide variety of other products. These include BSCRA type chassis, in both 1/24 scale and 1/32, including the Betta RC22 MkII Pro-Sports Super-Light strap motor chassis and other state of the art slot racing equipment such as engines, armatures, magnets, wheels and tyres, in fact just about anything you can think of. When I used to race metal chassis cars at Bath I always used Betta bodies, modifying several of my Scalextric type cars to accept Betta style front wheels as these gave far better performance than what was available at the time. Betta & Classic were kind enough to send me down several bodyshells which included a 1/24 scale Porsche 911 GT1, a white plasticard 1/32 1999 Volvo S40 BTCC (this, to my knowledge, is the only model of this car made so far) and a Ferrari 333 which came complete with a fantastic set of detailed transfers. Dave Mayo is using this bodyshell for a car he is building for me to compete in the BSCRA production class at Pinewood Raceway in April. All of these products are of excellent quality and I will be writing more about them in the future.

If anybody is interested in the BSCRA type of racing please get in touch with Jeff or myself to obtain a list of clubs.

Pinewood Raceway also has a 1/32 Scalextric track which gets very little use so if you are looking for a home for your club give Nigel a ring. They are a non-profit making organisation and could do with some more members to help pay the rent.

They are also running a 3 hour endurance race at Easter - spectators welcome.

PROXY II

PRODUCTION

CLASS CHASSIS

CONSTRUCTION

BY RUSSELL SHELDON

Although I've built and raced slot cars for the best part of 35 years, my job has resulted in a number of overseas postings and "home" over the past sixteen years has variously been South Africa, France, Belgium, the United Kingdom and currently, the United Arab Emirates. Needless to say, this has not been conducive to my hobby, and I've not really raced seriously for the past five years, confining myself to collecting vintage 1/32nd scale slot cars instead.

My passion for slot racing has however ensured that I have, as much as possible, kept myself abreast of developments, thanks to that marvel of modern technology, the Internet.

Resulting from discussion on the Internet "Slots DL", a free e-mail based slot racing discussion forum (<http://www.topica.com/lists/slots>), Bob Ward and Paul Kassens (editor of the *Old Weird Herald* e-zine), 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! The venue was Bob Ward's Daytona West four-lane home track, in Seattle, USA.

The first event, Proxy I, was held in February last year. Not knowing what to expect, I went completely overboard and took full advantage of the rules. I used a CAD program to design my chassis, and sent the diskettes off to DvR Slot Racing in South Africa to have them laser-cut from spring-steel. The cars were in a class of their own, totally dominating the event. Consequently, the rules for Proxy II, held in October, were revised, correctly in my opinion, so as to attract entrants regardless of their building skills and with only basic workshop

facilities at their disposal.

The rules for the Production Class were fairly straightforward, being for any production-type touring car, as raced in Trans Am or any of the European touring car series. With the emphasis on "scale", bodies had to be injection-moulded or resin. Chassis had to have an in-line configuration and could be manufactured from any material except spring-steel, and no laser or EDM cut components were permitted, other than the guide tongue. Chassis weren't allowed to be hinged, although they could flex, but as a single unit.

The first thing I considered was which body to use. Since the entries were expected to be predominantly from the USA, I anticipated that the majority would use Corvette, Camaro and Firebird bodies from older Revell or Monogram static kits.

Ferrari F50GT

I wanted something different, with a reasonable length wheelbase and front, to have the maximum guide-lead (the distance measured from the rear axle to the guidepost). I opted for a Ferrari F50GT, using a Ninco F50 body converted by PRS to GT specifications, and Pendle Slot Racing vacuum-formed windows and interior to reduce weight.

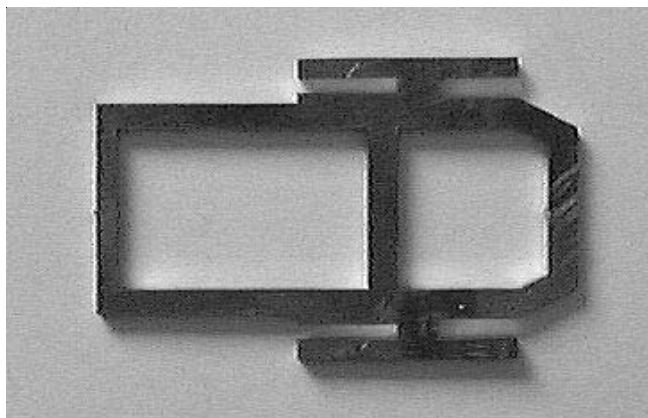


In order to optimise the rule allowing "chassis to flex as a single unit", I decided on a simple two piece design, using the rear piece to hold the motor and rear wheels and the front section the guide and front wheels, connected by two single piano-wire main-rails. Using the statistics from Proxy I as a guide, I opted for a fairly heavy chassis and used .063" brass plate with .047" main-rails.

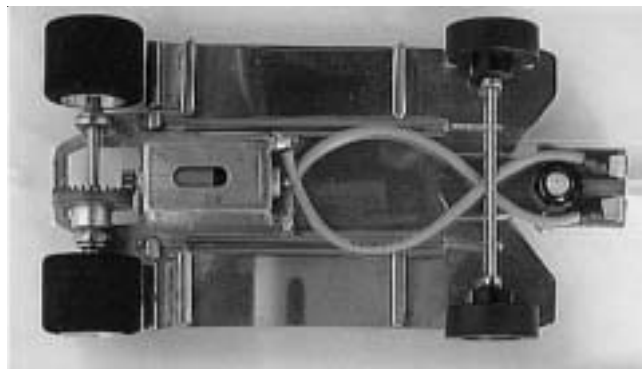
I cut the brass plate using a Dremel Moto Tool mounted in a Vandalay Accra Mill Plus, which firmly holds the Dremel and has a sliding-table on which the work-piece can be securely fixed. The various chassis components are shown below. The simplicity of the design is evident.



I used a combination of Dremel and Slick 7 cutting disks. The most difficult part to cut was the motor-box / rear axle unit, which I wanted as a single piece to ensure rigidity.



The chassis was soldered together using an Ungar soldering iron and Slick 7 eutectic solder. The rules required all cars to use stock Plafit Cheetah motors, and 48DP gears. Since my tyre grinder can only accept 3/32" axles, but as no manufacturer produces 48DP crown gears for this size axle, I sleeved a Plafit 30 tooth geardown to size. The body is mounted using pins through holes drilled in the sides of the body and fit into "shaker-tubes" attached to the side-pans, to allow some body movement. Since I don't have anywhere to test my cars, setting them up is purely guess work.

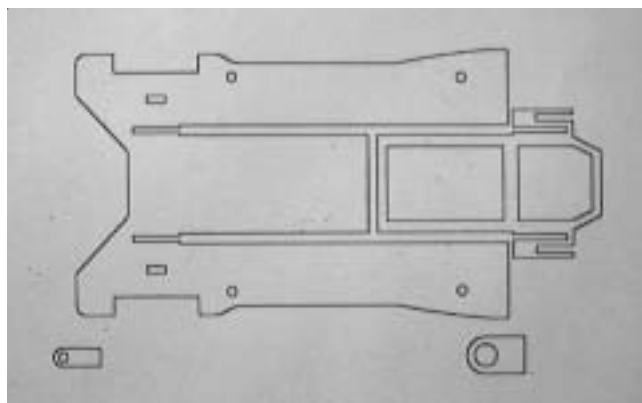


Opel Calibra

Having finished the Ferrari, I felt I could do a better chassis, with more flex and also wanted to space the rear-axle bearings as wide apart as possible. I also felt it needed a longer guide-lead, so I started all over again with a second car!

Using the same simple basic design, I redesigned the rear-end, to position the main-rail attachment point about where the pillow-blocks were mounted on the Ferrari chassis.

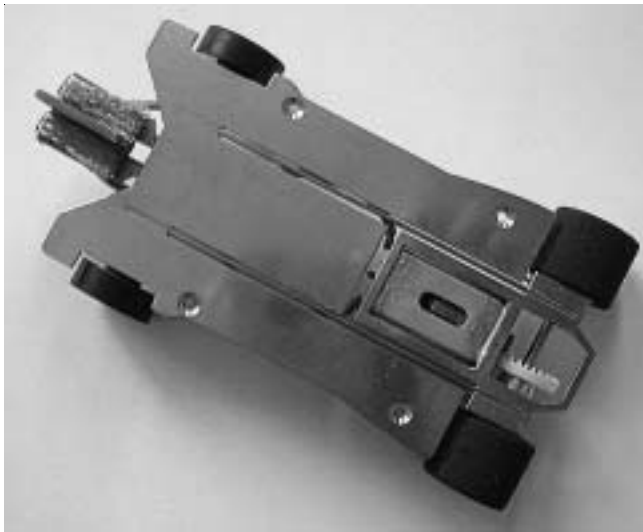
This time I opted for a Scalextric Opel



Calibra body, widening the wheel-arches out to the maximum permitted width of 2 1/2" using Plasticard and modelling putty. I also built up the front valance, to accommodate the guide. Unfortunately, I ran out of time and didn't finish the detailing body to the standard I wanted.



The picture below shows how the main-rails extend beyond the motor at the rear, with the pillow-blocks adjacent. Also evident are the counter-sunk holes for the screws used to fix the chassis to the body.



Here you can see the brass "L" sections, glued to the inside of the body, onto which the screws attach the chassis.



STATIC KIT CONVERSIONS - EXTRA

The recent excellent articles on converting static kits to slot cars also prompted me to contribute this. One of the most difficult things about static conversions is mounting the body just right. Although most of the converted kits I've seen use mounting posts usually made from a piece of plastic tube, another way to fix bodies is by using pins, which is the preferred method used for mounting Lexan bodies on slot cars.



This is a picture of a 1/32nd scale 1957 Cadillac Eldorado Brougham, using the body from a Gunze Sangyo static kit. The chassis is scratch-built and the body mounts by means of pins inserted through tiny holes in the sides of the body into K&S 3/32" I.D. brass tubes fixed to the chassis. In order for the body to have some movement, which aids handling, the pin tubes are mounted in slightly oversized square brass fixtures, in which they can move up and down as well as side to side. From the photograph, you will notice that the heads of the pins are not too unsightly.

During a recent business trip to South Africa, I met someone who used to race competitively in the club racing scene in Johannesburg back in the late 1960's. Besides being a top-class driver, he also built superb chassis, which were similar in design to those raced in the NAMRA classess around the same time.

Here is a picture of an STP Paxton Turbine car he built in late 1967 or early 1968. Typical of the cars of that era, the guide was a nylon pin and braid was combed-out electrical copper wire. The chassis comprises of a frame holding the motor, rear axle bracket and front wheels, which "floated" on a brass plate. The body was made by Lancer. It has seen some racing, but it must have been beautiful; the panel lines have been scribed with an X-acto knife and filled-in with black ink, and even the rivets have been picked out.

