

NSCC

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

No.224

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Contents

Editorial.....	2
What's On.....	3
Swopmeets.....	4
Ten Years Time Ago.....	5
Scalextric - The Video.....	7
Factory Lines.....	9-10
Evesham Swopmeet.....	11-12
Car Restoration.....	13
Backtrack.....	17
Members Letters.....	19
More on Rail Racing.....	21-23
Model Reviews.....	26-27
Steve McQueen Cars.....	30-31
Farewell Phil.....	33-42
Members Adverts	43-48

CRYSTAL BALLS!

The final sentence of last month's editorial has proved strangely prophetic. When I wrote that "Phil Etagart would reveal all next month" I was referring to his anticipated Evesham report, so it was somewhat surprising that he was absent from the Swopmeet. All was indeed revealed on my return as I received a letter from Phil announcing that he had sold his collection and was retiring from the hobby and the NSCC.

At first I thought it was a practical joke but, when his collection started to be advertised on 'Scale Models' website I had to accept that it was true. Phil was such a fixture of the club that it never crossed my mind that he could give the whole thing up. His contribution to this publication has been of enormous value and I really don't know how he can be replaced.

I make no apologies for devoting a significant part of this month's issue (page 33 onwards) to his departure as I felt we needed to say goodbye properly. As a result I have had to hold several contributions over till next month - so don't worry if your piece has not been published - I will include it as soon as possible.

Fortunately for those devotees of Phil's regular items, such as "Happening Ten Years Time Ago", Julie Scale bravely volunteered to help by continuing the archive spot and providing a Swopmeet report. I sincerely hope that other members are inspired to join her or future issues of the Journal may prove to be a little on the thin side.

One item I didn't have room for is worth a mention here - Derby HO Race Club will be running their annual Le Mans 24 hour race on 11th/12th November; contact details are on the diary page. Proceeds from the event are donated to a Childrens Charity so please support it if you are in the area.

And Finally - with my newly discovered gift of prophecy allow me to predict a future star. I have just returned from the Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch where I watched an 18 year old American girl finish second, in the closest fought final I have witnessed for many a year, driving a non-works car.

Remember the name - Danica Patrick.

Till next month

Brian



*Julie Scale puts on Phil's discarded waders and enters the murky waters of the NSCC
archives from November 1990*

History has always intrigued me- but as I get older I have discovered that the recent past; that which the grey cells can remember with a little bit of prodding, is entertaining stuff. I have loved the features looking back 10 years, as that is when I was dragged into the world of Scalextric and the NSCC!

Following Phil's decision to retire there will inevitably be a gap in our Journal and, as we have inherited all his wonderful archive material within his collection, I could not resist having a quick look at what was happening in the newsletter in November 1990.

I then stupidly mentioned this to Brian, and was left with no choice but to put fingers to keyboard, and share it with you.

Record Breakers was the main feature. The largest circuit ever, some 900 pieces of track, had been featured, with the star presenter Cheryl Baker. This is the problem with recent history, because we were under the impression that Cheryl still did Record Breakers. Mark was most disappointed to discover this was not the fact at the more recent record-breaking event which we attended earlier this year; I wondered why he was so keen to be there!

Scalextric on TV was obviously considered a great novelty back in 1990, but we are now getting quite used to seeing circuits, swap meets and collections; I believe we have to look out for an episode of 'Collectors Lot' which has been filmed over the summer at Gary Cliff's.

Back in 1990 Mike Pack had been to the Farnham swap meet, and was amazed to find reruns of the vintage Alfa and Bentley were selling at £50 each!

As usual Hornby had promised a new release car that every one had on their Christmas list and the question was, will it be here in time? The Sauber Mercedes did not make Santa's stocking that year!

1990s Chairman was Trevor Livingstone, and what a memory he had. In his 'Chairman's Chat' he was harking back to a 'Which' test in 1965/66 in which the new VIP track (designed by Fred Francis- the originator of Scalextric) came out best.

Discussion re the law changes due in 1992 about suppressing electrical interference prompted him to recall: -

"In the 1960s the old 405 line television transmissions were badly affected if someone was running a slot car set near by"

Finally for those of you who like confirmation that your cars are a sound investment, the advertisements included:-

C77 Ford GT40 white £10

C144 Lancia MB £15

HP2 Trackside Accessories £20

K702 Owners stand Unbuilt £20

Tin Plate Maserati vg £35

C68 Aston Martin Sunroof £55

Some things have remained the same - the 1990 Northern Swapmeet was in Leeds on the 4th November. I Trust we will see lots of you there this year on November 26th 2000

Daft Idea Animal visits the Scale family! Thanks Julie - I hope you can spare the time to take over the column on a regular basis.

THE SCALEXTRIC STORY

VIDEO REVIEW

BY THE EDITOR

I like this model - the box is nicely tamponed with pictures of Scalextric Caterhams and the presenter, Steve Berry, of 'Top Gear' fame. The tape itself is a stunning shade of black and it whirrs nicely when inserted into the recorder. Mind you, as it lacks magnatraction, I did have one hell of a job getting it to go round fast corners!

Whoops! You are supposed to watch it - not race it. It is, of course, the latest offering from Scale Models; a professionally produced video about all things Scalextric.

There have been other tapes about our hobby in the past; "30 Years of an Extraordinary Toy" and the two part "History of Scalextric" come to mind. So how does this one compare? I suspect it is aimed at a wider audience than NSCC members since it is more of a lighthearted look at the cars and accessories than a serious history of Scalextric.

The basic format involves Steve Berry driving the full size versions of the cars followed by a discussion with Mark Scale and Chris Brierley about the merits of their 1/32 counterparts. They then get down to the important stuff - playing with them!

It is a real treat to watch Steve Berry switch from over the top TV presenter to big kid playing with toy cars. He was obviously enjoying himself as he hurled the cars round the track and there were times when he almost forgot that he was supposed to be the presenter.

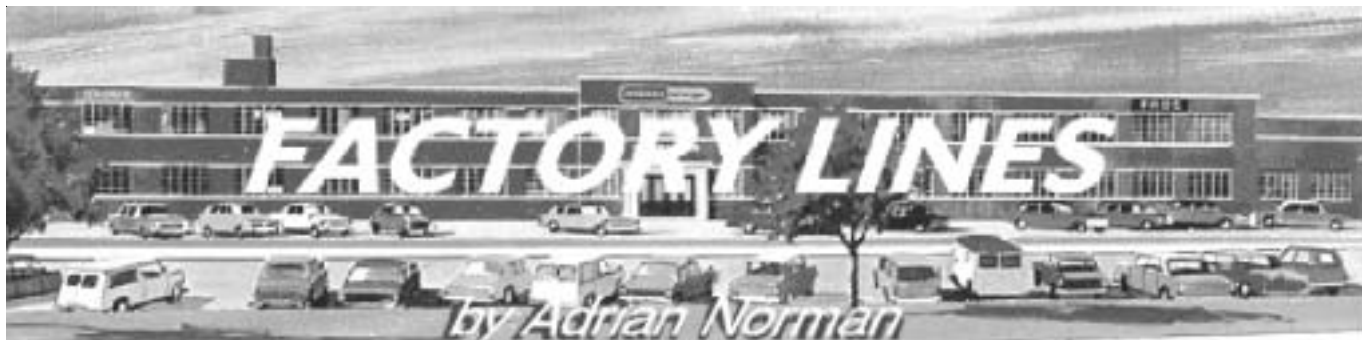
Chris provides the detailed information about the products, while Mark plays the trader's role (he would do that - wouldn't he?) and supplies valuations for the models. At one point Steve crashes a mint T45 Roadtrain and I swear you can see Mark examining the hole in his wallet!

Most of the normal rarities such as James Bond cars are shown to the viewer but I was particularly interested in some of the oddball things, such as Jump Jockey sets, which Hornby have produced over the years. Although they are not particularly valuable, despite their rarity, they provide a fascinating insight into the activities of Scalextric Design Department Daft Idea Animal!

There is also a short section devoted to production activities at Margate which I found very poignant. The shift of production to China was truly the end of an era as yet another great British product left these shores - Fred Francis must be turning in his grave.

A couple of minor criticisms - I found the constant car headlight flashing somewhat irritating; there is also a continuity error when Steve Berry refers to the McLaren MP4/4 as 'the Scalextric car that never was' but forgets to show us the model.

Overall, though, well worth the asking price; I was going to buy one anyway but Julie did herself out of a sale by giving me a review copy!



CATALOGUE.

The new catalogue is out. Labelled as 'Edition 41/ 2nd issue 2000', it shows off the two new Ford Focus cars (C2175 and C2176) in a front cover action shot driving straight at you. Can you guess what's on the back page? Following their new brand imagery the black and yellow chequer flows through the front cover exactly as it does on a box set lid, outer sleeve for a solo car or any of the Scalextric accessory packaging.

Inside, the glossy catalogue is in the same style and format as this year's first issue.

New sets declared in the catalogue are Grand Prix, Beetle Cup, World Rally, Le Mans 24hr and two Super Speedway sets. There's plenty of action in the NASCAR stable, which features heavily in the catalogue, with twelve cars.

Only five F1 teams remain, with only Williams BMW and Benetton having new liveries. Pictures of the new Cadillac are a welcome addition to the catalogue. The GM and Dams liveried cars are due for an end of year release. The rally cars, Beetles and Caterham/Lotus 7 cars remain as per the Issue 1 catalogue.

With the release of a new catalogue I was hoping that there would be more surprises in the shape of new cars. It seems a shame that more specials outside of the standard range have been released than new cars in the range. However, the factory has had its resources stretched ever thinner by the move of production to China. This has put a huge demand on keeping things on track (excuse the pun). I hope that next year brings us some new releases.

The factory has confirmed that an Issue 42 catalogue will be released as normal in January 2001.

C2126 AND C2127 JORDAN F197 VARIATIONS.

Another bout of confusion, this time over the Hornet liveries.

C2126 and C2127 were both issued originally as 'wide axle, slick tyres versions' - (Type 1).

'Narrow axle, grooved tyres' versions of C2126 and C2127 have now been seen - (Type 2).

STRAIGHT FORWARD UP TO NOW!

C2126 has now been seen and documented on my website with a third variation. This time it is on the rear wing. The top plane is decorated with a 'bar-code' of white stripes (Type 3) unlike Type 1 & 2 which have 'Jordan' printed on the top plane.

A LITTLE UNCERTAINTY!

Set C1035 has a Jordan Hornet No.9 which carries reference C2220W. Type variants are uncertain at this time. Your help is again required, but please send evidence!

LARGE BUCKETS OF UNCERTAINTY!

I thought I had cracked the Jordan Hornet saga until I found out more information from the factory. This is where things get hopelessly lost. In retrospect, a little knowledge is dangerous. But I guess, knowing a lot more can be outrageously scary and mind blowing if you are intent on documenting every variation. I hate to think what serious collectors will do! Anyway, having found out this information I didn't want to go to my grave bearing this so I will burden you all with it. If you want to remain sane then skip to the next item.

How can things get worse? Here's how: Three distinct modifications were made to the Jordan. There is no definitive cut-off point and the modifications (1 & 3 below) can't be aligned with Types 1, 2 & 3 above.

Here they are:

Modification 1: The front wing rubbed on the track. A modification was duly made to the way in which the front wing is secured to the nose.

Modification 2: Narrow track axles meant that the front suspension had to be re-worked.

Modification 3: It was reported that the Jordan underpan 'beached' itself on slightly warped plexy track leaving the rear wheels spinning in the air held securely by the magnet sticking to a slightly raised slot rail (relative to a lower track surface due to warping). The modification was to make the tyres of the Jordan slightly larger in diameter.

I don't intend to create 'Type' variations for each model against each of the three existing types (1,2 & 3 above) as I can't afford 24 hour psychiatric nursing!

It is worth noting that requests for these modifications have all been, but not solely, put forward by members of the NSCC. Remember that your opinions do carry weight, so keep sending your letters in. They all get fed back to Hornby.

**SANITY MAINTAINED.
FIRST PICTURES OF THE NEW
CADILLAC NORTHSTAR LM.**

Just to whet your appetite for Christmas here are a few pictures of the new Cadillac



The engine configuration is in-line. The interior is finely decorated and also has a new driver body. Easy access to the engine and rear axle is gained by removing the rear engine and wheel body panel.

The rear view mirror stalks are metal. The front wheels have stub axles, whilst all four wheels have very realistic potted brake discs. One of the most exciting improvements is to



the guide blade. It is now shorter in its shaft allowing it to be fitted as far forward as possible to cars with shallow bonnets/noses. The long sprung contact arms that touch the braids are to be replaced with flat metal quadrants giving a smoother and more constant electrical contact.

**C2094 RENAULT MEGANE 'TOTAL' OR
'ESSO'**

As mentioned last month there are two versions of the dark blue Diac Megane, displaying Total or Esso above the door mounted race numbers. After several discussions with the factory following a dozen emails from our members, it transpires that both versions were set and solo cars. The reference C2094 covers all variants.

C NO. UPDATES

No specific new releases this month that haven't already been documented.

Full listings are available on-line at www.slotcarportal.com.

(As the 'Factory Lines' report emailed it's way out, the office echoed to the sound of a plaintive call ("NURSE!!!!.....Nurse.....NurseNurse...")

EVESHAM SWOPMEET

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 24TH

REPORTS FROM STEVE PITTS AND JULIE SCALE

The latest swappie took place on Sunday 24th September but, as tradition dictates, actually commenced on Saturday evening at The Gardener's Arms, Charlton, near Evesham. This is where the pre swappie evening out takes place and the attendance seems to grow every year. The usual gaggle of Pitts, Normans, Snells, Thoburns and Winters were joined by Joel and Chris Thura. If this event grows much more we will end up having the whole pub to ourselves!

Unfortunately for me Sunday morning follows too quickly and I was up with the birds erecting the signs at 7am. On arriving at the Leisure Centre I was greeted with the dawn chorus from Mark and Julie Scale, Sean Fothergill, Roger Barker and Phil Underwood. Although slightly fewer tables were taken this year there were ten new names bearing a diverse load of goodies. As is always the case I found little time to look around the tables but all were well laden.

Joel Thura had his wonderful collection of Ferrari slotcars on display and I had brought along about a quarter of my F1 memorabilia collection. Both were much admired and added to the overall appeal of the event.

John Jude was busy buying stock although most other stallholders seemed to be concentrating on disposing of it. John's son, Gavin, purchased an Australian G.P. steward's hat and I am sure he will look resplendent posing around the streets of Leeds.

There were some lovely models available. One member had an absolutely perfect yellow Auto Union but found no takers and trade in 60s cars was especially slow.

The attendance was no doubt affected by the torrential rain which descended for most of the day but those who ventured forth were rewarded with a good day out in excellent company and kept well fed and watered by Linda Pitts and Steph Thoburn.

It was good to see faces old and new; Bob Bott and his willing donkey Mark Robertson were kept busy on the NSCC table while Mark Scale needed no less than five tables to display his stock. It was obviously thirsty work judging by the number of mugs of tea seen heading that way.

Traders generally seemed to have a quiet day with many now concentrating on 'internet' sales, though you can't beat seeing the cars in the flesh, my son informed me, as he thrust his newly purchased Porsche and Toyota under my nose.

Steve

Having missed the NEC the week before we had been worried whether any one would have enough fuel to attend Evesham. We made it, along with many others - but there were a few familiar faces not to be seen, and they were missed. In particular Phil Etgart - (who is taking a well earned rest). We were pleased to fill his tables and feel it is only correct that we should also fill the gap in this month's Journal - with the swapmeet review.

However firstly we have to say on behalf of every one in the slot car world: "We will all miss you Phil - and wish you Good Luck in everything you choose to do, we are convinced your commitment and abounding enthusiasm will ensure you always succeed."

Evesham is a very popular meeting, understandably so, the welcome is great and the support was good, although trade was a little slow, as we all get back into the swing after the Summer break.

There were a large variety of stalls, making interesting viewing. A particular eye catcher being the Ferrari dedicated area- a dream selection of Ferrari Slot Racers, with the Ferrari Flag adorning the wall behind.

For Formula One Fans there was a fantastic scrapbook on display, with original 1960s F1 photos and memorabilia; a great car boot find I believe.

Fly have come up trumps again with the release of the Steve McQueen 917, which could be seen piled high on a number of stalls. A sight we are already sure will not be repeated - if the trend set by the SM1 and SM2 continues.

All through the hall there were plenty of bargains to be had. The number of rare collectors items was down on previous years, probably because of the few dealers who were missing, but we saw quite a few happy faces, clutching additions to their cabinets as they left, and some very nice 60s buildings and accessories were snapped up by early morning.

Tribute has to be made to the ladies in the kitchen for the endless supply of tea and bacon butties (sandwiches to you lot from down south) which at one point were being delivered around the hall, by Mr Pitts - assuring that he will never be out of employment for more than a few seconds!

Congratulations Steve & Team. Great event as usual.

See you all at Bishops Stortford

Julie

As you can see I have had to replace Phil with two people. My thanks to Steve and Julie for stepping into the breach.

In conclusion - those of you who think the editor is a highly organised person - read on;

On Friday 22nd September we went to Stratford-On-Avon to see 'Henry V' at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (yes there are other things in life apart from slotcars). We stayed in a local hotel overnight; went shopping in Stratford on Saturday morning and started the three hour drive to Kings Lynn about 3pm. As we were approaching Peterborough I said to Christine "By the way, you do know I am going to a Scalextric thing tomorrow?"

"Yes, where is it being held?"

"A place called Evesham; I've never been there before. Do you know where it is?"

"Yes, dearheart, it is about ten miles away from Stratford!" DOH!!

FROM THE DARK INTO THE LIGHT

BY TONY SECCHI

I have just read and digested Gary Baldwin's letter in the September issue in respect of restoration of old or damaged cars.

On the subject of old glue or paint on bodies, the only remedy that I know of and use is to rub down the surface with very lightweight wet and dry paper and/or a light car polish cleaner like 'T Cut'. Any louvres, lines or vents have to be carefully scored out with the point of a model knife or sharp needle.

A thin coat of clear lacquer is applied as an undercoat and when dry, the appropriate colour can be added. If the model is elderly the stick on transfers can be removed using lighter fuel and stuck back on with 'Prittstick' or similar. However, if the car has been tampo printed then all the original livery will be lost and have to be replaced with waterslide transfers or self adhesive decals. This is not always possible so some compromise may have to be made.

I recently decided to try and revive an engine that had last run over 30 years ago - an American Pittman DC-704 5 pole sidewinder with built in axle and gears. However, the same principles of restoration apply to any electric motor. In the case of the old can motors the endbell contained external brushes whilst the modern endbell has the brushes mounted internally. But in both cases the armature holding the commutator has to be removed from the can leaving the magnets inside. This is generally done by gently folding back the metal lugs of the can housing which hold the plastic endbell. Once they are separated the work can begin.

Examine the parts for signs of obvious damage such as wear on the armature surface. Look for solder that has been melted and thrown off the commutator; It may be found that wires have become detached.

These last two symptoms are bad news as this would indicate overloading and a possible burnt out unit. Solder any loose wires back on to the commutator in the positions from which

they came. Look for physical damage to the windings.

Clean the commutator by rubbing it with a piece of clean, fluff less cloth moistened with lighter fuel. After cleaning in this way the commutator should be smooth and bright.

If it is badly pitted or grooved it is more bad news. It will need to be skimmed in a model lathe. (Not easy-forget it). The brushes may cause the unit to fail if they are excessively worn and should really be replaced (another non easy job). If they are OK they too can be cleaned in the same way as the commutator. While the brushes are being attended to, check the spring pressures in situ by gently lifting each in turn with a cocktail stick. If one spring seems weaker bend it slightly to match the strength of the other.

Returning to the commutator, the insulation between the segments must be below the copper surface (FIG. 1). Using the needle or the cocktail stick scrape out any residue between the pole segments until clear. You may have to soak a tissue in lighter fuel and insert your needle/toothpick if the residue is very hard and gooey. It is essential to do this otherwise the motor will not work under any conditions. When satisfactory re clean the commutator.

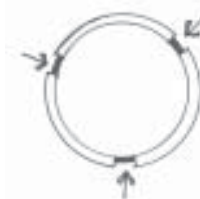


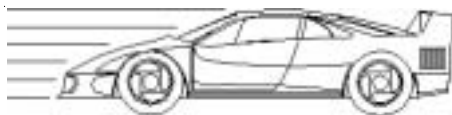
FIG. 1

Re assembly, as ever, is a reversal of dismantling but take particular care inserting the armature back into the can.

Whatever the motor the last check is on the bearings that run the armature. If these are concentrically worn then that is more bad news I am afraid. Like all bearings there should be 'firm play' - just a tiny clearance.

Finally, if all the 'bad news' items are present in one motor then replace it if possible and put it down to experience. If it is just a clean up job then the motor should respond and fire up first time like my Pittman did after 35 years.

Good luck Gary and may the sparks be with you.



BACKTRACK

NO.6 MIKE PACK

This month's subject - Mike Pack - is probably known to most of you as the organiser of the Liphook swapmeet. However, you may be unaware that he was secretary/editor of the club for many years. Mike produced the newsletter from May 1983 to June 1985 (when he handed over to Norman Wheatley) and remained an active member of the committee right up to March 1990. During his time the club went through its first period of major growth and, indeed, it was Mike who changed the format of the Newsletter from its original, photocopied, A4 format to its current A5 size. For once the subject of a Backtrack article was not difficult to locate - check the membership list; a quick phone call and 'Voila' the following was soon on its way to me:-

“In 1982 I was looking for some spares for my old Scalextric cars, which I had owned since the 1960s, so I foolishly rang Hornby to ask if they could help. Of course they could not but they gave me the telephone number of a chap called Roger Gillham. I gave him a ring and from that moment onwards I have been a member of the NSCC.

The editor then was Rob Brittain and in January 1983 I became the assistant secretary; not a good move as in May 1983 I became editor. It was good fun at first; at the time we only had around 100 members but this was soon built up to 400 which was when I was glad to hand over the editor part to Norman Wheatley. I remained secretary until 1990 when Trevor Livingstone took over.

I have some very good memories during those years like Shaun Claremont turning up at Liphook swapmeet in his white Rolls-Royce with his minder and boxes of green E-type Jaguars in various conditions; some with rusty RX motors all selling at between £2-£5 each. Then there was the Swiss member who purchased a complete warehouse full of cars and spares from the late 60s. You could buy mint boxed white/yellow Auto Unions, TR4s, Sunbeam Tigers, French vintage Alfas and Bentleys all for £10 each plus tons of spares for just a few pence.

At a swapmeet in Winchester Steve DeHavilland was selling mint boxed late sixties Spanish cars for £10 each. How times have changed!

It was during my time as secretary that the very first Club cars were produced. Just to confirm the numbers of the limited edition red Alfa and blue Ford Escort:- the Alfa run was for 125 cars and the Escort was 80. Roger Gillham and myself can confirm this as we spent many hours sat on his lounge floor stripping down blue Alfas and red and grey Escorts for the parts to make up the club ones as Hornby would not supply the spare parts.

My collecting is now with all Ninco models, some Fly and SCX models and any others that race well. With my friend Jim Saunders I run the Crofton Racing Centre at Stubbington near Fareham Hants. It is a six lane track using Scalextric super 1/24th track with a lane length of 90 feet. we meet every Wednesday evening. This is a permanent layout and has computer lap counting. We also have junior racing Saturday and Sunday mornings.

I would also like to bring to your attention an NSCC member called Geoff Spencer whom everybody seems to forget. If Geoff had not written to the members after the second swapmeet to get them together again for an event at Petersfield there may not have been a collectors club at all. Any members interested in racing at Crofton please give me a ring on 023 9223 0282.”

Members letters



Dear Brian,

May I say, on my own behalf (and hopefully on behalf of our avid readership) how much I enjoyed seeing Steve Carter's 'Track Talk' back again.

It was the C4 programme featuring his club in the 'Movers and Shakers' series that was incidental in my return to slot car racing after some 35 years.

His erudite and informative articles are a must for my friends and I to read. They rank alongside the excellent contributions by Phil Egtart - and that is praise indeed.

Please force, bribe, cajole or even blackmail Steve into doing more Items, preferably on a regular basis. He has a valid donation to make to the Journal and a readership interest to sustain that.

Best Wishes

Tony Secchi

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Dear Brian,

I would like to, if I may, comment upon Peter Novani's article, 'What a load of old Cobras' printed in the September Newsletter. As I was personally mentioned in the aforementioned article, I feel I have the right to reply.

Firstly, Mr Novani is absolutely correct, the Porsche 917 was powered by an air-cooled flat 12 engine, this fact I am aware of, having avidly followed motor racing from the mid 60s onwards. My love of Ferrari and their magnificent sounding V12 got the better of my memories and emotions while writing the classic sports car article Peter refers to. Yes I own up, where I should have written 'Air cooled flat 12' I wrote 'V12' because I was thinking of my beloved Ferraris. It was a genuine mistake. I'm sorry if anyone found the article misleading by my 'erroneous statement'.

Although I believe Peter Novani's piece was essentially written in 'good humour'; I feel those contributors mentioned in the article may have found Mr Novani's comments rather offensive. Initially, I myself dismissed it in good humour. However, after reading Pierre Collange's letter referring to it in Octobers Newsletter, I re-read 'What a load of old Cobras' again. Indeed, I come off very lightly compared to other reviewers/contributors. Perhaps, in future, such comments referring to submissions from fellow club members are considered carefully before being accepted for publication. There is nothing wrong with good-humoured friendly banter or constructive criticism. It has always been my understanding that we're supposed to be a club with a collective, common passion. A club that supports each other.

Personally, I am happy with my knowledge of a sport I have felt passionately about for most of my life. We all make errors occasionally, but part of the fun of sharing such interests is also sharing information and ideas in a way that benefits everyone and excludes no-one.

Best Regards,

David Wisdom

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Reprinted From Newsletter No. 128 - July 1992

RUNNING AN ELECTRIC-RAIL GRAND PRIX

BY WALKDEN FISHER

Thanks to Julian Rowe for sending in this very early (1950's??) article from an unknown publication.

A New and exciting hobby that has leaped into prominence, and is attracting a considerable number of enthusiasts, is the sport of miniature electric-rail car racing. It is a hobby that calls for a certain amount of ingenuity and skill, both in building and operating the model cars, but its growing popularity is definite evidence of the interest it holds.

It is now possible to stage miniature Grand Prix events in the home, because the scale to which the model cars and tracks are built permits this. In fact, the enthusiasm which has greeted the new hobby can well be compared with the tremendous interest aroused by the advent of the first 00 gauge table-top model railway.

Early in the development of electric-rail model car racing, experimenters soon realised that some definite form of standardisation should be fixed, so that clubs and individuals could be certain that the cars they built would also fit on tracks other than their own. The introduction of standards thus enabled inter-club races to be arranged, and a number of these events regularly take place in various parts of the country.

The now generally recognised standards which have been adopted in the United Kingdom, the U.S.A., and elsewhere are known as "Southport Standards"—so named after the Southport Model Engineering Club, whose members featured prominently in the pioneering of the hobby. The newcomer is therefore recommended to follow these standards also, because in so doing he will find greater opportunities for competition.

The Southport Standards

- (1) All model cars must be built to 1/32nd scale.
- (2) The cars can be fitted with any type of electric motor capable of operating on 12 volts D.C. and suitable for the required scale.
- (3) No car must exceed the maximum overall width of $2 \frac{3}{8}$ in.
- (4) The track guide rail, which also acts as the earth return rail, is $\frac{3}{16}$ in. high.
- (5) The positive rail is $\frac{3}{8}$ in. away from the guide rail on the left-hand side and fitted on the track surface.
- (6) No projections are allowed beneath the car other than the steering guide and contacts.
- (7) All cars must be scale models of full-size prototypes.
- (8) All cars must carry drivers.
- (9) All cars must bear their official racing number clearly displayed on both sides. The numbers to be not less than $\frac{3}{8}$ in. in height.

The scale of 1/32nd—that is, $\frac{3}{8}$ in. to 1 ft. is by far the most popular, and it enables tracks and cars to be built for use in a normal-sized living-room, and to be designed and constructed so that they can be erected or dismantled in a few moments and stored away when not required. An excellent circuit can be accommodated in the area of a table-tennis top. Smaller tracks are possible, and one designed on the figure-of-eight principle incorporating an over-pass is also ideal for use in the home. The cost of such a circuit need not be great, the necessary transformer and controllers, etc., being the most expensive items. The area covered by a track of this nature is approximately 5 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in.

Hardboard is the material generally used for the track base, suitably strengthened on the underside with battens. It should be pointed out that the smooth side of hardboard is not recommended for the track surface as it soon becomes polished by the passing of car wheels. The rougher “underside” affords a better grip for the wheels. Tracks are usually laid on trestles but can also be designed to fit over existing tables.

The cars themselves are accurate scale replicas of full-sized prototypes in outward appearance, and are not at all difficult to build. In fact, anyone with a little ingenuity should find their construction well within their capabilities. They are fitted with Ackerman-type steering, connected to a guide which fits over a “guide rail” on the track. This is raised 3/16 in. above the track surface and also acts as the negative or earth return. Two “wipers” are fitted beneath the cars; one contacts the guide negative rail, and the other, the positive rail, is fixed on the track surface and 3/8 in. away on the left-hand side of the guide rail. This positive rail carries the operating 12 volts D.C., and the whole electrical principle of the hobby is similar to that of two-rail model railways.

Guide rails should be spaced 2 1/2 in. apart all round the circuit. In this manner four rails can be comfortably laid on a 12-in.-wide track. It is possible to purchase 3/16 in. guide rail specially made for the purpose in 6-ft. lengths from Model Road Racing Cars Ltd., Bournemouth, who also produce special fixing pegs for it. Positive rail is also obtainable from the same source.

The guides on the cars do not grip the guide rail in any way, so that if a car is “driven” too fast into a corner it will “run out of road” in the authentic manner! It is here that skill is involved in controlling them—skill and practice that is soon acquired in knowing just where to cut off speed at the approach to a corner, and at what precise point to accelerate out of it.

Controllers of the type used on model railways are utilized to regulate the speeds of the cars, which are under separate control all the time. These controllers are wired

individually into each positive rail circuit. Power units giving a large output, sufficient to run six cars, are available from M.R.R.C. Ltd. Suitable controllers are also available from the same firm.

Returning to the subject of the cars themselves, enthusiasts who prefer to build from scratch will find an answer to their problem of obtaining accurate plans in the great variety published by the *Model Maker* magazine. Many of these plans, including those of outstanding pre-war and post-war Grand Prix and sports cars, are to 1/32nd scale.

A very fine series of 1/32nd scale model car kits, at a reasonable price, is produced by the Scale Model Equipment Co. Ltd., of Steyning, Sussex, and excellent, essential spares for the modeller in this scale are available for sale separately. These include wheels, racing tyres, and other useful components. The kits are intended to be built up into solid models, but many enthusiasts have hollowed out the interiors of the wooden bodies and fitted chassis and motor with great success.

The miniature cars are powered by tiny electric motors, similar to those used in model 00 gauge electric locomotives. These mechanisms turn at around 10,000 r.p.m., and the Scale Speeds attained by the little cars are often in the region of 160 to 180 m.p.h! Particular motors recommended for installation in the models are: the Triang Mk. IV, the “K” Mk. I, and the Romford “Phantom”.

At one period in the hobby’s development, worm gears were considered highly suitable. However, experience and experiments have changed that opinion, and now the most successful drive is obtained by using contrate gears and pinions with a ratio of 3 to 1.

M.R.R.C. Ltd. supply nylon contrates and steel pinions at a reasonable cost, and “Eldi Gears” for 1/32nd scale are obtainable through the magazine *Model Maker*.

Complete steering units of the Ackermantype are also scheduled for production.

The scenic side of the hobby offers plenty of scope, and many of the ideas and methods

contained in the article entitled “Scenery is Important!”, to be found on page 7 of this book, are also applicable to the model car tracks. The miniature racing circuit can be greatly improved by the addition of pits, paddocks, commentary boxes, and other typical structures based on those found on full-sized tracks.

Mention has already been made of the magazine *Model Maker*, and for those in search of the latest developments in this sport, a study of its pages is recommended. It regularly features articles dealing with all aspects of the hobby, together with reports of the various race meetings held from time to time up and down the country, including international events.

“Rail Racing” should not in any way be confused with “Slot Racing”, of which there are

one or two commercial sets now on the market. The tracks for the former are simple in construction and can be laid quite rapidly, whereas considerable difficulties confront the amateur builder in the making of a successful circuit based upon the latter principle.

Today, electric-rail model car racing can be regarded as a definitely established hobby, and it is certainly here to stay. Its popularity will undoubtedly continue to grow as more and more enthusiasts become acquainted with its many thrills and spills.

Strange the things you come across while looking for something else - I found this while searching for early contributions from Phil Egart. Once again the NSCC Newsletter was ahead of the game.

BANK ON BROOKLANDS

BY RICHARD (PUSH IT ROUND THE TRACK) MARKS

I recently attended the Brooklands rail racing event and have also just finished reading the book “Vintage Slotcars” by Philippe de Lespinay. I came away from both experiences feeling all bleary eyed and nostalgic.

I had never heard of rail racing, let alone seen a vehicle, until I read the article by Jeff Davies. I decided to contact him as I only live a short distance from Brooklands. Jeff explained the basic concept and Brian Rogers sent me photocopies of some old magazine articles showing how to build one.

I then spent the next six weeks building a car based on the Napier Railton - trying to keep in line with the original articles and specification, including using an old motor from an Austin Healey. Unfortunately this was to be my downfall as my car barely completed the length of the straight before the motor burnt out.

Despite having spent six weeks making the car, including carving the body out of balsa wood, I did not feel in the least bit disheartened; the encouragement I got from some of the other attendees in attempting to get the thing moving just showed the camaraderie this event produced. I remember racing slotcars back in the early 80s and never experienced this sort of pure enthusiasm.

At the end of the event I did a few laps with one of Jeff’s cars and it was clear that controlling one was totally different to a slotcar. It was more about driving skill and car design than powerful motors and magnets. Slotcars are now reliable and predictable - unlike real racing cars and the two disciplines are completely separate. rail racing (as I found out!) is a leap into the unknown.

I am not saying I am against modern slot racing as I am a keen “born again” collector and I get immense pleasure out of the latest releases. All I am saying is that the event created an atmosphere of real fun - both racing and seeing other people’s creations. I feel that this should not be a one off event and I am even building a small track myself so I can finally see how my car performs with its replacement motor.

I am sure others enjoyed the event as much as I did and if so they should show their support by convincing Jeff to do it again.

No sooner said than done Richard. I understand from Jeff that Brooklands will definitely be repeated next year and an interim event will be held at Abergavenny early in the new year.

MAGNIFICENT MILLE MIGLIA MERCEDES

BY JEFF DAVIES

When Carrera recently announced they were to produce a model of the Stirling Moss 1955 Mille Miglia winning Mercedes 300 SLR I was extremely interested as it was such an historic victory and the first recorded use of pace notes. This car was scheduled to be released in August but has only recently become available. It has been well worth the wait.

It is a really good model of the Mercedes 300 SLR and manages to capture the stylish lines of the original car; it even comes complete with a Stirling Moss driver and Dennis Jenkinson navigator with beard. When I first saw it I thought the windscreen glass looked too thick but looking at pictures of the real car it does seem quite accurate. The only exterior detail that isn't quite correct is that the vent in the bonnet should not be silver. The car is beautifully painted in the correct shade of silver with a finish Fly would be proud of and carries the number 722, as well as two Union Jack flags, one on each head rest. It runs on chrome wire wheels and comparatively tall period tyres. I had the Mercedes with me for the filming of a recent television programme for HTV and tested it on the Ninco circuit that we constructed for the programme.

There are several interesting features in the car including a switch allowing you to reverse the direction of travel which is a very good idea. The car has a sliding adjustable magnet which lets you alter the position forward or backwards from just behind the guide to directly in front of the engine. Positioning the magnet as far forward as possible enables you to slide it slightly around the corners.

The wheels and tyres were surprisingly true and the car performed very well; it proved very damage resistant as it hurtled off the edge of the table. It isn't the fastest car in the world but proved extremely enjoyable to race. In all

an interesting alternative model beautifully finished and a definite improvement on previous Carrera products. Well worth buying.



FABULOUS FORD FOCUS

BY JEFF DAVIES

Recently I feel that Scalextric have had a rather unjustified hammering in the Journal. I think it's important to remember two facts; when I started reviewing cars in the 1980s we wouldn't have had any 1/32 scale slot cars to review without Scalextric. For many years they virtually singlehandedly kept the injection moulded 1/32 scale racing and collecting scene in Britain going. Secondly, and far more importantly, the new Scalextric products are excellent.



Scalextric kindly sent me down a Ford Focus WRC Iridium to do a television programme for HTV. Unfortunately, due to post office ineptitude, the car arrived the day after the programme was filmed so I will use it for a review instead. During the programme we filmed a Scalex tinplate car, an original Bentley and a James Bond Aston Martin to make various points and it really showed what a huge variety of cars Scalextric have made over the years.

The Iridium Focus has an amazingly well finished paint job. I love the way it goes from black, fades through silver and finishes brilliant white. This is easily the most attractive rally car I've seen to date. I like the way they have the mesh grill in the front of the car and bonnet vents. It's also got two full figures, both driver and navigator. You can even see the navigator's pace note written on the board he is holding in his hands.

In the back of the car is both a roll cage

and a full sized spare wheel. Is this the first sidewinder rally car made by any of the major manufacturers? I think the model is an excellent representation of the real car, capturing both the spirit and the overall look perfectly.

The tyres even have a rally style tread pattern on them, which really contributes to the overall feel of the model when you pick it up. The Ford Focus badge is in the correct font and overall this model is finished as well as anything Fly have produced. The only question mark I have is about the back lights. There is nothing wrong with the way they look but it seems rather strange to have painted on lights rather than actual lenses set into the bodywork. Shortly I will be carrying out a full track test of this car which I will publish the results of. This particular model shows how good the latest Scalextric cars are. I would say, judging from the comments I've received about the clear Lamborghini Diablo, where everyone has been thrilled with the brilliant job Scalextric made of them, they are back where they belong - right on top.

READ THE BOOK, SEEN THE FILM!

BY PETER NOVANI

With the thirtieth anniversary of the Steve McQueen film 'Le Mans' almost upon us, Fly have chosen to mark the occasion by releasing a 'Steve McQueen Collection' of slotcars. Coincidentally, Michael Keyser recently had his book 'A French Kiss with Death' (daft title!) published. Although the tome is expensive at £39.99, it does recount the intriguing behind-the-scenes story of the 1971 motor racing feature film.

McQueen, who died of a cancer related illness in 1980, was not only a famous film star, but also a self confessed 'petrol head.' The film was the culmination of a long held dream of his to make the ultimate motor racing film; a riposte to the seminal 1966 'Grand Prix' epic that starred fellow American actor James Garner. Filmed over a six month period by McQueen's company Solar Productions, 'Le Mans' captures the very essence of that golden era of endurance sports car racing. A pity then that your local video store is unlikely to possess a copy of the 'Le Mans' film. However, it is occasionally shown on TV, and an American format video does exist.

Enthusiasts who have seen the film or read the book will undoubtedly savour Fly's latest offerings. Central to the collection's appeal is the fact that it is officially endorsed, as the trademark facsimile signature on the box confirms. Although lavishly packaged, it is bereft of any relevant car, driver or race profiles. Information that would surely have enriched a collector's enjoyment of an otherwise excellent concept. The inclusion of such facts would be most welcome, should Fly produce another special collection. Then again, excellence is only a stepping stone to perfection. Hopefully, they will take that next step forward.

Despite the dubious price hike, Fly has had little trouble persuading collectors to part with £40 for each car. And with demand outstripping supply, these little beauties are selling like the proverbial hot cakes. In fact the SM1 and SM3 versions virtually sold out before they came onto

the market. So, not wishing to miss out, I (belatedly) placed an order for all three - even if it meant enduring a bread and water diet for a month or so! Fortunately, Sean Fothergill managed to obtain the complete set for me. Phew!

PORSCHE 908 (SM1)

This ex-works Porsche 908/2 open 'spyder' (or flunder) was entered by Solar Productions for McQueen to co-drive with Peter Revson in the 1970 Sebring 12 Hours. They finished second overall, less than 25 seconds behind a well driven works Ferrari 512S. An heroic effort when considering that McQueen raced with a broken left foot encased in plaster following a motor bike accident. FLY used their existing second-generation 908 mould for this interpretation of a relatively plain white race car. However, it is faithful to the original, including the intricate pinstriping. Although the box photos shows the car with headlight covers, it raced with and without them during the traditional once round the clock event. As you would expect, the driver's figure represents McQueen complete with minute tamponed American flag, Gulf logo and even the driver's name. Superb!

PORSCHE 908 (SM2)

For the 1970 Le Mans 24 hour race, Solar entered their Sebring race car. Now repainted in dark blue with a central white stripe and pinstriping in red, it was fitted with prominent front and rear film camera cowlings. These contained one forward and two rear facing (driver activated) 35-mm movie cameras, enabling Solar to garner actual race footage. Inevitably, carrying heavy film equipment transformed the handling into the 'white knuckle' variety. Therefore, it was never going to be a contender for overall honours. Nonetheless, with Herbert Linge and Jonathan Williams (the latter helping Keyser with his book) sharing the driver duties it was an unclassified finisher. Fly have skilfully incorporated all the important features that make

this 908/2 so distinctive. By the way, it is Williams (red helmet) shown at the helm of the 'camera car.' However, before bestowing too much praise upon Fly's efforts my comments are tempered by one or two concerns. The purists ('anoraks') amongst us will argue that Fly have omitted various minor details on both cars. The most obvious being the missing front wheel arch aerofoils that the Solar 908 raced with. But, having said that, we are in danger of losing sight of the fact that they are 'merely' slotcars, albeit rather impressive ones!

And yet it is puzzling that the race photos on both boxes (they are also published in various books) do not allude to those elusive front aerofoils. On closer inspection it transpires that 'someone' has surreptitiously altered the original photos on the box to remove any reference to the aerodynamic devices. Altering race photos in such a deceptive manner is misleading and should be actively discouraged. "Facts are stubborn things" as someone once said.

PORSCHE 917 (SM3)

Thankfully, the third and final car in the McQueen trilogy is free from such controversy. An often held misconception is that Steve McQueen actually raced one of the legendary Porsche 917s. Although, there were rumours of him co-driving one with Jackie Stewart in the Le Mans race, Solar's financial backers 'Cinema Center' had other ideas and vetoed the project. So, regrettably he only ever 'raced' a 917 during filming.

The actual race version of No.20 was one of the John Wyer Automotive (JWA) Porsches 917K short tails entered for the 1970 Le Mans classic. The 'K' stands for kurz, that's German for short. Resplendent in the evocative Gulf sponsored colours of pale blue and orange, the car was driven by Jo Siffert and Brian Redman. During the early hours and with a commanding lead of seven laps, Siffert over revved the engine with dire mechanical consequences. Following the race Solar borrowed or acquired various 917s for filming purposes. The main focal point of the film was Michael Delaney's (McQueen's character) Porsche 917 painted in look-a-like No.20 JWA colours. As the script dictated that

Delaney would eventually be involved in a crash, a driverless remote controlled Lola T70 MkIIIB disguised as his 917 was sacrificed for that spectacular crash sequence!

Fly have rightly chosen to model the film version of the 917. Hence it comes complete with a driver's figure that has Delaney's metallic blue open face crash helmet, plus appropriate detailing on the race overalls. Get the magnifying glass out and be suitably impressed! This car differs slightly from previous Fly 917s, as it includes a small aerofoil linking the top of the upswept rear deck. Fly have found an ingenious and subtle way to locate the additional small wing. In theory, it should be capable of withstanding the rigours of racing. Although I doubt many Steve McQueen slotcars will be used for that purpose!

Searching for a criticism revealed that, although Fly have modified their existing 'high fin' 917 mould, they failed to include the additional NACA ducts on the rear buttresses. On this occasion Fly decided not to remove the ducts from the race photos! Also the area behind the rear window where the roll bar support struts are exposed, should be shrouded in bodywork on this version. However, those errors do not detract from an otherwise fine representation of a memorable race (and film) car.

CONCLUSIONS

The Steve McQueen Collection epitomises the advancements made by Fly in the art of slot-car manufacturing. Their raison d'être is choosing historically important race cars to model, then replicating them as exquisitely detailed and finished miniatures. I tend to think of them as 'coat hangers to hang my memories on.' Admittedly, the asking price might be an anathema to the less zealous collector. Hesitate at your peril though, as they are becoming difficult to obtain (as a set) with correspondingly exorbitant price tags a reality.

This timely tribute to McQueen's racing exploits says much about Fly's admiration for a man who shared their obvious passion for sports car racing. Undoubtedly, as a collection these cars are destined to become a footnote in the annals of slot-car history. Bravo Fly!

GOODBYE!

In some respects it was a surprise to find myself writing this letter because as you know Scalextric has been a very major part of my life for the last 10 years. However of late it has become increasingly difficult to juggle career and hobby and be effective in both and as I am sure you are well aware I am the type of person that gives 110%, or nothing.

I have found myself unable to pursue the hobby with the passion, drive and enthusiasm that I would wish to and therefore over the last six months have come to the conclusion that I will cease my Scalextric collecting activities in order to be able to focus effectively on my career and also in order to get my life back. When you are fully absorbed 16 hours a day seven days a week something eventually gives and I feel that it is better that it is the hobby that gives rather than me!

I have had great fun over the years and come to know a great many people across the entire globe who I would now count as friends and at the same time gained many hours of enjoyment from exploring the world of slot cars.

It was not an easy decision, but I have taken the step of withdrawing totally from the hobby and so have sold my collection in its entirety to Scale Models. Gary Cannell will continue to operate MRE without my input and future 'Slotswap' events are in the hands of Steve de Havilland and Nigel Copcutt.

Knowing my engrained collector's instinct I will no doubt resurface in a hobby near you at some point in the future, but this time I will be in a far less prominent role. I started collecting for fun and somehow the fun got lost in the shuffle; learn the lesson and make sure that it doesn't happen to you! I wish you many more years of enjoyment with Scalextric.

Regards, Phil Etagart
'The Enthusiastic Collector'

SHINING STAR

A BRIEF COLLECTORS GUIDE TO PHIL ETGART

BY THE EDITOR

A totally unique model this one. It never had a C number and the mould was mysteriously destroyed after only one prototype was manufactured.

It was first mentioned in the September 1991 newsletter under the "new members" heading but nothing more was heard about it until March 1992 when "Phil Etgart Wanted" adverts began to appear. These continued for some time, together with occasional mentions of sightings at swopmeets.

However, its existence was finally confirmed in the January 1995 issue (Alan's first as editor) with the publication of a Bishops Stortford Swopmeet report by Phil Etgart. This was closely followed in February by the very first "Brief Guide" to the SD1 Rover and, from that time onwards, I doubt an issue has been

published without an Etgart contribution.

Its fame soon spread worldwide with regular articles in the Dutch and Australian magazines (and probably the French and Spanish ones I would guess). Without a shadow of doubt Phil's contribution to the hobby, in general, and the NSCC, in particular, has been truly mind boggling.

His retirement will leave a large hole in the Journal which will be very difficult to fill but, by way of a goodbye, there is one last brief guide to read - everything you always wanted to know about the Scalextric Mercedes range.

Finally, if anybody knows of a second model made by a Hornby employee in his lunch break will they please let me know - I will pay good money for a replacement to the collection!

BYE-BYE PHIL!

When Brian told me that Phil 'The Pen' (or should it now be 'The Keyboard'?) Etgart had taken the decision to cut off from Scalextric completely I was more than a little surprised, as Phil has been a very active member of the NSCC for a long time. With his various business interests in the hobby he was, it seemed to me at least, here to stay.

The first time I met Phil was at a swopmeet (I think it was Liphook) where this new member was at the corner of the stage with a vast number of boxes in front of him full of bits of Scalextric cars. From memory they were mostly BRMs and Brabhams. There were probably some FJ bits as well, as that would have drawn me to him. Talking to Phil I discovered that he had seen an advert for an E-Type Jaguar which he had gone to see. The Jaguar was not in the best of health, being a bit yellowed and warped, and I never did discover

FROM ALAN SLADE

if Phil bought it or not. But the interesting thing was that the seller also had loads of other Scalextric bits as well and it was these that Phil had on his stand.

Knowing Phil's instincts these were probably soon converted into a profit so that the Jaguar would have been free if he bought it!

Gradually over the years I got to know Phil through meeting at swopmeets and the occasional purchase (I was definitely NOT one of Phil's best customers!) and when I took over the reins of Editor Phil was one of my backbones of support with his swopmeet reports, articles, snippets of information and photographs and material for the club.

I am sure he will not mind me saying this as we both have a similar 'hand' when it comes to writing, i.e. not exactly copperplate, but during my time as Editor I used to suffer from very mixed emotions when a fax arrived with

the opening words *A BRIEF COLLECTORS GUIDE TO ...* as I knew that at least 12, and quite often 16 or more pages, would follow detailing the history of a particular Scalextric model. This would then involve me in three or four hours typing as I transferred Phil's written word (and corrections) to the computer. I would then print it and sent it back to Phil for proof-reading. This system seemed to work well until last month when we discovered that one of his articles written a long time ago, and which had been on the club web pages for over two years, had a serious factual error in it!! It is now corrected.

Speaking to Phil about these articles it seemed that they were nearly always written in

his car while he was travelling around. I didn't like to ask if the car was moving at the time! Just as I was about to hand over the reins to Brian, Phil started e-mailing his articles, so Brian has had it easy!!!

Reading back over this it almost reads like an obituary. But please note that reports of Phil's death are greatly exaggerated, he has only left the NSCC.

Phil, Thanks for all the help and support you gave me while I was Editor. Take a breather and don't now start putting in 112 hour weeks at work as the idea was to get your life back.

Any volunteers for Quiz Master at the next HH Weekend?

AND FROM RICHARD WINTER

News of Phil's retirement must have come as a great surprise to many of you but Christine and I have been aware for some time that the effort and commitment that Phil put into our hobby was taking its toll not only on him but also his family and home life. We last saw Phil in "dealing mode" at Brooklands where after the boxes of cars etc. had been dealt with we had a very pleasant stroll around the old buildings and track and Phil talked with great enthusiasm of his first collecting love, that of records to which I understand he is returning.

I first met Phil over 10 years ago when I was a raw collector and this large and friendly individual seemed to know, and was willing to impart, all there was to know about Scalextric. Over the years I came to realise that this encyclopaedic knowledge only came through a great deal of hard work and a willingness to go anywhere, to not only find those rare items that most of us can only dream about, but also to advance his and our knowledge of the hobby. I am not sure how many cars and "bits of paper" I have bought and swapped with Phil over the years but I know my collection, and I'm sure many of yours, would not be the same if it wasn't for Phil. His ability and enthusiasm for the

hobby has kept him going and has encouraged new collectors into our world and that of the NSCC.

We will never be able to replace Phil when it comes to his wonderful articles that even my wife looked forward to reading. He was so easily able to capture the enjoyment of a swopmeet and also tell us what we had missed yet again or those finds that came his way but never mine, but such is life! Even when you thought that you had collected all there was whether it be range of cars or the catalogues he was often able to say "you know there is a variation on that" or "have you seen this!" Having taken a look at the photo on Mark Scales' web site there are cars there that I never knew existed and will probably never see again but that is what Phil achieved in the hobby.

I will miss Phil's articles and his presence at swopmeets and fairs, as I am sure we all will. On behalf of everyone in the NSCC I would like to thank him for all he has done for our hobby and the club and wish him well in the future in whatever he chooses to do and I trust that having got rid of all, and I mean all, of his collection he enjoys whatever life will bring him and if he wants to write that occasional article we will never say no!

AT THE SIGN OF THE THREE POINTED STAR

AN OVERVIEW OF SCALEXTRIC MERCEDES BENZ MODELS

BY PHIL ETGART

When I sometimes sit back and reflect on what might have been, I often muse how nice it would have been had Minimodels produced a mid 50s Mercedes 190 saloon to complement the Jaguar 2.4 saloon. The Mercedes Scalextric story is a reasonably concise one effectively restricted to six models. Over the years there have been slot car models of Mercedes-Benz cars from various other manufacturers including Airfix, Ninco and even Tri-ang's sister product Minic Motorway. This article restricts itself to Scalextric models only.

C-75 Mercedes 190SL Roadster

This model is the most stunningly beautiful Mercedes ever (for my money anyway) but scarcely does justice to the real car. It was introduced in 1964 (catalogue 5) and in the following year was available in set 50S (which also contained a C-74 Austin Healey 3000). The following year (1966) the set was superseded by 2 sets, set 65 including the penalty chicane and set 90 which featured 2 lanes but 4 cars (Merc 190/Healey/Lotus F.J./Cooper F.J.). Both sets are reasonably difficult to obtain in mint boxed condition. The Mercedes roadster itself was principally produced in two colours. However significant colour variations exist on both. The blue 190SL is normally a turquoise blue but does also exist in a very bright blue (similar to the colour picture in the centre spread of the first edition of the track plans booklet). The white car also has a variation in that there is a more unusual cream version. However if looking for the cream versions ensure the colour is even both inside and outside the body as the white cars yellow easily.

In 1967 the tooling for the Mercedes was amended to allow production of the James Bond

set baddies' car. Hence from that stage onward the standard version incorporated some of these changes. It now had no tonneau and a hole in the middle of the right hand side (where the passenger in the Bond car would have been fitted) and additional moulding inside the offside (right hand) rear wing (to allow the flip over spring mechanism to be fitted to the Bond Mercedes). Curiously the notch in the body to retain the flip over spring on the Bond Car was not evident on standard versions, suggesting this was probably hand cut! Ignoring head size changes it is reasonable to classify the full tonneau car as type 1, and the no tonneau/extra moulding as type 2.

There have been a number of well documented colour variations of the 190SL over the years. I am unsure which are type 1 and which are type 2 (help anyone?) However 190SLs are known to exist in red (believed 3 only), green (believed 2 only), one in a semi-legendary set alleged to also contain a blue Healey), dark purple (which turned up as a body only at a Hackney boot sale many years ago and is in fact a type 2) and an example (documented in N.S.C.C. newsletter of the mid 80s) of the road going 190SL in black, which the factory had presumably made up using a Bond 190SL body.

When buying 190SLs the most vulnerable points are the guide mounting post, which splits (in common with the C74 Healey 3000) and damage/loss of bumpers and/or screen, which is fairly common. Original bumpers and screens are difficult to obtain. When buying rare colours it is worth noting that the red and green cars exist in small numbers (1&2 of each) as dyed cars- lets be careful out there! The 190SL was dropped from the range in 1968 (catalogue 9).

C-94 Race Tuned Mercedes 190SL

In 1966 Tri-ang introduced their range of 'Race Tuned' cars in an attempt to counter the growing erosion of their market by an (at the time) seemingly ever increasing influx of high performance U.S. slot cars. Unlike many of the range the Mercedes, and Healey were not fitted with the improved swivel guide (would it have fouled the front axle?), and instead only benefited from race-tuned stickers and stripes, and the black sided (hotter armature) RX motor. The race tuned version is harder to obtain than the standard version (C75) and particularly difficult to obtain boxed.

The race tuned 190SL was produced in the same two colours, blue & white and also exists in bright blue (cream variation not seen yet). The C94 race tuned Mercedes 190SL was dropped from the range in 1968 (catalogue 9).

C-32 Mercedes Benz 250SL

This model was originally manufactured for the Spanish market commencing in 1967. The original catalogue listed the 'Pagoda Roof' 250SL as a 230SL. But it is not believed that any models were produced with 230SL rather than 250SL on the underpan. The only prototype I have seen had minor moulding differences and was produced in red with a cream roof. The cars were principally available in five colours with one or two variations in roof colour. The following are widely accepted as normal production, but other combinations have been seen (it is not believed that cars with matching roof colours are correct).

Body	Roof
White	Black
Beige	White or Maroon
Green	White
Maroon	White
Black	White

In 1968 (catalogue 9) the C32 was introduced into the UK range as one of a series of cars whose bodies were moulded in Spain, but

assembled in the UK using UK components. The UK versions were restricted to two colours white/black roof and beige/white roof. The underpans still had 'Made in Spain' stamped into them, but the cars came with a UK version of the RX motor and were supplied in the (chequered, window both sides) race tuned box. As with all of the Spanish derived range (C34 E-Type, C37 BRM, C39 Honda, C41 Ferrari 330 GT, C42 McLaren, C43 Mercedes Wankel etc.) it had a reasonable run in the UK, finally disappearing in 1972 after approximately four years in the range.

Unsurprisingly the white and beige models are reasonably common. Green and maroon can normally be found with a search, but the black C32 is an extremely difficult model to obtain. The 1993 red Vintage Series Roadsters have been seen with black, white or green roofs (which were remanufactured in Spain in the late 1990s).

The C32 was also manufactured by the



Mexican factory and exists in a variety of colours including white/red roof, red/white roof, green/white roof, blue/white roof, blue/blue roof, orange/white roof and orange/orange roof.

C33/8353 Mercedes 250SL Roadster

Originally introduced in Spain (the year after the hardtop) in 1968, the roadster was not available in the UK. Consequently (with the possible exception of the black roadster) they are considerably more expensive than the same colour in the C32 'Pagoda roof'. The C33 was produced in the same five colours as the C32 (white, green, beige, black and maroon).

The most vulnerable part of the C33 is the windscreen/screen frame, and prior to the vintage series reissue of 1992, it was quite common to find C33 with damaged screen/screen frames. The reissue enabled a number of C32s to be converted to C33. However the 2nd series driver platform is a slightly different shade of beige to the original, and so you need to know which is which! As with C32's the white and beige are easiest to find (mint boxed examples are in excess of 50% more expensive than m/b C32s), and again the black car is extremely difficult to obtain.

In 1992 Exin manufactured this car in a certificated limited edition of 5000 as the second of their 'Vintage Series' cars. The 8353 reissue of C33 was principally manufactured in red. However a small number exist in orange (it believed around 80 escaped the factory) due to a colour matching error, and a handful of bodies were rerun in black, and in white during the period of the Exin factories closure. This reissue is now gradually becoming more difficult to obtain. The car also appeared in the mid 80s in high quality resin bodies in yellow and silver.

The C33 was manufactured in a variety of colours by the Mexican factory. These include orange, green, white, blue and red. The C33 was deleted from the Spanish range in 1972 after 4 years production.

C-44 Mercedes Wankel 111

This model was produced by the Spanish factory between 1970 and 1972. It was a replica of the prototype that Mercedes produced in the late 60s (also modelled by 'Corgi Toys' in their 'Whizz Wheels' range). Only two examples of the real car were built, (one of which was on display at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in 1995), and Mercedes decided not to develop the Gull Wing door model any further.

The Spanish factory produced the car in orange (the correct colour), white, yellow, green and two shades of red. With the exception of the very rare dark red and bright red cars, these models are reasonably affordable and easy to obtain.

As with the C32 the C44 was moulded in

Spain and assembled in the UK. British colours were orange and white. The cars were sold in the UK in the blue based clear flip topped plastic 'Super Formula' box and the blue card window box. They were only available in the UK from 1972 (catalogue 13) to 1974. (Catalogue 15).

It is fairly common to find these cars



missing their wing mirrors, rear bumper, exhaust and rear panel all of which are available as repro parts.

The model was also manufactured in Mexico in the same colours as Spain and allegedly in brown.

7033/C-019 Mercedes 190 2.3 16v

The next Mercedes to be produced was in the Lexan bodied, space framed chassis SRS 1 series. It was produced again, initially for the Spanish market. It was in the Spanish range between 1985 (7033) and 1990 (9001), and between 1987 (catalogue 28) and 1989 (catalogue 30). It was imported into the UK as one of six UK SRS1 models (Peugeot 205, Skool Porsche, Totip Lancia, Ferrari F1, McLaren F) as C019. As with most white SRS1 cars the bodies often yellow, and as with all SRS cars the body is prone to splitting if crashed enthusiastically! The SRS 190 is also known to exist in silver presumably from a spare body pack.

2201 Mercedes 280 CE

Introduced in the same year as the SRS Mercedes 190E, the 280CE was a departure into yet another different branch of the Scalextric range. The 280CE was an off road 4X4 jeep type vehicle, not broadly dissimilar to a Suzuki Vitara to look at. The model was produced in

the Spanish S.T.S (Super Traction System) range. These charming models were produced in a smaller scale than the main range (around 1/40th scale I believe), and were the first models in the Scalextric range to feature



proper 4 wheel drive. In common with some later 4WD models the motor drove from both ends of the armature, but due to the size of the model the motor had to be diagonally mounted. In common with the 1/32nd T.T range issued five years later the cars were not fast but were fitted with a drop arm arrangement which allowed them to clamber over all sizes of obstacles that were incorporated into the special brown 'Rough Terrain Track'.

The Mercedes 280CE was produced in four colours/liveries, white/Rothmans, orange/Jaguar, blue/Pioneer and red/Marlboro. In common with other STS models the bodies are believed to have surfaced in other colours at the time of the closure of the Exin factory (1993), although in theory the STS had ceased production by 1989. The models were available in sets, and also as separate boxed items.

7041/9009 Sauber Mercedes 'AEG'

1989 saw the introduction of a second Mercedes-Benz in the SRS range. The Group C Sauber Mercedes was issued in the black 'AEG' livery. It was the last car to be issued in the SRS 7000 series and was only available in Spain. With the renumbering of the SRS range in 1990 the 7041 Sauber Mercedes became model No. 9009.

9011 Sauber Mercedes C10

Introduced in 1990 with the renumbering on the SRS range to the 9000 series. The C10 was the second SRS livery of the Sauber. In Group C/LeMans silver livery racing No.62. This

attractive looking model was only available for a year or so, and pre dated the Hornby Scalextric Sauber Mercedes by one year.

C468/189 Sauber Mercedes C9/88

Following hot on the heels of Hornby's existing Group C cars (C382 Jaguar XJR9 and C436 Porsche 962) 1990 saw the release of C468 Sauber Mercedes in the familiar silver livery. Initially the car was issued as a separate boxed item only, sporting racing number 62 and yellow mirrors. This particular version of the Sauber was then featured steaming towards you, just a nose ahead of a C463 Shell Porsche 962 on the cover of the 32nd catalogue (1991). This was slightly unexpected as the cover of the catalogue is normally reserved for the jewels in the crown of that year's model range.

The endurance Sauber Mercedes next appeared in the 1992 LeMans 24 hour set (C647) once again doing combat with the Shell 962. Simultaneously the Sauber was issued in a second racing number (No 61 fitted with red mirrors). The C189 was available again both as a separate boxed item and in the sports prototype set (C726), when it was paired with the Porsche 962 in predominately white Repsol livery.

The C468 was dropped from the range of separate boxed cars by the end of 1992. By the end of 1993 both sets featuring the silver Saubers disappeared from the catalogue. At the end of 1994 the C189 disappeared from the range, meaning the silver Mercedes was no longer available in the UK range, until they appeared briefly in the twin packs that were issued through Beatties in 1997.

C445/C 'AEG' Sauber Mercedes

Having followed the SRS range with the silver Sauber, 1994 saw the introduction of the black Sauber in the Hornby Scalextric range (although in a slightly different livery). The car was introduced as C445 racing No 61 as a separate boxed item, and also as racing No 62 in the new LeMans 24 hour with mega-sound set (C812). The set matched the No 62 Sauber with the white Toshiba Porsche 962. The No 61 separate boxed car was deleted at the end of 1995, whilst the No 62 car in the LeMans 24hr set continued to be available into the 1997 range (catalogue 38). The 1997 catalogue saw C445 (No 61) reappear as a boxed item. It is worth noting that two versions of the aerofoil exist. The difference being on the end panel which is either black with a silver 'AEG' logo printed on, or red with 'AEG' showing through in black.

C Mercedes C Class

In response to the cars success in the DTCC 1996 saw Scalextric issue a C-Class Mercedes saloon. The car and its sister car (Vauxhall/Opal Calibra) were introduced as entry level models. In order to remain within pocket money range they were fairly basic but functional; indeed it has been remarked that on certain circuits the accompanying budget GP cars, Navico/Simpson/Avon/Sally Ferries are the best performing, therefore the design department seem to have succeeded in meeting their objective. It is true to say that these models are not particularly popular with collectors, due to the resultant lack of detail (particularly the smoked glass and the lack of interior, last seen on the Pontiac Firebird). The same is true of the last budget saloon the Metro 6R4. Mercedes C-Class's issued to date are as follows:

C699AMG Mercedes C-Class 'Promart' yellow racing No5 – issued 1996 as both a set car (set C659 Eurochamps) and a separate boxed item deleted from the 1998 catalogue.

C601AMG Mercedes C-Class 'Tabac' – black racing No 3 – issued 1996 as a separate boxed item only deleted from the 1998 catalogue.

C2032 D2 Mercedes C-Class – silver racing No 2. Issued in 1997 as a standard boxed item.

C2038 D2 Mercedes – silver with D2 logo printed all over the car in white. Racing No1. Issued 1997 in Super Touring set (C1000)

C2033 Mercedes C-Class – Team Persson - predominantly blue/lime green band round lower third. Issued 1997 as a separate boxed item.

C2072 Mercedes C-Class 'Daim' – Predominately red car issued in 1998 as separate boxed item & in set C1016 'Super Saloons' (with 'Opel Line' Calibra)

Whilst the Chinese manufactured Mercedes and Calibra undoubtedly have more of a plastic toy feel than a model car feel, this is to be expected in the lower end of the range. Whilst a driver platform and clear glass would help immensely (surely an existing driver platform could be adapted to save the cost of a new tool). It has to be said that to Hornby's credit, the tampo detail has improved such that one or two of these cars are beginning to look more acceptable to the collectors eye (particularly the C2038 D2 Mercedes and C2030 Team Rosberg Calibra).

..... And so the story of the three pointed star of Mercedes through the history of Scalextric draws to a close for now. Whilst other manufacturers have produced models of other cars (particularly Airfix/MRRC models of pre war GP cars, especially the wonderful MRRC 4WD model) undoubtedly Scalextric offers the most comprehensive range by far. All we need now is a F1 pace car based upon the existing C-Class body moulding and a Stirling Moss 300SLR (now maybe I am dreaming!!!)

Time moves on and, since this article was written the SLK Mercedes has been added to the range. Anybody care to do an update?

**“That's All Folks!”
So Long Phil - enjoy your
retirement.**