



# NSCC

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The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

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### EDITOR

Brian Rogers  
27 Paige Close  
Watlington  
King's Lynn  
Norfolk  
PE33 0TQ

Tel/Fax:- 01553 813090  
e-mail:- editor@nsccl.co.uk

### TRADE ADVERTISING AND WEBSITE

Alan Slade  
The Old Schoolhouse  
Bridgefoot  
Strathmartine  
Angus  
Scotland  
DD3 0PH

Tel/Fax:- 01382 828670  
e-mail:- sales@nsccl.co.uk  
webmaster@nsccl.co.uk

## "He represented all that was best in Motorsport"

**F**resh starts! Sunday 25th March was New Year's Day in the Old Calendar. (Well this is Norfolk). It also heralded the first race meeting of the year at Snetterton and, true to form, it was absolutely freezing but we carried out our usual rituals.

First port of call was the Archie Scott-Brown memorial on the side of the scrutineering bay (yes, Archie the editorial cat is indeed named after this famous racing driver). Next time you look at that Lister-Jaguar in your Scalextric collection spare a thought that, in 1957, Archie Scott-Brown simply dominated the British sports-racing car season. In all, he won 11 out of 14 races, once finishing second, breaking the lap record after a long delay in the 13th and retiring from the remaining event. During every one of those race meetings, Archie's Lister-Jaguar either broke or equalled the relevant lap record. An awesome performance by any able bodied driver but Archie was severely disabled with only one useable arm! I can thoroughly recommend the book "Archie and the Listers" to anyone who wants to learn more about this remarkable man.

We then had a walk round the circuit before alternately jumping up and down on the banking to keep warm and sloping back to the car to recuperate for the next race. As this was primarily a Caterham meeting we were able to play a new game - "spot which car Scalextric will bring out next!" Someone at Snetterton had also had a visit from Daft Idea Animal as the gravel trap at Russell bend had been replaced by grass. Before long a Caterham executed the first off of the season and was soon buried up to its axles in mud; the rescue truck joined in the fun and we had a caution period while a second truck was called in to rescue the first one. Toy cars may be fun but the real thing is better!

**And Finally** - apart from pieces from the regular contributors my article bank is nearly empty; next month's issue is liable to be very thin indeed without some fresh input - over to you!

*See you at Loughborough*  
*Brian*



This month has turned up a couple of highly sought after items in the shape of Jaguar XJ220 and BMW 320i cars. The Jaguar Enthusiasts Club commissioned a special XJ220 in dark metallic green with leaping Jaguars and their logo printed on the car. The next surprise release was for a company called Printair who have released two beautifully liveried BMW 320i cars in blue and white.



*See page 25 for more details*

Feedback from the membership indicates that not just the latest livery, but all versions of the Williams BMW F1 cars are quite hard to get hold of. The Porsche GT3R is due for release very soon and I can promise you that it is a really good racer as well as featuring the usual high quality finish. The observant amongst you will notice that whilst the catalogue artwork shows the nose section of a Super Cup Porsche the actual Scalextric version has the GT3R nose. The Opel Astra V8 is still on schedule. Looking ahead towards the end of the year there will be, according to the Scalextric reps at the annual UK toy show, a new Subaru and two brand new Formula 1 cars for release later this year.

To confirm last months report about the Argos TVR set, the packaging does in fact have Mercedes CLKs on the box lid with a polythene

window showing what cars are inside. The artwork shows two GT cars roaring off into the sunset during an endurance race; their silhouettes being quite shadowy and indicating that it is generic 'GT racing' artwork. Scalextric have confirmed that they are using a generic box lid where appropriate. We can expect to see more Argos sets in the future with the same lid but with different cars inside. The lid doesn't indicate a set 'C' number or which cars are inside, so be careful!

The annual Hornby Hobbies/NSCC Special Weekend event is now pencilled in for September this year. It's a little later than normal but still promises to be a very special event where you can get the chance to speak with the people who design, make and sell the product. Keep your eyes peeled during the coming months for information on how you can apply to attend this special event.

Oh yes, those snails! It was bizarre that O'Neils breweries chose a Scalextric motorised 'snail' to run a contest for Guinness. Gardeners think that a pot of beer stood in the garden will attract a load of snails that will fight for the privilege of drowning themselves in the peculiarly inviting aromatic liquid. But we know better, don't we! Odd, too, that VW Beetle chassis were used to power the 4 inch high snail shells. Snails mounting beetles! Surely, the beetles are far too quick for such ponderous beings! You're probably wondering whether Scalextric are going to release a set called 'Attack of the killer snails' or 'Snail Trailblazers'. Well, thankfully not. Gimmick sets are not in favour at the moment and no amount of beer will sway Hornby Hobbies to go down that trail. You'll no doubt be relieved to know that Scalextric had no involvement in the provision of the Scalextric 'Snail' vehicles! ■

# A 'Day In The Life'

## Part 4 - Stereo lithography

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

**W**hen the design is finished the first 'stereo' models are made in a resin-based material. The CAD data is sent to an external bureau to make an epoxy resin sample. All components have to be made; nothing can be left to chance. So, exact details are sent to the bureau for every component from body and underpan down to lighting optics and wing mirrors.

Stereo lithography is a process of 'growing' a shape from the ground up, rather like building a castle in the sand. The base of the walls would be formed first and a gap would be left for the gate. This gate would equate to a wheel arch on the car body. The stereo lithography machine loads the data for the car and a flat plate rises up in a tank of clear liquid polymer to within 0.1mm of the surface. A laser describes the shape of the bottom most part of the car body in the polymer above the plate. The laser sets the polymer, the plate descends by 0.1mm and the next layer is described on top of the first and the polymer sets. Thus, the body is 'grown' from the bottom upward.

When the components arrive back at the factory they are checked and assembled to make a complete car. The development team then test the car for its handling characteristics and corrections are made. At this stage not all handling problems may be recognised or course, but some that are may not be corrected for commercial reasons.

### Come together

When all components are brought together and a pre-production model is assembled, approval for the body styling has to be gained, in some cases, from the manufacturer of the real car before Hornby Hobbies can proceed.

At a later stage of pre-production a test livery is applied to the assembled body and sent to the manufacturer, team and sponsors for livery approval.

### I'm fixing a hole...

The design measurements of the model have to take into account tooling constraints. Each component must be made in such a way that the plastic component can be withdrawn from the steel mould. The orientation of the component in the mould is crucial. Draught angles must allow it to slip out without undue force. Plastic also shrinks when cooling down. Therefore, it will be specified that the mould is made slightly larger in specific areas to compensate for this. Typically a plastic will shrink .004% after moulding hence the mould has to be oversize so that the actual body will be correct to the drawing. This small shrinkage would not matter in the perceived size of the car but would affect fits of mating parts and gear engagement if it were not allowed for. The development team has to engineer these considerations into the design.



*This square lump of expensive steel is actually a mould. It is about a 12" cube and impossible for most of us to pick up! Its value? Well, let's just say you could buy a decent second-hand family car. And what component does this mould produce? Just the Williams F1 rear wing!*

The mould for a car body would normally be of the 'six-way split' type. That is to say there will be a main core on one half of the mould and a main cavity on the other. In order to be able to produce side and end detail on the car body there are separate split sections which move in as the mould is closed up for moulding the molten plastic. When the moulding is cooled and set, the mould is opened to release it and the separate splits, operated by cams, automatically withdraw themselves.

Panel lines on the outside of the body are entered in to the three dimensional data on the computer and these are used as the reference points from which to determine the six-way split of the steel mould. In some case this isn't possible. For instance, Formula 1 cars are relatively smooth lined and, in the case of the Williams FW15, it is very easy to see the 'witness line' produced where two parts of the mould meet. Take a look at the Williams and look for a line from the top of the side pod inlet running forward across the top of the wishbones and then down in front of the axle. This is where two faces of the six-part mould met.

The moulds have to be extremely accurate as the hot plastic will seep through any gaps larger than about .001 of an inch and produce ugly 'flash'. Additionally, the action of injecting molten plastic into a large block of steel continuously will heat it up to the point where plastic will take a long time to set. The moulds are therefore honeycombed with waterways through which cold water is pumped.



*Guess who?*

## It won't be long

When agreement to proceed has been met then the mould data is sent to the tool-makers, a subcontracted business specialising in tooling. They will make the moulds and any other tooling required to produce the car.

Sometimes the moulds are returned to the tool-makers for modifications during mould flow testing when unforeseen flaws are detected, as you might expect. The first test shot moulding is known as a 'spark' shot and at this stage the mould is not yet polished. One of these test shots will immediately be used to test the livery ink printing process.

The Porsche GT1 window glass mould was returned for adjustment due to the first test shot interior glass being too tight a fit inside the driver compartment. The mould was altered and fresh test shots taken. All was well.

When all parts fit together properly and any adjustments made to the moulds have been checked and tested then the factory will instruct the tool-maker to polish the moulds.

They are polished to give a very smooth finish to the plastic body. The windows and other components requiring a glasslike finish such as the perspex box lid are polished to the extreme. The mould for the box lid has a surface so fine you could easily mistake it for a mirror!

In fact, all moulds have a full history record of all adjustments that have been made as well as the amount of work it has been used for. Each is labelled and stored in the mould shop in long rows of heavy-duty shelving. They are very heavy. The one for a Formula 1 rear wing is about a foot square. Size is important, as they say. The mould has to be big enough to absorb the heat produced from the enormous pressures achieved when the molten plastic is pumped in to the mould. If the mould was too small it would be liable to warp, too large and it would cool the plastic down too quickly by absorbing the heat. The result would be that the plastic would not be distributed evenly within the mould. ■

# To the land of the black Mini

BY RICHARD WINTER

As some of you may know, Christine and I have spent most recent Christmases with family and friends in Australia (Shame I can hear you all say). This Christmas was again to be spent in Australia but this time we planned to see more of the country than just Western Australia as we were on holiday for 7 weeks. Christine may have thought that our jaunt to South Australia and Victoria was just to see more of this enormous country but the ulterior motive was to search out Scalextric and its collectors.

Initially we spent some 10 days in Perth with our family which included, of course, me visiting Stanbridges, the largest hobby shop in WA and renewing old acquaintances there. This shop is managed by NSCC member Mark Sinclair who, in the interests of product awareness and advice to customers, always tests the latest cars, as we all would. Mark showed me the latest arrival, which I think is unlikely to be seen very often over here. This was the long awaited, certainly in Australia, Holden Commodore kit from Ozrace. The car comes unassembled and unpainted so it was difficult to see the quality but the one thing that put me off buying one immediately was the price. Considering that limited edition Fly cars retail for around \$A80 it was difficult to see much market for this newcomer to the marketplace at a whopping \$A135 for the lesser teams and \$A155 for the top-flight teams! Sorry to say that this one stayed on the shelf.

That first Friday Mark drove me up into the hills above Perth to have an evening's racing at the home track of Daryl Nutton. Daryl has a 4 lane track in his understorey (I think that is what it is called) that hosts race sessions every week for those willing and able to attend. As you can see from the photo the track is both large and fast and a joy to drive, even if you don't win as I demonstrated on more occasions than I care to remember. On most Fridays there could be six to eight people

racing and, as much as any racing can be heated, here it is carried out in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, which I am sorry to say is not always the case at some English tracks I have raced on. I have always found Aussies more than friendly and hospitable and there is always cold beer in Daryl's fridge. Daryl and Stuart, his brother, have constructed the track with help from others and the understorey also houses Daryl's collection of slot-cars. He has a good collection that gets larger every time I see it but as with all collectors he is always looking for the next bargain and elusive car. If you get bored with the racing you can always take a step outside and have a panoramic view of the city of Perth, spectacular at night as well as day, and also with a view to the airport to the east and Fremantle to the west.

After an evening's racing it takes about an hour or so to drive back "home", that is Hillarys on the coast north of Perth City, and everyone, well almost everyone, complies with the speed limits, which are set at levels not dissimilar to those in the UK. It is strange to drive along an almost empty dual carriageway at 110km an hour and not be overtaken by anything that comes along. I can proudly say that I did not collect any speeding tickets this year unlike two years ago when I managed to collect three in a month's holiday, which was not popular with⇒



her indoors and was also a waste of money which we could have spent on something else, Scalextric cars perhaps? The only bonus was that I could pay the fines by credit card and thus collect points, a small consolation when my speeding was done out in the country with not a single building, car, sheep, or kangaroo in sight!

After spending a week in Perth we flew to Melbourne where we were very kindly looked after by NSCC member, Guy Smith, and his very understanding wife Debi, who live in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne called Croydon. Home from home almost as Croydon is our hometown in the UK. Their large bungalow, with a suitable garage to house their four cars, (including a Bolwell – anyone heard of these in the UK?) was also home to Guy's collection of slot-cars together with a large layout in their spare dining room! Australian houses tend to be large and spacious and thus ideally suited to large Scalextric collections and track layouts without cramping the domestic necessities such as somewhere to sit etc. We met Guy and Debi at the Evesham swapmeet some five years ago and have kept in touch ever since and they very generously looked after us in Melbourne. We obviously did all things tourists do like visit Healesville Animal Sanctuary, a day out in the Dandenongs, see the Fairy Penguins on Philip Island but of course if I saw a hobby shop we just had to stop the car. Unfortunately I did not find anything to buy but Guy very kindly lent me some Australian Scalextric papers from the Moldex era when they held the licence for Scalextric in Australia. In addition he also lent me a colour advert from a 1963 edition of the Australian Reader's Digest (Christine was really impressed!!)

Having spent five days in Melbourne we then hit the road and drove to Adelaide along the Great Ocean Road in our brand new hired Ford Falcon, a journey which has been described as one of the best drives of the world, a statement which we would both heartily endorse. The road hugs the coastline with spectacular views of cliffs, bays and beaches and eventually you get to the 12 Apostles, spectacular

rock formations which are worth all those miles you have driven. The journey to Adelaide took us five days as we stopped off whenever we wanted, staying in hotels or bed-and-breakfast. It was a great trip, with great scenery and very pleasant people everywhere we stopped, we might even do it again! One night's B&B might only cost the price of a new Scalextric car but sacrifices have to be made.

We found Melbourne and Adelaide to be a bit too busy for us as the space and solitude of Western Australia is what we enjoy most but both cities have a lot to recommend them even though I struck out on Scalextric, but this was a holiday! On our last day in Adelaide fellow Scalextric enthusiast Clive Spreadbury, his wife Julia and their children made us very welcome at their home and provided us with a traditional Australian "Barbie" for lunch. The added bonus for me was to see Clive's spectacular Scalextric collection that was housed in his "garden shed".



The only difference from a traditional shed and Clive's is that his was the size of a tennis court and it needed to be to house the collection. Clive's aim is to have a complete Scalextric collection and from what I saw he is well on the way! Apart from the wonderful set lids on display around the walls, and the three working circuits in the shed, the glass cabinets house every car from the earliest tinplate cars, to front wheel drive Minis, including of course the elusive black Australian version, to black

Bentleys, Bugattis, AutoUnions and the latest cars. It was particularly nice to see a white Bison Datsun, the range of 1/24th scale cars and a display cabinet with all the lap counters, both



electrical and mechanical from various countries including Spain. All in all enough to convince me that my collection has a long way to go to be compared with Clive's.

The four-hour flight from Adelaide to Perth is just a blip in time compared to the 22-24 hours it takes to get to Australia in the first place. We then spent a very hot (38 deg C) Christmas and New Year (42 deg) in Perth with family and friends together with the opportunity to continue racing at Daryl's whenever possible. After the New Year we drove down to the south to stay in Albany where there is one of the finest natural harbours in the world. Unfortunately some of the magnificent scenery had been destroyed by fierce bush fires the week before we arrived. Luckily, some of the very rare wildlife survived although a large number of native animals such as possums died in the fires, which spread rapidly due to the high temperatures and strong winds.

After an enjoyable three days in Albany we journeyed north to Perth, spending two days in Pemberton admiring the huge karri trees, and two days with friends in Busselton, admiring a 100 or more kangaroos in their 'backyard'. Although I found nothing Scalextric to buy we still managed to visit the wood craft gallery in

Pemberton which has on display magnificent furniture, boxes, tables, chairs and lots more all made from native timbers. You can always tell when you have spent too much money in previous visits when the shopkeeper welcomes you by name, it happens in this shop! Christine always brings home a trophy from here to make up for all my Scalextric goodies. This year it was a jewel box (but no jewels!) made from recycled jarrah burl, banksia, lace sheoak and lined with pig suede. Cost in equivalent terms about eight, yes eight, cars but Christine says who is counting?

Upon our return to Perth and with our holiday coming to an end I at last found something Scalextric to bring home. Mark Sinclair had bought a couple of boxes of second-hand Scalextric including track, cars etc., nothing particularly special but all in good clean condition with some boxed. At the bottom of one of the boxes was a transformer, nothing special you may say but this different. It was boxed, made in Australia and has the Scalextric logo on it.



As Mark very kindly gave it to me as a present all I had to do now was persuade Christine that this was essential luggage and had to be packed for the journey home. This I managed and yet another bit of Scalextric ephemera has been added to the collection and plans are already in hand for the next visit to the land of the black mini and blue transformer!■

# Model car racers do it for charity!

## Riverside red nose blowout - Report from Andy Browne-Searle

Forty slot car racers gathered at Riverside Raceway on the evening of Friday the 16th of March for what is believed to be the biggest charity race in the history of British Model Car Racing.

The cars were supplied by Monarch Lines Ltd. (the official UK distributor of Proslot), along with T shirts and pants for all racers. The Hobby Company Ltd (UK importer of Ninco) also supplied some valued prizes. Riverside Raceway in Blaydon, Tyne & Wear supplied the venue, the track facilities and a prize for the driver raising the highest sponsorship. The racers paid an entry fee of £20.00 per car and also raised individual start line sponsorship for their drives.

The race format was 1 minute qualifying all laps to count, followed by an 8 x 2 minute segmented race heat, with the top 8 drivers going to a 40 lap final. The cars were issued to drivers at 18.15hrs on the Friday evening with a short practice/setup session and qualifying beginning at 19.15. The 5 rounds of heats started at 20.10 and were completed by 22.25 - with the final for the top 8 being run after the raffle prizes were drawn at 22.40.

The drivers whose ages ranged from 7 years to adult had a great evening's entertainment and

some highly competitive racing. Including their entry fees and sponsorship the drivers raised a stunning total of £2832.26 subject to final returns. This was an unprecedented figure for a group of just 40 racers and attendant onlookers.

I am delighted and awestruck with the response from our racers who have done such a great job raising funds for this wonderful charity. I hope we are in a position to repeat this next year for Children In Need and I would like to thank Monarch Lines Ltd for their fantastic support and generosity in helping bring this event to fruition. My thanks also go the Hobby Company Ltd for their generosity in supplying some of the prizes and lastly to the racers themselves who gave their time, their cash and their fund-raising efforts to make this such a great event.

### Final results

Simon Veasey	40.00 laps
Kevin Thornton	39.66
Les Bailey	38.37
John Brown	37.37
Simon Baker	34.72
Alex Newton	34.69
Lewis Baker	32.47
Adam Radford	27.50



*The evening's racers whose ages ranged from 7 years to adult!*



# People Painting

BY WAYNE BERMINGHAM

So at long last you've decided to add some life to your circuit; now you can finally position those figures you bought years ago when the circuit you had been dreaming of for so long eventually took shape. But before you grab some brushes and those tiny tins of paint, take a few moments to learn from my own experiences, with a little luck I'll be able to save you time and a fair bit of frustration.

MRRC have released some new, up to date, figures that look more at home on an Aussie track compared to those of the 1960s which belong at a mid winter race at 'Silverstone'. I've added some scanned photos from sets I bought which I hope give enough detail to show what I mean.



Now some people will tell you the very first thing to do is wash the figures in warm soapy water to remove any dirt or grease. While there is nothing wrong with doing this it is not the first thing you should do. Before washing look closely at each figure, paying attention to moulding faults such as 'tags', little bits of plastic which have no relation to the figure. It's also worth looking at joins or seam lines around the outer edges, as these will stand out after painting if not treated beforehand. There are numerous methods of removing 'tags', the best of which is a sharp modellers scalpel, however any sharp blade will do the job neatly. The best way I found to remove moulding seams is to scrape

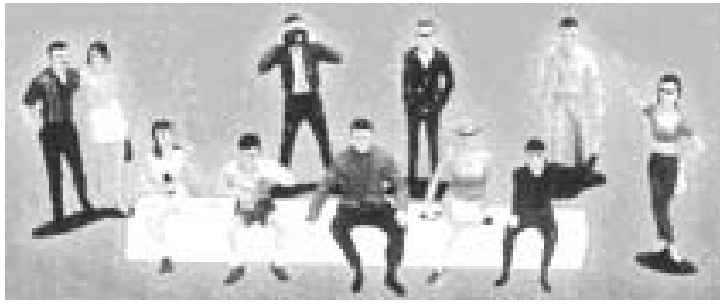
along the raised line with the edge of a "Stanley knife" or something similar, those retractable metal tools used in supermarkets to slice open boxes are ideal. Grasp the knife as if you're making a fist so that the blade extends out from the palm above the index finger and thumb. Hold the figure in your left hand, unless you're right handed in which case reverse what follows, then, while using your right hand thumb as a stabilizer, scrape the blade along the seam in a downward motion towards your thumb. Take care not to cut into the figure or your fingers and at the first sight of blood check to see what's missing. You might like to try practising this first on the tree which held your figures in place. Once you are satisfied with your technique start attacking the spectators, racing figures and track marshals. After everyone is smooth and cleanly shaved then wash the figures and set them aside to dry.

Don't be in a hurry to get the first one finished, the more care you take the happier you will be with the result. Okay, everyone is clean and dry and you can't wait to get going but don't know where to start?

After a number of botched attempts I believe the best place to start is with the skin.

What nationality most of your figures are going to be determines what colour you will paint them. I use two different shades from Humbrol; number 148 matt is perfect for so called white Europeans, while 5061 called 'Flesh' it also quite good but slightly darker.

A couple of hints worth remembering are, use good quality brushes in a variety of sizes, and warm the paint, it makes it flow better and more evenly. To do this pour enough hot water in a glass bowl to come just below the rim of the paint tin. By the way, remember to remove the lid before placing the tin in the hot water. Now that all the skin is done you will want to start on the rest of the figures, but as I mentioned earlier, don't rush! It really makes little difference what

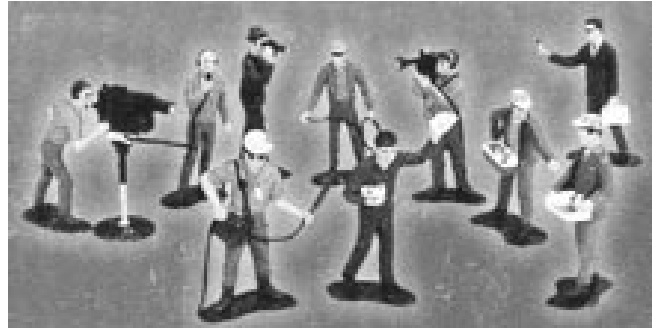


you paint first but whatever you do remember to paint the base last of all, that way you always have something to hold on to.

Another hint worth noting is I find it easier to paint the low parts first, not the bottom of the figures but the low sections. For example, if the person you want to paint is wearing a shirt, tie, vest and coat, paint them in that order, then if he is carrying something, like a camera, paint that last. I always like to start with the hair or hat first, this lets me paint a number of figures at once and when dry gives me another place to hold them. The final piece of advice I can offer has to do with painting the base of your people. Before you jump in and paint them all flat black consider where you intend to place the various figures and paint the base to match whatever

they will be standing on. It looks really odd seeing a person standing on the grass when the base is black.

I'm not saying that you should do it exactly the same way, I'm just passing along what works for me, you may find other methods that suit you better. So there you are, some hints and ideas to make your people really stand out in the crowd. Ouch, I can't believe I just said that.



**This article originally appeared in Club Lines and as I can't recall seeing a similar one in our own publication I thought it may be of interest. It is reprinted with the kind permission of the A.S.R.C.C.**





## Buying on EBay

BY JAMES PENTON

Use EBay.co.uk, not EBay.com. This will give you the option of only looking at items which are available to the UK. There's not much point spending hours trying to find a bargain, only to discover that the buyer won't send it abroad. Prices are also either quoted in £GBP or automatically converted into them.

### Timing

Timing – bidding on items too early will result in you being outbid and you will have to keep returning to the item and revising your bid. The best time to bid is in the final few hours – this will allow you to outbid other users and not give them much of a chance to revise theirs. For best results do this during off-peak hours (your bidding rivals can't respond if they're asleep!)

### Know your limits

Pick a limit and stick to it, the car is probably not unique, if you can get a better price elsewhere then buy it elsewhere.

Don't underestimate postage costs – obvious really but avoid buying heavy things like track, sets etc. from places far away.

Don't get too excited by non descript descriptions for example: 'Scalextric Jaguar' available for £10.50 – it could be a mint boxed yellow Lister Jag, but in this (and most) cases it is a tatty white XJR9.

Check out the seller's feedback before bidding. You will probably be required to send off your money before receiving the car so make sure the feedback from other buyers is OK.

As usual, full details can be found at [www.slotsurfing.co.uk](http://www.slotsurfing.co.uk) ■



Dear Brian,

The Brooklands website has been completely redesigned and now carries much more information, as well as more rail car pictures.

The site can be found at <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/j.davies4>

You may also like to know that Dave Yerbury's Birkin Bentley model (featured in the March issue) is now a rail racer, which will be competing at this year's Brooklands; rather appropriate as it still holds the outer circuit lap record. I doubt that Phil or I will quite get it up to 137 miles an hour however. There is also a rail race at Abergavenny on May 20th. Just about all the places are already gone but if anyone is interested email me at [j.davies4@ntlworld.com](mailto:j.davies4@ntlworld.com)

As Mac Pinches said, it's all about having fun. Roger Gillham will be competing with one of Mac Pinches' cars ironically.

Best wishes,  
Jeff Davies

.....

G'day Brian

It's now just over a year since we first started swapping newsletters and I want to say I really enjoy reading the NSCC Journal. I have certainly found the interchange beneficial as I hope you have. While we are on opposite sides of the world the enthusiasm for the hobby remains the same.

Your members will also be pleased to know that I whinge about lack of contributions possibly even more than you. Speaking as a fellow editor I know exactly how much time and effort you put in and I hope the members appreciate every bit of it.

If there is ever anything I can do to help in relation to slot cars down under or explain to anyone what a Blue Pointer is, or where to find the Black Stump, please don't hesitate to get in touch, my e-mail address is: [clublines@telstra.easymail.com.au](mailto:clublines@telstra.easymail.com.au)

'til next time close racing  
Wayne Bermingham  
Editor Club Lines

# Guide to - Williams F1 cars

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

Williams Formula 1 racing cars have been in the Scalextric range since catalogue #22 (1971) when an improved range of cars was introduced.

C138 Saudia Leyland Williams FW07B is an attractive looking car with excellent detail and printing, particularly for the time.



It was made with two rear wing types. Type 1 had a two-piece wing and wing support whilst Type 2 was an all-in-one affair. Either way, it's quite difficult to find this car without a damaged rear wing. In fact, the whole model was quite delicate. If you find one with wing mirrors, suspension parts, engine chrome and front wings as well as the rear wings all intact, you'll be looking at a rare beast indeed!

During its eight year production run the car was also issued in a relatively limited production run reliveried for Casio.



This car, C350, was issued in two lots in 1984. A promotional run (number not known, but assume very low) was given to the sponsor and associated partners. This car had a chromed engine and a driver in orange overalls. The main production run for general sale had a black engine with a driver in white overalls. In the same year, C351 'Grand Prix International'

livery in blue and red was also released. This example is commonly seen in bubble-pack packaging.



*Yes, the delicate rear wing is often loose or broken inside the bubble-pack!*

Catalogue 28 heralded the next long run of Williams cars. Although only one car was made, albeit in a couple of variations, it must have kept Scalextric afloat. The car was, of course, the famous FW11. Scalextric's versions were liveried in the famous 'Red 5' of Nigel Mansell and the number '6' car of Nelson Piquet. C374 (racing No.5) came first; in the following years of Mansell's reign, set variations sold, I imagine, very well. The number 5 & 6 cars were later



adapted to have 'Turbo Flash' - an LED which was illuminated by a capacitor discharging to it when you took your finger off the controller; Magnattraction was also fitted. If collecting these non-turbo and turbo versions it should be noted that the non-turbo version has a large square aperture around the axle gear and there is no hole under the rear wing for the 'turbo' LED. The second version fitted with Magnattraction has screw holes in the underpan to take the magnet mounting plate.

By the mid-nineties Mansell-mania was an important part of racing history. There was now another famous racing name in a Williams car. Damon Hill was driving for Sir Frank and Scalextric modelled the FW15C and released it with racing numbers 0, 1, 2, 5, and 6. The six cars all have their slight livery differences. C143 & C127 are both race number 2 cars with a different design to the gold stripe as it folds around the upper nose section of the car.



The FW15Cs stayed in the range until circa 1998 when the current long awaited FW20 arrived. Peculiarly, just as most of us had thought we seen the last of the FW15, Scalextric issued the 'Senna' range of cars, in which two FW15s were released. F2213 and F2214 were yellow/green (race No.1) and white/blue (race No.2) respectively.



Hornby issued the Senna range as a market leveraging tool along with six other cars apart from the Williams. The cars were generally issued in boxed 'Senna' sets. They were now fitted with gold or silver spoked wheels and grooved tyres. The FW20 appeared in the short lived red livery of the Williams Mecachrome 1998 team. Available with race numbers 1 & 2 (F2161 and F2162) the cars had no variations I'm aware of. These Scalextric cars reflected Formula 1's decision to have shorter axle widths and narrower grooved tyres instead of slicks.

The year 2000 saw the current issue of Williams cars with the white and dark blue 'COMPAQ' sponsored car from 1999. The two cars are issued as C2264 and C2265 with, respectively, racing numbers 9 & 10. However, Hornby have, with this car, made a slight change in the way they reference the model. There have been three different versions of these two cars, with a fourth yet to be officially confirmed. There may be other variations to appear in time, so don't expect this particular chapter of Williams cars to close just yet! C2264/5 are suffixed with WA for the first release, WAV for the 'Veltins' version, WAA for the 2001 version Allianz.

Hornby kindly donated an approval model to the NSCC as a prize in our December 2000 contest.



The pre-production 'approval' car has a slightly different colour front and rear wing compared to the main body of the car. Not all that notable to the casual eye but nevertheless Hornby had to consult the British Standards colour guide to correct the difference. An interesting record of how particular the teams and sponsors are and a nice addition to the collection of the lucky winner of the Christmas competition! ■

# It's show time, folks!

BY PETER NOVANI

**P**hew! I've attended some events with my slot-car track layout, but the two most recent events undertaken were surely the busiest. Thus proving that 'our' hobby is still extremely popular with the general public.

## Sandown collectors toy fair

The Sandown Toy Fair held at Sandown Park certainly justifies the bold claim made by the organisers, Barry Potter Fairs, that it is one of Europe's biggest collecting events. Despite the ongoing foot-and-mouth problem, the place was packed. Located in leafy Surrey, Sandown Park is probably better known for its horse racing activities rather than a venue for a toy fair or slot-car racing. I was fortunate enough to have organised an attraction there using my much travelled exhibition 12ft x 6ft Scalextric track layout. The four lanes gave visitors the chance to try their hand at racing slot-cars throughout the day entirely free of charge. That's right, zilch, gratis, nothing, complimentary!

Those opting to spectate could enjoy viewing a large selection of Scalextric made trackside buildings and accessories, spanning forty years, plus a recent acquisition, the elusive Dunlop (rubber) bridge. And with over 175 hand painted drivers, marshals, officials, mechanics and spectators dotted around the layout, there really was a miniature race day atmosphere to soak up. Possibly the only things missing were the inevitable traffic jams of the real thing, and the dulcet tones of Murray Walker, who was otherwise engaged. Racing was for the sheer fun of it, rather than any meaningful competition. Having said that, the climax to the proceedings was the 90 minutes 'Super Sandown Slot-Car Challenge.' The objective? Simply to complete 15 laps in the fastest race time of the day (FTD). Having a timed race distance encouraged consistency. Tried and trusted Ninco Ferrari F50 (NC1) GT cars were the preferred choice for that segment of proceedings. Although their range of

1/18TH scale karts are worthy of a mention, as they were particularly popular, yet deemed too fragile for the rigours of the challenge itself. The pin locating the guide to the front axle broke on more than one occasion – very annoying. Scalextric VW Beetles also made a brief, yet welcome appearance. Apart from numerous light bulb failures, they performed well enough. R&D departments please note!

A fantastic £100 Scalextric Formula One set awaited the winner of the competition. A prize very generously donated by Barry Potter Fairs, and certainly something worth racing for. As ever, it was a case of completing a race without being baulked by less competent rivals or crashing off. However, when the dust finally settled it was 12 year old Marcel Duffey, from Bedfordshire, who managed to outperform his skilful, and often older rivals, to scoop the much coveted prize. Marcel's FTD time was an impressive 1 minute 22.4601 seconds, set almost at the beginning of proceedings. His nearest rival could only get within 1 second of that time. Following the Challenge, Barry Potter was on hand to undertake the presentation honours.

Marcel, who is a keen Scalextric fan, undoubtedly inherited his racing skills from his father, Peter Duffey. Apparently, Peter was a notable slot-car racer many years ago, running the slot-car department and associated track layout at Beatties' original Holborn branch (now a McDonald's fast food outlet) during the Sixties. I recall, when living in the City, visiting the store as a schoolboy. Many Saturday mornings were spent racing on the slot-car track located in the basement. Often after racing it would be a short bus ride to the now defunct Gamages store to spend (waste?) yet more time perusing the massive toy department there, especially at Christmas time when the store had the good sense to erect a massive Scalextric multi-lane layout for competition purposes. Those were the days!

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At the Sandown event, the discerning collector was also able to purchase a special commemorative Scalextric Crystal Classics Barry Potter Fairs Jaguar XJ220 (transparent bodyshell). These were commissioned as a limited edition of just 100 cars. And here's one for the slot-car anoraks. As far as I am aware, just one example exists (#100) featuring clear eight spoked Jaguar wheels, rather than the usual type fitted to the other 99 – I have Hornby to thank for that variation! By the way, as a special thank you for his collaboration on this project, Barry Potter had the distinction of receiving #1 of the range. An evocative British marque produced by a famous British slot-car manufacturer, commemorating one of Britain's leading collecting events – a great combination.

It was a very enjoyable event, and one that I'm especially proud to have been associated with. I'd like to thank everyone who attended, especially those who raced, and the collectors who bought one of the limited edition Jags. A special thank you to Barry Potter for signing the A6 size certificates which accompanied the Jags. Of course a brief anorak 'history' of the road car was included on that. In fact, I was fortunate enough to speak to Howard Davis, a prominent Jaguar development engineer on the XJ220 project. I even got an invite to Coventry to see a road going XJ220 in person. An offer that may well be taken up in the not too distant future.

My thanks also go to Hornby's Marketing Manager, Simon Kohler, for signing the (Hornby) certificates and for providing me with the opportunity to offer collectors such a distinctive slot-car. Admittedly, the clear-car concept is not everyone's cup of tea, yet they are something different and also rather difficult to forge! Hornby should be congratulated on getting the Jags to look right and for delivering them on time. Thanks also to those collectors who phoned me regarding the event. It gave me a chance to catch up on all the latest slot-car gossip – keep in touch. Right! I'm going to lock myself away in a darkened room with a nice cup of warm milk and a digestive biscuit – my frail nerves need time to recover properly!

## London Classic Motor Show

I spoke too soon! Just two weeks after the Sandown event I found myself back on the exhibition trail attending one of London's premier indoor motoring events, the London Classic Motor Show held at the Alexandra Palace, in North London, on 17th and 18th March. So much for my recuperation period! Having participated at the 2000 event, it was a pleasure to have been offered a stand within the prestigious Great Hall, raising funds for Capital Radio's Help a London Child charity.

Unlike last year, my late decision to attend, meant no pre-event publicity, or the possibility of seeking out some interesting prizes. However, visitors needed little or no encouragement to try their hand at racing slot-cars. For me it was a case of finding time for a break during proceedings. Incidentally, I took great delight in discreetly placing a couple of brand new limited edition cars on my layout to tease the slot-car collectors amongst the throngs of enthusiasts. If you crave after yet more limited edition cars, more anon!

Prior to the show I had a phone call from someone in the media asking if my track layout would be in action at the show. At the time I didn't attach too much importance to the call. Yet, lo and behold, come Saturday afternoon, a film crew from Granada's Men & Motors satellite TV programme duly arrived. My contribution amounted to little more than answering a couple of questions. This was followed by some racing action featuring the presenter skilfully controlling his slot-car whilst talking to the camera! It's anybody's guess whether this programme, on various aspects of collecting, is eventually aired. If it is, then you are assured of a suitably stilted performance from yours truly – what do you expect after several hours of nonstop marshalling. Having gotten through that two day (16 hours) marathon relatively unscathed, I'm surely due something a bit stronger than a warm cup of milk. Make mine a diet Tango, my good man, and I'll have a straw with it too! Incidentally, after two years attending events with my track



layout, it is now heading for early retirement. A simplified layout for exhibition purposes will supersede it. I either love this hobby, or I'm a glutton for punishment – probably both!

## Limited ambitions

Just as the 'Barry Potter' Jags were launched at Sandown, yet another limited edition Scalextric XJ220 appeared on the collecting scene. This time it's the Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club version. Talk about timing! I found out about it from my father, who is a member of the club. Car #3 is now proudly on display at home. The JEC were also kind enough to include a preview of the Sandown event and the Barry Potter Jag, plus a colour photo of my track layout in their excellent monthly magazine.

Appropriately, a mere 220 examples were commissioned, and without question this is one of the best looking examples of the XJ220 thus far. Resplendent in lacquered metallic green with gold tambo printed (trademark) leaping Jaguar logos, club insignia and web-site address, the stunning effect is finished off with a set of gold (Ferrari F40) five spoked wheels. To differentiate one car from another the JEC supply each model with a small signed and numbered certificate of authenticity plus a sticker applied to the base of the plinth.

These Jags will undoubtedly be sort after by aficionados of the marque and slot-car collectors alike. Many of you will be aware of their existence by now. However, if that is not the case, and you wish to purchase one for your collection, then I suggest calling JEC Direct's Graham Mundy, who instigated this project, on 01302 328336, he may have a few left – tell him I sent you!

Sticking with the limited edition theme, yet another Scalextric car arrived during March – evidently a good month to launch a limited edition slot-car. This time a pair of BMW 318i cars (75 sets produced) specially commissioned by Printair (Compressors & Vacuum Pumps) as a promotional set for the two companies run by Ken Palmer. The white race #1 version shows allegiance to Printair Services, and features

tambo printed blue text and a distinctive blue chequered flag graphic across the rear of the car, fading out over the roof. Certainly one of the prettiest liveries to have graced the 318i. Moving on to the second version. This has the colours reversed, however, it includes subtle differences, such as the Printair Supplies Limited logo on the flanks and plinth, plus race #2. Both cars feature silver five spoked wheels. Incidentally, an official Scalextric logo adorns the top of the windscreen – only the third Scalextric car to have had that honour bestowed upon it. Ken, who masterminded the whole project, is an avid Scalextric collector and racer, was insistent upon including the logos. These cars represent a long held ambition of his to commission just such a car, especially as he is also a BMW enthusiast.

As with the Barry Potter and JEC Jags, demand for the BMWs (if you can find them) will eventually outstrip supply. As our esteemed editor alluded to in a recent editorial, the limited edition bubble may well burst. Yet whatever your sentiments are regarding the current plethora of this type of slot-car, they are an excellent way to commemorate a particular event, or to use as a promotional product. And much like an artist sells his work, it's part of the continuing process of creation. Profit is the aim of the process, but not necessarily the reason for it. In the unlikely event that collectors withdraw their interest in such products, then the concept will be made redundant. Anyway, no one forces a collector to buy everything. In fact it might be prudent to base a collection on the old maxim of 'quality rather than quantity.' A trend that appears to be gathering pace. Ultimately though, it's your call.

So, now you have two new slot-cars to add to your 'must have' list. Moreover, I cannot help wondering what else is out there that has yet to be documented. Stop, stop, enough already! I'm starting to develop the symptoms of that well known, and often incurable slot-car collecting ailment, 'limited editionitis.' Not only does it afflict the bank balance, but also the senses of otherwise rational thinking men. Do you recognise the symptoms? Cheers! ■

# V.I.P. colours

BY MALCOLM PARKER

I'm amazed to say that the adverts I've been placing seem to be working and I've had an encouraging response, particularly to last month's. Perhaps it might be worth a word of encouragement to a few others to drag out those musty, dusty never to be completed projects from deep in the dark corners of the attic to swap for things they do actually want. Somehow it's rather warmer than dealing in the clinical world of hard cash.

Anyway, several people have asked me about the colours VIP cars were made in, so I've constructed the chart below. I wouldn't say it's complete, but I think it's a fairly comprehensive list.

The blue, grey/blue and dark blue colours are all very different and easily distinguished when the models are side by side but are rather more difficult to describe in a universally recognisable form! The shade and texture of the

plastic also varies on the yellow and blue Porsche, some were produced in the normal VIP type of plastic while others are in the same type of soft plastic used on the Scalextric Javelin & Electra. I'm not certain if the plated F1 bodies originate from VIP and I've never heard of, or seen, a boxed complete car, but it's certainly possible that they produced a big pile of them alongside the plated Vipers shortly before the factory was closed. I'd love to hear from anyone who can confirm their origin.

Question marks on the chart are for colours which I'm fairly sure exist but have yet to see myself - obviously if any reader is able to confirm their existence then I'd be very pleased to hear from them, either directly or via the editor should they wish to remain anonymous. Everything else is a body/colour combination that I've either seen myself or have been told about on very good authority! ■

	Yellow	Red	Grey/blue	Green	White	Dark Blue	Blue	Gold	Silver	
<b>MGA</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?				White & Dk Blue versions, sidewinder chassis only
<b>Healey</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				White & Dk Blue versions, sidewinder chassis only
<b>A40</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓		?				
<b>Sprite</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
<b>Cooper</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓						All with white nose
<b>Lotus</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓						All with white nose
<b>Ferrari</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		All with white nose except Red & Dk Blue versions which were also made with body colour nose
<b>BRM</b>	✓	?	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
<b>Honda</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
<b>Lotus Indy</b>	✓	?	✓	✓	✓			✓		
<b>Porsche Carrera</b>	✓	?			✓		✓			
<b>Ferrari Dino</b>	✓				?		?			
<b>Viper</b>	✓				?		✓	✓	✓	
<b>Stock Car</b>	Red body yellow roof & front bumper	White body blue roof & front bumper	Yellow body red roof & front bumper							Some versions have names printed on the sides

# The allure of rubber!

## Part 3 - cleaning and trimming

BY PETER BOITA

The next part of the restoration process is the thorough cleaning of the rubber track sections.

Fill a bowl with water that is just slightly hot to the touch and add a good splash of washing up liquid. Immerse the first track section and using a medium stiff nail brush give the top of the track running surface a good firm brushing. On straight track sections go left to right and on the curved sections follow the radius of the curves, once again going left to right. Use a toothbrush to really get into the rubber channels that hold the metal rails and thoroughly clean out the grooves.

Once the top has been comprehensively cleaned, turn the track over and using a 1" wide soft decorating paint brush thoroughly clean the smooth underside of the track using the brush to really get into all the corners of the track bracing ribs. You don't want to use the nail brush on the underside of the track because you will scratch the plain rubber surface here and any scratches will show up badly when you come to "concourse finish off" the underside of the track later on. Rinse each track piece off thoroughly with luke warm water, allow it to drain briefly then dry it with a lint free cloth. Use a paper towel to mop up any remaining moisture in the corners underneath the track and from the rail grooves in the track surface. After you have done just a couple of pieces of track you will have to change the water; you will be amazed at just how dirty it gets. Now you know why the traction surface wasn't giving you nearly enough grip the last time you used the track! Put the track on a solid surface to dry out completely for a few hours and from then on only store it on a flat, solid surface if possible. This ensures that it remains straight and warp free as it cools down.

Once the track is thoroughly dry you can move on to the next stage which is dealing with the original fault of sloppy butt jointing of adjacent track pieces. On close examination of

my track I was amazed to find that on virtually every piece of track at each end there was still a ridge of varying thickness rubber that had not been trimmed completely off at the factory to enable adjacent pieces of track to accurately butt together! On reflection, I suppose that is hardly surprising given the growing pace of production in the 60s which meant that trimming of excess rubber "flashing" after the moulding process would naturally have been a little on the "luxurious" side in terms of the time available within a speedy, mostly manual, production process. The same varying excess of rubber was also present on the sides of the track. I did, however, elect to keep these as found; I felt they somehow, once again, gave an authentic period feel to what I ultimately wanted to achieve.

So, to remove the excess rubber at each end of the track sections, I first used a very sharp scalpel to trim it to about half a millimetre from the edge of the track section ends. Next, to get a really nice precision edge to the ends of the track section, I used a plastic block from a DIY superstore that had been faced with a medium grade metal "file like" sanding surface. I sanded the last uneven rubber ridge at a shallow angle away from the face of the end of the track section so that the actual "face" of the track section end was not marked. The trimming, therefore, slopes very slightly underneath the track itself. This ensures that when the track sections butt up together the face ends of the track come together as snugly as possible within the inherent limitations of the original design.

This section took me about 30 minutes per piece of track to complete. Now your rubber track section is nice and clean with smartly trimmed ends it's time to tackle the cosmetics of the broken white lines on the straights and the continuous white lines on the curved sections - not to mention the extra broad lines on the Start/Finish straight. This is what we'll be tackling in the next issue. ■

# Phoenix - rally challenge

Race report by Jon Sword

Recently the Phoenix club spent another enjoyable Sunday doing what it does best - racing box standard cars for competitive fun.

Alan Buckley had come up with the idea of a 4WD- rally event that would differ from the other faster forms of racing; the choice of cars being limited to only those fitted for 4WD. In addition the track, which is wooden at Oaklands (who are still fostering us until we move into our new room), was going to be polished smooth just to make life difficult.

As always, the choice of car was going to be important. On plexytrack the SCX cars usually perform well, but, because of reduced voltage on the Oaklands track, they are not competitive. The word going around was that a Team Slot car would have the edge, or maybe the new Ninco Golf.

As the Milton Keynes Swapmeet neared, the Phoenix members made travel plans and around eighteen attended. I had to deliver my SRA products to Scale Models, Pendle Slot Racing and Luc of Slot 32; he was over from Germany with his trade stand and generously gave us a club discount enabling the lads to pick up any and all of his Team Slot stock.

The Sunday morning of the event was soon upon us and as usual, there was a good turnout.

It immediately transpired that there would be a challenge in keeping your car under control as Paul Derby came up with the bright idea of spraying parts of the track with oil! So, with hardly any grip it needed a lot of skill and a very measured driving style to compete.

The Team Slot cars were left behind as the SCX and Scalextric cars plodded around in steadier style. The 'old hands' who had gone for speed were frustrated as they tried to stay on. The newer lads sensed the moment and really got stuck in. I never thought I'd ever see a car de-slot, complete a 360-degree turn, enter the slot again and continue driving, but young Martin did this on at least two occasions! It was all very close and when Graham Pritchard raced he managed to stay on whilst maintaining a fast lap time. He has a very definite style and whilst talking to everyone in the room and laughing as he drives around he somehow manages to stay on (annoying isn't it?)

To be fair, we had a great day that was certainly different. I learned a valuable lesson too - speed is not always important.

Congratulations to Graham, a popular winner, and to Aaron for winning the junior trophy. Also congratulations to an up and coming star, Richard Welch, winner of the Arcade trophy and owner of the biggest smile all day! ■

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## A-Plus from Parma

BY JEFF DAVIES

At the recent Abergavenny rail race both Richard and I shared the latest edition of the Parma Plus controller, which was supplied for review by Chas Keeling of SCD Parma. These are available in a variety of Ohm ratings: 15, 25, 35 and 45, the sample being 45 Ohms.

This I find is absolutely perfect for rail racing, which requires a gentle feeding in of the power and subtle control. This unit, to my mind, is very attractive and a large step up from the standard Economy controller. One of the

advantages it has over the economy version is the plastic trigger as opposed to the pressed steel one. I also like the fact that it is completely transparent.

A good hand control is a vital part of any slot racer's armoury as even the best car is useless without a suitable, reliable hand control. I was interested to note that every single person at Abergavenny used a Parma hand control, with all but one of these being a Plus. A really good piece of vital equipment. ■

# Stories from the box of stuff

## Dave Yerbury puts in his thumb and pulls out..... a Ferrari 246 Dino

Many years ago, I was visiting a friend and one time NSCC member, David Illand in Yorkshire. Luckily for me, he was having a clearout (as you often do on a Saturday morning). He was an accomplished model maker and most of the bodies were made of wood. A lot of his clearout ended up in the above mentioned box.

The funny thing about Scalextric collectors is that you can visit them under any number of pretexts, on numerous occasions, but the result is nearly always the same - whether you arrive bearing gifts or not you always seem to come away with armfuls of stuff, either purchased or donated free of charge. That is usually how the box gets started. After a recent house move, the contents of my three-car garage (which included a large track) would not fit into its new home - an 8ft by 6ft shed. Consequently I had to shift a lot at the Leeds Swapmeet and large numbers of people have new additions to their own box of stuff.

was enlarged to 2.5ltr for F1. The writing was already on the wall and it was to be Ferrari's last front engine car. It ran for two seasons in modified form but was no match for the rear engine Cooper and Lotus cars. Although its 2.5ltr engine was extremely powerful the lack of disc brakes compromised its performance. The car was notable for a number of reasons, not least because Mike Hawthorn drove it to the World Championship in 1958 after an epic struggle with Stirling Moss. It provided Hawthorn with his final F1 victory and was the last car that Fangio drove before retirement. In 1960 Phil Hill won the Italian Grand Prix in one, against mediocre opposition, and so recorded the last win by a front engine car. Sadly it was also the car in which Musso and Peter Collins lost their lives.

Such an important vehicle also deserves its place on the slot track and the body was so well made that it only required a windscreen and a Hawthorn lookalike driver for it to be brought



A recent dip into the box produced a Ferrari 246 body. This car was called the Dino in honour of Enzo's late son who died in 1956. Alfredo had worked on the V6 engine for the 1958 car with Vittorio Jano. The 246 was new for 1958 but it had started life in F2 as the Tipo 156 which had a 1.5ltr. V6 engine. For 1958, it

to life. The chassis is simply a Johnson 111 motor with an MRRC 'U' bracket screwed on. A piece of brass strip at the front end holds the front axle and a Scalextric guide. I was so pleased with it that I resolved to investigate the box of stuff again one day and see what else lurks there in need of help. ■

# Stay on track

BY TONY SECCHI

I am sure that today the standards of slot-car competition are extremely high, but it was never so, even in the dim distant days of my past.

In those faraway times, as now, preparation and attention to detail were the byword for any successful racer. So it was surprising to see how many members of my old club used to turn up with basically uncompetitive machinery and spend most of what should be fun times either de-slotting or being lapped. This was expected of new members who had yet to gain racing experience and preparation know how, but some were still stuck in this rut after a year or so.

Of course today you can buy models from Fly, Ninco and Scalextric that are competitive from the word go, but in my old days we built from scratch and had to iron out the bugs as we went along. I am no expert, but over the years I have adhered to a set of standard procedures that have given me a reliable and successful format from which to enjoy my hobby. So I thought it might be of some help to the less experienced and possibly puzzled racer if I listed some of the negatives that can contribute to a lack of competitiveness and how hopefully to be aware of and rectify them.

## Braids

Starting at the front of the car, where the most common ailments occur - lack lustre performance and de-slotting. The first point of contact with slot cars are the pick up braids and if they are not right both power and roadholding can suffer. They have to be kept clean and whole - a simple visual check can verify this. Some people like to put a horizontal bend in the braids where they emerge from the guide so that a flatter surface area is in contact with the rails, but be careful to avoid raising the front of the car too high. The second point of contact is the braid to motor wire connection in the guide, which is hidden from the naked eye and has to be dismantled for checking. Apart from the latest

Scalextric type this connection is made by a metal eyelet threaded over the wire and which fits into the guide. Due to the forces between braid and rail a drag resistance can be set up which can start to pull or shear the braid at this point resulting in a mystifying loss of power, particularly on bends. These eyelets should be soldered to the motor lead wires before insertion into the guide. This, as you know, has a slit for the braid with a circular cut out for the eyelet. You insert the braid from the top of the guide leaving about a 2mm projection which is bent flat towards the circular cut out. Using a wooden toothpick inserted in the cut out profile that portion of the braid to suit. This makes fitting the eyelet easier and stops it pushing the braid down the slot and reducing contact. Insert the eyelet and clamp with snipnose pliers. Be careful not to push it below the underside of the guide or it will project and cause the car to de-slot on virtually any tight bend. If your track is of the sectioned variety then the car will take off like a missile when this projection hits the joints. Be careful when stripping the motor lead wire that all the strands are intact (at both guide and engine ends). They are easily broken and if fitted thus will raise the electrical resistance which could affect power and response.

Whilst you have your soldering iron out check the motor lead connections on the engine itself; the wires move when the car is cornering and can work loose or fray. Another cause of the infamous de-slot can be chaffing of the front tyres on the wheel arches. Most racers 'loose screw' the body to the chassis to give a degree of flexibility and 'suspension' movement. The front wheels can be fine for vertical movement when stationary, but under hard cornering the body can tilt and catch the extremity of the tyre and off into the gravel you go. Look out for tell tale signs of rubber dust inside the wheel arches and wear profiles on the tyres themselves. Put the car on the track and rock it from side to side; you will soon find out if the tyres are touching. ⇒

Fitting smaller diameter tyres or reducing the front axle width should alleviate this. The third point concerns engines. They must be fixed firmly and not allowed to move under power. If the engine is loose in its mount either superglue it in or using a plastic/metal strap secure it to the chassis. (Do not cover the vent). If this is not done the car will surge on and off load and all fine control will be lost. Incidentally supergluing the wheels to the axles ensures that they stay on and do not do a 'Nigel Mansell' on you.

### **Final drive**

The fourth point is to do with final drive alignment. The armature shaft of the motor has the pinion fitted to it and the centre line of this shaft must line up with the centre line of the rear axle. It does not matter if the motor is installed at an angle so long as this dictum applies - think of it as a spoke in a wheel, irrespective of the final drive ratio. If these centres are not lined up the teeth of the pinion and contrate gear will not mesh properly and the resulting resistance will result in either a jerky throttle response or low speed pick up, not to mention excessive wear. Always try to keep the gears in sets - not every manufacturers' gear teeth are the same profile and mismatches are not good news in this area. For instance, Fly inline contrates do work with Scalextric pinions and vice versa but not very well. Keep like to like. Staying with the final drive, most serious racers glue the rear tyres to the wheels and then sand them down slightly to give an even flat profile. This gives a bigger 'footprint' and consequently more grip, but do not overdo it otherwise the car will bottom out. After all, having got all this power and front end stability you do not want to ruin things by having the rear tyres turn on their hubs or the grip fail. Finally, the last point is Magnatraction (if you use it). My best magnet position is just in front of the engine if inline or slightly rear of the centre of the car if a sidewinder.

### **Magnets**

In Peter Novani's excellent recent article on downforce he mentions Pro Slot and Slot It<sup>®</sup> magnets as replacements for the Scalextric

brown bar magnet. We have been using Pro Slot PS6001 magnets in this way for some time now, especially in our WSPC sports car class. They work a treat on the Porsche 962C and many others. However in contrast to Peter, we find that packing is not needed as the magnet's extra power more than compensates for the increased depth within the existing recess. Nevertheless, an excellent piece by Peter who is becoming a regular contributor of intelligent, varied and always interesting articles, keenly appreciated by my friends and I. Magnet position can vary according to one's driving style so we generally apply them with a touch of cement, track test and reposition if necessary, before finally gluing them into place. Naturally, driving styles can also induce de-slots or spins but if you have a car with low potential you will be pushing harder and making more mistakes.

With a little effort and attention to detail maybe you can upgrade that potential and finish with a quicker, more stable and easier car to drive, culminating in more successful and enjoyable racing. ■