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BY SUBSCRIPTION ONLY

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NSCC

The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

Wouldn't it be a good idea if.....?

Even now there are people who doubt the existence of Daft Idea Animal - ye of little faith - cast your eyes towards the organisers of the British Grand Prix - Octagon Motorsports.

Silverstone has a traffic problem; no change there then. Do they act like any normal business and try to improve access? No! They succumb to the promptings of my small blue furry friend and cut attendance by 30,000, meanwhile doubling the ticket price and charging £45 extra if you dare to bring your nasty car to the circuit! Even better - they are going to keep the same number of parking spaces available, 18,000, so you can actually pay for the privilege of sitting in a traffic jam for three hours. The mind boggles! Why not go the whole hog and ban spectators altogether and charge them £200 to listen to it on the radio while remaining stationary on the M25?

Not that it really worries me - I stopped going to the British Grand Prix in the early 90s when it ceased to offer value for money; give me a club meeting at Snetterton any day. Is it only me who finds it amusing that we now live in a country without an International football or athletics stadium and can boast the only Grand Prix circuit in the world that can't cope with the automobile?

I sometimes ponder on absurd missed chances for Scalextric so how about a GP2002 set with 24 cars running in the same slot so overtaking is impossible. The pit stop section could be reintroduced to add a bit of interest but any car using it would incur a five lap penalty in case it gained an advantage. The set would also contain a large number of grandstands but no spectator figures and would include a video of a gridlocked motorway to add a bit more realism!

And Finally - a 48 page issue this month and I still couldn't fit everything in! I am indeed a happy editor; don't worry if your contribution has not appeared yet I will publish everything as soon as possible.

Till next month
Brian

*Adrian Norman reports on current news
from the Scalextric Headquarters in*



FACTORY FOCUS

Twiddling our thumbs as we wait, with bated excitement, for the arrival of the brand new Formula 1 cars from Scalextric I fought for something to talk about. Casting my mind back, and there's not usually much mileage down that avenue due to the old grey matter getting slower and slower, over new car releases I was reminded of the Focus liveries. So, Factory Focus is aptly named this month, with a round up of information on the Ford Focus liveries.

To most casual Scalextric racers and with a glance at the catalogues from the last year and a half, you would be forgiven for thinking that there have only been three Focus liveries issued. In fact there are seven!

The first releases were the two most of us recognise. These are the C2175 and C2176 cars of Morgan/Sulayem and Grist/McRae, respectively. The Iridium car of Sulayem is the eye-catching black-silver-white livery whilst the McRae car, naturally, had the instantly recognisable Valvoline red and blue livery on the primarily white car.

Later in 2000 the Carlos Sainz car was released in Scalextric Collector Centres under reference C2179. The car is generally the same as the McRae car but with Moya/Sainz names on the side windows and racing number 6 on the roof and doors.



The Argos chain of stores agreed a deal with Scalextric to supply a special livery Focus for their standard rally set as had happened in previous years with other cars. Last year their Rally Challenge set was issued with a Focus in red along with a silver Toyota Corolla. Both cars were decorated with a livery specifically for this Argos set. The Focus, C2295W, is a light red with racing number 5 in white and the Ford blue oval draped over the rear quarters of the car. The Corolla was similarly decorated with a Toyota insignia. For the hardened nutcase collectors (like myself) the first recorded variant arrived on the scene with the red Focus seen at the Liphook swapmeet with the racing number on the roof in yellow (not white)!

The next catalogue livery appeared late in 2000 with the arrival of the white and light blue Laukannen Focus, racing number 19. The typically Finnish livery of C2343 is probably the prettiest of the Focus cars.

Finally, Argos agreed a fresh livery for their Rally set for this year, 2001, with C2380WA and C2381WA. The cars are silver and red. The silver car (C2380WA) is striking with its turquoise lettering and dark blue Ford oval. The red car (C2381WA) has yellow lettering.

Although the cars have advertising down the length of the doors and large Ford 'RS' logos on the sides, they are obviously and unfortunately produced to a price and thus only have a three colour tampo print. Such a shame as they would look so much better with a full colour livery, whether sold as a toy or as a car for the racer or collector.

There we have it then, seven cars plus one known variation. Unless, of course, you know different.....! ■

The organised chaos of Adrian Norman

BY STEVE BAKER

Well it all started so long ago..... Once upon a time there was this nice bloke by the name of Phil Etgart; it often seemed like everybody in the entire club knew Phil in some way. One of the many things he did for the club was a slot-car quiz at the annual get together. Then one day he decided to leave the club to pursue other avenues (though it was nice to see him again at this year's event).

This left a gap in the weekend, which, when speaking with Adrian at the Liphook swapmeet, I was daft enough to offer to write a quiz. All was well for a while - a friend (Brad Salmon) wrote some motor sport questions, and I started trawling through the back catalogues and Roger Gillham's books.

Then on August 12th I wrote to Adrian; even now things were still ok. On the 13th I got his reply, this was when the skies started to darken, and ghosties and goblins started to arrive.

First it was queries about checking the answers were correct, then on August 31st the first bomb dropped. Two weeks to go, and although Adrian was happy that the quiz was now sorted, he asked if I could come turn it into a 'Who wants to be a millionaire' style quiz with A, B, C, D options for each question. Sounds easy doesn't it. Well it wasn't. One of the original Motorsport questions was: What does the 'Y' in Jackie Y. Stewart stand for? Now come on be honest, how many men's names beginning with Y can you think of? Did you think of 4? - No? neither could I! By the way the answer is Young (as in Clive), and there were others too where you just couldn't get four appropriate and in one or two cases even inappropriate answers.

The next problem was nothing to do with Adrian; I changed my Freeserve account to 'Anytime' as I was by now using it so much. Then I didn't get any e-mail for 6 days. This meant that when I did eventually manage to get

my e-mails on the 8th September, I had 2 from Adrian. Firstly he wanted a 'fastest finger first' round, well ok, but how the hell can you do that with Scalextric questions? err pass. Along with that came the BIG bombshell, he didn't want it to be as the previous quizzes, i.e. 1 question addressed to the room, but to individuals, this was a whole new ball game which meant the quiz I'd spent hours sweating over, revising, changing to suit his desires was completely useless.

Well as you can imagine I wasn't really in that 'Happy bunny' frame of mind just then. And then just to put the icing on the cake the last thing Adrian asked was, "I'd like you to read them too". Well at least I thought I could manage that. So I replied yes I could read the questions, but I thought the best way to do the whole thing was for me to borrow my son's Millionaire quiz book, this would mean that the quiz was general knowledge only, no Hornby questions at all. But this got Adrian's approval, so all was well.

But this left me with the original quiz, MY QUIZ, it is in 3 sections: motor sport, Hornby (roughly in date order from the oldest to newest), and general knowledge.

Well that's it I'm done, I've had my rant, but all in all was it worth it? Well it was great fun doing the quiz, and everyone seemed to enjoy it, but was it worth it? Ask me next year.

Steve,

You really know how to make me feel guilty, don't you! If it were down to me I'd nominate you for some kind of special award, but as the award is Run the Quiz night for 2002 I don't feel brave enough to present it to you.

Adrian

Fear not Steve; your quiz won't go to waste - but the rest of the membership may not thank you when they have to do it for the Christmas competition! ■

Westcountry rambling

FROM VINE FENNEL

Good to see that Patto has had a mention. Nice one Dave! I've used quite a few of his decals, including a couple that he did especially for me. I supplied a pair of 1/24 Nissan Skyline decals which he kindly reduced for me; I have applied them to two ARII 1/32 Skylines, an R32 and an R33. I'm on about my fifth set of his decals so I guess I ought to share them with you all sometime.

If you are going to use them, I found that following his instructions and coating them with Johnson's Klear first (I brush paint but I suspect that airbrushing the whole car would be preferable) followed by spray lacquer works very well.

If you then leave this to dry thoroughly (I have commandeered a corner of the airing cupboard for this purpose!) you can then use a piece of very fine wet & dry used wet to smooth any imperfections and then re-lacquer.

Wot no wheels?

Whilst on the subject of scratch-building here is a gripe. Why have Ninco stopped making the smaller diameter wheels? The new large-diameter ones are completely useless! Far too big. Same subject - I once tried to get a set of Scalextric Caterham wheels - ideal for older cars - no joy. I don't know if this is still the case 'cos I haven't tried again. A set of Cadillac fronts would look nice on certain projects I have in mind (I know they are large diameter so don't start) but are they available as spares? Can anyone advise?

Liked the Riley Elf and when I can get a clear log-on the 'net (must be busy at the moment!) I'll get around to having a look at the others.

Slot Classic - Stunning! - but does anyone out there race one seriously? The wife wouldn't even let me think about buying one!

Right! Next part of the Fly listings. This month it's Venturis and Joest Porsches.

VENTURI

- A11. White - 500 LM. #56 - Le Mans 1993.
- A12. Silver - 600 LM. #43 - Le Mans 1995.
- A13. Blue - 500 LM. #45 - Le Mans 1995.
- A14. Yellow - 600 LM. #57 - Jarama 1994.
- A15. "TILED" Didn't happen.
- A16. Silver - 600 Super LM. #44 - Le Mans 1995.
- A17. Black - 600 SLM - Tomb Raider. #55 - Snetterton 1999.
- A18. Red - 600 SLM - Tomb Raider. #66 - Donington 1999.
- A19. Pink - 600 SLM. #92 - Le Mans 1993.

600 LM featured a different rear wing
600 SLM featured another different rear wing as well as different rear window.

A15 - Colour scheme too difficult to replicate?

TELEFONICA SPANISH GT CHAMPIONSHIP.

PA2. White/Green/Red. #11 - Cuate Max.

LIMITED EDITION.

E11. Blue - 600 LM. #40 - Le Mans 1996. Mini-Auto.

JOEST PORSCHE.

- A41. Blue. #7 - Winner Le Mans 1996.
- A42. White. #7 - Winner Le Mans 1997.
- A43. Silver (Test car). #0 - Hockenheim 1996.

LIMITED EDITION.

E41. Maroon. #69 - Gaugemaster.
E42. Orange. #20 - H&T Motor Racing. (German).

If you know of any Fly cars that I miss let me know. I'll add them to my list. One day I'll have a complete listing!

Seen some interesting repaints (with at least one Patto decal on Yahoo (I think!) auctions some time ago. Quite high prices as well. Next month it's the Marcos. Got a Chrome one? I'll tell you the story! ■

I can stop any time I want to..

BY STEVE WESTBY

Don't wives get funny ideas. Shelley thinks I'm addicted to buying slot cars on-line, but that's nonsense. To prove it, I'll keep this diary to show that it's all under control and I can stop any time I want to.

Saturday 18:07.

Just making my daily check for any items new today on ebay, I'll check the German and US ebay sites as well. There's a complete set of Fly 'A' series cars on the German site, but I'm not keen on them. I've stocked up with US dollars, German Deutschmarks and Austrian Schillings, so I'm ready for any bargains that come up this weekend. Even though I've got all this cash ready, I don't have to buy anything, I can stop any time I want to.

Saturday 23:36.

I'll check ebay for new items again, a lot gets put on in the evenings, especially from the US. While I'm on, I'd better check Yahoo and Amazon, just in case they've got anything, oh and the Australian ebay, they sometimes have some rare items. I've used up this month's budget buying a couple of Fly Classics and an Alfa re-liveried in Nuvolari's Le Mans colours, gone a bit over budget actually, so I'll have to be careful. I'm watching a Scalextric tower & crosswalk, but it's just gone over £100. I can resist that, I can stop any time I want to.

Sunday 05:47.

Making my daily check early, I've been thinking about that crosswalk, it's up to £121 now. There's a whole set of Airfix bodies and axles for sale and a Ford Felday 5 kit in mint condition. I haven't checked the Spanish iBazar site for a few days, I'll have a look at that. Might as well look at the Dutch, Italian and Belgian sites while I'm at it. Just because I can't sleep, doesn't mean I've got a problem, I can stop any time I want.

Sunday 13:21.

As I made my daily check early, I'd better have another look. I'll have to bid on those Airfix bodies, I've already got a full set, but I can't let them go at that price. I'm still resisting the crosswalk and the Felday 5 kit, that proves I can stop any time I want.

Sunday 19:27.

I forgot I'd already made my daily check... twice, still it was worth doing it again, there's a Mini Classics Auto Union up for sale. It'll probably go for more than I can afford, but I'll watch it in case. You've got to check regularly in case there's any rare items come in with "buy it now", they could be snapped up before you even saw them, some people can't control themselves, but I can stop any time I want to.

Sunday 21:56.

Made the daily check again; yes, I know it's the fourth time today! Better get an early night as it's work tomorrow. Think I'd better forget the crosswalk and the Auto Union, I've just spent a large chunk of next month's mortgage on the Airfix body shells and the Felday 5 kit. Still, tighten my belt a bit and I'll be all right, after all, I can stop any time I want to.

Monday 03:28.

Couldn't sleep, realised I haven't looked at the Brazilian iBazar site for a couple of days. Most of them don't have pictures and I don't speak Portuguese, so God knows what they're selling. Ah, here's one with a picture, it's very fuzzy but it might be a Marlboro McLaren, and it mentions Emerson Fittipaldi. I wonder what the exchange rate is? No, I can resist it, I can stop any time I.....,

Oh sod it! My name is Steve and I'm an auction addict, I haven't made a bid for seven minutes. Pass the booze and fags someone. ■



Been there, done that Steve. Hope your Scale Models prize car (GB Track GB72 Porsche GT1 Evo) gives you as much enjoyment as your article gave me.



Evesham Swapmeet

BY JULIE SCALE

Evesham is an excellent venue for a meeting as it is so central. The only problem with this is that it can be approached from so many different angles. John Jude claimed it was his tenth year of attending and his tenth year of getting lost!

We approached from a new route, which worked really well, as we bumped in to Roger Barker, Derek Cooper and son in a Little Chef, we therefore completed the journey in convoy, picking up Martin Davies en-route, for a double take on a couple of roundabouts!

Anyhow safely arrived at the Leisure Centre we were greeted by the usual array of keen stallholders awaiting entrance an hour before the published time. The sales as always started straight away and goods were seen moving boots. Clive Pritchard obviously was under some sort of an illusion that British Summer Time allows for shorts to be worn until mid October, and was modelling a very smart pair. Those of us who know Clive of old - so to speak - will appreciate that this is not the only illusion he lives by!

There was the usual great array of stalls, with some excellent items on display. Vaughan Jones was selling his personal collection. He has to be congratulated on his high standards; everything on his stall was excellent to mint and mostly boxed. It is not often that you can see so many 60's cars of such a high standard for sale at any one time. Of course most were sold within a couple of hours.

John and Elaine had been burning the night oil, on their latest production of hand built kits, the Slot Classic Merc 300sl and Carrera Pan-American 1952 were particularly superb. I can also never get over the fantastic detail Elaine adds to the badge bar on the Morgan.

Sean from Pendle was only with us in spirit - Nick was running his stall for him, and had a fine array of unusual cars, including blue Batmobile, clear Cosworth and many others. 'E-by-gum' a true Lancashire phrase was applied to a Phil Egart style collapsing auction,

and while the starting price of £35 did not attract too many punters, by the middle of the day sales were picking up to a great pace, and very little had to go back at the end of day.

Some new product was also available - Proteus have realised that with the original Heuliez Pregunta, they were appealing only to collectors, so they have re launched the model, in bright red or yellow, with lower specification wheels etc., and a price tag to attract the racers. The resemblance to a teapot has not diminished, but for those of us with yellow kitchens, at least we can stay colour coordinated.

The very long awaited Audi R8 for SCX has also finally arrived. The detail is far better than on their attempt at the Cadillac, the motor is a sidewinder leaving room for driver's legs and lots more detail. I understand it races very well too.

Finally we have to make mention of the team in the kitchen, the now famous Evesham Breakfast outdid itself this year, and the prices were so low no one could quite believe it.

Well-done Steve and Co. ■



Dear Brian

Where have all the Essex boys gone?

I am the (un)lucky owner of a 6-lane Ninco track, which is permanently set-up in the Southend on Sea area. The track is approximately 110 ft in running length and uses the same computer-timing program as most major clubs. The track is flat and does not suffer any “de-slot” problems.

We race a variety of cars ie: Scalextric, Fly, SCX and Ninco. None of these cars are allowed to be modified in order to keep preparation time to a minimum(although there is no substitute for a well run in car).On certain cars the magnets are removed which allows for better racing.

There are 2 “club car classes”, Proslot GT1’s and Ninco Karts.We run 2 classes per night on a race in each lane basis which leads on to semis and a final.

Racing is conducted on a lighthearted basis(what’s the point of doing anything if you can’t have a laugh) but obviously, we all want to win.

This leads me to explain the title of this piece, numbers fluctuate between 8 and 12,where are the rest of you? Essex is full of collectors, some of you must want to race (not your Auto Unions).Come and give it a try, the track is well worth a visit.

Club nights are the 1st and 3rd Mondays of every month and where else could you meet such famous people as Graham Smith.....?

Contact Graeme Thoburn on 01702 551225, 07899 960689
or E-mail graeme@gtmodels.fsbusiness.co.uk

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Dear Brian,

I read with interest the article by Dave Yerbury, on the AA Bodies 1950 Jaguar MKVII.

Last year at Brooklands Dave presented me with one of these bodies as the prize for winning the AA Bodies rail race against yourself and Dave. This was built up by John Moxon into a ballistically fast rail car, easily the fastest rail car in a straight line. At the last rail car meeting John Moxon won a trophy driving it, and I came second in the other main competition.

The car is identical to the car in the picture, even down to the number 2 apart from the rail car has approximately scale wheels with very tall tyres.

Best wishes,
Jeff Davies

Hi Brian

Just an update to let you know the response so far on your kind help with the advert in last month's Journal regarding the Partially Disabled Youngsters event to be held on 4 November.

Several members made contact, and in particular Kenny Forrest from the UK and Don Siegel from Paris; both very kindly donated cars free of any cost, which is extremely generous and it just goes to show how kind and thoughtful NSCC members are. It must also be mentioned with appreciation that several other members have supplied cars at a lower than market value, especially Nasseem who at the time was in South Africa.

Also my sincere thanks and appreciation to yourself and Mark and Julie of Scale Models who kindly awarded the MRRC Cobra in white as last month's prize. As much as I would like to keep it, I'm passing it on to the youngsters of the PDY, who will admire and appreciate this slot car during the event and thereafter with their therapy activities.

Kind regards
Steve Barnett

.....

Dear Brian

Some 88 1/32nd scale cars have been mailed-in from around the world to compete in this year's Marconi Foundation For Kid's Charity Proxy Race, which being held this weekend (27th and 28th of October) at Buena Park Raceway in California.

The cars, built strictly to "scale", will be driven by none less than Greg Gilbert (USRA National Champion), John Cukras (yes, THE John "the Jet" Cukras), Duran Trujillo, Howie Ursaner (the BEST Pro slot driver ever), Tore Anderson, Dennis "Foamy" Hill, Paul Sterett, Daniel Murai, Gil Rivera, Chris Radisich and Jim Cunningham.

If anyone is interested in seeing pictures of my entries, see: http://www.geocities.com/russell_sheldon/

Regards
Russell Sheldon

.....

Dear Ms. Jeffreys

I am delighted to acknowledge receipt of your cheque for the sum of £340.00. On behalf of Scope may I extend a big thank you for this most generous donation.

Please be so kind as to convey our appreciation to everyone who helped raise this money at the NSCC Race meeting; it will undoubtedly boost the funds to help people with cerebral palsy. Scope is a national disability organisation whose focus is with people with cerebral palsy. Its aim is that disabled people achieve equality. Primarily focussing on: support for adults with cp in daily living; support for children recently diagnosed with cp with support to their families; support for disabled adults in obtaining and retaining work; education support for children and young adults with cp giving also support to their families and carers. From this office we manage amongst other things 300 Scope shops and over 850 textile banks and are grateful for the numerous donations of unwanted clothes, bric-a-brac toys etc which we sell and raise a large portion of Scope funds. Best wishes and continued success to everyone at Hornby and the NSCC.

Yours sincerely
Pat MacCrimmon (Administration Manager)

Forwarded from Hornby Hobbies - a thankyou letter for the money raised at the Ramsgate weekend.

Get into the groove

BY STEVE JONES

I started R/C car racing when I was about 21 years old and eventually gave it up 5 years ago. Having enjoyed the hobby for nearly 20 years, the cost of remaining competitive was becoming far too high.

Last year I realised how much I missed the hobby, so my thoughts turned to other similar hobbies, but with less cost involved. One Saturday I rang a few model shops in my locality to see if anyone was running a slot-car club. Most said that the Scalextric side of their business was on the down turn and some even said that once they had sold off the remaining stock they would not replace it. None knew of any slot clubs that was running.

Undeterred by this I kept on with my search. I cannot remember how I came to ring Sean Fothergill at Pendle Slot Racing but on speaking to him he said that one of his customers, named Phil Barry was from Wales and he lived in Abergavenny which is only about 45 minutes away from where I live. He kindly gave me his telephone number and I rang him that evening.

My luck was in! Phil owned a 95-foot plexi track and runs Aberstone Slot Car Club at the Social Club of Neville Hall Hospital. Phil gave me lots of information and invited me to come along to one of their race evenings to see the track and meet the members I rang two of my colleagues who also used to race R/C cars to see if they would like to tag along, they both agreed.

The following week we turned up at the Aberstone Club; we were greeted by Phil Barry and Andy Meredith who made us all feel very welcome. After a brief chat, we were armed with

a hand controller and a car each to have a thrash around. The cars had magnets so they were easier to control, after a few laps we were all starting to get the hang of it, I was hooked! That evening we decided to join the club and purchase hand controllers and cars of our own.

Twelve months later we are now building a track of our own (Which is near completion after six months work). We hope to be starting a Club at Llantrisant in Mid Glamorgan aptly named 'Llanmarino' (My son's idea). New members are welcome to join; telephone Steve Jones on 01443 670018

Let's hope that this hobby will flourish and with the announcement that Superbowl are opening slot tracks around the country our membership numbers will increase.

At present the only competition that we attend is the Southwest Little Le Mans (SWELLS) League which includes four clubs, Southwick, Trowbridge, Torquay and Abergavenny and soon our club. This league is run by Mervyn Palmer and Paul Knight, the racing is competitive but friendly and relaxed. We race once a month at the above locations. For racers who are interested it would be nice to see any competitions being held by various clubs around the country printed in the NSCC magazine, Maybe this could become a regular feature in the magazine in the future?

May I take this opportunity in thanking Phil and Andy of Aberstone club for their hospitality that night and for our introduction into the world of slot car racing! Also to congratulate all the committee of the NSCC for their hard work in producing such an entertaining and informative magazine.... Well done! ■

Silver Hatch circuit

Part 2 - the track

BY KEN ELSTON

As promised in part 1 here is a detailed description of a lap of the Silver Hatch race circuit.

The circuit has 3 long straight sections, an elevated section and a tricky tight in-field section which means that a perfect lap consists of good top speed down the straights and patience through the tight corners of the infield.

Track facts

The circuit is 4 lanes made from normal Scalextric track. The power supply is through the old style non-jack plug controllers and power amps (1 per lane) for qualifying and the new Power Plus system using the old style jack plug controllers for race meetings.

All the corners have run-off areas consisting of standard Hornby or Exin borders. Most of the straights are also lined with track borders to assist when the cars weave from side to side when the tyres are going 'off'.

A C8031 chicane with 1 C8009 insert starts the straight which leads the cars up to the elevated section and is a place where a lot of incidents occur. Cones and straw bales line the inside and outside of this hazard to ensure that drivers have to wait until the right moment before accelerating up the hill.

A permalite system is incorporated into the track (and works well) to allow for Le-Mans style racing. A complete 4 lane Le-Mans start is situated on the top straight however this has not been used since the introduction of the PC controlled race system.

Track Length

Lane 1 (White)	23.36m
Lane 2 (Blue)	22.86m
Lane 3 (Yellow)	22.36m
Lane 4 (Red)	21.96m

Components used in construction.

C159 half straight x 12
C160 straight x 84
C154 half standard curve x 4
C153 outer curve x 34
C151 standard curve x 24
C152 inner curve x 9
C158 quarter straight x 4

A lap of the circuit

The cars line up under the first of the Dunlop Bridges ready to race for 3 minutes around this fast challenging circuit. The start/finish straight is not 'straight' at all. Soon after the start line the cars have to negotiate a Scalextric version of the famous Spa Bus Stop before turning left under the bridge.

Strategy comes into play here because drivers have to determine whether it is worth the risk of winning the race to the first corner for the advantage of racing on clean track or holding back and ensuring that you miss any first corner incidents but may be behind when the race settles down. Remember once you de-slot your race is over and that the race is scheduled to last 3 minutes (roughly 16 laps).

Turn 1 under the elevated section

This is the first left hander after the Bus Stop. Many racers find this is also the last corner on the circuit as accelerating too fast out of the Bus Stop can cause the cars to visit the outside barriers head on! The turn is actually not that tight so good exit speed is essential for a good run under the bridge towards the first hairpin.

Tunnel section

This is not really a true tunnel as there is some daylight, however lanes three and four do run completely under the elevated section. In terms of distance this is not a long straight being only 140cm long but as it is blind to most drivers some time can be lost if the driver is too careful.

Turn 2 hairpin 1

The first of the two hairpins at either end of the back straight was designed to enable bold drivers to gain an advantage onto and out of the almost blind back straight.

As can be seen from the photo the hairpin has multiple radii to give it a better appeal. The corner could have been made easier by using just standard and outer curves however, by using the C152 inner curves as well all drivers have a reasonable chance of getting through the corner at some speed.

From the photo one can see a Porsche 911 GT1 negotiating the bend in lane 3.

My lack of artistic skills can be seen by the fact that the people in the grandstand beside the corner above the hairpin aren't painted!



Back straight

One of the most challenging aspects of the circuit is the back straight because most of it is blind to the driver! Exiting the first hairpin and entering the second is the only piece of track visible to the racer.

The straight is 245cm long and is one of the fastest sections of the circuit. All you have to do is remember your braking point!

Turn 3 hairpin 2 - the computer bend

Not really a true hairpin in the sense that it is not 180 degrees, it is however still referred to as the second hairpin.

The cars come from behind the raised

section of track and then disappear again behind the computer monitor before negotiating the bend. The outer lanes have a slight camber to allow for extra speed to be taken through the kink and onto the main straight.

This area is manned during race nights by the racer currently on commentary/scoring duty. One of the advantages of having the track on bread baskets is that the computer box is safely installed under the circuit.

The main straight

This is without doubt the fastest section of the track. Being 245cm long all cars can reach their top speed.

This section of track is also the area where the power connections are made. For qualifying and general use the 4 controllers are all situated together; however for racing Hornby extension cables are used so that each driver has plenty of elbow room.

We have a World Championship trophy which the winning driver keeps. Another trophy is held for one year with the winning driver having to have it engraved with his name and year of success.

Turn 4 the banked curve

At the end of main straight there is a short slightly cambered bend that links the main straight with the front straight (formerly the start finish straight when the Le Mans start was used).

The curve is slightly cambered to allow as much speed as possible to be carried from one straight to the next. The kink was constructed using an inner curve, 1 standard straight and finally another inner curve.

The front straight

As previously stated the Le-Mans start was the original method that races were started; however when the computerised race monitoring system was installed it was decided that the design of the circuit did not permit the triggering section to be placed directly after the Le-Mans start. I kept the track sections in the circuit purely because it looks good! ➡

Turn 5 the chicane bend

The easiest corner on the circuit on the approach is the hardest on exit because lurking immediately after this turn is the long chicane so speed must be reduced so that the car is well balanced for the chicane.

The corner is 90 degrees and features 2 standard curves on the inner lanes. We use straw bales and cones to ensure that drivers have to be careful when negotiating the chicane. If the car's rear is sliding too much and contact is made with either the cones or straw bales then the odds are that the driver's race is sadly going to be over.

The pit straight

After the long chicane the cars pick up speed and head up uphill to the sharp right-hander at the top of the hill.

The straight is 8.75 (including the chicane) standard straights in length.



The power boosters for the circuit are situated in the straights which are not pinned to the board.

In the photo you can see several GT cars going up the hill.

Seven pit buildings line this straight, most with painted figures glued into them.

Turn 6 the short chute

Being only 42.5CM long this small section links the long uphill section with the shorter more risky downhill section. Inner curves are used in conjunction with standard curves to make the corners as tight and interesting as possible. The first bend is slightly cambered so that the outer lanes (1 and 2) have a distinct advantage in that

greater speed can be carried over the top section and down the other side. A few cars have visited the grandstand on the first bend as some drivers have been known to get their braking wrong!

The downhill section

After the second bend on the top section the track drops away for 3 straights before entering a slightly raised curve that is the beginning of the final twisty section of the lap.

Disaster awaits anyone carrying too much speed down the hill.

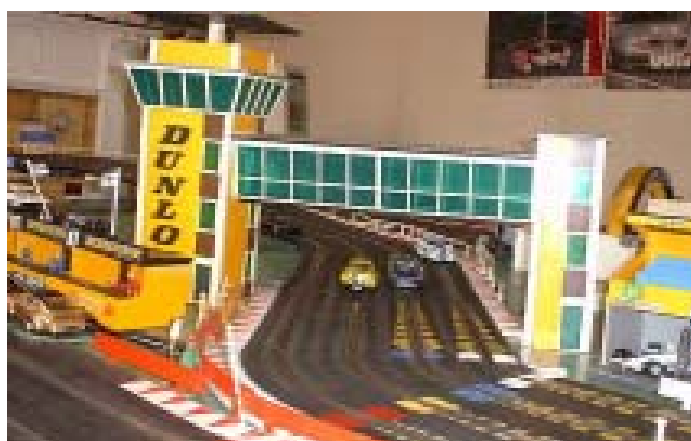
The Dunlop control tower

The Dunlop control tower marks the beginning of the twisty infield section of the circuit, the final stage of the lap.

A pleasant addition to the circuit, the tower is suited to a four lane layout in that it can span all 4 lanes without any artificial modifications. Care is taken to remove deslotted cars from this section of track. However few accidents happen as there is plenty of space to work with.

For the observant amongst you a gold Porsche Carrera can be seen getting service in the pits.

A yellow mini (probably being lapped!) leads a few faster models including a Dodge Viper under the control tower towards the twisty section.



The pits

Only 1.25 standard straights long the second pit straight on the circuit is probably the slowest section of the track. The cars come out from

under the Dunlop control centre and then turn left. At the end of this straight is the second Dunlop bridge on the layout.

An inner curve begins this section and a double inner concludes it.

The final Dunlop bridge

After passing under the Dunlop bridge the circuit turns 90 degrees left again for another short (52.5cm) length of track where the cars pass under the final Dunlop bridge.

The final straight

The final bend on the track (a 90 degree turn using standard curves on the inner lanes) leads the cars onto the final straight on the circuit.

Although good speed can be achieved down this straight care must be taken because the Bus Stop lurks just after the start line.

Notice the 2 electronic lap counter buildings lining the straight. This was one of our first attempts at having an accurate scoring system. That idea failed because not all laps were registered - a costly experiment. We did try to place them at various places around the track but with very limited success.

The fastest laps

The fastest laps of the circuit are classed by type and are as follows:

CLASS	MODEL	TIME	LANE
Touring	BMW Z3	8.46	1
GT	Marcos	7.58	2
Grand Prix	Arrows	7.47	4
Sports	Jaguar XJR15	8.57	4

Tune in next month for Part 3 - Racing and Race Control. ■



WHEELSPIN

FLY (C39) LOLA T70 MKIIIB REVIEWED BY PETER NOVANI

The harsh reality remains to this day. The Lola T70 MkIIIB was, despite its undoubted beauty, only ever capable of achieving a solitary victory in a world championship endurance event. As a successful racing car on the international stage, it was an underachiever. Yet this quintessential 'big banger' sports racer epitomises that period of sports car racing perfectly. Even today it is rightly held in high esteem by motor sport enthusiasts worldwide. And with a steady flow of new variations from Fly, it's about time the Lola received the 'Wheelspin' treatment!

LOLA T70 EVOLUTION

During the early Sixties, American car giant, Ford made an audacious bid to acquire the legendary Ferrari company. Having been suitably rebuffed by Enzo Ferrari, Ford commandeered the Lola Cars Mk6 mid-engine GT project. That British made GT was the brainchild of Lola founder and designer Eric Broadley, and would prove to be the genesis of Ford's highly successful MkII/MkIV/GT40 series of endurance race cars. And by way of retribution, those Ford race cars famously trounced the Ferrari team on several occasions at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

With the Ford's GT programme up and running in 1964, Broadley recommenced work at Lola, based just outside London. A single-seater and sports car programme was soon instigated. The culmination of his endeavours to design a sports car for the new Group 7 regulations was the Type 70 (T70) open two seater roadster (spyder). Those regulations were readily embraced by the Canadian-American Challenge Cup (CanAm) which catered for unlimited engine capacity spyders. That

financially lucrative series, sponsored by Johnson Wax, had just started to attract serious interest from race car manufacturers, especially those based in Europe. Much of the design philosophy of Lola's T70 MkI and MkII also stemmed from the Mk6 project, as they were specifically designed to use American V-8 engines. Incidentally, Fly have just released the Lola T70 MkII as part of their new range of high quality 1/43rd die-cast miniatures.

With top-line drivers such as Graham Hill, Dan Gurney and Mark Donahue at the helm, Lola T70 MkIIs were at the forefront of the embryonic CanAm series. But it was former Lola Formula One (F1) driver, John Surtees, driving his semi-works Team Surtees entered T70, who was crowned CanAm champion in 1966. In truth, Lola's redoubtable efforts were eclipsed the following season by McLaren's all-conquering M6A. Moreover, Lola were also developing a sports/prototype endurance coupé; For all intents and purposes, merely a refined version of the MkII. With its self-coloured glass reinforced plastic bodywork, plus innovative bonded windscreen and gull-wing doors, the MkIII definitely looked the part. Yet the aerodynamic horizontal tail section was probably the most unusual aspect of the car.

Another collaboration with John Surtees resulted in an ill-conceived assault on the 1967 Le Mans 24 Hours with MkIII coupés powered by Aston Martin's recalcitrant new V-8 engine. That proved to be an unmitigated failure. Thereafter, T70s were predominately powered by Chevrolet's more reliable V-8 engine. Such a configuration allowed semi-works and privateer T70s to dominate the British sports car scene, albeit against less than impressive opposition. Yet success in prestigious world championship

endurance events continued to elude the marque. However, a change of fortune followed the introduction of the svelte new MkIIIB coupé which incorporated the many lessons learnt from building and racing earlier versions of the T70. Without question, the highlight of its career had to be the début victory at the Daytona 24 Hours race held in America – a world championship sanctioned event no less. The winning car was a unique MkIIIB developed by Roger Penske's American racing team. Therefore, it differed both visually and mechanically from 'standard' versions.

Much of the remaining story is consigned to domestic success in England plus minor placings in International endurance events. The arrival of the iconic Porsche 917 and Ferrari's 512S, in 1970, effectively reduced the T70's role to that of an also-ran. Nonetheless, they were diligently campaigned until new regulations outlawed 'big banger' endurance race cars for the 1972 season.

THE SLOT-CAR

Fly's range of T70s represents only a fraction of the 100, or so, race cars produced by Lola in various guises. For this review I have chosen to concentrate on the less well known 1969 Oulton Park Gold Cup version (C39), which was obtained from Pendle Slot Racing. Not, that this British held event, supporting a non-championship F1 race, has any historical significance. It didn't even count towards the RAC sports car championship, so the entry was minimal to say the least. Entered by Mike de Udy, this Bartz tuned Chevrolet V-8 powered T70, was driven by Australian ace, Frank Gardner. The lack of quality opposition allowed the underrated Aussie to lap the entire field in a race lasting little over half-an-hour!

Fly have few peers when it comes to detailing and overall finish, and the Lola is no exception. They have done well to capture the flowing lines of this undeniably handsome race car. Having said that, a glaring error will immediately be apparent to those of you familiar with the de Udy version. That concerns the omission of the prominent roof mounted chrome 'twin snorkels.' It could be argued that

they might have got damaged when racing. But, shouldn't we have had the option to remove them? Nonetheless, the car certainly possesses that all important must-have factor. Painted in an unusual peppermint green colour with thick dark green pinstriping, it will easily stand out amongst other cars in your collection.

Fly have also added some subtle detailing touches. For example, the way the green paintwork shows through the perforated holes to the rear of the tail spoilers. Then there is the photo-etched front air intake mesh grille and metal panel fitted into the bonnet vent. Meanwhile, consider the superbly moulded side windows which replicate the open 'vents' often seen on the race cars. And an impressive trick taken from the static modeller's handbook is the way Fly add visual depth to exhausts by painting the insides of that part black. Yes, these Classic slot-cars really are almost too good to race. Which may account for the fact that many enthusiasts prefer not to run them. That is a pity, as they have other attributes going for them besides a wealth of detailing.

ON TRACK IMPRESSIONS

With Fly's usual chassis and running gear design philosophy adhered to, you can expect front stub-axles, sidewinder motor, powerful cylindrical magnet and treaded tyres. As ever, a brief test session was undertaken this time using a well sorted Fly (C11) Porsche 908/1 spyder as a comparison. That just happens to be one of the fastest cars around my layout, therefore an interesting benchmark for the new Lola.

The 908/1 was far more adept at negotiating corners with differing radii. And it's not hard to see where its performance advantage comes from. All Fly 908 spyders (especially the 908/3 version) have a minimum of front and rear bodywork beyond the wheels and around the cockpit area. Conversely, the Lola suffers from having too much weight in all the wrong places, especially the tail section. No doubt that contributed towards the adverse road holding characteristics which saw the Lola de-slotting on a regular basis – very annoying. Other than lowering the bodyshell, club racer style, ⇒

a simpler remedy would be to reduce the profile of the rear tyres by sanding (truing) them. Effectively, this lowers the chassis towards the track rails, thus increasing the magnetic downforce, which is essential if this slot-car is to be raced competitively. Further compromising the Lola's performance was the inner sidewall of the rear tyres rubbing against the chassis, causing the car to slow appreciably through lefthand corners. No surprises there, as that's a recurrence of a similar fault I came across when testing GB Track's Chevron B19 for the NSCC Journal in May.

However, the judicious application of sandpaper, prior to the track test, soon rectified the problem. Once the tyre tweaks have been successfully administered, I was able to power the Lola through the tight double inner curves on my four lane 'exhibition' 35ft Scalextric layout, with more conviction. But, and as the statistics reveal, it will require more track time if it is to beat Porsche's impressive lap times. Nonetheless, the Lola set a fastest lap time of 4.1634 seconds and completed 20 laps in a respectable 1 minute 25.3706 seconds. Whereas the Porsche's times were 3.8578 seconds and 1 minute 21.8606 seconds.

OTHER LOLA T70 MKIIIB RELEASES

The race versions listed in chronological order.

(C31) Penske – Daytona '69

From a purists point of view, this is the Fly T70 to own. The historically important #6 race winner of Donahue/Parsons. Although Fly's interpretation of the blue Sunoco sponsored car does have the gold pinstriping, it lacks the unique features of the Penske version. Missing is the single filler cap and recess ahead of the driver's door, the transparent box surrounding the engine inlet trumpets, the various identification lights and the single aluminium trim spoiler on the tail section.

(C31) Penske – Sebring '69

Driven by Donahue/Bucknum, the #9 Penske car was a contender for overall honours before retiring. Fly thoughtfully replicate the 'tank tape' on the headlights, which protected them against stone damage during the early (daylight) hours

of the race.

(C32) Bongrip – Thruxton '69

Resplendent in yellow with white and red central stripes, this Bongrip sponsored #33 Lola, finished in second place with Swedish legend, Jo Bonnier, at the wheel.

(C33) Hamlyn Books – Thruxton '69

The white, with a triple green stripe, semi-works T70 entered by Sid Taylor, and normally driven by 1967 F1 champion, Denny Hulme. However, sports car exponent, Brian Redman, drove the #4 car to victory on this occasion.

(C35) 2 decal option '69

Race #33 decals depict the Hawkins/Prophet version which retired at the Spa 1000km. The #40 decals represent the Jo Bonnier driven car which retired at Oulton Park.

(C38) Team Gunston – Kyalami '69

Another Sid Taylor entered T70, this time painted in the gaudy colours of local sponsors, Gunston (cigarettes). This is the #1 car which Redman/Love drove to second place in the South African 9 hour race at Kyalami.

(C36) Morand – Spa '70

The dark green Lola with twin central yellow stripes. It took part in the Spa 1000km race driven by Morand/Pillon where it was not in contention and eventually retired.

(C34) VDS – Le Mans '70

This red VDS entered car for Pilette/Gosselin retired having got as high as sixth at one time. Unfortunately, the ultra fast Le Mans circuit never really suited the Lola T70.

(C91) David Piper – Magny-Cours '70

The David Piper entered MkIIIB, painted in his 'trademark' mid-green colours. French F1 star, Jean-Pierre Beltoise, drove the car to victory at this minor sports car event.

CONCLUSION

Arguably, the Lola T70 is the poor relation of sports car racing's golden era. It was certainly a landmark car for the Lola marque, if not in terms of motor sport's illustrious history. Should that particular era of racing appeal to you, then the Fly T70 will surely be an essential acquisition – either for racing purposes or for displaying in a cabinet. Cheers! ■

A good day had (hopefully) by all

BY ROB LYONS

On Sunday 16th September, North Staffs. Scalextric Racing Club held their annual race meeting, open to clubs from around the country. We invited six clubs with whom we have friendly ties but unfortunately two clubs dropped out, which left us with spaces and these were filled with Juniors from our own club and Wolverhampton. By the way, if any clubs would like to race at next year's meeting or have a meeting that they would like to invite us to, we have cars and will travel.

So down to the race, it was a Porsche and Ferrari Challenge team race. Rules were simple, bring a Porsche and Ferrari hard top GT car, three racing team members, a mechanic/manager and then go racing. Teams were graded by qualifying to group drivers of equal abilities. As it was a team race, all team members laps were added together to find the winning team. Each individual's laps were also noted as there were trophies available for the top three drivers. The mechanic/managers job was to fix cars if they went wrong and then later to have their own race - well we had to give them something to do.

Did I say earlier that it was simple? Well I was wrong, organising the event was a nightmare; I think I will race next time. The teams that turned out were Quorn, Pendle, Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton Juniors, our own senior NSSRC team and junior members. Everyone had been seeded earlier on through qualifying, slower drivers against each other and faster drivers against ones of similar skill. Most teams were using Proslot cars with Evo3 motors; our senior team used Ferrari 355 and Porsche 911 GT3. Quorn used the same type Ferrari and GT2 Porsche. Pendle used Ferrari Modena and Proslot GT3 Porsche. Wolves used a Scalextric F40 with a Protech motor and Proslot GT3. Their juniors used SCX F40 Ferrari with an RX10 motor and Proslot Porsche; our own

juniors used the same type of cars as Pendle, but nowhere near as quick. It did not take long for everybody to get into the swing of things, first up were the slower drivers - sorry slower is the wrong word - group 3 drivers. Group 2 drivers were next followed by group 1 drivers racing alternately Ferrari and Porsche for 32 races. With the exception of Wolverhampton, all the other teams race on an MDF/Sandtex type routed track, so this put Wolverhampton at a slight disadvantage as theirs is a Ninco track and they are used to Magnatraxion but they raced and raced well.

After the race had finished and all the laps had been counted the results were

1st	Pendle	725.00 laps
2nd	NSSRC seniors	663.25 laps
3rd	Quorn	652.00 laps
4th	NSSRC juniors	613.25 laps
5th	Wolverhampton	537.25 laps
6th	Wolverhampton jrs.	530.25 laps

There were trophies kindly donated by Keith Harris of The Victoria Hotel, Tunstall (a club member of NSSRC who has the most reasonable rates for visiting racers) for the top 3 individual drivers who completed the most laps, these being

1st	Jim Brown (Pendle)	242.50 laps
2nd	Steve Swann (Pendle)	242.00 laps (couldn't get much closer)
3rd	James Lymer (NSSRC)	229.75 laps

The trophy for the best junior team was won by NSSRC juniors which consisted of Shaun Mitchell, 16, Chris Lyons, 12 and Samantha Alcock, 10 (yes a female and only been a club member for 3 months).

Thanks to Pendle Slot Racing who donated a car for the fastest junior, which went to Shaun Mitchell (NSSRC) for his 8.58 sec lap, which incidentally was only 0.2sec behind Jim Brown's fastest lap of 8.38.

There was a managers/mechanics race; Pendle dropped out of this race as they had no manager/mechanic (their cars never break down).

1st was Michael Pearson, 15, for NSSRC Juniors 2nd Stan Pearson NSSRC Seniors (Stan did not give his age but I think he is old) 3rd Quorn 4th Wolverhampton Juniors 5th Malcolm of Wolverhampton Seniors.

Special thanks to the NSSRC groupies who attended, giving support to their fancied racers and helping out with the refreshments.

As I said at the beginning, a good days racing had by all and hopefully next years will run smoothly, so if you would like to race with us, give us a ring or e-mail us.

Tel: 01782 311106 (Rob) or 01782 512579
email: roblyons@bun.com ■

Overseas members competition

Want to win one of these? I have a Ramsgate weekend limited edition car (50 made) available for overseas members only. To enter just send your name, address and membership number to the editor at the address on page 1 of the Journal.

Closing date Thursday 22nd November 2001

POSTCARDS ONLY PLEASE!

Archie, my faithful editorial cat, will choose the winner and the result will be announced in the December issue. U.K. members will have a chance to win one in the Christmas competition.



Back to real basics

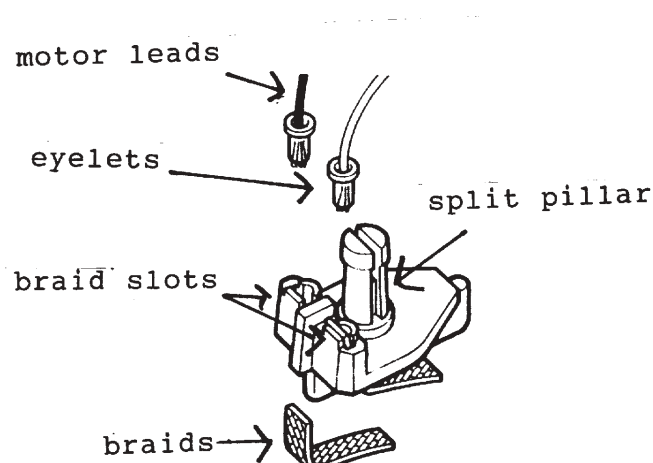
Part 2

BY TONY SECCHI

Braids - guide - motor - leads

To get the power from the slot rails to your car you need a conducting connection. This is effected by a pair of flexible copper, coated or soft steel braids - the criterion being that the material must have low resistance. These connections are called braids because the material is braided. This gives it strength of wear and flexibility. The latter factor is important because the braids also act as a sort of 'suspension' allowing for the vagaries in the track surface. Too stiff a contact and the car would spend more time out of the slot than in it.

The braids are fitted one each side of the pick up guide so that they are in contact directly with the slot rails. They run through slots in the base of the pick up guide and are held in place by metal eyelets containing the leads from the slot car motor. This ensures the containment of the braids to the pick up and at the same time



gives electrical continuity to the motor. The pick up guide is connected to the underpan of the car by a split pillar which fits into a collar in a profiled, open D' shape in said underpan allowing the guide to rotate and pivot when the car turns.

A few years ago Scalextric introduced their 'easy fit guide blade', which has metal motor contacts, built into the underpan. These have

vertical male spade connectors, which project inside the car, and the motor leads are fitted with female spade connectors. The object of this is that a replacement guide complete with braids can be pushed into place after removal of the old one.

Front axle

This carries the front wheels and tyres, which give stability and authenticity. Most slot-cars can be run perfectly well without any front wheels at all, as on older models where the wheels hardly touched the track when the axle was in place.

Nowadays axles come in two types. The first a solid steel rod with wheels fixed on each end mounted in vertical open-ended brackets projecting from the underpan. The second has two stub axles, one on each side mounted in the same way but with the brackets closed.

The motor

The leads from the pick up guide take the power from the track via the braids to the motor. These leads are plastic covered and stranded. They have a multi core of fine wires to give flexibility (and low resistance) - they have to turn with the guide - and the diameter of the wire core is selected to suit the electrical current that it has to carry. These leads are terminated at the motor by connection to the brushes. Switching the leads at the pick up or motor end will reverse the direction of travel of the car.

The brushes are located at the 'head' of the motor and are small carbon blocks fixed to spring loaded arms (one each side) that carry the electrical current to the commutator. They are generally profiled to bed to its surface.

The commutator consists of a number (three on 1/32 motors) of copper segments insulated from each other and mounted concentrically on the armature shaft and fixed to it. When under

power from the brushes the commutator rotates and acts as a switch changing the connection of the coils to the motor output.

Armature coils are literally coils of multi wire windings (three on 1/32 motors) mounted on the armature shaft which runs through the centre of the motor. Each coil is connected to a copper segment of the commutator.

The magnet, which energises the coils, is at the tail of the motor on a power sledge (on the enclosed 'can' types there are half round magnets each side of the armature)

The armature shaft, as previously stated, runs through the centre of the motor and carries the armature itself, the commutator and the pinion (more later) all of which rotate under power. It runs in small oilite bearings at the 'head' and 'tail' of the motor.

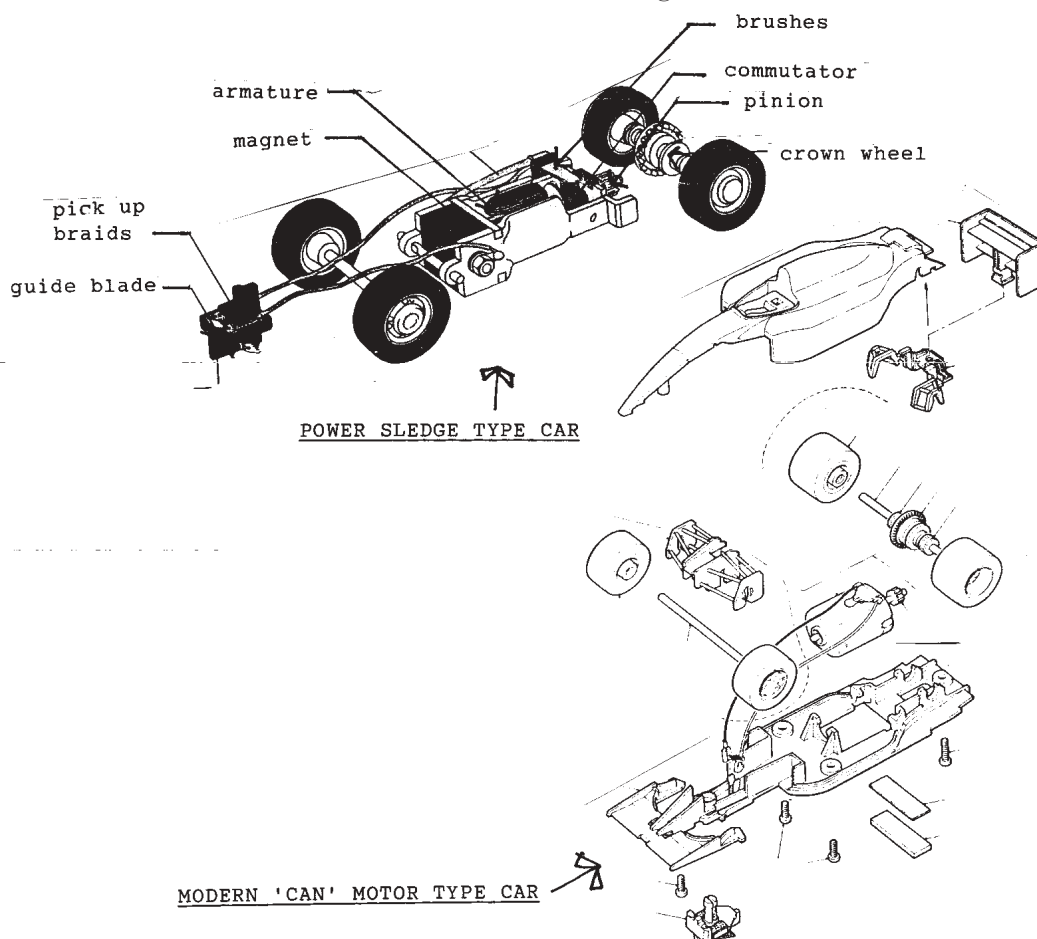
Final drive

The motor is mounted in vertical brackets protruding from the underpan and at the rear/head end of the motor the armature shaft

projects and is fitted with a pinion. This circular toothed gear (plastic or brass) is mated or meshed with a crown wheel fixed to the rear axle. This is also circular and toothed. The purpose of these two gears is to transfer the inline rotation of the motor to the required transverse rotation of the rear wheels. The pinion usually has nine teeth and the crown wheel twenty-seven. This gives a final drive ratio of 3 to 1. This ratio can be raised or lowered by changing the pinion - more teeth giving better acceleration, less teeth more top speed.

The rear axle runs in two plastic or metal circular bearings fixed into vertical open brackets in the underpan. The underpan itself is generally flat and can carry recesses or holes for rectangular or circular magnets for roadholding.

So there you are Mark - I hope that this offering helps to clear up any doubts that you and any other members new to our hobby have. Slot cars have been going a long time now and despite the competition from other forms of armchair racing it is most gratifying to see keen and enquiring minds like Mark's who are still willing to learn. ■



U.S.A. style '65

BY TONY SECCHI

Some time ago I wrote a piece for the Journal titled 'Raceway USA'. This was my personal recollection of the influx of American slot car models, kits and spares. on the U.K. club set up in the early sixties.

I went to the States in 1965 and drove across country from New York on the East Coast to Los Angeles on the West Coast. It was there that I experienced the American version of our hobby at first hand. As far as I can remember or ascertain, the era of American slot car racing spanned the years 1960 - 1970 (approx.) so I just happened to be there at the peak of it.

The trip came about because I have a cousin in New York and the friend that I went with had a sister in Los Angeles. We spent a hectic two weeks in the 'Big Apple' with my relations, took two weeks: to drive across the country (very hectic also) and spent four weeks recovering with his sister's family who lived in a suburb called West Covina.

Any members who have been to L.A. will know that, once there, a car is essential. The words 'public transport' do not translate. We had to do everything by car, even driving to the local shopping complex (which had a very good bar!) and it was whilst in this bar one evening that I saw a couple of guys with 'slot boxes' walking by. Being active in my own club at that time, I was curious so went to investigate. A few units down from the bar was a huge (and I mean huge!) 'Raceway'.

Culture shock

This as it turned out, was a commercial setup sponsored by one of the model car companies - Russkit or Revell I think. Tickets were purchased for an evening's racing (five races) on a six lane professionally hand built circuit about the size of Brands Hatch (actually over 200 feet long). I had never seen a commercial set up before and coming after my local club in London it was a shock, ours being parochial by comparison.

I stayed most of the evening, much to the chagrin of my friends and got to know a few people to talk to. My first observation was that there did not seem to be any organised championship racing, each event being run as a 'one off' with ticket holders entering them as they wished. The first evening that I was present there were four open top sports car races plus one G.T. race. No money prizes were given, but as is usual with America, all the entrants got pennants or ribbons right down to sixth place.

The cars were 1/24 scale (coincidentally the same scale as we raced at home) and were mainly by Strombecker, Cox, Monogram and Revell. Some were ready made and some were assembled from kits. They had aluminium or magnesium chassis with drop arm pick-ups - it was here that I first saw this configuration along with 'flag' type guides.

The engines were all 'can' types with exposed plastic end bells carrying the bushes, some were five pole units, which I had also never before encountered. Although they were of different colours and had various brand names, I was told that they were mostly made by a certain Ken Mabuchi of Tokyo (sound familiar?) - I think that they were type FT36 or 600. Bodies were almost universally injection moulded and very detailed for the time.

The pistol type controllers used were almost universally by 'Russkit' an L.A. slot car company formed by businessman Jim Russell. At the end of the slot car boom in America he sold the controller rights to the 'Aurora' company who later sold it on to 'Parma' (also sound familiar?). I use a Parma controller myself at present and it is excellent.

The pro-racers arrive

The racing that evening was very serious, but because it was not a club in the real sense, it did not have the friendship and camaraderie that I was used to. The guys were polite, curious and

very informative although at the same time reluctant to lend me a car to drive. I got the overall feeling that I was a welcome if slightly isolated observer all evening. However, I did return to the Raceway on a few more occasions and can clearly remember one bizarre evening when a couple of professional slot car racers turned up for a sponsored race along with the local beauty queen and a few minor dignitaries.

The pro racers were something else. They were sponsored by Russkit/Revell (whatever) and were a class apart. They looked like elderly college students (American style). They had cropped hair, shirts with button down collars and 'Ivy League' type single breasted suits made from some kind of polymer which shone like metal under the lights.

Blindingly fast

I had never seen anything like them on a racing circuit - or their cars! These were extremely light and blindingly fast. The chassis were hand made from brass rod and piano wire - one rod either side of the motor profiled to hold the rear axle, with the wire anchoring the pick ups and front axle, the whole giving a kind of 'ladder' frame. The body was screwed to outriggers welded to the rods and the engine held in place with a custom made wide metal clip.

The bodies were based on Indianapolis 500 open wheel single seater cars and were vacuum formed (again the first that I had seen) and again for it's time the detail and finish had to be seen to be believed - all professionally done to a stunning standard.

The five pole can motors (Dyno-can by M.D.C. I think) had been re-wound, dynamically balanced and fitted with Ferrite magnets. They were sidewinder mounted with the can and gears at a horizontal angle of about 10 degrees to the contrate. The tyres at the rear were very wide, made of sponge rubber and as if I could ever forget - coloured white

I cannot remember the outcome of that particular evening's racing except that there was a lot of ballyhoo, many presentations and lots of speeches and prizegivings. I was mentioned and

given a souvenir pennant and asked if I knew the Beatles.

I never did race on the circuit or visit the Raceway again but later that year, when I returned home, American cars, kits and spares began arriving over here and were slowly incorporated into our club's racing format.

The bubble bursts

By about 1968/70 the U.S.A. bubble seemed to have burst. The existing commercial products could not compete with the professionally made cars and the usual pace of American development overwhelmed the disillusioned racer whose cars became obsolete quicker than he could afford to replace them.

As in English commercial raceways, a small revival occurred featuring ultra lightweight Lexan pro-scale bodies (actually no scale) with slimline spring steel chassis and wide sticky sponge tyres. These way out designs hardly resembled real cars, being 'lovingly' labelled 'thingies' or 'blobs'.

I gave up racing then and for the next thirty years had no truck with our hobby. Then along came retirement, the 'movers and shakers' TV programme, Steve Carter, Brian Walters, Bob Bott, the NSCC, 1/32 scale, Ninco, Fly, Proslot, new Scalextric, Sean Fothergill, Alan Slade, Phil Egart, Dave Yerbury, Brian Rogers, my home track, a few of my old mates and presto! I am back in action again, racing, competing, modifying, building and enjoying every minute of it. The longevity and revival of our sport and my rediscovery of it has given me no end of interest and pleasure. It has introduced me to many new friends in the NSCC, all of whom have been enthusiastic, honest and forthright. It is nice to be part of our hobby again, even in my dotage. It inspires many happy memories of the past of both model and real racing, but most of all it has given me an added perspective on my present lifestyle that I could never have anticipated when I returned to it four years ago.

It is turning out to be one of the best things that I ever did. ■

Mole's Scottish rambles



It seems that I was right that the transaxle unit on the Fly Chevrolet is just a pretty piece of silver coloured plastic serving no more useful function than keeping the oil off the back window. Someone is bound to write in to say that is one of the functions of a transaxle. Agreed, but they normally hold the pinion in place as well.

It is constantly pointed out by reviewers that cars are reaching new heights of super detailing, but hey, lets remember that these are supposed to be toy model racing cars and if the present rise in prices continues then R/C cars start to look very attractive indeed. Super detailing is all very well, but Fly have been making a front engined rear wheel drive car (something of which Mole approves) for some time now and it is about time they got it right. It surely doesn't take a Nobel Prize winning scientist to work out that for the propshaft to stay correctly aligned at all times requires two bearings.

Mole has been on his yearly sojourn to the west coast of Scotland and revisited Applecross, a truly amazing place. The scenery is brutally wonderful and every driver should make the 36 mile trip around Applecross at least once in their lifetime, preferably both ways to really appreciate it. Just try to maintain a 40 m.p.h. average and you will see why Mole remarked to Mrs. Mole that it would make a marvellous model rally track. Go to your local library and look at OS map 24 and count the number of bends. But the map does not show the blind crests and bends, or the sheep and cattle!

What is all this to do with our hobby I hear you asking. Well, when Mole was in Lochcarron he espied on a newspaper billboard the following: 'Car Rally heads to Skye'. "What rally is this?" he thought, and on the way back to his temporary abode it hit him - almost literally - in the form of a MkII 3.8 Jaguar and he just had time to read the rally plate whilst trying to avoid said Jaguar and the scenery. It

was the 'Classic Malt Rally'. A tour round the Scottish mainland and the Islands visiting many of the Malt Whiskey distilleries - what better way to spend a few days, especially as you get to drive your classic car over some of the best rally roads in Scotland. This sent Mole's brain into overdrive especially as on the way back over Applecross he kept having to stop for Mercedes 250sls, Aston Martin DB4s, Renault Alpines, Lotus Europas, E-Type Jaguars, Porsche 911s and many more classic rally cars.

What a golden opportunity for a wonderful new Scalextric set; how about one with an Aston DB4, E-type, Healey 3000 and a Mercedes 250sl, and as Applecross is mostly single track road then it should be made up of nearly all chicanes with the occasional normal bit of track to allow overtaking. The only problem is that to make it realistic the track would have to be about 300 feet long and have a height differential of about 12 feet. Still it could all go into a very 'Exclusive box'. What's that? You cannot promote drinking and driving. Shame. How about The Uisgebaugh Classic Car Rally then?

In the September issue there were 158 cars listed that are or will be available this year. Add to that list the cars from the small manufacturers and others that will become available before the end of the year and the total must be near 200. To buy that lot you would need to be an (ex) millionaire, which may explain why traders say that buyers are becoming much more discerning and only buy what interests or appeals to them. Is Mole tempted? Well there are six that interest him, and of those two that he will definitely buy. As for the other four, well if they are reasonably priced and good racers then he might be tempted. Sadly none of these are from Hornby Hobbies. A couple of months ago I asked if anyone knew how many of each model Fly had made to get to their millionth car. One member has done the sums and the answer is 2000. Thank you Peter. ■

Racing down under

BY WAYNE BERMINGHAM
(EDITOR CLUB LINES)

As part of his article “More Westcountry rambles”, on page 13 of the September journal, Vine Fennel requested information about the racing scene here in Australia. The author also mentioned Patterson I gather he was referring to Bruce Paterson. Bruce caters to the slot car scratch builder by providing a huge range of clear bodies, over 12000 at last count, in both 1:24th and 1:32nd scale as well as chassis, motors, running gear, complete kits and decals. But Vine already knows this, so I’ll leave it to him to tell the readers all about it, because as Vine said, he has used some of his stuff.

Getting back to the first point, I imagine the racing scene down under is much the same as it is in the UK, the main difference of course being we need much stronger magnets because we race upside down. And if you believe that you’ll believe Kangaroos hop up and down the steps of the Sydney Opera House.

Actually the race scene here is quite varied with the many groups around the country using rules and classes that suit the way they want to race. For example my local club, the Twin Lakes Group, races a structured competition throughout the year every second Friday night. Two of our six permanent tracks are 4 lanes while the others are two lanes. Two of our circuits are fully computer controlled using the ‘Track Mate’ system I think; another uses the AFX lap counter/timer while the rest use nothing at all. We have fourteen or so regular drivers competing with eight classes of cars split into two groups, magnet and non-magnet models which are raced alternately at each meeting. By that I mean one night will be for non-magnet cars and at the next round we race only those cars from the magnet class.

The cars we race are mostly Ninco, SCX and Fly, however the number of drivers putting Scalextric on the start line is increasing, which is

good to see. We use the stop and go rule with unlimited deslots and race heats are run for two minutes on each lane. Cars remain more or less box standard with limited modifications allowed. All drivers use their own standard 45-ohm Parma hand controls. While our tracks are all plastic, we have no timber circuits in our group, they are all very different in configuration and length but have pretty much equal power to each other. Any arguments or disputes are sorted in the typical Aussie fashion, a quick punch up; a shake of hands followed by a cold beer then its back to the track. Do you reckon I’m kidding well, I am.

Other groups, even those in the same State, use different rules and classes. Some, like the Sydney guys, conduct 12 meetings a year each one on a different track with the cars chosen by the host from a long list of models in an ever growing number of classes which at the moment is over 40. To give you a quick example of this, at a recent meeting one of the five classes the host decided to run was Le Mans class 1. This is only for Scalextric cars and includes models such as Austin Healey, Mercedes 190 and 250 SL, Porsche 904 and Spyder, Renault Alpine, Sunbeam Tiger and Jaguar D type to name a few. Also picked for that same event was Formula 1 class 2 which includes Matra MS11, Ferrari 312 B2, McLaren M9A and JPS Lotus models all with RX motors. A third class chosen was called Touring/Rally for sedan cars with Mabuchi motors and magnet.

Another popular form of racing, known as club cars, uses just one type of car. Each racer has his own car, it might be say a Megane or Cadillac, that doesn’t matter, the point is all the cars are identical in performance and are maintained by one person to avoid any tampering. Each driver races with the same car for a predetermined season with points accumulating to find a champion. This type =>

of event is particularly useful for new race groups who want to increase the number of racers or for established groups who are looking for new blood because it means the new guys only have to buy one car to take part in a regular competition. Of course many groups also run social events either in conjunction with regular competition meetings to add more variety or perhaps even as the sole function of the group.

There is however one significant aspect that every race group has in common. It makes no difference what cars are being raced; what the track is made of or how big it is, whether it has scenery or is completely barren, the latest computer control or just a stop watch. It doesn't even matter that all the blood runs to our heads because we race upside down. But what is important is that we all have a good time with people who share a common interest and with whom we enjoy spending time with while racing

the toy cars we all love to crash. No better make that all love to race.

So there you have it, a quick insight into race meetings Aussie style. I have no idea if it's what you expected or if it's much different from the way you guys do things. Perhaps Vine might like to write an article explaining how racing is conducted over there.

Oh yeah just one last thing before I say catchyalata (goodbye), if anyone is interested in sponsoring me in a slot car test match, you know like the Ashes, I promise I will try not to do to you what the Aussie cricket team did in the recent series. Brian, your hard working editor, has already offered me a bed if I can get there, so all I need now is the airfare to the UK, any takers... anybody... anyone at all... someone... is anyone there? Where'd everybody go? Was it something I said? ■