



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

Gentlemen, start your engines!

In 1993 I sat at the exit of the Craner Curves watching the first lap of the European Grand Prix and couldn't really comprehend what I saw. Ayrton Senna pulled off an overtaking manoeuvre of such brilliance, on a damp track, that I can replay it in my mind to this day.

Quite honestly I thought that no motor racing experience would ever surpass it - I was wrong. I am sure I wasn't the only NSCC member who watched in awe at Rockingham Motor Speedway as Gil de Ferran pulled out of Kenny Brack's slipstream at 215 m.p.h. and passed him on the outside of the final bend to win the race.

The National Press, predictably, chose to concentrate on the problems which beset the event and I was as frustrated as everyone else at the lack of track action for the greater part of the weekend. However, when they finally threw the green flag and the Indycars started to roll I thought I had died and gone to petrolhead heaven! To stand just five yards away from a car cornering at 200+ m.p.h. with nothing in the way but a low concrete wall and a debris fence is an experience so intense that I can feel a tingle in my spine just writing about it. The sound of just one Champcar engine reverberating round the concrete bowl nearly shattered my eardrums - the roar of 26 of them in close order is totally indescribable. If you didn't go this year then book your tickets for the next one as soon as possible - I promise you won't regret it.

Oh yes - nearly forgot - I have managed to complete the Journal this month; quite a full one too, so thanks once again to all the contributors. Please keep up the good work.

And Finally - in view of the recent atrocities in the U.S.A. I am sure that you would wish me to express our deepest sympathy with our American members for the tragedy of the 11th of September. Any words of mine are totally inadequate but we are thinking of you.

Till next month
Brian



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



The Scalextric Catalogue 42, second issue, was released mid September and gives us an insight as to how Scalextric are developing. Set C1069 Opel Motorsport is an attractive new addition along with four new NASCAR ones. Three of these have new livery cars too! The entire range of NASCARS, ten of them, are new releases for two reasons; they have new liveries and new body shells and interiors. Collectors and McDonalds fans note that, according to the Scalextric factory, this will be the last McDonalds liveried car.

Formula 1 cars have started their transition to a higher level. Two McLaren and two Williams cars are due for release in the 4th quarter. As seen at the NSCC/Hornby Hobbies Special Weekend, the bodies and components are improved beyond compare over what will now be their rapidly defunct current range. Detailing is superb. The solo boxed cars will have brass bearings and hardened steel axles etc. to complement the improved body shape and the full length driver and cockpit.

In the sports car section there is only one addition, a third livery for the Cadillac Northstar in the Dams 2001 colours. The successful Opel Astra DTM cars in the Sport Bild and Opel Service liveries are available as solo cars and the rally section now displays the new body Subaru Imprezas (also shown in detail at the NSCC/HH Weekend) and Ford Focus.

Loads, then, to consider for collecting or racing. It's nice to see that the focus is centring on raceability and collecting. We can see this in what's now missing from the catalogue: Only one Jordan, one Ferrari, and one TVR is left in the range. There are no Benetton, no old shape Subarus, no Police cars and the plain silver

convertible VW Beetle is also dropped from the range. Hornby have also started to release information about American muscle cars being introduced to the range. Development is under way on a Camaro and Mustang circa 1969. This could be a new string to the bow introducing a range of similar cars and/or a marketing opportunity to gain more access to the potentially lucrative North American market. Time will tell.

Q and A

I have had a few questions posed by members and I have gleaned the following answers from the factory.

Q: Why don't Scalextric go back to the hard-wired guide blade?

A: The guide contact springs were developed to help youngsters change the guide blades more easily. This is due to the EEC rules of selling electrical equipment to the 3 year old plus age range. You'll notice on other manufacturers' slot car products that the outer box displays a higher age range. Hornby's eye is very much on the toy market and they do not want to exclude, say, 5 and 6 year old youngsters from using Scalextric.

Most cars from the up and coming range have a half-moon slot in front of the guide blade for enthusiasts who wish to hard-wire the guide blade.

Q: Why are most NASCAR liveries based on dark blue? Can we have more body colours?

A: It is true that some of the most successful race liveries do sport dark blue colour schemes and it's great that these have been in the Scalextric NASCAR range from the beginning. =>

More NASCARS have been added to the range and are due in November. Hornby can only issue liveries with the strict licensing agreement of the team and its sponsors. The newer liveries do have colours not used before. For example there will be a green Conseco livery and a red Motorcraft livery to add to the existing liveries of the yellow DeWalt car and the orange Tide one.



Q: Can we have more Caterham and Lotus 7 race liveries?

A: Not at the moment. Hornby have a production plan to produce so many cars. Unfortunately, some things have to fall by the way side so as not to impact others. There have been 17 different Caterham/Lotus 7 produced so far.

Q: Why do we have to have 'set only' cars? I

would like the first Caterhams in blue and yellow but I don't need more track and the expense of buying a new set!

A: Marketing decisions to follow this route have always existed. However, the current trend, with the Astra set, seems to be to produce a less detailed car for the set and the high-specification for the solo car. Let's hope this continues. ■

A 'Day In The Life'

Part 10 - Help!

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

Help! Don't Let Me Down. Even after the stringent product testing to meet the high standards required by the European safety regulations, things still go wrong. If a customer is not satisfied the Helpline at the factory provides an immediate service for consumers and retailers with product support, complaints management and spare parts order processing.

The Helpdesk is operated independently from the main company switchboard so that callers can swiftly reach a fully trained operator for direct assistance. A queuing system is employed which can handle 10 additional calls. These calls are often channelled through to the Helpdesk Advisors when their terminal is free. A recorded message ensures customers are kept informed.

Any Time At All

During Hornby Hobbies busiest period, Christmas, it is possible for each operator to handle more than eighty calls per day. All calls concerning product feedback are logged in order that the business can strive to improve the product. The Helpdesk has always been manned on Boxing Day, as this is one of the crucial days of the year when support to a customer is most needed. Many are the times that the support team have resolved problems for parents who have rung the Helpdesk desperate for assistance.

The Helpdesk ensures customers have all relevant information regarding products old and new and then follow up, if necessary, with the despatch of any relevant literature i.e. Product range leaflet, stockist details, retail price list, instruction leaflets etc. The Operators are required to be fully conversant with the products' technicalities and specification. Many 'problems' can be resolved by the consumer/retailer following advice given on the basic servicing applications of a product.

All products are guaranteed against defects arising from workmanship or materials for three months from the date of purchase. Fully trained operators are on hand to deal with any complaints and will follow these through to ensure complete customer satisfaction.

Spare parts are readily available to retailers to support the current Scalextric product lines. The factory endeavours to hold about three years worth of parts - subject to availability. Retailers are provided with spare parts order forms detailing the parts currently available and many choose to telephone their requirements to the Helpdesk. They will check stock levels, lead times, and then input the order on to the database for despatch. Likewise should a retailer have any query regarding spare parts he has received from the factory, the Helpdesk will take the call and deal with the query, liaising with internal departments as necessary. ■

What am I bid?

BY PETER NOVANI

Can it really be almost ten years since I last attended a slot-car auction? How time flies when you are having fun! Back in 1992, the well known auction specialists, Vectis Auctions Limited, organised a Scalextric sale at the Guildford Civic Hall in Surrey. An event best remembered for the elusive (C70) Scalextric Bugatti Type 59 which went under the hammer for a sensational £2,250. I still treasure the catalogue, although it amounts to little more than a large quantity of photocopied pages bound together. In stark contrast, for the recent Buckingham auction, Vectis produced a superb 64 page glossy colour catalogue. That afforded access to the event for two people which, in my opinion, is the best way to buy from any auction - in person.

Held at the Buckingham Community Centre on August 22nd and 23rd, the majority of the auction focused on a large array of die-cast collectables. From a slot-car enthusiasts' perspective, the second day was of rather more importance as it featured the sale of the impressive collection once belonging to the late John Fingland, a club racer of repute as well as a collector. You may recall the poignant obituaries written in his honour by NSCC members Steve Carter and Alan Slade (June issue). In the circumstances I admit to having had mixed feelings about attending.

With the advent of the Internet, it would seem that more and more collectors are using it as a means to trade goods. That may go some way to explaining why this event was nowhere near as well attended as the one in Guildford. However, some benefits of attending include rubbing shoulders with other, often more knowledgeable, enthusiasts, seeing and handling the items and, of course, enjoying the excitement generated by the bidding process – something the Internet is unable to offer. Thankfully many notable slot-car luminaries did make the effort to be there. As did a film crew from Central Television which gave the event

added kudos. Their suspiciously attractive female presenter informed me that the event, and therefore our hobby, would receive some worthwhile exposure during an evening news feature. With the auction viewing times scheduled for an inordinately early 8.00 a.m. (till 10.30 a.m.) there was no time to waste in getting there. Evaluating the condition of each item prior to the auction is essential. Pre-ordering a catalogue to give yourself more time (at home) to ponder each lot can be advantageous. In truth, the catalogue's estimated prices revealed several inconsistencies when compared to current market slot-car values.

And that highlights another aspect regarding the bidding process. Stick to the price ceiling you have set yourself. It's all too easy to get carried away and bid over and above the true value of a particular lot. Often pride gets in the way and you end up purchasing something that, in the cold light of day, you simply didn't much want or much like. So keep that 'buyer beware' motto in mind and be sure to have your wits about you. Remember, in certain instances it might be cheaper to buy directly from one of the reputable slot-car dealers.

Awaiting the completion of the die-cast auction merely served to intensify the anticipation for the slot-car auction, which promptly got underway at 11.45 a.m. Armed with a bidding card containing my designated number, I reminded myself not to rub my nose, scratch my head or indeed any other part of my anatomy at an inappropriate moment during proceedings. Undoubtedly any one of those actions could result in dire financial consequences as our auctioneer, Keith Calvert, kept the lots and bids flowing at an unrelenting pace. Without question the star Scalextric attraction had to be an example of the yellow (C71) Scalextric Auto Union. Accurately described as "near mint" and with an "excellent" box, this rarity was expected to fetch between £250 and £350. Those figures were soon →

surpassed as enthusiasts outbid each other until the price finally settled at £380. As a comparison, a similar example realised £260 at Guildford in 1992. Other lots up for grabs included quantities of less desirable modern single-seaters and touring cars from Scalextric in mint and used condition. As I alluded to earlier, John was first and foremost a racer, so it was no real surprise to find the collection containing many items in less than pristine condition. Cars which had seen some use looked to be excellent value for money, especially for the racer, either as spares or as replacements. However, it was the earlier 1960s items which really captured the imagination. Take the AC Cobra (CK/1) which was originally sold in kit form. One mint example, still with all the parts sealed in the shrink wrapped container, sold for £200.

Other cars worth mentioning included an Aston Martin Marshal's car, although minus the front and rear flags and with scruffy door decals, it still sold for £190. A James Bond Mercedes with repro figures sold for £260. Other items included FWD Minis, (Go) Karts, Vintage, You Steer and Tinplate cars. Even a Scalextric (C360) Ternco Metro made an appearance, selling for £150. The rare 1/24th Jaguar 'E' Type and Alfa Romeo cars were also to be seen as were various NSCC cars (sold at sensible prices). Spanish and French Scalextric cars including a pair of outrageous looking Corvette and Mustang dragsters sold well. Although often incomplete, a selection of trackside buildings, accessories and model car publications complemented the sale of the cars.

An unusual scenic 6ft x 3ft figure of eight banked Scalextric track circuit, presumably used for shop promotional purposes went for around £80. I just wonder whether Hornby made that. If they did then the successful bidder made an important acquisition. Yet for all this talk of Scalextric, it was left to the rarer VIP manufactured cars, such as the Austin Healey 'Frog-eye' Sprite and an Austin A40, to steal the limelight. They sold for a mind-boggling £600 and £420 respectively. Larger American manufactured 1/24th scale slot-cars, such as

Cox, Revell and Russkit, complete with their evocative and colourful box artwork were also up for grabs. One particular lot looked to be undervalued at an estimated £120. Enthusiastic bidding soon pushed the price up to an astounding £720. Half a dozen mint Fly GT cars were also offered to satisfy collectors with a penchant for the modern stuff, as were a good selection of mint Ninco Formula One single-seaters and classic sports cars. Without wishing to detail all 190 lots on offer, it's safe to say that there really was something for everyone. That said, I failed to make a bid. But then again I remained adamant in not wanting to exceed my valuation of the items. If possible, try and find time to attend the next slot-car auction. From my own experiences I cannot recommend it highly enough.

In fact, just a couple of days later I was back on the auction trail, this time at the Bonhams & Brooks auction at Silverstone's Historic Festival. Not, I hasten to add, for the sale of the full-size race cars, but for the more affordable memorabilia auction. I even managed to surprise myself by successfully bidding for one or two items. But that's another story and an entirely different hobby. Yet it seems that I'm never too far away from slot-cars these days, as was evident from my brief visit, that weekend, to the busy Scale Models marquee situated behind the main grandstand. In between serving eager customers, Mark and Julie Scale introduced me to Max Winter.

Max, as you may know, is responsible for the sublime Maxi Build McLaren M6A. Besides discussing the current machinations of the slot-car industry, I was shown a kit version of his M6A, which is also available ready-to-run. Even from a cursory look, it's obvious that the limited edition M6A would be a prime candidate for a 'built by anoraks for anoraks' accolade, should that ever be bestowed upon a slot-car. It successfully blurs the boundaries between precision static hand-built models and contemporary slot-cars – albeit with a rather hefty price tag. But, I'd better stop now before this becomes a 'Wheelspin' review. Cheers! ■

Adventurous ebaying

Part 2 - What's out there?

BY STEVE WESTBY

Having warned of some of the pitfalls last time, I wanted to identify why you might find it worthwhile venturing onto foreign auction sites and incurring the extra costs and effort involved. Whether it is worthwhile for you will depend on the direction your collecting takes.

In general you'll find that, not surprisingly, items from particular manufacturers are most likely to come up on sites in the countries where they have been most widely distributed. So if you are only interested in Scalextric, the UK site may provide you with all you need. However, rare items sometimes come up on the Australian site www.ebay.co.au and lots of newer items on the main ebay site www.ebay.com.

This US site is also the first place to look if you are into HO or 1/24 scale, or any of the US manufacturers. Apart from the "General" sub-category, there are also "Contemporary and "Vintage" which are further divided into "Accessories", "HO" "1/24" and "1/32". However, don't expect all sellers to get the classification right, or in some cases even get close!

This site has slot cars from Strombecker, Aurora, Tjet, Revell, Monogram, Cox, Gilbert and other rarer makes. So if you're into any of those, this is the place to start. One word of warning, some US sellers don't understand the importance of scale or condition. As long as they think it's old, they'll scrape up any old pile of plastic and metal and put it up for auction. Make sure you know what you are buying and what condition it is in.

In addition to those from the USA, you will find many international sellers on [ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com), especially Europeans that don't have thriving auction sites in their own country. In many ways, these can be the easiest to deal with, as they usually speak at least some English and they're used to international shipping. I've found more

Airfix items from these sources than anywhere in this country and there is also a fair sprinkling of Fly and some Pink Kar, Pro Slot, Ninco and SCX.

Apart from the US, the most active ebay site for slot cars is Germany (www.ebay.de), or go straight to <http://listings.ebay.de/aw/listings/list/category9117/index.html>). The Germans seem to be fussier about the condition of items and most of their stuff is in good condition, a lot of it boxed. Main makes to look for here are Carrera, Faller, Marklin and Fleischmann, each in their own sub-category. Scalextric, Fly and others are found under the "Sonstige" sub-category.

Other ebay sites are Australia and Canada, with other countries being added frequently. None of these have very large amounts of slot car stuff, though Australia is worth a look for rare Scalextric and the occasional snowmobile turns up in Canada! All of these can be accessed from the bottom of the home page for any ebay site.

There is also life after ebay. Many of the sites are not worth bothering with, QXL and Amazon have very little, although there is the occasional worthwhile lot on Yahoo. In continental Europe iBazar, which has now been taken over by ebay has sites for Belgium, Spain, France and others.

Ultimately whether any of this is worth bothering with is something only you can decide. If you simply must have that Cox Gurney Ford (and money is no object) or if you're determined to build up a complete collection of East German slot cars, then the international ebay sites are the places to look. Personally, I've found that the extra costs and hassle involved have made me much more selective in what I bid for and I now try to stick to EU purchases. In fact lately I've sworn off ebay altogether, but that's a story for next time. ■

Your ramble around the Westcountry

BY VINE FENNEL.

No rambling this month due to impending French holiday, in about 12 hours. Leaving it late or what? As our dealers have started doing much the same as I was planning regarding Fly releases, I've decided to do something else (who said shut up!). Someone might find it useful to have Fly's cars catalogued, so I'll start with Vipers and work my way through all the releases in time.

- A1. white/green stripes. #98 - Daytona 1996.
- A2. blue/white stripes. #97 - Daytona 1996.
- A3. Dayglow yellow Rent-a-Car. #41 - Le Mans 1994.
- A4. Dayglow orange Rent-a-Car. #40 - Le Mans 1994.
- A5. white/blue stripes. #61 - Le Mans 1997 & GT2 Champions '97.
- A6. black/yellow stripes. #54 - Silverstone 1998.
- A7. white/yellow-red bands. Benetton. #83 - A1 ring 1998. New chassis fitted at this point.
- A8. yellow - Brookspeed. #99 - Silverstone 1999.
- A9. red. #51 - British GT Championship 1999. Listed as Chrysler Viper.
- A81. silver/blue? stripes - Parr Motorsport. #71 - Silverstone 1999.
- A82. red/white/blue/black - GLPK. #33 - Silverstone 1999.
- A83. red/white stripes - ORECA. #91 - Petit Le Mans 1999.
- A84. DELAYED.
- A85. white/black - Playstation. #55 - Le Mans 1999.
- A86. yellow/pink/white/brown - Chamberlain. #46 - Daytona 2000.
- A87. yellow - Hasseroder. #53 - 1st Nurburgring 24 Hours.
- A88. Stars 'n' Stripes. #12 - Petit Le Mans 2000.
- A89. white/red-black stripe Chereau. #7 - 1st Brno & FIA GT Champions 2001.
- A201. blue/snake. #29

Telefonica Spanish GT Championship.

PA4. black/silver stripes - HP Tinstal.

Limited editions.

- E1. yellow/black stripes. #1 - Guia Slot Racing.
- E2. blue/white stripe. 1996 Indy Pace Car.
- E3. red/white stripe. #1 - CPE Italian Distributor.
- E4. maroon/white stripe. #69 - Gaugemaster.
- E5. maroon/blue. Barcelona Football Club - Ibb Auto Racing.
- E6. green. #22 - LESCARS - Belgium.
- E7. Chromo gold. 2nd Anniversary.
- E81. red/silver stripes. Road Car (IV Salon Modelismo Madrid) Mini-Auto Mag.
- S100. blue/gold Stripes - No rear wing. One Million.
- 'A1 Finish Line' Unofficial "dirtied" standard A1 painted by a distributor - disowned by Fly. ■

Slot Classic - One man's passion and dedication

BY STEVE BARNETT

My first Slot Classic, acquired some time ago, was the Ferrari 335S ref:CJ-7P, and ever since I've tried to obtain its partner ref: CJ-7T but in vain. It's a case of being quick to acquire them as soon as they are released, for production of these superbly detailed cars is very limited. All of the earlier models have long been sold.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of being introduced to Cesar Jimenez, the creator of Slot Classic in 1995, an enthusiast, collector and dedicated modeller. Based in Asturias, Spain, he provides to other collectors the models he creates for himself and has so far produced over twenty classic slot cars. Pegaso, Seat, Alfa Romeo, BMW, Aston Martin and Morgan are namely a few and recently, the Mercedes 300 SL.

Asking Cesar 'what is his favourite model?', his reply, 'The truth is that I like all of them, but as is usual these times, the last one deserves all the praises. All of them have their history, with more or less the same difficulties, but possibly the Morgan is my favourite At least for the moment'.

Cesar's collection is somewhat unique, in principle he collects his own cars, and as he

states, there are not too many, between 50 and 60 cars, besides a lot of coach works with painting tests that he hasn't yet built.

During a recent conversation with Cesar, he discussed his imminent new models due for final release, the Mercedes 300 SL in 3 variants, all produced in limited quantities of 400 units:

CJ16 Mercedes 300 SL Panamericana 52

CJ17 Mercedes 300 SL Le Mans 52

CJ19 Mercedes 300 SL Spyder

Panamericana 52

In addition to this will be ref: CJ18, Morgan Le Mans 61 with hard top and ref: CJ20, the Pegaso Spyder Le Mans 52, a production of only 300 units. Besides these, there are four more models in different stages of progress.

The time Cesar spends on development of a model at the moment is approximately 300 hours, considerably less time now than with the earlier models. The rate of production is between 100 and 150 cars per month, depending on the actual model and detail involved. He avoids the high costs and growth of industrial production and follows the tradition of European craftsman of 1:43 scale miniatures, manufacturing the main pieces (coach work, chassis and driver's panel) in high quality polyurethane resin which has great impact resistance. The models are completed with photo-engraving, nickel plated white metal, and window glass in PVC. The wheels are finely detailed, each with 5 pieces including photo-engraved spokes. The driver and, in some cases, passenger depends on each epoch, giving the artistic touch to different models. Each car is offered in 3 different versions, Kit, Kit with body painted and RTR.

I hope you find this as interesting as I have, if anyone needs any further information, just contact me on mansions@mercuryin.es or phone 00 34 609555491. ■





Dear Brian,

With regard to Richard Winter's query in relation to name boards, I have BRM and JAGUAR for the event board. I would imagine that the name boards reflect the cars available at the time and would be the same as the Pit Name Boards of which I have the following: ASTON MARTIN, BRM, COOPER and LOTUS. I have also seen a BENTLEY name board.

In relation to Roy Leach's letter, my track is also in my garage. From time to time I clean the rails with white spirit and this usually improves the running of the vehicles. If the track required cleaning I would do this by washing it in warm water and scrubbing the surface with Swarfega. I then dry the track by hand, leave it overnight upside down with a weight on top (usually a smoothflow transformer) in the hot press and then a quick wipe of white spirit on the rails before it goes back into the circuit. If rails are tarnished or have surface rust a quick rub over with wet and dry before washing clears the problem. I would be reluctant to apply any product to the surface as a friend once used "Back To Black" and it was like racing on ice. Despite cleaning, the track was never the same and was eventually replaced.

On the point of track, about 3-4 years ago I began to switch over from Scalextric to SCX track for standard pieces as the grip on the surface is much better. I also found that the SCX track has not warped and does not need to be pinned down the way Scalextric track has done; I rarely ever have problems with my joints (except my knees). I still retain and use my specialist track such as pit stop and chicanes in Scalextric as it remains my favourite manufacturer.

Regards

Ian Thompson.

Tony Frewin has also informed me that a complete list of known name boards was printed in the Newsletter many years ago. I have been unable to find it so far - the words "needle" and "haystack" come to mind. If somebody could inform me of its whereabouts I will reprint it.

Dear Brian

I have been intending to contact the NSCC for several years, just to let you know that we have an OLD TOY SWAP twice a year in Helsinki (at least ten years tradition). My aspect as a Finnish slot car collector is that we don't have any traders, but we have quite a big market and I think this should interest UK traders. Our next happening is at Sunday 4 November. please contact Martti Rinne on:- +358 400 715055 or email:- mcof@sci.fi

Best regards

Juha Setälä

Now there's a challenge for our travelling members - please let me know how you get on.



Dear Brian

As you know I have tried to participate as much as possible with various articles and, on this occasion, I seek help and hope you can draw some attention in the Journal. Here in the South of Spain, now an up and coming area for recreational sports and pastimes due to the increasing population of residential Ex Patriots, the passion for slot car participation has at long last improved, especially during the winter months.

I have been asked to participate in the forthcoming Charity Event for the PDY (Partially Disabled Youngsters) to be held on Sunday 4 November in Marbella on the Costa del Sol. This group of youngsters consist predominantly of European (mostly English) teenagers who are suffering some form of disability, generally accident or illness related.

The event is organised to include various activities, one of which will be an opportunity for a few of these members to have a short drive in a Jaguar E type and a Porsche cabriolet, hence the participation in slot car racing, although not necessarily competitive. Therefore, we are looking for several earlier slot-cars, as listed below. They need not be in perfect condition, in fact quite the opposite, just providing they run reasonably; i.e. cars that are poor runners, have cracked bodies, missing parts and especially bad brown marks are all urgently wanted. We have resources to rebuild, paint & repair as necessary. Due to the charity involvement of this event, funds are limited, nevertheless, there is an amount of money available to initially acquire these cars and cover postage costs. The cars will all be auctioned/sold at the end in aid of charity to these youngsters to assist in further therapy etc.

If any members have such cars and prepared to simply call me, these youngsters will very much appreciate it. Please do give me a call and we can arrange prompt payment etc.

C60 - Jaguar D Type, C61 - Porsche Spyders, C75 - Mercedes 190 SL, C33 - Mercedes 250SL, C74 - Austin Healey, C68 - Aston Martin, C288/9 - Aston Martin DBR, C69 - Ferrari 250 GT, etc.

I hope you can help and I look forward to reporting the result of the event in December issue.

Kind regards
Steve Barnett

If anybody can help Steve with this worthy cause please contact him on:-

Fax: 00 34 952887792

Tel: 00 34 952885777

email: mansions@mercuryin.es



They say virtue is its own reward, but, in this case, I feel it deserves a little extra help so Steve wins the Scale Models prize car this month - an MRRRC white Cobra.



Hi Brian,

I thought it time to hand out praise where it's due. The NSCC Hornby weekend was, as always, brilliant; Adrian Norman must have a degree in organised chaos, he has made it an art form. I've never before been to an event where you could ask the organiser what's next?, and he says "Well I'm not sure really", but I have to say it worked!

With the help of his associates (e.g. 'young' Clive et al) this was as it should be, a good, fun weekend where lots of like minded idiots got together and made fools of themselves. The best bit was the blindfolded race, where my team (team TIM) thought our driver Jess had crashed when he hadn't, so we stopped co-driving him. But it turned out to be another team's car, and Jess went on to win the race blindfold with NO assistance at all. In fact he also received an award for 'most improved driver'.

And finally one last thank-you to Hornby for supplying the prizes and the special 'weekend car', especially Simon and Mike for taking the time to talk to all us idiots who wanted to bend their ear. I spoke to Mike about them doing a Lotus Elise, and they have looked at doing one, but he said they can't do it to scale and fit a motor in. He said it would need to be about 1/30th scale. Well I'd be happy with that, maybe if we could get enough letters in about this then we could pester them into it?.

I hope to see some familiar faces again next year.

Steve Baker

.....

Dear Brian

I always start to read every article in the newsletter but admit that I don't finish each one. However Peter Boita's series on track refurbishment I found surprisingly interesting and absorbing. It must be his style of writing as it was as if I were sitting in his kitchen with him, but without having to endure the eyestrain, fiddly procedures, and immense patience.

It is meant as a genuine compliment when I say I'm sure he could write an interesting article on the boiling of an egg, giving times for various results and the different methods people use to get inside the shell, not to mention the many ways of eating the egg.

Once again please take this as a genuine compliment Peter.

Thanks

Chris Gregory

.....

Dear Brian,

I have just received my FLY PA2 prize from Scale Models - and what a prize! I am very impressed and grateful.

Yours sincerely

Roy Leach

.....

The fourth Hornby Hobbies/ NSCC weekend

BY ADRIAN LEGGETT

The annual Hornby/NSCC weekend is one of the highlights of the year for my wife and myself. While this might not say much for our social diary, it does give us the chance to meet up with old friends and make some new ones; have some fun with Scalextric cars and discuss new products with Hornby's development and marketing people. The weekend also coincided with our third wedding anniversary so we had a good reason to spend a few days away with our six month old baby boy.

This year's event returned to the Pegwell Bay Hotel and was extended by a day, which allowed us time to visit the two collectors toy shops in Margate, where I was very restrained in only buying one car. In the evening we had a relaxing and delicious meal followed by a quiz and a few drinks. Instead of the usual Scalextric knowledge and Motorsport questions, we had a format based on "Who wants to be a millionaire?" with Scalextric accessories, cars and sets as prizes. Fifteen correct answers to win an Opel Sport set; hardly a million pounds but still well worth having. The highest anybody achieved was 32000 - well done Steve Westby. The ask the audience life line provided most of the laughs as we tried NOT to give the correct answer.

The racing started on Saturday morning on a six lane landscaped layout and took the form of three racing events, where everybody raced on each lane, followed by a vintage racing heat and a 'blind' rally. We were all divided into teams and raced over 10 laps using four of Hornby's finest - two Mercedes CLK, two Opel Astra DTM, a Porsche 911 GT3 and the Cadillac LMP. The cars remained on the same lane throughout each event so it relied on the driver's ability to adapt quickly to the car. The combination of cars made for very interesting results but it quickly became obvious that the

outside red lane was the favourite with most people because the car would stay on the track by rubbing along the Armco barrier as it went round. During one of the practice sessions a few people tried the Cadillac in the red lane. WOW! This thing flew! It stuck like something rather smelly to a woollen bed covering. As the racing went on I realised I was really enjoying myself! That might sound strange, but as a collector, I rarely get the chance to use my cars in anger. We've only recently moved house and haven't yet had the chance to make use of the extra space we've gained; I'm planning a permanent layout eventually.

I found it quite amazing how much the cars have developed in the last two years. The Mercedes was very tail happy - in my hands at least - and during one race with it, I think I may have been better off with a guide on top of the car as it spent most of the race inverted. No surprise when I finished sixth! The Astra became my favourite to drive as I managed to win two heats and I had several top three finishes. Inevitably one of the wins was in the red lane, but I did beat Sean Fothergill into sixth place. Now there's something to tell my grandchildren! I wish I could have printed a copy of that result.

The racing was timed using the Slotmaster system on a PC. A fantastic piece of software, especially in Adrian Norman's hands. We were only allowed a minute after each heat to assemble the next six drivers for the next race. If anybody failed to reach their controller in time, the race started without them, leaving their car on the grid and playing catch up for the race. This was one of the major improvements over previous years' racing as everybody had to be on their toes and watch the monitors like hawks. It also made everything flow a lot faster. The racing finished off with a vintage heat using six Lamborghini Muiras. It was fun watching the

cars as they oversteered out of every corner, and even on the straights, when the power was applied too harshly.

The final event was the blind rally where drivers were blindfolded and navigators had to give instructions over three laps. Cars were either flying off in all directions or just crawling around slowly. Team Holland trounced everybody else with a consistent style of speed and pace. After all the points were totalled up, Team Leg had the most, but there were only four points in it. Thanks to Jack Thoburn, James Taylor, Craig Norman, Rob Chambers and Trevor May for obtaining good results, despite my best attempts not to finish sixth every time. For one of my races, James told me that the black lane had won the last four heats. Under incredible pressure, I managed to finish.....third. Oh well!

My favourite part of the weekend was the visit by Simon Kohler and Mike Walters of Hornby. Simon discussed the trials and tribulations of getting licences to produce new cars and how the NASCARS require three, EACH! One for the manufacturer, one for the team and one for NASCAR. Mike told us about future plans including some new buildings and various cars. He showed us pre-production versions of the soon to be released Ford Taurus and the Subaru Impreza WRC 2001 as well as two new hand decorated Formula 1 cars - a McLaren and a Williams. Talking to him later, he was telling me how he was trying to develop the cars so that they performed reasonably equally. At the moment the Williams is far superior because of the amount of flex in the rear underpan where the magnet is mounted. The amount of detail on these new cars will surpass all the previous models. It looked like they will be using the latest full length driver which is also in the latest Caterhams. Mike Walters was hoping to have the prototype models of the Camaro and Mustang Trans-am cars, but due to the dreadful and tragic events in America, he was unable to get them transported from Chicago, where they had been on display. The pre-production Subaru was later auctioned for Hornby's children's charity and raised an impressive £160. Even my wife bid on it!

The weekend concluded with the prize giving and Noel Taylor won the sportsmanship award for continuously encouraging his team mates, offering guidance and ensuring everybody was in their rightful position for their races. Well deserved. Other prizes went to most promising racer, Steve Westby and the top three racers of the weekend with Jack Thoburn coming out on top, beating his father, Graeme into third and Don Stanley second.

Thanks to everybody for making the whole weekend really enjoyable - the best so far - but a special huge thank you to Adrian Norman for organising the whole weekend so efficiently, especially as the venue was changed at the eleventh hour and he was ill on Friday night. He even played in the band Saturday evening. Is there no end to this man's talents?

See you all next year. ■

Virgin Racer –

Impressions of a first-timer at the NSCC Scalextric weekend

BY STEVE WESTBY

I approached this event with a fair bit of trepidation. I was about to shut myself in a hotel for the weekend with forty seven other obsessive nutcases. Not only that, racing was going to fill a large part of the schedule and I'd never even attended an organised race event before, let alone participated in one.

Needless to say, all my fears were groundless. The other attendees turned out to be remarkably normal. None of them had horns and a tail (well, hardly any) and everybody was very welcoming. Attending swapmeets, I find that I don't get to know who's who and I'd only ever really met one of the attendees before. So it was nice to put faces to the dealers and club officials that I'd had dealings with by phone or email. It was interesting to talk to people and find such a range of differences in the focus that each person has for their collection. It was also revealing to find that nearly everybody I spoke to was, like me, part way through a project to extend/refurbish/waterproof their garage to make room for their collection and track.

As for the racing, much to my surprise, I really enjoyed it. It was good to find that even the best racers deslotted sometimes, so I didn't feel as inferior as I'd feared. I did best in the first session when I didn't expect too much and just cruised around trying to stay on the track. However a heat win in the initially invincible red lane went to my head and I then deteriorated rapidly, trying too hard. I specialised in crashing on the first bend of the race and spent the last two sessions in a tussle with our illustrious editor for last place. I think everybody had fun and even the keenest racers didn't take the event too seriously.

The Q&A sessions with the editor and the two Hornby representatives were interesting and informative, though I was surprised that people had so few questions or ideas for the factory people. I would have expected a room full of enthusiasts to seize on this opportunity to express their views on the future, or find out why the

product range is taking particular directions. I also enjoyed the quiz, though having been one of the lucky prizewinners may have influenced that.

High points

- The blindfold rally racing, extremely funny to watch.
- Watching the demon racers jumping up and down when their car wasn't marshalled fast enough for their liking, even funnier.
- Some wonderful detailed and scratch-built cars, my personal favourite was the car of the caveman brothers from Wacky Racers, with their clubs waving about as the car circulated.

Low points

- Spending most of one race watching the wrong car, while mine sat stationary on the track. The rest of my team were not particularly impressed.
- Finishing last four times in a row (including one heat on the fastest lane).
- No announcement of any BRISCA F1 or F2 stock cars in the future Scalextric range.

Overall, I enjoyed it immensely and hope that I will be able to attend future events, though this may require increased levels of bribes to "she who must be obeyed". The only thing that I can think of to improve future events would be to increase the collector content, we are after all primarily a collecting club, not a racing one. I am however far from clear as to how to do this. Perhaps sessions on particular aspects of collecting, or on what slot-car racing will be like in 50 years time? Does anyone have any ideas?

I must say a big thank you to Adrian Norman (I don't know how you find the time), Clive Pritchard and everybody else involved in organising the event and getting the track working. Also, thanks to Simon Kohler and others from Hornby for their contribution, both in time and product.

Finally I must apologise to my room mate after I drove him from the room at three in the morning with my snoring! ■

Virgin Racer - 2

BY TIM AINSLIE

Having got back from the NSCC weekend in sunny Pegwell Bay I found my right index finger wouldn't keep still so, as it is the same one I type with, I thought I would try to capture my reflections of the weekend.

To date my involvement in the club has been restricted to attending swap meets, looking forward each month to the arrival of the buff envelope containing the Journal and having a letter printed in the Dear NSCC page; thank you for classifying my response to Graham Smith as sensible, my mother would be thrilled.

My brother in law is also a member; we are both small time collectors and enjoy racing on plexitrack whenever we get the opportunity, which is not very often. All we knew about the format of the weekend was that it involved staying in a hotel near the Scalextric factory, participating in racing with the promise of a commemorative car for each racer at the end of the weekend. I contacted Adrian Norman, who was organising the event and found him to be very helpful and two places were booked for the weekend.

On the Friday we arrived at the hotel in the dark; it resembled something out of a Hammer Horror movie with its towers and parapets. However, we checked in and joined the other members for dinner, after which there was a chance to see the track that had been set up for the weekend's racing. We had been briefed on what to expect over dinner but the hump back bridge on lanes 1 and 2 had not been mentioned! Apparently it was almost the circuit used by Hornby in the Megabowl experiment. It was heartening to know that the racing surface would not be too dissimilar to the set up I have in the loft. After chatting for an hour or so it was an early turn in. The rooms were clean but basic and not every one was totally in agreement with the choice of person sharing their room, particularly the member who went out to his car to sleep in order to escape his snoring roommate!

The Saturday brought with it a good breakfast, sunshine over Pegwell Bay and the racing. I had not participated in an organised race before and I was very impressed by the computer software that randomly organised people into teams of 6, ensuring that each time the individual raced it was on a different lane. How much time and effort would it take to do that on paper without someone finding something to complain about? The system ran smoothly all weekend allowing people to enjoy their racing. The cars were provided by Hornby with a mix of the current range Cadillac, Opel Astras, Mercedes CLKs, Porsche GT3 and TVRs. The hand controllers used were made by Parma; they resembled one of my son's transparent orange water pistols, but they worked all weekend which was the important thing.

The computer programme took control of starting, counting laps, finishing the race and showing the results that included position and lap times. The morning was spent racing which was good fun as everybody seemed to be handicapped to a degree by the lane and car allocation, I was quite pleased to get some creditable second places and a first, so it is not essential to be a hardened racer to be able to compete. Although there were some who wished to take the racing seriously the majority were relaxed and able to indulge in the sense of fun that the event was generating.

I was surprised to see how much better some of the cars were than others and also how easily some seemed to fall to pieces. I guess the velocity achieved on a six lane circuit is far greater than the average home set up so the hurt incurred by a car when it is hit by another going flat out is likely to be far greater. The new Opels impressed me with their handling, general sturdiness and construction while the groans were unanimously reserved for the TVRs and the Mercedes. The afternoon's racing followed a similar format to the morning session but there was also an opportunity as a group for us to discuss club

issues with the editor and with Hornby Hobby staff. It was interesting to hear the company's perception of their market and their views on the opposition. A new set of buildings for next year was confirmed and was the editorial comment about the Le Mans Bentleys quite as improbable as it seemed? - only time will tell. The evening was finished off with a band, including Adrian, and further opportunities for conversation.

Sunday involved more racing but had the added twist of the cars being changed for 1960s Lamborghini Muiras. It is amazing how much longer it takes to complete a lap without magnets or tyres that have grip! The racing then changed to a blind event with the driver relying on the instructions from an assistant and the cars were changed to Toyotas and Focus. I thought I had only completed a lap when I had in fact done two and I nearly decapitated a Marshal at the second bend with my over zealous throttle finger; overall a bizarre experience. With a ladies' race the day's racing ended. A raffle was held and I even won two items - something of a rarity! The prizes donated by Hornby included a spread of items from the current Scalextric range. An auction was held for a prototype Impreza and prizes were awarded to the racers. To close the weekend Simon Kohler presented the commemorative cars, a black Jaguar XJ220 with a certificate showing its limited number.

The weekend catered for both the collector and the racer. I came to the conclusion that racers could be recognised by their constant proximity to the track and the collectors could be seen looking furtively into plastic bags in the far reaches of the hall. During a lull in the racing on the Sunday I went out to the car park to see some catalogues that someone had brought with them in their car.

Three of us left the hall by a tortuous route that involved going in a tunnel under the road and back out through the hotel to the car park. No sooner had the car boot opened then five eager individuals appeared hoping to catch a piece of some rare exchange. On being told it was catalogues they insisted on a group inspection of the car! So collectors must also have a pair of eyes hidden in the back of their heads!

With the weekend over I have to say that it was extremely good value, very well organised and it gave a relatively new member the opportunity to put a name to the faces seen at swapmeets and a face to the names that advertise in the Journal. Would I go again? Yes. It provided me with the opportunity to race cars as often as I wanted, a chance to talk to people who have a far greater knowledge and experience of slot cars than myself and to get a car to take home at the end of the weekend. ■

Once again the editor's abysmal slot-racing talents are exposed to the world - yes I came dead last in the racing events! Just one heat win the entire weekend and that was only as co-driver in the blind rally! In fact this part of the proceedings provided my best memory of the event; I hope he won't mind me mentioning it but Chris Gregory really cracked me up when I chose him as my co-driver. His reply was "Now you are really in the st - I have got a terrible stammer!" Still we did manage third place despite Chris telling me that a bbbbbend was coming up!**

Anyway, I had a really great time and I look forward to the next one.

On behalf of the club I would like to thank Hornby Hobbies, particularly Simon Kohler and Mike Walters, for their wholehearted support of the event. Not only did they provide the track, race cars and commemorative car but also a considerable quantity of prizes. We are truly fortunate in having such an excellent relationship with them - long may it continue.

BITS AND PIECES

Slot 32 DE Calendars

Luc of Slot 32 in Germany has sent me two samples of his 2002 calendars. They are both A3 size and the first features pictures of cars from all the major slot-car manufacturers while the other (which is a limited edition of 500) has classic slot-cars as its subject. If you are the type of person who likes to use a calendar to plan future events then these probably won't be much use to you as the actual date information is very limited. However, the pictures themselves are extremely good and they do make excellent wall furniture.

They are only available on-line at www.slot32.de and are priced at 50DM and 75DM respectively. Well worth a look. If you would like to win one of the limited editions turn to page 33. The other one is on my wall already - there has to be some perks involved in this job!

Free lap timing software

Need a computerised timing system but short in the wallet department? Then try SlotRace Manager v2.00 available as a free download at <http://www.cenobyte.nl/slotracemanager/>

Yes this is freeware! The site is run by Mario van Ginneken who is a slot-racer from the Netherlands; he wrote the timing programme for his own club's use and decided to share it with the rest of us. The site is certainly easy to use but I have not tried the timing programme - perhaps one of you could download it and send me a report on its capabilities.

Interesting item on eBay

Two **Raleigh** Mini Cooper Scalextric cars - Nothing special about these two, I just thought it was funny when I finally figured out what they could possibly have to do with bicycles!

Malcolm Parker

It couldn't happen today

BY DAVE YERBURY

Fifty one years ago this month (October 1950) Jaguar announced the arrival of the Mk VII which was their first 100mph saloon car. It was powered by the new 3.5 litre XK twin overhead cam engine similar to that in the 'C' type. In 1950 the body style was considered very modern and the car was competitively priced (£1100 - including heater!) At the time there were very few large bodied saloon cars capable of 100mph and even fewer which could return consumption figures of 20mpg.

Needless to say, they were soon to be seen in competitive events and in 1952 Jaguar prepared an ex-rally car for Stirling Moss to drive in the first BRDC saloon race. Moss asked for a bucket seat to be fitted in place of the normal bench type but was told "That's how we sell them to our customers so that's how you will race it!"

Very few mods were allowed to the cars but the spare wheel and door trims etc. were removed; Weslake cylinder heads were fitted and the gear ratios changed. At that time drivers were not keen on wearing safety belts and Le Mans starts were the order of the day; this was

useful for Moss as he was a good sprinter and usually managed to get away first. He duly won the first all saloon race and continued to drive the same car until 1954 with considerable success. It is hard to imagine these great big cars being so successful with all that leaning into corners coupled with loads of understeer but they reigned supreme until 1957 when the new compact Jaguar Mk1 3.4 arrived on the scene.

Jackie Stewart's big brother, Jimmy, used to race one of them - PWK 700; he finished second to Mike Hawthorn at Silverstone in 1955. A few months later, with the addition of some fog lights, the very same car won the Monte Carlo Rally with Ronnie Adams at the wheel. In between times it was probably used as the factory runaround!

I decided to make a model of this car after seeing an article about it in the Classic and Sportscar magazine; as it had a 10ft wheelbase I had to stretch a Ninco Merc 190 chassis to fit. It should be a good performer with a good tail out attitude but, as I haven't got a big track, I have been unable to give it a good thrash round yet. I just made it because nobody else did and I like the car. ■



Back to real basics - part 1

BY TONY SECCHI

Inspired, not to say flattered, by Mark Winwood's letter to Brian in the July issue, I was jogged out of my natural state of lethargy to take him up on his request and write! Illustrate an item on the working of a slot-car and its component parts.

This subject may seem blindingly obvious to most of the active NSCC membership but even in my old competition days new club members turned up to race with scant knowledge of a slot-car's innards.

I think that Mark was very brave to go public on his naivety and if the following can help some new members to a better insight into our sport then to paraphrase Mark's final words 'it would be beneficial to all' (or at least some).

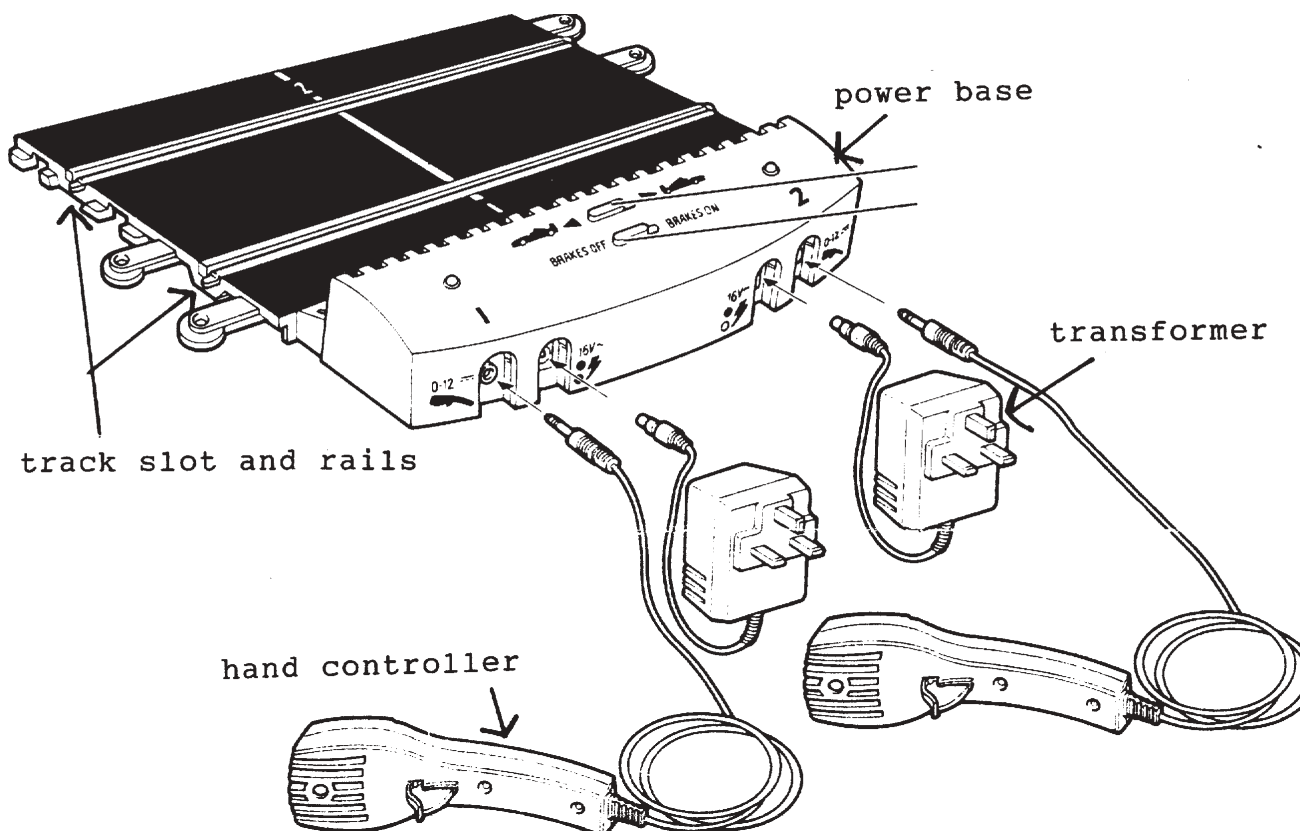
Mark also stated that the article should be couched in layman's terms and this I have tried to do - for instance it is not necessary to know exactly how an electric motor works in detail but to have enough information to identify and know the component parts and what they do. Similarly, I have stuck to a two lane layout for simplicity.

I have divided the article into sub headings in order of progression so that hopefully, a logical route from wall plug to rear tyres can be formulated.

Finally, because Mark has a particular affection for power sledge cars I shall use these engines when I come to that section, the modern 'can' motor basically being a covered in version with the magnets each side of the armature.

Track - transformer - controller

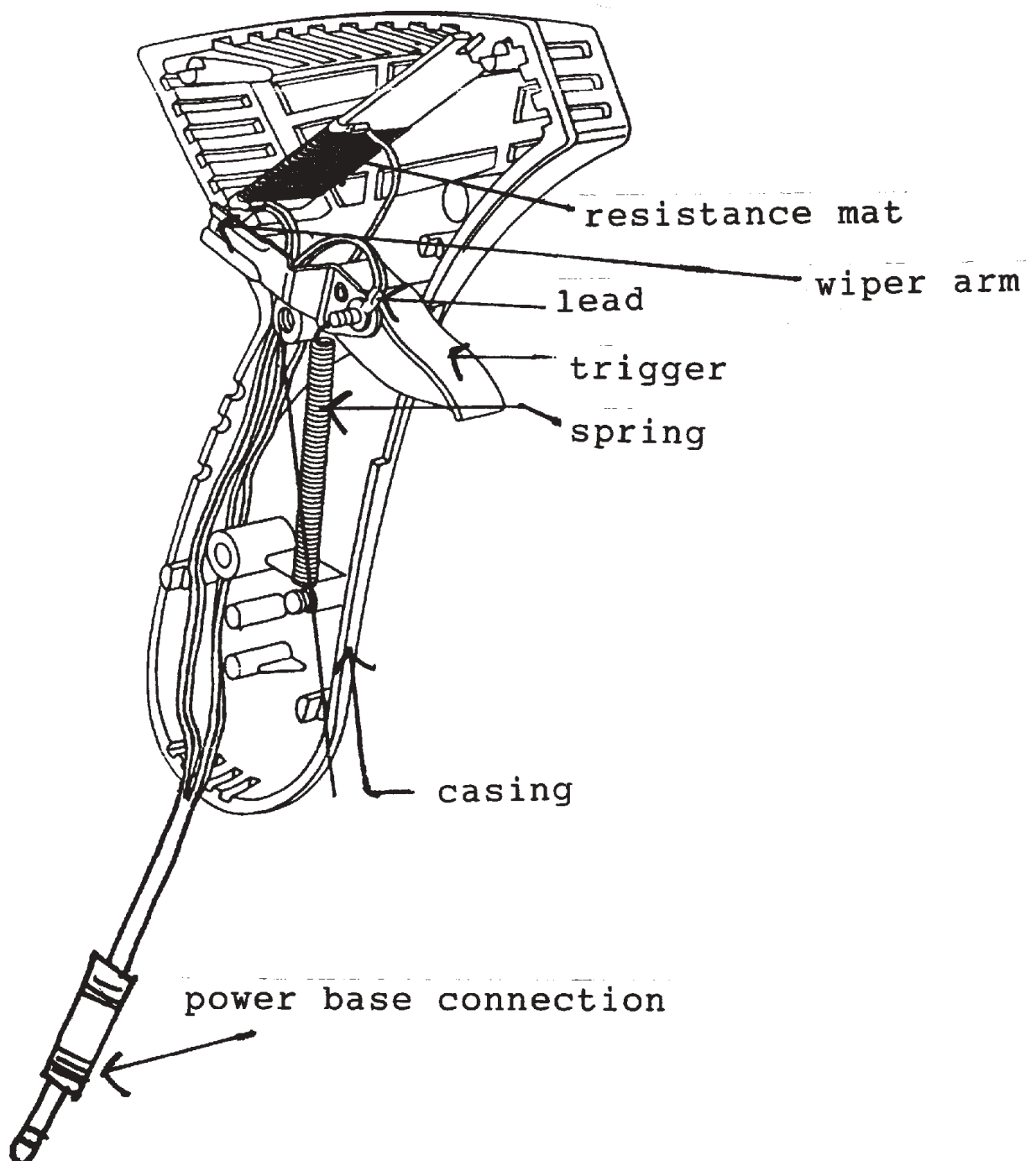
With our domestic electrical supply at 240 volts and most tracks at 12 volts we have to use a transformer to compensate - this is usually the three pin variety and is plugged directly into a mains supply socket with the output connected to the power base of the track. The power base has connections built into both lane slots and inside these slots are two metal rails, one on each side, which take the live and neutral electrical current from the transformer. That is where your car gets its power.



To race your car you need a variable power (electrical) output through the slot rails so that your car can accelerate and slow down. To effect this variability you have a hand controller - also plugged into the power base. These are either pistol type (thumb operated) or trigger type (forefinger operated) and can vary in output from 15 to 60 ohms in general use. As the Ohm is a unit of electrical resistance ($\frac{\text{volts}}{\text{amps}}$) it follows that the larger the layout the lower the throttle resistance required and as the opposite is true why many boxed sets which have short track lengths have high resistance controllers (typically 70 ohms).

If you look through the vents in the controller casing or if you can take it apart, you will find that it comprises of a resistance mat which looks like a small flat version of an electrical fire element. Running in an arc along it's length and pivoted from the trigger is the wiper arm. This does as it says and wipes the mat giving the variable output that allows you to control the car. The trigger has a return spring and from the base of the controller is the cable connection to the power base. ■

Continued next month



A good idea at the time

BY THE EDITOR

As many of you will be aware my life is ruled by a small blue furry creature called Daft Idea Animal. He constantly sits on my shoulder and whispers "Wouldn't it be a good idea if.....?"

He has been responsible for most of the stupid things I have done in my time, including taking on this job! In fact his ancestors were prevalent throughout history - I bet King Canute thought it would be a really good idea to hold back the tide and why else would Henry VIII have got married six times?

Government departments are full of his relatives; look at that giant redundant tent on the South bank of the Thames. The work of Political Daft Idea Animal without any doubt.

Slot-car manufacturers also have these animals in their design departments - the words "Ninja" and "Turtles" come to mind - so I thought it was about time that some of the major slot-racing lunacies were chronicled.

Varney Slot-Lock

This is my own personal favourite; Varney were an American firm who jumped on the slot-car bandwagon during the sixties when so much glorious rubbish was foisted on the unsuspecting public. A lot of the commercial Raceways at the time utilised a T shaped guide blade so that the cars were unable to deslot and someone at Varney thought it would be a really great idea to bring out a home system on the same lines. Thus the Slot-Lock was born.

Only four cars were ever produced for this system (Jaguar XKE and Corvette in both hard top and open forms) and each was fitted with a plastic clip round the guide blade which locked the car into the track so it was able to skid and spin but would never crash. I must admit that this has an appeal to such an appalling slot-racer as myself but I doubt I would have enjoyed it for long.

The Slot-Lock system was daft enough in itself but the really inspired piece of lunacy came with the track which actually had to be assembled round the car! Thus, in order to change cars it was necessary to dismantle the circuit; each piece of track was constructed in four parts and held together with push-in/pull-out plastic clips - sheer magic! Such fun hunting for them under the sofa.

However, my small furry friend was not finished yet as these cars also featured two gear contrates which could be changed by a lever protruding from the underside. Just one teensy weensy problem though: before you could move the lever you had to undo the chassis screws; split the body; release the gears; reverse the motor wires; put the new gear into mesh and then reassemble the whole thing! Unsurprisingly this system was not a major commercial success but as an example of the activities of Daft Slot-Car Idea Animal it has to be one of his major achievements.

Your turn now

People often tell me they would like to write an article but can't think of a subject; well here is a suggestion for all you budding correspondents out there. Tell me about your favourite "good idea at the time"; the history of our hobby is full of them.

As an added incentive there is a prize available for the best article on this subject that I receive before December. I have a limited edition classic slot-car calendar (1 of 500) from Slot-32 DE waiting for a good home. As always spelling and grammar are unimportant; what matters is the content. May the daftest idea win!

Funny, I had no intention of writing this article when I started compiling the Journal this month but somehow it just seemed like a good idea! Aaaarrggghhh! ■

Indianapolis Lotus 38

BY DAVID LAWSON

In my opinion there's never been a better driver than Jim Clark and there haven't been many better cars than the 1965 Indianapolis 500 winning Lotus-Ford 38. Being a committed fan of both for as long as I can remember and coming from the accuracy and realism side of the slot racing hobby, I haven't been really happy with any of the commercially available examples of this stunning looking car.

Good as the 1/32 Scalextric car is, it isn't an accurate model and I didn't want to buy one of the wonderful 1/24 Monogram or Scalextric at current collectors prices. How then could I achieve my aim of owning an accurate and affordable slot car?

Thanks to a "Classic" fibreglass body shell and a decal sheet from "Pattos Place" added to an MRRC chassis from Pendles I was able to put together a slot car that in my opinion captures the look of the full size car.

The bodyshell needed very little cleaning up and preparation for spraying and just the addition of some Plastruct tubing for the exhaust pipes. I did remove the moulded in driver figure because I had a spare MRRC/Monogram driver from a damaged bodyshell and this has an excellent representation of Clark's style of crash helmet. Having cut and adjusted the arms into position, filled with Milliput and painted the figure I was pleased with the likeness to the great Scotsman.

None of this work is actually necessary if you use the driver as supplied in the bodyshell.

The chassis just needed setting at the right length wheelbase and a simple plastic block glued to the bodyshell for the two mounting grub screws to fit into.

To really capture the car the decals were very important. I checked my reference photographs and found that most but not all of the logos were included, substituting close alternatives from the Patto sheet didn't detract from the overall feel and accuracy of the car.

Patto's decals are very fine and delicate and you have to handle them very carefully to avoid damaging them but they went on easily. They responded well to Micro Set and Sol decal solvents and they didn't adversely react to a coat of Halfords clear lacquer after they had been left to dry thoroughly for a day or two.

Materials and info from:

Pattos Place Decals -

<http://members.optushome.com.au/pattosplace>

Betta & Classic bodyshells: 01704 229342 ■



Silver Hatch circuit

Part 1 - introduction

BY KEN ELSTON

Enthusiast or lunatic? A question no doubt answered with the latter for those of us with an interest (obsession?) with racing (playing with) little coloured cars. Of course there is no clear answer, it all depends on your point of view doesn't it?

I have decided to introduce my home race track, collection and racing club to you in hopefully such detail that you can decide whether or not I am an enthusiast or indeed a lunatic.

I have split the evidence for the defence into the following sections to help you either understand the set-up or stay awake!

1. Introduction
2. Silver Hatch Circuit
3. Racing and Race Control
4. Software
5. The Website

I have also included a few photos of the circuit for your viewing pleasure. I just hope they look good in actual print!

(With my talents in the black blob department - I doubt it Ken!)

OK let's get started with Part 1. As is the case with most members (if you judge by the contributions in the Journal) I had a Scalextric set as a kid in the 60s but it wasn't until I became a wallet carrying big kid in the early 80s that I got bitten by the Scalextric bug.

It all came about when I saw a Scalextric set in my girlfriend's (later 'she who must be obeyed') wardrobe and decided to get it out and have a look. As you can guess the cars were formula juniors which had seen far better days and were destined never to run again. The controllers were burnt out but on the brighter side the track seemed flat!

Fate would have it that a local toy shop was closing down and was offloading its small stock of Scalextric at sale prices. So off I went and very soon had working controllers and a few cars.

Back at the house I assembled the layout (a small oval) and drove the cars by myself! Ah, a few problems, you can't race by yourself, and driving round a small oval can be boring. Over the next couple of years the collection grew. A little piece of track here and a car there and soon I had a medium sized layout with about 20 or so cars but still no one to race with.

Sometime in the mid- eighties one of my colleagues in the office spotted me coming out of Beatties with a new car. We got chatting and he told me he used to race with some mates a few years earlier and it was great fun and he wouldn't mind giving it another go. Word spread around the office and within a few months I had 6 or 7 people wanting to come round and race.

The first races were totally disorganised with the newer cars being a lot faster than the older ones and the levels of skills displayed by all the drivers had to be seen to be believed!

After a few months 'fun racing' suggestions/ ideas were put forward on how to improve the things. Number 1 in the hit parade was "make it 4 lanes". Fair enough, racing was then suspended while a new circuit was designed and additional track purchased (not cheap!). Eventually a new layout was made and written down in a book because it had to be assembled and reassembled for each event! Hours for me to set up and minutes for everyone to clear away.

By the time 4 lanes had arrived I had accumulated a few pitstops, grandstands and other assorted buildings. The layout now begun to take on the look of a real motor racing circuit. One of the first rules introduced was the "de-slot and that's it" rule. Our oldest rule! Scoring was done by the old fashioned pencil and paper method. At the end of each event points were awarded to each of the top 6 drivers which went towards the 'World Championship'.

The average age of each competitor was mid-30s so the next innovation was to move the layout from the floor 'cos "it hurt my back to

keep bending over"! The cry went out for any spare bread baskets. Soon we had enough to begin to elevate the track. The next step was to purchase some 8' by 4' boards and paint them green. Once this phase was completed some parts of the circuit were pinned down so that only the bridge sections needed to be constructed each time. Ah heaven - construction time on race day was at least halved and other benefits included better power supply and more elbow room for each racer as power points were spread around the circuit.

The club continued in this format for some time with the racing as good as ever. The range of cars being raced increasing to a point that several new classes were added (more about this later). There was, of course, the odd change in personnel but the numbers racing never went below 6 and sometimes we had as many as 10!

The final stage in the creation of Silver Hatch was the move to my mother-in-law's spare front room. This room was currently being used to house her indoor plants so I cheekily suggested that my layout could reside here and we would build around the plants!

Permission was given and 3 months later we had a permanent layout, the length of which I've never measured but the new Fly cars go around in about 7.8 seconds, the average lap for all cars being about 10 seconds. There should be a photo of the circuit beside this article.

It's slot racers heaven to be able to go up there (about 5 minutes drive) plug in and away you go! All I do now is keep it reasonably clean and flat. The track is constantly cleaned and the buildings given an occasional soak.

Anyway in the next instalment I shall hopefully describe and show you the circuit in full. ■



Review - Riley Elf made by BMC32

BY GEOFF MASON

Over 30 years ago, one of the first cars I ever drove was a Riley Elf. It was a nippy little car, and although it was basically a mini with a boot, it is a car I remember with affection.

To come back to the present, I was chatting to Steve from Traffic-modelcars at his shop at Barkham Antiques when he casually let it drop that he was planning a resin Riley Elf.

I had seen the MG F hardtop that he made for Rover M.G.'s facelift press launch and I know they ran very well despite long periods of abuse in the hands of the motoring press. He told me to look out for the pictures on his web site (www.traffic-modelcars.com). I did and ordered an Elf immediately.

The resin model comes in 2 versions:

1. A complete kit with MRRC Mini running gear.
2. A fully finished model.

Assembly

I chose the kit with running gear. This is only the second resin kit I have built and I am not the world's greatest kit builder. Consequently, I was delighted to find a very clean model with just very slight flash on the window edges. This was easily removed by very gentle filing. The grill, bumpers, lights and door-handles were chrome plated cast white metal as were the petrol cap and rear number plate light. The last two items needed small holes drilled into the body, as did the door handles.

Having washed the body in soapy water and then leaving it to dry, I chose to paint the car a pale bluish-turquoise, which resembled a BMC colour from the early sixties. I am not a practised painter but after two coats the model looked good enough for racing.

While the second coat was drying, I assembled the chassis. This consisted of the MRRC interior and snap in components.

Anyone who is not familiar with the MRRC set up (which dates from the late sixties) may have problems and should do several "dry" runs first. The rear axle holder must be screwed to the motor (a standard Mabuchi can) and this is easier if the pinion gear is not fitted. Once the axle holder is screwed in place the pinion can be push fitted and the rear axle snapped into place. This gives a crude but fairly smooth mesh.

The motor leads have to be soldered to the motor, and the front steering unit assembled. This proved to be the most difficult part, as I am quite clumsy with small components. I would recommend studying a completed MRRC steering unit before assembly. The pick-up braids slide into the guide, as do the tabs on the motor leads, which hold the braid in place. I find it easier to do this before fitting the tiny true-scale wheels.

Having completed the motor and axle assemblies, the front steering unit screws into the interior/underpan and the motor/rear assembly clips in by using the spacer cap on the end of the motor. The chassis unit then had a trial fitting to the now dry body to ensure there was no wheel rub etc.

Prior to final fitting the windscreen was trimmed and glued (epoxy is best) into place. The interior was painted and a driver fitted. The MRRC driver provided is just a head and shoulders so a suitable replacement was found.

Once assembled, the metal trim was glued into place and some numbers put on (no advertising in the early sixties). Final painting and highlighting was completed and it was given a coat of gloss for that "showroom" look.

On the track

Now the real test, the Elf sits well on my home track (Scalextric on a board in the garage) and is surprisingly nippy. It looks the part and is a good competitor for cars such as Reprotac

SEAT600 and Pink Kar Volkswagen as well as the standard MRRC Mini (Steve also has some of these ready built). I actually like to race it against a Triumph Herald (converted from the Airfix Kit).

With its tiny wheels, it is not the fastest car on the track, but when competing against similar period cars it can more than hold its own.

Conclusions

To sum up, this is a great little model that is a little bit different from the crowd. It runs well, it was fun to build despite being fiddly in places and it captures the look of the Riley Elf perfectly. It is a delightful addition to my collection. Steve has since shown me the MG 1100 in the same series, which looks equally impressive and is also now available. He also showed me the mock-up for the Austin A40 Farina, which should be out by the end of the year. Another “must have” model. ■

