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BY SUBSCRIPTION ONLY

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NSCC

The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be

I have just returned from the Historic Festival at Silverstone feeling distinctly old; for the first time I have watched "Historic" cars that I remember seeing when they were new!

Sadly this once major event seems to have lost the plot as attendance was apparently down by half, mostly due to the ludicrous admission charges this year. The number of trade stalls was also down so presumably they have had a price hike as well.

The day was full of ups and downs; I had a pleasant chat with Mark and Julie Scale (attendance must have been bad - they are normally far too busy to talk) but the pre 78 F1 race was marred by an enormous startline shunt. Nobody was hurt, thankfully, but Martin Stretton's priceless Tyrrell P34 was badly damaged. A friend of ours, Chris Perkins, was also involved and his Surtees will need a lot of work before it races again; every time we visit him in the pits before a race he either breaks down or crashes - I think he dreads our arrival!

However things took a distinct turn for the better with the final Group C race; we sat at Copse in glorious sunshine watching a trio of Jaguars spitting flame as they braked for the corner. It took a few laps before I realised that I was watching a scene that I had only seen before on a Scalextric track - a Bud Light Jag was in front, closely followed by the Silk Cut and Castrol versions - still the leading one was an SRS2 so no change there then!

We rounded the day off with a visit to Max Winter, who lives nearby, where I had a few laps of his superb home track with the McLaren M6 which you may have seen advertised in the Journal recently. It really is a wonderful slot-car to drive and, best of all, it was designed to run without magnets as all historic cars should be. Thanks very much for your hospitality Max and I'm sorry I broke the guide blade with my over enthusiastic tail slides - honest!

And Finally - this month is a very busy one for me so I would be grateful if you could send any contributions as early as possible and give me a fighting chance of getting the October issue out on time.

Till next month
 Brian



Although the Headquarters is enjoying a kind of summer shutdown period the wheels or industry are still turning. I say 'kind of shutdown' because the factory used to have maintenance shutdowns when production was still based at Margate. Nowadays the summer holidays mark the brief respite before the planning for next year's product range starts getting serious.

The 2nd edition catalogue was at the printers as the time of writing this report and the first information on what is due for the second half of this year has started to show itself.

The high visibility of NASCAR cars in the product range for the 4th quarter of 2001 indicates that Scalextric are still committed to leveraging their way into the lucrative North American market. With the upcoming events at the UK oval at Rockingham the interest in American cars seems likely to grow.

From a Collector Centre 'near you' the 2001 car will be available shortly in the form of a Porsche 911 GT3R in gold with black lettering. From Woolworths you'll find a red Subaru Impreza, whilst Argos have red and silver Ford Focus cars in a Rally Challenge set. Index Stores have two exclusive BMW 320i cars in black and red.

Looking back into the past at variations I've found four variants of the C17 Lamborghini Muira. It would appear that the first issue Miura was made in the darkest of the yellows, has red painted rear lights, the 'Made in England' marker is hidden under the engine and the white racing number was on a translucent square. A subsequent batch was produced in a slightly brighter yellow. On a further production run the detailing of painting the red rear lights was dropped from the even brighter/lighter yellow

body, the 'Made in England' marker was moved to the same edge as the 'C17' marker and the racing number was in black on a white roundel. A later production run in a pale yellow was also made.

C17 Lamborghini Muira, Type 1, yellow, painted brake lights, white racing numbers. 'Made in England' stamp on driver platform hidden under engine.

C17 Lamborghini Muira, Type 2, lighter yellow than Type 1, painted brake lights, white racing numbers. 'Made in England' stamp on driver platform hidden under engine.

C17 Lamborghini Muira, Type 3, lighter yellow than Type 2, brake lights not painted, black racing numbers. 'Made in England' stamp on driver platform on same edge as 'C17' stamp.

C17 Lamborghini Muira, Type 4, lighter yellow than Type 3, brake lights not painted, black racing numbers. 'Made in Russia' stamp on driver platform on same edge as 'C17' stamp.

Not all Scalextric employees have been lucky enough to enjoy a holiday! Scalextric have been busy launching the new Mega Bowl circuits. The first one was installed at the Croydon Mega Bowl. If anyone has the chance to visit the pay and race circuit any feedback via 'Members Letters' would be great.

'C' number update

C2267WBK BMW 320i, black, Index Stores
C2268WRD BMW 320i, red, Index Stores
C2379 Subaru Impreza, red, Woolworths, from set C1075K Subaru Challenge
C2380WA Ford Focus, RS, silver, from Argos set C1076K Rally Challenge
C2381WA Ford Focus, RS, red, from Argos set C1076K Rally Challenge
C2388WA Porsche 911 GT3R, gold, from Collector Centres. ■

A 'Day In The Life'

Part 9 - come together

Right, so the car bodies have left the mould shop along with the underpans, wheel hubs, driver platforms, interior glass, etc.,. The parts that require spraying and printing were prepared, 'painted' and stacked in hundreds of trays to harden-off. The parts that have been made in the factory are then brought together with others from specialist suppliers - light bulbs, electric motors, TV suppressor, etc.

The production manager will ensure that all these parts are brought to the kitting area when the production run is scheduled. This is situated at the head of the production line and is full of crates with all the components required for assembly. Each car is then individually built up.

The main production line is split into several smaller ones specialising in the assembly of separate parts of the car. Whilst one operative is fixing components to the interior of the car body another will be assembling the underpan.



In the foreground, a Megane Rallye interior is being assembled.

Normally a team of three assemble one car and they will be responsible for the quality of that production run. Additionally, the Quality Control staff will carry out spot checks with roving inspections. Q.C. will retain a sample car as a definitive item for reference should any questions or problems arise either in regulatory or retail areas.

Cars incorporating working lights always have underpans secured by screws. This is to

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

conform to toy safety regulations that stipulate that wherever a toy contains glass, e.g. a light bulb, this must only be accessible by means of a tool.



A Megane 'Diac' has its underpan screwed to the body.

The lady assembling the car uses a pneumatic screwdriver. The screws have exactly the same pressure applied to every car. You can also see that the car sits in a 'shoe', an upside-down-outside-fit felted 'glove' to the body. The cars will then be placed in trays to be either packed in 'solo' boxes or returned to the warehouse where they will be packed into sets.

Baby, You Can Drive My Car

When each car is completed they are tested individually on a 'rolling road'. This is actually a large roller on which the driven wheels run, the electric supply coming from terminals engaging with the pick-up braids. The car builder is thus able to check that the car is a good runner and that lights all function correctly. A proportion of each production batch is taken away to a quality control area and tested on a Scalextric layout.

At last, the car will be mounted on a plinth, the square Perspex lid attached and then slotted in to its outer sleeve and placed in cardboard outer boxes used for transporting the stock to retail outlets. Cars that are destined for sets are wrapped in tissue and returned to the warehouse for packaging at a later stage.

More regulations

Before, during and after production, Quality Control staff continue their work to ensure that all the components of the product intended for sale meet stringent standards. As mentioned previously, Scalextric products are designed to be played with by children of over thirty-six months of age, whereas other manufacturers often only build to a lower standard where the product is safe for customers of fourteen years or over.

The British and European Standard EN71 is adhered to rigorously. Part one deals with the physical construction and demands such safety aspects as no sharp points or any parts of the toy that might catch and cut your finger.

Flammability is covered in Part two of the standard; Hornby tests the product to make sure that, for instance, the motor doesn't reach such a temperature that the motor casing could burn a child's fingertips. Inks and paints are covered in Part three where, as you might expect, lead

content is checked as well as many other chemical traces.

Certification from the regulatory authorities is required not just for the cars. The cables, transformers, connections, power base track sections, controllers and the track itself all require certification. To keep the guys busy, and bureaucracy alive and kicking, a certificate is only valid for two years. Therefore, all products have to be resubmitted for certification. In fact, there is so much work involved in certification that specialist testing houses are employed to carry out the work of testing the products against the criteria set in the appropriate European Standards. Just when Q.C. thinks the job is complete, the Marketing guys may secure a contract to supply the U.S.A. with the product. Yes, you guessed it - a whole new set of testing and certification is required to satisfy the American ASTM Standards! ■

good friend of mine, who had sold part of his collection to me five years previously, in several visits, bought around 20% in value of the cars I had for sale.

Deciding to buy an exotic car was not to be taken lightly, so I researched the subject quite thoroughly and took qualified advice whenever I could. I was lucky in that I knew a couple of mechanics who specialised in this sort of car i.e. Ferraris, Lamborghinis and Aston Martins. After looking at three cars I had a call from Maranello Sales in Egham who were selling a red 1976 Ferrari 308 GTB fibreglass on somebody's behalf. I went to view it and as soon as I saw it on the forecourt, even next to many other bright red shiny cars, I knew this looked like the right one. Having gone over the car thoroughly with my check list and taken it for a brief test drive, I was even more convinced. I expressed my interest with the salesman and told him that I would like to bring a Ferrari mechanic back with me the next day. As I expected, my mechanic was just as impressed as I was and before I knew it, (with a list of items to be attended to all agreed), I had signed on the dotted line. There was one slight problem though - I hadn't managed to sell enough of my collection to afford it. Maranello helpfully arranged a short term loan which was paid off within three months. The car had been in storage for four years and we were concerned that items such as the camshaft oil seals, hoses and exhaust etc. may be faulty These were no problem to Maranello who agreed to do everything we requested plus putting right anything they found on a full road test. After several phone calls checking on progress and hearing of the many different tasks undertaken by the service



department and the fact that their bill to the sales department was "The biggest yet seen for a 308" (I'm glad I didn't have to pay !) I finally picked up the car three weeks later; together with the documentation, which included a full history, came two motor magazines (Car - July 1986 and Supercar Classics - Sept. 1988) with articles featuring the car by one of the previous owners (Steve Cropley magazine editor).

I have had the car for over a year now and (touch wood) I have had no problems, I also have the comforting knowledge that my Ferrari mechanic friend will be able to undertake any necessary maintenance at an affordable cost. It is well documented that these cars can be expensive to keep on the road, but with a little bit of common sense it can be quite affordable, even insurance is reasonable with Classic car insurance for 3000 miles / year costing £300.

How long will I keep it? Who knows, probably until I have to sell it to buy a new kitchen (don't tell my wife I said that). I am hoping that the car will hold its value and not depreciate like a more modern car, TVR springs to mind. The nice thing about this escapade is that I still have my four lane seventy eight feet running length Scalextric track layout on staging with display cabinets underneath in the loft, with 300 ish cars which my children, nephews, friends and of course myself can still enjoy. I still collect slot cars, mainly Ferraris, but also anything that takes my fancy such as Fly Listers, Marcos etc. I particularly enjoy finding obscure Ferrari 1/32 scale kits and turning them into slot cars. (Anyone got any spare?). I still look forward every month to receiving the Journal, looking for those bargain Ferraris. I also enjoy attending the NSCC swapmeets, sharing a table with John Couser, selling and swapping any cars left on my sale list plus other surplus cars. The friendly atmosphere at these events always makes for a pleasurable day.

And finally thanks to all the committee for their enthusiastic voluntary work, without whom there would be no NSCC Journal, swapmeets and all.

Happy collecting.
Martin Davis. ■

More Westcountry rambles

BY VINE FENNEL

It seems Graham Smith is a bit disillusioned with the content of the mag at the moment. Well as the Ed said, he could always find better use of his time in preparing interesting and informative articles for the mag. Perhaps if his letter had been written with a bit more tact and diplomacy he wouldn't have got the reply he did.

However, after reading his letter a couple of times I have to agree with one of the points he has raised. We need more information about the goings on of the major manufacturers other than Hornby. I've been meandering my way through some back issues, and at one time we had Ninco News. I suspect that the author of that particular piece is probably otherwise engaged with work nowadays. As the Ed says, Adrian Norman does Hornby because that's what he likes. Fine; at least we're getting information from them.

I'm going to follow up some thoughts regarding Fly. Who's going to have a go at the others? Would some of our Spanish members like to give Ninco a go? What about those of you in Germany - Carrera/Cartrix. There must be someone in Italy for Proslot? Don't worry if your English is not so good, it's probably much better than the majority of us speak your respective languages!

Right, now for the 1200 or so other members who sit back every month waiting for the mag, me included, get off your butts, write something down about why you do whatever it is you do with your toy cars and send it in. Share your interest with everyone else.

Now for a name check

David Lawson: great article in Feb 2000 about your E-Type. I've recently found Southend's web site. Send more stuff. It's great! Get the other guys there to send stuff. If they're not members, get them to join, or get their permission to use their stuff. I found it interesting, I expect others will too. For those on the net try:-

www.thura.fsbusiness.co.uk/index.html.

It's well worth a visit.

Australia.

I know we've had a few articles from you already. Let's have some more. What's the racing scene like out there? I'm sure somebody must be aware of Patterson. I know about him and I've used some of his stuff. Surely some of you must have. Share him with the rest of the world!

Another name check.

Mark Gussin: I've seen your web site. Get some of that out in the open. I know Mike builds and sells statics but they're only a chassis away from being runners. Perhaps others would like to see his work.

That's it for this month. Hopefully over the next months I'll start working through my back issues and making replies and comments to those articles that every time I saw something I said I would write in to agree or not. Mostly agree I think.

Remember people, if you've got something negative to say be tactful and constructive. Maybe something useful will come of it. ■

Not as gullible as some may think!

BY MARK SCALE

Before you start to read this, I would like to point out that I am the one who sold an E2 Pace Car for £50 (and felt guilty at the high price). At the time I tried to talk the customer out of the purchase; I could do him a nice A2, which was nearly the same for only £20. £50 was just too much to pay on a new car! Two years later the same customer sold me the same E2 back for £400 and still they increase. The last I heard it was £800 so what do I know?

Collecting is a hobby. Do not do it for the money. Whatever your hobby or past time it usually incurs a cost; go-karting, flying, horse riding or the pub, and at the end of it you have no tangible assets to show for it. I always wished I had been into walking!

Collecting or racing slot-cars gives you something that you can sell if you ever decide to give up. If, as a collector, you bought every Fly car on release you should, taken as a whole, have made a very good return on your money - given that there are not many that have fallen in value. The S11 was probably the first to fall back and more than a few of us lost money (myself included) but as the others have made so much it is not a problem. I think that a portfolio of one of each Fly car would compare favourably with a PEP or some other investment.

However if you want to play safe don't buy the limited editions - standard releases can appreciate greatly in value. The runs are still limited to a production run, and the appeal is to a far greater market. A standard livery is a model of a car that actually raced and they are purchased by racers, Fly collectors, and people with an interest in the particular car. Hand a chrome Marcos to anyone outside the collectors' market and they ask 'why?'

The price of the standard issues are such that they do go up in value A2s, C52s etc. The worst scenario is that they may fall back to what you paid for them if someone suddenly found a

warehouse full. Also we have to remember that standard cars are being raced and broken, whereas Limited Editions stay mint boxed. All the well known dealers within the NSCC sell Fly standard issues at less than the recommended retail price, so the moment the car is no longer available as a standard release it is automatically worth the recommended retail - amounts to a 15-20% increase!

I agree with a lot of Steve Westby's comments last month in his article. You may recall he referred to a T2 selling for £6000. I personally do not believe a car sold for this. Auction fixing is a very old problem, and I think we have to be aware that it can still happen in our technological world. It only takes 3 people working together; one puts the item in the Auction, the other two bid up the price. No one need ever know if money really ever changed hands or not, and the result is that one of them has a stock of this car which has dramatically increased in value. E.g. they could advertise the T2 for £2500 and it would be a bargain (NOT!) If I am wrong, and someone did genuinely pay £6000 for a model car, then I hope he enjoys it, because as a monetary value it only has one place to go - down.

Another problem with such over priced cars is fakes! Once the market value gets so high, it must become just too tempting for some people. Beware - fake Pace cars have been seen, but so far they can be spotted. My advice to anyone has always been buy what you like, and will enjoy, if in time you decide to stop, and the models have increased in value that is a bonus.

I wish I had a crystal ball, I regularly get it wrong, and end up over stocked - my latest disaster appears to be the PA2 Venturi!

Finally, if anyone out there really does collect Franklin Mint I think I still have my prize collection in the back storeroom gathering dust. They were a long regretted car boot purchase!■



Dear Brian,

I am afraid we have also felt obliged to get involved with the recent influx to your postbag. Firstly we have to agree with the praise - the Journal is a credit to you, and we know how much effort you put in.

Unfortunately whilst we have to confess that the Internet does affect the number of adverts we run generally, the main reason for the reduction in the size of our advert within the NSCC is the cost. (A point on which I think you will find all the traders will agree) The Journal is a club publication aimed at less than 1500 members-a large majority of whom are already regularly committed to a supplier. The double page ads were just too expensive to justify as a business expense.

With the reduction in adverts, has come the reduction in information regarding the 'other' slot brands and this was addressed at the AGM. We have to confess that we are slightly at fault here as we agreed that we would correlate information for a newsletter type article on a regular basis in conjunction with P&J, Pendle Slot Racing and MRE. We have put this to rights this month - comments on what people would like included would be appreciated. If anybody comes across any interesting information that they think would be of interest to other members they can drop us a line and we will try and confirm and then include in the next edition.

Scale Models does produce a monthly Newsletter and lists for any customers who do not have access to the Internet, and as Shaun Bennett pointed out we are pleased to post this out to any one who rings up and asks.

Now you have us writing I am afraid we can not stop, so also enclosed is a piece in reaction to Mark reading the article 'Just how gullible are we?' by Steve Westby in August's issue.

Finally we have to say that whilst not everyone may have been happy with what Graham had to say, it seems to have had a positive effect, in the increase in contributions to the newsletter. We thought we would try and help continue this new trend with a prize - for the next 6 months, we will be pleased to donate a car to the writer of the star letter/article (Editors Choice?) The prize will be the car we can't sell that month- (For relevance see Mark's article). This month it is a PA2 Venturi but we can't always promise that it will be a Special Edition car!

Regards

Julie & Mark Scale

Scale Models

Thank you very much for your generosity Julie; I am tempted to award the prize to you and Mark for your input this month! However, the winner is Roy Leach whose letter appears on the next page. There are no rules to the competition - all articles/letters will be eligible and I will select the one that appeals to me most.

Dear Brian,

Being a relative newcomer to the hobby and the NSCC it is a bit difficult sending a contribution to the Journal as I don't know what has gone before in the way of tips to improve the running of the cars.

Perhaps it would be a good idea to rerun past articles for the benefit of new members like myself. I found the Tony Secchi article on magnets to be of immense interest and I am sure a reprint of his earlier articles would be useful to us newcomers. If I find track adhesion to be insufficient on my own cars I use small pieces of lead sheet, bought from the local DIY store. These are stuck to the underside of the chassis or body with Bostik.

Until recently I used the ubiquitous WD40 for track cleaning but found that it soon formed a black gunge on the braids of the cars; I now use a track cleaner supplied by my model railway dealer. It smells like carbon tetrachloride but it cleans well and the track remains in good condition for some time.

My layout, unfortunately, resides in the garage and suffers from condensation drips in the winter, resulting in rusty track and poor electrical contact. I have thus coated the joints with copper grease from Halfords. Another useful product from the same supplier is Armor All Protectant which brings all plastic surfaces to a high gloss (slot-car and locomotive bodies as well as track).

One side of my layout is against a wall and out of reach so I have a length of wood dowel fitted with a hook to help retrieve crashed cars. The latest Scalextric cars such as the Cadillac have self centring guides which help enormously in reslotting; however, I have found that the retaining slot for the arm is too shallow and the self centring spring falls out. I have cured the problem with a spot of Superglue but perhaps Hornby may like to investigate the problem and seek a manufacturing solution.

Finally, in view of my rusting problems with plated steel, would it be possible for Hornby to consider the use of nickel silver? I am aware there would be an increase in cost but it would result in better conductivity and no plating would be required. Very few railway modellers use steel track these days. As I said at the beginning perhaps some of these points have been covered before; however they may help some other new members.

Happy conductivity

Roy Leach

★ **Thanks for the reminder Roy - it is easy to forget that not everyone has been a member for a long time. I will see what I can retrieve from the archives. I hope you like your prize.** ★

.....

Dear Brian,

When cataloguing some Scalextric buildings, or as Christine calls it "tidying up", I actually opened some of the boxes to see what was inside. Inside the four Event Board and Hut (Ref A201) I have discovered a variety of cars named on the insert slips provided with the building.

I have the following (in alphabetical order) and wondered if any others exist?

Aston Martin	Lister Jaguar
Austin Healey	Lotus
Cooper	Maserati
Ferrari	Porsche
	Vanwall

I look forward to hearing from other members as to their finds.

Regards

Richard Winter

International Vintage Meeting

BY DON SIEGEL

Samy Beraha and his fellow club members in Bordeaux have organized one or two vintage slot racing weekends a year for the last few years. But this year, they wanted to make it a real international event. Word got out, and the meeting attracted participants from all over France, as well as England, the U.S. and Spain.

Races were run according to the "Turin" system, from the Italian club that has also long organized vintage races: heats are organized according to the type of car. To encourage nicer looking cars, results of the Concours d'Elégance were given equal weight with race results: adding the driver's standing in each category gave the final result, with the lowest total the winner.

The suspense started Saturday evening at 6:00 pm with the Concours d'Elégance for both scales. Drivers rated all cars (except their own) on a scale of 1 to 10. These ratings were averaged to rank the cars in order – and we could finally adjourn for cocktails and dinner!

1/32 face-off

A clear favourite soon emerged in 1/32. Phil Smith of England had prepared a beautiful Cobra GT, mounting an Aurora kit body on an AMT chassis. The only word to describe this one was "impeccable". And if the AMT chassis worked, he was going to be hard to beat. The other front-runner was Paul Hamo's K&B/Aurora Pontiac GTO with the famous Challenger sidewinder motor. These two cars took first and second place in the Concours. They were followed by the two young Beraha brothers, Anthony and Jody, with a Revell Ferrari GTO and Mercedes 300SL, both well painted and detailed. Fifth was Claude Rozier's Monogram MGA – clearly the rarest car to hit the track in 1/32 – and then Derek Cooper's McLaren Mk6, with a Betta fibreglass body (orange of course) and a Strombecker (Scuttler??) motor. Close behind him was Marc Dodinot with a Lancia-Ferrari D50, using a Hawk body on an Atlas chassis.

The race next morning was run in six 6-car heats, with the Formula 1/Indy cars given a

heat all to themselves. Phil's Cobra quickly proved to have problems on the track, so the race was indeed up for grabs. Derek Cooper (a former British Champion) was going very fast indeed, and looked like he would combine a decent Concours place with a very high finish, but his body mount decided to break off after a minor deslot, and he finished the race with the body taped on at a very rakish angle.

The scratch winner of the race was American Dave Dobner, a soft-spoken young man who had travelled all the way from Detroit along with well-known collector Brad Blohm (along with Phil, they were going to Le Mans for the 24-hour race right after Bordeaux). Dave had prepared a stock Monogram Porsche 904 that ran like a champ ("He just knows how to set them up," said Brad, with typical Detroit understatement), outpacing Marc Dodinot by 4 laps. But although it was a fine looking car, his Concours grades were not very high – perhaps some purists didn't like seeing a light blue Porsche! Third place scratch was a Revell Stingray driven by Vincent Lacroix, followed by Anthony Beraha's Revell Ferrari GTO (about two feet ahead of me – a long tradition between us).

With his second place finish, Marc Dodinot took overall 2nd. And the surprise overall winner in 1/32 was young Anthony Beraha, with his stock, but well prepared Revell GTO, finishing 3rd in Concours and 4th in the race. The first Scalextric finisher came in only 23rd, although the highest placed Scalextric-type home slot car was Jean-Marie Donzel's nicely done Policar Alpine Renault in 4th place. A pair of Fleischmann Lotii 40s did pretty well too.

A special note of thanks to the six Spanish racers who made the trip from Irun on the French-Spanish border very early Sunday morning to participate in the 1/32 race, and stayed all day although they didn't have 1/24 cars. They were also too late for the Concours judging the previous evening, but participated in the race as good sports all around. ■

Adventurous ebaying

Part 1 - Know what you're letting yourself in for

BY STEVE WESTBY

In a recent article on buying slot cars through ebay it was advised that you stick to the UK site www.ebay.co.uk. While this is sensible when starting out, or if you wish to take a conservative approach, it does restrict you in terms of the range of items available to you. For some items, you just have to look further afield. While this can require more effort and cost, with a little care it may help you to find those elusive items that just don't come up on the UK site.

If the editor continues to indulge my ramblings, I'll say something about what is out there in a later article. Firstly though, it is important to understand the implications of venturing further afield, most of which come down to money. There are a number of pitfalls to be aware of which can raise the cost considerably beyond what you expected. It is not unusual for your \$50 winning bid to cost you £50 or more by the time you get your hands on your new possession. Unless you've thought through all the costs before placing your bid, it may no longer seem like such a bargain.

Shipping & Insurance

It is not cheap to ship stuff long distances, some professional traders will insist on using UPS while others have never sent anything abroad before and need a bit of coaxing to get them down to the Post Office. Try and negotiate the shipping method that suits you, but be prepared to accept what the seller dictates, especially if it was in the auction conditions. The postage alone is not the only issue, some sellers insist on insurance, while you may want this anyway, it does add to the cost. Consider whether you have any insurance cover from elsewhere, e.g. your household policy, or through your credit card if using that for payment. If you've bought a set, consider asking the seller to throw away the standard track pieces and the transformer, it's probably cheaper to source replacements here than to pay transoceanic shipping costs.

Paying for your Purchase

One simple precaution wherever you're buying from, check that the email address of the person asking you for money is the same as that listed for the seller. If not, request confirmation via the original email address given on ebay.

When buying abroad it is almost impossible to avoid additional costs in getting payment to the seller. The cheapest way is probably using your credit card directly; your card company will only rip you off a little bit when doing the conversion! There is obviously a security concern here, so if at all possible telephone your credit card details rather than emailing them. If you have to use email then split the details between two or more messages. But don't get too paranoid, you run a risk every time you use your credit card in the high street.

Many sellers are not professionals and cannot take credit cards. For the USA in particular, there are several alternative payment systems that are relatively simple to use. Ebay have their own system Billpoint, however this is pretty unpopular with sellers because of its payment structure. Far more common are PayPal (www.paypal.com) and Bid Pay (www.bidpay.com). PayPal requires both the seller and buyer to have accounts and setting up an account takes a month or so. It is probably best suited to those who will be making regular purchases. Bid Pay is simpler and more suited to the occasional user, though it probably works out dearer. You provide your credit card details and details of the transaction to Bid Pay and they send a Western Union money order to the seller. These are accepted almost like cash in the USA and I have yet to find anyone who won't accept them.

The third option is good old cash, either in sterling or in the auction currency. You will find that in many cases sellers in countries other than the USA will price the sale in US dollars but prefer to be paid in their local currency, which

may save you a small amount. International registered postage of cash will usually only cost you around £3.50. However beware, not all countries will accept this, the main example being the USA. For current details, get a leaflet from the Post Office, or if you're feeling really brave, try and navigate the labyrinth at www.royalmail.co.uk. If the seller is prepared to accept sterling, they'll probably load a hefty conversion charge on top. So you're probably better off doing the conversion yourself, perhaps stocking up if you plan a lot of deals with one country. Roll on the Euro!

The Sting in the Tail!

Having coughed up for postage, insurance, currency conversion and money transmission, you might think that you had more than paid your dues. However, you could still be in for a nasty little surprise when your package arrives. If you've bought from within the EU, you're OK, but if your little gem is coming from elsewhere you can find yourself paying import duty, VAT and a Post Office handling charge. If her indoors is asked by the postman to fork out for this little lot, expect your slippers to be on the fire, not by it, when you get home! Whether or not you get caught for all of this seems to be largely potluck. However, in my experience, the cheaper the shipping method, the more likely you are to be done. So UPS can actually work

out cheaper than surface mail (as well as six weeks quicker!)

Other Concerns

Apart from costs, other main concerns can be:

⊙ The language barrier - make sure you know exactly what you're buying, is it a boxed car, or just a box? If necessary use online translation facilities such as www.babelfish.com, this is also useful for negotiating payment & shipping.

⊙ Auction conditions - check the regions that the seller has specified that they will ship to and that they haven't specified hefty handling charges for shipping abroad. If in doubt, send them an email asking for clarification before bidding

⊙ Deadbeats - as with any form of trading, there are people who will fail to meet their obligations, through honest mistakes, stupidity, dishonesty, or just plain apathy. Push courteously, keep full records, in the US threatening a US Postal Service investigation can work wonders with "lost" letters or items. But again, don't be too paranoid, in around 100 ebay transactions, 50% abroad, I've had a few problems, but the only one that didn't have a happy ending (yet!) was with someone at the opposite end of England.

Next time I will say something about why you might want to put yourself through all this hassle! ■

BITS AND PIECES

Alfa Romeo mystery solved

I have received quite a lot of correspondence on the blue colour chosen for this car but Graham Smith (bless him!) has finally come up with the answer. The Scalextric model registration number FGC 409 is a replica of the car that finished second at Le Mans in 1935 at the hands of Frenchmen Helde and Stoffel and the colour is quite correct.

Charity fund raiser

To raise money for the Childrens Centre at Northwick Park hospital Eastcote Scalex club

ran a sponsored 12 hr endurance race at St George's Shopping Centre Harrow. Slot 32 ran their corporate track and raised nearly £1200.

Nic Picot

Something completely different

If you are visiting North Yorkshire have a look at Beech End Model Village which is built to 1/32nd scale. The road network is constructed of Scalextric track and the vehicles include such things as slot fire engines! It can be found in the town of Leyburn, Wensleydale and admission is just £1.80 for adults.

Ray Harper

"Motor Racing Circuits In England: Then And Now"

by Peter Swinger

This book has only been out a few weeks. It is very interesting as it sets out to show every circuit in England, even if it was only used once, or, in one case - Pebsham - was proposed but never used! It is so up to date that Rockingham is included.

The format is an alphabetical list complete with history and map, or maps (Silverstone has fifteen!) The majority have photographs, including aerial views; the Mallory and Snetterton ones are magnificent. Some programme covers are also included. A sad photographic omission is Oliver's Mount which has an unbroken history since 1946. Obviously some circuits only receive scant historical notes due to their short life, but the major circuits are



given extensive coverage.

While most of the circuits covered are well known, others are obscure and no doubt you will find some that you have never heard of before. That is why the book is so fascinating.

I do not normally recommend books but this one is well worth a look; if only to try building all the circuits with your Scalextric track! If you are really a glutton for punishment there is a wonderful view of a Spitfire on the startline at Snetterton - try turning that into a slot - er - plane.

The book is published by Dial House (a subsidiary of Ian Allan Publishing) - catalogue reference ISBN 0 7110 2796X. It is priced at £19.99. ■

Home Grand Prix

BY GRAHAM (NOT THE WHINGING ONE) SMITH

The letter from Paul Horner in the May Journal inspired me to write this article. Back in the mid 80s prior to children, a work colleague, Dave and I used to get together on a regular basis and stage home Grand Prix.

These would consist of taking over our lounge/diner; setting up a track for a week and inviting some friends round with their girlfriends and wives, after all we needed as many marshals as possible. The same would happen when his parents went away on holiday. The tracks were designed to take up the maximum amount of space. Sometimes they were four lanes, sometimes two, but they were BIG.

The format was fairly informal and would start with a few races, but the main idea was to race against the clock, against each other using both lanes with different cars. We would allow the competitors to familiarise themselves with the track (maximum 5 laps) and then it would be the best of three laps. Everyone was encouraged to take part. The timing was done using a sports stop watch, yes a little haphazard, but it made for some great competition and some good arguments. We would prepare time sheets and

then we would race anything from Minis to the SCX Bud Light Jaguars which, at the time, were one of the fastest cars around.

In the background we would have racing videos on the TV and suitable music to accompany the proceedings. We would always have food at these venues, usually a chilli washed down with beer and there were always plenty of toilets. Funny no baseball hats or flags.....

I remember on one occasion, Dave brought along a friend who said, "Can I bring some of my cars?" One of them was a white Auto Union in pristine condition; all it needed was some new braids which I fitted. We then managed some very respectable lap times with this great car which handled very well. Needless to say there was great good natured rivalry between Dave and myself and when he brought the SCX Silk Cut Jaguar and I just managed to pip him by a fraction of a second with his own car (well as accurate as you can get on a stopwatch being used by his brother) there was much discussion! I keep threatening to organise another one of these events some day. I wonder where that Auto Union is now ? ■

WHEELSPIN

FLY (A123) CHEVROLET CORVETTE C5-R REVIEWED BY PETER NOVANI

The touchstone of true greatness? Well, in the context of manufacturing slot-cars, surely the ability to innovate, rather than imitate. The Spanish, Fly Car Model company, have been successfully innovating almost since its inception just a few short years ago. So does the introduction of their much vaunted Chevrolet Corvette C5-R GT sports racer herald yet another advancement in the art of slot-car manufacturing?

Chevrolet racing heritage

Now this is something of a novelty for me as I wax lyrically about a contemporary race car, rather than the usual historic type. However, Chevrolet does have a racing pedigree worthy of a mention. The original V8 powered Corvette road car, which first appeared in 1953, was conceived by GM (who own the Chevrolet brand) as an alternative to the popular European marques sold in the USA. The success of the Corvette was largely attributable to the enthusiasm of GM designer, Zora Duntov, a Russian emigré and one time race car driver. Without question his dedication to the cause helped establish the Corvette as a mainstream American sports car icon, of which over 1.2 million have been sold.

Once Ford reneged on the 1957 gentleman's anti-racing agreement, which prohibited Chrysler, GM and Ford from participation in motor racing, GM reappraised their involvement in the sport. Of the major American conglomerates, GM were certainly the most vociferous advocate of motor racing. Indeed, Corvettes have had a long association with sports car racing dating back as far as an appearance at the 1960 Le Mans 24 Hours. However, following an eighth place finish that

year and a disappointing result in 1962, little was seen of the Corvette at Le Mans until 1967. In America, however, GM embarked on an official GT racing programme based loosely on the Corvette Sting Ray road car. The heavily modified Grand Sport GT was the fruits of their endeavours. A car that briefly raced against Shelby Cobras in the States during the early 60s. Unfortunately that car was not campaigned in Europe as was intended. GM pulled the plug on the project and subsequently withdrew from the sport. In truth they continued to surreptitiously support various racing projects in addition to supplying their ubiquitous V8 powerplant for teams competing in an assortment of race series.

During the 80s, GM returned to the fray with a lacklustre assault on the American IMSA sports/prototype car series. There they faced with the massed ranks of Porsche 962C race cars with their stylish Corvette GTP prototype. Between 1994-97, Callaway tuned Corvettes again raised awareness for the parent company. More recently GM have officially backed the Riley & Scott built Cadillac Northstar prototype project.

However, a works sanctioned assault on GT racing was instigated in 1999. Based on the latest incarnation of GM's 170 m.p.h. glassfibre bodied Chevrolet Corvette road car, the racing C5-R was run under the auspices of the Pratt & Miller racing outfit. It made its official debut at the 1999 Daytona 24 hours endurance race in Florida. Although it was extremely light, the underpowered 5.6-litre V8 engine hindered performance. Inevitably, it struggled against the established might of arch-rivals Chrysler and their venomous 8.0-litre V10 Dodge Viper GTS-R racer, of which the most competitive were those run by the formidable ORECA team based in Europe.

⇒

The slot car

Now boasting an uprated 7.0-litre powerplant, a Corvette C5-R came within 30 seconds of beating its nemesis, the ORECA Viper, for outright honours at the 2000 Daytona 24 Hours. However, the balance was redressed in the following year when a C5-R won the event outright. Both GT victories were unexpected and due largely to the high attrition rate amongst the leading prototype contenders. The GM team capped that historic achievement with a class winning 1-2 at the recent 2001 Le Mans 24 Hours.

Reviewed here is Fly's inaugural Corvette offering based on the victorious Daytona winner. Driven by O'Connell, Freon, Kneivel and Fellows, this relatively unadorned yellow #2 version had discreet sponsor logos bearing allegiance to Goodwrench (GM's car repair services) and other affiliated companies. If, like me, you appreciate fine detailing then the C5-R will not disappoint. On looks alone, it suggests to you that it is nothing more or less than a precision static miniature bound for the display cabinet, rather than a ready-to-race slot-car. Yes, it's that damn good. Having extricated myself from the hugely expensive and often time consuming hobby of building and collecting precision 1/43rd scale resin/white metal models. A hobby, incidentally, that at times could have you on the phone to the Samaritans! Confronted with the C5-R a sense of *déjà vu* prevails as many details are reminiscent of my former hobby.

However, it's not the Samaritans that I might want to phone on this occasion. More likely my friendly bank manager, as this little beauty costs a cool £32.95 (RRP) – and it makes no claims to be a special boxed limited edition. But if perfection is of importance, then you and I will simply have to pay more for the privilege. And that is exactly what owning this slot-car is – a privilege. So, what has brought about this latest bout of euphoria concerning a Fly slot-car? The trouble is, where do I begin. An abundance of intricate detailing not previously seen on any 'mass-produced' slot-car is a good

starting point, some of which is simply breathtaking. Amongst the many surprises to be found is a full roll cage with each support strut faithfully replicated. Then there is the red wiring leading to the cockpit fire extinguisher made of very fine wire for added realism. Moving to the rear of the car reveals another area where Fly deviate from conventional thinking. Viewed through the extremely large rear window, you cannot help but be impressed by the amount of thought given to seemingly insignificant details. Take the visible shroud covering the contrate gear assembly as an example. That has an authentic looking plastic bell-housing casing and suspension assembly. Much of which has been moulded directly onto the chassis rather than the bodywork. Here you will find the rear shock absorber/damper assembly (with individual springs) and parts of the race car chassis, roll cage support struts and ancillaries. To complete the effect Fly include the orange ducting that draws air from the roof vent.

Other notable features include the accurate off-centre roof mounted aerial, although the roof mounted communications transponder is missing. Then again the race car was devoid of that by the end of the race! Fly accurately mould the multitudinous hollow vents which dominate the bonnet. They have also thoughtfully disguised the yellow body posts with black tubes so that they cannot be seen through the vents. The correct yellow tinted convex shaped race headlight covers are further evidence of the subtleties incorporated within this slot-car masterpiece. In stark contrast to the impressive features already mentioned is the long-in-the-tooth driver figure. Surely that would benefit from an update. Giving the gloves a gloss finish doesn't help the effect either – aaargghh!

Although livery markings are all present, other errors are apparent. To be fair to Fly it's entirely possible that they based the car on an earlier alternative race version. Anyway, this race car did not have the red side marker lights on the rear flanks or the thin opening on the rear door pillars. The wiper should be directly in front of the driver and the car lacks a red arrow decal

and tow hook just under the front GrandAm logo. Orange coloured front indicator lights and the black moulding in front of the photo-etched air intake are also missing, as are the numerous silver coloured 'rivets' and twin black support bars on the rear window. Oh! And did I mention the absence of the two black NACA ducts on the rear tail section and the Corvette inscription on the central 'plate' covering the supplementary headlights?

Having an in-line front-engine and rear-wheel-drive configuration (as per the race car), necessitates the inclusion of front stub-axles. It also requires the motor pinion to be connected to the contrate gear by means of a long prop-shaft. All other underpinnings (except the new oblong magnet) are taken from Fly's well established range, although the redundant triple black plastic posts nestling on the chassis pan are a mystery – maybe that's something to do with Fly's proposed lighting system.

On track impressions

Owning such a slot-car does have its drawbacks. It was with some trepidation that I placed the exquisite C5-R onto my 35ft 'exhibition' track layout for a test session. Concerns as to whether the additional weight would adversely affect performance can be swiftly eliminated. Thankfully I can report that it is blessed with Fly's usual 'stonking' out-of-the-box racing credentials. Performance levels mirror those found on other Fly slot-cars.

And that's a relief as I had visions of it being an all-show-and-no-go type of slot-car. Pitted against a well used and sorted Marcos 600LM (A21), the obvious assumption would be that the marginally heavier C5-R might have its work cut out matching, let alone surpassing, one of Fly's best performing front-engined slot-cars. Yet much like its stablemate, the C5-R has the ability to negotiate corners without drama, except that you must glue the prop-shaft in place to avoid rendering the car motionless exiting a tight corner – as happened to my example. Couple that with a powerful motor which catapults the car out of corners with consummate ease and

you have an assured on-track performer. And just for the record, the unsorted C5-R set a fastest lap time of 4.1771 seconds and completed 20 laps in 1 minute 30.1006 seconds. That compares with the Marcos' 3.9791 seconds and 1 minute 26.1607seconds.

Conclusions

Two more C5-Rs have been announced. The 1999 black and silver #3 second place in class version, driven by Fellows and Kneifel in the Laguna Seca (ALMS) American Le Mans Series. Also expect a silver #12 'Campeonato de España' Spanish GT car (PA5) as part of Fly's new Páginas Amarillas range.

With the introduction of the Corvette, rumour has become fact. Fly are committed to offering detailing excellence in return for a correspondingly high RRP. That objective has been achieved with aplomb. And as someone who champions their cause, I shudder to think where Fly's quest for perfection is taking our hobby. Admittedly the C5-R is exactly what I want and now expect from a slot-car. Yes, it could be argued that most of the interior detailing isn't visible when racing – or crashing the C5-R! But that is missing the point. What you gain here is the satisfaction in knowing that you possess a car that has maximised the creative forces lurking within Fly Car Model.

Having satisfied my requirements with this new release, where does it leave the enthusiast who is less interested in the 'anorak' stuff and just wants to race the car? The C5-R may well be a complete anathema to those enthusiasts seeking a slot-car that is a reasonable representation, isn't collectable, doesn't cost a fortune to replace if it gets wrecked and, importantly, remains in production for a reasonable length of time. Factors that will encourage the cars to be used as intended, rather than kept in mint condition. Having had the opportunity to review this tour de force, courtesy of Pendle Slot Racing, I'm confident that the Corvette C5-R, represents another Fly inspired milestone in slot-car racing's evolutionary process. Cheers! ■

More memories

FROM TONY SECCHI

The demise of old friends is a sad thing and I am at an age now where this happens all too frequently. A few months ago I wrote a racing tribute to Bert Hyland, our club champion in the early sixties. Recently I heard that another friend and racer had passed on - doubly sad because it was an early death.

His name was Robert Dunne and his father was responsible for my enrolment and membership of my old slot car club. I had changed jobs in 1959 and met Robert's father at my new place of work. Although older, he was as enthusiastic about real and model cars as I was and as we got to know each other, he told me about the club in Hornsey where his son raced.

He was a keen static model maker and also made and assembled the slot cars that Richard raced. It was from him that I got my first insight into the ways of our sport. He and Robert invited me to the club one evening as a spectator and later let me try a car. Naturally, I came out at the first bend - a pattern that I subsequently repeated for many painful weeks after I joined. He and Robert were very helpful and patient as slowly but surely, I took my first faltering steps into slot car racing. Within a few weeks I was constructing my own cars which, like my technique, were absolute rubbish.

Robert himself was a fair racer and his cars were always beautifully turned out if not always fast and reliable. Generally, if they stayed in and ran well they won, but if not..... This fact bears keeping in mind in the ensuing tale so if you are sitting comfortably I will begin.

When I joined the club in the early sixties, we had just over thirty members and as he was to be for the next five years, the late, lamented Bert Hyland was our overall club champion. I have in past articles described the set up and race organisation of the club so I will not repeat it here, but outside of the structured events we had

other 'one off' races in which we competed. In my first year of competition, we had what was loosely called a 'World Championship'. This consisted of two semi-finals and a final. In each of the semi-finals, sixteen competitors raced each other in groups of four with the top eight going into the final.

With this system, you had five races against three fellow competitors, with three points for first, two for second and one for third. Therefore, the maximum score you could get was fifteen. The top eight scorers from both semi-finals went into the final where the system was repeated.

I was in the first semi-final and promptly failed to qualify, the few points that I acquired being mainly by the virtue of my fellow racers' deslots. As I said before both my cars and I were rubbish.

Bert however, was in scintillating form, winning each of his five races by big margins to go into the final unbeaten; the only member to do so. Robert, who was in the second semi and so avoided Bert, was also in excellent form with a car that seemed to be getting better and better as he raced it. He had a 'moment' in his first race but won the other four so that he qualified well.

As they say, excitement was at fever pitch for the final, due to the fact that not only would the winner receive the 'World Championship' trophy and the accolade of his fellows but a cash prize as well!

The track was tested and the cars checked and scrutinised before the final began. Bert Hyland was the obvious favourite; club champion, unbeaten to the final, fastest car etc. This was endorsed by Bert as he won his first three races convincingly. In his fourth race he came up against Robert who had also won his first three and was on fire. By pure coincidence, they were in adjacent lanes and they both made good starts, Bert a tad cautious but Robert flat out. After the first left hander they shot up the slope to our famous banked curve and flew

round this together with Bert a nose in front. They came down the fast straight over the tunnel and headed for the series of sharp left and right turns that were the chicane. Robert was inside Bert and still about a nose down. The fast direction changes needed for this section meant that the cars could 'yaw' dramatically from side to side as each bend was taken. On the last exit curve Robert's car overdid this slightly leaning hard onto Bert and pushing him off. Robert went on to win the race scoring three more points. Bert of course scored none.

Apologies all round naturally but Robert knew that he had it made and raced safety first to finish second in his last race - a total of fourteen points and the 'World Championship' The running gear on Bert's car had been damaged and he could not start his final race. His total of nine points put him back in about

sixth place. It was the only trophy that he did not win that season.

Robert and his Father were elated, naturally, and, because of our friendship, I shared in their joy. Within our normal categories of racing Robert never had the consistent speed to win any other championships, but due to his Father's preparation and his inspired driving I am sure that their combined efforts on that evening more than made up for that.

His Father lived to a ripe old age and passed on prior to Robert by a couple of months. I heard the news of both deaths at the same time and was very upset, but then going over past times with them in my head, the memory of their success, elation and happiness that night when they won both Driver's and Constructor's 'World Championship' brought a smile to my face. ■



Once again the mole triad are the last to bring you the newest news. Information has come in from a Mediterranean cousin residing in the land of sièsta and paella about some more limited editions from those nice ProSlot people.

What makes one of the cars so interesting from Mole's point of view, apart from its nice yellow colour, is that it was commissioned by one of our better known political parties, the MRLP. Any political party that has a cat as leader, wants to know why there is only one Monopolies Commission and has "Vote For Insanity, You Know It Makes Sense!" as its party slogan deserves our support. But what intrigues Mole is why 500 cars? Surely that means that each member (discounting the cat) has 10 cars, or maybe they are planning on giving them away at the next election instead of kissing babies on the head. That policy might already be paying dividends as the BBC held a mock election (aren't they all?) with school children, and The Monster Raving Looney Party took Bristol North West, Ruislip Northwood, Suffolk Central & Ipswich North and Wokingham. Maybe the Labour Party will commission a slot battle bus in 2006.

Enough digressing, back to the car. It has tampo printed on the spoiler 'Limited Edition Run of 500 Total'; on the sun visor the campaign slogan "Vote For Insanity" and on the bonnet it has the Monster Raving Looney Logo - Union Jack and Lord Sutch's Top Hat and Rosette. But it is the choice of car that will have that thoroughly British ex-leader squirming in his grave - a Porsche!! What is wrong with a wholesome British car such as a Jaguar or Bentley?

If you want one for your collection (and who wouldn't) I suggest that you contact the cat at <http://www.omrlp.com/> or drop Mole a line as he might just know where there are a few waiting for a new owner.

The next bit of news is from a place much nearer home. The Littlewoods/Index chain have an exclusive Scalextric twin-pack featuring

a pair of red and black BMW 318i's. They feature a large BMW logo on the bonnet with the greyed out flag logo on the roof and boot with running numbers 4 and 5. The pack sells for £32.99. They also have a four lane F1 set packed in an 'exclusive Scalextric storage container' for £159.99. For those who collect different Scalextric items this is certainly different, but is it worth £160?

For those of you who have smaller wallets there is a 2 lane figure of eight set with, according to the catalogue, a Mercedes C class and Opel Calibra cars, but which look to Mole very much like a silver and black Vauxhall Vectra. The interesting thing about this set is it has different run-off areas to that which Mole has seen previously. These are painted to represent gravel traps, but do they shed little bits everywhere when someone goes off? I think we should be told. It comes in a - wait for it - 'exclusive holdall bag with the Scalextric logo printed on one side'; yours for just £60.

More from the land of paella and sièsta. The new Chevrolet Corvette C5R Daytona 2001 from Fly has taken detailing to a new level with lots of air pipes, suspension detail and even a 'transaxle' unit. As it is a front engined car Mole cannot help but think that maybe the casing is there to stop the drive shaft from popping out. Surely not.

The last item this month is another Limited Edition car from Monarch Lines. This time it is a Porsche GT3. The 1057 Prestat Limited Edition car is the first slot car that has ever had the Royal Warrant Printed on it the car - it was commissioned by the Royal Chocolatier (Prestat) to commemorate their 100th Anniversary and the Queen Mother's 100th birthday. As to whether there will ever be another car with the Royal Warrant remains to be seen. If your dealer has not got one, you could try Prestat or else you could try sending Mole a box of chocolates (Prestat of course) and he may be able to help. ■

Jim Pover Memorial Races 2001

BY BOB BOTT

Sunday the 19th of August saw the annual running of this open meeting for 2wd and 4wd Saloon and Sports/GT cars. The basic format for this meeting has remained the same since the early days of the Quorn club, when Jim secured sponsorship from his employers and it was known as the Racial Sports/Saloon Open.

The classes were for either gear or band driven standard four wheel drive cars, and two wheel drive cars that could use any of the currently available motors, providing they could be fitted to the car without cutting from or adding to the chassis or motor mount.

As seems to be normal for open meetings, no matter how many entry forms you hand/send out, with the message “feel free to copy it if you haven’t got enough”, the Friday before the event arrives and you start to panic because you only have five forms entering eight drivers! Sure you have had ‘phone calls saying we are coming, might be three or it might be six, but it does make the Sunday morning very hectic because you cannot prepare things. Sunday the 19th was no exception when thirty three drivers entered the 4 w/d class and thirty four the 2 w/d.

Regular visitors

There were the “regular” visitors to the Quorn open meetings, Don Stanley from London, the Picknells from Devon, Phil Field from the English side of the Welsh borders and Paul Darby with his son Chris from the Birmingham area. It was especially good to see Steve Carter up from London, making one of his all too few trips these days.

What I found very heartening was the number of “new faces” that came along, many

of them sampling an open meeting for the first time. If only I had known there would be eight “juniors” I would have put on more trophies for them, but it is pointless putting lots of trophies on only to get two entries.

After giving the visitors lots of practice, the six entrants from the “home club” had five minutes to make sure their cars were working, the meeting got under way at eleven o’clock with the first of thirty three heats for the 4 w/d class. Each heat was over 10 laps, with a 6 5 4 3 2 1 points scoring system.

Time was against us

Lunch break followed the last of the 4 wd heat and racing recommenced with the first of the 2 wd class. Unfortunately, with so many heats to run, time was against us and the quarter finals I had hoped to run had to be forgone, so that the guys with two to three hour journeys home, could at least stand a chance of arriving before “her indoors” locked the door.

So the top twelve points scorers from each class went into two semi finals and the first three in each semi into the final. The semi finals were raced over 25 laps and the finals over 30 laps.

Throughout the day all races had been hotly contested and the semis and finals were no exception. All in all an excellent day’s racing without any upsets, which I believe everyone enjoyed to the full. In fact the only problem came at the end of the 4wd class, when yours truly pressed the wrong button on the computer causing the race to be manually started and counted.

To the credit of the drivers concerned, each one waited for the word GO and the start was as clean as any that were “on the lights”.

A35 from a box of junk

BY DAVE YERBURY

Some months ago (whilst lurking in the shed hiding from the rain awaiting our annual 2 weeks of summer sunshine), I dipped into a box to find a lump of wood. This was a complete mystery to me; from whence it came I know not. It was a half-finished A35. The sun was now out so I hurried to finish the job. When I was happy with the result I vac-formed a few bodies off the mould. Owing to its shape it can be difficult to get the body shell off the mould - success rate about 70%.

I managed to shorten a Scalextric Metro chassis to fit the body. I used Metro Wheels with the boss cut off and they just fit inside. I would have used the larger C7 Mini wheels but I can't remember where I put them for safe keeping. Then I painted it light blue and put on the only number to hand an MRRC 2.

A couple of weeks ago my brother sent me a page from the Internet site Lledo die cast models Collectiques advertising Graham Hill's famous 69 PMT Rally Car. Graham exceeded all expectations in this car gaining great success far and wide across Europe whilst it continued

to be his every day form of transport.

On the circuit the engine to have was the BMC "A" Series as used in the A35, A40, and Minor. Although they looked standard these cars were highly modified. Fitted with twin carbs, raised compression ratios, gas flowed heads, special cam shafts and valve gear.

Suspension mods. included anti-roll bars, special springs, shock absorbers and radius arms to provide positive rear axle rotation. The A35 also had independent rear suspension. With all this extra power and road holding, brakes were improved by special drum linings or a change to discs.

With all these mods the A35s were often giant killers getting amongst the 3.8 Jags and the Zephyrs. To measure this performance in August 1960 they were lapping the Brands Hatch Indy circuit only .2 of a second behind Graham Hill's outright saloon record.

Having set up Speedwell Performance Conversion in Oct. 1959 Graham Hill was capable of beating a whole field of larger capacity cars on a few occasions. ■

