



No.244 JULY 2002

BY SUBSCRIPTION ONLY

© NSCC 2002

Contents

Diary Dates.....	3
Swapmeets.....	4
Factory Focus.....	7
Members Moments.....	8
NSCC Weekend.....	9
Westcountry Rambles.....	10
Cooper F1 Guide.....	12
Scalextric Camaro.....	15
Bits And Pieces.....	16
Racing Numbers.....	17
Letters.....	18
Mole.....	21
Bluffers Guide.....	22
Rob's History.....	27
Black Stuff.....	29
Ninco Review.....	30
Another One.....	32
And Another One.....	34
D.I.V.O.R.C.E.....	37
Slot Classic Aston.....	39
Members Ads.....	41

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

Dr. Alan Slade
The Old Schoolhouse
Bridgfoot
Strathmartine
Angus
Scotland
DD3 0PH

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

The NSCC

www.nsccl.co.uk

The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

"The best catch there is"

A spokesman (spokesperson?) for Chelmsford Borough Council recently stated that certain roads are not lit "because they are rural roads". When asked how a road gets the 'rural' classification he replied "a road gets the rural classification because it is not lit".

No, I didn't make that up - the council is serious! There is a parallel in slot-racing; why do the lights go dim when a car goes round a bend? Because the car is travelling slowly. Why is the car going slowly? Because the driver can't see where he is going!

Scalextric made an attempt to address the problem with the Permalite system a few years ago but it didn't last very long; does anyone know why? Perhaps they would care to look at it again; I'm sure the real Le Mans drivers would be a little perturbed if their lights went out at the end of the Mulsanne straight. Perhaps that's how the 'Finish Line' Fly car got its battle damage!

Mind you, after my failure to notice the removable nose cones on the current F1 cars, someone is bound to inform me that the latest sports cars not only have permanent lighting but adjustable headlights, side mounted lights over the racing numbers, windscreen demisters and probably a CD changer in the boot!

I tried to give up this job recently on the grounds that I was crazy to spend so much time compiling the Journal. The committee agreed that I had to be a loony to do it; all I had to do was resign on the grounds that I was crazy. Trouble was, the minute I said I wanted to quit because I was crazy it proved I was sane and I had to keep on doing it. The chairman threatened to increase the number of missions as well. That's some catch that Catch 22.....

And Finally - I have almost managed to catch up with the backlog of articles (unless, of course, you know different) so next month's issue is in need of some contributions. The prize car incentive has returned so don't be shy; send in an article, letter or snippet of information and see your name in lights.

Till next month
Brian

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

FACTORY FOCUS



World Cup 2002

The excellent Camaro and Mustang muscle cars are now (end of June) in the shops nationwide and, probably, worldwide. So, if you're not into football, you can enjoy the excellent performance of these two cars. If you know the English goalkeeper, invite him round for a race. Even the most club-fisted of us would win as the point of racing little cars backwards and forth would probably go straight over his head!

Also released this month is the Mitsubishi Lancer, another superb rally car to match the Impreza Subaru.

Home matches

There are more new cars to track down from those hard to find stores around the country. Currently available through Index shops are two TVR cars:

C2395 TVR Speed 12, 'Mobil'. No. 4. Colour: red.

C2396 TVR Speed 12, 'Valvoline', No. 3. Colour: white.

Both are type 2, bored out exhaust pipes.



World Cup 1966

At some point in the mid-sixties it is possible that the factory produced a Race Tuned version of an Alfa Romeo 8C. As most enthusiasts know, whilst several raced tuned cars were produced in

the mid 60s, the Alfa wasn't one of them. The car was in a blue/white chequered box with an end label of C90 Alfa Romeo! The car itself had different detailing to the standard issue car.

This is an unverified find and more information has been requested. It's worthy of a note here in case anyone else might have evidence to send in of similar finds. I'll bring more information as it unfolds.

Forward fixtures

The MG Lola and GT40 sports cars are on schedule for release in the Autumn, so too is the F1 Toyota car. ■

Westcountry rambles

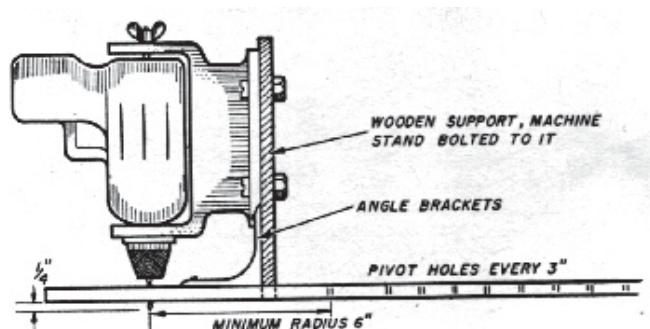
BY VINE FENNEL

If everything goes to plan the rambles won't be so much rambles any more but more like imparting information from the past. Fellow club member, Dave Stevens has kindly loaned me a load of old modelling magazines and I will be gleaning lots of hopefully interesting snippets from the earlier days of our hobby.

As mentioned last month in response to an item in Mole's column regarding metal VIP track here follows an item about track building.

"Something really new in the way of track construction and especially wiring comes from the Bolton M.R.C.R., with details of their 70ft lap track which utilises quite a revolutionary system. The club does not claim to be the first to use this method but do claim to have developed it a really snag-free set up.

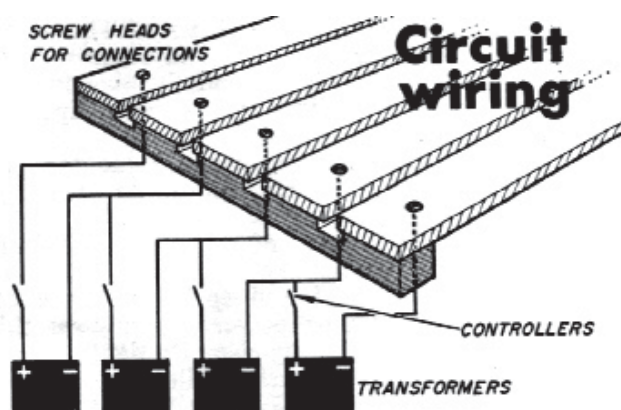
The track is constructed of hardboard (smooth side up) fixed to 7/8in sq. battens every 9in. The hardboard must be glued and screwed (or nailed) to the 7/8in sq. battens which should be notched at 3in centres where a slot is crossed. Ensure that the battens are at the very ends of each section, otherwise the ends will curl when sprayed. To make the electrical contacts, countersunk holes should be bored at each end of every strip and a bolt glued in with Araldite and finally secured by a nut. The metal spray will now cover the head which should be flush with the surface and complete the electrical connection. The straights are easily made up with 3in strips of hardboard carefully spaced 1/8in. apart. To cut slots for the curves a 1/8in. router was used in a 1/4in. electric drilling machine.



The jig was built as per diagram and with the radius arm drilled every 3in., it was a simple operation to drive a nail into the hardboard as a pivot and swing the cutter round this at 3in. intervals. These pieces are better cut before fastening to the battens as there is a risk of breaking the cutter when it reaches them. The complete track is hot zinc sprayed overall, i.e., the entire upper surface of track is covered with metal spray. Convenient sized sections of track are assembled for transporting before spraying and thick string is wrapped round the battens where exposed beneath the slot to prevent the spray bridging across. It is best to try a test panel with your local metal sprayers to make sure that they spray 'clean' before the operation proper begins. 5-10 thou. overall is about average spray depth on the track surface with an extra 5 thou. along either side of the slot.

Care must be taken in transporting after spraying as the fine crust of metal flakes easily if twisted. After a quick rub down with emery cloth along the inner edges of the slot you are ready to commence connecting up.

The wiring couldn't be simpler. A separate transformer is used for each lane and the only precaution is the track must be fed every 6ft. By 'mixing' positive and negative current it is possible to electrify all the surface without having to reverse the polarity of the cars on adjacent tracks, and for those who don't believe it there's a wiring diagram to prove it!



There are many advantages to this method of “overall” spraying: no masking, no gouging, no strip sticking. As there are no strips, the appearance is improved and the colour is that of granite chippings. The texture is ideal for tyre grip without causing too much wear. Because the pick-ups can be spaced at any distance, governed only by the cars, the wear on the track is even and steering movement is easier to design as the brushes can be widely spaced and attached to the body. Without a doubt the most important asset is the cost; and that is extremely low. A complete four lane run, 9in. x 15in. can be sprayed for 1/6d.(!!) There are firms able to undertake hot zinc spraying in most big towns.

Bolton M.R.C.R. have been using their circuit for over two years now and haven't run into any trouble. Visitors have been so impressed with the faultlessness of the track that they started construction of similar circuits - which all goes to prove that this method is an electrifying success!”

This little gem was lifted from Model Maker Magazine dated August 1963. Next month be prepared for some more amazing items from the dim and distant past of slot racing.

To finish this month, here's the latest instalment of the Fly listing.

Chevrolet Corvette C5R

A121 Chevrolet Corvette C5R black/silver.

Goodwrench #3 Laguna Seca 1999.

A122 Chevrolet Corvette C5R yellow/white

Goodwrench #64 Le Mans 2000.

A123 Chevrolet Corvette C5R yellow.

Goodwrench #2 Dayton A24 2001.

A124 Chevrolet Corvette C5R yellow/black

Goodwrench #32 Texas ALMS 2000.

A124L Chevrolet Corvette C5R yellow/black

Goodwrench #32. As above/lights.

A125 Chevrolet Corvette C5R yellow/U.S. flag

Goodwrench #4 Petit LM 2001.

A125L Chevrolet Corvette C5R yellow/US flag

Goodwrench #4. As above/lights

Limited Edition

E121 Chevrolet Corvette C5R white Test Car

Mini Auto

Spanish GT Championship

PA5 Chevrolet Corvette C5R silver #12 ■

Guide to - Scalextric Cooper Climax T51

BY NEIL DUNHAM

The UK Scalextric Cooper is a funny animal. Although one of the first cars released by Triang it doesn't hold any real value, is not really fancied by many collectors and is very easy to get hold of. This from a car that was hugely successful in full size racing, winning Formula 1 World Championships with Jack Brabham in 1959 and 1960 as well as Constructors Championships in the same years (with help from the more slim-line T53 in 1960).

Our Cooper was issued in 1961 as part of the second wave of plastic cars. The initial version was issued with the RX motor, medium head driver with body, black six spoke wheels (or occasionally with the chrome spoked or yellow wheels) and loop braids. The body also included the standard nylon body clips for easy motor access. It was available both in sets and individually.

As was usual, the car was moulded in various shades of the 4 basic colours. Known colours of the type 1 car are: dark red, red, blue, light blue, green, lemon yellow and standard yellow. None of these cars are particularly hard to obtain, the dark red being the hardest.

During 1961 the tooling was changed slightly to add a small ridge/bump to the nearside rear, just in front of the back wheel. The modification was designed to give the motor brushes more room to do their work. Oddly, in later years modified versions of the real car showed an almost identical ridge! The altered car was available in the 4 standard colours, this time with no discernible variations.

In 1962 the range-wide change from loop braid pick-ups to round pin guide took place. This was the only change necessary to the Cooper, unlike the first wave cars, which also changed from the big head driver to the medium head. Again, the Coopers were available in the four basic colours.

In 1966 Scalextric introduced the Race Tuned range of 'club racing' cars. The Cooper was updated again for this release and given the standard race tuning features: Tuned motor, soft compound tyres, swivel guide, RT stripes etc. The car was also given a new reference, C88. This car was only available in red and as a separate boxed item.

Also during 1966 Scalextric produced what could be argued as their first limited edition, or at least the first one they released on purpose. A boxed set was produced for the Gamleys toy store chain. Included in the set with a standard Lotus 16 was a blue C58 Cooper with a swivel guide. I am not sure how rare these are, but I have seen more C95 Bugattis in my time.

Foreign Bodies!

It may or may not have been produced in the French factory; it is hard to tell as French cars often included the 'Made in England' mark on the base or none at all. The existence of a dark red car would seem to suggest that there is such a thing. Firm proof in the form of a box would help, so if anyone has got one let me know!

The Spanish excelled themselves with the Cooper. First came the C58 in 1965. This included the round pin and medium head. The cars can be identified by the chrome plated wheels, silver engine intakes and (the big give away!) 'Fabricada en Espania' on the base.

The type 1 car was available in the usual green, red, yellow and blue, but also in some funky shades of all four main colours including RAF blue and lemon yellow.

In 1969 the C38 swivel guide version was released. Other than the guide, new features included suspension arms round the wheels and, bizarrely, Aerofoil holes just behind the driver's head (that would make the Cooper a good six years ahead of its time!) It was available in all four main colours.



Now the fun bit. Apparently unable to choose between a round pin and a flag guide our Iberian friends decided to go with both with one version of the C58. Well that's not entirely true, the cars were issued with a round pin guide with the extra fitting for the swivel guide. The double guide cars are very rare and almost uniquely to Scalextric Coopers, command a high price if you can find one. Choose between the usual shades of green, blue, red and yellow. You shouldn't find a boxed one, because these were set only cars.

There is also a chance that there is such a thing as a Spanish loop braid Cooper. Again, please get in contact if you have got one.

Mexico, the home of sun, sea, sand and odd Scalextric also chipped in with this one. Based on the Spanish C38 it was moulded in many weird and wonderful colours including (ref. Roger Gillham's bible): red, blue, green, white, orange, yellow and silver. In addition some of the Mexican cars were issued with the late sixties style aerofoil. This differed slightly from the standard UK version as the support struts were slightly wider apart. Also, true to form, they were produced in varying shades (or as Phil Egart used to say, Friday afternoon specials).

Worth a note is the Cooper produced by the Lionel Corp. in the USA. One of these cars is pictured in 'Scalextric History and Passion' and labelled incorrectly as an American Scalextric car. This car was actually manufactured as part of Lionel's own slot car venture and without any Scalextric input (knowingly at least). The yellow car is relatively easy to find with red and blue quite difficult.

Recent additions

A Cooper was released recently as part of the

Coches Miticos (Mythical Cars) magazine reissue range. The weekly magazine included parts of the car over four issues. Taken from the C38 tooling the car is presented in factory sprayed black with a tampoed livery.

Also this year, ReproTec have released a new version of the Cooper. This appears to have been moulded from an existing Scalextric car (in a similar fashion to the Pink Kar Bugatti and Auto Union) and is available in the four main colours.

Looking at all variations of the Cooper there are over 50 different cars to collect. I've only got 9 so it's time I got going on the other 40+, bye for now!

Thanks to Phil Smith for information in general but particularly on the Spanish cars, and to Scale Models for info on ReproTec.

C58 - UK

Type 1: (Medium head, loop braids) red, dark red, blue, light blue, green, yellow, lemon yellow.

Type 2: (Medium head, loop braids, small bulge on rear right body) red, blue, green, yellow.

Type 3: (Medium head, round pin, small bulge on rear right body) red, blue, green, yellow.

Type 4: (Small head, flag guide, small bulge on rear right body) blue.

Spain

Type 1: (Round pin, silver engine intake etc.) red, blue, RAF blue, green, yellow, lemon yellow, green. Also different red and green.

Type 2: (Spanish head, round pin and flag guide) red, blue, green, yellow.

C38 - Spain

Type 1: (Swivel guide, silver engine intake etc.) red, blue, green, yellow.

Mexico

Type 1: (As above, known colours from Roger Gillham book) red, blue, green, white, orange, yellow and silver

C88 - UK

Type 1: (RT motor, flag guide, soft compound tyres) red.

Other

USA Lionel: (US pick-ups and tooling) yellow, orange, red, blue

ReproTec: red, blue, yellow, green.

Coches Miticos: black

Back to the 60s - Scalextric Chevrolet Camaro review

BY ADRIAN NORMAN

It's an unusual and brave step to go back in time and revive the things we loved 'way back when'. Scalextric have taken that step and produced two American muscle cars from the 1960s - the Ford Mustang and, the subject of this review, the Chevrolet Camaro. A nice choice of TransAm cars and, as you'll see when you buy one, they are an excellent static model to boot!

For such a plain car, in as far as the modest racing sponsorship and graphics of the 60s went, you'd be forgiven if you only paid it a fleeting but polite glance. Look at it in detail, though, and you'll see that the C2399 Chevrolet Camaro constitutes a further improvement to production techniques. Gone, are the days of mould 'witness lines', smudged ink printing and spray bleeding still suffered by some prominent slot-car manufacturers today! It's almost impossible for the layman to find any substandard work on the livery at all. The pin-striping is very nicely finished and, even more so, the chrome effect lining around the window and door frames which simply highlights the excellent standard that Scalextric continues to work to and improve upon.

Forty years on and thinner on top

Like the topmost part of this author's superstructure (OK, let's just say 'structure'!), things are getting a bit thin! The first thing to hit me,



like a cold winter breeze, is how thin the Camaro's roof is. Plastic cars made in the era of flower power would normally have quite a thick plastic roof necessary to provide a firm and safe body shell, but at the expense of scale precision. The relatively thick tops were a constraint of production techniques at the time. Today, however, progress allows for finer scale detail. With no door glass it is easy to look straight through the car and it is then that you'll notice the roof is wafer thin. This gives a very realistic scale thickness rarely seen on 'tin-tops' to date, even though the interior crystal plastic goes across the underside of the roof. A firm push with the thumbs on the roof tells you that the car body is still very strong though. At the front of the car there is an air splitter under the bumper. Again, it is very thin but also feels stronger than its looks would have you believe.

These boots were made for racing

The tyres fit neatly inside the wheel arches whilst the wheel hubs show off their precisely painted wheel nuts and front brake discs. They are driven by the standard Mabuchi S motor, mounted as a side-winder. The Camaro is available in standard race trim as well as Sport trim. Brass axle bearings and a turned steel axle being two major performance enhancements. Subjected to lengthy lap recording sessions it soon became apparent that the Camaro was as quick as the latest Williams and McLaren F1 cars from Scalextric. The F1 cars are currently the fastest all-round cars Scalextric produce, but already the Camaro matches them! More remarkable that the Camaro has a higher centre of gravity and larger body mass than the F1 cars.

The groovy, swinging sixties

Keeping the Camaro car in the slot groove is fun. The multiple magnet positions allow for →→

enough combinations to cause you to toss your 60s pre-digital era slide-rule in to touch. As a rule of thumb, a magnet at the front of the car allows the tail to swing out encouraging the driver to try power slides whilst exiting the corners without the fear of deslotting, while a magnet at the tail keeps the car firmly planted in the track slot for high speed racing. The treaded pattern tyres on the big yellow wheels grip very well for straight-line acceleration but slide on demand in the corners.

Hoods, bonnets, boots and trunks!

A sixties fashion nightmare? No, the sixties were said to be crazy but I'm not talking about clothes here so, don't worry, the full-length driver wears a standard white race suit! A bonnet is a hood, a boot a trunk and a tyre a boot! Call them what you will, the definition is clear enough on the car.

The boot has a chromed double filler cap and the front grill under the bonnet is etched metal and chrome bumpers (sorry, fenders!) complete the picture at the front and rear. The blue livery has a pleasingly deep feel to the colour when scrutinised closely with no dust particles or other blemishes on the bodywork.

Back to the future

So, not such a brave step after all but more of a calculated decision based upon the knowledge that there are many enthusiasts both young and old who will appreciate this car for the two things that it is - a model and a racing 'toy'. On the track it is going to perform better than many cars you may already have. The realism is so good that you can almost expect the doors to open and close; the bonnet to pop up and the car to move up and down on working suspension. Maybe in the not too distant future? ■

BITS AND PIECES

Prize cars return

The first complete car from Slot.It®, the Audi R8C, is due to arrive in mid July. Colette Clarke of Monarch Lines has generously donated three of them as article prizes so start writing now if you want a chance to win one - same rules as usual - editor's choice of best contribution each month. I should also have a review model available for one of the test team.

www.toymuseum.co.uk

If you haven't visited the excellent Cumberland Toy Museum yet, log on to the above website and sample a virtual tour.

It is run by NSCC member Rod Moore and is absolutely stuffed full of Scalextric items, not to mention thousands of other toys.

Hornby profits rise again

"Great news for model collectors as Hornby the famous model train maker, reported a 62% surge in annual pre tax profits to March 31st.

They rose to £3.7m, on turnover up 16% at £28.5m. The results came in ahead of analysts forecasts of £3.5m. CEO Frank Martin said there was a 'genuine resurgence in interest in hobby ranges amongst adult collectors and enthusiasts.'

Daily Telegraph - June 12th

Mr. Martin gets his picture in the Telegraph Business News so often I am beginning to wonder if he has something on the City Editor!

Bugatti on eBay

Got the odd £2850 to spare? That is how much you would have needed to buy the C70 Bugatti recently auctioned on eBay! It was virtually mint apart from some tarnishing of the chromework. As far as I can ascertain the buyer was not a member of the NSCC.

Surprisingly, a mint, yellow C71 Auto Union failed to reach its reserve with the bidding stuck at £300. I think I'll keep mine till the price goes up!

Racing Numbers..the story so far

BY RUSS GANNICOTT

For several years now, I have been manufacturing full size graphics and race numbers for cars, bikes and power boats, so it was an obvious step to take when I started making numbers for slot-cars. I don't claim my numbers to be exact copies of the originals, as they are computer cut vinyl, not printed, and are more 'generic' in nature. The interesting thing though (if anything can be interesting about such a boring subject) is what I've learnt along the way. Now, as I said, the numbers are for slot-cars generally, not just Scalextric and are ideal for scratch builders, but I did start off by using Scalextric styles as my reference point. This was rather more difficult than I expected, as when I started to examine the decals on the cars in my collection, I soon realised that there was no standardisation at all! So far, I have identified thirty seven different versions of adhesive number decals used by Scalextric alone! I can only guess that this was due to the factory subcontracting out to various printers, each who interpreted the brief their own way. OK, some of these variations are small, i.e.. matt or gloss, paper or vinyl sticker, but some are more obvious. There is a wide range of diameters of disc, and dozens of variations of type face. If this changed with the range of models, life would be simple, but often the variations are there on cars of the same type and period. There are eight different versions I've identified so far on the UOP and BRM P160 alone!!

Pointless information

So, where does all this pointless information take us? Well originality is more complex than I used to think for a start. Don't dismiss a car as being 'wrong' just because its numbers aren't the same as another in your collection. Don't assume that all 1960s cars have those upright thin numbers printed on paper and that race-tuned ones had

the ones with italic numbers, they don't! Lets face it, the factory didn't give a toss and neither should we, life's too short!

There are now some nice printed numbers available which fit the bill for replacements of the two most obvious styles of roundel, which are also suitably generic for most applications. If you want to get more specialist you can buy some of my numbers and discs and make your own up. The choice is yours, but I think it is also worth thinking about leaving the model 'naked' if it comes to you without numbers, as all of our reproductions are just an attempt at 'gilding the lily'.

Sorry I couldn't fill as much space on this subject as the superb drivers' head piece, but you must admit this is a lot more boring! ■



Dear Brian,

We'd like to be amongst those who thank and congratulate Mike Pack for yet another great swapmeet at Liphook.

Despite clashing with the England/Sweden match we were very pleased with both our sales and purchases and had a great day. It was the first NSCC swapmeet we'd taken our seven year old to since he's been old enough to appreciate it and it really blew his mind! We never expected to be coming home with a box full of Turtle vehicles, but he was so enthusiastic, we just gave him some money and let him get on with it. It was great to see him haggle over deals and then scour all the parts bins for tyres, guides, heads etc, which he duly found and fitted. In fact, he did so well, I think we'll let him do the deals for us next time!!

For those people who bought striping kits from us and asked why there weren't any yellow 'Lotus' stripes included, we've just cut some! So, if you still want them, give us a ring on 01202 418422 (day) and we'll post you some for the cost of a couple of stamps!

Anyway, thanks again for a great day Mike!

Russ, Ashley and Carole Gannicott

.....

Dear Members,

Just to let you know that the Bishop's Stortford Swapmeet (November 3rd) will be held at the Rhodes Centre again this year.

The planned alterations to the building have fallen through due to a lack of finance so it has not been necessary to move to an alternate venue. All the usual attractions will be present and, as it will be held the day after the giant Sandown Park Toy Fair, traders and overseas members should find it easier to attend both events.

Regards

Brian Walters.



Hi Brian,
Just a few lines about our events in the Isle Of Man.

Sadly the first event was cancelled due to a clash with another big event in TT week, but the R.N.L.I. Fun Day at Port Erin on June 9 went ahead. The weather forecast was not favourable, so a two lane track was erected inside using the Crew room instead. Everyone who attended had fun, and new interest was gained resulting in a set being brought for a twelve year old who is fed up with his PlayStation! There is still a future for slot-cars!

The track was twisty and challenging with a quickest lap of 7.3 seconds for the under 10 year old winner of Thomas Heny, aged 8, and a time of 7.2 for the over 10's winner, Kyle Kendall aged 11. Both winners picked a ProSlot Porsche as their prize. Thanks to Colette at Monarch Lines for the prizes. All proceeds went to the RNLI. There will be two more events in August (see Diary Dates)

Regards,
Tigger

.....

Dear Brian,
With the recent issue of the Scalextric Mustang, it reminded me of my activities some 15 years ago when I competed with the 6 litre version. The local newspaper did a feature on the car and my Scalextric collection and a clipping appeared in the Newsletter around the same time.

The Scalextric version is a very fine reproduction, albeit a 1969 model, whereas my real car was a 1970. Also the Scalextric version has a mere 302 cubic inch V8 but mine ran a 351. I bought my Mustang when I was 21, having had a Fairlane 500 for two years prior. I kept the car for some 13 years, seeing quite a bit of track action during the latter years. It was a real monster to drive with over 400 bhp on tap and handling like a demented pig, but superbly entertaining. It was also very loud.

As a spectator, I still enjoy my motor sport having attended Le Mans, British GP Santa Pod and both Goodwood events during the last 12 months. It is my intention to buy a Corvette in the not too distant future and perhaps return to the circuits.

I look forward to further Scalextric releases of this sort, which is on a par with Fly models. In particular, I would love to see a 1963 Ford Galaxie added to the line up.

Yours sincerely,
Nicholas Jackson



Forget model cars with fronts that fall off (intentionally or otherwise) it is now possible to buy cars with bits missing, What's new about that you ask?

Well, for a start the part(s) are supposed to be missing and the car comes in a super presentation box thus adding at least £10 to the price. You even get a little card telling where the part fell off and how. The first model in this new range from Fly (who else?) called Serie "Racing Finish" is FZ01 Porsche 917K "12 H. Sebring 1971".

Mole is surprised that there is only one car



in the box. Surely there must also be a "Racing Start" car? A car that you race for the prescribed number of laps as detailed on your little card, then you throw it into the wall or whatever, stagger back to the pits and emerge six laps later with your 'repaired' car.

Mole must admit that the detail is very good with 1:32nd scale tank tape and dust and dirt on the model. Presumably a complete tyre change was undertaken while the car was in the pits, as it has pristine wheels and tyres.

One wonders if the mould for the 917K has now been destroyed and all future versions will have part of one front wing missing, or is someone employed to 'modify' perfectly good shells.

Are we now expected to add broken cars to our collections? I can see a fortune being made at clubhouse doors every week as people try to sell off the results of a hard night's racing.

But thinking logically about this, isn't every winning car driven to a 'Racing Finish' - not if your name is Michael Schumacher I suppose.

Will we soon also see another set of cars called Serie "Racing Non-Finish" with all sorts of bits missing? Mole can think of some classic non-finishes. The first one that comes to mind is a Mini Marcos that hit the bank just in front of Mole at Crystal Palace race track and ended up in four parts strewn over a 100 yard length of the track. Try putting that little lot in a box!

And then there was the Formula Vee that Mole was going to get his first (and as it turns out only) single seater racing experience with, that the owner parked on top of the grass bank exiting Druids, as it was then called, at Brands Hatch.

And then we could have the Serie "Rally Non-Finish", that should keep a manufacturer in business for the next 20 to 30 years producing blobs with varying numbers of round black things hanging off where the corners were. ■

The bluffer's guide to scenic modelling

Part two

BY MAX WINTER

With the track laid out and the basic scenery in place it is time to turn our attention to the finishing touches.

Bridges

Approaches, no problem; I'd remembered to keep a selection of those "Styrofoam" packing pieces that seem to come with every appliance and flat pack bit of furniture these days. I just cut 'em up to track width (don't forget the borders) and started stacking the bits till I got the right height depending how far along the approach and incline I'd got. Next I got out the PVA (Wood) glue to stick my stacks but not to the track or base. Support was provided at every track section joint along the approach and at the mid point on longer track sections like straights. Added a bit of banking and camber while I was at it. Memo to self, don't forget to raise the height

of your actual bridge to allow your favourite SCX (and now Fly) truck to pass underneath. Oops! Thankfully only a quick remake at this point.

Next some cardboard cut to fit the actual plan section of the track being fitted, including any borders. Same method as the Grassmat, I used the actual track but now with the borders kept in place where fitted, as a cutting pattern. Taped the bits of cardboard together to mimic the track as it would be laid and then placed them on top of the track supports.

This "card track" is used for two purposes, to act as one of the anchoring points for some leftover "Grassmat" cut to act as the "cladding" on the side of the bridge approaches and to trap lichen between it and the track to disguise the raised and exposed track edges. The pieces used for the cladding were cut to have enough excess





material, top and bottom, to allow it to be folded to provide its fixing points. At the bottom the edges of this cladding are nipped with scissors to allow for the curvature of the track and then pinned in place with some bayonet tacks. Likewise at the top the material was nipped again but the ends were taped down to the “card track” with the proper track now laid on top. All that was needed now was some more lichen at the base of the approaches and trapped between the track and the card to give it a finished look. To add to the effect on one section I used large bits of cork tree bark filled in with yet more lichen to make a rock outcrop.. I also sprinkled around some cork chippings in other areas to give a “rock fall” effect.

Little people

With all the track, buildings, lighting, power and scenery in place all that was needed was to bring it to life with all the cars and people you’d expect to be at a busy track. Over time I had acquired a large selection of little people to populate my track, mainly Scalextric, some pre-painted originals from the 60s and some more recent of the same make that needed painting.

All I will say is remember to prime anything that needs painting and when you sit down to do a bit of daubing do a load of figures at the same time and go through the lot applying one colour at a time. Why? When you get to the last one the first one you did is ready for you to apply the next colour to and the whole process becomes quite quick and painless. I’ve done some of the figures with their bases covered in flocking material in a hue to match the Grassmat they are placed on. Then it’s just a case of placing them around the circuit to best effect. I found it best to use a bit of double sided tape to secure seated figures in the grandstands, it’s the one place that gravity just doesn’t apply in sufficient quantity to do its stuff. Again it’s a pity I didn’t have available the range of figures that have now emerged, the MRRC/Monogram re-releases, SRA’s very creative offerings and the intriguing German Prieser figures that can be used to add some welcome originality.

It doesn’t hurt to have a look at some other branches of the model world, you’d be surprised what is available in a suitable scale from the military and railway bods. Like a marching band and policeman for instance, no proper ➔

circuit is complete without them.

Trackside vehicles

Apart from dropping in a suitable assortment of slot-cars into the paddock area with their attendant pit crews, tools, spare tyres and drivers there was the little matter of some vital working vehicles at the track. A trip down to Toys R Us fixed most of that problem. Britains still do a nice line in commercial and farm vehicles in the right scale. Tractors to pull out crashed cars from the scenery; a Quad bike doing deliveries in the pits; Land Rovers for the officials and favoured guests of the track owners and skip lorries to take away the rubbish that accumulates during the course of a meeting.

There are also specialist manufacturers out there, like the US First Gear make, who do a nice line in wreckers and other such necessary vehicles. Then there are those snap together kits that can be modified to provide moving track service vehicles to run round the track, like a track repair crew and their pick-up truck. Don't forget a police car and one for the clerk of the course to give the final inspection before a race. There are some old collectors models for that function but I have seen modern alternatives advertised in Scalextric's "house" magazine Racer. But there was still something missing, that vital bit of kit that no grand prix can be run without, a medical helicopter. Lucky me, I found out that Revell made a civilian one in the right scale, and not only that but also the smaller Hughes 500 that was just right for the flying camera crew.

Final touches

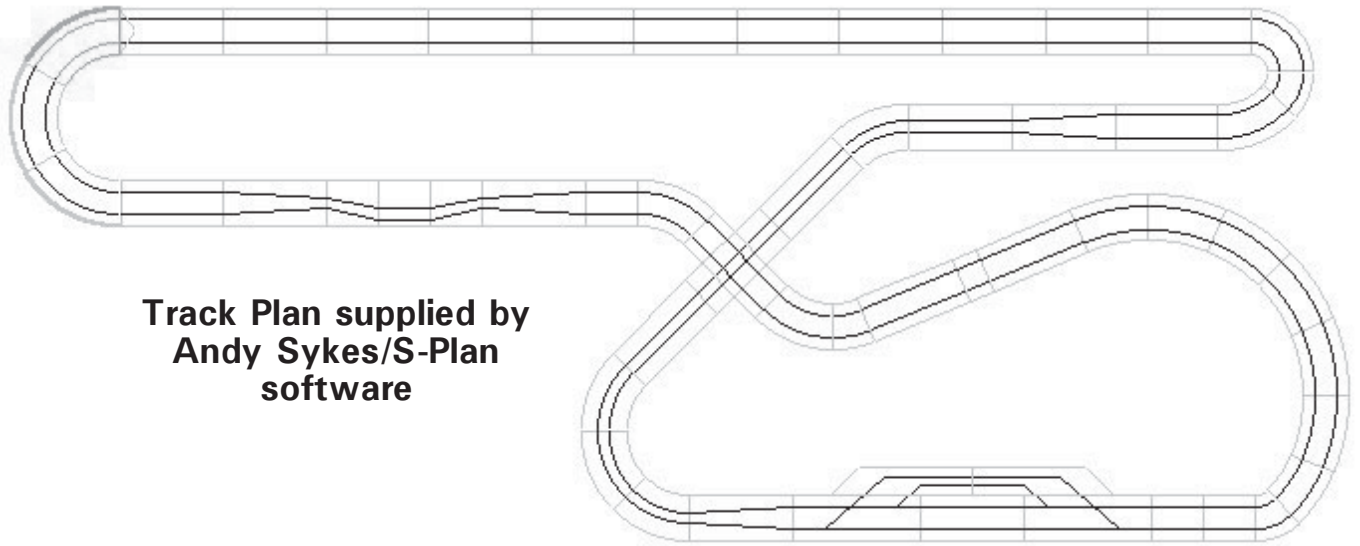
Apart from adding a few track direction signs, hay bales, oil drums, cones it's pretty much all done. There are a few little other touches I added. How about these: Advertising hoardings, just a bit of styrene plastic "H" section and plasticard sheet, a copy of an ad from a mag, double sided tape and some clear sticky back plastic to laminate with. Debris fencing - same again on the materials front plus a trip down the art shop for some fine expanded ally mesh. Box Girder pedestrian bridge - an old "OO/HO"

scale bridge from a model shop junk box and all the materials you just bought for the previous two items. Or how about a nice lake in the infield, there's some great stuff available to recreate a water effect, just fill it from the stream running under a hump back bridge track section. Problem is that bit of track section kept on punching the prop shafts out of my Fly Vipers. I couldn't resist an LGB cable car set I found, it's just the right scale and a bit different, Alpine circuit anyone? I nearly forgot, a lap counter and timer, I told you I wasn't too much into the competition bit.

The circuit has also got its own stereo sound system that as well as pumping out music also has a selection of CDs with a whole load of different real race car engine sounds. Anything from a Bug' T35 to a modern Ferrari V10. Yep, you can even get the right sounds going for the right car on the track. And when it's all lit up at night with no other lights on in the room with a couple of cars zipping around, their headlamps ablaze, to the sound of the "Mulsanne" CD mix it's just magic. Everything this little kid always wanted.

Despite the move the track is very much as it started out, one makes the inevitable tweaks as one goes along. The only major change is the fact that the 180° turn at the end of the main straight can be either "flat" or one of Scalextric's steeply banked numbers. The switch over takes less than five minutes and you can't tell which one is the "right one" as both options blend in perfectly. Both track "units" are kept assembled in their entirety, boarders, barriers and any supports in place. The only mods to the original banked track was the fitting of four fixed supports to its rear to get rid of any flexing. These were adapted from some old sixties Scalextric banking trusses. After one near mishap the gap between the top of the banking and the adjacent wall was filled with a couple of cunningly disguised old pillows. These last items stop any wayward cars from being crunched if they decide to go over the top.

There you have it, the bluffers guide to scenic modelling. By the way this layout can be torn down and packed away in 4 hours, with no



**Track Plan supplied by
Andy Sykes/S-Plan
software**

waste of valuable materials. And it only takes 8 hours to re-erect, I know, I've done it. It's also very easy to lift out and replace individual items or for its annual spring clean. For maximum space utilisation it's set at a height that allows all those standard size removal storage boxes to be placed underneath. The front edges of the bases have their support legs set back enough to allow some purpose built display cabinets to be placed flush to the front, under the layout. While it's not exactly portable its construction method does allow one to enjoy this aspect of the hobby while having to deal with the somewhat transient lifestyles some of us have to put up with these days. Now let me see, I have all these bits of track, Flying leap, Blow out, Hill-climb returns, High hump bridge and a few buildings left over and this new place has got a floorboarded loft and I always wanted the ultimate rally circuit. Hmm

Useful contacts

Below are the contacts to assist those who might like to have a go at making their own layout. All have well established mail order facilities and are probably the best known and respected in their individual fields.

MRE, as well as slot cars this shop is also in the model railway business and keep a wide range of basic scenic materials in stock - Grassmat, Gravelmat, lichen, clumping and flocking scatter material, cork tree bark, ballast (gravel), water effects, scenic backdrops and smaller trees. You

name it they've got it. They can also obtain the large trees to order and even the LGB cable car set up. See their ad's in the journal for contact details.

SRA, offer an excellent contemporary range of resin trackside buildings, trees and white metal figures. Their products can be found listed at most of the retailers advertising in this journal.

Hobby's, principally a supplier to the dolls-house, boat building and woodworking enthusiast, they carry quite a number of useful items. These include the wiring system that is used for the lighting set up, petrol pumps in the right scale, plastic and wood materials for scratchbuilding and some interesting kits for buildings and other stuff that would enhance a layout. Anyone for a dockside layout! Tel 020-8761-4244

The Model Shop (not the one in Harrow), specialists in architectural model supplies, they carry a wide variety of scenic materials and plastic and plaster scratchbuilding items. This is where you can get the "mesh" for debris fencing and even brick walls and windows for making your own buildings out of in 1/32nd scale. They also do a nice line in photo etched trees, would you believe. Tel 020-7253-1996

Hannants, probably the biggest model aircraft supplier in the country. If you really want a Helicopter these are the people who will have =>

it, and if it's no longer available they can point you in the right direction to one of the many obsolete kit suppliers who might be able to help you. They also carry a wide range of paints and finishes that have an application for model car building. Tel 01502-517444

London Graphic Centre, as the name implies these are the people that you go to for anything to do with signage. Here you can get materials for making up and laminating the adverts on your hoardings and inks, pens, tape and films. But there is a lot more besides that can be useful to a modeller from this source, check them out. Tel. 020-7759-4500

Slot 32.de, This German slot car retailer carries the Preiser range of figures and lighting systems, well worth a look. Find them at www.slot32.de

Great North Roads, one from the military

modelling world, and at a similar scale of 1/35th. They do an amazing range of, mainly "ruined," buildings and structures in styles from all over the world. Or at least the parts we or the Germans took pot-shots at up until nearly 60 years ago. There are some very interesting items here, how about Middle Eastern shops and homes for that Casablanca GP circuit, just add some palm trees from The Model Shop and some Britains camels ! Tel. 0191-455-5724

Things like Scalextric/Carrera/SCX buildings and trackside accessories and the MRRC/Scalextric figures, including some of what is now collectors stuff, will be available through most of the retailers listed in the journal. Or you could try E-Bay for some the older items. Chuck in your local toy shop or Toy's Are Us and some specialist commercial vehicle retailers and the only limitation on how your layout turns out is your imagination. Go on, make those childhood dreams a reality, it's very therapeutic. ■

My history

BY ROB SMITH

It's funny how occasions in your childhood can have such a profound effect in later life. I'm sure that when my parents bought me a Scalextric set in the 60s they didn't anticipate that I would still be addicted now I'm past 40 in 2002.

I don't recall the exact year it appeared, and I don't think it was new then. There was no set, just a cardboard box of track and two boxed Formula Junior cars – a blue C66 Cooper and a red C73 Porsche. This probably worked to my advantage as there was far more track than an off-the-shelf Set 31 would give you – and my circuits had to use every bit available. I was allowed to set it up in the “front room” – normally an area where children were excluded except for “best”. This stretching of the normal rules was probably to prevent my hated little sister from trampling all over it – by accident or design depending on her mood – and the exclusion zone was vigorously policed.

I vividly remember the 1968 Catalogue and pouring over the colour centre spread of mouthwatering cars, planning which one to buy next. Of course, it didn't happen – Scalextric was always an expensive toy and new cars were far beyond my pocket money, but “one day, one day”, I promised myself – especially those gorgeous Minis with the spotlight on top. So my little Formula Juniors tore round my tortuous circuits for lap after lap, month after month, usually against the clock but sometimes against Dad. It was one cold winter's weekend that Dad and I were setting up a layout that we decided we needed some more track. After a moment's consideration he told me to hang on and disappeared upstairs. After much banging, crashing and cursing that always accompanied an ascent into the loft – he reappeared with a huge box of track. I recall this had been bought from a colleague at work and was planned as my birthday present – but that was weeks away and he couldn't wait, never mind me. Now the front room could be totally covered and the

Nurburgring was a short track in comparison to my creations. A couple more Formula Juniors had appeared too from somewhere – possibly from an older cousin who was a member of a slot-car club.

My best friend also had a Scalextric set and a huge combined sitting and dining room and occasionally we would join forces to achieve a straight of gigantic proportions. He had a Mercedes 190 and Austin Healey but our main competition was between his powersledge cars and my Formula Juniors. My cars were faster in a straight line but his went round the corners when mine went into the skirting board! It must have been close enough as we had great fun and the event was regularly repeated. I keep finding bits of track and accessories marked by small pieces of Elastoplast used to distinguish between our two collections.

Homework (and girls) meant Scalextric took a lesser role during the later 70s but it never disappeared into the back of the loft and was occasionally revisited when the opportunity arose. By 1984 I was established in Surrey in a small rented flat and the Scalextric travelled south from Sheffield packed into my Frogeye Sprite to be reborn as after pub entertainment. The Formula Juniors were tired by now so something more modern was required. This turned out to be two UOP Shadows bought from the “For Sale” columns in the local paper. Horrid things, but they went well and didn't break even when drinking and driving didn't improve one's skills as much as expected. The local paper yielded a few other sets and the realisation of a dream began to take shape.

By 1988 I was married and that Christmas Lorraine foolishly asked me what I would like as a present that year. “Two Scalextric cars, please” I said. “Don't be ridiculous” was the reply but reluctantly she capitulated and a C429 RS200 and a C464 BMW M3 were collected from Beatties in Kingston, together with the latest catalogue – a bad mistake. Scalextric were ⇒

now in a different league from before and these cars really motored and handled well. My enthusiasm was rekindled. In 1990 I visited my first toy fair at Farnham Maltings accompanied by a friend with a passion for all things Alfa Romeo. Graham Perris sold me a black Mini Cooper with a spotlight on top for the princely sum of £45. Yes, I know this was far too much but I had achieved that long awaited ambition. At the same fair I met Steve De Havilland and I enquired about a club – where could I find more information about Scalextric? “Join the National Scalextric Collectors Club” was the reply, “give this chap Trevor Livingstone in Wales a ring. He will sort you out”.

So I joined the NSCC and visited my first swapmeet that summer in Milton Keynes. On entering the hall my jaw hit the floor. I had never seen so many Scalextric cars - or so many idiots buying them either - the place was packed. Where did one begin – well, with that centre spread from Catalogue 8.

1990 was also the end of long weekend lie-ins because I discovered that boot sales were THE place to buy old Scalextric without the need for another mortgage and so the habit for getting up at 06:00 every Saturday and Sunday began. In the early 90s I could buy more stuff than I could get in the car at every bootsale and it soon began to pile up around the house. I was implored to “Stop leaving that rubbish in the lounge” and a Picture Pride cabinet was put up in the hall to proudly display my 25 or so cars. “You are not going to get carried away with this, are you ? We can’t afford it,” I was asked one Sunday morning as I was perusing the finds. “Of course not,” I lied. And how I lied. One cabinet became two, then three and so on. Friends’ houses were ransacked, and colleagues were interrogated. Boot sales became an obsession because just like the lottery – your numbers will come up the week you don’t buy a ticket – I am sure I have missed my Bugatti on that cold wet Sunday morning when I couldn’t get out of bed.

In 1999 we moved house. Lorraine believed that we were moving to a better house in a nicer area but the real reason was to provide more

space for the collection. It now has its own room - the biggest in the house of course. Lorraine is very accommodating, or rather, she has given up complaining. She was even coerced into buying me a green C69 Ferrari as a 10th wedding anniversary present. I responded with jewellery - no comparison to my mind but she seemed pleased ! Hard drugs have nothing on the collecting habit so if you are just beginning - be warned! The purchasing volume has decreased but the expense has risen; I buy all the new cars from Hornby - none of these Fly & Ninco pretenders. I have over 1000 cars now and the missing ones are getting expensive. I desperately wanted the yellow DB4GT Mark Scale was offering recently but at over £1000 it is still too rich for me - without a second career in crime!

I find it harder and harder to find 60s cars without paying dealers’ prices and have had to resort to more and more inventive ways of finding that elusive Bugatti. Bootsales rarely yield anything at all any more. I won’t share all of my methods but many of my business meetings don’t begin with round the table introductions, but with questioning on the contents of the attendee’s lofts. It can be surprisingly fruitful, especially as I am lucky enough to travel around Europe on business most weeks. Even that little sister has proved useful in the end as she now lives in Barcelona - a great place for the Scalextric collector.

Highlights through the last 10 years include finding 3 pairs of Bond cars in as many weeks and finding an ex-employee of Hornby with a 35 strong collection of pre-production TR7s. I no longer run the cars and I have no interest whatsoever in racing clubs and the minutiae of tweaking cars for extra speed but my enthusiasm for collecting remains undiminished. 2002 promises to be an exciting year with many new cars from Hornby and who knows what limited editions to hear about and then try to obtain. Exciting new mechanisms for trading such as the Internet expand the opportunities and meeting fellow sufferers through the NSCC is always fun. Long may it continue. I blame my father for all this as he started it but he strenuously denies all responsibility! ■

Curse of the black stuff

BY ROY LEACH

I recently returned to my garage based circuit after a couple of days and, as usual, my cars failed to complete a lap before grinding to a halt.

On examination the braids were once again totally black where they had been in contact with the track; strands of black woolly type fibres also stuck out rearwards from the braids. With the aid of the usual stiff bristled brush and the ubiquitous WD40 the debris was soon cleared away and the cars returned to the fray.

The question is:- what causes the black stuff to develop in the first place? Is it due to the running current being DC, reaction between copper and tinplate or is it just because the current passes between two different contact materials?

Whatever the reason the build up of black stuff acts as an insulator between the track and braid and the cars won't go. Is there a solution or cure? It would appear not as this problem has

been evident since the inception of slot-car racing; it also affects two rail DC model railways.

For some years now the toy train fraternity have had a device called a Relco which helps alleviate the problem. It is an electronic device which connects between the controller and the track; it acts across the rail joiners and ensures continuity of current from one length of track to the next. This device is also 12v DC and I have often wondered if it could be adapted for our hobby. Has anybody tried it?

I have also had problems in the past with open circuits on the joints of my track but this was mainly due to rust and was easily cured; the curse of the black stuff is another matter altogether.

Still, all hobbies have their plus and minus points and slot-cars certainly have plenty of positive aspects to set against the odd problem. Perhaps I should run my cars constantly to avoid the curse! ■

NINCO *track test*

50260 Subaru WRC

50262 BMW V12 LMR

**50264 Austin Healey
Roadster**

Yet another large parcel arrived from the Hobby Co. this month - its like Christmas everyday in the editorial household at the moment!

This one contained five cars plus an NC4 motor; three are reviewed this month with two more Mercedes and the NC4 to follow in the August issue.

I must confess I was sorely tempted to keep one or two of them but managed to restrict myself to a few "parade" laps before sending them on to their respective reviewers. The more I see of the latest Ninco cars the more I like them - they may not have all the bells and whistles of Scalextric and FLY but they race well and are excellent value.

Incidentally, why have so few people (ten at the latest count) asked to join the review team? Doesn't anybody want a free car?

50260 Subaru WRC "MonteCarlo" 2002 Reviewed by Peter Hitchens

When given the opportunity to review one of the latest offerings from Ninco, the choice of which model was quite easy. I have had very few dealings with 4x4 slot cars and would be reluctant to gamble on buying one to find out how they perform. The club that I belong to has several club classes that have a car dedicated to each of the four lanes, one of these classes is run with SCX's focus WRC which is also 4x4. They have proved to be very close in competition and fun to drive, the only problem being that they are comfortably the slowest class that we run, have a habit of hopping around corners and due to weight and centre of gravity they roll without warning. So this was a good chance to see if a higher powered NC2 belt drive 4x4 would overcome some of these problems.

First Impressions.

Once the car had arrived first impressions were mixed, the detail and appearance of the model was excellent. I don't think that I would be exaggerating to say that the quality was to the same standards as Minichamps type models. From the small aerial on the roof to the vented discs behind those gold wheels it looked the part, this was emphasised by the DTM CLK also from Ninco which in comparison looks a bit basic. However detail has its problems and my fears were that with full interior, bucket seats, driver, co-driver, spare wheel and roll cage that it would be so top heavy that on a non-magnetic track it would spend most of the time on its roof, which amongst other things would mean the life expectancy of the roof aerial would be somewhere between 0 to 2 laps.

Testing, Testing.

Anyway the only way to know for sure is to give it a go! The track used is approximately 50 feet in length and slots together in four parts, it is of wooden construction with copper tape and hence does not provide cars with magnetic assistance.

Firstly I did something that I don't think that I have done before, I ran the car straight from the box with just a slight loosening of the body screws to allow some roll. The first time down the straight and two things were apparent, firstly it was very quiet with none of the normal whine from the NC2 and second the fact that I braked far too early for the corner. I was not used to being able to brake so late for corners with an NC2 powered car, it took a few laps to get used to but by then I was more worried about the car's behaviour on the exit of corners, it was acting as if it were the real thing and was spending most of its time sideways. It looked like

the 4 wheel drive system was fighting with the car and trying to spin it around 360° at every opportunity. After running the car in each of the four lanes for about 20 laps the average lap time was 5.168, this was rather disappointing as our saloon class record is in the 4.5s and my personal best with a DTM CLK is in the 4.6s (which is the car to have at the moment). Time for a bit of preparation! Firstly I trued the rear tyres, added some competition braids and added oil to the normal areas. This I thought should make a noticeable difference as the grooved tyres seemed now to have lost their shiny finish and being round is always a step in the right direction!

Back to the track and the difference was not only noticeable but a lot more encouraging, the handling seemed to be more balanced and the car was exiting corners more smoothly and in a more controlled fashion, within a couple of laps it was down to a 4.786 and other club members were starting to pay attention. The next test was to see how it ran next to a DTM CLK in the

next lane, the straight line speed was as expected not as good but the time was made up on braking and sharp corners with good stability and a tendency to slide at the rear rather than tip and roll as I had feared.

Buy One?

The verdict is that if the following was done (as allowed by our club rules) then the Subaru would be on the pace:- tyres changed to slicks of the same size from Ninco and trued front and rear, the motor glued in and a small amount of tinkering to allow the body to roll properly rather than catching/snagging.

I guess the true measure of what I think is 'would I buy one for 25 quid' and that would have to be a Yes, the answer before the test would have been No due to the 4x4 and extra detail that often makes Rally cars uncompetitive against Touring cars, so you just can't tell sometimes.

And YES the aerial is still on the roof after several high speed testing shunts! ■



50262 BMW V12 LMR

Reviewed by Tony Secchi

Those sad people like me, who read every printed word of the Journal, will have noticed Brian's offer on page 18 of the May issue headed 'Reviewers Wanted'. Imagine my surprise when I received a phone call from our esteemed Editor asking me if I would do a car review for the July issue. I accepted at once because I fulfilled three of the four prerequisites listed by Brian. I have a decent home track; I have timing facilities and, as I am retired, can produce copy on time. The fourth dictum was to write an objective review. Well time and the judgement of my peers will see if I can fulfil that.

I was given a choice of four different models to choose from and with no surprise to anybody who has read my previous efforts picked the Ninco 50262 BMW V12 LMR that practised at Le Mans in 1999.

I already have the Ninco "Dell" computer sponsored version that actually won the race, so I was in a good position to not only review the new car but compare it with the version that I have raced frequently.

History

Just prior to 1995, the ex Formula One driver, Gerhard Berger was made BMW Motorsport director and commissioned a new engine design from the company to run in long distance sports car races initially and then in F1. The accompanying chassis and body designs were inputted by the Williams F1 company as was the engine testing. A definitive version of this astonishing V10 engine now powers the Williams F1 car which in the last few seasons was generally agreed to be the most powerful on the circuit (at the expense of reliability it must be said) revving up to 19,000 and giving great straight-line speed.

However, Berger's brief at that time was for the long distance sports racer and the engine and components were tuned and tested rigorously for longevity. For Le Mans in 1998 two works cars were entered, but both were withdrawn when it was found that the tyres were rolling on the wheel rims and the race was won by the factory

Porsche 911 GT1 98 of Alan McNish (now driving F1 for Toyota).

Extensive work and testing was carried out during the winter and in February 1999 a more aerodynamically efficient version of the car appeared. This was the LMR99 sponsored by Beck's (beer, not Posh's husband) and in its first race it won the 12 hours of Sebring by 30 secs.

Then in June came Le Mans; two works cars (sponsored by Dell) were entered - #15 for Joachim Winklehock, Pier Luigi Martini and Yannick Dalmas won but only by virtue of the #17 car driven by J.J. Lehto going out four hours before the end with throttle linkage failure. Also in that race were two private LM98s - one entered by "Panasonic" car audio and a black liveried car #18 sponsored by "H.S.H." and driven, among others, by our own Steve Soper which finished fifth. Ninco do model versions of all these cars.

The model

As stated, this is the BMW V12 LMR99 liveried as the spare or test car for Dalmas, Winklehock and Martini with the number 16. It has no conventional sponsorship logos, just a number of philosophical sayings printed in silver on a white body (i.e. "protect me from what I want"). The cockpit has a three-quarter-length driver and self-adhesive instrument panel dials.



On opening the body top there is the standard Ninco flat chassis with the well known NC2 motor (now in red livery but exactly the same spec as its black bodied predecessor) it is

35mm long, weighs 32grams, revs at 18,100 and is mounted in line. Just in front of the engine is an 8mm dia. circular magnet with a strength of 3.500 gauss. This sits on the chassis in a plastic collar above a 2mm dia. hole and is sited almost centrally within the wheelbase. The final drive is the standard Ninco set up of 9 toothed brass pinion, 27 toothed plastic crownwheel and brass axle bearings. The rear tyres are standard Ninco slicks 20mm in dia and 10mm wide. The front axle is a solid rod and the pick up is also conventional - brass eyelets connecting the motor wires to copper braids. The pick up guide clips the bottom of the slot on my standard track but would be OK on the new sports system.

The body finish is simple but good with a lacquered finish and with the minimum of interiors, no hidden from sight suspension details etc. The car is quite light at 84grams overall and with a big, heavy, low mounted engine spanning from the middle of the chassis to the rear, the weight is down at the level of the track so the centre of gravity is excellent.

This is a lesson some manufacturers, who today put a lot of heavyweight detail high up in the body, could go back to. But manufacturers have to sell to collectors as well as racers so nowadays we are stuck with it.

The BMW is very low, the overall height to the air box being 34mm but the body proper is only 25mm high. It has a length to width ratio of 2.25, so it is approximately twice as long as it is wide and with a wheel on each corner looks very stable. The wheelbase is 86mm on a body length of 130mm (without the rear wing) and the rear/front wheel track is 64mm. The centre of the pick up swivel post is 15mm back from the nose and the same distance in front of the front axle.

The test

I decided to run the car in just using the chassis and did a total of 100 laps. This gives the tyres, gears, pick-ups etc. time to bed in and allows any basic quirks to become known. Obviously, in this configuration, the car is very fast and stable. Putting the body back on makes very little

difference, there is a slight drop in top speed and due to the overhang of the rear wing, a slight tail out characteristic on exiting corners. This is not a bad thing but control of the power input has to be spot on as you become more familiar with the car in the quest to go faster. With my own version of this car I have drilled out the hole below the magnet and lowered it flush with the chassis underside. This has allowed the power transfer to become more stable.

The track

I have a two lane standard Scalextric track of 55ft length with fast bends, a crossover and one hairpin. It has a longest straight of 9ft 9inches (2.7M). I use a Parma 45-ohm controller with no braking or tyre goop. I tested the car on a timed 10 laps as single fastest laps can be a one off never repeated, whereas a race distance gives a better overall test of the car.

On my track the very fastest cars do this distance in 38/39 secs the slowest 43/45 secs. with an average of 40/42 secs. After a few attempts, I got the car down to a best of 43.86 secs. which is very good for a new car without any modification and still running in. My own BMW V12 with a lowered magnet, modified pick up and several races under its belt has a best of 42.52 for the ten laps.

Summing up, I would say that it is a fair to middling racer, which will get better as it is used. In the right class it would do well without setting any fires. With its minimalist interior and conventional layout it is a little old fashioned by today's standards. Racers who like this car will probably already have the "Dell" liveried versions that won Le Mans in 1999, but to the "must have every version made" collector it may have some rarity value.

It is an unassuming, standard format, slightly dated model but potentially pleasing nevertheless. It is very fast in a straight line (as are all NC2 powered cars) but a bit of a handful exiting corners. In fairness, there are better all round cars suited to my track, but on club circuits with much longer straights it would really come into its own. ■

50264 Austin Healey Roadster

Reviewed by Alan Slade

When I first saw this model it set me wondering about the colour, as all of the cars that I could remember being associated with were single colour, generally red, blue or green. But I concluded that as the model was a left hooker then it was obviously an export model and I had no experience with them.

When one thing jogs your memory you then start to look at other things, and in my case it was the wheels - they just did not look the right size. I appreciate that the classic cars are not a big seller and therefore the wheels will be used right across the limited range, but still they did not look right. The size on the model tyres is printed as 20 x 7.

I checked up on the specification of the full sized car and found that the wheel size was 5.90 -15. That translates into 4.68 x 11.9 mm. The actual wheel size is 14.9mm which is 18.7" scale size, so my initial impression was right, the wheels are oversize. The marking on the tyre is also rather curious as they are in fact 21.7 x 7.8.

All this checking of scale dimensions had me looking at the price of the real car in June 1964 (the date of my specification sheet). The basic price of the car was £915, wire wheels were £40 4s 2d extra. It is not possible to see if the model has a heater and overdrive (£18 14s 7d and £60 8s 4d respectively) so I have not included them in the price, so our original car would have cost £1136 7s 11d - scale price £35 51p, so I reckon we have a bargain.



Slightly oversize wheels?

Just before getting to the model, reading about the overdrive got me to remembering that with a little bit of creative wiring it was possible

to have an 8 speed gearbox on the Healey, and indeed on any car fitted with such an extra.

Anyway, enough of this, what about the model I hear you asking. Well in spite of my previous comments I rather like it. It is a road version fitted with a pretend 'red leather tonneau cover' (i.e. plastic), which will, with a bit of persistence, come off to reveal a second seat all ready prepared for a passenger (so a rally version is definitely on the cards). I also suspect that the holes that the tonneau cover uses will be where the hardtop fits on.

The 'driver' is definitely of the weekend variety out to collect the Sunday papers, as no serious driver would drive like that - or would they? Knowing the handling of the Healey I would suggest that this driver has never got beyond about 1500 rpm.



Sunday afternoon driver? Note the 25 past 6 driving position.

Taking the tonneau cover off makes it easier to see the dashboard, and a pleasant array of dials and switches is provided courtesy of a vinyl sticker. Even the rear view mirror is in the right place. With a little bit of detailing a very authentic interior could be obtained. The exterior is also well detailed with the front nicely proportioned and correct rear lights and a nice *Austin Healey* graphic on the boot lid. It is a pity



The rear end detail.

that the badge on the front panel is only painted on and not a separate part, and I was a little bit disappointed that the exhaust detail moulded into the chassis does not continue into 'real' exhaust pipes, but hey, this is a toy right? Not a die cast collectors item - so what do I expect?

In fact it was when I turned the model over that I got my biggest surprise. I was expecting to see the same chassis layout as on my other Ninco Classic cars, and OK it is an in-line, mid engined rear wheel drive layout, but an NC-2 motor and magnet? This surely puts it in a different league to the previous cars and means that they cannot be raced against each other.



The underneath, the surprise for me.

My other surprise was how poor the wheels were. I have come to expect that Ninco wheels are well made and run true. Not so on this car. Three of them were well out of true, and I expected a rough ride with the car when I tested it on Knockhill.

This poor ride did not in fact materialize, the car proving to be a pocket rocket with a very smooth ride, but I suspect a lot of this can be attributed to the powerful magnet and the sprung guide.

After a few exploratory laps it soon became apparent that the Healey was nothing like the previous classics and was capable of being thrown around quite hard and putting in some very quick laps, even the skinny tyres providing lots of grip, or was it the magnet again providing the grip?

I very soon got down to the low 4 second bracket with the Healey. To put this into perspective I have a very well sorted Fly Venturi with some extra tuning tweaks (giving all my secrets away now!) which runs 3.2 second laps.

And like the Venturi, once you have dialled yourself in, provided you do not go to sleep with the boredom of a car that just goes round and round and round and round and.... you get the picture, then it will put in quick laps for ever.

To give me some comparison, I ran a few laps with my Ninco Jaguar XK 120 and what a difference! A lot slower thanks to the NC-1 engine, but you also had to DRIVE it as there is no magnet - a real wake-up call after the Healey. Lap times were in the 6 second bracket and they were not consistent as the reward for a slight bit of over excitement was a trip to the other side of Knockhill to put the car back on.

So the Healey is a good 2 - 3 seconds a lap faster than other Ninco Classics and would easily win a race. Well, no it wouldn't, as both back wheels fell off the test car and would not go back on the axle without copious quantities of the magic sticky stuff, therefore handing the 'race' to the Jaguar.

I have not tried the car now that the wheels are back on, but I suspect that it will probably happen again. A combination of strong magnet, high cornering forces and narrow, high wheels putting a lot of load on to the wheel hub. As much as I like the Healey as a model, and for personal reasons, I do not think it will get much use being so different to the other cars in the series. And it is also not much fun to drive, not requiring a lot of skill (other than staying awake), but mind you I might just take the magnet out, fit an NC-1 or an RX-4 and have a 'real' Healey in my collection. Anyone got some adaptors?

Oh, one last point. Be very careful with the windscreen. The one on the test car already has a crack a third of the way across, in fact it is only the windscreen wipers stopping it going any further. I expect on the hard top versions it will be a lot stronger as it will have some support.

Why is it cracked? Well even with a magnet there is a limit to the adhesion, and when you go off, you go off big time.

Would I recommend it? Yes I would as it is a very nice model. Would I buy one? Again, yes as I want a rally version. When I get one I will let you know how I get on tackling the 'Angus' stage. ■

It gets you out of the house

BY RICHARD DOWNHAM

No, this is not a “how I got started” article but, just like everybody else I had a Scalextric set when I was young. Needless to say I lost interest when I discovered the joys of real cars and girls; I got older, married and each Christmas told my wife I would like a new Scalextric set, only to change my mind at the last minute.

However, in 1987 she called my bluff - bless her - and behold the monster she created. I joined the NSCC in 1989, started going to swapmeets and then discovered the guilty feeling of buying too many cars.

Now onto the point of the article; last year, completely out of the blue, my wife told me she wanted a divorce. The world fell out of my bottom! I moved out and proceeded to spend my evenings staring at the four walls of a cold, lonely flat.

Desperation caused me to start searching the Internet for slot-car clubs just for something to do. I'd been to clubs before and always found it an extremely embarrassing experience; usually with a borrowed car and controller I would be dead last in each heat, several laps down. However, desperate times called for desperate measures so I short listed three local clubs and decided to try the nearest one first.

Burnt Oak club meet on Wednesdays at 7:30pm so, after StarTrek, I took a deep breath and drove the two miles to the Edgware Community Centre. On arrival there were lights on but no sign of activity; the hall was strewn with wires and tables as if some sort of building or decorating was taking place. I eventually found someone in the kitchen making tea and told him I was looking for the model car club. He replied that I had found it and introduced himself as Jim Sharp; he told me about the club and, in return, I related why I was there.

Other members soon started to arrive so I helped assemble the track on the tables and connect it to the jumble of wires. In spite of my protests that I had only come to look, I was given a car and proceeded to come last in all four

heats, completing the final four or five laps on my own!

I was much better at marshalling (mind you I couldn't have been worse); the trick is to watch your own straight/corner and disregard the rest of the track, but that's another story. In spite of my lacklustre performance I enjoyed the evening immensely and spent the next week preparing the various classes of car recommended by the other members.

I have been attending for about six months now and my laptimes have been steadily improving; I am not always last and rarely get lapped. I've learnt a good deal about driving and preparing cars (I've even had offers for my Alfa 156) and now look forward to Wednesday evenings. Being home late is not a problem as I only have myself to worry about and I no longer have to smuggle cars indoors after a swapmeet!

So, in conclusion I would like to thank Burnt Oak Slot-Car Club for keeping me sane and my ex-wife for removing the guilt! ■

Slot Classic Aston Martin DB4 Zagato

BY JEFF DAVIES

If my six numbers came up on the lottery tomorrow there is one car I would love to own above all others. This car symbolises what made the British car industry so great in the late 1950s and 60s when Britain ruled the sportscar world. Both Jaguar and Aston-Martin won the Le Mans race and produced a series of road derivatives of the race winning sports cars.

The car was raced in a variety of green and other colours and was driven to and from the circuits; to my mind these were the last of the race cars that could be conceivably used as day to day transport. It is arguably one of the most beautiful cars ever produced with a sensational blend of exotic curves making up the bodywork. If you haven't guessed it by now, the car is an Aston Martin DB4 GT Zagato.

It was built as Aston Martin's answer to the road going Ferrari Berlinettas which were being purchased to race at such places as Goodwood, Snetterton, etc. The Zagatos were driven by people like Jim Clark who drove 1 VEV at Goodwood in 1962. The model is based on the Zagato which raced in the 1961 Le Mans, driven by Jean Kerguen and retired with electrical problems. These cars were powered by a 3670cc twin overhead cam engine with twin spark plugs

per cylinder which produced approximately 315 bhp at 6000 rpm and could accelerate to 60 in around six seconds with a top speed of over 150 mph. They weighed approximately 24 cwt and were built with a steel tubing chassis covered in lightweight aluminium panels. These were expensive cars, costing £5,460 in 1962 which was considerably more than the average house.

The first time I saw a Slot Classic Zagato was at a NSCC swap meet. I just had to have it, although it was the most expensive model I have ever paid for. This model, perhaps more than any other, captures the spirit of the real car, being exquisitely proportioned with the nicest wire wheels I have ever seen, but the one feature that made this an impossible to resist purchase, was beautiful jewel like recessed front and rear lights which completely blew me away.

The model is finished in Old English white, with the number one in the roundels and a red and blue full-length stripe. The front grille and side window trim are in stainless steel along with exhaust and fuel filler cap. Slot Classic makes this model in three different options: as a kit, as a KPP (prepainted bodyshell but unbuilt kit), and as a RTR. I bought the RTR as the factory paint finish is fantastic and all the mould panel lines were perfectly recessed into the paint. The RTRs are not cheap but you certainly get what you pay for. This car transcends being a mere slot-car model and is elevated into a miniature work of art. A couple of years ago if someone had told me I'd pay this sort of money for a new model I'd have thought they were out of their mind. These models are built in extremely limited numbers with usually a run of around 50 RTR models of a particular car produced and are very sought after when the production has finished. An exquisite model of a full sized car I desire above all others. ■

