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Contents

Swapmeet.....3
 Diary Dates.....4
 Christmas Competition.....5
 Messages From Margate.....7
 Ninco News.....11
 Shipment From Spain.....13
 Traders Travels.....15
 Bits And Pieces.....17
 Letters.....19
 Ninco Track Test.....20
 Home Circuit.....21
 Ramsgate Rarities.....27
 Argos Cars.....28
 Newark Swapmeet.....29
 Ramsgate Weekend 1.....31
 Ramsgate Weekend 2.....33
 Ramsgate Weekend 3.....35
 Barry Lee Mondeo.....37
 Review SCX.....41
 A Christmas Tale.....43
 Members Ads.....46

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The NSCC

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The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

"It's only a bit of fun"

A phrase traditionally uttered at the annual Ramsgate Weekend about slot-car racing; it is usually spoken through gritted teeth by Graeme Thoburn as he is thrashed, yet again, by his son, Jack!

Another tradition of the event is that the rest of the committee take pity on your editor and let him enjoy himself while they do the work! This year was no exception and, while the rest of them rushed about organising things, I was free to consume vast amounts of ale and socialise late into the night. My only task was to 'persuade' some people to write about their experiences - mission accomplished very easily this year - thanks Karl, Tony and Annette.

I know I have said it before but it bears repeating; you do meet the nicest people in the NSCC and the Ramsgate Weekend is a prime example. Within an hour of arrival I was happily chatting away to half a dozen members, whom I had never met before, as if we had been lifelong friends. To my mind, this is the real strength of the club - it is remarkable how many lasting friendships have been formed due to a shared interest in toy plastic cars.

One tradition of the weekend was broken this year though - THE EDITOR DIDN'T COME LAST IN THE RACING! In fact I won four heats and achieved an almost respectable final position of 26th, equal on points with Graeme Thoburn! Just goes to show what six month's practice at the local club can do for you. However, in a couple of heats I was lying in a comfortable 2nd place; a year ago I would have happily settled for that but I fear the racer's instinct has finally taken over - went for the win, as you do - and fell off. Still, it's only a bit of fun!

And Finally- Merry Christmas one and all, I hope you enjoy the colour supplement in this issue. Please try and get any contributions in early next month - I really would like to get the January issue finished before Boxing Day!

Till next year

Brian



Now That's What I Call A Christmas Competition #42

Vote For The Greatest Slot-Car In The World Ever!

A Christmas competition with a difference this year as there are no wrong answers! Even Rod Moore should be able to manage this one and I shan't have to read Graham Smith's annual essay on alternative answers!

All you have to do is cast your votes for the World's best slot-cars

As usual I have a bumper selection of prizes to give away and everyone who enters has a chance of winning something. In fact, this should be the biggest giveaway ever - I already have over 20 prizes with more promised. As always, Archie the Editorial Cat is going to be very busy picking the winners - don't forget the customary bribes!

Top of the shop is an Argos TVR set which has been signed by Martin Short - the owner/driver of the Xavex car. There is also the last remaining Ramsgate 2002 weekend car, a selection of Ninco, MRRC, SCX and Vanquish cars, two chequered flags, SCX track and accessories and much more - not to mention a set of Slot.It Pitlane Babes!

The entry form should be included elsewhere in this issue - please read the rules carefully. All entries will go in the prize draw but you must include reasons for your choice if you want to win one of the top prizes. Why you vote for a particular car is entirely up to you - because you like the real one, your very first slot-car, favourite livery, you won your club championship with it etc. A bit of humour might not go amiss if you are trying to catch the editor's eye and win the Argos set.

Apart from the competition aspect it should be interesting counting the votes and seeing which car(s) come out on top.

Closing date is Friday January 23rd 2004

**Send your entry to the editor at the address on page one of the Journal
(Post, Fax or Email)**

The winners will be announced in the February issue

**Results of the vote will be in the March issue provided I have finished
counting them!**

**Good Luck -
and don't forget - it is a little difficult to win a prize if you forget to include
your name and membership number!**



As we begin the run up to Christmas there is the usual flurry of new products from Margate with many more (at least 20!) in the next few weeks. A huge number of Scalextric sets, cars and accessories are sold at this time of the year and the Margate warehouse is full of frantic activity.

C2499 Mini Cooper “No7”

The first new release to be discussed this month is the 3rd car sold exclusively through Hamleys in London. This car comes free if you purchase the large Hamleys exclusive set. This Mini has less decoration on it than the two set cars with just the Union Jack on the roof and Hamleys plates.

Strangely only 1000 of these silver Minis have been produced to accompany a set with a limited edition run of 1500. 500 set purchasers are going to be disappointed.

C2539A “The Italian Job” Mini blue

C2540A “The Italian Job” Mini white

More Minis come in the form of the solo Sport versions of the two Italian Job Mini Coopers; The white one actually being an off-white, creamy colour. These cars are in the Sport packaging and have a limited edition of 7500.

The red Mini Cooper S version is not yet available.

C2502A Chevrolet Corvette L88 1972 No 57

The Sport version of the red Corvette, C2502A is now available in a limited edition run of 10,000. This model has the motor fitted at the

front with a long propshaft. As we saw at the recent Hornby/NSCC weekend this model handles particularly well on Sport track. The front wheels are interesting with an additional moulding of the air scoop fitted to drive cold air onto the brakes. A nice detail touch but a bit fragile.

C2524 Porsche 911 GT3R “The Entertainer”

As mentioned last month C2524 Porsche GT3R The Entertainer can now be found. 1000 of these are available from The Entertainer chain of toyshops in the South East. It is also available from their web site at www.thetoystore.com.



C2548 Indy Car plain white

This version of the Dallara Indy Car is only officially available in the US where the new car is proving very popular for its great performance but low price. A few dealers in the UK have been advertising them too. More versions of the Indy car are expected soon. ➡➡

C2454A TVR Tuscan 400R Eclipse Motorsport No 69

The first Sport version of the TVR Tuscan 400R is a limited edition of 8000. Unlike the Argos set cars described a couple of months ago this version has a number of etched metal parts. Most noticeable and effective is the detailed grill set low in the nose.



The standard version C2524 is already available in your local shops and in Spain as a Superslot release.

C2550 Subaru Impreza Rob Gill

Sponsored by Hornby and the Sun newspaper the Welsh rally was contested by Rob Gill in a Subaru Impreza. Hornby are releasing this livery shortly. However, a special set containing the car has been promoted in the Sun newspaper and also as a competition prize in Autosport magazine.

C2534A Ford GT40 1969 "Kelleners / Jöst" No 68

Just arrived is the Ford GT40 Kelleners / Jöst. A Sport release with full Sport packaging and a limited edition of 2000. The car description within the box lid is in German.

For many this will be the best GT40 release yet as the car looks stunning in cream with black, red and gold stripes. Officially this is a Germany only release but is available from some of the specialists in the UK too. Following on from the Swiss and French Porsches last year I think we will see many more special releases for other parts of the world too.



C2343WL Ford Focus No 19

A new set is available exclusively to the larger Woolworth stores. This is C1129 World Rally, Circuit 1. The set contains C2343WL Ford Focus, Laukannen, No.19, white and light blue and C2379WA Subaru Impreza, type 1, No.5, red.

Although the red Subaru was released some years ago in the first Woolworth's exclusive set the Ford Focus is quite different from before. The livery is a simplified version of C2343, the white and pale blue Focus released in March 2001, but is based on the new Focus mould with the small integrated rear wing and open front grill. I wonder why this didn't warrant a new reference number. More details next time.

This set is quite hard to come by as numbers appear to be limited with most stores only having 2 or 3 allocated to each of them.

Magazine

In a new departure for Hornby in the UK a Scalextric magazine has been produced. In conjunction with De Agostini, well known for their partwork publications, a 60 piece magazine is available that builds into a full Scalextric set with track and four cars. Issues are published weekly and cost £4.99.

The four cars are:

C2364 Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 7,

C2341 Subaru Impreza,

C2454 TVR Tuscan 440R

C2339 Porsche 911 GT3R ... at least I think so, it is a bit difficult to tell from the pictures provided.

If you subscribe you also get a free Mini Cooper, a case, a card pit building and some throttle extension cables. The hot-line number for back issues and subscriptions is 08708 502300. At the moment it is only being trialled in the Portsmouth, Warrington and Leicester areas before going nationwide.

Issue 1 carried the Subaru bodyshell and Issue 2 a hand controller. The magazine has 16 pages with articles about famous tracks, cars and drivers, how to tune your Scalextric cars and the history of Scalextric.

Into the future

At the recent NSCC / Hornby weekend we saw the new Lister LMP resin prototype complete with a separate engine/back axle sub-chassis cleverly mounted to allow some movement. We also learnt about a new range of tune-up parts with 3mm ground steel axles, a range of both contrate and pinion gears, a range of aluminium hubs and silicone tyres, ball race bearings and 3 different motors. Many of these parts can be retro-fitted to recent releases too. More news on these items as their development continues.

Motor bikes

And finally for the most exciting piece of Scalextric news for a long time. You probably all saw the press releases in the newspapers recently announcing a new range of motorbikes to be produced by Hornby and launched next year. This is an exciting development for Scalextric as the bikes are superbly detailed and even lean realistically. More news will be available in due course.

From the official press release

"Scalextric has secured from Dorna Sports, the series' commercial and TV rights holders, a worldwide exclusive licence to produce Scalextric sets and individual bikes in the liveries of all the MotoGP teams and all of the riders. Hornby expects that the products will be well received in countries across the world especially in mainland Europe and Asia. First deliveries are expected during the late Spring of 2004, to coincide with the early rounds of the MotoGP World Championship.

The Scalextric MotoGP bikes will be powered by a small electric motor that will drive the rear wheel. Electricity will be delivered via a discrete guide blade mounted between the wheels. The front wheel will be free spinning and in contact with the track surface. The bikes have been designed to emulate the appearance and performance of the real MotoGP bikes. This represents the first authentic motorbike slot racing system and significantly widens the stable of Scalextric products." ■

As this year draws to a close, Ninco continue to introduce new products to their extensive range. November saw the arrival of a new liveried GT, Rally, Classic and Champ cars.

The 'anglewinder' NC-2 powered BMW M3 was released as the "Euro GT" (50307) with a striking star-spangled red, white and blue colour scheme. Ninco always produce a fantastic high-gloss finish on their cars so, as a break from the norm, they have introduced the first of their "race-effect" cars in the form of the Renault Clio Go!!! (50313). The paintshop has added a light spattering of mud effect across the lower section of the bodywork giving the impression of the car having just started the first few metres of a special stage. This rally car comes with the NC-5 motor and ProShock suspension fitted. A true Classic, the Jaguar XK120 (50317) is now available in black with a twin white stripe running down the centre of the car and sporting a light-brown soft-top which, as you would expect for an "Alpine Rally" car, is in the 'up' position! Finally, two more CART series cars were released last month, both in the "Herdez Competition" team colours. Although the name is relatively new to Champ Cars, the team is one of the oldest in the series, beginning life in 1986 as Bettenhausen Racing. The first is the No.4 car (50318) of 44 year old Brazilian driver Roberto Moreno; a name Formula 1 fans will remember from the early 90s. The second is the No.55 car of Mario Dominguez; a relative newcomer to the Herdez team but already gaining his and the team's first series victory in the Honda Indy 300 during the 2002 season.

Happy Birthday to you...

December 2003 sees the arrival of Ninco's 10th Birthday! To commemorate this Ninco are to release a special 10th Anniversary Collector's Set (50325). This will include a reproduction of their very first slot-car; the Renault Clio XXIV

BY PETER SOLARI

Copa 'Blanco'. However, the decoration will be tampo-printed rather than stickers as found on the original 1993 model. The set will also include a 200 page book covering the history of Ninco in words and pictures. It is issued as a limited edition with each set being numbered and I recommend that serious collectors place an advanced order.

Christmas pull-over

As we are entering the time when flashing lights are just about everywhere, Ninco offer two new 'Road Cars' Both are Police cars, one a replica of the Catalan "Policia" (50320), the other of the German "Polizei" (50321). Each car features working headlights and roof-mounted flashing blue lights.



Make sure the only flashing blue lights you see this Christmas are on the track!



Return of the Mc...(Laren)

The Ninco McLaren F1 GTR range is always popular with collectors and racers. This new McLaren (50324) is offered in the yellow "SOK" sponsored livery and is powered by an NC-2 motor. I've put two on my Christmas list... *well Christmas just wouldn't be the same without a pair of SOKs!!*

Super-ru

Ninco offer many add-ons and spares for professional racers with which to 'tune' their cars. Now it is possible to buy a race-tuned off-the-shelf Ninco car. Not only is this "Super Racing" slot-car fitted with an all-new NC-6 "Crusher" motor, but it also includes four ball-bearing axle bushes and two high performance, trued and balanced axles. This super Subaru WRC (50322) also benefits from an improved chassis and double pulley '4-wheel-drive'.

Desert Storm

Finally, a fourth Mitsubishi Pajero is released. This one is in the "Argos" sponsored livery from the 2002 Paris-Dakar rally. It is finished with a



realistic 'weathered' decoration simulating how the car appeared as it finished the gruelling trek through the desert sand. Just like its 1:1 scale big brother, this Pajero is well equipped to take on the rugged terrain as it is fitted with ProShock suspension, ProArm guide, 4WD and powerful NC-7 motor.

10 years and counting...

In closing, I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and hope you will join me in wishing Ninco a very happy 10th Birthday! ■



“Desde Barcelona... os deseamos una Feliz Navidad y que paséis unas festividades entrañables”

First up, apologies for not getting the Le Mans start article and photos to Brian in time for last month's journal, hopefully it's shown this month. Technology let me down, laptops and remote email etc, etc.

This month I will focus on my recent trip to Barcelona to meet up with Luca from Tecnitoys. We planned this trip a while back just to touch base, take a look around the office, discuss the NSCC, check out any new product and of course to have a play on the new SCX Digital system prototypes.

Tecnitoys office is tucked away just outside the centre of Barcelona (I won't give you the exact details they don't allow day tripper tours!) a short walk from my hotel in the centre (next to Palau). After meeting Luca at reception I was given a short tour of their offices and met some of the team responsible for the marketing and promotion of the Tecnitoys range. As you can probably imagine, most of the material (shop displays, promo brochures etc) on display was for the Spanish brand (not SCX but Scalextric). There is a nice display of the entire Spanish range from Exin to present day and some great photos of past and present Rally, F1 and Sports car drivers playing with slotcars along with a number of models signed by the drivers. There is also a classic photo of the Team Scalextric F1 car from the sixties.

SCX Digital

After the various pleasantries were exchanged I was invited to have a play with Digital. This is what I had come for! In a separate room was a layout of two lane track with several people playing continuously; in fact all employees are asked to play for at least an hour a day to test the

prototypes to destruction and to get to know the product! Tough, working for SCX isn't it? I was given a brief explanation of how the system worked (which was similar to various reports on the web, but not quite the same!). This involves placing the car of your choice on any lane, pressing a button on the power strip, removing the car then replacing your car in the slot. After this the car can run in any lane and will be controlled by your controller (adhesive numbers will be provided in the sets).

We were playing with six cars on the track at once! Opel Astra, Merc CLK DTM and Audi TT DTM. The cars also had adhesive numbers to make identification easier! The layout had approx. six cross over lane changing track sections dotted around the track (which is grey in colour). The six of us lined up at the start (3 cars on each lane) 3, 2, 1, Go, thank goodness I was at the back! The others obviously have had more practice than me and roared off in the lead. Now I was there to learn, so in the interest of NSCC members (and the fact that I was going to be crap anyway) I took it easy and played around with the lane changing system and generally observed how it all worked.

The basics of the system are as follows: the track is fed with a constant 18 Volts; speed and track changing is controlled by signals sent to the car from the handsets. Track counting is displayed on an expandable LED tower, this displays the number of laps completed and who is in the lead etc. Switching lanes is controlled via a button on the top of the controller which you press and hold just prior to the lane switch track section, in fact you can hold it down constantly and you will swap lanes every time you go over the track sections. ⇨→

You may have seen contact strips on the side of the guide flag (in photos on the web etc). Some have thought these were a method of control for the lane changing - they are not. Their function is to pick up power when you go over the lane changing switch. It is actually operated by a peg set into the guide flag which, when activated, extends below the guide flag to move it into a different track.

What's it like? – Great fun! Like I said, the people I was racing against had more experience than me, but after about 10 minutes I got the hang of it and with more practice I'm sure it would be even more fun. Six on two lanes is probably too much in my opinion, but four would be fine. There were obviously crashes on the lane changing sections, but no more than on a normal cross over. Cars felt responsive and balanced. All the cars had the normal strong SCX magnets. (didn't have a go without them). Racing is possible in one direction only.

Compatibility

This was a prototype set up and Tecnitoy's were very reluctant to let me take photos of the system (especially as it was branded with the Spanish logo). However I have been promised some photos in the very near future. I will, of course, send them to Brian as soon as I get them.

The entire system will be shown at the London Toy Fair in January 2004 and should be on general sale to the public for May 2004. A full range of accessories and spares will be available including a total of 6 new cars, track borders/barriers, spares etc.

The track and cars are not backward compatible; old SCX cars will not work on the new system and the new cars will not work with the old. When first released there will only be one curve available, but the full range of curves will follow shortly. The boxed sets will contain everything you need to start racing, track, power, lapcounter, three cars and three controllers.

We are planning some form of NSCC exclusive demonstration of the system next year! Planning is in the very early stages and as soon as we can confirm details then I will let you know.

Other news

Whilst at the offices I did see one of the new releases planned for the end of 2003. Unfortunately this new car is only planned for release in Spain under the Spanish brand and will not be available as an SCX car in the UK, but I thought you should know.



Ref 6129 Dallara Nissan World Series race number 3 in bright Yellow.

This is the Team Gabord car driven by Frank Montagny (2003 Renault F1 test driver). The model appears to be based on the very successful Tecnitoy's Jaguar F1 chassis. I have no idea why this will not be released in the U.K. (the Championship is European).

Also another car due for release in Spain only is ref 61080 a BMW Williams FW23 - F1 car as driven by Marc Gene in testing 2002. No numbers on the car.

It would also appear that ref 61010 McLaren Mercedes MP4-17 "David" will not make it into production, not sure why, but it's very similar to the SCX MP4-16.

Well that about wraps it up for this year. 2004 should be a very interesting year for Slot-cars. Most of the planned releases will be previewed at the Toyfairs in London and Germany during January. I will be there and will report anything I can. A full and detailed review on SCX Digital with photos will follow over the next few months.

Happy Christmas and all the very best for the New Year.

P.S. no prize for guessing the Spanish! ■

Traders Travels

BY ROBERT LEARMOUTH
(WESTWOOD MODELS)

It's been a seriously busy November for Swapmeets. Stuttgart and Utrecht back to back and Ashford still to come. We made the journey to Stuttgart by car. It's a long way but no regrets about trying it as we had the opportunity to take a few days to make the trip.

The swapmeet itself was enormous. Aside from the lack of paste tables, (this seems to be purely a British thing) the number of dealers present even exceeded Milton Keynes. The German market is very large though based firmly around the traditional continental makes (Fleischmann, Carrera, Marklin etc). However there were still plenty of the makes more familiar to most of us with suggestions the German market is expanding more now in this area. The Scalextric German GT40 had just been released and was freely available. Though that's the only place it probably ever will be as just 2000 were made and most will have found homes by now. Some may even have stayed in Germany! I'll be attending next time but will almost certainly be arriving by plane! Utrecht is a much easier run, in fact it can be done in as little as 2.5 hours from Calais. This is not a huge swapmeet but it is very busy. You're made to feel very welcome and a good day is invariably had. This time was no exception and I came back with a nice selection of rarer items including the newly released Harlekijn GT40. An aftermarket tampered plain white GT40 produced by a Dutch slot dealer but nonetheless worth adding to your collection with just 40 made.

Ebay seems to have gone into overdrive lately with significant amounts of quality, rare items now appearing. As a dealer I've found a distinct lack of older cars coming through for a while and no doubt this is accounted for, in part at least, through direct disposal on Ebay. But it has a downside as many items are poorly described and there is a lot of animosity from buyers at the moment. There are also increasing numbers of people who are clearly buying and selling for profit. Many of these people are pure

opportunists from outside the hobby and are not particularly well versed with what they are selling either. They are also going to have a very rude shock when the Inland Revenue catch up with them as you can bet they monitor Ebay. Am I a little bitter at the competition? No way, I've no right or reason to be! Anyhow, choice expands the hobby. Am I bitter they don't part with hundreds/thousands of pounds in tax each year like I have always done even as a part-time dealer? Yes! And does it trouble me they are selling brand new cars for £1 or £2 profit on trade? Yes! Because they will turn slot-cars into what Lledo diecast has become - worthless. Get yer £22 Sport cars while you can.

Rant over. Worthy of mention on Ebay this month are an, admittedly near mint, boxed Healey but £230? A new, old stock C13 Tiger Special at £134 - this is a very difficult car boxed and someone clearly wanted it badly. A C52 Escort white, used and unboxed, amazingly failed to attract any bids with a start price of just £100! James Bond sets are crawling out of the woodwork at an intriguing pace recently with three in as many weeks. A near minter made nearly £3000 and even a rough one has just sold for £1000. Italian Job sets are appearing and not selling. This is a genuine surprise as Hornby have released few yet and we are told no more will be made next year.

The buzz is that the NSCC/Hornby Race Weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended, due in no small part to the excellent organisation. It also produced the opportunity for a very special yellow GT40 that no doubt, if you want one yourself, will take a lot of bribery to obtain!

With the festive season nearly upon us it just remains for me to wish you all a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

PS. Please let Brian know if you want to see this column continue in 2004. I shall shut up and let the space be used for something more useful otherwise! ■

BITS AND PIECES

Messages From Margate – the Email

For those of you with the technology and the inclination Messages from Margate is now available as a newsletter by email. It is fully illustrated in colour so is not suitable for those connecting to the Internet via a tin can and a piece of string.

Send an email to hhliaison@nsccl.co.uk to be added to the circulation list.

Rob Smith

Ebay spotting

My thanks to *Ray Chambers* for this little gem, perhaps it should have appeared in the 'Adult' section. Whatever next? "Plastic Scalextric spectator gets her kit off" perhaps!

History Of Scalextric VHS Video 1957-1970

"Superb video documentary about the most famous model racing cars in the world and produced under licence by **Horny** Hobbies. In as new condition and played only once. Packed with information and interesting stuff and a real must for serious Scalextric fans. Covers all the history from the very beginning in 1957 right upto 1970. Running time 60 minutes. Excellent Christmas present."

Calling all Grahams

Many and varied are the messages left on my answering machine but a recent one caused me a little amusement. Somebody called Graham would like to know Steve Baker's phone number - however he failed to provide either a surname or return phone number and when I did a '1471' I got the 'number withheld' reply.

If you are reading this and still need an answer perhaps you would like to let me know which one of the 22 Grahams in the club you are!

Incidentally, by way of a reminder, the editorial phone line is permanently connected to an answering machine so you have two chances of getting an instant response - 'fat and no'.

I always return calls as soon as possible but, contrary to popular opinion, this is not my full time job and I do have a life to lead outside the NSCC!

Also, please note that I am extremely busy at work at the moment (13 hour+ days) so club stuff has had to be put on the back burner for a while. If you are waiting for a response or a prize car please be patient - I haven't forgotten you.

New tyres

This month sees the addition of three more tyres to the range supplied by R/S Slot Racing. We now have racing slicks to fit Vanquish Lola and McLaren models, giving far better grip than the original tyres. Also, there are tyres for Fly Trucks and slicks to fit Scalextric Opel and Mercedes DTM cars, all made from the same "supergrip" compound.

You will notice that we have changed our name slightly from R/S Racing. This is in preparation for the forthcoming launch of our website www.rsslotracing.com. Here you will be able to view pictures of each and every tyre available from our ever increasing range. We will also be adding aluminium racing wheels in various sizes and superb, fully adjustable chassis, for both 1/32 and 1/24 cars along with all the necessary hardware to get them up and running.

Colin Spark



Sir,

Has anyone else had difficulty obtaining the Ninco Club car?

Having joined their on-line club I ordered the car in August, at which time my credit card was debited. To date I have e-mailed them 6 times, had one vague reply and I still await the delivery of the car. Am I the only one?

I am, yours etc,
Vince Cluderay

.....

Sir,

Due to the overwhelming response to my ad in the November newsletter, I would like to sincerely apologise to all those members I was not able to return telephone calls.

Hopefully, I managed to get back to you all. I'm sorry so many people were disappointed. Just wish I'd had more to sell!

I am, yours etc,
Dave Wisdom

.....

Sir,

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the hard work they put into organising the Hornby weekend which I thoroughly enjoyed once again. Due to my other sad obsession (which involves watching kids kick a bag of wind around a muddy field in the vain attempt to get it in between two sticks) I raced off home to get all the phone calls made and paper work done before 6 o'clock so I didn't get to thank everyone personally.

The organisers really do put a lot of effort into these events and it is quite easy for the rest of us to forget this, especially as when we turn up everything is all ready set up but someone has to do it, it doesn't happen on its own and the questions for the quiz don't just get asked at the last minute, they have to be researched and planned for everything to work okay. So once again I'd like to say my thanks to everyone involved and I look forward to next year before which I might have to practise so I don't make a fool of myself on the track again.

I am, yours etc,
Jess Steele

NINCO *track test*

50316 Lola Ford 'Rahal Team' Champ Car

**Reviewed by the membership of
Mussel Bay Slot-car Club**

One of the benefits of the editor's current obsession with 'real' slot-car racing is that he can call on the combined talents of the club members when writing reviews. Thus, you will no longer have to put up with my own prejudices and the cars will get a thorough shakedown by people who can actually use them properly!

When the Hobby Company sent the latest batch of review cars I immediately decided that the Champ Car was classed as editor's perks - I am an unashamed fan of the real thing so I definitely wanted to play with this one! However, much as I applaud Ninco's efforts to bring us different ranges of slot-cars that don't duplicate other manufacturers' efforts, it does seem a somewhat strange marketing decision to go for this one. The series does not have a great following in Europe; as far as I am aware Ninco does not have a large market in the USA and, in any case, the whole CART empire seems on the edge of failure as the IRL series grows in strength.

Real thing v model

The Champ Car series provides one advantage for any manufacturer though - it is essentially a one-make series and there is endless scope for repaints of a single mould! Ninco's first offering is Michel Jourdain Junior's Lola Ford which finished 3rd in the 2003 championship and, as far as I can tell, is a reasonably accurate representation of the full size car.

I am not a rivet counter but the bodyshape looks fine and the livery, while not perfect, is near enough. If I were being picky I would point out that a few sponsors decals are missing and the front wing should be predominantly white, not red. Overall though I was perfectly happy with the look of the car.

On the track

One of our club members, Dave Woodhouse, has a 70ft Ninco track at home so I sought his opinion first and he reported that it was a reasonable performer; not as fast as the current Scalextric single seaters but it had the legs of previous Ninco offerings and recent F1 cars from SCX.



However, when I gave it to John Kelly and John Watt at the club, serious shortcomings emerged. Without a doubt wooden/copper tape tracks are the ultimate test of any slot-car and, although we eventually managed to post some reasonably competitive lap times with it, the thing was highly unpredictable. The main problem was flexing of the rear chassis - the NC5 motor fitted has bags of power and torque but it is impossible to use the acceleration available as it just lifts the left rear wheel all the way down our long straight. Also, the steering front wheels tend to foul the front wing on tight corners which, combined with overlong, too rigid, guide wires lead to unnecessary deslots.

Buy it?

As a model? If you like the real thing - certainly. Home track? Yes, but the motor is possibly too powerful for small circuits. Wooden club track? Forget it - you will get slaughtered! ■

Penmaendyfi Rally Stage

WORDS BY MEL TURBUTT
PHOTOS BY DAVID TURNER

I built Oakwood Park (see “my home circuit, March 1999) in 1995 just at the start of the current boom in the slot-car market. This has given us a host of superb new cars and can only be good for the hobby, but it meant that I could not afford to buy every new release and I would have to “theme” my collection. It was also around this time that my interest in rallying had been rekindled thanks to the introduction (in 1997) of the World Rally Car.

My motor sport interests had wandered away from rallying with the demise of the Group B cars, but these new cars brought it all back. Also, for a “solo” home racer like me it would be much easier to stage a rally rather than a race, but the clincher was when SCX brought out their first rally cars with proper 4 wheel drive. So the die was cast, in future my new purchases would be limited to rally cars.

Enduring images

Now Oakwood Park had taken up pretty much all the available space in the loft, but I had managed to squeeze in a short hill climb/rally stage using some old Airfix track that I had

picked up from a swapmeet years ago. This was inspired by an early 70’s edition of Model Cars that featured a rally event held on a fully landscaped Plexitrac layout. I spent hours looking at the pictures of Airfix Minis passing through Scalextric gateways and ever since then I’d wanted such a layout for myself. The Airfix track was OK, but it was a bit short.

I intended to take my rallying seriously and, short of tunnelling through into next-door’s loft, I’d run out of space. There was only one thing for it – Oakwood Park had to be shortened to allow room for a longer, fully landscaped special stage. That was the only sensible solution, but it still took weeks to summon up the courage to rip-up about a third of the circuit. Eventually the deed was done and new baseboards were erected. The Airfix track was packed away as the new stage (christened Penmaendyfi after one of my favourite spots in Wales) was to utilise the Scalextric track that I had left over, including an old hill climb/drag strip return loop which would allow cars to return to the same place as they started. ⇒



The service areas - A Mitsubishi and Subaru are being scrutineered while a co-driver is being interviewed by a TV crew

Forest tracks

Once a pleasing configuration had been found and the track laid, the landscaping could start in earnest. As a former railway modeller I had some experience in this field (excuse the pun) and plenty of literature from which to extract helpful tips. I wanted to include a forest section within the stage and this is where polystyrene ceiling tiles came into play. Packs of these tiles can be obtained for a couple of quid and they're almost exactly the same thickness as Scalextric track. The tiles are cut with a modelling knife to the same shape as the edges of the track and glued into place using PVA glue.

Hills can be built up by glueing layers of tile cut into contoured shapes similar to the contours on a map. When the glue is dry these contours are covered with decorator's filler, which is then painted and covered with scatter materials. The downside of using these tiles is that everything gets covered in those little polystyrene balls which have to be Hoovered up. The advantage is that model trees with a wire trunk (such as those made by K&M) can simply be "planted" into the landscape. The track rails were carefully

masked and then the whole track was sprayed with gloss brown paint from an aerosol. Using gloss paint results in a harder wearing surface that is also nice and slippery!

Building site

I wanted to include a farmyard as I had a cache of Britain's farm animals and vehicles left over from my younger days and I always liked the sixties box illustration from the Airfix kit of the Porsche 906. It's unlikely that this circuit racer was ever seen bursting through a farmyard, but I thought it made a great picture. Making 1/32 scale buildings (using artist's mounting board for the carcass) was a breath of fresh air after years of working in 4mm and 2mm scales for model railways. Nice and chunky with no fiddly bits!

Vroom, vroom

So lets strap ourselves into the co-driver's seat of Richard Burns' Peugeot 206 WRC and go for a spin around the Penmaendyfi stage. As the lights go green we have a long enough straight to go right up through the gearbox before a dab on the brakes for the Goodwood chicane.



Richard Burn's Subaru is counted down at the start of the stage - part of Oakwood Park circuit can be seen in the background



A Peugeot 206 negotiates the first hairpin - watch out for the water pipes!

Flick left, right, a quick squirt of throttle and then right and left again. Now we enter a fast right-hander. The chicane track continues around this bend, so there's room to let the back-end drift out a bit. Mind you, the solid looking brick wall on the outside concentrates the mind! A short straight leads into a tight right-hand hairpin. Overshoot here and you'll be met either by a babbling brook (fed by a waterfall), or a pile of water pipes that are waiting to form a new gully. Hit either of these and Monsieur Provera ain't gonna be a happy bunny.

We accelerate away from the hairpin through a flat-out left-hander and climb steeply past the pretty Dyfi View cottage.

Vertical drop

As we approach the brow of the hill, Burnsie is hard on the brakes. All that can be seen in the road ahead is a wall of straw bales. It's not a good idea to test the strength of this wall as any car passing through it will not only drop to the floor, but will probably fall through the loft hatch

onto the floor of the landing below. A scale vertical drop of about 500 feet! Thankfully, Richard has got everything sorted and steers sharp left. This is the junction that takes us off the main road and onto the service road to Penmaen reservoir. ➡➔



A Stomil Impreza passes Dyfi View cottage and turns left at the road junction - I hope that photographer realises he is in a dangerous place!



A Castrol Toyota passes through the gate and enters the farmyard - I trust he has removed his wing mirrors as there is not much room to spare.

I feel sick!

We're back on the power now, but the road ahead narrows alarmingly to pass through a gateway. It doesn't look very wide, but the Pug JUST squeezes through. Burnsie treats the following right-hander with some respect as the road is covered with mud. We accelerate away with the farm buildings to our left and a corrugated iron chapel to the right.

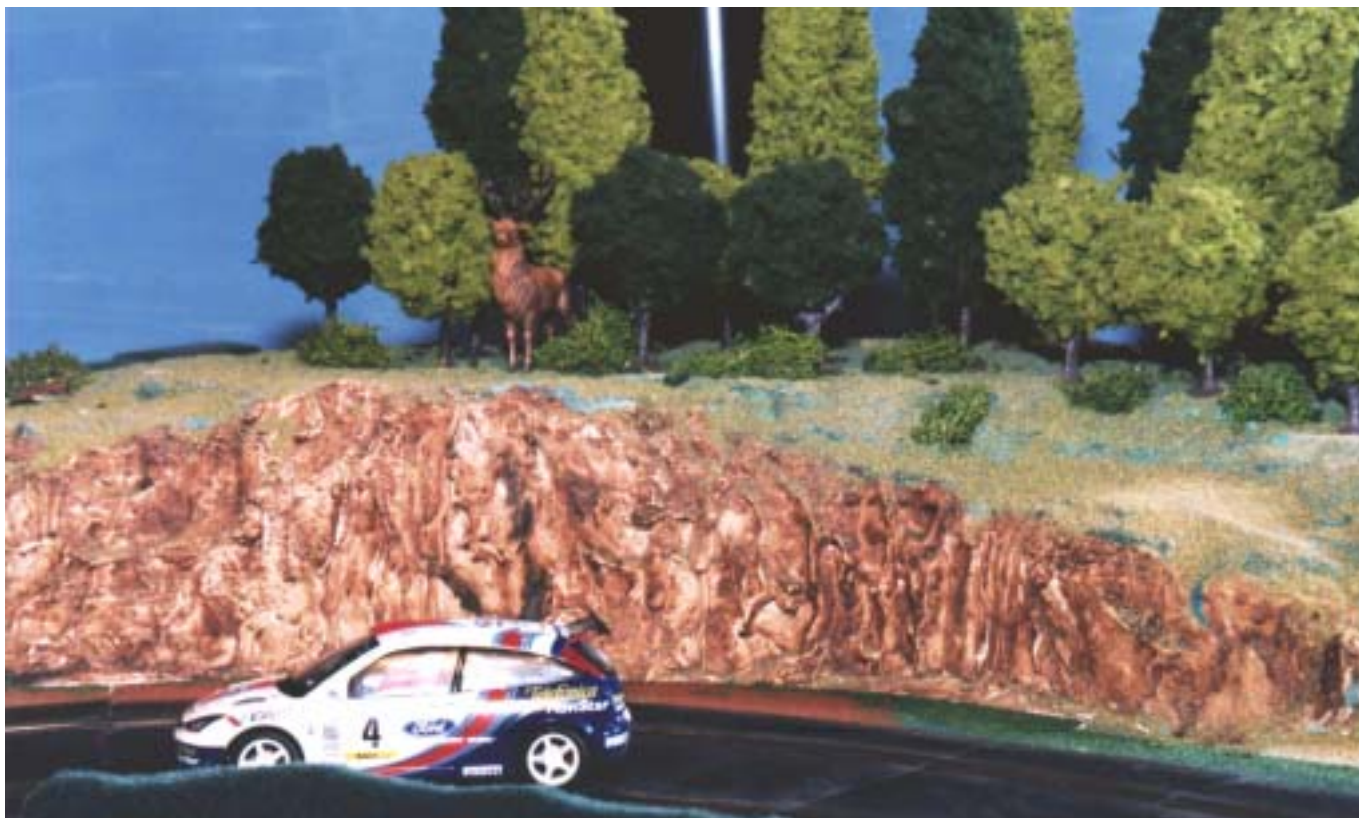


Gwyndaf Evans steers his F2 Seat Ibiza through the Welsh farmyard - no time to admire the surroundings - two hump-back bridges coming up!

It's comforting to see the doctor's car and rally rescue unit parked in the chapel car park. There's even a telephone box, so if their radios fail they can always dial 999. Drive down any Welsh lane, miles away from anywhere, and you'll find a traditional red phone box. We're aroused from our musings by the Peugeot becoming airborne over a crest. Not only that, but there's a hump-back bridge coming up!

At least all this flying will save on tyre wear. We only drop one gear for the following right-hander and then it's uphill again.

All that can be seen through the windscreen now is sky, but Richard is back on the middle pedal as we approach the summit. The phrase "what a wuss" has barely entered the brain when we see why Burnsie drives real rally cars and we drive Scalextric ones as immediately after the brow of the hill the road turns sharp right round a long hairpin. In fact, this section of track used to be part of Oakwood Park. This was Munari bend.



Colin McRae slides the Focus through the cutting watched by one of the locals

Slip sliding away

Exiting the hairpin we approach an impressive looking rock face. The road turns left and then twists into the distance towards the reservoir, but we turn hard right to pass through another gateway and enter the forest section.

Up until now the stage has been tarmac, but now we're on the slippery stuff and almost

surrounded by solid looking trees. In the only gap in all of this flora is an equally solid looking log pile. Richard handbrakes us around a left-hand hairpin and then gets back on the power through a fast right. After a short straight the handbrake is back on again as we drift through a right-hand hairpin that leads to the rear of the chapel that we passed earlier. ➡



The Skoda Octavia rounds the hairpin - approaching the halfway point

A quick squeeze of the loud pedal and we're into yet another hairpin, a left-hander that seems to go on forever. In actual fact this is the aforementioned return loop, so now we have to do it all again only in the opposite direction.

Right - an F2 VW Golf is just exiting the return loop on its way back to the start/finish line



Below - homeward bound - the Golf passes behind the chapel on the return leg



Washing up

Finally, a few lessons that I have learnt from building Penmaendyfi. First, you know those little green scouring pads that you always see in hardware stores and on market stalls? Well they're not for washing up. They're for cutting into strips to make 1/32 scale hedges out of. Second, model trees are like model people. You buy a load of them thinking that they'll fill your layout, spend hours painting and preparing them, and when you put them on your layout it just seems to swallow them up so that you need a load more. And third, I don't regret for one

moment taking the plunge and shortening Oakwood Park. It's still every bit as demanding as it used to be and I still indulge in the occasional race, but Penmaendyfi gives me a lot of enjoyment. I've finally got the scenic rally stage that I spent so many years dreaming about. If any present club members remember being involved in that 1970 (I think) rally event that featured on the front cover of Model Cars, my sincere thanks for the inspiration.

Now then, Colin McRae is just warming up the Xsara. I wonder if he's got room for a passenger? ■

Ramsgate Rarities

An auction is held at the NSCC/Hornby weekend with the proceeds being donated to Hornby's nominated charity. If you didn't attend this year here are pictures of some of the rare items which raised well over £2000.



*Left - prototype Corvette
Below - prototype Subaru*



Left - extremely rare Dutch club limited edition TVR



Below and right - couldn't afford the items in the auction? A £1 raffle ticket provided two lucky members with a pre-production approval model of the latest Australian Commodore



Unlucky in the raffle? - a pre-production Beetle for everybody as a present from Hornby

Argos Cars

If you want to add this little lot to your collection then you will need to buy three complete sets as they are exclusive to the catalogue store, Argos. Or, of course, you could always bid silly money on Ebay for the individual cars - I recently saw a pair of the TVRs fetch more than the cost of the complete set! They are, clockwise from bottom left C2528W, C2531W, C2532W, C2533W, C2527W & C2526W.



However, if finances won't stretch that far, why not enter the Christmas competition? Top prize this year is an Argos TVR set, signed by Martin Short - the owner/driver of the Xavex car.



Newark Swapmeet Sunday 26th Oct 2003

BY ROGER BARKER

The alarm interrupted my slumbers at half past five, a quick wash, a cup of tea and I'm on my way. A check round all the road signs put up the previous evening and down to the Grove Leisure Centre to meet the duty manager to let us in and finish off the previous night's preparations.

I meet up with Steve Cannon and the rest of the boys who had done so much the previous evening by arranging tables and setting up the Trent Valley Slot-car Club track ready for the Sunday meet. At the Leisure Centre we are allowed in shortly after seven thirty; just forty five minutes to set up before "The Traders" are in. Very soon that oh so familiar hum fills the hall, the chatter of all things Scalextric, it was great to see fifty tables full of the stuff with several stall holders taking advantage of the "Spares Only" tables that were available.

As the time to open approached Steve Cannon brought the two "Bargain Hunt" competitors together, namely Phil Ashton and Mark Wright, they were handed their two hundred pounds each and as the doors opened they scuttled off feverishly into the hall to purchase their bargains.

Rare Rover

At every NSCC swapmeet something genuinely rare and unusual pops up; Newark, not to be outdone, was no exception. The irrepressible John Jude provided one of the rarest cars I believe I have ever seen...a Rover 3500 ...yes a Rover, it was factory printed in the red and blue livery of National Holidays. I don't know if it changed hands on the day but I can say that negotiations were at an advanced stage by the end of the day. There was a fair array of non Scalextric slot-cars on display, John Cowser finding an early MRRC 1/32 scale rail racer on a member's table. Mark Scale picked up a shoe box full of really nice sixties cars during the day

which some lucky member had rescued from his local tip! The day drew on; the two "Bargain Hunters" had scoured the tables and put their respective wares underneath the Auctioneers Gavel (which incidentally was a Mighty Metro!). Just like the real programme neither contestant made a profit, but it added to the day. The raffle prize of an SCX Rally Set (kindly donated by Scale Models) was also drawn at this time and gleefully taken away by its recipient. Overall over a hundred people came through the door, I believe around ten new members joined the club on the day, taking advantage of the Swapmeet subsidising their membership. So hopefully this meet will continue to grow and become a "Must Visit" occasion for members and Traders alike. ■

NSCC Hornby Weekend - 1

BY KARL CORNELL

The 31st October saw the arrival of the NSCC/ Hornby Weekend for the 6th year. This was my first time at this event and it did not go to plan. First off I had a puncture before I had even left home and then, whilst I was driving down the M2, a rather large stone bounced off my windscreen. To make matters worse I had left all the travel information at home and could not remember the name of the hotel or the road it was in! After driving round Ramsgate for some time I asked a passer by about a hotel that had changed its name; fortunately she knew the one I meant and kindly directed me 200 yards back the way we had just come!

After checking in we investigated the racing area where there was a large display cabinet showing off club members' own finds; it was nice to see the full range of NSCC cars on show as well as old buildings and the holy grail of them all (not the Scalletti Arrow!) the blue Bugatti including the wooden mould block!

We all met in the bar at 7pm; Shaun Bennett was already there tasting the delights of the hotel beer and I was introduced to Brian Rogers, his good lady, Chris, and Stephen Barber. We all sat around talking and getting to know one another over a few beers when Brian had the idea of going to Pizza Express but on arrival the place was full, so we walked up towards the town and spotted a Chinese restaurant that was having its opening night. This is where Stephen got some special treatment from the waitress (must have been the aftershave he was wearing). Even better was the special offer of free booze!

To end the evening we returned to the Hotel where we consumed a lot more beer and the general chitchat, mainly Scalextric related, lasted until the early hours of Saturday morning.

Somehow we managed to rise early for breakfast before the proceedings started at 10 o'clock. Rob Smith gave a short talk outlining the events for the weekend, and then the time arrived for which we had been waiting.....

.....Racing

The four lane Sport track layout performed faultlessly throughout the whole weekend, which is more than can be said for the RMS system. Crash and burn was the rule - once you come off that was it - you were out of that race. 1st place you got 4 points, 2nd place 3 points, 3rd place 2 points and 4th place 1 point.

Each person had to race in each lane to make things fair and the first session used the Indy cars which were the ones that caught most people out with their tail happy handling. After four races I did manage to keep on the track for one whole race to claim my first point! After a break for lunch we had the second round of racing but this time we were using the Tuscan TVR 400 Eclipse Sport Edition with the new guide blade fitted; the detail on this car is amazing.

This was a race with a difference as the car was placed on the track in front of you without the guide blade fitted: the RMS counted down as normal to start the race but, instead of roaring off from the start line, you had to fit the guide blade on first then put the car on the track and you were off, except for Shaun Bennett who was four laps down before he got the guide fitted with a little help from Adrian Norman but not before breaking the rear wing off the car in the process!

These cars handled very well on the track and during the afternoon's racing most people finished all 4 races (I only finished 3). Afterwards there was a Q and A with Adrian Norman; this was a very interesting discussion with a lot of people's questions answered. After a two hour break we sat down to the evening meal where everybody was issued with a pre-production green Beetle with no tampo, clear wheels and a pink driver..

After the meal we had the Scalextric quiz and some of the questions were bloody hard; I don't know which book they come from but it was not Roger Gillham's! Amazingly, yours =>

truly won the quiz and I was presented with a Sport Edition Corvette no. 57. By the time this was all over it was 11pm and we all went off to the bar for a couple of hours drinking and discussing the quiz in general before retiring in the early hours of the morning to bed.

I was down for breakfast at 8am again but there was no sign of the others; most people appeared at around 9 still bleary eyed.

At 10 o'clock the 3rd and final round of racing started; this time we were using the Corvette Sport Edition, another fine looking car and in my opinion it has better handling than the TVR 400. My aim for the day was to finish all four races without coming off the track and try and improve on my poor score. With the first heat underway I was quite pleased with my performance for seven laps before I was told that I had come off on the first bend - I had been watching somebody else's car and thought it was my own! This is where 'Air Scalextric' was born or, as Shaun calls it, 'Ghost Racing'. It got even

better in a later heat when three cars collided; each competitor was convinced that his car was the sole survivor and raced hard to the end! On a good note I did finish the last three heats (hooray)!

With the weekend drawing to a close all that was left was the auction and raffle. All proceeds were being donated to cancer research. Up for auction was the prototype Scooby in silver, a white prototype Corvette and a silver Mini as well as smooth track sections and various other Scalextric items. Overall £2400 was raised which is a great achievement between 48 people; well done to everybody who bid in the auction. This year's weekend car was a GT40 in yellow but it was stuck on a boat coming from China!

In conclusion, I would like to thank Rob Smith and Hornby Hobbies for all the hard work organising the event and add a word of warning - do not let your partner race like I did because it is very embarrassing when she beats you! ■

NSCC Hornby Weekend - 2

BY TONY FISHLOCK &
ANNETTE GOODMAN

It all started with a phone call from Rob Smith, trying to discreetly ascertain if I slept in the same bed as the 'partner' on my application form. Luckily for me I did, and so the wheels were set in motion for our first NSCC/Hornby weekend.

The journey from Newhaven began rather uneventfully, until we reached Ramsgate, where, to Annette's horror, I drove through a pedestrian zone, which also happened to contain a busy Friday market! If this was the standard of driving, I didn't hold out much hope for the weekend's racing!

Eventually we found the hotel, checked in, and wandered down to the racing room to see what was going on - after getting chucked out of the racing room we went back to the bar, and there met up with Richard Davies and Mike Ronald. It was great to be 'taken under the wing' as neither of us knew anyone else there, or indeed, who anyone else there was. Richard pointed out various people, we put a few names to faces and Mike showed us some of his wonderful collection, including some amazing custom built models. Some of these found their way into the display cabinet (which was very oversubscribed, with loads of interesting displays to ogle at). At last - people we could talk to about Scalextric who didn't look bored! After discovering we needed to find food, the four of us then continued our discussions in the local Chinese. A very warm welcome for our first meet!

The next morning the introductions and racing began in earnest. Neither of us had raced on anything larger than 'the living room oval' before, so were a bit concerned that we were way out of our league and would look really crap. We needn't have worried! In the first race session we got three 2nd places and one 3rd place between us, and total humiliation was avoided. After lunch and the second series of races we were given a

talk by Adrian Norman. We found this really interesting, even though the majority of answers were 'yes'. It was great to have some idea of what's in the pipeline, mainly so we could gauge how much money we'd need to save up for next year! We'd never even heard of Mr Blobby before, so came away feeling very enlightened.

We then sat down for dinner. Much to our surprise and delight, we were all given a pre-production green beetle, even the non-members, so thank you NSCC/Hornby! Bets were taken as to how many would appear on ebay come Monday!

After dinner it was quiz time. We arrived feeling we had at least a basic knowledge of Scalextric, and left knowing we had an awful lot to learn. Luckily, in the true nature of quizzes, there was plenty of whispering (aka cheating) going on, which gave us a sporting chance of at least getting one question right.

Nerves of steel

Sunday morning was the final heat of the racing, and our final chance to outdo each other on points. As our racing was over fairly early we had some time to socialise some more with the other enthusiasts. One of these was Richard Winter, who had a really comprehensive collection of foreign catalogues and nerves of steel, as he was letting anyone who asked have a look through them, including us.

Following the final showdown and lunch, we were given a talk on future developments by Jamie Buchanan. It was really good to be able to get our grubby mits on some of the new products. The talk was pretty technical; we never realized exactly how much work went into the production of just one model - a real eye opener!

Following a short break, the skilled and not-so-skilled were presented with their prizes, and this was then followed by the auction. We had been warned we would spend money - and =>

we did! Knowing it was all going to charity did make parting with our hard earned cash a little more bearable though. We managed to obtain a couple of Dallara Indy cars as souvenirs: the first cars we ever raced at our first proper race meet – ahhhhhh! A snip at £22 the pair.

We also did well in the raffle, coming away with a pre-production Australian issue Ford Falcon, and a Kellogg's NASCAR.

Overall an EXCELLENT weekend, we were welcomed by everybody, and there was an extremely friendly sporting spirit! Despite me losing the racing, the quiz, and even the raffle to Annette, I had a great time, and can't wait to apply for next year's meet – I've already provisionally booked the time off work!



..... and from a female point of view

My excitement at learning we'd been chosen suddenly turned to blind panic when I realised a) I'd put my name down for racing and b) I was walking unarmed into blokeland! Luckily all my fears were unfounded; I had a great time, with lots of laughs along the way.

To me the highlight of the weekend was not beating Tony at the racing, or even winning the Australian Ford in the raffle (though that came pretty close!), but actually getting my hands on my own personal Scalextric holy grail – no, not a James Bond set, but being an avid snail

collector (another story), a genuine Guinness/O'Neill's racing snail! So my sincere thanks must go to Mike Ronald for letting me have a play with it, and letting us race it against our own home made racing snail.

In conclusion, I'd say to any partner in two minds about attending, pop your name down! It's a great social event, and you never know, you might even beat your other half at racing too – both us racing females did this year. And if nothing else, you can keep an eye on how much they spend at auction! ■

Ramsgate Weekend Thanks

BY RICHARD WINTER

It becomes somewhat boring and predictable to keep saying that this year's NSCC/Hornby weekend was better than last year but it was!

When Adrian Norman moved on to take up a job with Hornby, Rob Smith volunteered for the role of Hornby Liaison. What we forgot to tell him was that with this came the responsibility for organising the weekend! Adrian was a hard act to follow but Rob somehow managed it.

When he realised this it was too late to get out of it and he responded superbly, building upon the excellent work that Adrian had started. For a start he moved the venue from the idiosyncratic Pegwell Bay Hotel, with the underground passage to the bar, to the Comfort Inn in Ramsgate itself. We took over the whole hotel and the staff response was excellent, looking after all our needs, well perhaps not all of them, for the entire weekend. There were minor difficulties such as Don Stanley being shown to a room full of beds(!), all vertically stacked and then having a room with no heating and a window he couldn't shut. The reverse of this was Chris Gregory's room where the heating was full on and with windows he couldn't open! The obvious solution was for them to swap at hourly intervals but they survived.

The track, designed by Andy Sykes using his excellent S Plan software, was not the traditional racing circuit but, with its sideswipes and crossovers, tested all our racing skills. The entire new track, borders, barriers and the RMS system were generously supplied by Hornby who also excelled themselves in the prizes and auction items they donated. The racing was "organised" by Stephen Barber and Shaun Bennett, I say organised as, although they volunteered at a committee meeting, only when the racing started did both of them say that neither had ever used RMS! A steep learning curve developed and by the second group of races an element of efficiency had appeared!

A new feature of this year's event was the opportunity for members to display some of

their prized possessions in the display cabinet, loaned through the good offices of Gareth Jex and erected by the combined brains and brawn of members from the Farnham club. We were also able to display the covers from all the UK catalogues thanks to Stephen Barber who brought down the display boards he uses when displaying his instruments at European music fairs.

The job of extracting as much money as possible for the raffle fell to Adrian Leggett who somehow persuaded the gathered members to part with over £260 for items we had not even put on display until the Sunday! The dinner on the Saturday night was excellent and was followed by a quiz that just showed how little the NSCC members knew about Scalextric cars. The other way of looking at this was that the Chairman had made it too difficult but, as I am writing this, that view is not accepted. Just to say that the winning member got less than 50% of the available points. See what I mean!

Hornby input was provided by Adrian Norman and Jamie Buchanan, the designer of many of the latest Scalextric cars, who gave us a very interesting talk on car design and also brought along the very latest Renault F1 car and some new track pieces. All in all, fascinating and certainly educational in exactly what is needed to produce that latest car.

The closing session on Sunday, after the race prizes were awarded, was the raffle and auction and big thanks goes to all those members whose generosity, especially Chris Gregory for opening every bid with £19 and even winning one item, contributed almost £2,400 to charity. Thanks obviously go to Hornby who donated test mould cars, final approval cars, trial track etc. but also to Mike Ronald who donated several of his weird and wonderful slot-cars for auction as well as Joel Thura who donated a "special" for charity.

A final thanks must go to all those who stayed behind to dismantle the track and display cabinets. Roll on next year. ■

Stars And Their Toy Plastic Cars

Barry Lee and the Scalextric Ford Mondeo

BY STEPHEN DREW

Barry Lee is a full time racing driver and engineer (his passport gives his profession as a racing driver) from Chelmsford in Essex and has been around longer than most drivers.

Barry started Autocross in the 60s in a Ford Anglia, with a 1500 GT engine in it and painted it yellow and black. He took it on a trailer to its first event and it's been said that he was the one that ruined autocrossing by bringing the car to the track on a trailer, wearing overalls, putting on proper racing numbers and not just white-washing them on the sides.

Whether the autocross world liked it or not, Barry soon made it clear that he was there to stay and when the Players No 6 National Championship was introduced, he took the title and kept it for three consecutive years.

The final Players No 6 in 1967 was to be Barry's last autocross meeting; by then he had won something like 300 trophies. Competing against him at that meeting was Roger Clark and, also there watching, was Ford Competition boss Henry Taylor. Was the exuberant sideways style, which was widely adopted by other drivers, brought from his speedway days or was it from his Scalextric set?

After this meeting Henry Taylor asked him if he would like to go to Boreham on the Monday morning because he would like to talk to him, show him a new model of car and offer him a proposition. Although Barry won his class that day, he was only fourth fastest overall in the event, but that didn't seem to worry Taylor. Barry wasn't the fastest person there at the time, but he had the most professionally turned out team.

Barry duly went along to Boreham, had his interview with Henry Taylor, was shown around and, at the end of the workshop, behind some screens was a J25 (what is now known as the

Mark 1 Escort). Barry's brief was to take away one of these pilot build cars and test it in competition. The first event was to be the televised rallycross at Croft and he had to pick a car up from Allens of Romford, prepare it and drive up North for the meeting. Barry says, "I picked it up after dark because they hadn't even seen the car and it was about a month before it was due to be released. It was sacrilege really, because the first thing we had to do was tear it apart, put a 1650 engine in, fit eight inch wheels, convert the compression struts to a roll bar front end and generally make it ready for competition."



True to form Barry is not too sure exactly what happened at the first rallycross meeting with the Escort. He thinks he won his heats. Roger Clark was first overall in a twin cam and he was about fourth. ➡

For 1968 Ford gave Tony Chappel a twin cam Escort for rallycross and left Barry with the 1650; His job was to keep on autocrossing with the 1650 and to report back on any problems he had, although he also competed in a few rallycrosses as well.

Barry was hoping it would lead to a full works drive and not just a factory supported development programme and, at the end of 1968, this goal was achieved. Escorts by then were winning international rallies and chalking up many saloon racing wins, so the pressure was on to do well in rallycross and Henry Taylor decided that Barry would give up autocross and do rallycross.

He was also made team manager by Henry Taylor and his job was to do the twelve rounds and win the championship for Ford. The following year he did development work on the four wheel drive rallycross Capri, and continued to compete in the Escort.

Barry moved on to Hot Rod racing with the Mark 1 Escort and later with the Mark 2, winning four World Hot Rod Championships, and many other championships as far away as South Africa and as close to home as Northern

Ireland. He also won the Castrol BTRDA Rallycross Championship Title driving a Burton Performance Centre sponsored Ford Escort.

He later joined a full works Dealer Opel Team to compete in rallycross and hot rodding with two Opel Kadett GT/Es.

In the 1980s and 90s Barry lectured to schools nationwide on road safety sponsored by Total Oil. He also masterminded the Carlsberg Toleman Motorsport attempt on the Paris-Daker after witnessing the event at first hand in 1986, not to mention racing Caterhams, trucks, and Thundersaloons in addition to racing on the oval tracks and his Scalextric one at home.

In 1994 Barry was back full time with the Eurocar Super Saloon Series on the ovals. Gone was his familiar 351 number in favour of the number 1 on the Ford Mondeo which was a part of the three car team sponsored by Dagenham Motors; the other two cars being number 2 for Alf Boarer and the number 3 guest car.

The Eurocar Super Saloon was closely based on the highly successful SHP motorsport National Winston Cup car, but with a distinctly European flavour. The Ford Mondeo was chosen simply because it was the most recently





introduced four door saloon on the market and, therefore, it was likely to be some time before it was superseded or facelifted. It was a testament to the quality of the finished product that Ford saw fit to endorse it; producing the moulds for the Mondeo shell cost a substantial five figure sum. The shell is not an exact replica of the original. Look closely and you might notice that the longitudinal strakes on top of the roof have gone, and the wings have been subtly reshaped to move the wheel arches up, so allowing the bodyshell to be mounted substantially lower. Rather amusingly, one of Ford's main concerns prior to giving approval for the use of the Mondeo shape was that the composite panels might find their way on to modified road cars. Well, that's the way big corporations think.

The Scalextric connection

Barry informed me that the first time he raced on a Scalextric track was as a young boy with a yellow Lotus, going round the bends sideways, so racing in the slot has been in his life for a long time. In the beginning he could only dream of being a racing driver like every other young boy with a slot track, not knowing that Scalextric would one day build his car and put his team cars into a set.

Throughout his career Barry has always had

a track and raced on it, nowadays he races on his home track with his son. We have also taken a slot-car track to race meetings before now and set it up in the team's awning with the cars in the sponsors colours. Barry would race as hard in the slot as on the race track and it was a job to get his hand off the controller and get him into the car, so now the track is left at home.

The first Scalextric Ford Mondeo was Barry's No 1 Eurocar C196. He informed me that this all came about by working on a sponsorship deal; Scalextric liked the look of the new Eurocar Super Saloon Championship and said they would like to come on board with Barry and his team, so the Scalextric Eurocar Mondeos were produced in the following form:

Ref: C570 Car No1 Barry Lee which was included in set C805. Several examples were also provided for Barry and Dagenham Motors' promotional use

Ref: C579 Car No 2 Alf Boarer, which was available separately.

Ref: C196 Car No 3 was the other car in the boxed set; Scalextric changed the colour of this car to yellow so they had two different coloured cars in the set. ■



Review



**Le Mans Start Pack
Ref 69050
BY GARETH JEX**

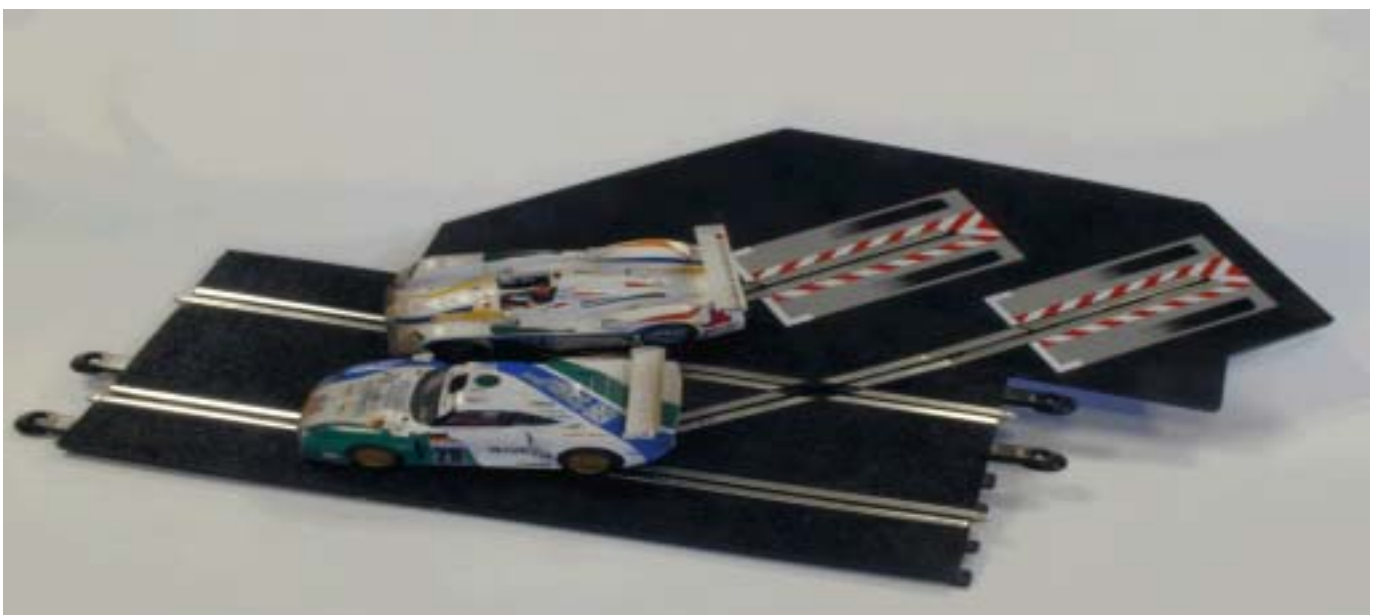
Let's get the track sorted out straight away. This is not a straight re-issue of the original Le Mans start. Both sections of track are new. The major problem with the old style was straightforward; if both cars exited at the same time they hit each other! Previously the right hand track (on the parking section) exited to the inside lane, the left hand side exited to the outside lane crossing the inside, hence the crash! This new design has to be an improvement in my opinion.

The parking section has two printed areas with red and white hazards around the slot and a grey box with white start lines to the front and printed black tyre skid marks. This section is smooth and flat, it does not have the same surface texture as the track. Starting from these sections in cars with magnets is not a problem, however without magnets it's a different story. Don't get me wrong, I don't think this is a failing, but it should be noted. To be honest you can't leave at full throttle anyway, you'll come off

straight away.

Flipping the track sections over reveals several interesting items. First off there are slots for borders all round the parking section (I'm not aware of any new borders being produced). The other surprises are the hangovers from the original. Still present are the small pegs and holes to locate the sliding switch mechanism from the pit stop and the rails on the parking section are cut in two on the left hand side slot. This was on the original to enable the push button switches to be used. Power is transferred across the cut via a soldered cable under the track as it is on the slot entrance sections and cross over point. Care must be taken with these cables, however they are not difficult to repair.

Overall a great addition to any layout and something lots of people want. You only need to check out Ebay to see how much people are prepared to spend on second hand examples with corroded rails and broken tabs etc. to see this is going to go down well. ➡



The cars

Porsche 911 GT-1 "Konrad" No. 28

Driven in the 1997 Le Mans race by F. Konrad, M. Baldi and R. Nearn. The car failed to finish and retired with suspension failure on lap 138. Somewhat fittingly, perhaps, SCX have decided to add to their weathering effects with both the two cars in this set with a new "Burnt Out Tyre Effect". What this means is a very subtle dusting over the whole body with a greater build up around the front of the nose and down the sides. It's a nice touch, but to be honest it makes the car look dirty rather than a specific effect, perhaps it's too subtle for my eye!



Generally the car is identical to previously released Porsche GT-1s with two exceptions. First, and not so important, is the chassis which is silver/grey rather than the normal black. Second and one of the most interesting features is the inclusion of the 'Xenon' lighting system. None of the previously released Porsche GT-1s have had lights.

The printing quality is up to SCX's normal high standards with crisp fine detail and strong colours. Straight out of the box the car performs well, with the standard adjustable magnet, RX 41 motor, double braid, guide flag suspension and guide flag return to centre mechanism. One point to note: the box photos show the car with silver wheels but it actually comes with gold ones. There are some other minor subtle differences between the box photos and the final production car.

Audi R8 Le Mans "Champion" No.3

Driven in the 2001 Le Mans race by J. Herbert, D. Theys and Kelleners, the car qualified third but failed to finish. This car has been given the same dusted treatment and it is more noticeable on this model due to the livery mainly being white. Talking of the livery it's pretty spot on to the real car with the exception of the rear spoiler which for some reason is nothing like the real car. (Note; info from various web sites, so if you know different let me know!).



Again the model is identical to the previous releases with the noticeable addition of the lighting which was one of the few complaints when we reviewed the Gulf livery model a while back (are they listening?).

The printing of the livery is very good with all the red, blue, green and yellow stripes and swirls really looking good. Again there are some subtle differences between the finished car and that shown on the box art.

Anyone who has raced these cars will know what great fun they are, they just go and then go some more! A real class winner at my club. Just run the motor in a little, loosen off the chassis screws and keep your finger glued to max.

To sum up - this set is a cracker! Two great unique cars and a new Le Mans start for all those who asked for it. Retail price is £64.95. Expect them to go quickly I believe only about 400 will make it to the UK. ■

Miracle On The B2443

A PIECE OF CHRISTMAS SILLINESS FROM JOHN DILWORTH

Christmas at the club is always a great occasion. The Boxing Day race is the highlight of the year for most of the members. We always decorate the club room, keep a few bottles of Tio Pepe handy, and generally have a good time. Everyone turns up with the cars they've got for Christmas. One year Bruno built a sledge complete with Santa and six reindeer to lead the parade lap- it didn't half oversteer around the big curves, but it set the mood. Most years Barry eats a few more pies in November, sticks on a cotton wool beard, and makes a passable Father Christmas. He gets a sack full of guides, motors, tyres and other seasonal bits and bobs to give out to the junior members, and promises the ladies that their Christmas wish will come true if they gave him a smooch. That's Barry's Christmas wish, anyway. And it never comes true. The ladies know him too well.

1966 was a very special year though. Throughout the club, the mood was festive in the weeks running up to the big day. All the kids had given their want lists to their dads, who'd promptly gone to Harry Hobbs' Hobby Heaven in the High Street to place the orders. Plus a few requests of their own. As the days to Christmas counted down, more and more people were pestering Harry for news. "I've sent the order to Havant, as usual. They're sending their van any day now. It should all be there. All the models you could dream of. The very latest gear." "Well they're cutting it a bit fine, Harry. You're going to have a lot of very disappointed kids in the town if you don't come through." "Yes, and not a few unhappy dads, either. I've heard those Cobra kits are pretty good." "Well, Sid, it should all be arriving pretty soon now", said Harry, but his optimistic words hid a dark and bitter secret.

The last Saturday before Christmas dawned, and heavy snow covered the straggling queue of kids and parents waiting outside Harry's shop at nine o'clock. They could tell straight away from Harry's expression as he switched the little Scalextric sign on the door from 'Closed' to

'Open', that the van had not come. He fell back as the surge of people forced the door open and filled the cramped shop in a whirl of icy air. "I'm sorry everyone. I've not heard anything. It's always been here by now in the past. The Christmas Scalextric delivery is always my busiest day." "Get on the phone, Harry boy, or there's going to be trouble", Ken growled as his little boy Nigel began to sob. "Am I going to get my Typhoon for Christmas dad?" he simpered. The crowd fell silent for a moment. "Don't worry son, I'll make sure you do", said Ken, glowering at Harry.

Harry retreated to his back room, whilst the ugly crowd eyed up the bare shelves, the few marquetry kits on the counter and the dusty Sopwith Camel hanging from the ceiling. Harry rang the usual number. Engaged. He rang his friend Algy at Gamages. Yes, they had their Christmas shipment alright, but they'd sold out straightaway. Sorry. Can't help. Harry began to sweat. He'd never be able to show his face in town again if he didn't come up with the goods. He let the bakelite receiver drop heavily back onto its cradle and held his head in his hands. Then he reached out to the little stack of papers wedged at the back of the desk and pulled out a well-fingered envelope. He read it again, just to make sure he hadn't misunderstood:

"Dear Mr Hobbs,

Thank you for your large order, but due to several unpaid invoices which have accumulated over the past year, Lines Bros. Ltd are obliged to sever all business contacts with 'Harry Hobbs' Hobby Heaven' and are not prepared to honour any outstanding orders from the aforesaid company.

With the compliments of the season, etc."

Harry had had a difficult time since his guinea pig died last year. He'd taken to the odd nip of whiskey in the evenings, and then the occasional flutter on the horses. All the profits of his thriving model shop just seemed to have drained away. No-one would give him credit any more, except for the little place that sent him →→

needlework accessories that he couldn't sell. Things had never looked so bleak for Harry as it did this Christmas. He raised his tear-filled eyes to the ceiling and whispered, "Somebody help me. I can't let the children down. Please help me and I'll never touch a drop or put a penny on the gee-gees again. I swear."

Just then, the phone rang. Harry picked up the receiver and an unexpectedly cheerful voice crackled in his left ear. "Hello. Harry Hobbs? I've got your Scalextric delivery here." "What? Good grief! Thank heavens! Where are you? I need that delivery quickly- things are starting to get difficult here. What's happened?" "Well, Harry- I'm in a bit of a fix myself. I turned off the main road at Brattlethwaite and the snow started coming down really heavy. I kept going, but everything went white within a mile or so. I couldn't see the side of the road, and, well you know that sharp left by the pond in Lower Gillham?" "Er, yes." "I missed it. The front end of the van's in the pond up to the windscreen wipers." "Oh no! That means you're at least five miles up the road. What about the A.A.?" "I called them. But all the roads around here are impassable. There's snow drifts all over the place and they're going out to the women and children first. They told me to walk to the nearest town and leave the van 'till Tuesday." "Boxing Day?" "Yeah. I can't do anything else." "Good grief. Listen. Where are you now?" "I'm in the Snug at the Crown and Pinion in Little Pendle. It's quite cosy actually. I'm not going anywhere for now." "O.K. You stay there then. I'll have to go and tell the townspeople the bad news."

Harry stood up with a heavy heart and walked back to the front shop, past his empty store room. At least he had a story for them. He held his hands up and pleaded for quiet before telling the restive crowd about his phone conversation. Howls of anguish went up and the sound of children's sobs rent the air unbearably. Grown men clenched their fists and beat the counter, their chests, their foreheads. It looked like it was going to be a grim and joyless Christmas. "Wait a minute, folks. We can't let this beat us." It was George, an old member of the club, a devoted racer and modeller of

infinite patience. "Twenty five years ago I took my little cockle boat to Dunkirk; the British army was trapped on the beaches at the mercy of the Luftwaffe. Did we stand by feeling sorry? Did we heck. We went to get them. In whatever we had. Rowing boats, pleasure steamers, sailing dinghies, hovercraft, jet-skis - whatever there was that was waterproof. We set off across the Channel and got our boys back. That's how we could do it now." Murmurs began to ebb and flow around the crowded shop. "What's the old boy getting at? We should sail over to Lower Gillham?" "Don't be daft. He means we should call in the army." "Yes, of course! They could get through the snowdrifts with their Churchill tanks!" "Not the army, the navy, you squallock!" "Hold on, hold on." George was waving his pipe in the air, trying to get attention again. "What I mean is, we've all got sledges, toboggans, tea trays, hostess trolleys... there's Dan's donkey in the barn, and old Mother Madgewick's got a little dog cart, and Jim Flowerdew's got his wheelbarrow. If we all got ourselves dressed up warm with some thermos flasks and stuff, why, we could tramp over to Gillham, load up the Scalextric and be back here by tea time!" "By the cringe, he's right you know. I say, what a wheeze. Everybody back home for scarves and welly boots. Round up anything that will traverse this snow and meet back at the vicarage. I'll get Mrs Counter to brew tea for the flasks, and start on some hot soup and sandwiches. We're off across the snowy wastes to Lower Gillham!" The Rev. Counter was good at organising.

Half an hour later, virtually the whole village was gathered in the snow outside the vicarage, extemporising Christmas carols and with a collective excitement that had already made this Christmas Eve an epic occasion. Some wore tennis racquets tied to their feet, some carried lanterns. All were red-cheeked and ready for the adventure. "All right, everyone, follow me!" called the reverend, taking Dan's donkey by the halter. "No. It's that way", said George, flourishing his pipe in the other direction as hot sparks fell onto the fresh snow.

The mood kept up until Little Pendle and

the Crown and Pinion hove into view, its thatched roof blanketed with white. Orange light flickered invitingly from the leaded windows. Rev. Counter instructed the women and children to wait outside and sing carols, while he took the menfolk inside to find the Scalextric man. Within the bar was a fug of smoke, and a heavy pall of stale malt. A round of beers for the men, port for the ladies, and lemonade for the children was ordered, to which the landlord added a large plate of home-made mince pies. "Compliments of the season", he said. Then the Rev. Counter looked around. Sat on a bench by the hearth was a heavy set man in a donkey jacket. A smile appeared through his full white beard and he set his pint down on the tiles. "I take it you're looking for me", he said. "Nick's the name, Scalextric's the game!" He offered his right hand to the reverend, and with his left slipped a set of keys into his duffle coat pocket. "There you go sir. You'll see the van round the corner. Take what you can. I've talked to 'ead office on the blower and they've written it off against insurance. They don't care anymore. I'll wait here. Nice little pub, ain't it?"

The red Ford Thames van was indeed just beyond the next bend in the road, its front end deep in the ice of Pendle Pond, but the back doors, painted with the words 'Nick Clore's Seasonal Delivery Service' were easily accessible from the snow banked road. The parents and children formed up a human chain while the reverend slid the key in the chromed handle and threw the van doors open. He pulled out the first crates bearing the familiar chequered flag brand, and heaved them into the waiting arms of the next man. From then on, box after box was drawn from the seemingly bottomless black space in the back of the outwardly tiny Thames van. The boxes were stowed on sledges, Dan's donkey, Mother Madgewick's dog cart, in duffle bags and shopping trolleys- whenever it seemed the van must be empty, more crates appeared. And the labels were new and mysterious; 'Monogram', 'Revell', 'Cox', 'VIP'- all were swallowed up by the waiting queue. "Right, I think that's it", called Rev. Counter, and he slammed the doors closed. The noise echoed

briefly, but then came an ominous creaking, and the van moved slowly forward. Inch by inch it slid beneath the ice, until it had disappeared. Everyone watched, spell-bound, as water and then ice closed over the red Ford's roof. Fresh snow fell, and within minutes, it was as if the van had never existed. "I never knew Pendle Pond was so deep", said Ken, "We'd better warn P.C. World about it when we see him back in town."

Darkness was falling as they returned to the Crown and Pinion. "I'll go and tell Nick the bad news", said the Reverend, disappearing quickly into the snug bar. But it was empty. The landlord received his enquiries blankly. "You're the only ones we've had in all day. All the roads round about are closed, Vicar. Everyone's staying at home this Christmas." "But you must have seen him my good sir. I spoke to him myself. A chubby, red cheeked fellow with a broad smile and a long white beard." "You pullin' my leg vicar? You askin' me if I've seen Father Christmas? You've been at the mulled wine, aint'cher? Get off back home or you'll miss your Midnight Mass."

With lanterns lit and another round of the Crown and Pinion's mince pies tucked away, the caravan tramped the rest of the way home with happy hearts, and the burden of their heavy sleds and bags seemed to get less and less as the lights of the town appeared across the field. There never was a better Christmas at the club. The whole town turned out for the Boxing Day meeting. Harry Hobbs gave out the prizes, with a puzzled but happy air. He'd refused to accept any payment for the Scalextric orders, but had quickly loaded up the empty shelves, then to his absolute astonishment, entirely filled his empty storeroom with the boxes and boxes of exotic imported American hardware that appeared from the trolleys and sledges and Mother Madgewick's dog-cart. "With the profits from this lot", he thought happily, "I'll be able to pay off all my debts to Scalextric, and by gum, I'll never put a penny on a pony again in my life."

He was true to his word. He spent it all at the dog track in Walthamstow instead, but won handsomely and went to live in Spain. Near the Exin factory. ■