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Contents

Members Moments.....5
 Messages From Margate.....7
 Model Maker August 1959.....9
 Independent Suspension?.....13
 Loughborough Swapmeet.....15
 Trader's Travels.....17
 Vanquished?.....19
 Shipment From Spain.....21
 National Colours.....23
 Scalextric At Goodwood.....24
 Bits And Pieces.....26
 SCX Review.....27
 Letters.....30
 Ninco News And Review.....34
 Scalextric Review.....36
 See The Light.....37
 Carrera Corner.....39
 Repro Parts.....40
 SCX Hyundais.....42
 Sacré Blue.....43
 Members Ads.....45

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The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

Gentlemen start your concert!

It's been a funny sort of month. The last time I went to a big event at Brands Hatch was the final Grand Prix held there in the late 80s and I have vivid memories of queuing for two hours to get in; queuing for half an hour every time I went for a pee; Nigel Mansell driving out of his skin in an otherwise fairly boring race and then queuing for two hours to get out again.

On May Bank Holiday this year we spent two hours queuing to get in; queued for half an hour every time I went for a pee; watched a fairly boring Champcar race (the Touring Cars were good though) and then queued to get out again. Plus ça change!

The following weekend we went to Rockingham for the first ASCAR meeting and found ourselves in a traffic jam once again. Things became even stranger on entering the circuit as the attendance was bigger than at Brands the previous weekend and half of the spectators appeared to be 13 year old schoolgirls! All was soon revealed as the latest Boy Band sensation, "Busted" took to the stage to give a concert.

They also visited the pitlane to start the race in the traditional manner; the scene resembled Heathrow in the sixties when the Beatles returned from America. I swear the screaming of the fans drowned out the engine noise of the ASCARs and the race wasn't up to much either! The loos were clean though! Mind you, my good lady, Chris, found her street cred boosted considerably the next day when she told her class that she had been to a "Busted" concert! She somehow failed to mention that she had really expected to see a motor race.

And Finally- while at Brands I visited the Scalextric Roadshow; Adrian Norman was organising (?) things in his own inimitable way so I had a go on the track. This was the same one used at the last Ramsgate weekend and I managed a lap time of 5.97 seconds. Fastest time of the weekend was 4.20 seconds and I seem to remember people circulating in the high threes last Autumn. My slotracing skills don't get any better!

Till next month

Brian





New Cars

Brand new releases for 2003 have started to arrive with the new DTM Mercedes CLK: C2391A Mercedes CK DTM “Vodafone” No1 Sport version.
C2391 Mercedes CK DTM “Vodafone” No1 standard version.

These have already been extremely popular with many retailers selling out immediately and reporting that their orders were not fulfilled to start with. The Sport version is the first car to have the limited etched plate on the chassis and credit card style certificate. This version was limited to 6000 units worldwide.

Another car eagerly awaited has been the C2509A Ford GT MkII No3 Le Mans 1966. This limited edition was 8000 units worldwide and is beautifully finished in red. The standard version should be out any day now.

I am promised that we will see a huge number of new cars in the next few weeks including Opel V8s, Minis, Ford Focus and Indy cars. I wonder if the SARS outbreak in China is causing a problem.

Mini Sets

As mentioned last month the new Minis C2484 and C2485 are available as solo cars and in a set. The set is C1112 John Cooper Challenge; you may also see it referred to as John Cooper Trophy. Just to be confusing the name has changed several times – just like the real racing series! Look out for the Mini Mayhem set from Argos later in the year too.

Indy Cars

The second Indy Car has broken cover; C2443 Delara Indy Cortec. This car has a detailed red, white & black livery. Together with C2442 Delara Indy Pennzoil it will also be available as a set car.

Ford Focus

The C2489 Ford Focus Works 2003 is finished in this year’s W.R.C. livery of white with prominent RS logos on most panels. Of course the real rally cars have changed quite a bit this year and thus the Scalextric version is a re-livery of the Ford Focus that has been around for a couple of years now.

The other new Ford Focus to come this year will be C2488 Police Car. This has a generic police force livery with bright green and blue chequers down the side. The lights are quite clever though as the headlights flash individually. I’m sure the realistic siren won’t be at all annoying!

New Releases Catalogue

We should see a 2003 New Releases catalogue in July containing pictures of the all the new cars including the eagerly awaited Corvettes, TVRs and Renault F1s

Classic Track

In response to members who have queried the availability of Classic track pieces Hornby confirm that they no longer manufacture any track of that style. They include the track pieces in the current catalogue to assist retailers who still have old track in stock. =>

Club Car

I obviously didn't make myself clear about the club car so let me reiterate a few key points:

1) If not enough people bother to show interest IT WILL NOT HAPPEN. So if you haven't written, emailed or phoned me with your ideas please do so NOW.

2) We cannot have an "old" car as the moulds are not in China and are not necessarily serviceable. So all those of you who would like Bugattis and Aston Martin DB4GTs will be disappointed.

3) Likewise we will not get a brand new car either. The cost of developing a new car is huge. So all those of you who want Escort MkI's and MkII's will also be disappointed although I have put all requests to Hornby.

What we can have is our own livery on one of the current, or about to be released range. Think BMW Mini, Caterham 7, MG Lola, GT40, Mustang, etc

I want to know answers to the following questions

1) Would you pre-purchase a club car at around £30

2) What car would you like us to produce ?

3) What livery ?

a. A real racing livery

b. An NSCC/Scalextric livery

Suggestions.....

4) Any other comments or suggestions?

I look forward to being swamped with your requests. ■

Practical slot racing - Part 3

by D.J.Laidlaw Dickson

Model Maker August 1959

FROM VINE FENNEL

Current pick-ups & guide pegs

Basic requirements

The guide peg must be adequate in size and depth to perform its function of keeping the car in its slot whilst at the same time allowing for realistic slides and drifts. It must respond to skilled handling and react appropriately when undue liberties are taken. The "shop window" type of running with the peg at the rear is not desired by competition drivers.

Electrically, there must be no possibility of causing shorts and the guide should preferably, in steering type cars, have electrical pick-ups swivelling with it, so that a wide slide will not bring them out of contact with current sources.

Approach to guiding devices

Simplest type of peg is, just that, a peg of circular nature slightly less in diameter than the slot. It need not be insulated since it can never be touching both sides of the slot at once. If it does it is too thick. With a very slight gap there might be a tendency for current to complete contact, so that a minimum clearance of $1/32$ in. should be allowed.

The flat plate shoe is the simplest form that can be fitted to a steering pivot post and convey direction to the front wheels. This, by virtue of its length, will frequently be touching both sides of the slot, so must be of non-conducting material or insulated from the electrics. In the search for adherence to the track there is a tendency to make this place too long. In consequence, it can begin to bind on sharp radius corners and will always give a rather jerky performance when the limit permitted by the steering is achieved on a slide.

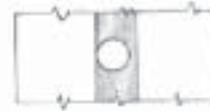


Fig. 1. Single guide pin $3/32$ in. diameter in $1/8$ in. slot for non-steering type of car. Need not be insulated. provided clearance adequate

Fig. 2. M.R.R.C. flat plate guide shoe $9/16$ in. long by $1/16$ in. thick. Shoes such as this must be of non-conducting material as they will normally touch both sides of slot at once. The shoe swings out to its limit and tends to somewhat jerky motion



Fig. 3. V.I.P. shoe of soft polystyrene comprises two oval pins, each $5/16$ in. long by $1/16$ in. thick and $11/16$ in. long overall. Soft nature of material makes swing action realistic

Fig. 4. Original Varcoe steering system for $1/40$ scale can be elaborated. Shown with $3/32$ in. dia. pins at $3/8$ in. centres. Connected to front and rear track links will be flexible, non-jerky and permit minimum radius of track



This jerkiness is noted on the M.R.R.C. type guide plate but can be substantially reduced by cutting back the length of plate, in trial and error steps, starting at the rear end. About $1/8$ in. should be sufficient to show a substantial improvement without impairing its adhesive qualities. This advice is for the more expert; less skilled users may prefer to suffer the jerks for the sake of immense holding-in powers.

The V.I.P. shoe approaches the same end in a slightly different way. This shoe is comprised of two oval pegs even longer in total distance than the M.R.R.C. type. However, since it is made of a soft and bendable polystyrene, jerkiness is not apparent to the same extent. Moreover, as reference to Fig 6 will show, it is located in front of the axle line and thus provides a sweeter lead than the M.R.R.C. type of which about one-third is behind the axle line. In passing, we would add that some adjustment of location is possible on the M.R.R.C. type which is a very firm fit on its metal holder. \Rightarrow

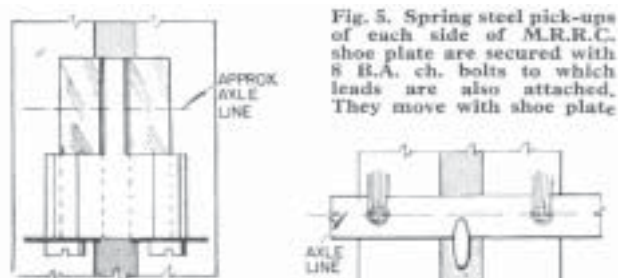
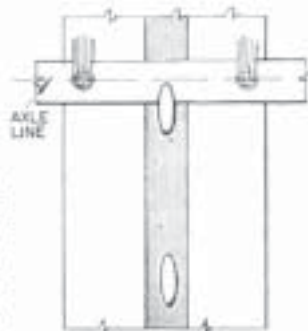


Fig. 5. Spring steel pick-ups of each side of M.R.R.C. shoe plate are secured with 8 B.A. ch. bolts to which leads are also attached. They move with shoe plate

Fig. 6. V.I.P. pick-up system—stranded wire led through kingpost beam at 1/2 in. centres and trailing to make contact. Only just close enough to work on "our" standard. Do not move with shoe-plate. N.B.—V.I.P. shoe further in front of axle-line than M.R.R.C.



Ron Vercoe's experimental type of steering for 1/40 scale cars with a peg fitted on each of two parallel link track rods, is one that we rather favour, though it does suffer from a movement directly under the axle line. It will, however, be a good choice of method where a circuit with very tight bends is envisaged.

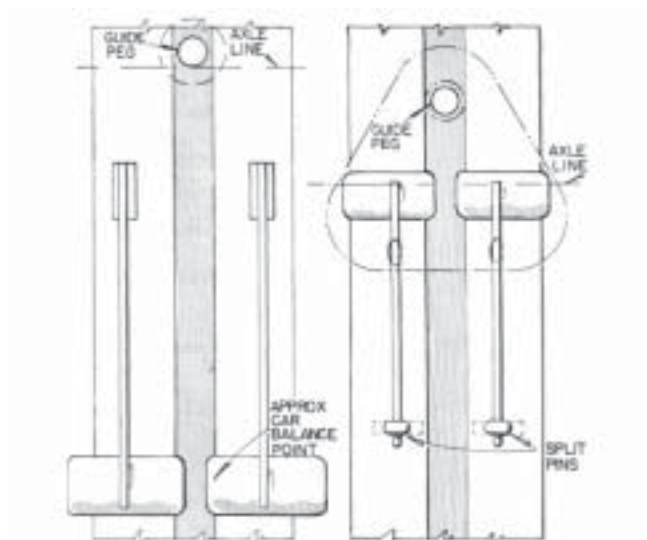


Fig. 7a. Original Varcoe pick-up for 1/40th scale cars. Wide pick-ups on long spring arms located at car balance point, efficient but subject to derailment damage

Fig. 7b. Modified Varcoe method, now with leading (not trailing) pick-ups on axle line, protected from accidental damage by light paxolin keeper plate located on steering pin

Current collection

Electrical pick-up is very closely related to guide shoes. The large slide possible to slot racing cars makes breakdown of electrical continuity the first problem to be solved. If the wipers are attached to the swivelling peg then they can be of a minimum width. M.R.R.C. for example, have theirs only 1/8in. wide, which is adequate

since they can never leave their current feed. V.I.P., after their early somewhat unsatisfactory pick-up method whereby they endeavoured to place the contact point over the car's balance point, have now evolved their present simple method which works well. This uses a multi-strand soft wire "brush" which is pushed through holes in the kingpost beam. These holes are located at 1/2in. centres, which is fine for their all-metal track, but leaves very little margin of error with two 1/4in. current rails separated by 1/8in. slot, since the brushes do not move with the guide peg.

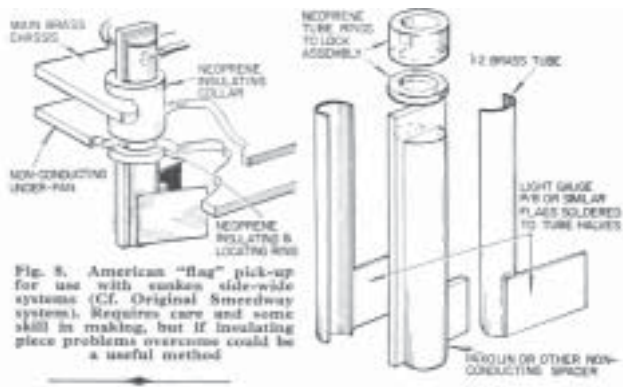
The Varcoe system also has something in common with the early V.I.P. system, in that pick up is arranged to come at the car's approximate balance point. The defect that this made for long and spindly springs to the wipers which was so apparent with the original V.I.P. method, has been overcome by the insertion of a triangular lightweight Paxolin keeper plate threaded over the guide peg and through the two wiper springs. Through trial of this method with the aid of unskilled operators, convinces us that it is sound. Although this system does not employ steering, the defect of swinging out of contact can be overcome by the use of very wide contact plates.

Those who like this simple method, but would prefer a safeguard against sideways bending of the spring wire, may substitute clock spring. This method was that used by Mike Booth recently in his 1/48th scale Vanwall. He did not find it necessary to add a keeper plate, and here too we have a fairly good experience of his trouble-free use in unskilled hands.

Yet another current method (not illustrated) has also been tried, whereby vertical pick-ups like the V.I.P method have been fitted, but instead of a flexible wire that bends backwards to wipe, a rigid spring loaded tube makes contact like the spring loaded brushes on the K Mk.1 motor. By using a suitable carbon bronze brush a high degree of electrical conductivity can be enjoyed with a minimum risk of accidental displacement during use. This method was used on certain proprietary OO gauge locomotives just after the war and, if well made, is excellent.

American "Flag" pick-up

We have always been adherents of the surface wipe type of current pick-ups, but our slot-minded friends in the U.S.A. are trying out the aptly named "flag" pick-up which is used for side wiping contact in the actual slots.



The "flags" are easy to make, but the insulated dividing piece is more of a problem. It could be filed out of brown insulating rod - such rod could be slit and a flat piece stuck between the two halves, or we have thought of extruding it through a suitably shaped die - cut in brass, using nearly set Araldite as our medium. Brass tube of 1/8in outside diameter is first sawn lengthways, using a jeweller's saw. Light brass shim or phosphor bronze is then soldered to each half to make the flats. The unit is then locked together with thin rings cut from 1/8in. inside diameter neoprene tube. The usual contacts are soldered to the upper ends of the unit when in place. Our correspondent who brought this method to our notice says, "so important is this unit, that it is well worth whatever extra time you can afford to construct it perfectly." We may be suspicious in our old age, but this looks very like a warning: "Don't try it unless you're good!" ■

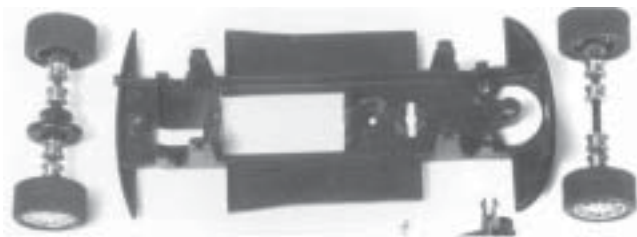
Independent suspension?

BY ALAN SLADE

Question - when is a car with four wheel independent suspension not a car with four wheel independent suspension?
Answer - when it is a Ninco Clio.

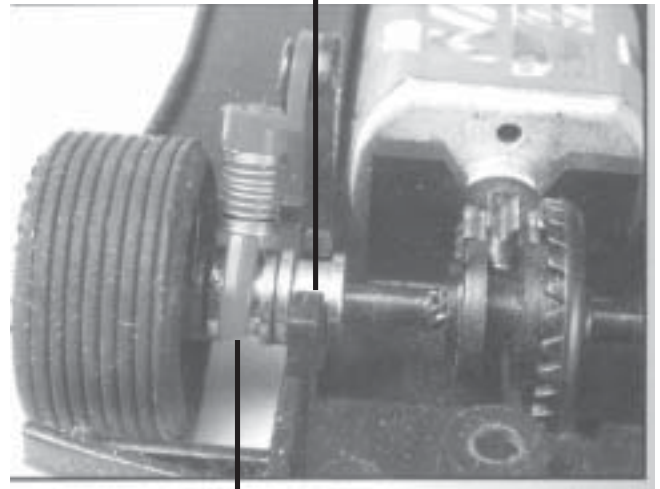
I do think that clever marketing aside, manufacturers should tell the truth, and a car fitted with two solid axles **CANNOT** have independent suspension. Just think what the term actually means, it means that each wheel can move independently of the others, and in the case of a car suspension system one hopes that that movement is only in the up/down direction.

Looking at the parts of the new Ninco Clio in the picture below it is fairly obvious that the front and rear axles are on solid axles and therefore they are only independent of the other axle. I have heard and read varying reports on the new Clio and they all point out various shortcomings of this new system, not having had a chance to try one for myself I cannot comment on them; suffice to say that if there is a degree of vertical movement in the rear axle bearings, and from the picture below it would appear that there is, then this would account for the problems some people have been experiencing with axle tramp on acceleration and cornering.



As slot racers we have spent a lifetime ensuring that axles run true and are held firmly in place (remember the early SCX axle bearings) and keeping friction to a minimum. Here, it appears, we have a similar situation and I foresee gear wear being quite high. If 'suspension' is a necessity then why not make a flexible chassis as on they have done with the Karts?

Bearing loose fit in axle holder



Shock absorber putting extra load onto axle

No doubt I will be inundated with cries of, 'Does not know what he is talking about', 'Should shut up and not stifle innovation', etc., but I am only speaking as an engineer. I fully accept that there is a report in GSR that says that they got the car to go very well, but only after removing the magnet, changing all four tyres, altering the guide spring rate and fitting different shock absorbers front and rear. All very well for slotheads, but what about the poor wee lad with a home circuit? That is a different story, and that is the customer that manufacturers have to satisfy to stay in business.

What I would like to know is how many people have adapted the system to fit on the front stub axles of a Proslot or a Fly car? Such a front end and with a little bit of ingenuity using a Vanquish diff and split rear axles it should be possible to build a car with genuine all wheel independent suspension. I should think the only difficult part would be the universal joints for the rear axle, but I am sure it is possible to source some components from a radio control car or helicopter if not from a mechanical components supplier.

Remember you heard it here first! ■

Loughborough swapmeet and AGM

BY DAVID NORTON

Sometimes the real world gets in the way of the important things in life and, for the past six months, both the racing and collecting of slot-cars has unfortunately taken a back seat while the builders have been on site constructing (deconstructing?) our extension.

It seemed like a good idea in Sept 02 when my wife suggested the work (after all I was going to get a nice big new garage; perfect for a new layout!) and in a moment of weakness I agreed. It didn't seem such a great idea when the wettest November on record struck just as they had dug the foundations and we ended up with a superb moat down the length of the house for what felt like forever!

Still, all behind us now; a swapmeet was just the therapy I needed and my club's annual event was perfect timing so with event booked I turned up early at Loughborough University to help, only to find Tony Sandon and the rest of the Quorn Slot-car Club members had beaten me to it. Our event has grown steadily over the years but this was our biggest with a new hall and 94 tables, Mark Scale grabbed the "biggest pitch award", occupying all down one side of the hall!

Once a year I tend to have a clear out of the collection and redundant race cars, usually at Milton Keynes, but with "Bob The Builder" in residence I could not make it so was hopeful Loughborough would be a good'un. I was not disappointed; as soon as I started to unpack the circling gaggle swooped down!

Now, although possessing a 400+ collection, I am primarily a racer and having recently revaluated my collecting priorities I was selling some tasty items, clearly evident by the "mad feeding frenzy" at my table! It's afterwards that I always think, "Bugger, they were too cheap" Still, I had my "wedge" and my C93 Race Tuned Healey, Red Vintage Alfa, C92 RT Porsche, C7 Black Spot light Mini, C46 Gulf Porsche, Boxed Goodwood Chicane, etc. had new homes. Temporarily I suspect!

Funny though, it never ceases to amaze me what sells and what doesn't, I had a number of old Riko and Revell chassis, motors, plus some MRRC controllers and SuperShells wheels/tyres and these sold straight away. But I took home my reasonably priced MB C360 Ternco Metro,... a seriously rare car,.....but there again it is a damn Metro!

Cheap Fly

Enough of my fortunes, what was the rest of the swapmeet like? Pretty good was the impression I got wandering around, a good selection of old Scalextric with numerous Black Bentleys, early white C52 Escorts, and mid 80s cars to chose from. Derek Cooper had his usual wide selection of cars, encompassing many different makes. However, cheap Fly Cars appeared to be the order of the day with a number of traders doing some cracking deals, Steve Cannon and Mark Scale being among them. £14 for a new C61 Porsche 908/3, C56 Porsche 917 or similar model is an excellent price. Well I thought so 'cos I bought them! Various dealers had the newish Coches Miticos models, Racing Porsche 911, and Ferrari GTO for about £35 each. I don't know if it's me being fussy but the quality of some of these cars is crap; I looked at 4 or 5 Porsches before buying one!

Plenty of spares, old and new, such a GT40 Sport parts, were on offer and there seemed to be plenty of people who spent the whole time hunched over with their head buried in the "bit boxes", so the spares pickings must have been good. The one I stuck my head in was spot on, resulting in some new tyres for my old Spanish Renault 5. Speaking of tyres, R/S Racing had a display of their extensive range and appeared to be doing a roaring trade. Never one to miss out on "sticky" tyres, I bought a couple of pairs and they are pretty effective on Quorns sandtex surface.

⇒

On to the AGM..... or not in my case. Sorry, but I am guilty of not attending. Having sat on the committee in the mid 80's I am happy to leaving the running of the club to others now and "just go with the flow" , as right now the club is the best it's ever been!

I hope all who attended the Loughborough Swapmeet went home happy but probably poorer and those that didn't attend "you missed a good'un".

To end, my favourite moment of the day, nothing to do with an elusive find etc, but the point when a member returned to my table to barter for the car he'd obviously had his eye on only to find me gone and now facing my 12 year old daughter. I was quite prepared to drop the car's price, as you do, but on return I asked Laura how much she'd knocked off. "Nuffing, got full price, now go away as I am making more money then you Dad"!!! Priceless!! ■

Trader's travels

BY ROBERT LEARMOUTH
(WESTWOOD MODELS)

The anticipated presence of seven UK traders duly materialised at April's Mini Classics swapmeet in Barcelona. The number of stalls was a little down on last November's meeting and the Brits accounted for nearly half of the overall presence in the hall! Sadly missing on this occasion was the Spanish dealer who had the wonderful array of Spanish spares last time - this had been one of the highlights of the previous meeting.

Whilst Dutch swapmeets have a decidedly British feel to them, the Spanish events take a bit more acclimatisation. There is an open door policy, literally, which means visitors enter at no charge - at the same time as the dealers if they like. The Spanish way is to swap where possible and when that fails to haggle like mad! Fair play to all of this because it's very much in the spirit of what swapmeets were once about in the UK. Another enjoyable day was had by all and the event concluded with the ritual squeezing of handfuls of new acquisitions into the very limited suitcase space.

Arriving early on the previous day meant the four of us who had travelled out together had plenty of time for taking in a small tour of Barcelona. First stop, armed with our wants list of Spanish spares was Slotmania. Well it would have been if they hadn't been shut for Easter... To get over this disappointment we sought refuge in the drinking establishments of the harbour where our let down at Slotmania being shut was tempered by a barman who assured us that another slot-car shop he knew was bound to be open. Via further bars and a dip in the sea we set out to track the other shop down. This duly turned out to be the Palau shop but yes, you've guessed it - that was shut for Easter too. Never mind, we'd enjoy our meal in the Thai Gardens later that evening where all the UK dealers had arranged to meet up - wouldn't we Steve Cannon? All I can say is never, ever, trust this man when he tells you he knows where somewhere is! Following two hours of wandering

round central Barcelona we gave up and collapsed into the nearest restaurant. And guess what? On leaving the establishment it turned out to be 10 yards away, just round the corner, from our intended destination!

Don't try this at home

I've always been wary of soldering in the vicinity of suppressors - the older ones sweat off a chemical, which stings the eyes when heated up. Normally you manage to get a brief warning of trouble ahead and can pull the iron away quick enough. This particular one gave no warning at all and next thing I know a chemical discharge hits my eye so hard that I'm temporarily blinded and in considerable pain. I just about managed to park the iron safely and stumbled out of the room to get fresh air. Without the benefit of full vision I managed to wander into a large pile of washing which I tripped over, collapsing into a heap on top. Karen was ironing nearby and I groaned for assistance; The help I got was blunt and to the point, 'Get off my bl**dy washing!' Now whilst the moral of this story is to exercise caution with who you take first aid advice from, be careful with the soldering too...

Worthing event

A new non-NSCC slot-car swapmeet/fun day was held in early May in Worthing. The venue was an old cinema (The Dome) on the sea front near the pier. It was a fairly small event with about 25 tables but there were also several circuits set up. It turned out to be a great day - very busy and lots of interest shown in the circuits. I didn't recognise many of the faces and I suspect the majority of the visitors were locals who had seen the event advertised or who just decided to drop-in as they passed by. The event was such a success that the second event has already been planned. Make an entry in your diaries for Sunday, August 10th. Proof if needed that slot-cars continue to enjoy a boom with a wider audience than ever. ■

Vanquished?

BY MAX WINTER

What is happening with Vanquish MG's offerings? They originally promised us amongst other things – “serious models of real racing cars driven by real racing drivers”. Excuse me if I decide to take this sales pitch at face value.

Never mind their somewhat disappointing and arbitrary internal chassis and motor detailing to date. Nor their slot-car's erratic performance, in part due to the differential fitted. Or even the over scaling, a whopping 1/28th, and the high riding driver due to their choice and positioning of running gear for this brave and innovative product. It's just that some of the distinctive features of the real cars modelled so far seem to be missing, and in some cases the variants of the cars modelled appear almost pure invention.

Yes, I know that Vanquish do not have the benefit of the low cost production methods available in the far east. Nor the hard won almost guaranteed sales volumes of a maker like Scalextric to ease the amortisation of high tooling costs. But if you raise the expectations of your customer with a sales pitch like theirs you should at least be offering “serious models” of the “real cars” that incorporate their main defining features, even allowing for a price ticket of around £34. I won't go into full rivet counter mode as that would be unfair at this price point. Let's just benchmark from what other major producers are achieving at below and around this mark. Especially with such tricky subjects as, dare I say, the GT 40 from you know who.

Let us start at the beginning. Their L&M Lola from the outside is a perfectly good model at the price. Just one slight glitch though with this first one, it's the Laguna Seca car, not the Riverside one as stated. Not a heinous crime, just a mix up in research possibly.

With their second release, the Dave Causey Mosport race Lola, things start to go downhill. The car in reality ran with prominent side fences along the length of its body, these also supported

a smaller rear wing than on the L&M car. And there's a very large and bulbous air box that fully enclosed the induction system, and a “shovel” attachment to the “bluff” nose missing from this model too. Quite a few defining features I'd say. Vanquish are certainly not the first to do this, but going back to their initial sales pitch is it right to foist such an approximation on the, possibly unsuspecting, customer?

Next, a 1970 works McLaren M8D. Yes it is, and not bad too, so long as you overlook a couple of production cost saving anomalies. This car has the wrong windscreen fitted, an asymmetric one presumably tooled up for their forthcoming M8B. The Group 6 & 7 rules had been amended in 1970 to force car makers to fit full width cockpit openings and symmetrical screens to avoid quasi single seaters becoming the norm in sports prototype racing. A defining feature I'd say, one that a “serious model” should incorporate. And if it ever got onto to the track it would have been waiting for those staggered injectors till its 1971 M8F incarnation.

Then there's their 4th offering, the “Penske” team car. Magic name to make sales with Penske, isn't it? Slight problem, Penske never came near this car. Yes, M8D race number 8 did exist and it was driven by Chuck Parsons at St Jovite. He was subbing for a certain A.G. Dean, the name that should be on the side of this car along with a whole load of different sponsor names, in different sizes and positions, from those applied to the model. And the colour is way off too, never mind the pinstriping. To see why read on.

Real Howler

This previous model now makes Vanquish's next offering, the black bodied M8D with its red helmeted driver “Vic Elford”, a real howler. It should be the self same car, as described above, now sold on to Roy Woods' team to replace at short order a written off M8E. Such a short order they didn't have time to repaint it, just =>

salvage and fit the wing from the wrecked car. This, and the previously mentioned car, should really be produced in the same colour, dark metallic blue. But then sales might be a bit limited if you are going to offer two very similar, and obscure, cars. Oh, and this time they've even gone and tinted the wrong shaped windscreen green when it wasn't, but they got the rear wing and sign writing right.

Shadow on the horizon

To finish off I have just spied on the internet their latest offerings, the MK II Shadow as raced at St Jovite and the "test car". I never realised that the MK II ran with tall staggered injectors, that is apart from at the last of the 8 races it entered that season, Riverside. An integral part of the MK II's design was a low profile horizontal induction system, which most of the time was covered by a GRP shroud. This was all in the interest of achieving a low frontal area, as was the fitting of 12 inch front wheels. It is interesting to note that a picture of the real white "Riverside" car is being used by a few retailers to trail Vanquish's upcoming "Edmonton" race version. Perhaps someone somewhere is trying to make us think this is the correct induction set up for this car too?

Excuse me if I get a bit cynical here, but I love their silver "Test Car". If only for the fact somebody forgot the real car's chassis was built up from black anodised aluminium panels, inside and out. The team, on a very tight schedule, stopped off at Chaparral's Rattlesnake raceway facility to do their testing. Interesting, the car shows up in pictures taken there logoless and nice and black all over. I dare say there is a shot somewhere as it came out of the Long Beach works with at least a set of silver painted aluminium honeycomb reinforced GRP body panels. And it is certainly known that it inherited the MK I Shadow's rear wing which would have been black, so long as it hadn't been stripped beforehand. But as I said I'm starting to get a trifle cynical right now.



Going back to Vanquish's initial claim, what is a "serious model"? And will they please now define "real cars driven by real drivers". Are they just implying that the Vanquish product is a cut above one of the "retro" caricatures of the past? Or is it stating that it is as good, if not better than, the current crop from the likes of Fly, Ninco, Scalextric, Auto Art, Carrera, Spirit and now Monogram? Or does it even intend us to think that Vanquish are promising even greater things, levels of authenticity and detail heading into the territory that is usually claimed by somewhat higher cost items? Well I suppose they could always retort, "any fool will understand you can only expect so much for the price."

The risk of this tactic, apart from customer disappointment and the possible resulting backlash, is that buyers might undervalue or even call into question erroneously the efforts of other makers big and small as a result. And that brings us to those old axioms, "you only get what you pay for", and, "you pays your money and takes your choice". ■



As I mentioned last month, May and June seem to be one of the busiest times of the year for slot manufacturers, so loads to tell you about this month.

One of the problems you have when you take on a role like this is the fact that everyone expects you to know everything about who you're liaising with and that you have some form of godly power over them to make and supply anything. Any of the other factory liaison guys will tell you this is far from the truth.

I try not to publish anything that I can't verify with either Bachmann or Tecni Toys. This can slightly delay info getting to you, but it does mean that it's more accurate. The pictures and words we send to Brian to edit and put into print go off to him about one month before you read it and sometimes the info we include you already know.

Why is he telling me this?

Like some other members of the NSCC I occasionally surf the net, partly looking for those obscure slot car parts on eBay or looking through manufacturers web sites to keep up to date. I also look at some of the web based magazines, I've sent them info and pictures before. So when I see info on SCX being discussed on Slot Car Illustrated message board, I'm obviously interested. Imagine my surprise then to read with apparent accuracy a full description of the new SCX Digital range with tech spec, UK prices, descriptions of packaging and release dates!

- Hang on, why don't I know about this?
- How did they get this info?
- Why haven't I been kept up to date?
- Who is Moped Rider?

Cue email and telephone call to Bachmann. They have no idea how this information was

obtained and are not too sure how accurate it is. The system was previewed at the Nurnberg Toy fair and a brochure was available, however the entire system is still in development. Still none the wiser I left it and got back to my day job. Several days later Jon at Bachmann calls to invite me to a private exhibition for Toy Master in Harrogate, take a look at the new models and have a chat with David Pitarch from Tecni Toys Barcelona. Great! Where did I put all those members questions and comments.

Arrange a day off work, get up at 4.30 am, 4 hour drive to Harrogate pick up a badge from the very nice ladies from Toy Master (thanks Jo and Barbara), wander over to the Bachmann booth, shake hands with David Haarhaus and Jon Gibbs, take pictures of all the new models and prototypes, meet David Pitarch and the new UK marketing chap, Luca, 2 hour meeting, coffee, pub lunch, lose the car, find the car, 4 hour drive home, pick up the slot racing box of bits, 3 hours slot racing coming a dismal 4th (out of 5!), bed!

Result?

Read on: first let's deal with Digital! The web article had some info that is correct, but some info that's either wrong or is guess work. The main point is to say that it's still in development both technically and pricing wise.

It will be released in Spain (under the Scalextric brand) first and then the rest of the world under the SCX brand. An interesting point here is the countries which Tecni Toys brand under Scalextric: Spain, Mexico, Russia, Morocco, Slovakia and Poland, the rest of the world is SCX.

The entire system is new! New track, new cars, new controllers, etc. It will be incompatible with the existing range of track or cars. =>

Existing cars will not run on the new track and the new cars will not run on the existing track.

The existing range of cars, track and accessories will **NOT** be phased out. In fact, they will be expanded with new track and cars.

The system will basically be sold at first as a layout of track with three controllers, a digital lap counter and three cars running on two lanes. Each car can be individually controlled and run on either lane at any time. Overtaking, changing of lanes (or blocking! – probably in my case) can take place at the cross over track sections which you can add as many as you like (the number in each set is still tba). The system will run up to a maximum of six cars simultaneously over the two lanes. Overtaking is operated via a button on the controller which moves the guide flag – not a track type switch.

Prices, exact UK release dates, car liveries, packaging and so on are all t.b.a. but expect to see it in the shops around Spring 2004. New track section, accessories and cars are all planned but all t.b.a.

I watched a short video of the new system which showed how to programme each car prior to a race, overtaking at speed and how the digital lap counter worked (much like a NASCAR tower!) with positions and laps completed displayed for all lanes as the race went on. It all looked great fun.

Tecni Toys were very excited about the new Digital system and explained that it would run alongside the existing range not replacing it. They are aiming it at a younger audience, (not sure what the average age of an NSCC member is!) but I'm sure it will attract a much wider audience than they expect. Competition will be tough, I believe both Hornby and Carrera are planning similar systems. We will no doubt see in the future whose works best. Rest assured, we have been promised full details of the new Digital system as and when they are available and the new system will be sent for review ASAP.

Right, that puts the record straight on that (I hope) if you know different – let me know or write to Brian! Just for the time being, it's probably better not to send me emails entitled "Is Moped Right"?!

Questions, Questions

Let's move on to the near future and the present. First, let's deal with a few questions and comments that you have sent in (thanks by the way - keep sending questions, suggestions, comments and complaints to me. I can't promise to get back to you directly, but I'll try to publish the most common questions). I asked David Pitarch various questions sent in, most he could answer, some he will get back to me on. Here are the first batch.

Are spare parts for old models available? - "No, not from SCX, the current range of spare parts, tyres, axles etc listed in the catalogue are all available, Pro range and standard; there are repro parts available from other companies, but they are not made by Tecni Toys"

Who owns/has the moulds for the STS and TT range made by Exin? - "I don't know. I need to check"

Will the new RX-1 motor be available as a separate part or spare? - "No, company policy"

How many limited edition Vintage Corvettes will be allocated to the UK? - "The SCX branded Vintage Corvette will be limited to 4000 worldwide, the Scalextric branded will be approx. the same. Approx. 500 will be allocated for the UK".

Will you expand the membership of the Spanish club outside Spain? - "The Spanish club is branded under Scalextric and membership is restricted to those with a Spanish address, however we are considering a larger club for SCX"

How are the cars sold via the Altaya Spanish magazine made? - "Tecni Toys manufacture the individual components for the Coches Miticos and Rally Miticos magazines in Spain, Portugal and Mexico from the original moulds"

Are there any plans to do a similar magazine in the UK? - "not at present, but we will consider it"

Why are the Dirt, Rain and Snow effect cars tyres covered in Varnish, it lowers the performance of the tyres and they

need to be replaced? – “We were not aware of a problem with this, but we will now look into removing the tyres prior to painting of the effects and varnish – thanks for the feedback”.

The reference numbers given to SCX cars are not sequential; there are gaps, is this for set cars or for items that didn't make it to production ? – “there is no specific formula for the ref numbers and we do not keep a list of previous numbers”.

Well that's most of your questions answered. I did ask others that couldn't be answered at the time, but they will get back to me. Other feedback, complaints and suggestions were discussed and they will be given to the product development team.

Competition time

To encourage more feedback, Bachmann have very kindly provided me with a few Limited Edition Boxed Sigmas to give away. All you need to do is send me your answers to the following

question and your name will be put into a hat for a draw:

What car or accessory would you like SCX to make in the near future?

Simple! You never know, you might get what you ask for. Send your answers direct to me via email to: gareth@2LK.com, or you can post your answer to me at:

Gareth Jex (SCX)
c/o 2LK Design Ltd.
The Courtyard
17 West Street
Farnham
Surrey
GU9 7DR

Please title your emails SCX competition. All entries to be received no later than 16th July 2003. Winner will be announced in the August journal and informed directly. ■

National Racing Colours

BY DAVE SYKES

I think someone asked for a list of National Racing colours a little while ago so here are the ones I know:

Austria: blue with silver lengthwise stripe.

Belgium: yellow.

Brazil: pale yellow.

Canada: green with white stripes.

Czechoslovakia: white with blue and white bonnet.

Denmark: silver grey with national flag as stripe on bonnet.

Finland: white with blue Latin cross on bonnet.

France: blue.

Germany: silver grey.

Great Britain: green.

Holland: orange.

Hungary: white and green body with red bonnet.

Ireland: green with a horizontal band of orange.
Italy: red.

Japan: ivory white with red sun on bonnet.

Luxembourg: white with red, white and blue lengthwise stripe.

Mexico: gold with blue band on bonnet.

Monaco: white with a horizontal band of red.

Poland: white with red underframe.

Portugal: red with white underframe.

South Africa: gold with green bonnet.

Spain: red with yellow bonnet.

Sweden: top of body yellow with cross bands of blue on bonnet, lower body blue.

Switzerland: red with white bonnet.

Thailand: pale blue with lengthwise yellow Strip.

USA: white with blue underframe.

Anybody know any more? ■

Scalextric at Goodwood

BY ROB SMITH

This year sees the start of a major new marketing activity for Hornby. They are a sponsor of the motorsport activities at Goodwood. As part of its sponsorship of this year's three day Festival of Speed at Goodwood taking place from 11th to 13th July inclusive and the Revival Meeting on September 5th to 7th, Hornby has built a replica model of the event's famous hill climb.

Measuring 44 feet long and eight feet wide, the model will form part of the attractions being featured within the Scalextric enclosure. The replica hill climb is impressive in the detail shown and consists of a track that winds its way through a miniature reproduction of Goodwood House's landscaped park and gardens, all of which provide natural obstacles for the racers.

"The concept behind the replica hill climb is that it will give visitors to the Festival the opportunity to feel as if they are physically taking part in an event for which the Festival of

Speed is acclaimed," explains Frank Martin, Chief Executive of Hornby Hobbies. "The challenge for each participant will be to try and set the fastest time, with racers pitting their driving skills against both past and present driving heroes from the racing world."

"The link between Scalextric and Goodwood goes back to the company's early days in the 1950s," comments Lord March. "Indeed, my grandfather's passion for motor racing included his own giant Scalextric layout in Goodwood House."

Scalextric is also producing a limited edition of the Ford GT40s that finished first, second and third in the famous Le Mans 24 hour race in 1966, for use on the replica hill climb. These special models will be finished in the Le Mans liveries from that same year's race and special boxed sets of the three cars have been produced in a limited edition for the event, priced at £100 per set. The boxes will feature the logos of both





the Goodwood Festival of Speed and Ford's 100th Anniversary. For the first time for Hornby the cars have a weathered finish to represent their condition at the end of the gruelling 24 hour race.

Visitors will be able to try their hand at Scalextric's hill climb and there will be a prize for the overall winner at the end of the three day event to include a Scalextric set and GT40 cars. To date, the record held by a Scalextric Ford GT40 is 30 mph, which if pro rated would equate to a top speed of 300 mph on a real racing track.

It will cost £1 per run on the track and all proceeds go to the children's charity CHASE, a special children's hospice. CHASE is the official charity for the 2003 Festival of Speed and is dedicated to the support of children who are not expected to reach their 19th birthday. For these children there is at present no hope of a cure but they and their families still need care and support over the course of the life ahead of them.

For those of you not familiar with the Goodwood Festival of Speed it is a quite amazing event. Many of the world's most significant racing cars will be present and running up the hill. Many of them are really trying to get FTD too ! One of the highlights this year is the celebration of 100 years of Ford who will be exhibiting right in front of Goodwood House. All three of the 1966 winning GT40 MkII's will be there – a unique opportunity to compare them with their Scalextric counterparts. Many of the top F1 and Rally teams will be there too giving unrivalled access to the latest machinery.

It is amazing just how many of the spectacular cars at Goodwood each year have been modelled by Scalextric over the years. I really cannot recommend to you strongly enough to visit Goodwood this year, see the fabulous cars, have a go on the Scalextric hillclimb and support CHASE.

Thanks to Janet Bradley at Goodwood and Simon Parker at SPS Marketing for much of this information and the picture of the hillclimb. ■

BITS AND PIECES

Scalextric on TV - again

The build up to the recent F.A. Cup Final, between Arsenal and Southampton, saw Sky Sports' TV coverage included an interview with prolific Arsenal striker, Thierry Henry. Unlike other dreary, and predictable interviews with footballers of limited conversational skills, this particular pre-match chat was conducted while Henry undertook a number of slot-car races against Clare Tomlinson, Sky Sports' resident interviewer. Using a pair of Scalextric Ford GT40s for the occasion they raced around a large two lane figure-of-eight Scalextric (Sport track version). Admirers of Henry's footballing prowess will be dismayed to hear that he could not replicate his famed turn of speed during the proceedings, and was comprehensively trashed by the skilful Miss Tomlinson. Of course, Monsieur Henry could, in true French tradition, simply be demonstrating the noble art of chivalry!

From Peter Novani

Swapmeet Calendar

Following conversations with European dealers and collectors, I have created and will maintain an online calendar of events to inform members of forthcoming events in the UK and in Europe at:- www.8sc.co.uk/swapmeet.htm. If anyone has any additional information regarding swapmeets or race meets they would like listed, please email me at swapmeets@8sc.co.uk

Steve Cannon

Medway Open

Due to unforeseen circumstances outside the organising club's control the Medway Open event has been cancelled. Alan Green would like to apologise to prospective entrants but he will try to reschedule it for later in the year.

Marconi proxy race

The fourth running of the Marconi Foundation Charity Proxy Race will be held at the splendid Marconi Foundation Automotive Museum in Tustin, California, USA, on the 22nd and 23rd of November, 2003. As usual, the event is being organised by Philippe de Lespinay of Electric Dreams.

The Marconi Foundation for Disadvantaged Kids is the beneficiary of all entry fees and donations received. Over the few past years, the event has raised in excess of \$3,500 for this most deserving charity, helping disadvantaged kids who have probably never seen a slot-car, let alone ever having owned one. This year's race will be held on two six-lane tracks, a Scalextric "Sport" track, kindly donated by Scalextric-USA and a Carrera track, kindly donated by Carrera GMBH. Professor Motor will supply the controllers.

Previous Marconi Foundation Charity proxy races have attracted entries from all around the world — including the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Brazil, Greece, France, Germany, Italy and the United Arab Emirates.

Full details, including rules and regulations, can be found at:

<http://www.electric-dreams.com/proxy2003/p2003-rules.htm>

Russell Sheldon

Eastcote 24 hour race

Following on from last year's successful event the Eastcote Scalex Club will be holding their 2003 24-Hour team race over the weekend of the 11th-12th October 2003. This will once again be on an eight lane Ninco track, to be built just prior to the event to ensure there is no home advantage!

For further details please contact Brian Steptoe on 020 8868 4478 or email him at briansteptoe@eastcotescalexclub.biz



No detailed review of a specific car this month, but I thought I would give you all a preview of the new SCX models and an update of some changes to the 2003 range.

The Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VII will now be released as a "Mika" Hakkinen car as raced in the Arctic Rally, Ref Number 61210. The car will be a different colour scheme to the other Evos in the range. See picture below; you can see in the background the new Safety Protection barriers Ref 88420. These should be on sale now.



The Citroën Xsara WRC "Monte Carlo" Ref 61220 will now be issued with a new style of square shaped bonnet mounted light cluster, not the circular type shown in the catalogues. See the picture below.



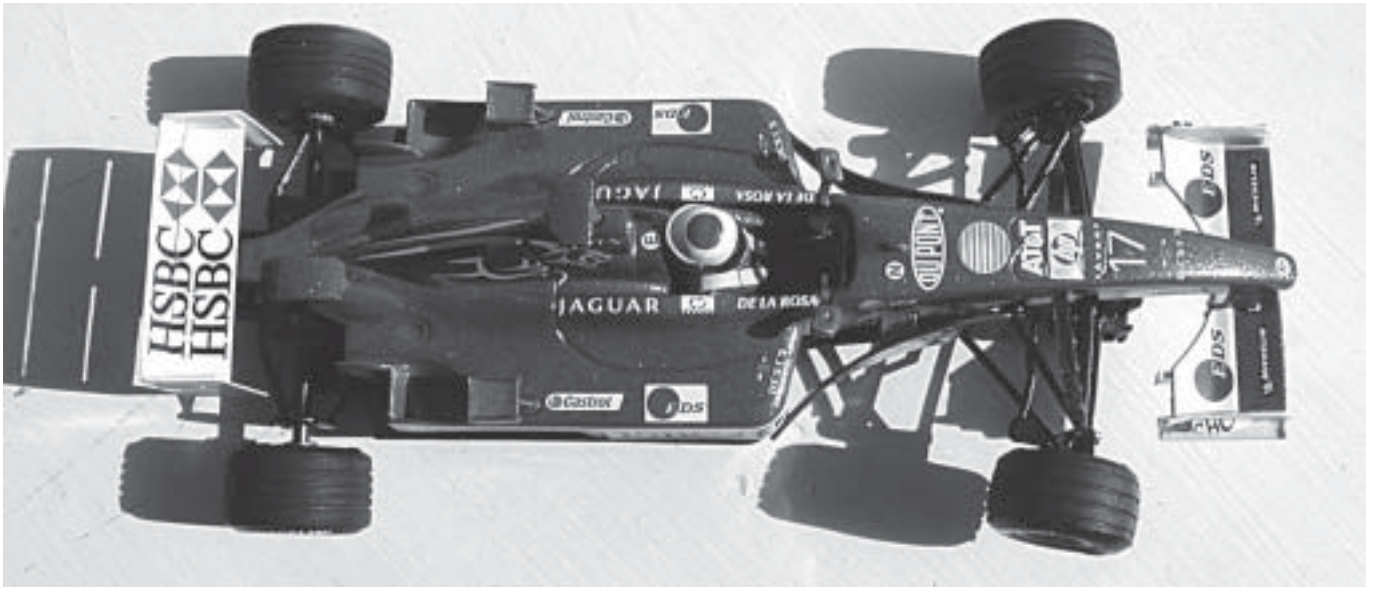
The Audi RB Japan Ref 61300, Hyundai Accent WRC Dirt effect Ref 61200 and the Peugeot 206 WRC Rossi Ref 61360 should all be in the shops by now.

The Opel Astra DTM "Schneider" Ref 61100 is out now and the "Menu" Ref 61130 should be out when you read this. This model will be reviewed next month.



The computer rendering of the new "Rally Box" in the catalogue doesn't really do it justice. The roof section will not be a moulded plastic top, but a fabric section. See the photo. Expect to see it in the shops about now.







Here are some shots of the Prototype models for the new Formula one Jaguar, new Fiat Abarth "Gulf" and the great looking Vintage Corvette Dragster.

For your info the SCX Dragster will be limited to 4000 world wide, with only approx 500 being allocated to the UK! Mine is already on order! ■



Dear Brian,

Imagine the disappointment when I find out that the Scalextric RMS won't connect to my new laptop. The RMS lead is a 9 pin jobby and there isn't a suitable connection on the laptop. A visit to PC World for a connector draws a blank, and when I phoned Hornby they admit they overlooked the possibility when they were designing the system, although there is a rumour that something called a USB connector could do the job if you've got Bill Gates as a 'phone a friend' to set it up. Has anybody out there managed to sort out a solution?

On the matter of Classic v Sport track, if anybody's still interested, I very skilfully managed to assemble all the Classic track necessary for my 'dream' 4 lane 50' home layout a couple of weeks before Hornby announced they had redesigned the track. (after 40 odd years!) So I bought a new Sport set to see if it was any better. The reason for building the layout was to run all my old cars, collected since the 70s which were festering away in boxes in the loft. Most of the tests carried out so far seem to have involved modern cars with magnets, which seems a bit pointless to me, since they'll stick to the track regardless. With the Sport track I found that the grip was not as good with the older cars and worse, when the cars were really sideways in the corners, (no magnets see) the pin guides jammed in the curved crossover sections and broke them off. Perhaps I was unlucky with the set I bought, but I'm going to stick with the Classic track for now.

Regards
Noel Harris

.....

Hi Brian,

Interesting that Tim Ainslie should mention the rapid deterioration of Fly tyres in his 'Dreaming of Le Mans' article as, when I tried to give my Fly Venturi an airing a week or so ago, it just went ZZzzzzzz - and nowhere.

The tyres were rock hard and shiny. I foresee a marketing initiative - the 'Fly Genuine Vintage Collection'. The cars are stored in a darkened, temperature controlled wine cellar (there must be loads of them in Spain) for a few years for the tyres to mature before being released. Then, with the benefit of a typical Fly magnet, there'll be absolutely no chance of them ever moving and all those dinky little aerals, mirrors and air scoops - not to mention the purchaser's not inconsiderable investment - will be perfectly safe.

Cheers,
Bill Grigg

Dear Brian,

Slot-cars, I always thought, were manufactured in the main with a view to being raced. Over the years some cars have been manufactured, or are being manufactured with apparently only the non racing collector in mind. These cars look very nice with all those breakable parts sticking out in the breeze. That is, if they are still there after a couple of laps of the track, and the odd few crashes.

Some are far too heavy, with motors that can hardly move their bulk, nor go through corners without deslotting, to be even remotely considered for practical racing. Others with magnets so strong, that they are so slow in a straight line that a tortoise would give them a good run for their money (I'm half expecting to see a car soon that won't be able to move from the start line at all because of the strength of the magnet). This is certainly reducing the variation of different cars seen during club racing nights. My opinion is that in a GT/Sports class on a Plexy type track, for almost standard out of the box cars (minus magnets of course) it's hard not to use a Ninco Mercedes CLK. There is the odd Slot-it Audi R8C appearing, as well as a few Ninco BMW sports cars, but little else. From what I've seen so far on a wooden track it seems to be Proslot Toyota GT1s, or Slot-it R8Cs. Any other variations in cars on both track types soon appear to be discarded as uncompetitive. I recently watched a Fiat Punto fitted with its standard fitted motor far too powerful and fast, attempting to get through a corner after a long fast straight. The marshal on that corner would have been better off if he'd been dressed for keeping wicket in a cricket match, and for more than one good reason.

I'm at a loss to fathom out why slot-cars have, over many years, rarely been produced with a practical racing pedigree in mind. As a racer I don't wish to spend money on a car I know, or find, is uncompetitive, just because it looks nice. I've recently purchased a car for a Classic Sports car class (very nice looking car) that has a screw holding a U shaped plastic projection on the separate moulded gear box cover, as well as the motor and rear axle cradle in place. This gear box cover (now discarded) doesn't appear to like staying in place, hence one ends up with the motor/rear axle cradle trying to do all sorts of weird and wonderfuls.

I must admit to being a big fan of the Slot-it axle, gear and wheel set up, and in classes where allowed, have used this setup successfully on other cars. Beautiful looking cars are OK, but I'd like to have a practical racing version of each, with a body, chassis, guide, motor, gear, wheels and tyres meant for racing fitted as standard. Perhaps then there will more variation in our racing classes.

Regards

Terry Blackmore

.....

Dear Brian,

We are fortunate at Wolverhampton SCC to have, in addition to a six lane Ninco track, an oval six lane routed stock car track. Our current membership shows little interest in stock cars, understandable when one compares the abundance and quality of RTR cars.

I am however, aware of 2 or 3 people from the Birmingham area who have expressed an interest in stock car racing. If there are any more people "out there" interested would they please register their interest with me. Any interest would lead to an inaugural meeting being arranged at Wolverhampton.

My initial thoughts for a group would be to meet monthly, possibly on Saturdays, 10am - 6pm from little acorns grow! I can be contacted on tel:- 01902 497270 or email:- mscotto@blueyonder.co.uk

Many thanks,

Malcolm Scotto

Dear Brian,

I am writing to let you know that I took great offence to part of an article in the March issue of the Journal by Nigel Copcutt (page 10, "Milton Keynes Swapmeet").

In this article Nigel refers to the practice of people "... sneaking in through the exit door to avoid paying their (entrance fee of) £1.50." He then continued with a particular reference to "... the tall guy with the grey hair and beard who is getting really good at it, he should be the number of times he has done it!"

As you (and Nigel) are aware, I can be fairly described as tall (1.93m or 6' 3" in socks), grey haired and I have sported a beard for over 20 years. I am sure you will understand my fears that your entire readership will believe I was the person referred to as guilty of this shameful, serial freeloading. Whilst it is strictly accurate to say that I came in through the exit door and did not pay the entrance fee, I did pay Nigel £56.00 for the two tables I shared with a Spanish friend so I figured I'd paid my dues for that day.

I thought about bringing an action for this ridiculous defamation but since I am far too poor to afford a solicitor, I consulted the late George Carman QC, via a medium. (This was dead cheap as the medium I used is the aunt of a friend so I got a special rate.) The advice I received from the other side was to wait until after the next swapmeet. This was sound advice indeed. At Loughborough recently, I could see that half the people there had grey hair and beards and, of course, half of any group would look tall to the other half.

With this in mind, I can see that I had perhaps been uncharacteristically precious to think that everyone reading that description would think of me. I have forgiven you for publishing this vague calumny against half your membership and I will forgive Nigel for writing it when he charges me £1.50 for my tables next year.

Cheers,
Peter Zivanovic

This month sees the arrival of the first Ninco "Raid" car – the Mitsubishi Pajero-Montero "Masouka" (50306), based on the 2001 Paris-Dakar winner. This all-terrain car is the first to feature the ProArm drop guide. The system allows the guide/brush assembly to maintain contact with the rails even when the car is raised over very rough track surfaces. It is also fitted with the all-new high-torque NC7 Raider motor which will transfer its power to the track through chunky off-road tyres. In addition to these innovations the Mitsubishi has all-round ProShock suspension as featured on the new Clio but this time combined with 4-wheel drive. The suspension setting supplied is "medium" but can be interchanged with the after-market "soft" or "hard" shocks.

Following last month's edition, I have been asked if there is any intention to add to the current range of track available. With the ProArm and ProShock developments being introduced to some Ninco cars, it seems a natural progression to offer some "special stage" track, after all, Ninco want to give us all the opportunity to recreate the excitement of the Paris-Dakar rally in the comfort of our own home. "Raid" style track has been mentioned in previous press releases – so *"watch this space"* for more details! Still on the subject of track, I am reliably informed by 'Manuel' (- *he's from Barcelona*), that a new rally-style curve set will be on the shelves at our local stores *VERY* soon... With steel rails and a reduced-grip track surface, it should prove quite challenging to both magnet

& non-magnet cars.

Other products due for imminent release include a new liveried, silver, Citroen Saxo (50299) and the first race-decorated new-shape Renault Clio (50300). Both of these cars add to the line up of the Super 1600 Rally class. For Classic car fans there is a beautiful 1963 AC Cobra (50303) - a reproduction of the actual car raced during the 2002 Classic LeMans. This car includes a removable super magnet, NC2 motor



and an active suspension slot-guide.

Finally, Ninco's new controller is now available. As well as all the usual features such as brake, jack-plug and flexi-cable, this one features a 55 ohm resistor, offering smoother control of higher powered cars with magnets fitted.

Remember to send in your questions or suggestions about what you would like to see featured in "Ninco News". E-mail me direct on PTSolari@aol.com or contact me through our editor – details at the front of the journal. ■

NINCO

track test

50287 Mercedes CLK DTM
"CEB" #17
50291 Mercedes CLK DTM
"OASE" #16
Reviewed by Dave
Richardson

Another pair of Mercedes CLKs from Ninco - the "CEB" version in a fetching shade of ultramarine blue and the "OASE" one in vivid lime green with a white rear half.

Both models sport multi-spoke simulated alloy wheels with slick tyres and the sponsors decals are sharp and well printed. Bodywork details such as the simulated cooling louvres on the wings, the exhausts in front of the rear wheels and proper air ducts in the side panels are good features.

On the downside the Mercedes motif on the bonnet will have to be removed prior to racing as will the door mirrors (yes, I know they are staked in). On the subject of mirrors - why don't they put some simulated glass or at least some silver paint on them? This is a detail that always seems to be missed on saloon cars. Mind you I did love the African tree frogs on the boot of the "OASE" version!

On the track

My permanent loft layout is a Plexytrack 4-lane system in the shape of a large capital E with an average lap length of 87 feet and computer timing. The track surface is coated with matt black emulsion. The fastest lap to date is 5.25 seconds.

I tested the cars straight out of the box apart from filing down the guide blade to suit the slot. They are powered by the usual NC2 motor through a standard 3 to 1 ratio rear axle fitted with brass bearings.

Road holding is assisted by the now familiar round magnet fitted just forward of the motor which keeps the car firmly on the track. However, on a couple of the tighter bends, at

about half throttle, the tail slid out quite sharply but recovered well; typical Ninco handling in fact.

The test was carried out over 50 laps on each lane with the car very quick from the off. Times continued to fall as the car was "run in" and reached a very respectable level for a new car. Just as a comparison I also ran my newly acquired "free with Racer magazine" red Ford GT40 MKII.



Facts and figures

Lane	Mercedes	GT40
Green (longest)	7.34 secs	6.39 secs
Yellow (fastest)	6.40 secs	5.95 secs
Red	7.18 secs	6.88 secs
Blue (shortest)	7.13 secs	7.11 secs

As previously stated both cars were "straight out of the box" but I have no doubt that the racers amongst you would lower these times considerably with a few modifications. For me the Mercedes is just fine as it is - if it ain't broke then why fix it? Thanks Ninco, a good one for the collection. ■



The quality of Hornby's recent products have improved drastically and the new Mercedes DTM in "Vodafone" livery is no exception. This car looks simply stunning!

The tampo printing is probably the cleanest and most defined that I have seen from any slot-car manufacturer. The body moulding is exceptionally crisp with beautifully sculpted louvred vents and brake cooling ducts above the wide wheel arches front and rear.

The rear spoiler is of a tri-plane design and looks, and in fact is, rather delicate. Hornby have made nice use of photo-etched parts for number plates, these have "Blaupunkt" printed on them, side exhaust heat-proof surrounds, front splitter mesh and disc-brakes on the typical Mercedes multi-spoke wheels.

The interior is, as you would expect for a car of this type, fairly sparse, with a rather bland driver figure (licensing fees?), roll-cage, floor mounted fire extinguisher etc. chassis and running gear

Hornby continue to use the sidewinder type mounting which, in my opinion, doesn't give good weight distribution. We also find the obligatory magnet which is a rather large bar type measuring approximately 25 x 7 mm and virtually guarantees "****t to a blanket" traction and can be mounted either in front of the rear or behind the front axles. The saving grace is the location point for the weaker and far smaller in area round magnet-more of that later.

The tyres seem to be of a new compound with a higher silicone content and similar to some Ninco tyres. The guide blade is of the sprung self-centring type but I do think that the spring is a little too strong. The chassis is attached to the body using 6 screws.

On track

I tested the Mercedes on my 6 lane 143 feet running length Ninco circuit which has a good variety of fast and technical sections.

C2391 Mercedes CLK DTM "Vodafone"

REVIEWED BY GRAEME THOBURN

As I don't have an affinity to super magnets, I quickly discarded them after a few high speed laps. With no "traction aids" I found that the car had a tendency to "wheelie" caused by a combination of rear wheel grip, high revving motor and a very light front end. The handling became unpredictable and I realized some minor modifications were needed.

Out came the Plasticine and increasing amounts were added until some semblance of predictability to the cars handling was achieved. Then I found a small Scalextric round magnet and decided to try another car using this in the aforementioned position.

I found that there was very little difference between the two cars with the exception that the magnet car now had better braking ability. A little more work was still needed so I discarded the two centre body screws and made the other front and rear screw holes larger and removed a small amount of plastic on all chassis edges.

This enables the body to move freely, giving a suspension effect which can prevent a car from tipping out on corners quite as easily.

Back to the track and I now have a better handling, fast car with a nice tail-out attitude which still needs a great degree of skill to negotiate the circuit at speed and this was achieved with a small amount of work.

In summation, Hornby have produced a great looking car which, in my opinion, should please both collectors and racers alike and is well worth purchasing.

Personally, I would like to see Hornby go back to in-line motors and ditch the Mabuchi for something with better brakes and less revs. A motor like the Ninco NC2 would be ideal as this has all those attributes and, being approximately 18 gms heavier, would give better weight distribution and thus enable it to compete on level terms with other cars raced non-magnet.

PS: if anyone in the Essex area is interested in club racing, please contact me on: 01702 551225\07789764950 or email me at Graeme@gtmodels.fsbusiness.co.uk . ■

I have seen the light!

BY IAN WINSTANLEY

I never had Scalextric as a child. The preferred electric toys in our house were Hornby trains as my Father had been a fireman back when they had 'proper' trains.

Since then I have tried to get away from tracks and have played with Radio-controlled cars, boats and planes and, more recently, toys that you can ride on e.g. motorbikes, go-karts and 4x4s.

It was on my first visit to Oasis in the Lake District (now part of the Center-parcs group) that I got the Scalextric bug. They have a six-lane circuit that in retrospect is quite poor but within a month I had spent my first 100 quid on the 2001 Le-Mans 24hr set. Within three months I had spent another 300 quid and borrowed some more track to organise a 'last working day before Christmas' Scalextric tournament.

Slot club

Soon afterwards I started attending Hazel Grove Slot Club to find out how I could go faster. At the time, all classes being raced were modified for speed and cornering, and I found that the cars in my collection most likely to get in a final at the club didn't want to run on a track assembled at home.

Then I saw the light..... as long as I had a worthy opponent, there was a lot more fun to be had with unmodified cars. There's no fun in just doing an entire lap on full throttle!

For a variety of reasons I decided to set up a club of my own this year. When I was offered the choice of going for a long and fast circuit assembled weekly in a church hall, or a winding and skilful circuit in a secure and permanent venue, I went for the permanent venue.

East Lancashire Slot Racing Club is based in an office building, and the circuit only occupies 12ft x 7ft but is nearly 100ft long. The circuit has proven to be quite a challenge for unmodified cars, but the cars that run the best at

Hazel Grove just weld themselves to the track at the slightest bump. This was annoying at first but I have now seen that this was another sign..... and I would now rather drive an unmodified Ferrari F40 (brown rubber magnet), than a modified Porsche GT1 (2mm thick Slot-it bar magnet).

The fastest cars on this circuit are now the GT40s, the best Scalextric car I've taken to bits so far, the best looking car in the catalogue and the most Magnatraction that our circuit will tolerate.

To see the current state of completion of our circuit, and to find out more about East Lancs. Slot Racing Club, visit www.slots4fun.net or I can be contacted on 07740 492465 or email me at ian@slots4fun.net . ■

Carrera Corner

BY STEVE BAKER

By now everyone will know about the Carrera range of Mille-Miglia cars, and personally I like 'em. But then according to some I'm supposed to say that as I get them for review. Err, well no actually. The point of any review is to give an honest opinion, whether it's positive or negative. All feed back to the manufacturer is good, right? So that's what you'll get - an honest opinion. Right, now we've got that out of the way, did I mention that I like this range of cars? Yes, good.

This is a review of my own race car, as used every fortnight with varying degrees of success. This is due to a number of reasons, not least of which is that we race them the wrong way round our club track. For those of you who are hard of hearing, yes I did say the wrong way round our track. This is thanks to the polarity reversing switch on all Carrera cars, any club could do this (unless of course you use a mechanical lap counter, in which case I wouldn't recommend it!), and if you can you should try it. Let's just say it livens things up a bit, not only in this class, but

it takes more effort than you'd expect to get back into your rhythm going the right way round in the next class.

Range

There are four cars in the range, the Aston, a Jaguar D type, a Mercedes 300SLR, and the little Masser A6GS. All have accurate period detailing, with the nice chrome wire wheels and race liveries, and a full length driver. The motor is located near the front right behind the guide flag, with the variable magnet between the motor and the rear axle. Mine is the dark green with yellow stripe version, and how does it handle? That very much depends where you position the magnet (our club circuit is a steel track), too high and you get a faster car which is a little unpredictable at some corners, too low and you get a slow car that flies off the track as you have to keep it floored to make it move quick enough. But once you find the balance which suits you best, they are a pleasure to race, even with the high gearing and, yes, Carrera are ⇒



aware that the gearing is too high and they have now changed it on ALL 1/32nd scale cars future and current models. Whilst a good move, the downside is that you will not know until you run it which gearing your chosen car has.

I've also raced my beloved Aston on the copper tape track at Home Farm near Liphook. The first time... now that was scary. Why? high gearing and no magnet with a tight-ish corner at the end of the main straight, also for some reason the copper tape track felt to me as though it gave FASTER acceleration. In fact it was more of a handful on the more open copper track that it is on our tighter steel track, obviously due to the magnet's capabilities as much as mine.

Room for improvement

If there is one area for Carrera to make improvements it's with the guide flag assembly, you can swivel it... if you hold the blade the fitting arm can be moved laterally in the sleeve, the up-and-down movement although not sprung is acceptable but not lateral movement as this allows it to lean over when cornering, something which is obviously undesirable. Also I'm not convinced about the angled lower edge of the blade, I feel it should be as deep as possible for as long as possible (i.e. level) particularly on the leading edge.

Even after this bit of trying to convince Carrera to change this, I still like their cars

generally, not because I may think there any better or worse than anyone else's cars. But because they are different, they provide a continuity of racing, if my club ever gets to the point where we race only classes with high performance magnets where you never take your finger off the throttle then it will be time to look elsewhere (but as I'm chairman it's unlikely. Did I say 'unlikely', it'll never bloody happen while I'm chairman!).

Other 'braking' Carrera news

Well as mentioned above all newly produced 1/32nd cars now have revised gearing. Next it's about to be a very busy time on the Carrera front (OH B****R), if you haven't seen it the new Carrera catalogue has a total of 96 cars in it across all 3 scales (1/43rd, 1/32nd, and 1/24th), and most of these are 1/32nd and is well worth a long slow read.

But probably most interesting is that Carrera have developed an active braking system which will be fitted on all 1/32nd cars, I don't know at this time whether this only works on Carrera's own track or all tracks. These may well be already available by now, as they were due for the end of May.

For anyone who collects the Carrera sets, they have developed a new style of hand throttle, is this related to the braking? We'll have to wait to find out. All these questions and many more answered..... eventually (maybe). ■

Repro parts register

Here is the first listing of people who supply reproduction parts. Most of them advertise in the Journal so I have only included contact details for those who don't. If I haven't included your details below, please get in touch via the editor or email me at peter_boita@btconnect.com so that we can include you in the next update of the register.

Sprint Promotions

Products: Early Scalextric car numbers. 20 cars can be done from one sheet. Sheets also contain

BY PETER BOITA

Pit Board Numbers from 1 - 9. These numbers are on the correct grade of paper (not vinyl!) to accurately restore these fast appreciating early cars. Can also be "aged" if a more patinated feel is required. Cutters to accurately punch out both sizes of the numbers for repro. or original sheets.

Prices: Sheets £6.00 each regardless of size (Only 30 pence per car).

Cutters £8.99 each regardless of size.

P & P to be added as required.

Contact details: peter_boita@btconnect.com
Tel. 020-8679 0888

Martin Fox

Goodwood green banking.
A.237 Hurdles in black or white. All cast in resin.
Scalextric C0051 Maserati metal seat.
C0052 Ferrari metal seat.

Prices: Banking is £10.00

Hurdles are £3.00

Scalextric C0051 Maserati metal seat £10.00

Scalextric C0052 Ferrari metal seat £10.00

Contact details: martinsfox11@aol.com

Tel. 01298-813383

BTS Mouldings.

The original supplier of (mostly 60s) repro parts.
Makers of replacement parts in resin for slot-cars including Scalextric, V.I.P., Minic and Revell. Large range parts - too many to list here.

R/S racing

Specialising in tyres only. Huge range for most modern makes and also from the 60s onwards.

Really Useful Spares Co.

Steve Cannon and Roger Barker have formed an exciting new company producing high quality injection moulded replacement parts. They have a continually expanding range of mainly 60s stuff - mostly screens, wheels, tyres and wafer thin metalised decal sheets. They are looking for new items to produce all the time, so please contact them with your suggestions!

Prices: Screens are £3.85 each.

Chromed wheels are £1.25 each.

Wafer thin metalised decal Sheets £3.85 each.

Look at their website at: www.8sc.co.uk/useful.htm

email: rusc@8sc.co.uk

Tel. 0115-9681113 or you can contact Robert Learthmouth at Westwood Models who will also help you.

Scale Models

Established dealer selling decals and stickers for various cars particularly early Spanish stuff. They deal with the earliest of 1957 tinplate cars right up to present day. Vast list available on request.

MRE

Fully licensed replicas of all Cox decals. Stockists of high quality waterslide and self adhesive decals for slot-cars and static models.

Hand Built Reproductions.

Contact is John Carmichael. jrac@bigfoot.com

Reproduction plastic parts produced to order and to a very high standard.

Prices approximately £2.00 to £6.00 per piece depending on the volume made. The list so far is:

B1/B2 Typhoon screen.

C2 Matra Djet screen/roof unpainted.

C5/6/8/9 driver/mirrors in white plastic.

C6/C8/C9 screen.

C56/C68/C69 tail light moulded in clear red plastic.

C74/C75 screen.

C76 Mini gearbox cover moulded in black plastic.

C83 Sunbeam Tiger headlights andscreen.

C84 Triumph TR4a screen.

Renault 5 front sidelights.

All Formula Junior screens.

Mercedes 190 and Healey guide.

T.V. tower operator/monitor/ready painted ladder and technician.

Various drivers' heads moulded in blue or red with ready painted faces.

Peter Novani

Telephone: 020-8343 4697.

2 clear and 2 white A4 size decal film sheets.

U.S.A. imports. These sheets allow you to create your own decals when used in conjunction with a photocopier. Instructions are included and the pack will cost you £10.00.

Useful sites to browse

www.pendleslotracing.com

www.ukslotcars.co.uk

These will open up a whole load of places for you to explore. ■

Ponderings on SCX Hyundais

BY DAVE DIAMOND

At the end of November last year I bought an SCX Hyundai Accent WRC from my local toy shop. It was the first time I'd seen one in the flesh and I was reasonably happy with the detail and finish - in fact, I was quite taken with the bored-out exhaust! It's a very standard SCX 4-wheel drive car mechanically; RX 81 motor with extended armature shaft and a crownwheel and pinion at both ends, no wires, just brass strips which, at the front, press down on the braids to give a bit of up and down movement to the guide as well as maintaining electrical contact.

Slow isn't the word

On the track (ply and tape so no magnet) it was the smoothest of all the Tecnitoy 4x4s so far, with the possible exception of a Lancer Evo 4 that I bought in '98, but "slow" doesn't begin to cover it. It managed 8.559 seconds not long after I bought it and months later after a little tweaking it got down to 8.207 seconds. That's about 1 1/2 seconds off the lap record. Nice little car, though., handles well and looks quite good.

On my birthday my son Rhys went back to the toyshop and bought me another SCX Accent. This one is the DTM version and has, I'm pleased to say, certain differences. My first thought on seeing my son's present was "Oh, well, at least it's got a different livery" but that's not all.....it doesn't have lights, the front axle is rigidly mounted in brass bearings (so it doesn't act like a drunk in corners) and it's two wheel drive. The motor looks the same but has RX41 printed on it. (Sounds exactly the same, though, and draws the same amount of current).

This one's quicker

I put the car on the track and it immediately did an 8.300 sec. lap - down to 8.100ish within 5 laps. "Gosh", I thought, "Wow" (or words to that effect) "I wonder if it'll go any quicker?" I took off the shell and removed the tyres, refitting them carefully (instant smoothness - it bounced around like a pogo stick straight out of the box) put a spot of 3in1 on both sets of axle bearings and armature bearings and reassembled it with all 5 screws about 1/2 a turn loose.

Back on the track and ten laps later it was down to 7.964 secs. and it ain't run in yet! This thing, folks, is faster on my track than the Gulf Audi R8 that I bought on the same day as the WRC Accent!

The tyres have probably got something to do with it 'cos the Audi and the WRC have ribbed ones and the DTM has slicks but it just goes to show that simplicity has just got to be the way to go!

Experiment

I tried another little experiment using both Accents. I put them both on the same lane with the slower WRC in the lead and set off for a lap or two. Yes I know, that's what you do when you're four years old! The interesting thing was that at the beginning of a straight, when I put the hammer down, the DTM didn't have the instant acceleration that the WRC. had, only catching up again after about 3 feet. I guess this shows you that 4 wheel drive does actually work because the only explanation I can think of is that the DTM has to be spinning a little; still, you pays your money and you takes your choice! ■

SACRÉ BLUE

BY DAVID SYKES

We owe a lot to our neighbours over the channel, Continental breakfasts, the Guillotine, Norman Castles, someone to hate, oh and Motor Sport.

In 1887 the French journal, *Le Velocipede* arranged a short trial from Paris but only one competitor came along, so a bit like modern Formula One really. Unusually the French stuck at it (we had red flags and road racing was banned so perhaps we had best not laugh too loud) and in 1894 *Le Petit Journal* organized a trial from Paris to Rouen, 79 miles; 102 machines were entered but only 21 made the start all powered by petrol or steam. Who won? Well a DeDion steam tractor made 11.6 m.p.h. to finish first but was disallowed because it had two crewmen! So Peugeot and Panhard took first; do not ask me to explain! The trial itself seems to have been a bit of a farce but it did inspire the Marquis de Dion and Baron de Zuylen de Nyevelt to form the Automobile club of France and a race from Paris to Bordeaux and back, some 732 miles. Whey Hey! Motor sport and the governing body is born, well because they were French we have to have some farce so cars with two or less seats were banned as this was to be an endurance race and cars with two seats are built just for speed, four seats was *dé rigueur*.

Apparently the early races had a very heavy toll on dogs, Man's best friend had not seen the automobile before, gave chase and actually took hold being then thrown into the mudguards etc. French cars were prominent in these early races with marques such as Renault, Peugeot, Ballot, Panard et Levassor and Delarge. It is surprising and unfortunate that French racing blue has not been more prominent beyond those early years. As fans of Scalextric, we all know of one French make that has become a rarity in our circles - Bugatti T59 GP. This car is a typical Bugatti design in that Ettore designed his cars by eye rather than mechanical knowledge. He grew up

in Lombardy, Northern Italy between the industrial cities of Turin, Milan and the craftsmen minded city of Venice and it is the combining of metal and art that is seen in all his designs. The Bugatti Marque's success in racing is mostly due to a slump in racing between the wars and that Bugatti cars could be raced out of the box; so many were bought by privateers that they outnumbered the opposition but this should not be allowed to detract from their simple beauty.



The last Grand Prix Bugatti was the T251 of 1956 and is not considered a true Bugatti, as Ettore had no part in its design, dying in 1947. His surviving son, Roland, worked with Gioacchino Colombo to lay out the design for the T251 with its straight eight engine set transversely behind the cockpit in a space frame chassis. It appeared for only one race with Maurice Trintignant at the wheel, was underpowered and handled badly with DeDion axles front and back but if Bugatti's military contracts from the war in Vietnam had not dried up and some development made it may have put up a show. What I find attractive about this car, as with many of those from the 1950s is the variety of body shapes. The T251 has a full width nose similar to F1 cars of the 70s and a bulging waistline like the Ferrari Squalo 555; it is a revolutionary attempt that never got a chance.■