



No.260 NOVEMBER 2003

BY SUBSCRIPTION ONLY

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EDITOR

Brian Rogers
27 Paige Close
Watlington
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE33 0TQ

Tel/Fax:- 01553 813090
e-mail:- editor@nsccl.co.uk

TRADE ADVERTISING

Adrian Leggett
Roseville
Westwood Lane
Normandy
Guildford
Surrey
GU3 2JG

Tel:- 07773 967333
between 09:00 - 18:00
01483 810102 evenings
e-mail:- sales@nsccl.co.uk

The NSCC

www.nsccl.co.uk

The independent club for slot-car enthusiasts

High, wide and handsome into Paddock

It's mid October; it's freezing; veteran commentator Brian Jones is at the microphone and 30 teenage lunatics in spindly single seaters are hurtling towards 'Druids, the hairpin'. Your editor and his good lady are in motorsport heaven, standing outside Hailwoods clutching the obligatory cup of hot chocolate. Where are we? Brands Hatch and the Formula Ford Festival - where else?

The roll call of previous Festival winners reads like a 'Who's Who' of motor racing - Derek Daly, Johnny Herbert, Eddie Irvine, Mark Webber and Jenson Button to name but a few. Sadly, this blue riband event would appear to be on the slippery slope to extinction with this year's entries down to just 46; the idiot at Ford who did away with the Kent engine and introduced the Zetec version should be hung from the highest yardarm!

Long gone are the days of eight heats, quarters, semis and final; this year we had a complicated arrangement of heats, eliminators and 'last chance' races to eke out the meagre entry. I swear they were on the verge of changing the coloured stickers on the cars and giving them a race in each lane!

No matter, the racing was, as ever, fabulous and we had a worthy winner in young Joey Foster. To lead from lights to flag with 15 other drivers setting faster race laps speaks volumes for his talent. Lap after lap we watched in admiration as he went into Paddock three abreast with his pursuers but his line was inch perfect and nobody was able to take the win away from him - I look forward to following his future career.

I find it strange that not a single slot-car manufacturer has produced a model of this most successful racing category ever; don't they realise how many repaints they could get from a single mould?

And Finally - if you don't read Motorsport magazine the following comment will mean nothing but to regular readers of their letters page I suggest you look at the final contribution in the November issue and mourn the passing of civilisation as we know it.

*I am, yours etc,
Brian*





New releases

Lots of activity from Margate this month with several reliveries and a brand new car:

C2484 Mini Cooper "John Cooper Challenge" No5.

C2485 Mini Cooper "John Cooper Challenge" No6.

The standard versions of the BMW Mini's C2484 and C2485 are now available. They are visually identical to the Sport versions released recently.

"You're only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!"

Eagerly awaited by many are the Italian Job Minis. The first version of the set has been released in the bigger Marks & Spencer stores in the UK. Featuring an attractive box design with prominent M&S logos. This set is actually smaller than the general release set and has a crossover to ensure many of these cars will be destroyed.

C2538W BMW Mini Cooper S Italian Job

C2539W BMW Mini Cooper S Italian Job

C1119 Italian Job Set

The cars themselves are de-specified with painted door handles and no discs.

The Mini Cooper S is a completely different mould to the standard Cooper. The most notable difference is the bonnet air intake but the front and rear spoilers are also different, there is a spoiler on the roof and there are twin exhausts. With this level of investment in a new mould we are sure to see more Cooper S versions next year.

Rally cars

A 3rd incarnation of the Subaru Impreza has been released with the latest bodyshape and multi-split rear wing.

C2491(W) Subaru Impreza WRC Works 2003 "No8

C2531W Subaru Impreza No7

C1120 Competition Rally Set



C2491 is available as a solo car in a standard crystal case and in set C1120. There is no Sport version. There are no discernable differences between the solo and set cars. C2531W is only available in set C1120 and in the forthcoming Scandinavian Petter Solberg Rally set. C1120 Competition Rally Set is an Argos exclusive.

C2489 Ford Focus WRC "Works 2003 No4" - another relivery of the Ford Focus, this time in this year's corporate rally livery which is mainly white. ➡

Other releases

C1125 Caterham Clash Set. A new set has been released through the general outlets that is not listed in the new Catalogue update. This is C1125 with the Team Richie and Team Taran Caterhams, C2344 & C2345

C2525 Chevrolet Corvette L88 Plain White

Last but definitely not least is the first of the new Corvettes. Strangely, the plain white one has been released first. Most of the production has gone to the US but a small number have been seen in the UK with the major resellers. The fully decorated versions are due shortly.

Racer specials

C2349 Ford Focus WRC "RS"

C2351 Mitsubishi Lancer "Evolution 7 WRC"

Issue 35 (August/September 2003) of Hornby's own Scalextric Racer magazine gives us the opportunity to order two more cars exclusive to the Scalextric Enthusiasts Club and these have now been released.

Neither car features rally numbers but are in corporate road liveries. The quality of the finish is extremely high and the silver Evo VII is particularly successful.

Coming soon

Anyone downloading car images into RMS from Hornby's web site may have noticed a dark blue Porsche GT3R in there. This is C2524 "The Entertainer" which refers to a chain of toy shops, mainly in the South East of the country, whose logo is a juggling clown. Due during November the car can be ordered from their web site at www.thetoystore.com.

Hornby on the road

Hornby will be at the UK WRC event, The Wales Rally GB on November 7th, 8th & 9th. Based in the Swansea service park they will have a huge layout based upon the Cardiff Super Special Stage. Although it looks like a 4 lane





circuit it has only two lanes but is designed so that each loop is very similar. Cars will be started on each loop and complete what appears to be two laps to get back to where they started. Clever use of RMS enables a split time to be displayed at the end of the first loop. Hopefully we will have some pictures in due course to explain this a little better.

Have a look at <http://www.walesrallygb.com/> for more information about the rally.

Bits and pieces

Scalextric will again feature in TV advertising in the run up to Christmas. A new Challenger advert has already been spotted during Sunday

morning Channel 5 kids programmes.

The packaging for cars selling in the US has been updated. The Scalextric USA logo appears on the outer card sleeve and on the front of the plastic plinth. Now, should we collect both versions ?

The new TVRs come complete with a small bag containing replacement braid plates. On the standard crystal case versions this is taped to the underside of the plinth.

In a continued effort to satisfy the demand for spare parts Hornby have now made several Service Sheets available as PDF downloads from their web site. See http://www.scalextric.co.uk/pages/prod_spr.aspx to see the list available. ■

Traders Travels

BY ROBERT LEARMOUTH
(WESTWOOD MODELS)

After many years of running Westwood Models as a spare-time business, Karen and myself have finally decided to take the full-time plunge. No doubt one of the contributory factors was sitting in the stunning sunshine of Madrid at the outdoor swapmeet there in June thinking 'this is the life!'. The reality of course is somewhat different and actually managing to make a living out of selling only slot-cars is a stiff challenge. But nonetheless after 17 years numbing my brain in an IT career it's a challenge I'll happily accept.

We're moving the business out of home alongside my brother Jon who runs Slot City. It will certainly be an interesting concept seeing parts of the house again that disappeared many years ago under a pile of slot-cars. I also have to adjust to a life at home without the sanctuary of 'the office' - now that I am worried about...

Meanwhile Jon's current premises aren't really big enough now so by the time you read this we'll have moved next door which has much more floor space and we'll have a retail shop too. Please come and visit!

As a long-time mail order based business I suppose it's almost ironic that we're now also selling through a retail shop. But as someone who managed to bore himself silly with technology a long-time ago I've sensed for a while now that the novelty of Ebay and the Internet is wearing off or at least becoming just another, albeit important, sales channel. It's quite possible we'll see a shift back towards 'traditional' ways of doing business, as people want to buy hands-on again. Which is why I've lent my support to the NSCC reviewing its swapmeet position. We're now seeing new swapmeets announced which, as open events, are reaching out to the new blood in the hobby and giving more people the chance to actually see and discuss what they're buying.

Ebay watch this month reports a rare-as-u-like yellow Electra, which had passed through

the careful scrutiny of two reputable NSCC dealers and had been declared 'genuine'. This sold for a very modest £250. Meanwhile Graham Perris would have been delighted to see one of his Bugattis sell for a very encouraging £255.

Less than delighted though was the NSCC member whose pointy-fin Batmobile failed to reach its reserve, coming to a halt at £150. This version never made it into full-scale production due to the potentially hazardous nature of the fins, which were subsequently revised with a small bead on the end. Many will remember the initial clamour for this model, which caused Simon Kohler some merriment in a well publicised interview of the time. Elsewhere a white Corvette L88 made a solid £56 but the seller was wide of the mark to suggest only 100 came into the country. Officially it was 500 cars and no doubt many dozens more arrived as individual imports. All the same, all of the recent plain white car Scalextric releases have been low-key and passed over by a lot of collectors which will potentially make these difficult cars to obtain down the line.

New arrivals in the last week have included the first of the Italian Job Minis. But why release only the blue and white ones to start with and not the red one, which is now rumoured to be delayed until December? And why wait for a month after the release of the film!?! Will the white car be the most sought after as that colour is not a set car and some dealers are selling the individual cars as a trio only?

It's like waiting for the proverbial bus - no major European mainland swapmeets since the other side of the summer and now Slotmania, Stuttgart and Utrecht beckon this month within eight days of each other. Utrecht is an easy enough run from Calais and recent Dutch swapmeets have been thriving events so this one could be worth a weekend away for. ■

Highway 32 SP250 (Daimler Dart) Sports Car

BY GEOFF MASON

About a year and a half ago I reviewed the BMC 32 Riley Elf resin kit. It was only the second resin model I had built, and I was pleased with its performance. Since then, I have purchased several resin cars, both in kit form and ready made. Although they are heavier than normal plastic (ABS or Styrene) bodies I find that they are competitive on my small home track and gives me the chance to build and race models that would not otherwise be available.

Whilst I would not consider myself to be an expert, I can say that from the different resin model makes I have tried, I have never been disappointed with BMC32 and Highway 32 series. At present there are around ten models in the BMC32 range and about five in Highway 32, with more to come in both ranges.

The models represent good value at around £50, which, while more expensive than off the shelf models, are competitive for resin bodied cars. The kits come complete with vacuum formed windows (unlike some resin bodies), metal accessories (grills, lights, etc.), and the components to build a complete car. Usually the running gear is MRRC based, and recently, the new little red motor, which is very powerful, appears to be being supplied.

SP250 (Daimler Dart) sports car

The SP 250 was a V8 powered sports car, which was about in the early 1960s. It was a little up-market from the usual runabouts and was probably more expensive. Its design was a bit old-fashioned and it was soon replaced when the maker was absorbed by Jaguar and then into British Motor Holdings. As a teenager, I lived in Hampton, in West London, where there was a depot and garage facilities for the Metropolitan Police. There was at least one Dart kept there as a “Q” car.

When I first saw the Dart advertised by Highway 32, I immediately placed an order. Here was another car from my youth, that I could race against my TR4s, AH3000 and AC Cobras. After several production delays and my usual levels of whinging, the car arrived. When I opened the box I was not disappointed.

The resin body captures the shape nicely and there was very little flash on either the body or the resin interior parts, and the use of the MRRC Cobra chassis (note to self – I must get a new Cobra) allows a full length driver. The screen is a metal frame with a vac form screen and the grill, headlights and tail lights are also metal. All metal parts are nicely chrome plated. The chassis comes with MRRC motor and guide unit in situ, leaving only axles and wheels to be fitted.

At this stage, prior to assembly, my only whinge is that there were no instructions. I have built many kits, both static and slot racers, so I found construction simple and straightforward. However, anyone building this as a first model may not find it so clear, but there again, I might be underestimating other peoples’ abilities. This whinge is not just for Highway 32 as other resin kit suppliers (including Top Slot) do not supply instructions either.

Construction

As usual, I did a “dry run”, fitting the interior to the body, and then lining up the chassis. The fit is good but snug, and as usual with car designs of that age the track is quite narrow which leaves it tight to avoid tyre rub.

The next job was to prepare the body. I drilled the holes for the metal lights and the chassis screws, then I gave the body a good scrub with an old toothbrush. The interior and driver parts were given the same treatment. The seats were then glued into place. I use super-glue, which works well enough and can be obtained



cheaply anywhere. The body, interior and driver were then painted.

While the paint was drying, I assembled the chassis & wheels and track tested it. Then I cut out the vacuum - formed windscreen and glued it carefully to the metal frame. This was quite fiddly but with patience and minimal amount of glue, a good fit was made.

Once the paint had dried the interior and chassis were fitted and the car tested. Resin is comparatively heavy, and with some surprise, I found that the car ran well. It was fast and responsive, and it was very easy to predict the amount of slide on the bends (must have cross-ply tyres).

The car was then disassembled so that the finishing touches could be added. I gave it some numbers, fitted the driver with a helmet and the folded hood (which matched the seats), and added the metal parts (grill, lights & screen), before giving it a clear gloss coat (I use Fymo gloss varnish which is water-based and isn't over glossy).

When completely dry, I fitted some very old metal original MRRC wheels with spoke inserts and Ortmann tyres, as I wanted the supplied

wheels and tyres for another project. The Dart was then given a full test. I gained a bit more grip and a more retro look from the wheel change. I don't have any fancy equipment and my small home track (fitted onto 4'x8' board in my garage) can be lapped in under 5 seconds by new breed ready built cars (F1 & LMP). The Dart managed well under 6 seconds and was faster than my Old Revell Cobra kit, my home built AH 3000 and TR4a, and an old Scalex Hong Kong Cobra.

All in all, this was a very satisfactory project. The car was easy to build with just a couple of fiddly bits, and it performs well and looks good. I have also built the Italian Sports Saloon/Police Car, which also goes extremely well. I can't wait to build the Imp and the TR6 (I might buy two as a Group 44 version is promised).

I should point out that I have received no commercial advantage from this review, and I paid for the kit. The BMC 32 & Highway 32 ranges offer a good choice of unusual cars from the 50s, 60s and 70s, giving the chance to race something a little bit different. Both the ranges can be seen together with future models at www.slotcarkits.co.uk ■

Westcountry Rambles

BY VINCE FEENEY

Following our Editor's lead with his "Crap Racer" diaries, I think it only fair that I relate a little tale that proves that 'The Ed' isn't alone. On the 11th/12th October, we (competitors in Merv Palmer's South West GT Championship) got conned into entering the Eastcote 24 hr race. (Thanks Don!).

Initially I was quite keen (remember only two weeks notice!) until I realised that it clashed with the Bathurst 1000km (shown live on Motors TV). Still I'd committed to it but didn't really want to go. (Bathurst, racing on plastic etc. etc). Having arrived at the event by about midday on Saturday, I proceeded to get some practice. Ten laps later and it was obvious that my 15 ohm Parma controller wasn't going to be suitable! A few laps with one of Nick Picknell's and I was sorted (ish). Sat around for three odd hours while Roland got the car sorted and event organisation ground on and we were ready for the big event.

So here we were, faced with a monster eight lane Ninco track that my imagination told me we should have been using Ninco's Mitsubishi Pajeros on. (Remember, we've just started racing on wood again, anything else feels like Paris-Dakar!). I'm racing on plastic which I don't like, a car I've never driven before with a controller I've never used before.

Add to the mix the fact that, apart from four four-minute races on our track at a round of the aforementioned SWGT Championship, I haven't raced competitively for almost two years and things are starting to look really gloomy.

The team boss (Roland) has decided that we will all do a half-hour stint on the first lane (6 drivers - 3 hours per lane) so when my turn arrives it with sweaty palms and pounding heart that I take my place on the rostrum and proceed to drive like a complete twat! I can't get the hang of all those funny little quarter turns or whatever they are, I'm used to constant radius turns, or the little sideways steps between the track sections (no drifting then!). I'm relieved after 30 minutes

and wander off mumbling rude things. About five hours later it's my turn again, more sweaty palms and a one hour stint. It's not possible to be that bad again is it? No. I was worse! It was at the end of this stint that I said a lot of rude words quite loudly and requested from the team boss that I finish my minimum required time as quick as possible so I could clear off home on the train. Luckily he ignored me as I picked my toys up and stomped off in a huff. I would like to thank Paul Darby at this point for the hug and the kind words ("Stop being a twat", I think he said).

Anyway I marshalled and bummed around for several hours before we reached one of the gutter lanes (black I think) and it was my turn again. Overcoming my nerves and sweaty bits I managed to string together quite a reasonable performance and things started looking up. Next lane (red) the car got rebuilt during my stint and suddenly I got a grip.

At last I was racing competitively! I could actually keep up, more or less, with our main competitors for position (Phoenix and The Belgians). At the end of the hour I floated off the rostrum with the biggest grin on my face you could imagine.

At the end of the 24 Hours I'd gone from not wanting to be there to having greatly enjoyed the event.

So how did the team do? We finished 5th, about 20ft behind The Belgians. Without my dismal early performances I think we could have seriously challenged Phoenix for third overall. We were about 50 laps behind them at the finish and I probably lost 40 of those in my first hour and a half. Luckily the rest of the team carried me at this event, so it was thanks to Roland, Nick, Phil, Mark and Merv that we got the result we got.

I think the most annoying thing was that I know that I am capable of driving much better than I did at this event. Next year (if we get invited!) I will go with my mind tuned in and a positive attitude.

⇒

Thanks should go to Brian Steptoe and his crew for organising this mammoth event and the track was much better than I'd convinced myself that it would be. Obviously it takes a totally different driving technique than I'm used to, so I'm taking steps to improve this situation (I have to prove that I am better at this lark than was seen this year!).

A question to Brian Steptoe - is there any reason why this is more or less a one-make event? Can't you open it up to a few more vehicles and make it bit more interesting? Can we come back next year please? OK three questions!

It was very tiring; good to see Paul Darby again after more years than I care to remember; good to meet Dan from Belgium and good to be able to put faces to names now. Why does Don Stanley have so much faith in my driving abilities?

Oh, and I've decided to drop the Vine Fennel thing 'cos too many people know my real name now! ■

BITS AND PIECES

Ebay spotting time

It would seem that many of you spend more time looking at on-line auctions than is healthy! *Andrew Davis* sent the following observations: "An NSCC Rover C562 (MB) for £131.00; 'Toys R us' **Saclextric** C281 red Triumph TR7, a snip at £115.83; the matching black one, a give away at £116.44 and an NSCC Jaguar XJ220 for £133.00.

If you have any more of these in the cupboard, now is the time to dig them out!

There are plenty more where these came from. How is anyone supposed to win any auctions when they are bidding against people who are willing to pay these prices? Thinking about it, are these payments actually received by the seller? If any of the sellers or buyers involved are NSCC members, please could they let us know?"

Catalogues also seem to be fetching silly money with an 11th edition raising an alleged £83 while *Bill Grigg* reports a 'Fly Lola T70 - **Mangy** Cours -C91' which sounds fairly horrible.

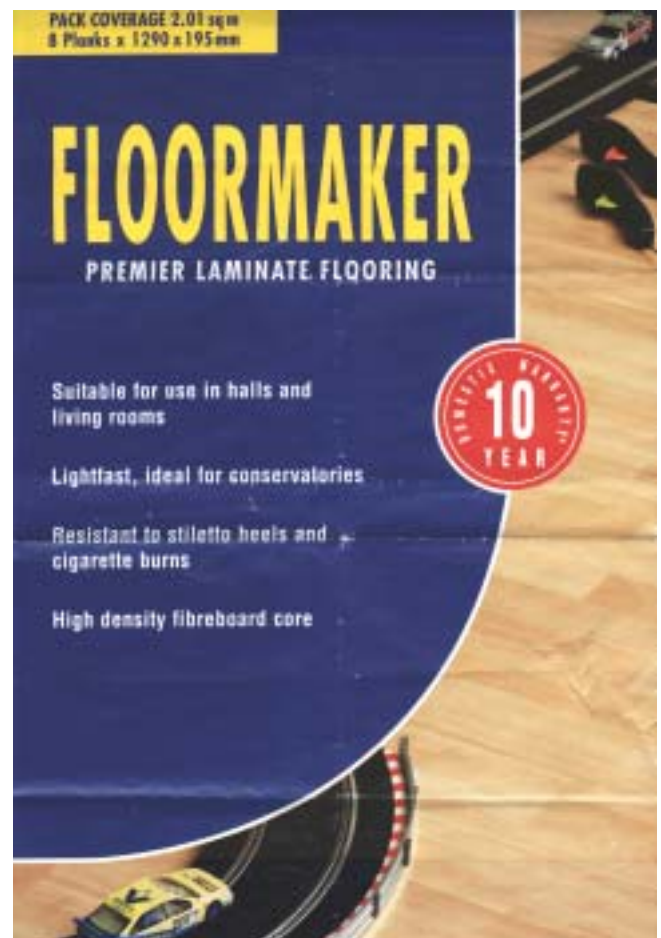
Mind you, nobody noticed the NSCC 200th edition Jaguar recently which fetched £62. This is a truly remarkable car as: "IT WAS ONLY AVAILABLE TO NSCC CLUB MEMBERS TO CELEBRATE 200 YEARS OF THE CLUB MAGAZINE OF WHICH ONLY 1018 WERE MADE"! I think I will award myself a prize car for spotting that one - anybody got a copy of the January 1798 Newsletter going spare? I believe the first article was entitled "How to race tune your hansom cab after discovering the wonders of electricity"!

Still on the subject of Ebay, while the World and his mother were watching the England football team Euro Cup qualifier on television recently, I picked up a near mint boxed C68 green Aston Martin DB4 for just £30 - all up the pub watching the big screen were you?

Mid-week lunchtime is also a good time to bid - that's how I got a TV tower for a tenner!

Stupid Scalextric adverts

I have received several examples of Scalextric products appearing in adverts for fairly tenuous reasons. Unfortunately magazine cuttings don't scan very well but I have done my best. Thanks to *Dave Smith* for the laminate floor piece below - would have thought it was better to cut slots in the stuff myself!



Richard Downham has sent me a couple of entries as well - will try and reproduce them next month. He also spotted a lorry on the M5 carrying 'Energiser' batteries and sporting the logo "Are you power mad?" over an Opel Astra and a stretched limo on a section of Scalextric track. If anybody has a photo of it, or indeed, can explain what the hell it is all about please get in touch.

Don't forget there is a prize car available for the best/worst advert sent in by Christmas.

Do It Yourself

BY ROB SMITH

It is an ambition of many of us to design and build our own Scalextric car. Something that is unique and personal to us and that will never be produced again. For the vast majority of us this ambition will never be realised and we fill our cabinets and tracks with the results of someone else's creative processes. Not always though.....

As an important member in the local community Hornby Hobbies sometimes take kids for work experience and some years ago this led to something quite unusual. In June 1999 a local schoolboy joined Hornby for a fortnight of work experience.

The first week, as with most work experience postings, was spent learning how the company operates and time was spent in all of the main

departments including the warehouse and despatch. The second week was much more interesting and he was invited to decorate his own Scalextric car.

The Vauxhall Vectra was chosen as the base vehicle. This was sprayed green on a plain white shell. The resulting colour is much like the Blend 37 Laguna that followed soon after. A scan of his school's logo was made and along with some gothic text turned into the tampo screens. The school logo is printed in 3 colours on the roof and there is some text on the bonnet too.

Only a handful were made to ensure that the printing was crisp and clean. It is not surprising that 4 years later the car is a treasured possession and a fine memento of a work experience placement. ■



Shipment from

Spain

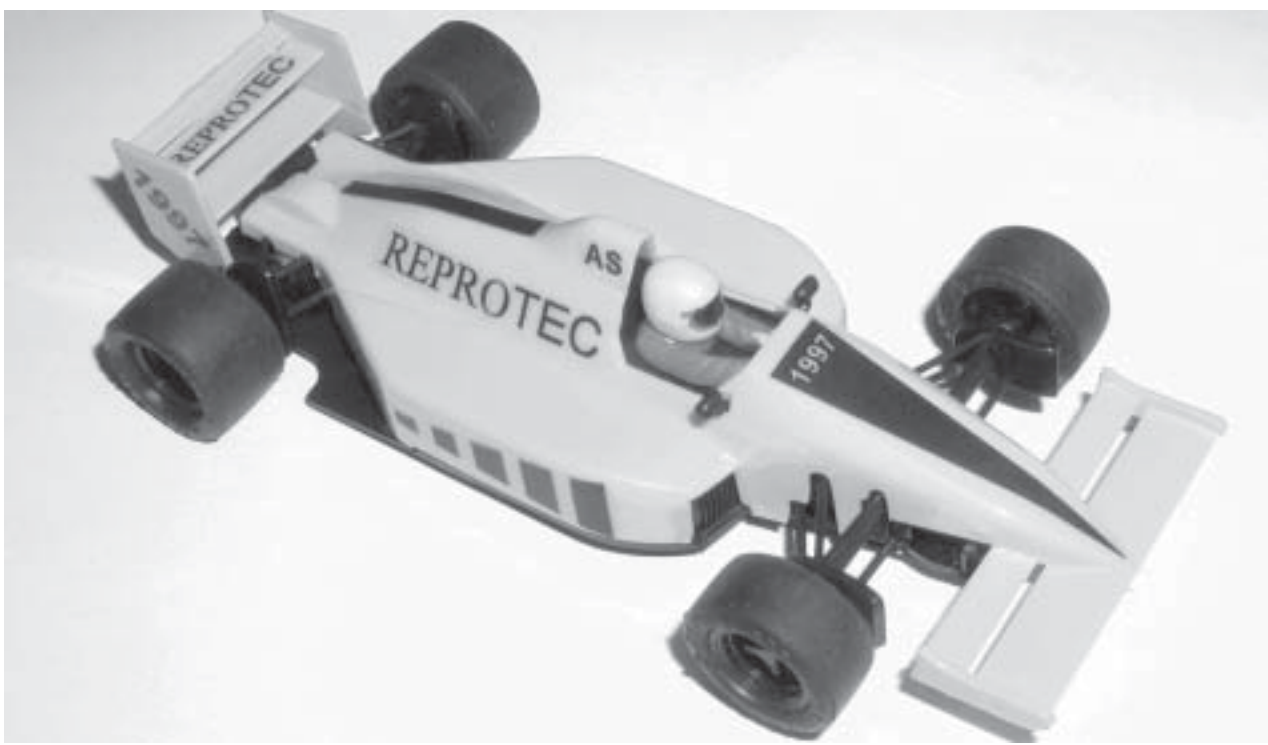
by Gareth Jex

What a fantastic week. I knew a little while ago that the new Dome was on its way, together with the long awaited Le Mans Start set, but I wasn't sure if they would arrive in time to tell all in this month's journal. Several telephone calls and emails with Tecnitoy's and a nice big box arrived by courier on Monday. Work took far too long that day and as soon as I could get away I drove over to Julian's house to deliver the review model and have a play! The planned hour or so I promised my wife turned into three hours of taking the cars apart, taking photos and, to be honest, several laps on his great home circuit, thanks Julian and thanks for the coffee!

When I ran a competition several months back to find out what SCX items you would like to see in the future, top of most people's list was a new pit lane and a new Le Mans start. We have a brand new Le Mans start so who knows what else is round the corner? Enough of this chat! What are they like? Read the review over the next few pages.

I met up with a few of you at the recent Bishop's Stortford swapmeet and also came across another very unusual car. Something tells me that this type is unlikely to be repeated! Ref. 8399-09 Minardi F1 car, yellow; interesting enough in that colour (to my knowledge it was never produced in this base colour), SCX marked on the chassis, Scalextric marked on the tyres, unusual to mix the brand names, but could have easily been a mistake. However what can't be a mistake are the logos and colour scheme. Released as a special edition around Christmas 1997 the description written on the back of the box thanks all their customers for their business over the year and wishes them a prosperous and fruitful 1998. All fair enough I hear you say until you realise that the car is printed with 'Reprotec' and the customers the car was given to was theirs not SCX. Very, very strange. I have never seen this in any listings or books, needless to say it doesn't appear in the 40th Anniversary book!

Did any of you out there get given one of these? See you soon, Gareth. ■





SCX Dome Judd S101 'Holland' By Julian Cotton

“Don’t believe the hype,” sang Chuck D of seminal rap group Public Enemy back in 1988. With this latest release from the SCX stable it has been difficult, though. We have been promised high-intensity Xenon headlamps, a new motor, a lighter body shell, ‘pro’ braids and, roughly translated, ‘spherical’ bearings. Oh yes, and some of the most detailed tampo printing ever seen on a slot-car.

The Judd engined, Racing for Holland, Dome car of which this model is a replica ran last year (2002) at Le Mans. It managed an overall finish of eighth place. It also recorded the fastest speed trap time of the race, clocking up 210.8 m.p.h. through the timing beam. The PR team obviously don’t go along with the ‘less is more’ approach to advertising. The model has a chequered flag type livery with the rectangles being filled with many different sponsor names. The idea, I’m informed, was that it meant you could get your company name on a Le Mans car for much, much less than normal - around two and a half thousand Euros, I believe. This makes for a stunning looking car that is memorable, to say the least.

I have been anticipating this model for quite some time and have spent many idle moments looking at the press shots of what is, quite simply, an awesome feat of tampo printing. In the flesh it is breathtaking and upon its arrival I struggled to find any words to describe it apart from an enthusiastic, “wow!” It is the sort of scheme that you just cannot stop looking at! Whatever you do, do not keep it on your desk, as you will find many moments wasted in awe. The tampo printing is sharp and accurate, with all the sponsor names being where they should be. The livery is predominately black and white apart from the Le Mans legend on the car number and

the Tricolour featured both in the Dutch flag and along the inside edges of the aggressive looking wheel arches. The moulding of the body is fantastic with all the swoops and curves on the Batmobile-esque LMP900 car done perfectly. Well almost, there is one exception. The extra hump employed to house the crown wheel. However, I find the hump acceptable and think it does not detract significantly from the aesthetic appearance of the model.

The Rays wheels of the full size car are very nicely reproduced although there are no brake discs, as included by some manufacturers on their models. Perhaps this is due to keeping the weight of the model down, though. After all, this is supposed to be a competition prepared car and every little bit helps. Indeed the body shell is lighter than both the Slot.it Audi R8C and race specification Fly Porsches. The cockpit is well done and features a full-length driver and very trick looking steering wheel. Again, Techni-Toys have reduced weight here and from the right angle, or indeed wrong angle, you can see inside the car and, in particular, the hole used for holding the car in place in the display box. If this particularly offends you, though, the hole is easily disguised with a small piece of thin black card.

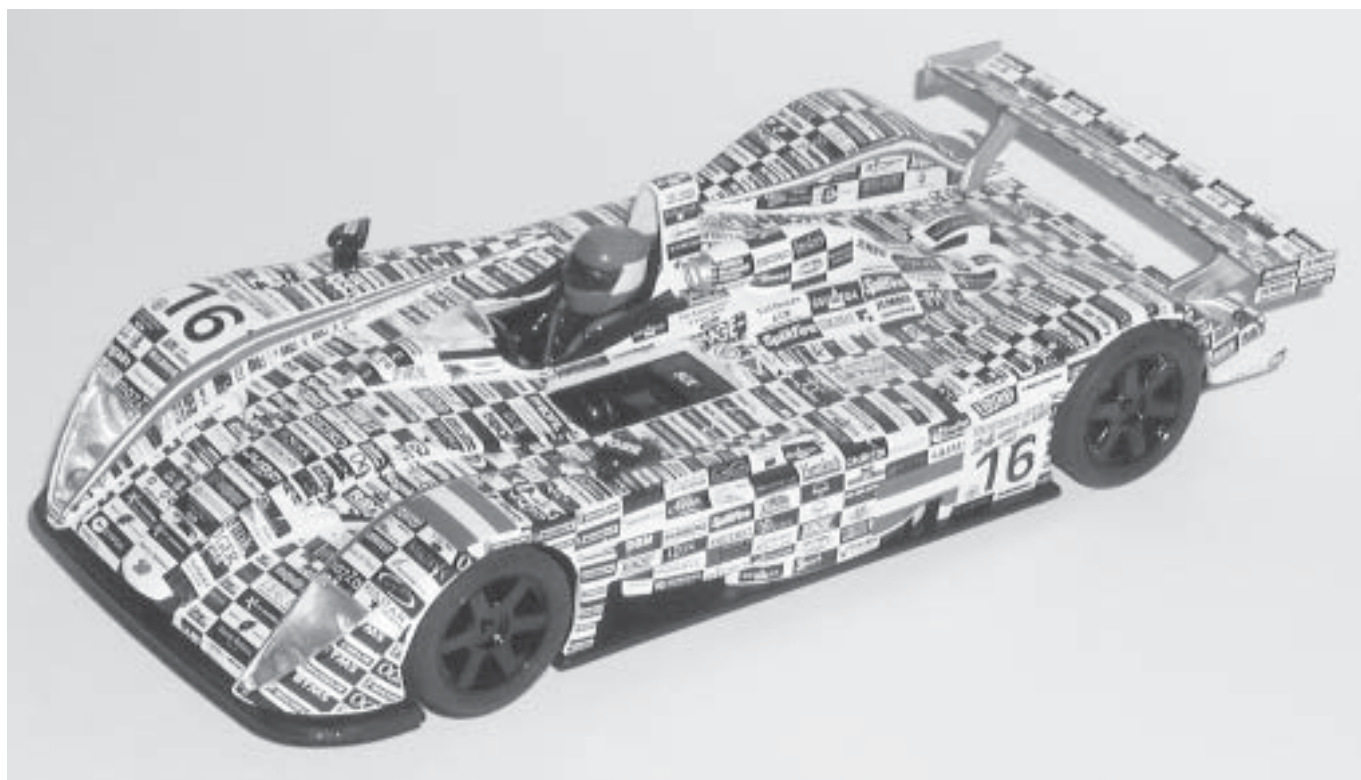
SCX’s wonderful Xenon type, high-intensity headlamps and rear red lights are present. There is a small difference to be found on the inside of the car with regard to these though. You may remember how impressed I was with the very small and neat lighting boards included in the recent Opel Astra V8 Coupe I reviewed a few months back. On this model they are even smaller and neater. Impressive indeed. The lights work very well and the front headlamps are super bright. You’ll find they light up the ➔

track in front of the car quite well as you tour around your circuit.

The body shell is held to the underpan with four screws and upon taking this apart we are greeted with a number of familiar parts but also a few surprises. The guide blade is as standard, with many of the recent SCX models being sprung via the copper power feed strips that lead to the motor and self-centring via a separate spring. What is new here, though, are the 'pro' braids. These are soft and silver in colour, although a hint of copper colour can be detected upon much closer inspection. Tecni-Toys have not, so far, announced from what these are manufactured. They are supposed to give greater electrical contact with the track and I have certainly not had any problems with them.

and allows these mechanisms to 'float' independently from the main chassis. It is attached to the main chassis by a couple of pegs that locate into a hole at the aft and jaw at the front allowing the wheels some movement up and down. This system has been designed to improve track handling, especially through the corners, and works well.

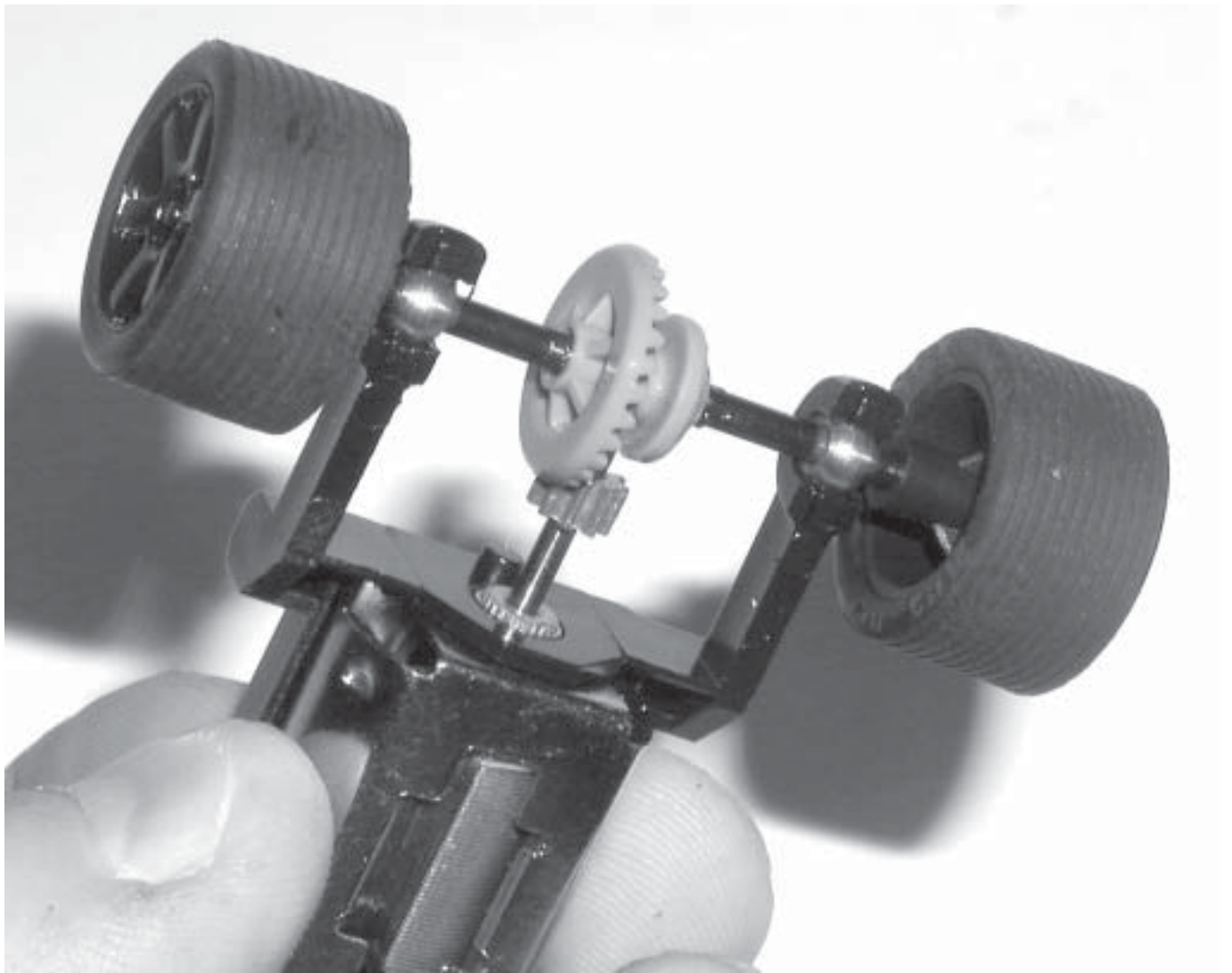
The other new additions to the inside of the car are the 'spherical' bearings. These may sound strange but are in fact very simple. Imagine a small sphere with a hole drilled through it and you won't be far off. Why though? Well the idea is that these will align perfectly in the jaws that holds them, allowing for a smoother and improved transmission. All sounds good and they look rather cool too.



The biggest difference by far inside though is the completely new motor and cradle. The motor (reference number RX-62C and rated at 18,000 rpm) is fantastic. It is of the open can style and has more torque and a higher top speed than the RX-41 fitted to, for example, the SCX Audi R8. Gearing is as usual, being twenty-seven teeth on the crown gear and nine on the pinion gear. The all-new motor cradle includes not only the motor but also the rear axle

The magnet included with this car is of the strong neodymium type and is adjustable via a couple of screws without taking the car apart. The magnet can either be lowered or raised to your liking, or removed all together. The magnet housing has been improved and toughened up, which can only be a good thing as the previous example seemed a little flimsy.

Ok, we have explored a lot of new parts but how do all these work together on the track? It's



a given that if the sum of the parts do not add up all the new bits in the world will not help. Before the Dome arrived, I ran a number of laps around my Sport track with my SCX Audi R8. I managed some good laps of around 7.6 seconds, which is not at all bad around the twenty-two metre circuit. Before driving the new car too aggressively, I ran it slowly around the track for five minutes or so to at least give it a partial running in. After this, I upped the pace somewhat to get a feel for the car before setting the track timer and nailing the throttle. The car feels responsive and nicely balanced right from the go. It is both quick and smooth and very quickly gives you the confidence to push harder and faster into the corners as well as getting the power down well out of the bends too. My first timed lap netted me a lap time of 7.5 seconds and within a further three or four laps I was hitting the low sevens with my best time being a couple of thousandths over seven seconds dead.

Unfortunately, track time on this occasion was rather limited. I am certain, however, that next time I get to pilot it, at least a couple of tenths of a second will be shaved off the above times and, more than likely, it will be getting down to the mid sixes. It would therefore seem that all the new parts work rather well. Nay, very well. I did also run a few laps without the magnet fitted and again the car felt controllable and stayed planted in the slot well without having to add any ballast.

It was a brave person indeed at Tecni-Toys that suggested they take on this livery for a slot-car and I thank them for doing such a fine job. Much credit should also go to SCX for bringing this out at their standard price point. A certain other company, though dear to my own heart, would have likely released this as a special edition that many either could or would not afford.

Believe the hype, this is most certainly a very Def Jam. ■



Sir,

I have read the Ebay debate in recent issues with much interest. Whilst the warnings of 'buyer beware' are obvious, surely it comes down to a simple matter of self-discipline. When bidding on Ebay for cars, I set myself a few simple rules:

1. Set your maximum bid price for the car and do not exceed it at any time. Alternatives invariably appear again within a few days.
2. Only bid on brand new 'mint boxed' cars. This way, you avoid any disputes over used condition.
3. Only buy from sellers with ratings of over, say 25, and read their feedback carefully.
4. I buy from UK sellers only. My one experience with an overseas Ebayer was a complete pain.

My first port of call for cars is always my local model shop in Jersey and I use Ebay and Internet retailers (mainly Pendle and Slot City) to obtain cars that they do not stock. Ebay does currently present some opportunities to obtain Fly cars at prices well below those of a number of dealers who still seem to be charging grossly inflated prices for most Fly models.

Turning to Fly, isn't it about time they got on with releasing some new models? How many re-liveried Porsche 917s or Corvette C5Rs etc does the market need? I also agree with your contempt for their so called limited editions. Complete waste of time and money and shows Fly's complacent attitude to the market.

Keep up the good work.

I am, yours etc,
Richard Painter

.....
Sir,

I have just received my prize from the MRRC competition and I am very pleased.

This is a lovely model, and as you are all no doubt aware, MRRC is my biggest interest. So this one will be there with my other MRRC collection items (and its about the only thing I have ever won.... and I did not have to buy a raffle ticket!)

Thank you Pendle Slot Racing, the NSCC and, of course, Archie the Editorial Cat.

I am, yours etc,
Andy Carmichael



Sir,

I was very shocked to read that you gave the readers the impression that I am a part time dealer trying to trade by so called abusing the NSCC advert possibilities.

First of all if you had studied my adverts thoroughly, you should have seen that it was mostly the same cars returning because of lack of results on the previous advert.

Furthermore, and I find this unacceptable, You invented “evidence” to prove I am a so called “part time dealer”. According to you I advertise regularly in French and Dutch magazines and I am on ebay with a very strong presence.

Well, dear Brian, if you can find only one advert of me in a French or Dutch magazine, If you can prove that I have even only once advertised on E bay then I'll give you 10 bottles of my best champagne.

But if you can't, then I suggest you apologize in the Journal and print this letter; that is if you are as eager to apologize as you are to accuse.

I am, yours etc,
Francis Bogaert
Belgium

I have a golden rule, both in life and in my position as editor - If you are right stick to your guns but, if you are wrong, then admit it. In this case I have to agree that I made a mistake and maligned Francis unfairly.

My comments were based on information from normally reliable trade sources but, on this occasion, it would appear that they were mistaken and Francis is guilty of nothing more than trying to sell a selection of Fly cars at prices people are not prepared to pay. Rest assured that my informants will be taken outside and shot.

I trust that you will accept my sincere apology Francis and the prize car that will be sent to you by way of recompense.

One further point that has arisen from this episode - I will amend the rules to allow repeat adverts but you must tell me if this is the case. As I lack a crystal ball I have no way of distinguishing between multiple sales of the same cars and genuine repeats of items that fail to sell first time round!

Carrera Corner

BY STEVE BAKER

Changes

Hi to all, we're off and running again with reviews of Carrera cars thanks to the UK distributors Nikko toys. This month it's the Enzo Ferrari.

As many of you will know Carrera have made significant changes to their cars in the last couple of months. There are also two very pleasant changes to the boxes as well; firstly they stack properly now, without wobbling. Secondly the extra braids which were wedged in a slot in the back are now safely tucked away in a very neat little storage space which has a tightly closing clear cover. So if you need or want to take a magnet off, for example, it will store away into this space in the box. What a nice touch. Lastly this box has an extra label, "100% HOT WHEELS" I've no idea what this refers to, or whether it's on all of the new cars, but it looks good.

Appearance

Now onto the car itself, the Enzo I received is the yellow one, which personally I prefer over the red. I was impressed by the improvements in the amount of detail on the car, starting with the side mounted wing mirrors which even appear to be at the correct angle to the driver, as is the interior rear view mirror in the cockpit. Staying outside the cars for now, each of the four rear lights are separate pieces, painted yellow where they need it, then put in place. The two pairs of exhausts are also a separate piece joined on a bar which goes across the inside of the car. On the tail is a very good Ferrari horse which has been highlighted in chrome. Inside the engine detail is good being in black and an aluminium grey colour. The driver cockpit is also of this standard even down to the driver of this road going version having a smile on his face, and, be honest if you were driving an Enzo you'd have a smile on your face too (at least when you weren't soiling your underpants as you took a bend too fast). All of the interior panels are heat welded onto the underside of the body, except the exhausts which wrap round the rear screw holes.

The two biggest areas of change are the chassis plate, and the gear ratios used. First the gears, these are now the familiar 9:27 ratio used on nearly all new cars. The chassis is very different, it's a lot flatter on this car than previous Carreras, and is quite rigid, having only a little flex when twisted. The chassis still carries the sliding magnet (VMS), but now there is also a second magnet mounted on a bracket just in front of the rear axle (in a similar way to SCX cars), neither of these are high performance by current standards; in my opinion both are a mid-way rating. Lastly, the chassis still carries the most entertaining part of any slot-car, Carrera or otherwise, the polarity reversing switch. A quick note on this - Carrera track actually runs the other way round, so most new cars will come with the switch in the wrong position - go careful the first time you put the car on the track, believe me you wouldn't be the first to send his car backwards off the start line.

On track

And now onto how it performs. I ran the Enzo first at the club in Farnham which is a tight and twisty Ninco plexy track (no braking), so the magnets worked. This track is now a few years old and not as flat as it once was, but it was not to blame for how much the Enzo bottomed out, unless you had enough momentum you couldn't complete a lap. The cause was found to be that the mounting bracket for the second magnet hangs very low, only just clear of a flat surface. It's also a bit thicker on the underside than it needs to be and after a couple of minutes careful sanding it ran much better, very much better. It was possible to deliberately place the Enzo into a tail slide and control it throughout the turn and exit onto the straight, and there are very few cars I have ever been able to do this with. After a little practice I could do superbly controlled tail slides, and that was enough to put a smile on my face.

The general consensus of all who tried the car at Farnham, was that it looked good, and



drove better than previous Carrera cars, at present we don't have a race class for these, but it did compare well with known cars from other manufacturers; it didn't win, but it was never too far behind.

Thursday night was Home Farm near Liphook, which is a board and copper track. The Enzo went like a dream from the off, with no grounding out. Home Farm has a longer back straight than Farnham but it still felt as though it could go faster, so with the confidence instilled from running it at Farnham, I proceeded to crash all over the place. Also, being a sandtex type track, it was harder to get that tail wagging in a controlled way even though the magnets wouldn't be working, and that's my excuse for crashing it so much, and I'm sticking to it!

At home later on, inspection of the second magnet revealed a spacer between the body and

the magnet, which has now been removed and is stored safely in the compartment in the back of the box. So the following Wednesday at Farnham, its performance was terrific, the only unfortunate thing is that I don't know if taking the spacer out first would have given it enough clearance in the first place,

So in summary, I'm now the owner of one 'new' but very high mileage Enzo, it's a nice looking car which performs well, while not being quite as high performance as some others it will give anything a run for its money when the gloves, sorry I mean magnets are off. All it needs now are some more cars from Carrera which would race against it, the wrong way round the track of course!

Lastly I hope to receive other review cars thanks to Nikko toys, so if you would like to do a review of one get in touch and please include your NSCC membership number. My email is steve@baker31.fsnet.co.uk ■

Le Mans Miniatures - Ford Mk IV

BY JOHN DILWORTH

Ahh! Dan Gurney. Le Mans 1967. The first Champagne shower on the victory rostrum. The Ford Mk.IV. Slippery shape, lovely lines - lovely car. Seriously under-represented in the slot-car world, and I never could work out why. It's odd that both MRRC and Scalextric did the notoriously unsuccessful 3L, but not the winning Mk.IV. Cox and other U.S. makers did it in vac-form I seem to remember, but there's never been a good version available, as far as I know, until now. I jumped on this as soon as I heard about it; a high quality kit of one of my favourite racers, with lots of fiddly bits to put together to keep me happy in the evenings.

The Mk.IV was a descendent of the distinctively bearded J car- another oddity in that although it never actually raced, it became comparatively popular as a slot-car in the late sixties. More conundrums for you. Quite a different beast from the low tech. muscle and stamina of the GT40, the Mark IV had a honeycomb sandwich monocoque (tell me if you find one in your picnic basket), all the weight pared off and a super slinky aerodynamic body that looked as if it was draped over the track like a carpet. So. It won first time out at Le Mans in '67, beating the beautiful P4 Ferraris and the sci-fi Chaparral 2F, which led Dan Gurney, one of my own favourite personalities in racing (and a known slot-car fan to boot) to spray champagne from the rostrum and initiate a now long standing tradition. The golden age of Le Mans racing, in my opinion.

So what have Le Mans Miniatures done with it? The instruction sheet is a bit vague. The kit is made in France, so that is the basic language, but translations are O.K. as far as they go. It's all mostly diagrammatic, so I would advise several run-throughs and a good set of photos of the real car to hand. Well, first look at the kit bodes well- a lovely resin shell that looks

absolutely right. The paint seems slightly thin, but I shan't let that worry me. After scurrying through the contents of the box a little more I realise that this is basically a motorised version of an existing static kit. The photos in the instruction sheet seem to be of a slightly different model, possibly a larger parent. There's no driver, but you do get neat decals of the safety belts to lay on the empty seat. The running gear is pretty flimsy- the plastic gears and bearings don't exactly inspire confidence. And the tyres. What can I say. You could donate them to your favourite charity but they wouldn't thank you. You could glue them under the short leg of that wobbly chair. You could slip them into a well-cooked dish of calamari and see if anyone notices. But don't put them on a slot-car. Distorted, cracked, bubbled- throw them as far away as you can, unless you own a dog that might misguidedly fetch them back. The wheels are resin and while I was hugely impressed by the fact that the vanes cast into the full size magnesium hubs to aid brake cooling are precisely reproduced, with left and right side differentiated so that the direction of rotation is correct, but there's no indication in the skimpy instructions that the wheels have to be fitted on the appropriate side And you need sharp eyes or an anorak mentality (who me?) to know that the offside knock-off spinners should be painted metallic blue and the near side ones metallic red. But sadly, the wheels themselves just don't seem up to the job. Assembled and pressed onto the axle, they don't run anything like true, and they look as if they will only accept the dreadful kit tyres. The thing is, when the model is finished, with all the detailing and a thick cast body with full interior, it's quite a heavy beast (95grams finished weight on mine, compared to around 70 grams for a standard Fly car), and the running gear, apart from a Scaleauto Mabuchi, looks as if it would all turn to jelly on lap two. I did

actually try it but, as I guessed, halfway round lap two the plastic pinion started spinning uselessly on the motor shaft and the car ground to a whining halt. Appropriate for a Chaparral maybe, but not this particular Ford. I noticed too late that the kit description shows that you can get a cheaper version (the oddly titled 'Soft Line'- perhaps it means something relevant in French that maybe we shouldn't go into here) that comes without all this dodgy equipment, allowing you to fit your own. I wish I'd known. Still. All you have to do is spend a few more quid on this already expensive kit by getting wheels, tyres, gears and a driver from Maxi-models. In order not to sacrifice those lovely cast wheels, I turned them down and used them as inserts in a set of Maxi-models finest. The car looks so much better sitting on real metal rims rather than silver painted plastic anyway.

Other than that, the kit build is great. Parts fit together in a very neat, but often rather unnecessarily complicated way. The interior detail is well up to modern standards, with a little care and a fine pointed paintbrush you can make the cockpit very cosy indeed. One problem that did come up was that the steering wheel is rather large (rather Routemasterish in fact) and had to be ditched for a spare from the recycle bin small enough to fit over the driver's legs (which, as I mentioned, you'll have to source from elsewhere- but personally I can't recommend Maxi-models accessory kits highly enough). Whatever, you end up with a pretty authentic model of the Le Mans winning no.1 car, complete with authentic rooftop bulge to clear big Dan's full-face Bell bonnet. I can't fault the model for accuracy anyway, and a bit of trouble taken sorting out the chassis and finding appropriate wheels and gearing can make it look pretty slinky on the track. There's not much leeway under those low sweeping wheel arches, so it takes some time and trouble to get it to sit low, hugging the track in the proper manner, but at the same time allowing necessary clearance for those bumpy track joints. Or perhaps you've got your track properly sorted. Don't let too much daylight show under that shovel nose though. There's no magnet in the kit, but there

is a circular recess for a Fly-type neomideum in the chassis moulding if you want it. I can't really credit Le Mans miniatures for the track performance of my completed kit seeing as how I junked all the relevant bits- apart from the motor- they supply. Anyway, performance isn't shattering, but with all its weight it does have a reassuringly solid feel on the track and it rumbles around in a very authentic sort of way. The kit motor gives it a decent push, which needs good anticipation on the brakes, but being so low built it's a natural tail slider. Don't forget to round off the edges of whatever tyres you use to avoid tripping up as it mounts the rails of the adjacent lane on its oversteering way round the track. I can get it round my home circuit in the low 5s, a not unreasonable time considering the all out lap record is 4.45 with a vac-bodied scratchbuilt. This kit is made for show rather than go for sure, but that's not going to stop me getting this little bullet firing down the back straight as it should, and it only needs a bit more fettling to make it go as fast as it looks. What about a Mirage-Ford next? ■

TRACK TALK

by Steve Carter

MG Vanquish - McLaren M8C - Special Race Version

Since Fly arrived on the scene model slot-cars have become increasingly more accurate and intricate, with more and more detail being offered both inside and outside the car. This has resulted in some fabulous looking cars but performance has, in the main, centred around the power output of the motor, together with the strength of the traction magnet, rather than its handling qualities which can be next to useless without the aid of the magnet. This is not, as you might think, because they have been specifically designed to work with a magnet; more because magnets have been used to camouflage shortcomings in the handling department.

In short, all that lovely intricate detail has, in fact, compromised performance. This situation has not bothered people who collect them without ever intending to race them. Nor, probably has it worried people who favour racing with magnets, except that all the extra detail has meant that prices have escalated.

However, if you buy slot-cars with the intention of racing them without a magnet, you are probably not very happy at all with the way things have developed - you could probably live without too much of that detail you are paying extra for as very often you have to remove it to make the car perform! Surely it would not be too difficult for the manufacturers to strike a balance?

In my opinion Proslot and Ninco, at the lower cost end of the market, have come closest with Slot.It at the top end - The Audi R8C offering enough in all areas to keep everybody happy.

Fly have responded by introducing their 'Race Special' Porsche GT1/98 Evo 2. As well as a re-engineered chassis and more powerful motor the car features a lightweight body devoid of its usual cockpit detail. Instead you get a

cheap and simple vacformed item which is not even painted. However, the price is horrendous - a case of 'less for more'.

The emphasis with this new breed of car is obviously performance without the need for a magnet, since you do not get one. The aim has been to shed weight to improve the power to weight ratio. The latest of this type comes from MG Vanquish in the shape of their McLaren M8C.

This is a good choice of prototype as the bodywork is low with no add on wings that will only raise the centre of gravity. Whilst it is unpainted the body is a nice shade of red plastic. Normally the Vanquish Can-Am cars are very heavy but it is very noticeable how light this car is in comparison. The main reason is that the alloy lookalike cockpit/chassis detail normally sandwiched between the body and chassis has been replaced by a lightweight vacformed item that provides only the head and shoulders of a driver. It is noticeable that, as well as being merely plain black plastic, the driver actually sits low in the car instead of 'on' it - a bone of contention with Vanquish models.

The engine detail normally provided has also been discarded as the same vacformed piece serve to support the inlet trumpets. Thus all the exterior detail is now fixed to the body, the fixing screws can be backed off and the body run loose. The bodyshell is probably 50% lighter than the normal set-up.

Moreover, Vanquish obviously appreciate that the body will be run loose as they have made this easier to achieve in three separate ways; firstly they have chosen to use a narrower underpan from the M8D which does not make contact with the sides of the body. Secondly the body post locations on the spine chassis have lost their movement restricting locating collars. Thirdly the fixing screws are very special ⇒

items which feature small heads and a threadless shank to avoid any chafing on the chassis when loosened.

The guide is positioned close to the front axle, as on all previous models, which does not make full use of the bodyshell's length to maximise the guide to axle dimensions. Vanquish must have made a conscious decision to go for uniformity on each Can-Am model using the same spine chassis clipped onto various underpans. This would help to ensure that performance differences across the range are not monumental.

On the track you can feel that the guide is mounted short relative to the car's dimensions but this is not sinister as the guide has a degree of suspension. This is one of the cleverer bits of the Vanquish system as there are no springs involved. Strategically placed motor wires cut to equal set lengths run under the front axle on the spine chassis; thus providing adequate vertical springing and rotational centring for the guide.

This 'Race Special' features the same motor, wheels tyres and axle as the previous models

though I am told the differential crown is of tougher material. This has, of course, previously been the weak spot of these cars which is not really surprising given their weight plus a torque motor and track magnet. The gears should have a much easier time on this car!

You can certainly feel the difference immediately; it accelerates and brakes much better due to its lower weight and centre of gravity.

Can you improve it? Well yes, of course you can. Obviously most racers will slacken the body screws and I used a pair of scissors to trim a bit off the bottom of the cockpit detail. The chassis being in two parts means that vertical free play of the axles is increased as you loosen the screws so I would recommend gluing the spine to the underpan. I would also place a small amount of lead ballast on the front corners of the chassis. Finally, if you race on a big fast track then you might consider changing the pinion for a ten tooth item. One for the racers? Most certainly but get your paintbrushes out! My thanks to Colette at Monarch Lines for the review car. ■