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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 slot racer's book of excuses

One of the delights of my weekly trip to Mussel Bay Scalextric Club is the amount of mickey taking that goes on. One of the members, Stephen Drew, was unable to attend for several weeks due to work commitments. On his return I informed him that, as a 'new' boy, he would be classed as a novice - whereupon he duly presented his car at the start line with a novice 'X' painted on his rear bumper and spent the rest of the evening trying to get signatures on his racing licence!

My friends at the club are also becoming extremely creative of late with their excuses for losing races. Any club racer is familiar with the usual ones of "bad marshalling, faulty hand controller or duff motor" to explain a lack of success on the track but this lot have drifted so far into fantasy land that we are actually running a competition for 'excuse of the season'!

The current favourites are:

- Somebody left the window open and the draught upset the aerodynamics of my car down the straight.
- My motor was overheating and the smoke got into the cockpit so the driver couldn't see where he was going.
- The copper tape was loose at turn 1 and it upset the balance of my car so much that I fell off at the next five corners as well.
- I put too much moisturiser on my hands so my finger kept slipping off the trigger. Just in case you are wondering - this one was offered by Michelle, our lady racer!
- No wonder I couldn't stop at the end of the straight - one of the front brake discs has broken.
- Left rear puncture.

Are there any better ones out there? I am sure I could find a prize car for the most creative excuse.

And Finally - once again the article tank is running on empty - some contributions would be very welcome for the December issue.

Till next month

Brian





More from the Race+ series have reached the shops in the shape of three track packs. Each one contains some speciality track together with one of the Porsche Boxsters or Audi TTs. The idea is to encourage people to start extending their layouts. They are good value for money with a recommended price of £30. The three released so far are:

C8306 Racing Curves Pack containing a pair of crossover curves with outer borders and **C2608W Porsche Boxster** In yellow.

C8307 Lap Counter Pack containing a lap counter, a second full straight and border and **C2609W Audi TT** in a metallic light blue.

C8308 Leap & Side Swipe Pack. Surely the best value with both a pair of side swipe straights and a flying leap complete with borders and **C2610W Porsche Boxster** in silver.

The fourth pack with hairpin and a red Audi TT is due shortly.

Banking

Back at the NSCC/Hornby weekend last November we saw a prototype of some banked curves and these have now been released. They are available in both radius 1 and 2 and each box has two curves complete with supports. The radius 3 curves have two sets of supports so that they can be used outside of the radius 2 curves with a continuous track surface. The reference numbers are: **C8296 Radius 2 Banked Curve** and **C8297 Radius 3 Banked Curve**. They should prove popular with NASCAR and MotoGP fans but are appropriate for use with any Scalextric car unlike their predecessors.

Formula 1

Another expected new release this month was **C2554 McLaren Mercedes F1 MP4-16 No5 'David' 2004**. Don't forget that this is a relivity of last year's car and that the new model for this year is the Williams.

Design of the Williams is now complete and they should be in the shops for Christmas in both standard and Sport versions. They are C2583(A) and C2584(A). To keep them company there are also 2004 versions of the Renault too – C2581 and C2582.

The fine detail in the complex body shapes of current F1 is fantastic and the small winglets are attached like wing mirrors and glued into small holes in the main body. The Renault uses the new small motorbike motor to fit under the accurate bodywork.

MotoGP

If you were wondering what had happened to the rest of the proposed MotoGP series then you will soon find out. Almost all of them should be released in time for Christmas. One of the delays has been is designing new packaging to keep them secure in transit. The new boxes are similar to the standard car crystal cases but a bit taller and less deep. However, the bike is held by a screw, and two tie wraps, a moulded piece at the top that locates the helmet and a packing piece between the rear wheel and the chassis. They should remain secure!

The bikes come fitted with a weight stuck to the stabilising wings. This is in one piece, about 2mm thick over the entire surface of the wings. Hornby describe this as the Chinese wing. ➤➤

A UK weight also exists. These are smaller triangular weights that just fit onto the ends of the wings and several could be stuck together to get the optimum balance.

Holden VX Commodore

At the same time that the first of the genuine Australian livery V8s have arrived down under, a pair of Holdens has appeared in the UK. These are in an £80 Toys-R-Us exclusive set. I don't know the C numbers yet for either the cars or the set. The cars are in very attractive liveries featuring the Racer script from the Hornby Enthusiast's Club magazine and big V8 logos. #36 is yellow and blue and #37 mainly grey. More details to follow next month.

Vipers

The new Chrysler Vipers are currently in production. They are different liveries to those illustrated in the catalogue and look really good. C2552(A) is blue and C2553(A) is white and dark blue.

White Porsche

Thank you to everyone who called or emailed to tell me that C2629 Porsche GT3R white was available from many USA dealer web sites. More information has emerged from Hornby to explain what has happened. 240 of them were delivered to the UK on standard bases with no sleeve. As previously described some of these were given away in Margate and the rest have gone to a few favoured dealers in mainland Europe. I believe they gained sleeves too. 246 of them went directly to the US on Scalextric USA bases with sleeves. These are the ones now for sale on many US web sites.

Whilst on the subject of Porsche GT3s, the Scalextric version will feature a revised chassis next year with the new guide system and new magnets. At least one new livery is planned which is red with a blue stripe of the GruppeM racing team. This should be available early next year.



Skoda Fabia

The Skoda Fabia contained in set C1136 will have two wheel drive rather than the belt driven four wheel drive system of the standard and Sport solo releases. However, which version will be in the set is unknown. It may have less decoration too.

Sport spares

The range of Sport tuning parts is now finalised and only the design of the point-of-sale material is now outstanding. Expect to see them in blister packs on a rack in your local retailer before too long. The range includes wheels and tyres, axles and bearings, gears and motors. Tuning the car is a key element of the new Sport World system due next year and currently undergoing rigorous testing.

Yellow Subaru

A bit strange this one. Months ago a yellow type 3 Subaru was rumoured and there were several theories as to how it would appear. I don't have more details yet but I understand it is in a set called Extreme Rally. If anyone can tell me more please drop me a line as Hornby don't seem to know!

Hornby weekend

A date for your diary is the 5th/6th March 2005 for the next NSCC/Hornby weekend near the factory in Margate. More details will follow when I have found another hotel as the excellent venue we used last year is unfortunately closed for refurbishment.

Club cars

Orders for the club cars have been flooding in and we have had 174 orders so far, accounting for 341 cars. Don't forget that the closing date for submitting your order is the 3rd December. The first test cars should be back from China soon and the delivery date expected is towards the end of January.

Unfortunately our post was stolen from the postman on Wednesday 20th October and the orders that would have arrived that day have been lost. As I have no idea whose forms were in the post that day, could I ask any of you who think their order might have been delivered on the 20th to please call me (+44 (0)1276 479440) and I will confirm whether I have your order or not. Those who wanted to pay by credit card should check their credit card statements carefully to ensure no unauthorised payments have been taken. ■

From Peter Solari

Turning Japanese...

Ninco have just released details of another totally new model for 2004 - the Honda NSX - a very sleek looking racer from the All-Japan Grand Touring Car Championship (JGTC). Two models are lined up for release very soon, both modelled on current entries in the 2004 JGTC. One based on the "Autobacs Racing Team Aguri" (ARTA) car; a rich red body colour with white bonnet (50355). The other based on the Epson Nakajima Racing car; a white body with mid-blue air-intake, rear spoiler and graphics (50356). The JGTC series is split into two categories GT500 and GT300 (max. output 500BHP and 300BHP respectively) with both categories racing alongside each other. Strict regulations and weight penalties ensure that racing is always very close and it is common to see cars battling for first place right up to the chequered flag. As you would expect, the field is

dominated by cars from Japanese manufacturers such as Honda, Toyota and Nissan although European cars such as the popular McLaren F1 GTR, BMW M3 GTR and Porsche 911 GT3-R also compete.

These new slot-cars from Ninco are fitted with NC-5 "Speeder" motors fitted to the chassis in the angle-winder position. A new gear system (*see below*) transmits the power to the track through new hubs (80717) and new low-profile, 20x10 slick tyres (80513).

New gear

In addition to the angle-winder axle set already available for the BMW M3 GTR, three more axle sets will soon be available in the range of Racing Components. They are specifically designed for use in the angle-winder chassis currently found in the BMW and Honda.



BMW (std)	80409	33-Tooth Gear on 49mm Axle + 11-Tooth Pinion	Black
BMW	80418	32-Tooth Gear on 49mm Axle + 12-Tooth Pinion	Red
NSX	80419	33-Tooth Gear on 53.5 Axle + 11-Tooth Pinion	Black
NSX (std)	80420	32-Tooth Gear on 53.5 Axle + 12-Tooth Pinion	Red

Gear ratio chart

Gears and Pinions may be interchanged to give various ratios, altering the characteristics of acceleration and top speed. The gear ratios for more top speed (32:12) are moulded in red to aid identification.

Unmistakeably Orange

Perhaps the most eagerly awaited livery of the Porsche 934 (50333) has finally arrived. Instantly recognisable on many race cars, the orange sponsorship colour of the German herbal liqueur, Jägermeister, was popular throughout the mid '70s as the company continued to raise its profile. In 1973, Jägermeister's "Hubertus Stag" logo appeared on a German team football strip and is believed to have initiated football jersey advertising! Three years later, it adorned this particular Porsche 934 which is now beautifully reproduced by Ninco. As with previous models, this 934 features a powerful NC-5 motor, ProShock suspension, rubber bumpers and superb detail inside and out.

Off-Road fun!

The second livery BMW X5 arrives this month, this time based on the vehicle entered in the 2003 Paris Dakar driven by Gregoire DeMevius and Alain Guehenec. The "X-Raid" (50342) team car has all the features found on the earlier model; 4-wheel-drive, ProArm drop guide, all-round ProShock suspension and NC-7 Raider motor. To compliment the range of "Off-Road" vehicles and track sets available, Ninco are now offering the 40cm straight track section in a bumpy, off-road format (10153). Whilst the "Rally Trucks" cope well with the rigours of the off-road track sections, they are also immense fun to drive on standard track!

Vintage stripes

The last car to be announced this month is the AC Cobra "Racing Stripes" (50352). A fine-looking white-bodied classic with a bordered, double blue stripe running from front to back and a finer double red stripe angled in a ➤➤



shallow “V” across the bonnet. A single driver wearing goggles and a red hat and scarf, sits neatly in a matching blue moulded interior. The car carries the number 38 on each side, bonnet and boot and, along with the chrome exhausts and trim, really adds to the classic racer look. The 20,000rpm Speeder motor will guarantee plenty of muscle for power-sliding round corners.

Driving round the bend

You can drive yourself round the bend this Christmas with the choice of three curve sets. First of all is the “Snow Curve Kit” (10507). An ultra smooth finish to this white track surface reduces grip and simulates cornering on ice! As well as the slippery finish, both lanes are brought closer together like a chicane. With the risk of either colliding with your opponent or skidding out of control, the set is supplied with crash barriers. Next is a “Change Over Curve” (10508) in the traditional black finish. This changes the outer lane on a bend to the inside

lane and so evens out the track length. Two change-over curves are supplied and must both be used when making a 2-lane circuit. With the added danger of collision, this kit also includes six safety wall sections and six safety fences to fix to the track. The third set is a “Curve Chicane” (10509) made up of “Lead-in” and “Lead-out” straight sections and four 45° curve sections where the distance between the lanes is greatly reduced. Again, with the risk of collision, safety walls and fences are supplied with the kit.

Ninco Club Car offer for NSCC members

A few months ago I published details of a special offer to NSCC members wishing to purchase the Ninco Club Car. Everything is now in place to process this special offer and hopefully all those who had expressed an interest have now placed their order! For any other interested members, there is still a very short time for you to contact me (ptsolari@aol.com) regarding this offer as it will close at the end of this month. ■

NINCO

track test

Reynard Champ Car "Corona"
(50341)

Reviewed by Peter Solari

The latest offering from Ninco in the CART or Champ Car series is the beautiful "Corona" sponsored Reynard car. This is the second Champ Car based on the Reynard chassis (*there are three Lola models also available*). It is, in my opinion, the most striking of the five available with a fantastic white/blue/yellow colour scheme. Before you pick this car up off the shelf, you can hear it calling out to be released from its display case and let loose on the track!

Proportional representation

When comparing the car to pictures of the full size race-car, everything appears to be in proportion and the decoration is spot-on. The detail of print is particularly sharp around the nose-cone where the "Ford" badge and fine blue and white stripes blend between the opposing backing colours.



The printing is only let down on the body where the yellow "splashes" are printed. It appears as if the yellow paint should have been applied twice to mask the border between the blue and white body colours underneath. Dimensions for the full size car set the length to

be within 190" and 199", maximum width 78.5" and wheel base between 124" and 128". The majority of the scaled dimensions are within these measurements but before Mr. Vernier-Gauge writes in to our Ed, I will add that the rear axle would be about 3" too wide on the full size car... *but hey, what's a few inches between friends!*

Curvaceous!

The body detail is full of aerodynamic fins and curves.



Even the underpan is beautifully sculptured with curved air vents.

With the car upside-down, the distinctive pink wrapper of the NC-5 Speeder motor can be seen. This seems to be ideally suited to the Champ Cars giving a very fast but smooth acceleration allowing control to be maintained when exiting corners. The 1:1 scale car has a 750HP, 2.65 litre Turbocharged V8 engine that accelerates to 100mph from standstill in 4.2 seconds! Four screws attach the chassis to the body and with these removed it is possible to access all the areas requiring a drop of oil and if required, remove the magnet. ➡➔

Gentlemen, start your engines...

When the car sits on the track the wide rear slicks and slightly narrower front tyres appear to suck the car down. On the start line it has the appearance of waiting to pounce. The ground clearance is about 3.5mm on Ninco track and the chassis sits level with the car in the slot. I've had the luxury of testing this car on many different tracks and even more experienced racers have been more than satisfied with its handling both with and without the magnet fitted.

Danish Krone (*Corona,.. Krone,.. geddit?*)

Initial tests were carried out at the Kolding Mini Race Club in Denmark. This track is a 6-lane, 50m circuit with approximately 1/3rd Ninco track and 2/3rd wood, combining twisty sections with fast sweeping bends. (Pictures of the circuit can be seen on their website: www.kmrc.dk). The fastest lap recorded with the magnet in place was 14.120s and with more running time and the magnet removed, the lap time was a very respectable 15.268s. *Remember, no modifications whatsoever!*



On the Kolding Mini Raceway circuit

Each time the car has been assessed, it has been literally “out of the box” with only the magnet removed for comparison. The front wheel steering reduces any drag through the corners and appears to offer enough flexibility to not lift the front out of the slot. The guide is not spring-loaded and this helps to keep the front of the car down.

This car handles well from the moment it is placed on the track and I have absolutely no doubt that it can be made to run even faster with the minimum of tweaks. I'm sure the other Champ cars run equally as well,... but just look at this one! ■

NSCC Championship - update

By Gareth Jex

News of the first two international results and one more local to home.



Swiss Race Bahn

Open round held at the Slotforum 1st Birthday party held at the Swiss Race Bahn club in Egg (near Zurich) Switzerland over the weekend of 24th-26th September.

The race was held on a huge four lane Carrera track based on the 'Suzuka' track. Vanquish MG cars were used in a ten lap crash and burn style race format. Cars were sprayed in lane colours and the drivers drove all cars in each lane. The final results were close, but the overall winner was new member Thomas Wanner from Switzerland, second was Jim Moyes from England and third Joergs from Switzerland.

Thanks to Allan and Doug for organising a great weekend!

Sundsvall 4x4 WRC Sweden

Open round held at the Hotel Sodra Berget, Sundsvall in Sweden to coincide with the last round of the (1:1) national hill climb race. Held on a 52 metre Ninco Rally track this was a fastest lap/rally competition using the SCX Citroen Xsara.

The final results were very close, 1st Claes Wilman with a time of 28.8 sec, 2nd Ase Laurin 29.5 secs and third Fredrik Ryden 29.8 secs.

Looking forward to seeing Claes at the finals, if the Swedish support is anything like the real WRC expect to see lots of flags! Thanks to Anders for running the event. ⇨⇨



Farnham Scalextric Association

Last this month, but by no means of least importance, are the final results from my local club in Farnham. This mini championship event went right to the wire with the final result being decided in the last evening!

Held on a four lane Ninco track, 10 lap races, lane cars, crash and burn, three classes, Carrera, Ninco and Vanquish MG.

Congratulations to James Turley who scored 195 points and Jim Moyes who came second with 186 points. 3rd place Neil Dudman closely followed by Mike Hills on 173.

Farnham have now started the second mini championship using the Fly, Scalextric and SCX cars. Following the first race with the Fly Saleen race spec cars I have agreed to a slight rule change.

Because these race spec cars sit so low to the track, any slight bump or incline causes the rear overhang to ground out leaving the wheels spinning. We cut off the rear fins from the chassis and this helped the ride. We also suggest that you tape, or hot glue the motor in position prior to racing. This all depends on your track of course, nice smooth MDF routed tracks may not have this problem.

Just to let you know the NSCC club cars are now all in use at various clubs around the world so we are unable to lend any more for the time being. When the cars are available I will let you know. I have had a couple of requests for me to contact the manufacturers for additional cars but please note that the championship sponsors are under no obligation to supply free cars to clubs running heats or races, they have all supplied the required number to enter and are not obliged to supply any more.

Good luck - there is still plenty of time to hold your races, let me know. ■

New Competition!

SlotForum/NSCC/Pendle, Build your own slot car 2004 – 2005

To celebrate the recent launch of a brand new chassis specifically designed for the conversion of 1/32 scale static kits and resin low volume special slot-car bodies, the NSCC, in association with Slotforum are proud to announce a new competition for 2004/2005.

Sean from Pendle Slot Racing developed this adjustable chassis to fill a void in the market. Aimed at scratch builders it makes building slot-cars easier, removing the need to search through the various RTR chassis and adapting them to suit.

The chassis is constructed from ABS plastic and comes in two main sections, the rear is designed to accept the standard Mabuchi-S motor (standard Scalextric) in an 'in-line' format. The rear section allows for the insertion of standard axle mounts/bushes with standard pinion and contrate gearing. There are also clips to accept a magnet (15mm x 6mm x 3mm, same

size as a standard Fly). Pendle will soon be offering their own brand of magnet in the near future. The front section is an adjustable sliding device that slots into the rear section and is fixed in position via either of two small nuts. This enables a variety of wheel bases to be achieved. The front has a mounting post to accept a standard post type guide flag (Scalextric, Ninco etc), there are also mounting clips to take a standard, free running, front axle. Spacer tubes are also supplied to position over an axle to stop movement.

Fixing the chassis to the body can be achieved in several ways, either using the side flange on the chassis to the sides of the body or via two fixing holes at the rear which could be used for mounting posts or for a direct fix to the body.

Pendle Slot Racing are selling this adjustable chassis for £6.75 each and will also supply motors, axles wheels etc to complete your conversion at an additional cost. There is a discount for people entering this competition (details from Pendle).

The idea behind this competition is to use this brand new chassis to convert any static 1/32 model kit into a working slot-car. There will be four sections to the competition:

A. Injection moulded plastic kits (Airfix, Monogram, Pyro, etc) No Magnet.

B. Injection moulded plastic kits (Airfix, Monogram, Pyro, etc) Magnet.

C. Resin kits (Proto, Traffic, OCA, Slot Classic, etc.) No Magnet.

D. Resin kits (Proto, Traffic, OCA, Slot Classic, etc.) Magnet.

You have over 6 months to make, paint and test your models before the final judging which will take place at the NSCC 25th Anniversary Weekend, 21st-22nd May 2005. Your car/cars (trucks, lorries, what ever!) will be judged in the following format.

Concours competition - 50% of the final score, judged by a panel including Sean from Pendle, one NSCC committee member and one member of the Moderators from the Slotforum.

Fastest lap competition - 30% of final score, you will race against the clock on one of the many tracks at the event. At this time we think the track will be Classic Scalextric.

And finally - **slowest lap competition** - 20% of final score, using the same track you will have to try and drive the slowest lap around the track. Not as easy as it sounds!

The choice of motor, body, wheels, tyres, guide, axles, contrate, pinion is entirely up to you but you must use a Pendle Adjustable Chassis

Ref PCS 32. If you decide to enter the with magnet class please note one (1) magnet only! You will not be allowed to swap motors, guides, magnets, etc during the competition (i.e. you can't change gearing between the fastest and slowest lap sections.)

Your car/s should be brought to the event no later than Saturday 12:00 noon and will be displayed in a locked showcase for all to see. Judging will start on Sunday morning and the cars driven at around 12:00 noon on Sunday. If you are unable to attend in person you can nominate a driver. You can also post your entry to us and as long as you include the full cost and details of where to send it back to we will pop it in the post. The NSCC, Slot Forum and Pendle accept no responsibility for loss or damage during postage or during the event.

An application/entry form is available to download on the NSCC, Slot Forum and Pendle Slot Racing web sites or you can send a S.A.E. to me at the normal address.

Entry to the competition costs £1.50 per entry and is payable at the event or with your entry (cheques made payable to the NSCC). The entry fee will go to our main weekend sponsor's (Toyota) chosen charity "**The Children's Trust**". Pendle Slot Racing will also supply some excellent prizes!

So dig out those old kits you have promised to do something with or buy that dream car you can't find in RTR format and start building.

To help (or hinder!) your progress I intend to start a few conversions myself during December and will keep you up to date with progress. For further hints and tips take a look at the Scratch Building section on the Slotforum, some of the best modellers and scratch builders often post advice and suggestions here for novice builders like myself! Good luck. ■

Roger Gillham's sixth edition

Five years of editing the NSCC Journal has given me an immense amount of pleasure but has also left me with, I fear, an incurable disease - "desktop publishing-itis"!

This manifests itself in the form of an unhealthy obsession with the actual mechanics of the printed word - leading, tracking, font size and type; not to mention a fit of the vapours every time I discover an errant apostrophe! In fact I am incapable of reading my daily paper without commenting on the various errors contained within.

Roger's 6th edition of his book about the history of Scalextric is no exception so I take great pleasure in announcing to the world that there is an errant apostrophe on page 77 - "Dallara's" - pah! Hanging is too good for him!

There are also a number of missing letters at the end of words, some other typos and a fairly major printing mistake on pages 80 and 82 where the same text is repeated for two different sections.

Now no publication is without errors - the Journal is proof read at least four times before it goes to print but, every month, it drops through my letter box and I spot a couple more mistakes. A commercial publication with paid copy editors should aim for a higher standard though and I believe Haynes ought to do a bit better job on a book retailing at £25. This is not a moan at Roger - it is the publishing company's function to prepare the final version for print.

The previous edition was criticized by some traders for a number of factual inaccuracies but as Phil Smith, Robert Learmouth, Mark Scale and Steve de Havilland have been heavily involved in checking this edition I trust there are no such problems with this one. Anyway, I bet they will keep quiet about it if there are any!

On then to the important bit - is it a good read? Is it worth buying if you already have a previous edition? The answer, on both counts is a definite yes.

Book Review



Without doubt this is the best version so far - complete colour

throughout (twice as many photographs as in the 5th edition), several extra chapters and the most comprehensive car listing section a collecting fanatic could wish for.

The additional chapters cover the early days of slot-cars, including rail racing; Australian/New Zealand cars and Scalex boats. I found this last section interesting but, strictly speaking, it is a little off subject. There is also much more comprehensive coverage of French, Spanish and Mexican production; the Mexican chapter is particularly fascinating - the colours of these cars is sheer lunacy. Imagine a child let loose in the Margate factory with a paint box!

Despite the fact that I have already read large swathes of the text in previous editions I literally picked this one up and read it from cover to cover without stopping. The extra information included this time, particularly the pictures of the foreign sets and accessories, demonstrates the huge effort Roger has put into keeping the book fresh and up-to-date. At the same time I am glad that he hasn't dropped those black and white photos of early Scalextric production; it is always good to remind ourselves of the founding genius of Fred Francis and his original tinsplate toys.

I often get enquiries from the general public about Scalextric items they have found in their loft and I invariably advise them to buy this book if they wish to explore the subject further - all commission to the usual address please Roger!

In conclusion, the title of this edition has been changed to "Scalextric - the definitive guide", an apt title if ever there was one. There have been many other attempts at writing books about Scalextric over the years but this one was the first and it remains the best. I trust Roger is already hard at work on the next one. ■

Carrera review - James Bond Aston Martin

By Peter Folley

“Now, pay attention please. Windscreen – bulletproof – as are the side and the rear windows. Revolving numberplates, naturally. Valid all countries...”

And so our hero is taken through the many and esoteric modifications to his new steed, the Aston Martin DB-5, by erstwhile quartermaster, “Q”.

Goldfinger: in many purists’ minds the best Bond film there has ever been and most likely ever will be. All the classic ingredients are there - shaken, not stirred, together; the debonair Sean Connery as your main man, Auric Goldfinger, the quintessential megalomaniac, Odd Job and his bowler hat and Pussy Galore (the delectable, Honor Blackman). And, of course, the DB-5; the horseless carriage of choice for a gentleman of Her Majesty’s employ, circa 1968.

In one fell swoop Carrera have taken a double bite at the current slot-car market and ensured sales success for this offering; the Bond

fans will have to have it because of the franchise and the Aston fans will have to have it too, because this is one mighty impressive looking model of the classic British GT.

The first thing that assails your eyes is the shine of all that chrome, shiny, shiny chrome. From those fabulous wire wheels to the intricate grill, to the deployed and ready to fire forward facing machine guns, deviously secreted under the indicators by that cunning “Q”. This is a Carrera that has had a lot of detail lavished on it. True, the gorgeous knock off spinners don’t extend out to maul the sills of any passing Mustang convertible, nor is there a hint of a rotating numberplate or indeed the trace of a bullet proof panel, poised to spring from the rear flanks.

In fact, aside from the trademark silver coachwork and the machine guns there is very little about this model to suggest that it is a Bond car. Although a quick ‘butcher’s’ in the cabin



Do you expect me to drive, Mr Goldfinger?



No Mr Bond, I expect you to buy my new slot-car

reveals a somewhat more sartorially refined driver figure than we are normally offered; resplendent in Saville Row suit and tie, sadly our hero is cursed by that aforementioned Carrera attention to detail, as his painted eyes give him a very spooked expression indeed. Perhaps the incident with the laser beam whilst reclining as a guest of Mr. Goldfinger scared him.

But the model looks good, sitting on its plinth. Yes, the rivet-counters will say the chrome is too bright; that the position of the wing-mounted rear-view mirrors is wrong; that there should be indicators just in front of the

vents on the wings and doubtless countless other niggling little errors; but from where I stand, this one looks the part.

Under the hood is where it all goes wrong. For there is the standard, over-engineered Carrera chassis reminding us that, first and foremost, they are a maker of toys. The fat guide (you will have to cut it down or swap it out to run on proprietary track other than Carrera's own), the reverse polarity switch, and the chunky thread to screw the car to the plinth are all there. As are the twin magnets, one fixed just forward of the rear axle, the other sliding on an angled track down to meet it and thus giving a degree of tune to the downforce. Combined, these =>

ferrous fiends are as intent on sticking the car to the track as Goldfinger was on cornering the world market for gold and they will sucker you into circulating faster and faster, until, as predictably as is the ending of a Bond film, their evil plot unravels and you spin off. Be warned, if you buy a Carrera DB-5 and put it on the track where it surely belongs, it could all end in tears - shiny chromed tears. Which is why, dear reader, I restricted the running of this example to smooth Carrera track only and gave the twisty bits ample respect. Needless to say, the car was well planted and smooth. Removing the rear-most magnet and sliding the remaining one forward I was able to exit the corners with playful oversteer; but that's all a bit 'Starsky and Hutch' for Bond and it only took two visits to the scenery before I backed off, ever fearful of tarnishing, or losing, a bit of that bright-work.

It strikes me as a crying shame that the manufacturers treat all their output in the same manner, be it a classic 60's GT or a modern Le Mans winner, they all get the same high revving

motor and they all get the same super magnet downforce - masking, more often than not, a poorly designed chassis. It's the path of least resistance I suppose; but a travesty to this reviewer when it means a DB-5 can mix it with a Bentley Speed Eight.

So we need a conclusion. Well it is a striking looking model. I could not tell you if it is to scale (the smart money is on it being a little on the large side for 1:32). But more to the point, I could not personally care - it looks good, if a little gaudy. To me, it is galling that it runs so fast; but don't be tempted to risk breaking off all those fine details. No, if you make the purchase, I suggest you pootle around the track doing bad impersonations of Sean, imagining yourself on a twisty Alps road and very, very soon, you will be humming that theme tune - dum dee dum dum, dum dum dum, dum dee dum dum, dum dum dum. Baa naa! Naa, naa, naaaa. ■



SCX

SCX Jordan F1 Reviewed by Graeme Thoburn

I have always been a fan of the SCX range of Formula One cars, beginning with the Ferrari F1/87, McLaren and Jordan that they produced in the nineties. Sadly, the earlier types (before magnet) are now obsolete and those of us who like to race them are finding it difficult to purchase them.

In the year 2000, SCX introduced the Arrows and Minardi and since then have added the Williams, McLaren, Jaguar and now the Jordan.

To be honest, I am a little disappointed in the appearance of the car; the colour just doesn't look right and appears a little translucent. After checking some websites, it seems that the yellow should be of a deeper shade, not the almost lemon colour we are presented with. There is a distinct lack of sponsorship logos on the body shell and I am fairly certain that this model is not liveried for any particular race and this may be attributed to licensing costs.

This leaves us with a model that has a nicely moulded body with a robust looking front spoiler (unusual in this type of car); well-defined tampo printing that has the look of a cheaper child's toy. I find this a shame because all the recent issues of the SCX F1 have looked pretty good.

On track

Out of the box the Jordan is a magnet lover's dream, a slot-car with very similar handling characteristics to the real thing, but I am a firm believer of throwing the magnet away. Before I did this, I ran the car around the Essex Club's Ninco circuit at a slow speed for about 30 minutes. SCX rear contrates are notoriously notchy and running the car around slowly with the magnet helps to bed it in, together with the



motor brushes and the tyres. What you are trying to achieve is a smooth mesh between pinion and gear. The smoother this is, the smoother the car will run and will ultimately lap more quickly.

After the running in period I tested it against a Jaguar and found the performance to be almost exactly the same. This is probably because both cars have exactly the same wheelbase. All the recent SCX F1s have similar performance but a few club members have preferred the longer wheelbase of the Jag' and this seems to give the car the edge on the Williams, McLaren etc.

Summing up

For the racers amongst you, I would recommend racing this type of car but without the magnet. They all race in a very similar way, with a tail-out attitude and a reasonable turn of speed and this makes them a real challenge but enjoyable. They are not as fast as other brands of F1, but because of that, they sustain far less damage in a collision. Would I buy a Jordan? Yes, despite its faults it stands out from the crowd and it races well. It could be the last Jordan you ever have the chance to buy if rumours in the real F1 world are true!

My thanks to Tecnitoys and Gareth Jex for the car. ■



Sir,

I was going to say I have a minor interest in slot-cars, but it cannot be that minor as I joined the NSCC just over a year ago. I don't belong to any racing club and due to various circumstances it's sometime since I've actually run a car on a track. I am still purchasing the odd car here and there and have appreciated my time with you and had considered the service, information etc that you have provided extremely good.....

.....Until I read Robert Learmouth's Traders Travels in the October journal.

I, and I assume others living North of Watford, would view that those of you living South of here are still in a very exclusive club. All this talk about too many swapmeets, there's very few of them in the North of England and I expect over the Border is even worse.

Last year I was able to get to Newark because there was another show in the area that another family member wanted to go to. If it hadn't been for that it would have been too far to travel. Also last year you held a swapmeet at Leeds, this appears to be missing from this year's calendar.

Other than these events I have not come across any other specific slot-car events in the North of England. I have been able to get to a few general swapmeets but there are very few slot-car traders. Harrogate is probably the best and usually has four or five stalls out of 300. One of your advertisers, Swaton Raceway, have recently started to attend this event bringing a good selection of items so I normally support them and buy cars, parts or magazines. York has a couple of stalls that are worth looking at but I'm afraid the other stalls at these and other

events just aren't worth the effort in making the journey. Having to use public transport doesn't help. Gateshead is good though if you like old trains.

The High Street retailers I have found restrict themselves to Scalextric with a few Ninco and SCX so there is little chance to view items prior to purchase and none know about after market parts. It's all well and good saying that there is mail order and the internet/eBay. I do use these methods to make purchases as it is the only way I can get some items I want.

However having purchased a couple of other makes cars via the internet and been disappointed by the quality I am loath to do so again unless absolutely the last resort.

So on behalf of the members in the near frozen North can I request that those traders who feel that there are too many swapmeets consider attending some up North and that the NSCC runs Leeds again plus a few others. We are given very short measure up here so an opportunity to see the full range of other manufacturers' cars, and talk about tune up parts, silicon tyres etc. would be a great benefit. Also, if, as Robert says, there are 50 non-members to each member perhaps the stragglers are here as the overwhelm of events in the South doesn't appear to be finding them.

I am, yours etc,
John Strong

It has always puzzled me why there aren't more events in the North, after all two of the largest slot-car retailers are located there. As for Leeds - haven't got a clue if there is one this year, the organizer has told me nothing!

Sir,

The latest craze in my small coterie of like minded spare bedroom racers is building slot racers of old GP cars. This was largely inspired by Mac Pinches' body kits, but we also use anything suitable we can get our hands on. Thus the new Scalextric 'Classics' were instantly of interest and we've each secured a pair. Well, mine aren't quite a pair as the Maser which I bought first at MK2 is the standard version and the Vanwall a 'Sport' (I'm usually too mean but we got a good bulk deal!).

The cars are very nicely made and sit well with the rest of the GP racers though (collectors look away) I felt constrained to paint the wheels with aluminium paint as they looked far too shiny. Track performance with the magnets fitted was entirely predictable: they zoomed frenetically round until the magnets could no longer cope and then shot destructively into the scenery. No fun at all. Magnets out was also very predictable: with the motor mounted far forward and skinny low-ish grip rear tyres they were tail happy in the extreme and performance was pedestrian.

Time for plan C. I bought some Ortmann tyres from R/S Slot Racing (29a - Marklin F1 rear) which improved the handling no end and made the cars roughly comparable in lap times, though not so nice to drive, to the rest. These tyres have the extra advantage of being of greater diameter than the Scalextric rears (which are the same diameter, though wider, than the fronts) and more realistic in appearance.

Almost finally, and Gary Leigh please note (see Dear NSCC letter, October, para 4), guess which of the two is the quicker? Well, would you believe, it's the dear old Maser with the nylon bearings and sloppy non-precision ground fit axle. Who'd a' thought it? (That is, apart perhaps from cynical old me)

Now, if I could bring myself to hack the bottom off all that interior detail and move the motor back to the proper place, I might have a couple more very nice racers.....

I am, yours etc,
Bill Grigg

Carrera D-Type

By Peter Folley

As a child of the Sixties I really wasn't following any motorsport until the middle of the Seventies, when Formula One cars were bedecked in garish liveries. Consequently cars from the Fifties were of no interest to me.

Now that that same child of the Sixties is approaching his forties, is a subscriber to Motorsport magazine and a frequent spectator at festivals rejoicing in cars from days gone by, I find myself drawn to those giants of early sportscar racing. And it was an article and the accompanying inspirational photographs in a recent issue of Motorsport, celebrating 50 years since the Jaguar D-Type's appearance and claiming that to fire up a D-Type is to "don Union Jack underpants" which prompted me to add the Carrera 25708 Jaguar D-Type to my collection.

It is an undeniably pretty model, the streamlined aluminium shape of the original has been captured well in a shell that comes apart in three pieces; the main one forms the bonnet, cockpit and tail; and two small separate sections, front and rear, sweep the aerodynamic curves down to the wheel wells. And the wheels are nice renditions of the original Dunlop alloy dishes,

adding nicely to the period look and feel of the model. Carrera have also faithfully reproduced the narrower rear track of the real car which gives a curious look when viewed from above and makes you wonder how stable the model will prove to be. Since the car is so petite this is one Carrera that does not have half a hundred weight of plastic in the chassis and the amount of travel available to the trademark sliding magnet has also been severely curtailed but there is still some weight to it all. I just wonder if it is really 1:32 scale.

Over the years the D-Type appeared with numerous different windscreen/cockpit/headrest combinations and in order to offer several of these variations the large fin behind the driver (added on the 1:1 to counter the effects of crosswinds) is a separate moulding on this one. As are, curiously, the tail lights – which is a shame because on mine the yellow paint doesn't match that of the body. Continuing with the minuses; so thick is the plastic forming the windscreen it looks as though it would not be out of place on a model of a Russian President's Zil, and the rivets surrounding the cockpit look like they might contain secret messages in Braille -





they just don't show up in most of the photographs I found. I wonder what possessed Carrera to model them so robustly?

The livery is typical of the period and the tampo printers didn't have much to worry about; the model carries just four race number roundels and a tiny manufacturer's emblem, all echoing back to more simple, pre-advertising times.

And so to the track; tested first on a Carrera circuit, with both magnets in situ, the D was able to produce some stunning times, comfortably outpacing a Fly 917/10 that I knew to be swift. Clearly the depth of the Carrera guide and the combined strength of the magnets proved invaluable in producing that result but it didn't look right; the D-Type was just a blur, sitting relatively high and hurtling through a series of esses and the shallow banked curves - stuck down like a modern F1. It didn't look right at all.

So I removed the rear-most magnet and moved the sliding one as far forward as it would travel on its very short track. The Jag' was still no slouch but now would fishtail its way out of the fast curves in a rather pleasing way - whether or not that is 'scale' I couldn't say but it looked and felt better, like I was actually driving it. It would still de-slot but I could tell myself that I was feeling the build up to it, as opposed to just having it snap away from me. A much more pleasurable drive.

That Motorsport article said that the original car had traction problems in tight corners or any corner with a bump, so next up, and having cut the guide down a tad, I tried the car on the aged plexy track belonging to the Oxford Scalextric Club. I quickly learnt that in low downforce or high, the Carrera model suffers the same as the full-size original - although, to be fair, the de-slots were mostly on the hideous potholes on the main straight. The combination of uneven surface, narrow track of the chassis and motor too powerful for it all meant she just couldn't put in a decent time, (I eventually got down to just under ten seconds whereas that 917 could post a very, very low six) which was a big disappointment; but the track is very, very rough. Back home then and I set up the longest Scalextric Classic circuit that space would permit; incorporating a fourteen foot straight and a 270 degree outer outer turn, all much, much smoother than the club layout. No timing was possible but it was clear that the different steel of the rails was offering more grip to the 917 which was now the faster car to hustle. Even with both magnets installed the D-Type couldn't brake as late and didn't instil as much confidence. But hey, the real car would have been outclassed too and it no longer came out on the straights.

Lastly, I removed all the magnets from the Carrera and boy was she transformed - way too fast for her own good and no semblance of brakes that you would recognise (maybe that is more representative of the 1:1!) but now the tail was dancing in the breeze. A totally different style of slot racing and no less enjoyable for it. I entertained myself for ages sliding around those curves. This was the car that I had wanted all along - classic looks with a dynamic style more befitting the old girl. Union Jack underpants indeed, albeit in 1:32 scale!

Sure, the Carrera does not have the level of detail that you would expect from Fly; it is more toy like and it may not be true 1:32 scale. But if you are a fan of the period and not of magnets; if you have flat track and sweeping curves, then these D-Types are for you and I'll certainly be picking up another. ■

BITS & PIECES

Shipment from Spain the mini-version

Not a lot to report this month! All very quiet from Tecnitoys but I do have news of yet another Spanish only re-issue (they have it easy in Spain!). This one is slightly different to the normal Miticos type magazine offers in so much as it's a one hit purchase for 12 limited edition cars.

Entitled 'Rallies Miticos' it is released by the Spanish mail order company 'Plante Directo'. It consists of 12 cars (coches), comes in a yellow presentation case and you get an exclusive watch with your order. Details are a little sketchy but I think you also get two additional cars when you order - a Red Seat 850 and a stunning Porsche 959 in a Rothmans livery.

The other 10 cars are: Ford RS200, Toyota Celica, Ferrari GTO, Seat 500, BMW M1, Porsche 911, Lancia Delta, Ford Fiesta, BMW M3 and an Audi Quattro. All the liveries look similar, but unique to this set. The sets are limited to 3500. All in, it costs approx 450 Euros (about £321.00) or £23 each car - not bad!

Try as I might I just can't persuade the distributors to sell NSCC members these cars, I have asked on many occasions. The photos I have are very low quality, but as soon as my set arrives I will take some pics - before you ask - no I didn't get a sample! Luckily a friend of a friend ordered a set for me!

Off to Barcelona to see Tecnitoys this month so hopefully I will have more to report next month.

Gareth Jex

What a classic

I can't help but notice more and more "slot-car" adverts and pictures in the motoring press. The October issue of "Classic Cars" promotes four of the slot-car marques for the price of three... There's a Fly classic BMW offered as a prize, a full page advert for Revell and a rather nice looking picture of the Carrera Mercedes

300SLR in the famous Stirling Moss Mille Miglia "722" livery. So where's the fourth slot-car manufacturer then? Well, take a closer look at the track that beautiful Mercedes is sitting on... it's NINCO!

Peter Solari

Whoops!

Re - The Definitive Guide 6th edition.

Yes I know before you all write to me! - some typos have crept in despite checking several times. They have all been noted and if there is a re-print in the future they will be corrected. The one I am most ashamed of is that on page 177 I show a red Ford Mustang - of course it is a Chevrolet Camaro.

Roger Gillham

F.A.Q.

Just a reminder that Chris Holt is available to offer help and advice with any slot-related problems.

You can contact him by post:

16, Hillside Road

Storrington

West Sussex

RH20 3LZ

or via email: Holtchris959@aol.com

He will try to answer any questions or point you in the direction of a "man who can". Feel free to ask any slot related questions - no matter how elementary - we all had to start somewhere.

Car reviewers

My offer of free cars to review in the September issue has resulted in quite a large response - so large, in fact, that it could take two years to supply everyone with a car!

I shall, therefore, have to close the list for the time being. Everyone who has already applied will eventually receive something but please don't start complaining if you don't hear anything for a long time.

Ebay watch

By Martin Fox

Have you seen the eBay television adverts recently? “Buy it. Sell it. Love it!” There are 7.5 million users in the UK now with 2.7 million items on offer just in the UK every day. But beware, there are 200 fraudulent auctions on the site every day.

I joined eBay in 1999, put a search in for “Scalextric” and only 12 items were found, now it’s over 3000. In the early days people were unsure if eBay would catch on or last so were willing to pay silly prices to complete their collections. I think that people are prepared to wait now as another will nearly always turn up.

Recent prices realised

E/5 Marshall’s car boxed (hairline crack in roof)	£261
James Bond Aston Martin (damaged engine mount)	£345
James Bond Mercedes good condition	£290
Sunbeam Tiger (repro box)	£162
Refreshment Kiosk unboxed	£29

4 lane horse racing Derby set	£84
Goodwood chicane boxed	£56
Jersey police car (used)	£35
Bugatti C95 Graham Perris 1983	£620
B2 Hurricane (repro box)	£92

Search tip

There are no spell checks on item headings. If you are looking for a “Scalextric marshal car” save a search for a “Scalextric marshall car”. Also try plurals “Scalextric marshal’s car” and “Scalextric marshall’s car”. Save your searches on both ebay.co.uk and ebay.com

Try it and note the different number of items found on each search. But check all items that you are bidding on will be posted to the U.K.

Following last month’s request for someone to take over this feature, Martin Fox and Chris Arlow volunteered their services and will be sharing the column between them. ■



Norman's conquest – revisited

Norman Griffiths – who oversaw Scalextric production at Havant from 1964 to 1971 – offers his memories of the factory's final days, as **Paul Strange** concludes his revised report.

Part 10: Havant's final days

The closure of Scalextric's Havant factory in August 1970 was a bombshell for all the staff, particularly Norman Griffiths. As general manager, he had the difficult task of announcing the news to the stunned workforce. A few days prior to the announcement, he was called in by the directors and learned that Lines Brothers were in financial difficulties. He was told that the Havant factory would close at the end of the

week and that production would transfer to an associated company, Rovex, which produced Tri-ang Hornby model trains at Margate in Kent. The closure would make 1,200 people redundant at Havant.

“I was told that I must not breathe a word about this to anybody and I felt terrible,” he says, as we near the end of our chat at his home in Broadstairs, Kent. “The directors told me, ‘This is absolutely strictly private – not a word outside this office – no one knows, because we want you to be here on Friday to close the factory. We want you to tell them.’ It was very difficult not to let on what was going on to people I'd worked with for years. I knew it was going to happen, so it preyed on my conscience and it was rough.” =>



Minimodels senior staff at a works dance at Portsmouth, circa 1968/69, with Norman Griffiths (far right) and his wife Lynne (far left). Two years later, Norman and director Jim Hamersley (seated, back of table, with glasses and moustache), had to close the Havant factory.

The closure caused chaos, cost a small fortune to implement, wasted recent outlay to upgrade the Havant factory and was the first inkling of the Lines Brothers collapse that was to follow a year later. (Scalextric was saved from the wreckage and was sold on to the Dunbee-Combex-Marx Group. Production of Tri-ang Hornby model trains and Scalextric continued to be combined at the one site at Margate, and Rovex eventually became Hornby Hobbies Ltd.)

“The Havant closure knocked us for six,” says Norman. “It was an enormous expense. We’d got a 100,000 sq ft warehouse with a £60,000 sprinkler system that had only been up for 12 months.

Originally they were going to bring the train-set production down to Havant but, after discussions with local trades associations and the council, it was put to Lines Brothers that the Margate area would be devastated if Rovex left there because they were such large employers. Whereas if they switched Scalextric production to Margate, it was no skin off Lines Brothers’s nose and for those that were made redundant from Havant, there was a lot of work around Portsmouth in the engineering trade. So that was that.”

“The Friday morning came, and the death knell was going to be sounded. I was asked to clear a space in the factory for 1,200 people, we told them and they all went home. You’ve never seen anything like it! Sales reps and sales directors all had to drive their company cars in and then take taxis and buses home. Part of their agreement with me was that I would stay on for a further six months and empty the factory. I had to take charge of moving all the materials and all the Scalextric plant to Margate.”

Gradually Norman achieved this with the help of director Jim Hamersley. “There was a 100,000 sq ft of warehouse, 30ft high of racking, radio-controlled sorting and so on, even in those days. And all that had to be cleared – some sold up, but a lot of it went to Margate. My contract ran out on 31 January 1971 and by then all that was left was a big, empty factory. On that particular Friday I walked out and that was that.”

After more than 17 years of working for Lines Brothers, Norman remained in the plastics moulding industry but found a rather different market for his talents. Through contacts, he was appointed manager of an artificial limb factory in Basingstoke and 14 repair units in hospitals around the country before retiring to Broadstairs in Kent, where he lives today.

“It was absorbing to work on Scalextric, actually,” says Norman, as he reflects on his career. “There was always a problem that was interesting to solve; I just got into it. My production target was £100,000 a week – £5 million of Scalextric goods a year – and we made a good profit. And I definitely enjoyed racing the cars as well, although I could never beat anybody at that Jump Jockey. I thought that system was good! All it was, was a motor stuck up a horse’s stomach, running round a track! It was great fun – a good idea but it never took off.”

Unlike Scalextric, then?

Norman smiles and offers me another cup of tea. ■

Ortmann tyre review

By the Editor

“They’re round, black, have white lettering on them and they keep the chassis from scraping on the track”

A quote usually attributed to former F1 champion, Alan Jones, in response to a question about tyres from an idiot journalist - but probably a guiding design principle for most slot-car manufacturers!

In full size motor racing the tyres are probably the single most important variable in the quest for faster lap times. Michelin and Bridgestone spend countless millions in the development of new rubber compounds; I doubt the major slot-car brands spend more than a few pence on providing tyres for their products and it shows.

As with poor chassis design the standard answer to lack of rear wheel traction is, “Bung a stonger magnet in it.” We currently have the finest, most detailed slot-car bodies ever but they are sitting on top of outdated underpans and using inferior tyres. One day Scalextric and the rest of the major brands will design a car which runs properly on a smooth wooden/copper tape track and add the magnet afterwards; at which point a Gloucester Old Spot pig will be observed coming in to land at Heathrow.

Which brings us to the point of this article - Over a year ago I was sent a set of Ortmann tyres to review (how’s that for a long term test?). They are sold in the UK by R/S Racing which is run by NSCC member, Colin Spark.

The ones I received were a replacement for those on my Ninco Audi TT and the difference they made to its levels of grip were, quite simply, astonishing. On my small Sport track layout in the loft they transformed the thing from a tail happy monster (when run sans magnets) to an easily controllable car which was a delight to drive. Within five minutes I had cut ½ a second off its previous best time - not bad on a track with a record lap of four seconds!

I was sufficiently impressed to buy a few more tyres for my small stable of home racers with the same pleasing results. The Ortmanns

were particularly impressive on the ‘Challenger’ Mercedes which had been a constant struggle to keep running properly on ordinary tyres. Only trouble is - it is even harder to beat as I don’t have the luxury of waiting for it to fall off!

Now the Audi is also my saloon class racer at Mussel Bay Raceway club so the next step was to test the tyres in real competition on a routed wood/copper tape track and here the picture is more mixed.

As the racers amongst you are well aware the preparation of tyres is something of a black art! Apart from sanding, all sorts of oils and unctions are added to soften them and provide more grip. I found the Ortmanns to be superior to box standard tyres but no match for those prepared by the top men in the club.

On the plus side though - they are virtually indestructible and don’t pick up any muck from the side of the track when you fall off. I have won many races when my opponent’s tyres have “gone off” in the middle of a race or when a deslot has caused him to run slowly for several laps while the tyres clean themselves up.

In fact the original set which Colin supplied me with are still almost as good as new after more than a year’s use. Apart from a light initial sanding I have done nothing to them and, at the last saloon meeting, my Audi was good enough for two wins against superior opposition.

Ortmann tyres are, in my opinion, not the complete answer to better grip at top club level but they are a considerable help to us “middle order” men. Almost any car will handle better with a set fitted and give you more confidence to attack the circuit and improve your driving skills.

If you run on plexy track however, I would wholeheartedly recommend these tyres, they do “exactly what it says on the tin” and are far superior to most manufacturers’ originals. Colin can even supply versions to fit 60’s cars if you want to give your old toys a run. ■

Lotus 23

By Dave Yerbury

First shown at the Racing Car Show in January 1962 this was the last of the successful Lotus sports racers and was adapted from the Formula Junior Lotus 22. Like the 22 it was a space frame design but a bit wider. The normal engine used was the Ford Cosworth 1098cc with a modified VW gearbox.

Like other designs of the time, such as the Merlyn, the Lotus was lower, faster and overall a better handling car. It sold for a staggering £1650 ex works but in component form. A demonstration of its capabilities was posted in May at the Nurburgring 1000km race. With a prototype 1498cc engine Jim Clark ended up 9th in practice and fastest 2 litre car. Before the race it rained and, although he fluffed the start, by the end of the first lap he was 27 seconds in the lead. After two laps it was 47 seconds, after three laps 78 seconds. After eight laps it had grown to two minutes. Unfortunately the track started to dry and by lap 11 Mairesse's four litre Ferrari was only 42 seconds behind. On lap 12 Clark felt unwell due to the fumes from a broken exhaust entering the cockpit; this caused him to slide off the track into a ditch and retirement. A great pity but its potential was clear to see.

1963 saw the chassis strengthened, more rigid and, with the addition of the 1594cc Lotus-Ford twin cam driven through a Hewland five speed gearbox, it became the 23B. The most successful team of the year was Mike Bekwith's Normand outfit. With Bekwith, Hegbourne and

Jim Clark, when available, it amassed 20 class and overall wins. Ian Walker also ran a 23B in which Graham Hill finished second in the Canadian Grand Prix at Mosport behind Pedro Rodriguez in a 250P Ferrari. The 23 remained successful in minor events with Peter Gethin winning the Guards Sports Car Championship and it remained in production up until 1966; a total of 131 cars were made. There were a lot of variants on the 23 theme including one powered by an F1 BRM engine and another by a BMW two litre powerplant. The prize for the most eccentric went to R. V. Marchant who managed to fit six Ariel two stroke motorcycle engines. It was known as the Rotorvic and didn't always run on all twelve cylinders but made an incredible noise. There is no record of it actually taking part in a race.

This is a car I've always wanted to make. I have had a couple of Russkit bodies but felt these were under scale. I used to own a Revell 1/24th 23 which I raced to oblivion at Beatties of Southgate pay track in those distant days. A Ningo Ferrari 166 MM chassis fits snugly into the body and is secured by the usual plastic pegs. The wheels and tyres are from SRM with their 'wobbly' inserts. The car pictured represents Jim Clark at Oulton Park in September 1963 driving for the Normund Racing Team; a nice change from the Lotus team's usual British Racing Green. ■

