



Contents

Swapmeets.....2
 Membership Update.....4
 Diary Dates.....5
 Messages From Margate.....7
 Ninco News.....10
 Traders Travels.....13
 Shipment From Spain.....15
 NSCC Championship.....17
 Letters.....19
 Festival Of Speed.....20
 Track Signs.....23
 Norman's Conquest.....25
 Bits And Pieces.....27
 World Classics Review.....29
 Can-Am Challenge.....31
 Power To The People.....37
 Adverts.....35

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So, farewell then, man with bobble hat?

It is generally reckoned in the world of work that the time to worry about job security is when they move your desk nearer to the front door. It is highly likely that you will soon be walking through it on a permanent basis. I suppose the Scalextric equivalent is the back page of the catalogue so let us turn to page 74 of the current one where we find the last surviving remnants of 60's production - Grandstand, Pit Stop, Control Tower and assorted miniature people. The buildings date back to the very first catalogue in 1960 while the spectators and pit crew made their appearance just a year later. I suspect that none of them will be in employment for much longer as new mechanics are already with us.

I must confess that I will be sad to see them go - all over the world these little plastic people have been doing sterling service on miniature race circuits for over 40 years. Through rain and shine the well endowed lady has been waving her programme; the country gent has leaned on his stick; the press photographer has struggled with that Box Brownie and the man with binoculars has presumably been studying the finer points of the well endowed lady! Meanwhile, over in the grandstand, man with bobble hat continues to wave, the courting couple are still holding hands and the young child resolutely continues to crush his father's leg.

Most of their colleagues have long since departed - the ice cream seller no doubt has upgraded to a Mr. Whippy van but the starter on rostrum has been replaced by soulless traffic lights and the TV commentator has moved to air conditioned luxury in the press centre. How long can the rest of them survive?

And Finally - I really think that we ought to start a retirement home for these oft derided figures so they can live out their twilight years in peace and comfort. Perhaps we could arrange an annual coach trip to the Goodwood Revival meeting for them so they can rekindle the memories of their youth and see how that young Stirling Moss is progressing.

Till next month
 Brian





Digital

Sport Digital is in the final testing phase and coming on nicely. Everyone at Hornby is spending time playing with it and I was pleased to take my turn when I visited them last week. Sport Digital is great fun. Racing several cars at the same time and changing lane adds a whole new dimension to racing and the lane changing is slick and easy. I know there are some sceptics out there – I can only advise them to keep an open mind and try it. Digital is far more than multiple cars and lane changing though. The control box enables many different types of racing including lap and time based races and a rally mode. It can be configured for jump start penalties and to cut power after the race. The technology will lead to pitlanes and a whole new level of realism. We should see Sport Digital before the end of the year.

Porsche Boxster and Audi TT

The plain silver solo Audi TT followed soon after the first Porsche Boxster. This is C2506 Audi TT “Silver ’04”. This has no tampo printing at all and just looks like a standard road car.

For those of you who like the TT and Boxster there will be plenty to collect:

Porsche Boxster

C2478 Porsche Boxster “Red ’04” - already released

C2479 yellow

C2608W yellow – different from C2479 and only in C8306 track pack

C2610W silver – only in C8308 track pack



Audi TT

C2506 Audi TT “Silver ’04” - already released
C2506/W Audi TT “Silver ’04” – in C1145 Road Rivals Argos exclusive set

C2507 blue

C2609W blue – different from C2507 and only in C8307 track pack

C2611W red only in C8309 track pack

C2617W blue – different again and only in C1145 Road Rivals Argos set.

The Boxster and TT will also feature as the cars in the new Sport Digital sets in due course.

Street Cars

This year’s fashion for road going liveries continues with street versions of both the Mustang and the Corvette.

C2574 Ford Mustang Boss 302 ’70 Street Car

This new livery on the 1970 version of the Mustang is yellow with black detailing. A host of details differentiate this version from the racing liveries which have preceded it including ➤➤

chrome wipers, door mirrors and a rear spoiler. Louvres over the back window make a big impact as do excellent new wheels. The tyres also feature incredibly small printing.

C2575 Chevrolet Corvette L88 GM Test Car

This differs significantly from the car illustrated in the 2004 Catalogue. It is predominantly white with a single, wide, pale blue stripe running from front to back. Again, the tampo printing of the badges is incredibly fine but still clear.

C2629 Porsche GT3R white

A plain white Porsche GT3R was rumoured some time ago but no further news about it was forthcoming until recently. It was decided by Hornby not to release this model but they had received approximately 200 samples from China. What to do with them? The solution came when Margate held a charity fund-raising event on the seafront. The Hornby Roadshow was there and all of these white Porsches were given as prizes to lucky race winners. The car is plain white with no tampo printing. It came in



Limited Editions

C2568 Mercedes CLK DTM Service 24h No24

The Collectors Centre car for 2004 is in the shops already, much earlier than in previous years. It has a really attractive pale blue livery as driven by Gary Paffett in the 2003 DTM championship. It is in a limited edition of 1000 and is sure to be popular.

a standard crystal case with no printing on the base and without a sleeve. This car is going to be very hard to find – good luck!

Argos

Only one new set unique to Argos in their Autumn/Winter 2004 catalogue. This is Speed Machines containing two Audi TTs and a small X1 layout. There are no new items in the corresponding Index catalogue.

Bikes

The next MotoGP to be released will be the 2004 Yamaha ridden by Rossi. The packaging for the bikes has been heavily revised to be much like the standard crystal case with a black plastic base, rigid Perspex top and MotoGP sleeve. The new boxes are the same length as the car box but taller and shallower to match the shape of the bikes.

All future bikes will contain a self adhesive weight that can be stuck on the stabilisers to dramatically lower the centre of gravity. This weight is also in the new MotoGP sets and will be available as a spare from the Hornby web site soon too.

An interesting modification to alter the bike's handling requires the use of a scalpel blade. Above the rear wheel is a spring governing the rear suspension movement. Next to this is a small square plastic lug. As standard this lug prevents any suspension movement as the magnet would just pull the bike down as far as it could. To race the bikes in a different way just cut off the lug, remove the magnet, fit the new weights and off you go. Hornby ran the bikes at the recent MotoGP round at Donington in this mode and the feedback was excellent. Let me know what you think.

Paperwork Track Plans

Look out for a new track plans booklet in your local store. It gives advice on planning and building new circuits and how to extend your circuit from an initial set. There are big track designs of all of the main Grand Prix circuits together with details of all the track pieces needed.

Sport Digital

A 4 page Sport Digital brochure is also available. This gives more details of the forthcoming sets, accessories and cars. Disappointingly there are no new car liveries.

Coming Soon
Vanwall & Maserati Classic Grand Prix
These are the next cars to arrive and will be in

the shops during September. More information about packaging has emerged that differs from previous information published. C2551 & C2552 will be available in both Standard and Sport versions. The Standard versions are in normal crystal cases but with a "Classic Grand Prix" designed sleeve. The Sport versions are in Sport boxes but these are a green and black chequered finish together with the Goodwood logo. They will be available from the normal outlets.

Ford GT

The design of the new Ford GT is coming on quickly and the first test shot looks great. It is bigger than the GT40 as it should be but keeps the same proportions. Hornby are using three different photo etched mesh grills on various parts of the car. There should be two versions mimicking the real car as Ford are producing a "racing version" with twin fillers and different rear spoilers and exhausts.

Skoda Fabia WRC

The Skoda Fabia WRC is complete and should be in the shops soon. This is Hornby's first four wheel drive car for a long time and the front wheels are driven by an elastic belt on the nearside. The rear pulley being between the wheel and the sidewinder contrate gear. The belt just fits very neatly between the body shell and the interior. Being short and wide the car goes round sharp corners extremely well and the four wheel drive gives it more bite when accelerating out of the corners.

C2528 NSCC Mini Cooper S

At last, progress! Not ready for you to buy yet but having our own C reference number means we have a slot in the production schedule. The livery is being designed right now and hopefully I can soon release details.

Thanks again for all of your letters and emails. Your ideas are always passed onto Hornby in our discussions, even if some of you would like the entire Ford back catalogue modelled as slot-cars! ■

From Peter Solari

Ninco 8-hour endurance

While Spain took a well-earned rest in August, the New Tottenham Raceway played host to an 8-hour Ninco GT Endurance race. The club organised this event to be held on their own permanently set-up 6-lane layout which really has to be seen to be believed. It is a technical circuit with an interesting collection of very different corners that is challenging to drivers of all abilities and must be one of the best designed club circuits anywhere in the UK (*if not the world!*). With an average lane length of approximately 200ft, non-magnet cars can complete a lap in around 18 seconds.

New Tottenham Raceway entered three teams, each with a different GT class car - a Porsche 911 GT1, a Ferrari F50 and a McLaren F1 GTR. The remaining three entrants were from Eastcote, Essex and West London clubs -

all running Porsche 911 GT1s. Five teams favoured the new NC-5 "Speeder" motor with Essex choosing the NC-3 "X-Trem" as their engine. The event was split into six 80-minute sessions to allow for each team to race on every lane. Racing was close throughout the day with overall positions changing during almost every session. "Tottenham 1" managed to stay in front to win the endurance race completing 1548 laps over the 8 hour period. "Tottenham 3" took 2nd place and "Essex" finished 3rd. The fastest lap of the race - an astonishing 16.61s - went to Graham Eldridge.

New Tottenham Raceway is located at 4th Floor, 61 Markfield Road, Tottenham, N15 4QF. For more details about the club, please contact Ian Newstead by phone (020 8808 4350 or 07939 482183)

E-mail: (ianhomer@btconnect.com).



The New Tottenham Raceway circuit



The winning Porsche 911 GT1 and 2nd place Ferrari F50

Product feature: Transmissions

Transferring the power from the motor to the wheels comes about through use of gearing, and different gear-ratios can determine factors such as acceleration and top speed. Apart from the Karts and the BMW M3 GTR, the current range of Ninco cars are fitted with a 24- or 27-tooth crown gear, centrally mounted on the rear axle. The 9-tooth pinion mounted on the motor shaft can be interchanged with a 10-tooth pinion to mesh with the crown gear resulting in ratios between 2.4:1 and 3:1. Pinions and axles are available in the Ninco “Racing Components” range and the table below acts as a reference when choosing replacement parts:-

80204	9-Tooth Pinion (standard) x 2
80205	10-Tooth Pinion x 2
80401	27-Tooth Crown Gear on 49mm Axle + Front Axle and 2 x Brass Bushings
80402	27-Tooth Crown Gear on 53.5mm Axle + Front Axle and 2 x Brass Bushings
80403	24-Tooth Crown Gear on 49mm Axle + Front Axle and 2 x Brass Bushings
80404	24-Tooth Crown Gear on 53.5mm Axle + Front Axle and 2 x Brass Bushings
80410	27-Tooth Crown Gear on 46mm Axle + Front Axle and 2 x Brass Bushings
80411	24-Tooth Crown Gear on 51.5mm Hardened Steel Axle + Front Axle
80412	27-Tooth Crown Gear on 51.5mm Hardened Steel Axle + Front Axle

⇒

If you want to dabble with changing gear ratios or maybe just replace a worn-out pinion, you can do so using the Ninco Pinion Press & Puller (80201). This gadget will help you do so without damaging the motor shaft. Pinion presses and pullers are available as separate tools and can be relatively expensive but the simple design of this Ninco product combines both in a single instrument.



And Finally...

Following on from last month's announcement of new cars, here are the official pictures of the Reynard "Corona" Champ Car, BMW "Sachs" X5 and Subaru "Imola" WRC. ■



Traders travels

By Robert Learmouth
(Westwood Models)

August saw the arrival of the first digital system - from SCX. The Slot City demo set was packed in the car boot and taken for evaluation by the boys at the Oxford club. The journey from Swindon proved an interesting one when I forgot to shut the tailgate and pulled back out from a parking lay-by onto a very fast dual-carriageway sending a very heavy sack truck out the back! Fortunately no damage done... Back to the digital system.

The demo set in question was a generous track size affording a very large offset oval. SCX use a new track system which is incredibly easy to put together and pull apart and will no doubt win friends in its own right. I'm not going to attempt a detailed review here, but suffice to say, my own theory about digital was echoed with some of the comments received.

You need a very large layout to keep even three cars running round happily, bigger even than the generous size demo set we had. Can this size track be accommodated in the average home? It is likely to win friends in club racing but, with SCX digital at least, it will require a very large investment to set-up. The cars aren't cheap either at £45. The technology itself worked like a dream though and appears to be very well implemented. I still suspect Hornby will sell more due to the compatibility and flexibility of the product. Ultimately I think that the future of digital will not be as a separate range but as the core product itself. Costs would have to be reduced to mainstream levels so I can't see it happening for a few years yet but I wouldn't mind betting this will be the agenda for the manufacturers.

It has been a busy month for interesting new releases. The Carrera James Bond DB5 has arrived and is superb. This car has certainly caught the imagination of a large number of people. And at well under 30 quid it's a bargain too. Top marks to Carrera for continuing progress with their range in a sensible and manageable way for collectors.

Also worthy of mention this month are the superb new repro parts from RUSC. Injection-moulded (chromed) bumpers and hubs are now available for a range of 1960's Scalextric cars and they look absolutely superb. Very, very difficult to distinguish from the originals.

Hot off the press are reports that there are going to be three new series of Altaya Miticos cars. However, the reports are so new that I had to try and decipher them from a Spanish Internet site and I think the posters themselves weren't 100% sure of the information. Anyway if word is true we can expect to see re-releases of existing Miticos cars, paired up and issued together. Hopefully these will be re-liveries as I just don't see the point otherwise. We can then expect a range of Fly, yes Fly, Miticos cars and finally a range of Ninco Miticos cars. I have to say I'm sceptical about the latter two ranges appearing so please treat this info as gossip for now unless you hear otherwise! ■



Shipment from

Spain

by Gareth Jex

Not a great deal to report on this month, Spain, like most of Europe seems to shut down for the summer months and everyone takes their holidays. However, just before they left Tecnitoys did send through some new info.

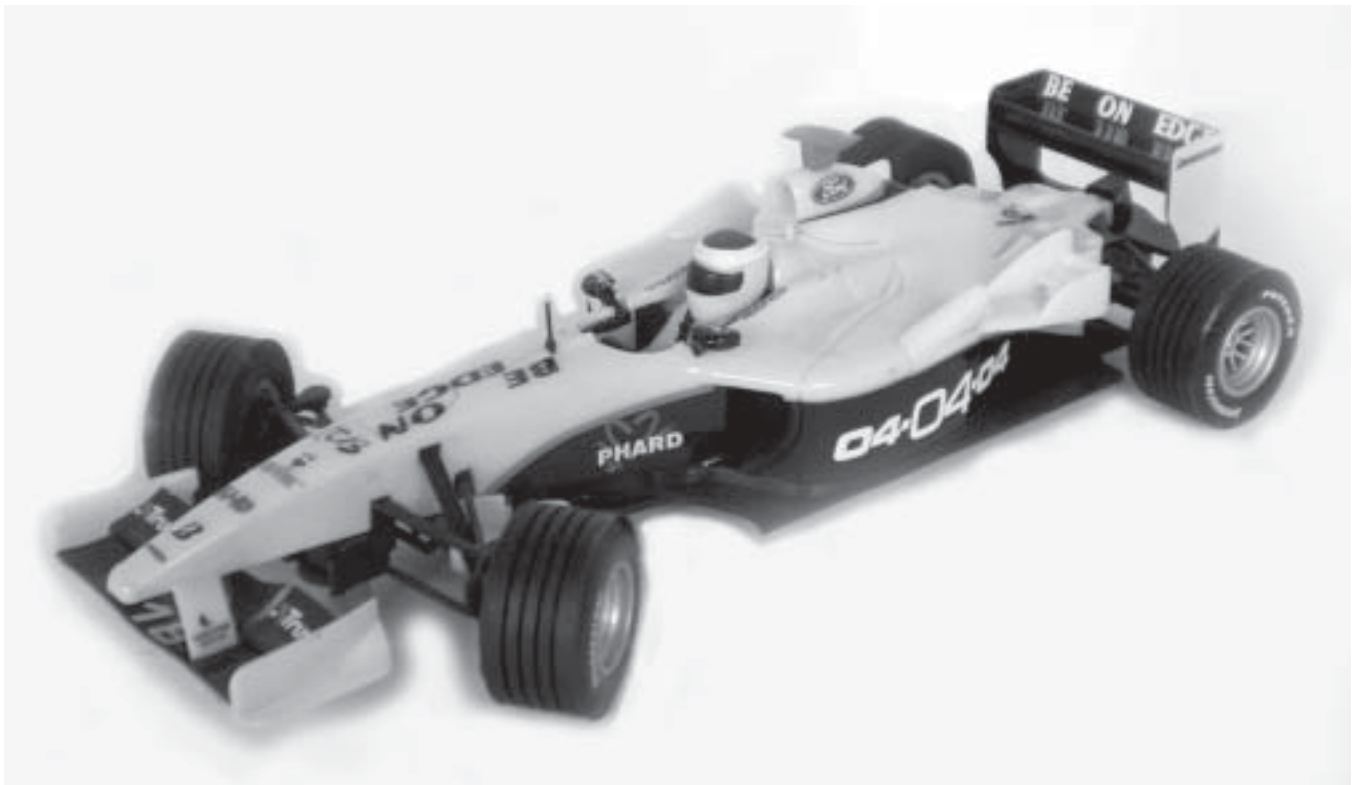
It's an F1 bonanza this month!

You may remember from the London Toy fair that the Williams F1 FW26 "Walrus" nose was

not going to be available in the UK due to licensing agreements. This has now been sorted and they confirm that the SCX 61670 is scheduled for release in September. Stocks may be limited.

Struggling in the current season, but with hopes of new sponsorship the new Jordan F1 "Australia" is due for release very soon. Ref SCX 61500 In bright yellow with "Be On Edge" these cars always look good. ➔





SCX 61500 Jordan F1 "Australia"
Photo supplied by Pendle Slot Racing

Last in the new F1 line up is a relivery of the Jaguar F1. This car was reviewed a while back and was very good. This new livery Ref SCX 61540 "Sepang" features the HSBC logos in red on the side pods and rear wing

TecniToys have also confirmed that the Citroën Xsara WRC and the Subaru WRC, that comes in the 1000 Lakes set, will have working bonnet mounted lights. This was mentioned at the London Toy Fair, but not confirmed until now. I'm not sure if this car will be released as a separate item.

SCX Digital is now available in the shops! This is the revised version that differs slightly from the Spanish release. A new demo set is being lent to the NSCC and will be available to members at as many swapmeets as we can get it to. TecniToys and Bachmann plan a launch event of some kind in the UK, details will follow as soon as I know. ■

NSCC Championship update

by Gareth Jex

Six months to go!

The final date for clubs to hold their races, heats, mini championships etc is Feb 27th 2005.

Several people have asked how everything is going and to be honest my answer is, "I don't know". Very few clubs have sent me any info about the championship heats they are running and the first I know about it is when the results come in!

If you are planning for your club to compete in the championship, please let me know as soon as you can. A good example of the flexibility of the rules is the mini championship being held at Scale Models Slot Racing; here are a few notes from Mark about how he is organising the event at his club:

"We thought long and hard about how to do this- six different cars and six lanes - we came up with this idea, and four weeks in it is working brilliantly. It is the best racing we have had in ages.

The Race format is: five minute endurance (marshalled) on Monday evenings.

We run the race programme as two cars (from the specified six) per night and each racer gets to run those cars on three lanes. The race is against the clock - five minute endurance and the track has been split in to 10ths for very accurate recording of the results - the person with the most laps wins. We are now at the end of one set of six cars on six lanes and the overall leader is 1/10th of a lap in the lead!

Once every one has raced all the cars on all the lanes, we are going to do it all again, which will mean every one gets a chance to record a time for each lane. In the event of holidays/work/sickness then you put your best time forward and the enthusiasm is growing each week.

We will be running another session before the finals, so anyone who wants to join us, get in touch and we will be pleased to keep you informed." ⇒



My local club Farnham Scalextric Club, has just finished the fourth of seven races in their three class championship (Carrera, Ninco and Vanquish MG) running on our permanent Ninco track and the racing is close. We are running races of ten laps, crash and burn, with supplied lane cars. The heats are incorporated into our normal club championship.

Once this championship is complete we will be running the next three cars (Fly, Scalextric and SCX) in a separate one. There are also rumours of an endurance event. We meet every Wednesday at about 8 pm, time permitting we run eight heats every night.

Don't forget that there are sprayed up club cars available to borrow from the NSCC. Please get in touch if you wish to use them.

The Trophies for the top three racers are nearly finished and I hope to have some photos next month. These really are worth winning! All of the trophies feature at least one very rare collectors car!

We hope to be holding the second open round of the NSCC Championship at the Milton Keynes Swapmeet 19th September



(space permitting). We will be using the SCX/Ninco NSCC Rally track with SCX Citroën Xsara WRC 4wd cars. Depending on time and numbers we may hold magnet and non magnet classes. Winners (fastest lap) on the day get invited to the finals plus they will win an SCX car.

Plans are also afoot to run another round at the Newark swapmeet in October. We could also do with some volunteers to run these events; please get in touch if you can help.

This is your championship so please take part! ■



Sir,

I just had to write in support of Richard Painter's letter in the August edition of the Journal, especially with regard to Hornby's rally cars.

I understand that the new Skoda will be 4WD and it's about time too. However, I hope that it's proper 4 WD (like SCX's) and not the cop-out of belt drive. I have to agree with Richard's view that Hornby place far too much reliance on the power of their magnets rather than making a chassis that still works without one (as Ninco and SCX seem able to).

I have begun to form the opinion that Hornby aim their products at people who use Sport track and race their cars straight out of the box. I realise that Scalextric is primarily a children's toy and the vast majority of their customers probably do just that, but I also believe that those of us who still use our old track and can remember the pre-Magnatraction days deserve something for our loyalty.

It really pains me to criticise Hornby in this way. After all, like most other members I grew up with Scalextric and we've been together for a hell of a long time. But even in this dog eat dog world, I believe that loyalty works both ways, and the sad fact is that I only buy Scalextric rally cars if they're not available from SCX or Ninco. Please Hornby prove me wrong and bring out a range of proper 4wd World Rally Cars that don't handle like a block of flats if I choose to remove the magnets. Let's not go through a messy divorce.

I am, yours etc,
Mel Turbutt

Sir,

It seems that the hobby of slot-cars, and Scalextric in particular, is never too far away. Let me explain.

I've just finished reading the excellent new book "Steve Marriott - All too beautiful" by Paolo Hewitt and John Hellier on the life and times of that late, great Small Faces and Humble Pie singer/guitarist.

The book unexpectedly recounts their interest in Scalextric and it was heartening to note that Steve had things in perspective! Let me quote you the relevant passage from the book as narrated by one of Steve's friends, Hugh Janes. I've included my additions in brackets:

"By 1966 they (The Small Faces) had the whole world at their feet and Westmoreland Terrace (their London residence at that time) was one non-stop party. One room was set aside for a giant four (lane) Scaletrix(sic) set. No chairs in there, just cushions and in the middle of the track was all the drugs, food and drink. They took their racing very seriously and during pit stops they'd take the opportunity to roll a joint.

Steve (Marriott - lead singer/guitarist) and Kenny (Jones - drummer) in particular would spend hours on end racing Scaletrix(sic) and eating baked beans. There would be dozens of girls outside and, of course, certain hand-picked ones were invited in. But to be honest, Steve was much more interested in Scaletrix(sic) and music." Ronnie Lane's brother made the toy cars that were used as the original cars were deemed to be too slow. How times change!

I am, yours etc,
Peter Novani

Goodwood Festival of Speed 2004

Event report by Gareth Jex

As I'm sure most of you know, each year Lord March opens his gardens to petrol heads like you and me to run the annual Goodwood Festival of Speed. For those of you who haven't heard, this is basically a hill climb event with timed and demo runs of some of the most fantastic cars, bikes and go-karts from the 1900s right up to modern day. The hill is actually Lord March's front drive. Toy retailers, manufacturers, accessories dealers, and many others take stands or displays in the grounds to complement the event.

During the last couple of years Hornby/Scalextric have been a major sponsor of the event and you can see their logos on trackside, pre show publicity material etc, etc. Previously they have reproduced a 1/32 scale layout of the hill climb complete with scenery and GT40s. They are also a sponsor of the Goodwood Revival race in September held at the famous race circuit, just down the road.

This year they had some competition!

Scalextric took along their Roadshow trailer complete with four lane circuit and showcases of

their latest products and an awning to keep off the sun (or on Saturday the rain!).

Carrera made a big splash this year and, in conjunction with their UK distributor Nikko, brought over their German 'Tour Truck'. Inside was a four lane, 30 metre long Carrera track on which visitors could compete for free and win prizes for the fastest time of the day. Cars used were in the spirit of the event and included the Aston Martin, Ferrari 166 and the Jaguar D-Type. Outside, under red pods, were a Carrera Pro-X Digital Race system and, for younger racers(?), Carrera Go tracks. Prizes included some of the big Carrera sets and Go sets for the under 12s.

Both companies seemed to be very busy on all days; you have to feel for the guys manning the displays, all those kids!!! However, I hope I'm not alone in saying that the Carrera Red Dolly Girls in the leather outfits are a little bit more pleasing on the eye! If you think that was interesting you need to get your hands on the Carrera 2004 Poster, lets just say it's adult orientated!



Scalextric roadshow



Carrera roadshow - exterior

Mark Scale (Scale Models) was on hand to relieve you of your slot cash at his stand which had a great selection of all the major brands and a good collectors' section of mainly period cars (in keeping with the event). Modelzone were also on site selling their wares.

Whilst the slot-cars were good fun, I go for the main event and the chance to see the full scale versions of your Scalextric collection racing up the hill less than 10 metres away from you or the chance to touch, photograph the cars

in the paddock and talk to the drivers! This year my involvement was a little more than normal as one of my clients had entered a soapbox in the Dunhill Gravity race. We didn't do too badly, 3rd in class 7th overall. Gravity slot racing anyone?

If you get the chance to go along, do, it's one of the best Motorsport events in the UK. Let's see who turns up at the Revival meeting in September! ■



And inside

Track signs

By Tim Ainslie

Part of the allure of collecting Scalextric is that there has always been a variation between what is advertised in the catalogues and what reaches the shelves of the toyshops each year.

These variations appear throughout the range of Scalextric products and this article highlights some of the differences in the sixties' track signs that I have come across as my Scalextric collection has expanded over the years.

Track signs appeared in catalogue number 1 (1960) as a set of five; they were attached to the track with metal clips. The signs were continued in this format until catalogue 6 (1965) when plastic clips were incorporated as part of the moulding.

The earlier mouldings appear to show the same signs apart from the hairpin bend that show a bend to the left in the earlier set and a bend to the right in the later set.

The early set demonstrates consistency of the signs in catalogue 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

The later set also shows a consistent set of signs in catalogues 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, (the signs are discontinued by catalogue 13).

There are several variations that I am aware of:



Early type with metal track clips



A) Early type showing track deviation to right and left



B) Later type with hairpin to right and left



Later version with moulded clips



C) Later type, humpback bridge showing difference in the positioning of the bridge on the sign

⇒

I have also seen a later type right angled bend to the left with the bend being a pronounced 90 degree angle rather than the more gentle curve illustrated above.

The signs were sold as sets of 5, however there would appear to be some variation in what signs were likely to be included in a set.

It seems odd that the moulds for items such as the spectators have been used so often that the recent products resemble burns victims, yet there is variation in the track sign design and images displayed when these were discontinued in the early 1970s.

These signs provide a nice finishing touch for a more traditional layout, they are still available at swapmeets or on eBay and a set can be picked up somewhere between five and ten pounds relatively easily.

Now if you thought that this article was interesting have you ever looked closely at the differences between those half tyres that plug into the Goodwood chicane track.....!!!■



Norman's conquest – revisited

Norman Griffiths – who oversaw production at Havant from 1964-1971 – recalls the development of possibly Scalextric's finest range.

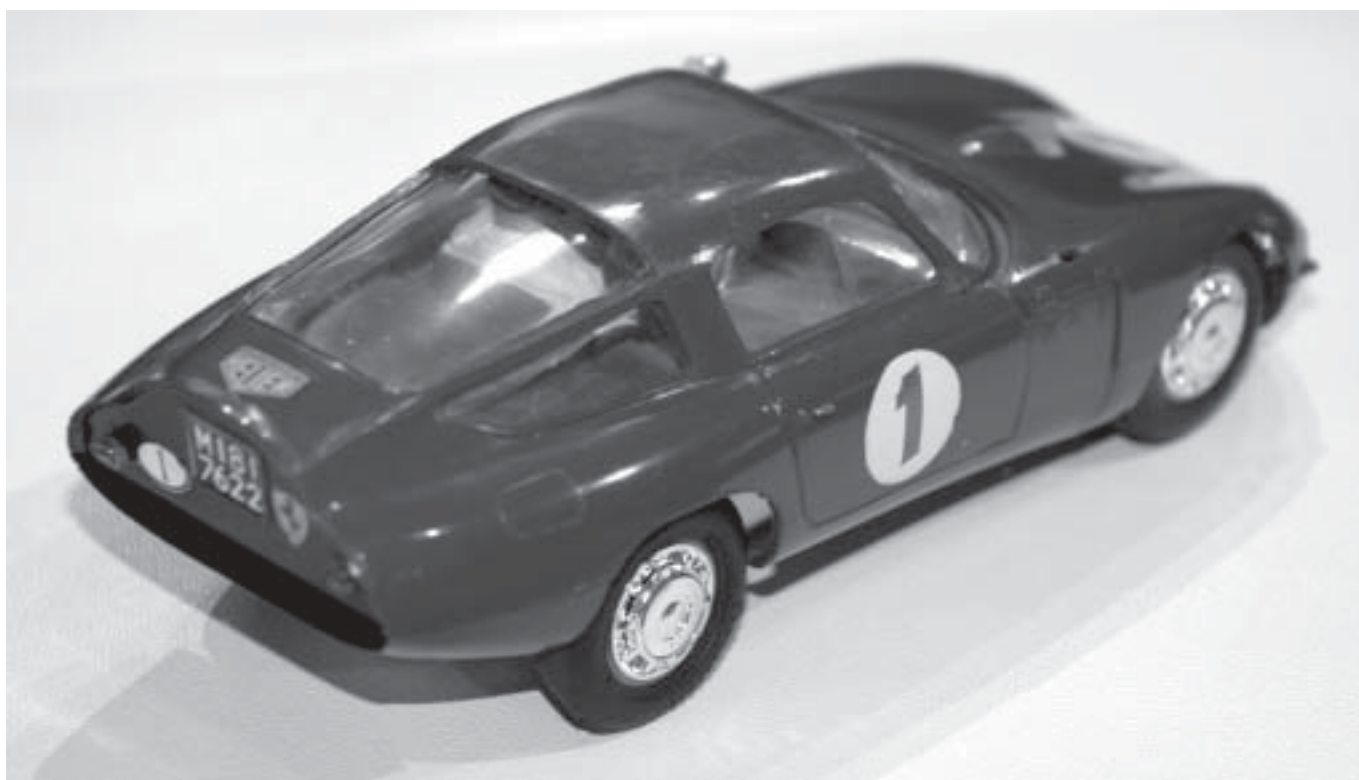
Paul Strange reports

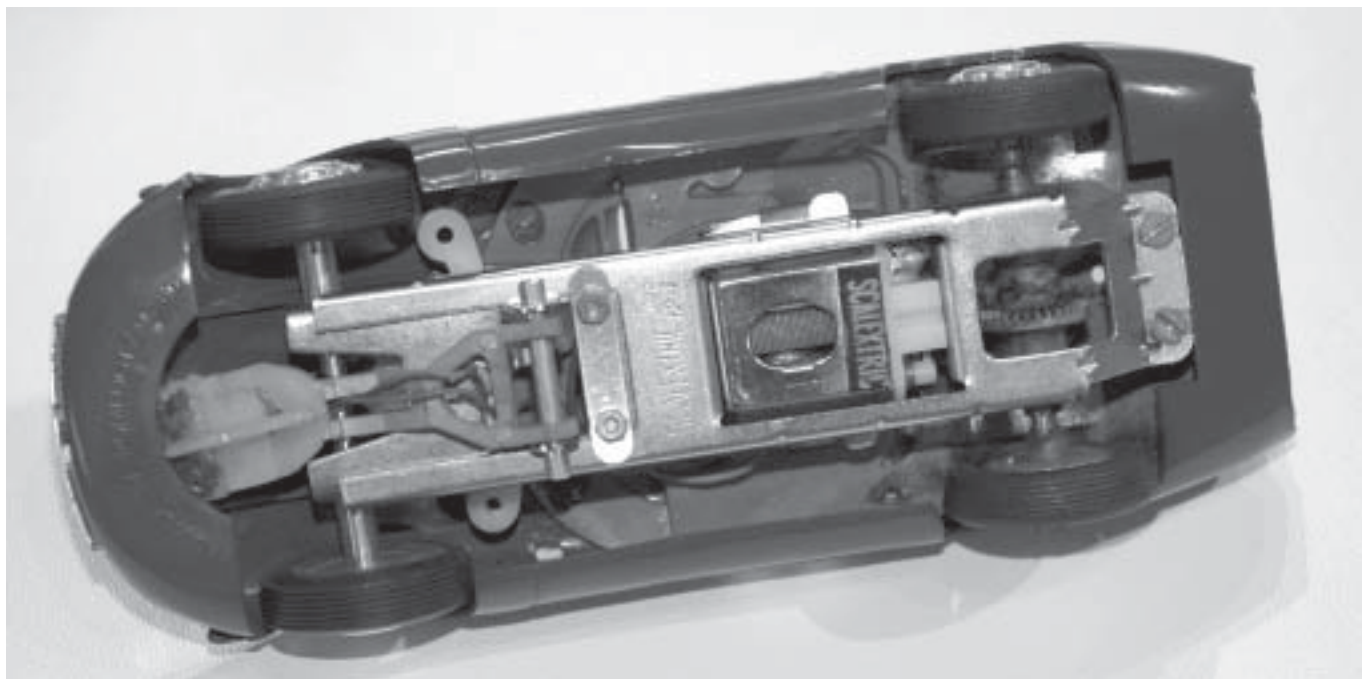
Part 8: the 1/24th Super series

By 1966, Scalextric's development team, led by Bill Langley, were on top-notch form. They'd brought in the race-tuned series of cars with the powerful Johnson blue can motor and advanced A/262 race-tuned hand controller, and the innovative if somewhat sluggish Power Sledge cars were in the pipeline, but they weren't allowed to rest on their laurels. The Lines Brothers directors – particularly Graham Lines – wanted further innovation and were thinking bigger. Much bigger – 1/24th scale, in fact.

Norman Griffiths, Minimodels' general manager between 1964 and 1971, picks up the 1968 ninth catalogue, turns to the final pages and his eyes light up as he sees what was to become one of Scalextric's finest and rarest products. "The 1/24th series was fantastic stuff," he says, as we continue our chat at his home in Broadstairs, Kent. "It never did really take off, though."

Breaking new ground and with a build quality far exceeding the 1/32nd series, the 1/24th system was principally designed for clubs, slot shops and outdoor use. With its rigid three-lane track, highly detailed cars and innovative mechanical construction (including a metal chassis with drop arms and dynamic braking for the cars), it deserved to be an outright winner. Unfortunately – due to its high price and the fact that the 60s' Scalextric boom was beginning to falter – the 1/24th system fell on stony ground and failed to sell. Not surprisingly, today the track and particularly the cars are extremely collectable. ⇨





“The 1/24th system was the dream of one of the directors, Graham Lines. He envisaged people having it out in their garden, permanently laid down. Graham was very big on the American stuff. He used to go over there at least once a month and get his ideas from the States. In fact, at one particular point we were borrowing American tools to make certain items for the 1/24th stuff.”

“I’ll never forget that to prove the durability of it, Bill Langley and I got permission from the RAF on Thorney Island near Chichester, and went and nailed a piece of 1/24th track on to a breakwater at low water and left it there for six months to see what would happen. This was really scientific stuff! And surprisingly, not a great deal did happen to it!”

There were problems in producing the track though. “It was a cow to mould! For a start the track was rigid and whereas with the normal Scalextric track it would bend to a degree if you wanted banking and so on, with the 1/24th if you wanted banking, you had to mould the banking into the track and you’re into a different ball game all together, with shrinkage and

everything. But I thought the 1/24th series was great fun. I don’t remember a great deal about the cars other than they were much easier to make because they were larger and that they went like a bat out of hell!”

With few sales, it wasn’t long before the plugs were pulled though.

“Unfortunately the 1/24th hadn’t got the sales potential. You see, the Formula Junior really made Scalextric. It sold a huge amount, particularly mail order. It costs a lot of money to develop and to tool any car. Today I doubt that you’d get much change out of £20,000 on a mould for just a body. By the time you’ve done that, all the tools for all the bits and pieces, you’re looking at a lot of money and you’ve got to recover that money in sales. The 1/24th system had a lot of interest and the enthusiasm, but never the sales. You’ve got to recover the initial outlay and keep getting the sales. Scalextric had to stop the 1/24th series pretty quickly, and in fact it didn’t go on for too long prior to them going into liquidation.” ■

Next month: the Cougar, the Dart and missing stock

BITS & PIECES

Carrera liaison person wanted

Due to lack of time available Steve Baker has relinquished the above post. If you have an interest in Carrera products and would like to take on the job please get in touch with Gareth Jex (address on back page) for more details.

Reviewers wanted

It has always been my policy to send most review cars out to members as I feel that an endless diet of the editor's own prejudices would soon become boring. Just to remind you, therefore, that more volunteers for the 'Review Focus Group' are always welcome.

If you would like to become involved, the qualifications needed are:

- A decent track to test them on - doesn't have to be a club track but a figure of eight set on your living room floor is unlikely to be sufficient!
- Basic timing facilities preferred.
- Photographic facilities also preferred.
- An ability to write an **honest** review - I am not interested in mindless praise just because the car is free. Yes, you do get to keep the car! Your annual subscription recouped in one go.
- **Most importantly** - you must be able to produce copy on time and at short notice.

If you are interested then please get in touch.

Brian

Slot.It bargain?

In the September 2004 issue of 'Top Gear' there are a couple of adverts for slot-cars and accessories, one being that the 'Slot.It Pit Babes' retail for the princely sum of £4.99 at www.slot-it. After a good look around the net, such price was sadly unavailable.

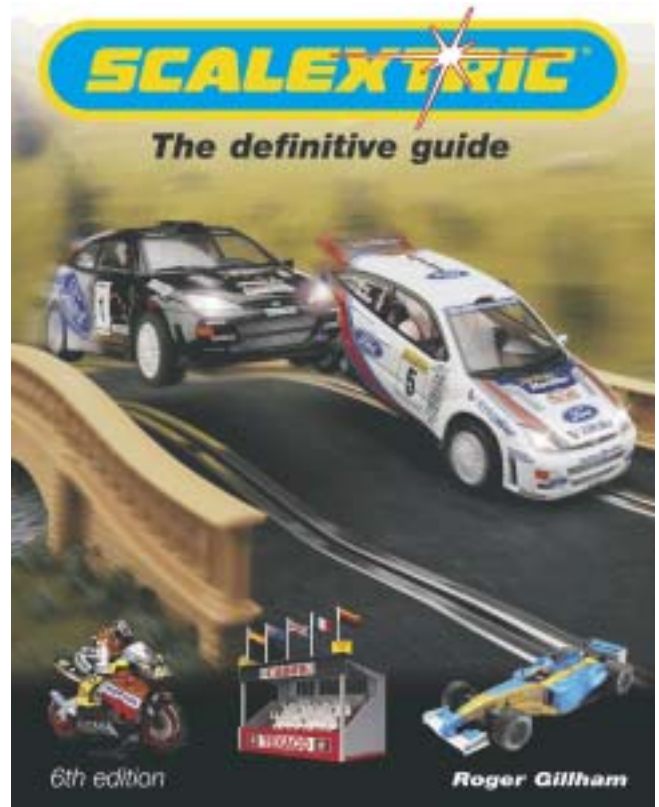
Rob Chambers

Roger's 6th edition

The new book is in production and scheduled for launch at the Goodwood Revival meeting on the 4th September.

Roger will be doing a book signing between 1300 and 1400 at Scale Models stand.

It should contain 256 pages (176 in the 5th edition) and 350+ extra images so it is more comprehensive.



Educational aid

"Scalextric is a slightly elaborate way of connecting the 12-volt DC supply from the terminals of a transformer to the carbon brushes of a small electric motor. How much more engaging O-level physics might have been if Sir had demonstrated the relationship between this simple phenomenon and domestic motor racing. Scalextric is simply brilliant."

James May

Daily Telegraph July 31st

Lancia Fulvia F&M Special by World Classics

A review by Phil Insull

Having produced two of the classic mid to late seventies rally icons in the last two releases, World Classics turned to a very unusual car for their next offering to the world of 1/32 slot - the Lancia Fulvia F&M Special.

In World Championship terms this car only ran once to my knowledge - this being a two car entry for Sandro Munari and Timo Makinen in the 1969 Tour de Corse. Lancia's little Fulvia was a competitive car, but team manager Cesare Fiorio and senior engineer Claudio Maglioli (The F&M come from their two surnames) wondered if the car could be made even better by reducing the weight and lowering the centre of gravity. What better way they reasoned than to simply slice off the roof and create a "Fulvia Spyder". The car they created had the roof removed and just the front screen and "A" frame retained along with an oversized roll bar behind the cockpit. The cars length was also shortened and in all a weight saving of around 45 kg was achieved bring the car down from 825kg to 780kg, not bad at all and with the little V4, 1600cc engine pushing out 165bhp to the front wheels via a 5 speed transmission the team thought they were on to a winner. Alas what is great in theory is often complete pants in reality, and so the F&M Specials performance proved.

At Corsica in 1969 the team felt rain was likely so the crews had to wear waterproof suits not dissimilar to a frogman's wet suit, not exactly ideal for rallying in. However the event stayed dry and to add to the crews discomfort the open top Fulvia sucked in lots of dust and exhaust fumes. This had not been noticed during a high-speed test track session but was a problem on the slower sections of Corsican road being used in the rally. The real problem was, however, that the majority of the weight loss had come from the rear of the car disrupting both handling and brake balance and causing massive oversteer.

The cars were a flop, trailing in 11th and 13th behind team mates Kallstrom and Ballestreire who were driving the conventional Fulvia Coupes. Following this poor debut the F&M specials were switched away from rallying to road racing events, the highlight of which was a class win in the Mugello road race.

Building it

The kit comprises resin body shell, interior, drivers' heads, front grille, a white metal roll bar, lexan front screen, clear headlight lenses, and a very good transfer set for the Sandro Munari/John Davenport entry for the aforementioned '69 Tour de Corse. The kits are also available with a complete set of running gear from Pendle Slot Racing; this comprises a modified Team Slot Fulvia Chassis, engine mount, Mabuchi motor, screws, guide, braids, and SCX axles, wheels and tyres.

So, equipped with all the gear, off we go. First we line up the chassis; the small front end modification has already been done by Pendle-Slot and requires no extra work. Ensure it's straight and drill the two front postholes and two holes in the chassis sides. Next fit the running gear, again no modification is required - the wheels fit properly under the lovely flared wheel arches. Trim the lexan glass and cement the drivers' heads in place, then do a full dry fit to make sure everything runs o.k. It's much easier to correct something at this stage before you paint the car up. This is possibly the easiest kit to build I have ever come across and everything should fit together with no problems. Now disassemble the car for painting; the shell moulding is good quality and requires just a light rub down with wet 'n' dry and a tiny amount of flashing removed. Wash the shell in slightly soapy water to remove any grease before spraying and then spray two light undercoats. I used Plastikote grey primer. ⇒

Next spray several light coats of red (I used Plastikote Insignia red) and allow to dry in a dust free environment. A tip here is to get a crystal case from another car such as Ninco or Carrera as they are a bit larger than the rest, and place it over the painted shell while it dries, thus keeping the dust off the car. Paint and detail the cockpit, drivers, and grille, before resin bonding them into place and refit the completed chassis. You can now hold the car by the wheels when you do the rest of the detail painting. The rear panel and front panel around the grille/headlights needs painting in white, then the rear light clusters can be detail painted.

The roll cage needs fitting next - fit the main roll hoop section and bond it in position. When dry, fit the two bracing pieces (the curved ends fit into the holes in the body shell) and then the other end needs cutting to size so that they rest against the top of the main hoop. Use a pair of side cutters for this. Once you are happy with the bracing pieces bond them into the hole and to the top of the main hoop. Allow the resin time to dry then paint the whole assembly in matt black. Glue the headlight lenses and windscreen into place and the assembly work is complete. Finally fit the transfers. These are excellent quality and fit exactly without trimming. However, one thing to note is that the instruction leaflet shows a couple of transfers in the wrong place. First the yellow spots on the doors should go behind the numbers not in front of them, and secondly the little Tour de Corse number plate should go right in front of the bonnet in the centre, rather than angled on the side of the bonnet as shown in the instructions. If you don't believe me look at Reinhard Klein's Rally Cars book page 178 for a picture of the car in action on the '69 Tour de Corse.

On Track

To the track for a run then and how does it perform? Both on my small Ninco home track, and the somewhat larger Wolverhampton club track the little coupé handles beautifully - drifting through the corners in a predictable tail out slide; wonderful stuff, particularly if you dislike the false handling and speeds from mass

produced magnet cars. Lap times are good for a car of this type and show an improvement on the non-magnetised Team Slot Fulvia Coupé of around 0.6 seconds per lap with very similar running gear. Visually there are a couple of minor niggles for the absolute perfectionist, firstly the Munari car at Corsica ran with a pair of additional low level front spotlights, and secondly the car had a full front windscreen with "A" pillars rather than the aero version provided in the kit. (I believe the Mugello car ran with an aero screen) and finally the car is slightly too long (if you recall the real car had been shortened).

All in all though World Classics have brought us another unique piece of auto engineering in 1/32 form and the finished article looks delightful, handles beautifully and surely this is another must have for the rally slot enthusiast. Again I cannot stress how easy this kit is to construct and credit should go to World Classics for using the keep it simple approach. Not everybody is an expert modeller, but they have done such a good job on this kit that any one with a modicum of ability should get great finished results from it.

Other kits available in the series are:

BMW 2002 Turbo

Jaguar E Type Fastback LM 1964 Lindner

Talbot Sunbeam RAC 1980 Russell Brookes.

Andrews Heat for Hire

Ford Escort MK11 RS1800 RAC Winner 1976

Roger Clark Cossack

Ford Escort MK11 RS1800 RAC Winner 1977

Waldegaard British Airways

Ford Escort MK11 RS1800 Monte Carlo 1979

Hannu Mikkola Castrol

Lancia Fulvia Barchetta Tour de Corse 1969

F&M

Planned future releases:

Ford Capri MK1 Road Car

Ford Capri Mk1 3.0GT W. Rohl

Ford Zodiac MK111 Monte Carlo 1963

Ford Zodiac MK111 1962 Safari Rally Anne Hall

Sunbeam Tiger Monte Carlo 1965

Can-Am's continental challenge

By Tony Secchi

The phone rang one evening a few weeks ago - it was master model builder David Yerbury. "What info, have you got on the Ferrari 612?" he asked, "I'm thinking of making one but I'm a bit short on photographs and dimensions so anything you have will be useful".

David was, of course, referring to the first prototype Ferrari that was specifically built for the North American Can-Am series; promised much, but in the end devoid of works backing failed in its quest to dethrone the mighty McLaren juggernaut that was dominant from 1967 until 1972 when the Porsche 917/10 eclipsed the English based team.

Ferrari's U.S. agent was Luigi Chinetti, whose North American Racing Team had entered cars in many races including Le Mans. In 1967 he prepared a re-bodied 4 litre 330 P3/4 and with Ludovico Scarfiotti driving, he entered the Can-Am championship at Bridgehampton where the car finished eleventh and at Mosport where it retired.

With Chris Amon's arrival from McLaren to Maranello that year, Ferrari's challenge was given a bit of a lift and the factory, independent of N.A.R.T., had produced a pair of lightened and re-bodied 330 P4s with special 4 litre V12 engines giving 480 bhp. However, they did not make much of an impression when they first appeared at Laguna Seca; Amon was fifth and team-mate Jonathan Williams was eighth. Amon went on to finish eighth at Riverside with Williams retiring.

Clearly something better than this was needed. Back in Italy, the factory came up with a brand new car. Designed from scratch, with a tubular space frame, the 1968 model was powered by a specially built 6.2 litre V12 engine with 4 valve cylinder heads, fuel injection and

100 bhp per litre (apparently). The aluminium body had a big rear wing mounted just behind the driver's seat (more mid than rear mounted).

As was the norm with Ferrari at that time, the car's debut in the 1968 series was late but finally, keeping faith with thousands of fans who had expected it at every race since the opening round at Edmonton, the 612 reached Las Vegas on November 8. At the eleventh hour the Scuderia fielded the largest, most powerful and fastest racing car it had ever built. Team Manager Franco Gozzi, racing engineer Mario Forghieri (now in charge at F1) and chief mechanic Giulio Bosari had just two days of practice to make a dent in the (then) world's most lucrative road racing series.

During practice the 612 showed excellent acceleration, a top speed of 185 mph but rather unstable handling. Forghieri only had time for minor suspension adjustments and the addition of a few spoiler tabs.

After coming 8000 miles and qualifying ninth, the Ferrari, through no fault of its own, covered less than a lap. The tangling of Bruce McLaren and Mario Andretti at the first corner sent most of the pack off into the desert. Amon very skilfully avoided the shunt, but the 612, with its throttle slides clogged with dust was one of two cars which would not re-start.

Ferrari was eminently capable of building a winning Can-Am car but in 1968/9 the Can-Am was one of six (yes, six) different types of racing that they engaged in. Just to recap, apart from Can-Am, there was F1, F2, the Tasman series, World Sports Cars and the mountain championship. The Can-Am programme was the last to start and consequently testing and development generally carried out during races but the biggest problem was that the engine was plagued with an oil cooling/scavenging =>

problem throughout its life. Additionally, the car was about 200 lbs (90 kg) overweight and although as fast as the McLarens in a straight line did not have the handling/braking balance that a proper development programme would have provided.

The following year (1969) the car was rebuilt with much lighter revised bodywork and suspension. The big wing was also omitted and power was reputedly up to 650 bhp. It was mainly funded by Chris Amon himself who received little in the way of factory help in its development.

Generally the 612 (except for the two McLarens) was the fastest car in the series. Its handling improved when the wing was put back, albeit this time hub mounted. Unfortunately, its unreliability was a liability and its sixth place in the series championship was not much of a reward for the car's potential.

The new 612 made its debut at Watkins Glen in the third round of the series, Amon qualifying and finishing in third place. In the following race at Edmonton Amon had his and the 612's best ever finish, qualifying third and finishing second only five seconds behind Denny Hulme's McLaren after swapping the lead throughout the race. The car actually ran without the new Lamar rear wing. Having been sent out from Italy it managed to end up in London instead of Western Canada - typical of Ferrari's organisational priorities at that time.

At the Mid-Ohio race Amon had a troubled qualifying session finishing thirteenth on the grid but after nine laps he was up to third where he stayed till the finish.

Amon retired at Elkhart Lake after the 612 ate its fuel pump, but was back on the grid at Bridgehampton in fourth place before the Ferrari's appetite for fuel pumps manifested itself on lap three of the race.

Back on the track at Michigan, it was clear that Amon loved the circuit from the start. Quickest in practice on both days and having set the fastest pre-race lap, disaster struck - another oil pump failed and the V12 melted its bearings.

With no back up engine the 612 was out of the race. At Laguna Seca Amon did not even get a run - the re-ground crank on the engine gave out - the pump once again. However, Chris managed to jump his contract for one race and drove a McLaren M8B, having no better luck for the change, he retired nine laps from the finish.

At Riverside Amon had the new 6.9 litre engine installed (officially making this version of the car a 712). After another oil pump failure Chris was third on the grid, but it did not matter because come the race the Ferrari refused to do what it should do on the starting grid - start up! Amon tried in vain to re-start the new engine. The organisers allowed a push start and then changed their minds and disqualified the car just when Amon was really pressing the McLarens, confident that he could nail them at any time.

The last race of the series was in Texas and Chris was raring to go after his all too short Riverside debacle. He qualified third but had the engine blow up on lap ten.

So ended a promising but unfulfilled series for the 612 and, as I stated previously, sixth place in the championship was a scant reward for the one car in series that gave the McLarens something to think about

Back to David's model - of course I had some info on the 612. Am I not Italian? Am I not a Can-Am nut? Am I not a bookworm?

Yes I am all of those things so I forwarded poste haste several Xerox copies of the car taken from my books on Can-Am racing containing debut photos and full body/chassis dimensions. I also sent him an excellent Osprey publication on the same subject which features a whole chapter on the 'Continental Challenge' of Ferrari and Porsche (from which I pinched the title of this article). David also sourced some technical drawings of the car and in due time returned my book and (generously) the first cast from his mould.

The car is made of fibreglass resin and has to have the 'flashing' cut off, the wheel arches filed out and profiled and any ducts, vents etc. opened up to suit - a pleasure for an old long time model maker like me.

David had chosen the 1968/ early 1969 version of the 612 because of its clean, classic lines. During the lifetime of the car it had loads of fins, vents, wings, tabs, openings etc. added almost race by race to try and improve the handling. In his opinion all these 'improvements' spoil the pristine proportions and grace of the original, so no big rear wing but uncluttered clean lines and a beautiful shape were David's parameters and he certainly has succeeded in that aim.

Building

As I said, the car is moulded in fibreglass except for the cockpit area which on the real car was very confined and must have caused driver discomfort from high temperatures. For this David had vacuum formed a separate unit in clear acetate and is so narrow in its true scale that I had to use the head of one model driver and the arms of another (with very narrow shoulders) to get a fit. However, I was able to successfully replicate Chris Amon's open-faced peaked helmet with its simple red and blue lines. I fitted a new stalk-type rear view mirror and anti-roll bar from stock. For the engine inlet trumpets I used the same trick as I did on David's "Testa Rossa" built earlier. I used twelve Scalextric pick up lead 'eyelets' glued into the pre-drilled engine block incorporated in David's model.

For the running gear I used a complete unit (chassis, axles, wheels/tyres, engine and drive) from a 'Fly' Ferrari 512/512S. This gave me the correct gold Ferrari wheels and front tyres. I had to adjust the underpan slightly to suit the 612's wheelbase and use wider tyres on the rear wheels to get them to scale and look right. In real life the 612 was seven feet (2100 mm) wide at the rear, so the tyres had to match the then current width used in the Can-Am series. Fortunately, I was able to keep the tyres within the body so everything looked authentic. The huge width gave a boost to the roadholding and the 'Fly' Mabuchi engine with its final drive gearing means that it is competitive with other cars in our series. Excluding the 612 we now have twelve cars racing in two classes of six each.

The whole chassis/underpan unit was fitted into the underside of the body by the usual 'mounting post' system described in the Journal previously by others and myself.

Testing

The Can-Am series that we run on my home track has some seriously fast, regulation free cars (just like the real thing was) so the 612 would have to be quick and stable to compete on even terms. Anything under 40 secs. is a quick ten-lap stint on our circuit and of the twelve cars we race only one has not broken that barrier on both lanes. The fastest of the cars is the Chaparral 2G on lane 1 with 36.74 and the Porsche 917/10 with 37.52 on lap 2 (the longer lap). ⇒



As we have no roadholding limitations on these cars we all use Magnatraction. The 'Fly' chassis carries the standard powerful circular magnet just in front of the sidewinder engine. This was retained, a circular hole drilled beneath it and the magnet lowered to the underside of the chassis pan. A small piece of lead sheet was added just behind the pick up for balance and after a few laps of testing a small half piece of an old Scalextric bar magnet was added to the rear. This gave the car good stability, late braking and allowed the back to step out in fast and graceful power slides without spinning.

First runs gave fastest times for ten laps on lane 1 of 39.86 and for lane 2 39.71. Adding the rear magnet brought the times down marginally to 39.51 and 39.63 respectively with, I think, more to come. These times gave the car a provisional 6th fastest on lanes 1 and 2 - so about half way up the list. This is very promising for a reasonably heavy car and compares very well with a 'Topslot' resin Ferrari 712 powered by the same running gear which is only a quarter of a second faster. So things bode well for the future when our Can-Am series begins at the end of the year. The car looks great, goes well and, when fully run in, should be a good competitor in the top half of the championship.

As ever, my heartfelt thanks go to my friend David Yerbury, who invariably seems to hit the spot with his hand built cars. His standards get higher all the time and this is the best yet, on a par with any professional product bodywise. It makes a refreshing change to build a car yourself and race it against proprietary makes which run straight out of the box.

Postscript

I live in Islington and last Saturday I was passing through Camden Passage when I saw that my local toy shop - Becks - was having a closing down sale after over 100 years of traditional service. I am 71 years old and I can remember Becks for most of my life (even before Scalextric) I was sorry to see it go. However they had a sale on and I was able to purchase a few of the latest Scalextric 'Sport' cars including a very nice 'Dyson' racing MG Lola. It was very light, fast and well balanced, right out of the box and ready to race. With a modicum of 'tinkering' I got its times down for ten laps to 40.84 on lap 1 and 40.93 on lap 2. As our good readers will note these times are not quite as fast as the Ferrari and I know which one gives me the greatest pleasure and reward to race. With a suitable amount of smugness, I rest my case. ■