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## A legend in his own lap time

Michael Schumacher's tally of victories in F1 is pretty impressive - 83 and still counting. What then to make of a driver who notched up 623 career wins driving mostly powerful saloon cars?

Consider also that this man weighed over 20 stone, had a liking for strong ale, an eye for the ladies and didn't know the meaning of political correctness. In later life he battled cancer of the spine and underwent knee and hip replacements - not to mention a quadruple heart bypass operation. Best of all he drove in true crowd pleasing style - tail out on every bend and sideways down half the following straight. Who said, "You have to be smooth to be fast"?

I am, of course, referring to Gerry Marshall who died last month; fittingly he passed away at the wheel of a Camaro while testing at Silverstone - the car drifting to a halt at Luffield corner in front of the BRDC suite. He wouldn't have wanted to go any other way although I suspect that a final pint in the bar would probably have figured in his plans!

Gerry's exploits in the Vauxhall Firenza based cars - Big Bertha and Baby Bertha - were the stuff of legends during the mid-seventies and he was still winning historic races last year. It will be a long time before I forget the sight of him cornering an Alvis on its door handles at Goodwood last September. Such a shame that none of his famous cars have ever made it into the slot-car manufacturers' catalogues.

A few years ago my good lady was standing at Russell Bend, Snetterton when he wandered past; it was shortly after his heart operation and he was supposedly off the booze. He walked straight past the mobile bar, paused, turned round and ordered a pint which he downed in one. He then zipped up his overalls, climbed into the car and won the next race in his usual inimitable style! When he won his 600th race, also at Snetterton, there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

Goodwood just won't be the same without him this year. So long Gerry and thanks for the memories.

*Till next month*

*Brian*



# The Big One!

**NSCC 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND UPDATES**  
**21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2005 – Toyota GB Headquarters, Epsom, Surrey**

Following a committee meeting please be advised that the cost of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party on Saturday evening has been reduced from £30 to £15 per head. This revised cost also includes a free Scalextric car. An application form is available on the web site, alternatively contact Gareth for details. The list of prizes for the quiz is pretty impressive so bring your thinking heads! The quiz is not just about Scalextric but includes sections on all the sponsors' products as well as general slot knowledge.

## Exhibits

The list of exhibits on display at the weekend is being updated all the time and we have now had confirmation that the Toyota Corolla WRC from 1999 driven by Carlos Sainz and Didier Auriol, Toyota GT-One from 1999 Le Mans driven by Martin Brundle and the new Toyota TF104 F1 race simulator will all be at the event as well as the range of Toyota road cars. H:O enthusiasts will also be pleased to hear that we will have a 90ft lane length four lane H:O track for you to use. Thanks to Deane and John for this. All the manufacturers have confirmed that they will be bringing their full range for display. Monarch Lines will be presenting a number of new products.

At the time of writing there are just six trade tables left for the swapmeet so if you want to book one please get in touch with Gareth ASAP.

Doors open at 10.00 on Saturday and Sunday and to receive the NSCC discount at the door you MUST have your membership card with you!

Car parking is free at the venue, please follow the instructions given by security staff when you arrive. Directional signage will be very

limited, due to local council restrictions, so bring your maps along (downloadable from the web or on the back of the flyer you got in the journal).

Championship drivers should have received their final instructions for the weekend, so if you have not please contact Gareth ASAP. We are looking for helpers on the day to score the racing, so if you can spare some time please let us know.

## All aboard

Following lengthy negotiations (two beers and a cake!) we have confirmed the services of a preserved double decker bus on the Saturday of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend.

The bus, RT604, Regent 3 AEC, Ex London Country, will arrive at Toyota at around 2.00pm on Saturday and take people for sight seeing tours around Epsom Downs and surrounding area. At 4.30pm it will return to Toyota to begin a round robin trip to the local hotels dropping people off as it goes. At 6.30pm it will return to the hotels to pick people up and bring them back to Toyota for the 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party. The bus will also be on hand from 9.30pm to take you back to the hotels.

It is privately owned and run by enthusiasts; Maximum capacity is 56 so a couple of trips may be required. We are suggesting a minimum donation of £1 per trip per person; this goes towards the running and preservation costs of the bus.

Hopefully this will enable you all to enjoy the wine and beer with your evening meal without having to drive.

You might have seen a number of articles in the local, national, trade and hobby press for the event, it's never too late to let people know about the event so if you need any more information please check on the web site for updates or contact Gareth Jex. Hope to see you there! ■

by  
**Rob Smith**



## **MESSAGES FROM MARGATE**

**I**n direct contrast to last month there have been absolutely no new releases since the last Messages From Margate. That is not strictly true because the standard Viper releases C2504 and C2505 have reached the shops but that is all. I predict a bumper month next time though.

However all is not quiet at Margate and there is a veritable raft of new product under development.

### **Retailer Specials**

Despite the demise of the Index catalogue chain reported recently Hornby's relationship with Argos and Toys-R-Us continues. First to arrive is a special set for Toys-R-Us containing two Maserati Coupés. The set is C1166L and contains C2688 red/silver #25 and C2689 silver/red #24. These are simple but effective liveries in the "Racer" style with prominent trident badges. They are due in the shops imminently. Look out for other unique products in the next Argos catalogue too.

### **Set Cars**

Catalogue 46 shows two sets containing unique cars this year. The first is C1155 John Cooper Challenge. This contains two new Mini Cooper S completely different to those illustrated in the catalogue. Both are unique to the set and are C2686W in red/white and C2687W in blue/white. The liveries are generic and feature the John Cooper Challenge branding.

The other set with a unique car is C1161 Le Mans. One of the Vipers in this set is C2691W in red/white.

### **Forthcoming New Cars**

The Ferrari F1 2004 is now well into the development cycle with hand decorated versions being exchanged with Ferrari in Italy on a regular basis. Ferrari are very particular about models of their cars and insist on the decoration being more or less perfect. The cars to be released first by Hornby are those raced with such success in the first few races of 2004.

The Ferrari 156 is beautiful. It has reached the first test shot stage and the prototype I saw was sprayed silver. The suspension detail is superb but the Chinese think it is too delicate and fiddly to assemble so may yet be altered. The wheels are highly detailed too. Fitting the driver in as well as a motor has proved tricky but he (Phil Hill) neatly hides the end of the motor. The matching Cooper Climax is even smaller than the Ferrari with even less space for a driver. Both of these cars feature slightly wider tyres than the Vanwall and Maserati last year and this seems to give them more grip. Magnet strength is being reduced so that they are not faster than the 2004 Ferrari! Both of these cars should be released at the Goodwood Revival Meeting in September in the Goodwood Sport packaging.

The 2005 version of the Vanwall features disc wheels and a modified exhaust system making it appear quite different from the previous release.

It is difficult to know how to describe the Batmobile. It is finished in matt black with tiny gold details and looks like nothing else on earth. With four huge rear tyres and little weight it is probably awesomely fast so long as you go in a straight line. The Batmobile will be available as

a solo release, in a Sport twin pack with the police car and in the set. The matching Police car will not be available on its own. It features flashing red lights on the roof but is otherwise more like a Micro-Scalextric car.

## Germany Only

C2683A, the German market GT40 mentioned last month should be available shortly. It is a limited edition of just 2000 and is yellow with two black stripes.

The BMW Mini Cooper S models also mentioned last month are available on the Mini international internet shop. To find this go to your local country Mini site (i.e. [www.mini.co.uk](http://www.mini.co.uk)), find the 'merchandise shop' and then the 'international shop'. They take a bit of finding as they are under 'Accessories' then 'Kids'. The web site states that the sets are sold out but the cars can be purchased individually. Apparently just 500 sets were supplied to BMW in Germany last December! The cars are C2620 electric blue and C2621 astro black – these are both genuine

BMW colours. The solo cars come with black Mini sleeves rather than the usual Scalextric ones.

## Paperwork

It has been reported that the 2005 catalogues from a number of slot-car manufactures are to be recalled due to problems with the Ferrari images. This is certainly not true for Hornby! *If* a reprint is done then different pictures of the F1 Ferraris would be used but this is extremely unlikely and with the finished model being nearly complete any future catalogues will picture the model anyway. No 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Catalogue is planned for 2005. Watch out for changes in the Scalextric catalogue in the future as their new marketing director has ambitious plans for it.

A new Sport Digital leaflet has also been available for some weeks now with the reference C8166. It is A4 in size and has 12 pages describing Sport Digital in some detail together with how to convert existing cars. =>



## **Digital Chips**

C6007, the first Sport Digital conversion chip for saloon cars is now available for you to convert existing cars to digital. Hornby would love to receive feedback about the conversion process – especially for cars not designed with the fittings for the chips, such as older models or those from other manufacturers. Let me know your findings and I will pass them on.

## **Production Vagaries**

Not much gets through the QA process these days in China and Margate. However I recently bought an Italian Mini Cooper S with the sunroof printed on a red roof without the normal white paint on it. Has anyone else managed to find similar errors?

## **NSCC Club Minis**

Thanks to the many of you who have expressed your delight in the club BMW Mini Cooper S models. The mountain in our dining room is

now subsiding as all of the cars to be posted have gone and many others were picked up at the Loughborough swapmeet. I assume that if you haven't told me otherwise that the rest of you will collect their cars at Epsom. If this isn't the case please let me know urgently.

It saddened me that some members only bought their Minis to make a quick buck. After being up most of the night trying to get SmartStamp labels printed before the Royal Mail came to collect 200+ parcels I was not amused when someone put theirs on eBay within minutes of receiving them the following day. Heaven help the perpetrator if any of the team who have worked so hard on this project get their hands on them.

At the time of writing there are a very few pairs left which will be for sale at Epsom where they are sure to disappear quickly. At Epsom you will also have the opportunity to buy another Scalextric car not available anywhere else too. See you there! ■



Shipment from

**Spain**

by Gareth Jex

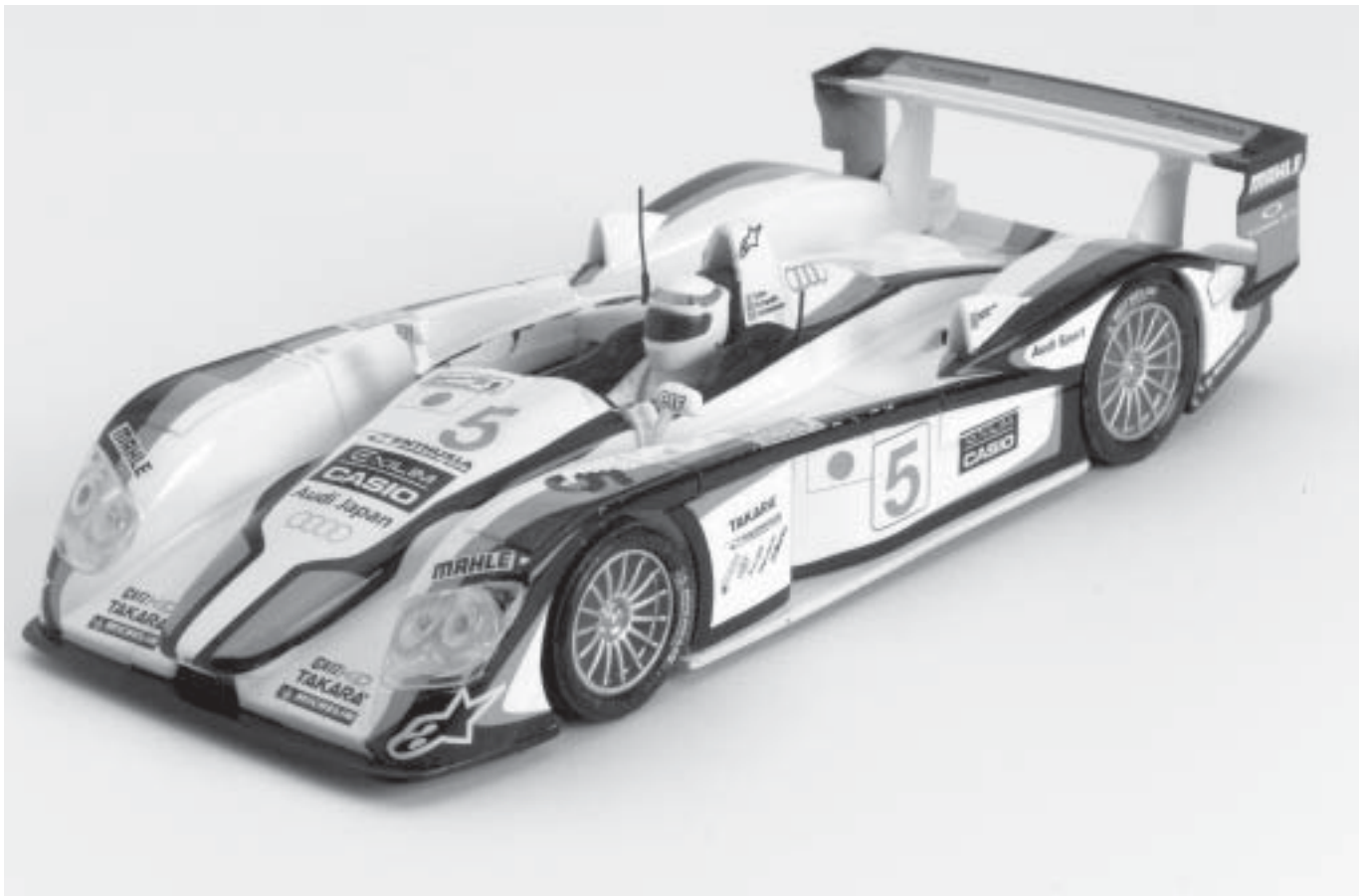
**R**eleases have been a little slow from SCX so here are two months worth: in SCX newly branded packaging is set "C1 Rally" this is a small oval track set with the new Ford Fiesta Rally JWRC and the Citroen C2 JWRC. Set Ref 80710. Both cars are unique to the set with a "Dirt Effect" finish.

### **Audi R8, Ref 61700**

This latest model represents that driven by "Kristensen". The body has been re-moulded but features the same motor and magnet set up as the previously released Audi R8s. The livery is overall white with red and black stripes extending down the body and across the new tail wing.

Just in case you missed it, we have four of the Vintage SCX Minis left from our Tecnitoy's special offer last year. These will be for sale at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event - £15 each, first come first served, no pre-orders, collection only.

Whilst at a recent meeting with Tecnitoy's I met with some of the new team. They were interested to know our thoughts on future developments and cars etc. Feedback is most welcome so if you have any constructive criticism or suggestions please forward them onto me. I was also shown some of the new models for this year, the Vintage looks great as does the new Ferrari F1. All new release models will now come with the re-branded logos and packaging design. →





New for May is the latest SCX F1 car. Ref 61740 Toyota F1 'Interlagos'. Car number 16 represents last years Toyota F1 TF104. It has all the normal SCX features including adjustable magnet, suspension guide and steering. Motor is referenced as F1.

In an unusual stroke of good timing, this car should arrive just in time for our event at the

Toyota Headquarters in May so rather than me arrange for a review, visitors will be able to have a go for themselves!

Last but not least is the very pretty Fiat Abarth 'Texaco' Ref 61770. This a straight re-livery of the existing model. Modelled in red, white and blue this makes a smart addition to the 'Classics' small car line up. ■





**A**t last the new production runs are beginning to be released and are hitting the model shop shelves. You'd think with all the activity planned for this year there would have been something to get our enthusiasm going last month, but there wasn't.

So rather than repeat myself I thought I would hold over until this month. The reason for the delay in new goodies was that Nikko/Carrera were waiting until all had been revealed at Nuremberg.

## DTM Heaven

The gorgeous DTM cars are now available.

- 25745 – Audi A4 “S line” – silver.
- 25746 – Audi A4 “Hasseroder” – yellow.
- 25747 – Mercedes C-Klasse “Vodafone” – silver.
- 25748 – Mercedes C-Klasse “Daimler Chrysler Bank” – silver.
- 25751 – Audi A4 “Red Bull” – blue.
- 25754 – Mercedes C-Klasse “Direkter” – black.
- 25755 – Mercedes C-Klasse “AMG” – chrome.

Visually, I'd recommend any one of these, but the “Red Bull” Audi is a stunner. I'm waiting on samples to arrive from Nikko and we should be able to cover these in more depth next month.

## Pro-X

I've managed to confirm prices for the first two Pro-X sets, due to be released June/July.  
Set 30100 – Formula 1- Ferrari & McLaren

Mercedes – 6.9m track - £150.

Set 30106 – DTM – Audi “Red Bull” and Mercedes “Vodafone” - 8.9m track - £200.

Believe it or not, there is already a major new development concerning Pro-X, something that is also a first in the world of slot-car racing, but I can't tell you until next month! Let's just say we won't all have to stand in a line anymore.

## NSCC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Nikko/Carrera are planning a strong presence at this event, having never been involved with anything like this before. There will of course be the Carrera track that is used for the finals of our ongoing club competition, but there will also be a Pro-X layout for you to try and those of you with smaller aspirations can also try a Go!! Set-up as well.

Also, on display will be all the latest cars from Carrera and possibly some of the future releases, like the Ferrari 512BB Le Mans car, a prototype of which I saw at the London Toy Fair. Oops, was I supposed to mention that?

While we are on the subject of track, my circuit is soon to start construction, having been delayed by various domestic tasks and the clearing of all the boxes from moving house. Yes, Peter Solari, I know that 21 of those boxes you removed from my loft contained slot-cars, but they will now be displayed, raced or swapped. ⇨



Anyway, I digress. If you are looking for any track, accessories or spares for Carrera that you cannot get from your usual supplier then you can contact Nikko's dedicated Service Centre.

Having looked through their list it seems pretty comprehensive and I quote, "Due to the wide range of parts we carry, stocks may be limited – so it may be wise to call our help line on 01707 377767 to confirm availability". There are no minimum quantities, so give them a try.

at clearance prices, suggesting that demand is in fact low, but even low volume has its place. Maxi-Model anyone?

I thought I'd just remind you what we'll be missing with this picture of the two Ferrari 250 GTO SWB released last year.

## Rally Competition

Now, you may remember if you've been paying attention, that some time ago I set a Rally Competition.



## Au revoir

On a bit of a sad note, for me anyway, it seems we must say goodbye to Carrera 1/24<sup>th</sup> cars in this country. Unfortunately they are not a viable option, according to Nikko, as sales just don't stack up.

Future 1/24 releases will be assessed on their interest value and consequently not all new releases will be available here, unless someone is bringing them in from Europe. If you are a dealer who is planning to do this then let me know and I'll publish your details.

So, if you are a collector or even racer of these fine models then buy them when you see them and don't "Oh I think I'll leave it 'till next time", because they'll be gone! I know that there have been some of these 1/24 knocking around

Thank you to all of you who made the effort to mail and email me. I am impressed that every single entry was correct except on question 3. I must make the questions harder next time.

I gave all the entries a number, put them in a hat and asked my slot-car loving wife (not!) to pick one out. So, the winner of "one of those silly toy cars", or the Peugeot 307WRC to you and me is Jon Cross from Abergavenny. Well done Jon, the car is winging its way to you.

The answers to the competition are as follows:

1. Grönholm achieved 5<sup>th</sup> place in the 2005 Monte Carlo Rally.
2. Grönholm lost his second place because he crashed, on snow, losing a wheel and had to limp back on three wheels.
3. After 16 rounds of 2005 WRC Peugeot had 9 points, giving them 4<sup>th</sup> position.

4. The Col de Turini is where spectators like to drop snow on the road. See answer 2 for results of this jolly spoof!
5. In 2004 Monte Carlo Rally Grönholm finished 4<sup>th</sup>.
6. Freddy Loix was the man behind the wheel of the other Peugeot 307 in Monte 2004.

I'm working on the next competition, which will run for two months, starting next month. Jon at Nikko has already been kind enough to offer a prize and this time it's more than just a car, so look out next month, especially if you are younger or have children.

### Make Way!

As there aren't any new cars in my possession yet, I've photographed two of the last releases from the American NASCAR Classic series.

These are the two versions of the Ford Torino Talladega '69.

25740 – No.98, Jim Robbins Special – white

25739 – No.17, Champion of '69 – blue with the all-important gold roof.

These models are huge, as are all the Nascars, and look fantastic on the track. The cool looking driver in "Racing Whites" and open face helmet is ready to do battle on the oval. Tampon printing is faultless and the cars run smooth as silk straight from the box.

The next series at our club will be American Muscle – box standard and I'm going to run an earlier Dodge Charger 500. I'll let you know how I get on and any hints or tips to improve the car that I come up with.

### Stockist?

I am trying to put together a list of stockists of Carrera product, so if you are one and would like to be included on it then contact me at [colin.spark@btinternet.com](mailto:colin.spark@btinternet.com).

Send me your full details and exactly what you stock - cars, track, spares, etc. ■



BY DEANE WALPOLE

# H:O WORLD



Large toy companies are a law unto themselves - incomprehensible decisions, long delays, slow turnout of new product and poor quality are just some of the headaches these conglomerates give us.

Playing Mantis, whose line-up of H:O slot-cars is sold under the Johnny Lightning banner, is as guilty of the first two as anyone although they are beyond reproach on quantity and quality. Mantis has now been taken over by Ertl diecast, who in turn have changed their name to RC2 - so it is a strong possibility that the 1/64<sup>th</sup>

scale slot-car line will disappear. The rumour is that, like Tomy and Mattel before them, the new owners are dismayed at the after sales care needed when selling electrical products with parts that wear out. This would be a huge shame, as Mantis have produced some stirring work. Being a US company with an ear to the ground, they tapped into the nostalgia wave sweeping through the States for the older chassis designs by getting exact copies of these made cheaply in China; they have produced about 100 different cars in just 3 years. OK, so =>



Fast and Furious Toyota Supra in white



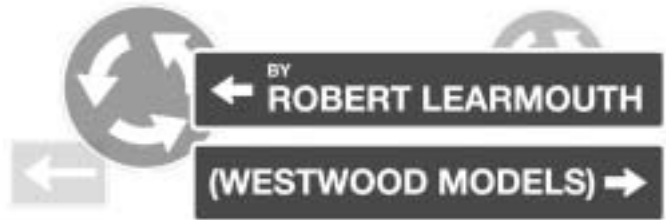
Repainted Mantis Nascar body on Tomy chassis

many are just colour variations, but this output is still unheard of in H:O and therefore to be applauded.

To date, most of the bodyshells have been of road cars from the domestic US market, both old and new. But future releases look set to build on that. For example, models of the DeLorean DC12 car used in the 'Back to the Future' movie trilogy are planned and that car is iconic the world over. For the moment, the best cars remain those based on the Fast and the Furious movie vehicles. These are a good example of how hard Johnny Lightning has worked to widen its market. All 24 cars, whether close to actual movie cars or not, look good (pictures don't do them justice) and have a high level of detailing. The six body shapes involved in these releases alone pretty much equals the output from all Mantis' rivals added together! Given that JL cars sell well you would think that they are not particularly collectable. However the boom in Nostalgia racing means few remain mint and boxed, so they might be worth it for future profit alone. Especially as they work out

at less than £5 each. But even without that the cars are worth grabbing as they have that 'wow' factor that H:O cars tend to lack. From a racer's point of view, the F&F cars are also a real find especially the four Japanese cars (known as 'ricers' in California where the movies are set). They fit directly to the current Tomy chassis raced all over Europe as well as the 'pancake' chassis currently dominating the US scene. They are low and light with minimal overhangs, and the leery colours make them easy to see! At my club, E.A.H.O.R.C. ([www.bglawns.com/eahorc.htm](http://www.bglawns.com/eahorc.htm)), we have already jumped on the bandwagon and had a 'Fast and Furious' themed event, but the bodies have continued to be used since then. Also growing in popularity is their Chevrolet NASCAR body which fits the Tomy range of chassis (SG+, Turbo, SRT), looks really cool after a repaint (because of high licensing costs the JL colour schemes are fictitious ones) and is much lower and lighter than the 'official' Tomy NASCAR bodies. To see the full range of JL cars check out:

[http://www.playingmantis.com/er/products\\_index.php](http://www.playingmantis.com/er/products_index.php) ■



**A**pril has been a busy month for swapmeets with trips to Madrid, Loughborough and Lelystad (Holland). Madrid was first up and it has to be said this is not a swapmeet for the faint-hearted dealer. As you might expect from one of the two Spanish capitals of slot, recent releases from the home produced brands are much in evidence. In fact the swapmeet is really one big stock clearance opportunity for local dealers with prices that make your eyes water if you've been foolish enough to stuff your suitcase with Fly, Vanquish, SCX, Pink-Kar etc. But given that the vast majority of visitors to the swapmeet are Dads and lads this is probably a good match. With a bit of wheeling and dealing, some swapping and careful buying, the trip can be paid for and it's nice to have an excuse to visit this great city anyway.

Back home and support for Loughborough was a welcome surprise. Loughborough will never be the busiest swapmeet or the most commercially viable but attendance from both dealers and visitors was there or thereabouts the same as last year. This is no mean achievement in a climate where swapmeets are not what they used to be. But I think trying to measure up Loughborough and probably Liphook for that matter is probably a mistake as these are nice, laid back events where there is plenty of time to catch up on the gossip and enjoy the social aspect that NSCC swapmeets bring. And no one knows this better than Jon and his girlfriend Ros who inadvertently booked themselves into a hotel where a Senior Citizen leather fetish convention was in full-swing! I joke you not...

Off to Lelystad the following weekend for the SLN club event. It has to be said this one was

hard work as a dealer but the flip-side is there were bargains galore if you were on the other side of the tables. The Dutch economy is experiencing a prolonged downer and this was clearly in evidence with some very careful and considered buying. I do think this event is a bit far north, being past Amsterdam. The SLN events in Utrecht and Dordrecht are much more central and accessible for the Dutch as well as the Brit dealers who drive. But it's always a pleasure to visit Holland and the Dutch have a great way of making you feel very welcome. The November event in Utrecht is already booked in.

By the time you read this you will hopefully be eagerly anticipating your trip to the NSCC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend at Toyota in Epsom on 21/22 May. This not only promises to be an enjoyable occasion but I believe this event will also be instrumental in helping to shape the future of swapmeets in the UK. Whether it gets a thumbs up, thumbs down or is met with indifference we will have plenty to chew over in terms of understanding what people want. My main reservation is the concept of a two day swapmeet so I will be spending time during the run-in working out how to pace things over the weekend.

I try hard not to use this column as an advertising opportunity but I think it would be remiss not to point out that one of the most asked for, previously unavailable, spare parts is now in fact available as a very high quality RUSC repro fitting. Escort Mk I bumpers! Available from all good slot-car stockists, blah blah blah. Now we just have to get the most asked for part sorted – Formula Junior motor brushes and messages to my inbox will shrink by around half! ■

I was sent an eBay second chance offer last month on an item I bid on. I didn't recognise the eBay I.D. so I double checked with the seller who knew nothing about it, He had sold the item with no problems. So it was a scam outside the eBay safety net.

Ebay just keeps getting bigger. There were 2900 items for sale last time I put a search in for Scalextric on ebay.com.

Last month I needed a Mitsubishi idle speed controller. Dealer price £467 - eBay price £99. Front fog light, dealer price £50 - eBay price £23. I also needed to get rid of a piano. Dealers didn't want to know for free but I sold it on eBay.

#### Recent eBay Prices

E5 Marshal car (no flags or box)	£161
E5 Marshal car (boxed but bumper corner missing)	£165

Pink-Kar Bugatti 1 of 300 black	£82
Racer magazine issue number one	£24.25
Carrera highway patrol police car mint	£28
Le-Mans 4 lane start piece	£10.50
Scalextric catalogue 13	£37
Turtle party wagon (rough)	£31

If you have any trouble when buying or selling always bar the user. Go to bidder management and follow instructions. Some buyers will always complain about condition, but they want to keep the item with a price refund. Be aware also of the upgrade buyers. They contact you about the "mint in box" car auction they have just won, but you described it as just a boxed car. Put them straight, refer them to item description. ■



**T**hey're here! The challenge to the phenomenal Honda NSX has finally arrived in the shape of the Toyota Supra GT. Ninco have released the first two Supras based on liveries from the JGTC (Japan GT Championship). These cars really look the part, just as wide and just as low as their counterparts. The first Supra GT (50369) is in the Esso Toyota Team Le Mans colours; mid-blue and white with a beautifully reproduced "Esso tiger" print over the rear wheel arches. The second is the striking bright yellow of the Kraft Yellow Hat Motor Sport team (50370).

The Ninco versions are fitted with NC-5 motors in the angle-winder position in place of the full scale 4.5 litre V8 32-valve power-plants. The new JGTC hubs, slick tyres and 32:12 crown/pinion are fitted as an identical match to the Hondas.

One of the rules for the JGTC is that each team must have two drivers and both must compete in qualifying and the race to receive championship points. Driver change is a must with one of the two drivers completing no more than two-thirds of the race. Ninco's choice of teams for the first two Supras has the equivalent of Ralf and Michael Schumacher in the JGTC world. Shigekazu Wakisaka (Yellow Hat) is the younger brother of Juichi Wakisaka (Esso). Although both in their 30s, they have many years experience going right back - as with many race drivers - to Karting.

A calendar featuring a picture of the Yellow Hat Ninco car can be downloaded from their website - [www.ninco.com](http://www.ninco.com) - this month.

## Back In Fashion

The next Ninco Porsche to hit the track will be the Jocavi (50371) fashion house sponsored 911 rally car. This car features the built-in rally lights on the bonnet and a totally new spoiler. This new design, dubbed the "duck tail", was a result of development to balance the amount of front and rear-end lift. It is reported to have been extremely efficient in this and, as well as reducing the car's overall drag, it reduced its vulnerability to the effects of crosswinds. I wonder if a difference in performance will be as noticeable on the 1/32<sup>nd</sup> scale car?

## Another Boost of Energy

For Raid fans, this month sees a new BMW X5 in the Isostar livery (50366). This main sponsor claims to be "Europe's first isotonic sports drink to address the nutritional needs of athletes". Apart from athletics, they have sponsored a variety of other sports from cycling to ice hockey. They now follow the likes of Red Bull and Battery in turning their attention to motor sports. The Ninco BMW X5 has its own source of energy, the powerful NC-7 Raider motor along with full ProShock suspension ProArm guide and 4-wheel drive.

## Club Car No.2

The original Ninco Subaru Club Car will soon be replaced by a new Honda NSX in Ninco red. Available only through the Ninco website, it will be fitted with an NC-6 Crusher motor and carry the number "2". To any collectors out there... if you don't have the No.1 car already, they will soon be difficult to find at a reasonable price! ■

# NINCO

## track test

A Porsche on the rocks?

50362 Porsche 934

Reviewed by Allan Wakefield

Ninco release another Porsche 934, this time from the 1984 Rothmans sponsored rally team. However, playing on the safe side of a possible lawsuit, the logos read 'Racing Team' and not 'Rothmans Team'.

Whilst this isn't something that bothers me overly, I would love to know the deeper side of why some manufacturers of slot-cars (well any toy cars actually) print tobacco logos and some don't. But that's another story and detracts from the car very little.



What we have here is the 7<sup>th</sup> Porsche 911/934 offering from Ninco and it is, apart from a bonnet mounted fog light cluster and passenger, no different to the others bar colour. Powered by the now standard NC-5 'speeder' it sits on the Ninco suspension arm chassis (blue – medium hardness) and sprung guide – no surprises there then.

In fact, when one tries to search for one word that sums up this car 'nice' springs to mind. Although a very bland word, it is the only one that fits and this is the basic problem with the car. Sure it runs well, the tyres have average

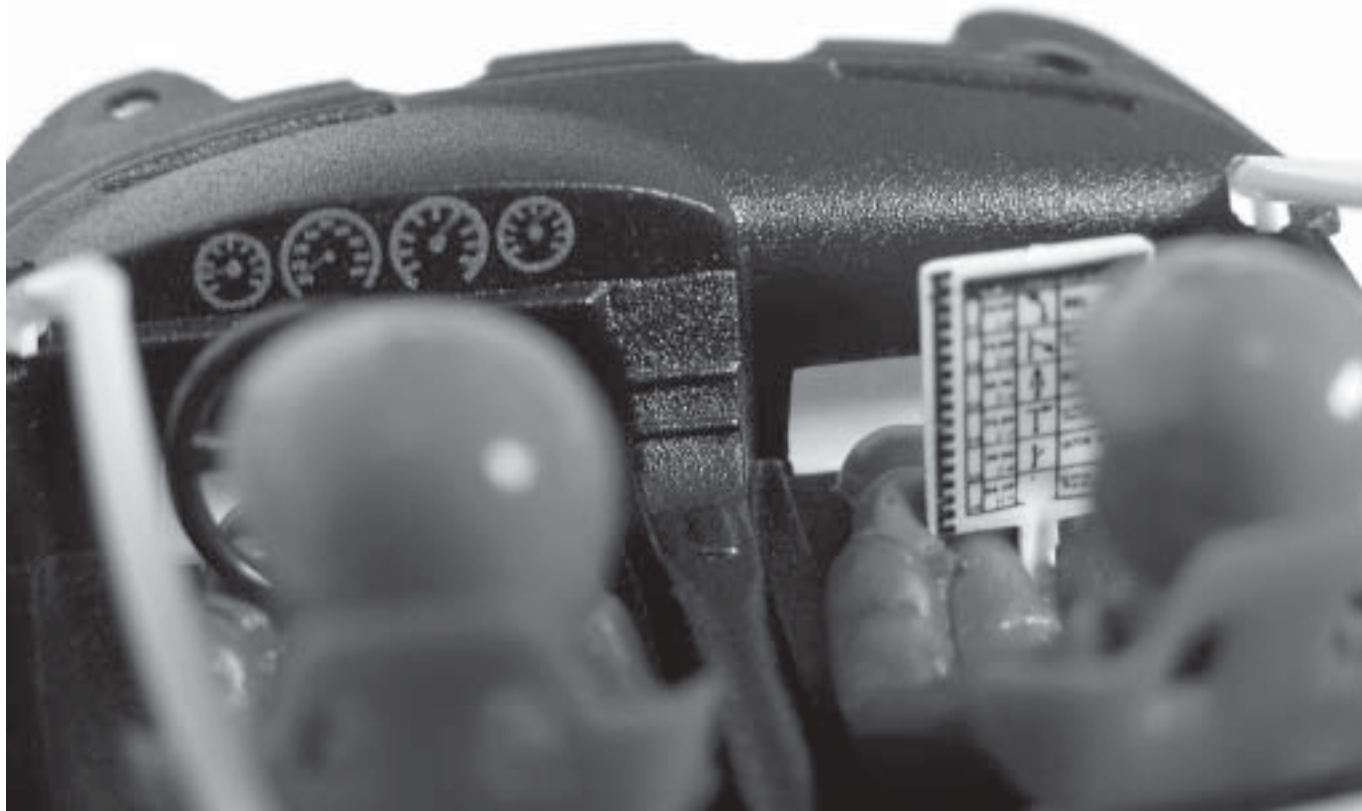
grip on most surfaces and the paint/tampo work is crisp, shiny and concise but there is nothing that really makes it stand out and scream 'buy me!' apart from the addicts (read collectors?) 'must have' philosophy that is.

However it isn't all doom and gloom, the model has some really good touches amongst the basics and the overall Ninco sturdiness is certainly not to be sniffed at.

To illustrate the point take a look at the bare minimum design of the wheel.







Only just making the grade lookwise and then compare that to the huge attention that has obviously gone into the cockpit;

The problem is, I had to prise the interior out with a small screwdriver to get the picture and see the detail in all its glory and who, apart from the manic detail buffs like me, actually does this? Does it not seem like priorities are mixed here to some degree?

Onto the track and it begins to shine however, giving middle to fast lap times compared to other RTR cars in the stable. Already greased and oiled there is no need to play and tune other than a short downward tweak of each braid at the ends for contact's sake. The round magnet is well situated between

guide and motor, allowing some sliding action whilst keeping the stability expected from a magnet car. For the tuning bods, chamfering the tyre edges does help here but certainly isn't a prerequisite.

I think any advantage from the suspension is negated by the magnet and it isn't until you run without it that you will see a difference.

Many happy hours of smooth, reasonably fast and balanced slotting can be had with this car, try playing with the different strength suspension legs because they really do change the feel of the car. My first suspension car from Ninco was the Renault Clio and that, on my track, runs best with solid front suspension, a yellow (soft) leg on the rear right and the standard blue on the rear left – well that and five grams of lead behind the guide. I don't see the Porsche being any different sadly.

Overall it is a worthwhile purchase if you don't have a Ninco suspension car already and want to try one, if you want a play mate for one you already own (or any other Ninco suspension car bar the 'RAID's) or you NEED them all. Just remember it is a 'nice' car not a 'great' one. ■





# A Brief Guide To -

By Phil Etgart

From February 1995 till November 2000 Phil Etgart's brief guides to various Scalextric cars were a regular feature of this magazine. Phil's knowledge and easy to understand style have never been surpassed so I have decided to give the articles a second run. I am indebted to Phil Smith and Mark Scale who have agreed to check them over and add any new information.

## The Scalextric Aston Martin DB4 GT

A personal favourite this one. The archetypical English gentleman's car. The DB4 GT is probably most familiar as the classic James Bond Aston Martin, and whilst that forms a part of this story there is an awful lot more to the Scalextric Aston Martin DB4 GT.

It was introduced simultaneously to its 'partner' car, the C69 Ferrari 250 Berlinetta, in 1963 (catalogue 4). It was initially available as a separate boxed item and later on in sets. Whilst the catalogue suggested the car was available in four colours, it is generally assumed that it was only produced in red and green in the UK. At this stage two distinctively different reds exist - what is referred to as bright red and the standard medium red colour. Assuming that the shades of red were aligned to production of other red cars, it is reasonable to assume that the medium red was the earlier production run, and probably a reasonable short one. This is underlined by the fact that the medium red is rarer than bright red, and that most of the medium red cars that surfaced are in the earlier non window box. They also have the earlier bumpers without provision for Marshal's car flags (assuming they turn up boxed with original bumpers!) the difference in shade of red doesn't appear to affect the price a great deal.

Subsequently in 1964 (catalogue 5) the C68 was manufactured as a lighted car (E3), and was then available simultaneously in lighted and unlighted versions. Again UK lighted Astons were only initially available in red and green. Whilst the lighted Astons were available as separate boxed items, they must have sold many more in Set 60 (issued in 1964) which featured a lighted DB4 and 250 Berlinetta with superb box art featuring the cars streaking across a flyover bridge lights blazing! It is fairly difficult to find them as a boxed lighted car, although again they do not sell for a great deal more than the standard versions. In 1965 Set 55 with unlighted DB4 and Berlinettas was introduced. As with Set 60 it was only shown in catalogue for one year. One other notable point is that the Aston Martin and Berlinetta were the first cars to feature separately moulded chrome bumpers and effectively the first Scalextric models of road going cars since the earlier tinplate range.

Whilst the DB4 was being manufactured in 'Havant', it was also being happily churned out in the Calais factory, and as is common in French cars of the period, it was in different shades/colours to the UK versions. Whilst the green was very similar, the red was a much darker colour than either of the UK colours. The French market also had blue (two different shades!) and yellow DB4 GTs, (which although shown in the UK catalogue was probably never sold in the UK, in as far as I've yet to see one with 'Made in England' on the base). The yellow is by far the rarest and most valuable of the DB4 GT models produced in the Scalextric range.

The French Astons can be fairly easily distinguished from UK versions although looking at the base can be confusing. French cars in all colours can have either 'Made in U.K.' 'Made in France' or be blank, I believe the first cars sold in France were the 'Made in UK' ones.

The best way to tell a French car is by the metric body screws; the different drivers head; chrome on the back of the wheels and, more often than not, the driver platform is a different colour. Again they were available as individually boxed items (hard to find now!) and as set cars which do turn up reasonably frequently.

### **Marshal's car**

The 1964 range (catalogue 5) included a new variation on the DB4 GT, the E5 'Track Marshal's car. This was manufactured for the UK market in black, and then had the addition of a white domed roof light, flags mounted on the front and rear bumper and 'Marshal' decals on the sides of the body. It was at this point the mouldings for the bumpers were modified to hold the flags of the Marshal's car. The car was only available as a separate boxed item, and due to the ease with which the flags got lost, complete mint boxed examples are hard to obtain. It was also manufactured for the French market. Initially manufactured in Havant and shipped out for assembly (no country of origin core stamp on the base) and later manufactured in France ('Made in France' stamped on the base). It was during the first phase of production that an ordering mistake is believed to have been the cause of some of the rarest Marshal's cars to be produced.

It is widely believed that an order of components, that included parts to build a number of cars, failed to specify Marshal's cars bodies specifically. Consequently red and green

(not black bodies) were supplied by Havant. The Calais factory assembled them by drilling a hole in the roof for the light. One consequence of this is that it is fairly easy to fake red and green ones. Therefore any offered for sale with no side decals or repro side decals should be viewed very suspiciously. Genuine examples do exist and are extremely rare, well sought after and fairly valuable.

### **James Bond car**

The next phase of the history of the DB4 GT was in 1967 (catalogue 8) with the introduction of the C97 James Bond Aston Martin DB4 GT which was only ever available as a set car. Its manufacture involved significant amendments to the tooling and the production of a number of special components. The standard underpan was replaced by an open pan type arrangement which incorporated a front and rear valance and a drivers platform which included motor, guide and axle mounts. Looking at the underside of the car it was not dissimilar to the Mercedes 190SL and Austin Healey arrangement, except that it featured a swivel guide. This addition significantly improved the drivability of the car. Apart from all the other specialist equipment, bullet proof shield mechanism, machine guns in front grille and the ejector seat mechanism, the most significant alteration was the introduction of a sunroof and amendment to the glass moulding to allow the passenger to be ejected. It is reasonable to assume that the production of the Marshal's car ceased at this point due to →→



the alterations to the mould (it is assumed its continued appearance in the catalogue was to run down existing stock). A black DB4 with sunroof has surfaced, but it was heavily restored, and did not have its original sunroof so quite probably was a black Marshal's car that had been got at!

Once the tooling had been amended to include the sunroof, the C68 Aston Martin also incorporated it but the rest of the car was as the original DB4 GT. Triang retained the one piece base with round pin, which was a shame because the swivel guide transformed the Aston's handling. The 'Sunroof' DB4s only existed as separate boxed items, and are consequently much rarer than the standard version as they sold in much smaller numbers. In common with the James Bond Aston, they have often lost their sunroof.

Triang manufactured sunroof Astons only as unlighted cars, and only in two colours, red and green. The green is significantly rarer than the red although price does not totally reflect this. It is also alleged to exist in blue and yellow

but this is totally unsubstantiated, and in the absence of documentary evidence should be disregarded. The sunroof Aston normally comes in the pale blue/sliding tray/window/'export' box but can also come in the normal window box

It is not believed that the Bond Car or sunroof Astons were manufactured outside the UK, although the Bond set was illustrated in all contemporary catalogues confirming it was distributed overseas.

Gold chrome plated DB4s (1<sup>st</sup> type-solid roof) are known to have been produced by the factory as competition prizes. A 'mock-up' of the Bond Aston DB4 based on a green car painted white has been seen, but it is difficult to substantiate the provenance of this item. No other specials are known although clear mould flow bodies could possibly exist, as a clear Formula Junior from that era has been found.

Here ends the tale of the Scalextric Aston Martin DB4 with its disappearance from the catalogue in 1968 (catalogue 9). Gone but not forgotten, one of the greats! ■

# BITS & PIECES

## 24 - hour race

The 4th annual Eastcote 24-hour race will be held on the 8th & 9th October 2005 in Ruislip, Middlesex, England.

This may seem early but I would like to know how many teams we have for the event so I can decide on the type of circuit we will use. The track is probably one of the largest for any such event in the UK and is built only for this race so there is no home advantage. If we have sufficient entries, I am considering a mirror-image 6 or 8-lane to make it 12 or 16 lanes - a concept used for the annual Brussels 24-Hour race.



Details are available from *Brian Steptoe* (briansteptoe@blueyonder.co.uk) or phone +44 (0)20 8868 4478 or +44 (0)7860 231499. Entries are especially welcome from International teams.

## Quick update from R/S Slot Racing

So far this year it's been a bit hit and miss. Our attendance at MK was, as always, a great success. Thanks to all who supported us and for the numerous kind and positive comments we received.

Unfortunately there is a slot car dealer who seems to be creating a rumour that you have to wait a long time for mail orders from us. This is not the case and most mail orders are turned around in 24 hours, many before payment has

been received! He who shall remain nameless is welcome to look at our stack of complimentary letters.

On a more positive note, we've had more tyres added to our range including those to fit Fly Porsche 911 rears, SCX Lola MG/Dome Judd and Scalextric Ford GT 2004. If you require a current list you will have to send an s.a.e for the moment.

I know I said the website would be updated and improved by January but due to the old computer going "bang", followed by the new computer going "phut", followed by the website software going "up yours", the website has remained untouched. My apologies for this if you've been wondering why there's nothing new on it.

My computer boffin (nephew, bless him) has hopefully just fixed it all, so I'm now able to update it as time allows.

*Colin Spark*



## Scalextric Peugeot 307 WRC Reviewed by Matt Tucker

Scalextric are the fourth manufacturer to produce a Peugeot 307. It seems this car is becoming the new Subaru in terms of most modelled rally car. Ninco, Carrera and SCX have released their own versions, each with their own qualities. In my opinion Ninco seems to be proving the rally supreme; SCX is a decent all rounder and fits well within the extensive rally catalogue; Carrera is heavy although I think it's the best looking 307 produced so far.

So Scalextric were going to have to do something that bit special if they want people who, like me, have already got a 307 in their stable to go out and buy one. Have they produced something special? Well they have produced something intriguing. This is, as far as I know, the first mass produced car (well at least in the last 10 years) where the motor primarily drives the front wheels with the motor up-front over the guide. Is this a performance enhancer or are Scalextric embarking on a foolish strategy (like Fly) of putting the motor in the same position as the 1:1 car.

Anyway the model I'm reviewing is the Peugeot 307 driven by two time world champion Marcus Grönholm – Scalextric call this car the Works 2005 car but the rally plate states “Neste 04”. So I presume the livery is based on the car that Marcus ran in the 2004 ‘Great Race of Jyväskylä’ or as the rest of us know it, the Neste Rally of Finland. Finland was the Peugeot 307's maiden victory after they were disqualified from their win in Cyprus. 2004 did not turn out to be a great year for Peugeot or Grönholm with the manufacturer ending fourth in the constructors' championship and Marcus ending a lowly (for him) fifth overall in the drivers' championship.

The Scalextric models reference is C2560 and as this particular model is a Sport limited edition (a production run of 4000) it has the 'A' suffix. The Sport models include the following over and above the standard models: brass bushings; hardened steel axles; a Sport wrapper

over the motor(!); a credit card proof of authenticity; a limited plate on the base of the chassis; a nice box; finally, and a very recent addition, the inclusion of xenon bright white lights as apposed to the yellow LED lights. They don't stay on but they look brilliant.

Comparing the model to pictures from the 2004 Rally of Finland I found that generally it has been executed beautifully and up to the extremely high standards that Scalextric have set and continue to attain. If they did model the car on the 2004 Finish livery then there are some obvious omissions which include the rear spoiler sponsors and the door and bonnet white blocks. The paint and tampo printing are flawless and comparing it to my SCX model the quality difference is absolutely huge – it makes the SCX model look like it is - a plastic toy rather than the a detailed quality model that also goes round a track. Some nice touches include the painted driver's/co-driver helmets which look accurate and a highly detailed roll cage. Basically a top notch job and it is the best looking version currently on the market.

Six screws hold the chassis to the body; two small screws in the mid part of the chassis hold the internal cockpit tight and four quite long screws keep the body attached. On removal of the body I immediately scanned the motor, gear and guide set-up. The motor and front axle has a surprising amount of lateral movement in it which is, in my experience, unheard of from Scalextric. I can only presume that Scalextric tested it extensively and this proved to be an essential specification.

The guide is the now standard disc set-up but this time it has 3mm of vertical movement in it. This movement I think is essential for a rally car (to help cope with the bumps and hills) but is even more important in a front wheel drive car as it ensures the guide will always be in contact with different tyre heights. However the guide has considerable slop in it and this did affect performance and caused a few de-slots on



chicanes when I pushed it. The rubber band is quite taut and when I removed it the car's performance dropped significantly.

Anyway with the magnet in its rearmost position even on my Sport track it was a pocket rocket. This did not change even with the magnet in the forward position. To really see the handling characteristics you have to run without the magnet. With no tinkering this car performed faultlessly and was a joy to drive – the car gripped really well and once you got used to how it handled it was pretty quick. I found applying power in the corners, much more than I'm used to, would result in very satisfying controlled power slides with much more margin for error than its rear wheeled drive Fabia counterpart would allow.

I took it to our club's wooden track and again with no tinkering the car performed very smoothly and happily. A tad top heavy to be ultra competitive but for straight out of the box running I have to say a great effort.

To give you an idea here of performance the following are the average lap times (over 10 laps) on my Scalextric Sport track for a selection of rally cars:

Scalextric Fabia – basic tune      6.52 seconds

SCX Peugeot 307 – basic tune      6.21 seconds

SCX Xsara – well tuned              5.89 seconds

Scalextric Peugeot – out of the box 6.29 seconds

On my purpose built rally track with its switchbacks, varnished hairpins, bumps and hills the car managed a best lap of 16.5 seconds which compares with a well run in SCX car. My Ninco Subaru holds the lap record at 14.8 seconds. The guide did not handle the bumps as well as the Ninco sprung guide but it was much better than the Fabia normal guide.

## Conclusion

Quite simply excellent – there is room for improvement in the guide and if Scalextric are going to produce a specific livery then they should go the whole hog but the look and quality are superb. Performance is not class winning (Scalextric's quest for detail will always hamper performance due to the extra weight) but it is quick and, more important, an easy, satisfying and very enjoyable drive.

My best endorsement is that I hope Scalextric ensure all their future rally releases come with this set-up. If they do then I will swap allegiances from my beloved SCX rally cars. ■

# Three into one does go

By Tony Secchi

This is the life story of a particular car that I raced in the early sixties. It started its life as a complete model, morphed into a different one and finished up forming the base of a third. Its diverse racing and build history epitomised that we 'raced on a shoestring' in those days, re-using and recycling everything that we could because of the scarcity of spares prevalent at that time.

The car was a 1/24 scale 'E' type Jaguar which for sentimental reasons I still have in its final form.

To briefly put members into the picture of that time I will reiterate the circumstances of our slot racing club at the beginning of the 'swinging sixties'. We met twice a week (Mondays and Fridays) above the business premises of the guy that ran the club and we raced three classes in 1/24 scale - Saloons, GT/Sports and Formula Libre (the last being a free formula with no technical restrictions except overall size). Two championships of each class were run during a calendar year with the winner of each class accruing points towards the overall championship.

In 1963 I had been with the club for about a year or 15 months and could hold my own in the racing and building stakes. Just another point of clarification here - availability of static kits was quite reasonable at that time but ready to race or slot-car kits were thin on the ground, American imports, for example, not appearing until 1964/5 so the upshot was that generally we had to build our own cars complete with chassis and running gear.

The general store Woolworths used to do quite a good range of 1/24 'push-push', toy cars which they updated (if popular) on a regular basis. These models had a drive mechanism similar to Fred Francis' Scalex clockwork tinplate cars (the forerunner of Scalextric). You pushed the model forward (or back, I can't remember) which engaged the key which wound

the motor. The model would then fly off and crash into the nearest skirting board. It actually ran 3-4 metres (10-12 feet in real money). During 1963 they brought out a model of the Jaguar 'E' type coupé in exact 1/24 scale. This was a roadster (open) version with an optional separate hard top - just like the Airfix 1/32 kit.

The 'E' type had been introduced at the Geneva motor show in March 1961 and made its competition debut a month later at Oulton Park where it won driven by Graham Hill.

Our club was just starting its GT/Sports category and I bought one of these to race in that class. The body was made in two halves horizontally being joined just below the door line so that the bottom section of the model ran from just under the front air intake to the underside of the boot/rear valance. This gave a one piece chassis which could accommodate the running gear (front and rear axles, pick up, engine and final drive). The car had internal trim and seats plus a dashboard and steering wheel.

I split the body along the joint and removed the seats and trim. On the outside I removed the bumpers and chromed headlight surrounds. The chassis was worked on to accommodate a Johnson type 222 large can in-line motor, final drive plus front and rear axles. I cut out the chassis to fit the engine/final drive and araldited the sides of the can into the opening. I added a home made bracket to locate the rear axle and screwed it into place. I glued a small oblong hollow plastic section (from a propelling pencil lead box) to give the front axle some vertical movement. Lead weight and Plasticine were used to give stability front and rear. I put a sheet of profiled plastic under the open cockpit and fitted a head and shoulder driver complete with dashboard and half a steering wheel. On top of this I fixed the optional hard top. This left the boot exposed and I fitted a large chromed petrol filler cap from stock. ⇒



Wheels and tyres were hard to find in those days, but a friend had a set of aluminium "D" type Jaguar wheels from a 1/24 static model and I used these with some tyres that I had in stock. Thus assembled, painted in my dark blue racing colours with my white racing number 21, I was ready for the competition.

During this time scale of two months we had to complete ten races in each category. I was able to do some cursory testing on competition nights before the racing started and after adjusting the size and position of the lead weight I had a reasonably fast and stable car, but the rear tyres were letting me down. Every time that I pushed or braked late into a corner the car would spin out and putting the power on when exiting a corner could cause huge time losses in tail twitching.

I then had a stroke of luck when a fellow member sold me a box of mixed spares and I found a good set of hardly worn rear tyres that fitted and revolutionised the car. Just in time I had the rubber that I needed to put the power down and stay in the slot. The Johnson can was also second hand and it appeared to be just run in. It certainly got quicker during the racing period. This, allied with the reduced gear ratio that evolved as the tyres wore and reduced their diameter meant that the car got faster as the season progressed.

I did not win that particular championship round but I finished a close second, winning the final four rounds and breaking the outright track lap record. After nearly two years of learning I had finally arrived!

However, there were five events to be run that year and I had to build two more cars (a saloon and a Formula Libre) if I was to contest the rest of the championship season. I duly did this with another push-push Woolies model - a Ford Zephyr saloon and a second hand ready to race Lotus 30 (by Revell or Monogram). This was the first American import I had ever come across. Both cars were competitive and although I won a few races in each class I was never a top contender.

I was heavily into active sport at that time and managed to get hospitalised with a knee

operation followed by four broken fingers on my right hand. For some time I could not stand properly with the first injury and I certainly could not use a controller with the second. After a promising start I had suffered a mediocre season. But that was to change in 1964.

Our club rules prevented the use of the same car in any class for the following season. In other words you had to enter at least three new cars a year. This ensured that a very successful model could not dominate. This also gave parity to drivers and kept the model stock relatively up to date.

I have always made static models (and still do) and during the beginning of the year I purchased a 1/25 scale Monogram kit of a Ferrari 250LM 64 for that purpose. Lots of the American kits were made in this slightly smaller scale and our club allowed them to be raced as the size was very similar, so I decided to use it as a slot racer. Because of the time I had lost and the recent indisposition of my hand I had not done much in the way of preparation for the 1964 season. I needed a well-prepared car to race in a very short time so I decided to recycle my successful 'E' type of the previous year. The Ferrari had also been made in top and bottom halves as had the 'E' type so it was quite easy to replace the chassis/underpan set up with that from the Jaguar, only the wheel base and axle width needing modification to suit the Ferrari.

This was the second manifestation of the car and I went about it in much the same way and encountered much the same problems as the 'E' type. The Johnson can, which in the 'E' type had got better and better, blew up on me in testing, glowing hot and melting part of the endbell. This however, proved to be a blessing in disguise, the better for happening in test time rather than in competition. I had bought an early Mabuchi large can series 600 engine (FT16/FT36) for the previous year's saloon cars and found it had proved to be quite fast. Again time was to prove that as the racing in that year's class progressed it got really quick. During testing there were signs that the engine speed was too much for the chassis balance and the existing (ex 'E' type) tyres.

I solved the former by adding a bit more weight to the front third point of the chassis (as I do even nowadays, 40 years later) and went hunting for a new set of rear tyres. Those fitted to the Jaguar were very worn and when used on the Ferrari (which had lower ground clearance) were allowing the engine to clip the track on the rise of the cross over section. Just to divert another moment here - members may have read about the problem with modern day 'vintage' cars - i.e. that because of Magnatraction and modern soft compound tyres they cannot get these cars to corner in the rear end power sliding fashion as they did for real. In the early sixties we had no magnets and used lead/Plasticine weight to get the cars to corner in this way. When done correctly it looked spectacular with the inner lane cars leaning on those outside of them when cornering together. Sometimes you would get all four cars on our track alongside each other all leaning with the outside lane car sliding along the barrier - great stuff and great memories - of course the outer cars got punted off occasionally but, as we were all such 'gentleman' racers this occurrence was very rare!

The result of this cornering technique meant that you had have reasonably soft tyres for grip which, because of that grip (and slide) wore very quickly. This constituted a serious problem - when your tyres wore out you could not readily get replacements as you can today, so that by the end of a championship class your rear tyres would be on the way out and so were you! On several occasions I have witnessed a front runner in a championship round become an also ran because his 'good' tyres had worn out and could not be exactly replaced. So the deal was to run and test your car with a new set of rears before the competition began, hoping that they would last the pace.

This was my dilemma and I knew that if I could not effect this my championship chances would be zilch. It was here that I encountered that stroke of luck on which success sometimes depends. The static Ferrari kit had a set of plastic wire wheels and solid rubber tyres, the

rears of which were wider than those of the 'E' type I had been using. I fitted these and took the car up to the club to do a final test before the start of the GT/Sports class. I had lightly sanded the tyres to get rid of a 'scrim' line and to true them up, but not being slot racing items, I did not have much confidence in them, just hoping that they would suffice to start the championship until I could replace them with something better.

My doubts were unfounded. Those tyres were terrific. During all my slot racing years that rubber made the most difference to any car that I had ever driven. I could not believe the stability under braking and acceleration the road holding on the banking, the nimble sure-footedness through the esses. I knew I had a winner.

Our club champion (who had beaten me into second place with the 'E' type the year before) had entered a 1/25 scale self built Revell bodied Chrysler Avanti 2 door sports, which although having higher ground clearance than my 250LM looked awesome in testing. To be honest, I can still remember that when we tested our cars together I held back a bit keeping the full race potential of my Ferrari for when I was on the track by myself.

I won my first championship round with that car. It won seven of the opening eight rounds and finished second in the last two, the tyre wear and my caution not to wreck it accounting for those.

Phase one of this car had secured the outright track lap record, Phase two had won a championship round, Phase three was yet to come.

Later that year we had the saloon and Formula Libre classes to race and I competed in them using a Woolies push-push (again) Jaguar Mk 10 (with new running gear) and a store bought kit (ready to race) of a Cox Chaparral 2C coupé. Both of these were successful, the Mk 10 leading the championship until I made a 10 week tour of the USA and missed the last four events of that class and the first four of the following. I lost the saloon car championship =>

by a few points and the Chaparral was good but on our track I could not get it to go really well. Starting that particular class when I returned from the USA meant that I spent a lot of time racing with little time to test. I finished a distant third.

However, at the end of that championship we had one of our endurance races for Formula Libre cars. It was over four hours with two drivers per car. Once again I had little time to prepare and not being enamoured of ready to race kits decided (once again) to build my own entry. I had come across a 1/24 scale static Plymouth Barracuda GT and had toyed with the idea of using it as next year's Sports/GT entry but on checking it over I had an idea. I made a few cursory measurements and realised that if I cut off the sloping, full length hard top I could fit it to my old 'E' body turning it into a fixed head coupé. I duly did this and glued the top to the 'E' type body after removing the original hardtop. After filling, sanding and repainting it looked great. Going back to the original chassis was not an option because this was going to be a race of endurance not speed. I was going to need a stronger underpan, a new motor and some new rear tyres (again).

Another fellow club member was selling an American Pitman DC-704 five pole sidewinder motor with built in axle and gears. He also had a home-made aluminium engine-mounting bracket to go with it. The engine was quite heavy with two huge rectangular magnets but, on the plus side, low slung and virtually central between the rear wheels. This, I thought, would give good rear end traction and stability. I bought it from him and took it home to see if it would fit into my much revamped 'E' type.

It was obvious from the start that I would need a custom built chassis designed to accommodate the Pitman. I decided to fabricate this from different thicknesses of plastic sheeting laminated with Araldite for strength and stiffness. This had to be drilled to accommodate the engine mounting bracket and built up to form a platform for the driver, steering wheel, dashboard and body top. Trial and error and a

few nights of hacksawing saw me with a working (I hoped) chassis. A circular Scalextric pin guide was fitted as far to the front as possible and the front axles and wheels were fitted from the original 'E' type. I had to cut the sills, undernose and boot areas from the original 'E' type and fix them to my laminated chassis. This was a bit fiddly but it worked well in the end and along with the top half of the body were the only parts of the old car that remained.

After a bit everything fitted together well and I went on the usual search for wheels and tyres. I decided to use the 'D' Type front wheels and tyres and found a couple of possibilities for the rear set. The first wheel/tyre combination was OK but they were too small, giving the car good acceleration but poor top speed. Being a heavy car I felt that we needed more 'top end' so I fitted a set with a bigger diameter. This gave a more manageable car suitable for a four-hour enduro I reasoned.

However, in testing I found one consistent fault - the car, despite its weight, kept de-slotting. At first I did not want to add any weight as the handling was pretty good overall, just this de-slotting when pushed a bit hard. In the end I had to pack the nose with Plasticine and lead. To my surprise the car was transformed. It was a little slower on the straights (but not that much) and in the corners it was majestic. I could brake late, let the cars weight run it into the start of the bends and drive it out in a huge power slide. If driven this way it was immensely stable and if my co-driver and I could keep it in the slot we would profit over the other faster cars who, we hoped, would be inclined to de-slot more frequently than us.

Normally in our racing when you came out you stayed out but for this special event you were allowed to be put back in the slot. I had chosen as my co-driver my good friend Nick (who I still see today) and we spent a few track evenings testing and learning to drive the car. Nick's natural style was thumb/finger hard down all the way, but with a bit of advice and coaching from me, he realised the potential of the car and curbed his enthusiasm with the prospect of a Trophy win.

As stated, the race was run for four hours, each driver racing for half an hour with the cars pitting for a change of pilot. Maintenance and repairs were only allowed during these stops. I took the first stint and by virtue of our tactics built up a lead which we were not to lose. The car never missed a beat, never came out and only needed the pick up braids to be cleaned at every pit stop. Whilst all the other lighter, quicker cars regularly de-slotted our 'E' type won with laps to spare.

I still have the car in its final form. It stands as a reminder of a more 'hands on' time of slot-car racing which gave me a lot of pleasure and a modicum of success. Today we can buy cars straight out of the box which can compete on the track on the same day of purchase. We can choose from a huge range of tyres, final drives, engines, underpans, pick ups etc which I do, but in those days of limited access to accessories we had to 'make do' which we did.

The 'E' type's three different class successes epitomise that era and the absolute pleasure that discovering slot-car racing gave me over 40 years ago; it still does and some of the greatest pleasure that I get from the sport is racing a car that I have conceived, designed and built all by myself. The 'three in one' principle worked in 1964 and in some cases it does today. I am currently racing a Can-Am Autocoast Ti22 with a handpainted Lexan body and with component parts (chassis, engine, rear axle, wheels and tyres) from three other older cars. It is at present leading the championship with fastest lap times on both lanes.

It is a great and enjoyable car to drive, giving confidence speed and results. In my mind it is a successor to the 'three into one' Jaguar "E" type of 40 years ago. For me personally, it is nice to know that our sport has improved immensely over that time but has not changed all that much. Has it? ■