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THE INDEPENDENT CLUB FOR SLOT-CAR ENTHUSIASTS

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No Surprise There Then!

There was a time when I would rush down to the local model shop every year about now and purchase the new Scalextric catalogue. I would take it home and read it from cover to cover several times over. Today I happened to be passing the shop so popped in and bought the 2006 version. On returning home I had a quick flick through it and filed it with the rest of the collection. It then dawned on me that I hadn't actually read the thing properly for many years now and I began to wonder why this was the case.

Catalogues of ten years ago were nothing like as slick as the current ones and used to contain three or four new cars at most so why were they interesting when modern ones aren't? On reflection I have to conclude that there are no surprises in the new one any more. In those far off, pre Interweb days, unless you were a privileged retailer you had no idea which models would figure in Hornby's production schedules and the catalogue would provide your very first glimpse of the new cars.

Nowadays everybody knows what is coming some months before publication and pictures of the imminent releases are plastered over every slot-car website in the known universe. The manufacturers seem to have forgotten the commercial benefits of keeping everyone guessing and building up anticipation; they think that mass media saturation is the answer to everything. I guess it is part of this brave new technological world we live in - 'Now' is all important and yesterday is just history.

I am not normally one of those old fogies who constantly harks back to some fictitious golden olden times and I enjoy the benefits of modern computer science as much as the next man; just once though I wish I could open up the latest catalogue and find a brand new release of which I had no previous knowledge.

And Finally - I may not have read the thing properly but I did notice a glaring spelling error - "Lane change Staight" indeed! Once an editorial pedant, always an editorial pedant.

Till next month

Brian



by
Rob Smith



MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

As usual for this time of the year there are plenty of recent releases to mention and lots to look forward to as shown in the new catalogue and at the Toyfairs always held in January and February.

Recent Releases

C2642 Ferrari 330 P4 Le Mans 1967 Mairesse-Beurlys No24

Together with the standard crystal case version of C2641 comes C2642. To my mind this is even more attractive than the Scarfiotti-Parkes No21 version as it has the extra detail of a thick yellow stripe from front to back – absolutely one of the most beautiful Scalextric cars ever!

C2597/C2598 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet Monte Carlo Jeff Gordon No24/ Jimmy Johnson No48

To keep the new Ford Taurus Nascars company are two new Chevrolet Monte Carlo models. Both are well decorated with lots of fine sponsors' logos over smart metallic paint-jobs. Although etched metal grilles adorn the front of the Chevrolets they are as fast and robust as previous Nascars. The boxes feature the drivers' signatures and even the plinths are printed with lots of detail.

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C2604 Ford Taurus Plain White

C2605 Chevrolet Monte Carlo White

If you prefer to decorate your own NASCARS with some of the excellent decal sets available then Hornby produce plain white versions of the new Ford and Chevrolet. These are only available in the US. Interestingly the Taurus packaging includes a sticker warning against motors seizing if they are run until they overheat. I guess NASCAR racing on a simple oval is fairly unrelenting!



C2695 Ford Falcon BA "Caterpillar" No6

C2696 Chevrolet Camaro Bob Jane

Back in November I wrote about the first of the Australian only cars to be released this winter. Here are the other two. The modern V8 Falcon is the best of this crop's liveries in black and white with yellow details. Going back several decades is the Camaro of Bob Jane. It is finished in red with modest sponsors' logos but lots of character. Unlike most of the Camaros this model has lights.

C2680 Maserati Coupé Cambiocorsa 2006 Range Presentation

One of the best collectors' items each year is the range presentation car given to the main Scalextric dealers who visit Margate to order their stock for the year. The 2006 model is the Maserati Coupé in yellow and black with racing number 9 – as this is the ninth year of range presentation models. Only 250 of these models are made and they are always eagerly sought after.



C6020 Valentino Rossi / Yamaha

C6021 Sete Gibernau / Honda

C6022 Max Biaggi / Honda

C6023 Carlos Checa / Ducati

Aside from the two BSB bikes described last month it has been a quiet second year for the much vaunted Scalextric MotoGP range. However four new models arrived at Christmas to keep the range up to date. Just like the BSB bikes they also feature the modified magnet holder and extra stabilisers that really improve their handling.

Performance Parts

It is over two years since Hornby first began discussing a range of tuning parts but these are finally available on the High Street. The range includes motors, wheels, tyres, axles, brass and race bearings, gears, magnets and a sprung guide. The axle diameter is 3mm compared with the standard size of 3/32nd inch which means that the new gears, wheels and tyres are not compatible with the existing axles and old parts cannot be fitted to the new axles.

When you have tried them please let me have your feedback to pass back to Hornby.

What's New in 2006

January is always the time of the new catalogue, Toyfairs and the future product range. The Sport packaging and A suffix of the Sport versions has been dropped for 2006 and all cars, except the Classic Grand Prix pair, will come in standard crystal cases. Otherwise we see an exciting year with lots of new liveries, 10 new cars and new track pieces too.

Paperwork

Catalogue 47 follows the same format as recent years and features the Renault F1 on the cover. Not surprisingly it covers the range of sets, cars and accessories but not Scalextric Sport Digital. That features in a separate A4 sized catalogue of its own. A Race For Real leaflet, edition 12, is also available showing the complete range with the Ferrari P4s on the front.

2006 Range

So what is in the 2006 Scalextric range? For a start there are a number of new sets – A1 Grand Prix, Porsche GT Supertuned and Supercars. The latter two are especially interesting as they feature cars not available separately. The Porsche set (C1184) contains two new GT3R liveries, one of which is unique to the set. Both are equipped with the Sport Tuning parts such as high speed motors. The Supercar set (C1185) contains the red Ford GT but also a black Mercedes McLaren SLR.

In F1 the new Honda 2006 will be eagerly awaited, especially if Jenson Button does well this season. Barrichello's car is also included – C2715 and C2716. Not in the catalogue but in the price list are 2006 versions of the Renault and Williams F1 cars too.

A1 Grand Prix gets lots of space in the catalogue and 10 liveries are described and scheduled for release in Q3. Great Britain, France, Netherlands, Brazil, New Zealand, Portugal, Australia, USA, Italy and Germany are the featured countries.

In the GT category there are new liveries for the Maserati MC12 and Dodge Viper and two new models. The first is the Aston Martin DBR9 which ran at Le Mans in 2005. Strangely, only one racing number is being modelled, with the yellow flash. Let's hope for the sister car and the privateer team too during the year. The second car was a great surprise as it is the Jaguar XKR as raced in the US. It looks good in black and silver too.

There are also UK releases of the Japanese Takara Quattrax JGTC cars and these look great. There are two each of the Toyota Supra, Honda NSX and Nissan 350Z. To go with them are two UK designed versions of the Nissan Skyline. The Quattrax cars are identical to the Japanese releases but are in standard UK packaging. In Japan each one will be released with its own pit babe!

Surprisingly there are no new Vectras but there is a brand new touring car – the Séat Leon from the WTCC championship.

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Available in Q1 is a very nice Subaru Impreza in Scalextric and Sun livery. Later in the year will be a brand new Subaru - the latest Impreza competing in 2006.

Fairly anonymously hidden in the catalogue is one of the most often requested Scalextric cars ever – the Ford Escort Mk1. The first release is in the white and pale blue Esso Uniflow livery. Q2 cannot come fast enough for this car to be released. We are sure to see other liveries following too.

Also hidden away without much fanfare is the Classic Grand Prix pairing of McLaren M23 and Ferrari 312T. You too can relive the 1976 battle between James Hunt and Niki Lauda. Why this isn't front page news I cannot imagine.

There are plenty of reliveries of popular models too, including two new Mini Cooper Ss, a yellow Ford GT, a white and black drift Nissan 350Z and a new pair of Audi TT and Porsche Boxster. There are new versions of the Mustang, Camaro and Corvette too.

The Digital catalogue offers a growing range of Digital ready cars including the Aston. For the first time there is a unique set of Digital cars – two Nissan 350Zs.

New track pieces include a straight lane change enabling left to right and right to left changing. This is 1.5 standard straights long and is really smooth allowing fast lane changing. The pit lane pieces which allow a single lane to split into two, to the right or left and then merge back again, should already be in the shops. When coupled with the single lane half straights and curves enormous possibilities emerge. Please send me pictures of your layouts designed using these new pieces.

Toyfair 2006

Hornby had a large presence at the recent UK trade only Toyfair held at Excel in London and there was lots of interest from new and existing retailers.

Disappointingly there were no prototypes to be seen other than the Escort Mk1 and the most exciting releases for the year were only shown as small photos of the real cars – not ideal for building the excitement and anticipation required for driving sales.

Please do let me know if you find anything not described in the catalogues. There are sure to be special releases for specific countries or retailers during the year! ■



There is plenty to report this month, lots of new models and the announcement of some exciting new releases planned for 2006. The finer details and release dates won't be announced until the Nuremberg Toy Fair in February.

Recent Releases

BMW M1 (A1303) "Motul", supplied with a decal sheet of a well-known cigarette brand. Driven by Bernard Darniche and Alain Mahe

in the Tour de Corse 1982. They failed to finish though, due to a brake pipe leak. The five decals on this model are very easy to apply, two down each side and one on the bonnet.

Porsche 934 (A935) "Jägermeister", driven by Edgar Dören, Gerhard Holup, Roman Feitler and Hervé Poulain.

Unfortunately they too failed to finish, breaking down on lap 167 with gearbox failure.

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A1301 BMW M1 with cigarette decals applied





Fly 31 Ford Capri with additional gears

Ford Capri RS Turbo (Fly 31) “Mampe”

Another release in the lightweight racing spec series, without a magnet. The bonus with this car is that it comes with 4 additional aluminium crown gears (23z, 25z, 26z, 29z).

Finally, the psychedelic “Martini” (Team 12) set. Technically not a team from a specific race, but a very nice addition to the range. The printing on both cars is very crisp and bright in a very attractive presentation box, typical to the team set range. Limited to 1250 units.

Decisions, Decisions

Another new release out in January was the “Meijers Motorsport” BMW M3 GTR (E280). The car is painted in a very striking two-toned orange and dark blue/grey colour scheme. There is no sponsorship adorning this car, but it is supplied with 2 decal sheets to decorate into either a 2004 or 2005 Belcar championship contender.

I purchased two of these cars, as I couldn’t decide which version to do, and subsequently spent a few painstaking hours applying the decals. The most difficult was the number on the

roof which had to be nurtured into the air duct. The real-life counterparts didn’t have this air duct, but with a lot of patience and dexterity can result in a very satisfying finish. I found their web site very useful; www.meijersmotorsport.nl/a_auto.html, click on fotos, then 2004 for the #84 car and 2005 for the #96 car. There are many views of both cars to aid you in your reproduction.

This model is also fitted with the Fly racing motor as standard.



E280 BMW M3 showing both versions possible

Classic Le Mans

There are seven new releases listed on the January flyer. The first of these are now available:

Porsche 917 LH "Gulf" #18 (A1402) and Ferrari 512 CL "Scuderia Filipinetti" #14 (C75).

The Porsche is from the 24hr Le Mans 1971 race, driven by Pedro Rodriguez and Jackie Oliver. After qualifying in pole position they failed to finish due a problem with the oil system. The sister car, a 917K (#19), performed much better finishing second.

I must admit to being slightly disappointed with this particular model as it doesn't come equipped with rear wheel covers as per the picture on the flyer. A nice touch though is the tape decoration around the front headlights.

First impressions of the Ferrari are that of a re-issue from the previously released Team 2 set. A closer inspection reveals there are differences, the omission of any sponsorship logos. This model is the test car from the 24hr Le Mans 1970 race, whereas the team set represented the race cars.

Both of these cars are sold out at the factory due to high demand and are proving very popular with collectors.

What's Next?

The remaining five releases should be available by the time you read this:

A903 – Porsche 911 Carrera "Max Moritz Racing" Le Mans 1973.

A996 – Lancia 037 "West" Rally Costa Brava 1984.

E903 – Porsche 911 "Trece" PPG classic rally. This will be limited to 1000 units.

Fly51 – Lola B98 racing "Team Vaillante" #19 in blue, Silverstone ELMS 2005 British livery. A lightweight racing version similar to E500.

Truck55L – Man truck "Cepsa". A similar livery to Truck 41 previously released, but with working headlights and race #23.

Poly Special Edition

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of Poly, Fly has produced a special edition Renault 5 (E1202). The car is mainly white with a black and white chequered roof, black skyline silhouette down each side with "Poly" written in red, and a big golden yellow "30" on the bonnet. I'm not sure of the quantities produced but it will be of limited availability.

2006 Announcements

Not many of you will be aware, but this year Fly are celebrating their 10th anniversary. To celebrate this they have announced that it is their plan to launch a ten car limited collection set with one car to be released each month between March and December 2006. The cars will be the most celebrated cars and liveries from their history!

The planned releases for this year will commence with the Porsche Carrera 6. This was shown in prototype form at Nuremberg last year. There will be two initial liveries launched at Nuremberg, one will be a special edition to celebrate the 2006 show.

Following on from that there will be a new addition to the lightweight racing range. This will be a rally Porsche 911 with a new chassis similar to the Evo 3 Porsche 911 GT1 98.

Before the summer there will be a BMW M3 E30. Other releases planned, and for me the pick of the bunch, are a Ferrari 250 GTO 1963 and an Audi Quattro Group B rally car.

This year Fly have a surprise up their sleeves in the form of a single seater car. There has always been speculation as to whether Fly would ever release a single seater. At this stage there is no other information as to what class it will be from. Further details on this and the other models next month. ■





February sees the release of five new cars including a special limited edition. All are re-liveries of existing models although they do include some new features. First of all, a new Renault Clio Super 1600 (50377) in the familiar blue and yellow colours associated with Renault Motorsport. Based on the group and class winning entry piloted by Kris Princen during the 2005 Belgium Ypres Westhoek Rally, it includes interchangeable ProShock suspension and is powered by an NC-5 motor.

Next on the grid is the mighty Mitsubishi Lancer WRC '05 "Australia" (50378). Already a great looking car, this one features a unique effect on the windows – just like that of the full size car that claimed Mitsubishi's highest finishing position (2nd) during the final rally of last season's World Rally Championship. Gianluigi "Gigi" Galli, brought his Lancer home in fourth position narrowly missing out on a podium spot.

Galli is one of motorsport's rising stars and following Mitsubishi's shock announcement before Christmas that they are to withdraw from the WRC circuit until 2008, Gigi is set to compete in the Ralliart sponsored Lancer this year. The model is fitted with Pro-Shock 2 suspension and an NC-5 motor providing power to all four wheels via a double transmission belt.

The recent release of the new Mégane Trophy car has already met with nods of approval from both racers and collectors alike. It is a stunning model and the GT Trophy series offers a wide variety of liveries. This latest release replicates that of motor tuning parts company "CESAM" (50379). The 330bhp, 3.5 litre V6 engine is replaced by Ninco's NC-5 Speeder motor mounted in the angle-winder position.

The BMW M3 GTR returns in the red and black colours of the "ADVAN" team (50396). Advan is a brand of sports tyres created by Yokohama over 25 years ago that has quietly ruled the world of motor sports with wins in just about every category from Rally, through World and European Touring Cars, to Le Mans. This brand of tyre can be found today fitted as standard on supercars such as the Bentley Continental GT... however, this BMW comes only with grippy Ninco slick tyres!

Finally, a rare limited edition Austin Healey "Snetterton" (50389) is released. Finished in a dark racing green body colour with a white "hard-top", the car has a stripped down, race-prepared look to it and is supplied in an exclusive new packaging. Fitted with an NC-5 motor, this is sure to be a handful on the track so prepare for some serious power-sliding! ■



Kits 'N' Bobs

A round up of recent kit and resin releases

By Phil Insull

A bit thin on the ground in the UK this month for Kits 'N' Bobs but plenty out on release if you live in the United States or mainland Europe.

Most exciting and eagerly awaited release in kit form is the new Ferrari 275 GTB4 69LM from Protoslot. Available as either a pre-painted plain red street car kit or pre-painted red Scuderia Fillipinetti Le Mans 69 version; this is one of the most beautiful of all real life front-engine Ferraris and yet another in a stunning line up of kits from these French resin specialists. Designed to utilise the PCS32 adjustable chassis, these cars look even more fantastic when finished off with the new range of classic wire wheels from PRS. Hopefully I should be able to bring you a full review next month once they reach the U.K.

a pale blue Citroën DS from the 1972 rally of Portugal, and a maroon Saab 93 circa 1962 complete with roof spotlight, both of these should be available in kit form and presumably like most other TKP kits will also use the PCS32 chassis.



MMK Bristol 450



Protoslot Ferrari 275 GTB4 Le Mans 1969 Scuderia Fillipinetti

Next up are two releases from MMK - the Ferrari 250GT in plain white or yellow and a very unusual subject, the Bristol 450, in green and white Le Mans livery complete with its two high roof fins; all three available only as ready to race cars. From sister company TKP we have

As announced last month the Reinecke Motorsport range has two new arrivals in the form of a 1968 Plymouth Barracuda and the 1970 AAR Cuda, designed to run on either Scalextric Mustang or Camaro chassis these make an interesting addition to anybody's Trans-Am line up.

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Reinecke Motorsport 1970 AAR Cuda

In the world of plastic slot cars the Team-slot Audi Quattro is due in to U.K. importers Classicslot Limited any day now, and I for one will be itching to see how it stacks up against the old SCX version. This great looking model of a group B car could well prove popular come the Toyota NSCC Slot Rally GB in September.

Another contender come September may well be the latest rally release from Spirit. Following on from their successful Peugeot 205



Teamslot Audi Quattro

T16, Spirit have now launched a new Renault 5 Turbo, available in a number of rally liveries beginning with Carlos Sainz, Jean Ragnotti and Bruno Saby versions. Spirit have also produced a number of Renault 5 Cup versions with the most popular colours surely being the red and white Jan Lammers version.

Finally, from race masters Slot.It the Mercedes Sauber C9 made it into the U.K. just too late to feature in last month's article, and similarly their new Castrol liveried Jaguar XJR9 should make it to these shores early in February. Both should be exciting additions to the range and are expected to feature heavily in the 2006 Slot.It challenge series. ■

London Toy Fair 2006

By Gareth Jex

Let me start by briefly explaining that last year I vowed not to bother going to the London Toy Fair this year – why? Well, to be honest, Scalextric info is released at the end of the year and as a result there are normally no surprises to be seen. Ninco, Fly and most of the smaller Spanish brands do not exhibit; SCX and Carrera normally show a reduced range and wait for the German Toy Fair to release all their new product. So it was with clenched teeth that when Tecnitoys asked me to design and build their exhibition stand (that's what I do in the real world!) I agreed.

So, less hobby time - more a busman's holiday! However it did have its advantages - free contractor parking and early access, plus the chance to get to know Tecnitoys and AEC a little better.

The show is held in two halls at London Docklands Excel exhibition centre. This year it opened on Wednesday (press day) and closed on Saturday. Officially it's trade only, but anyone can in fact register on line in advance which does lead to a large number of familiar faces wandering round the show; great for visitors but it can slow up the show for exhibitors. Press day normally has a number of themed events to catch your eye and this year was no exception with Corgi celebrating its 50th Birthday with children and costume characters parading around the halls singing "Happy Birthday" and another stand demonstrating their latest board game themed on the TV show 'I'm a celebrity get me out of here' with young ladies eating worms and maggots!

I made the effort to visit all the show this time to try and ensure all slots were covered along with any other items that I thought might be of interest to you, including 1/32 scale diecast and models. To ensure an unbiased review let's do this alphabetically!

Airfix

Not strictly speaking an Airfix stand as the space is branded Humbrol. Only items of note are the existing range of 1/32 scale multi pose military figures which can be converted for scenic track use. New this year is the re-release of some classic 1/32 car model kits. Shown in a triple gift pack, the models released include the Ford Escort Mk1, Triumph Herald and the Vauxhall Viva. I was informed that the kits should be in the shops around March this year. No plans for additional 1/32 releases, but that's what they said last year!

Carrera

Carrera are distributed in the UK by Nikko UK Ltd who had a large open stand opposite SCX. They sell a vast range of RC cars, boats and planes etc along with Meccano and other specialist toys. Carrera had their own dedicated area with a Pro-X track, display cabinets and posters showing this year's releases.

Starting with the Exclusive 1:24 range, new for 2006 are the 'Hot Rod' range with six new models featuring lots of exposed engines, flames and big chrome wheels; think ZZ Top video and you have an exact picture of these machines. No actual prototypes on display and it was clear that the photos and posters were only preliminary designs, expect to see actual mock ups at the German Toy Fair. GT cars will include the Chevrolet Corvette C6R in four liveries and the Ferrari 575 in three 2005 liveries and a new plain silver one for 2006. One additional livery in the classic range with the Ferrari 330 P4 getting a 1967 LM paint job in red with light blue stripe. There will also be a limited edition 1:24 scale classic car for 2006 but they would not say what it was.

Plenty to keep F1 fans happy in the 1:32 Evolution range, new cars for 2006 include: Ferrari F2005, Toyota TF105, Red Bull RB1 and the McLaren-Mercedes MP4/20. 1:32 ➡➡



also gets three Hot Rods along with a new series of Fast and Furious street cars with added features including ground effect lighting (neon) and spinner wheels set onto the new Ford Mustang GT 2005, Chevrolet Corvette, Nissan 350z and a Ford Mustang '67. GT racers are well covered with the Ferrari 575 GTC in four liveries and the Maserati MC12 in four liveries.

Not too surprisingly DTM cars feature high on the Carrera list and this year there are seven cars, Merc and Audi; there is also a Sebring version of the Chevrolet Corvette. Moving on to more classic machines and Carrera announce the new Porsche 935/78 in Martini Racing, Momo, Kreepy Krauly and John Fitzpatrick liveries. The Ferrari 512BB LM also gets a new livery this year in the form of JMS Racing 'European University'. The remaining cars seemed to have been thinned out, classic Nascar reduced to two cars and WRC to three. The same liveries are repeated in the Carrera Digital Pro-X range with the addition of a Ford Mustang GT 2005 in US Police Highway Patrol livery with flashing roof lights. Apart from that the digital range did not appear to have any additional/new products.

The 1:43 scale 'Go' series will include the F1 Renault along with the Red Bull F1. As you would expect in this scale there are a large number of themed sets from films including Fast and Furious and the new James Bond film Casino Royale. In all a substantial range and a massive catalogue (which was in short supply).

Revell

Another company celebrating its 50th Birthday was Revell. I'm glad to say that, after several years of struggling to have closer relations with Revell, they have changed their PR company so perhaps in the future the NSCC will be better informed. Again all product on display was locked behind glass making full access tricky.

Two ranges to report on: 1:32 'easy kit' static kits and of course the slot-cars. I was told that some of the kits had been held back from sale last year, but that they are now all available including Dakar cars; Nissan, VW, BMW and Mitsubishi and the Ferrari cheap static kits.

On the slot-car front the range expands to include some new rather unusual choices. First a Trabant 601 in two liveries - black 'Rotstern' and a red 'Stadwirtschaft', pretty track cars certainly in a class of their own. However, the second new release is equally obscure - Simca Rallye Mk2. Again two liveries - one boggy lime green and the other red. Along more familiar lines there are also plans to release a Chaparral, Porsche 904 and King Cobra and there will be new liveries for the NSU. The limited edition range this year will include a Porsche 550 Mille Miglia '54 'Hermann/ Linge'. The limited editions are due mid year, but the new cars are not due until the end of 2006.

Scalextric

As I mentioned at the beginning of the report, Scalextric release information about their product range towards the end of the year and it gets confirmed at the Dealer launch events held prior to the Toy Fair. So I was not expecting too many surprises but I will assume that not everyone knows or has previously seen the info.

Let's start with what Hornby say will ensure a flying start to 2006. The big push this year will be A1 Grand Prix. Scalextric signed an exclusive deal with A1 GP that will initially bring 10 of the international grid to the Scalextric catalogue in analogue, digital and micro ranges. The cars are all identical in terms of physical and mechanical appearance but each carries country colours/flags etc. They do look great in photos - no prototypes were available and the flying start may be delayed - cars are due for 3rd quarter release.

Sticking with the single seaters, Scalextric have also signed an exclusive deal to bring us the Honda F1 car. There will also be a new livery for the IRL range in the form of 'Klein Tools'. The existing range of F1 cars remains the same.

Big news on the Endurance front was the Aston Martin DBR9 and the Jaguar XKR along with new liveries for the Maserati MC12 and Dodge Viper. The Porsche 911 gets another livery as does the Nissan 350Z drift car. All the other Endurance cars remain as 2005 with MG Lola and the wonderful Ferrari 330 P4.

SCX Selection



Scalextric JGTC Cars



Eagerly Awaited



A Grand day Out



JGTC (Japan Grand Touring Car) is proving a popular series with manufacturers and Scalextric have done a deal with Japanese firm Takara for them to use Scalextric technology and sell the cars under licence in Japan. They will also be on sale in the UK. On the stand were production prototypes of the Toyota Supra, Honda NSX and the Nissan Skyline. The models displayed included the digital chips, but at this time it's not clear if these will be released in digital form. The new Digital catalogue does not list them, but they are all shown in the analogue catalogue. Initially eight liveries will be offered but, with the recent news that the Maserati has joined the race series, expect others to follow. The models looked bright, colourful and very well made. You may notice on the bases of the prototypes that there is a circular space – this is for a model pitlane babe, the cars will be sold in Japan with these, but UK models will not come with one.

On the Touring Car front the range remains the same with the Opel Vectra, but an addition latter in the year will be the Séat Leon WTCC, pictured in the catalogue with Spanish driver J. Gené - expect two liveries during the year. A little quiet on the rally front, but new liveries for the Subaru in the form of the works 2006 spec and 'The Sun' livery as sponsored by Scalextric.

Best, in my opinion, of the new releases is the fantastic Ford Escort Mk1. Displayed in mock up prototype form the car is a brand new model and features new driver and co-driver figures. The first, of hopefully many liveries, is that of the 1972 RAC winner driven by Roger Clark and Tony Mason. Number 4 in white with light blue Uniflo stripe. The prototype looked great, chrome a little too bright for my tastes, but shape and wheel size all looked good, due for 2nd quarter release.

There are also new liveries for the Audi, Porsche Ford GT and Minis this year. Look out for the set only black liveried Mercedes SLR.

Last on the car front, but certainly not least, is what might be the only Sport or limited edition cars on general release this year. Released under the classic range is a twin set of F1 cars from the seventies: C2558A features the

Ferrari 312T driven by Niki Lauda and the McLaren M23 driven by James Hunt. Expect delivery toward the end of the year.

The entire range of Sport performance parts were on display along with accessories and demos of Sport World. The new catalogue also features a DVD preview of Sport World on the inside of the back page. No new track sections announced.

The digital range is now covered in a separate catalogue. New for digital this year is the lane change on a straight ref C7036 and a new lap counter C7039. New cars are the same as analogue with the Aston Martin, Renault F1, two A1 GP cars (GB and France), Merc SLR and Nissan 350z.

Finally the 1:64 Micro Scalextric range has been updated, brand wise, and features two new sets - Mazda Mayhem with two RX8s and A1 GP with Team GB and Team France. My first Scalextric, The Simpsons and Mighty Minis remain.

SCX

For a brand that I have the closest links with, I was surprised at just how little I knew about their plans for 2006. Sure I had been sent boxes upon boxes of stock and display material before the event, but I was under strict instructions not to open certain boxes until Luca and his colleagues arrived from Spain. So it was with some trepidation that I sat down with Luca to go through the prototype 2006 SCX catalogue.

Digital first, because that's how it's laid out in print. New for 2006 will be a basic set containing three DTM cars and the Pit Stop set which will be the same but with additional pit box facilities and track. New accessories include Ref 25110 'Console', basically this will be a box to connect your track to the TV! On display will be the starting grid lights, timer, speedometer and fuel levels. It also includes a championship mode which allows you to configure races and define a championship. Winners receive points which allow racers to buy improvements to their cars or repair damage. Details were a little brief, but development was in an advanced stage. ➤➤



Ref 20240 Car Digitalization Kit, basically this is the guide flag activation hardware to allow you to retro fit SCX Digital into original cars.

On the digital track front there are three new accessories: Ref 25130 Chicane is a new track section with single lane chicane, Ref 25100 is a banked curve and Ref 25090 Super sliding curve 'oil effect'.

New digital cars include BMW 320 WTCC, Ferrari 360GTC, Aston Martin GT, Séat Leon WTCC, Séat Cupra GT 'Puma', Chevrolet Corvette C6R and the Volvo S60 in the GT range. New liveries for the Opal Vectra in DTM range and a Mitsubishi Evo-3 in WRC. There will also be a Mercedes Safety Car with roof lights and special functions that allow it to be used as a 'ghost' car, set in 'Hindrance mode' the car will drive itself and players will have to overtake it, set in 'Normal mode' and players can control the car as normal.

Onto the 'original' or analogue range of SCX and the Aston Martin and Ferrari 360 get their own new set in C2 configuration (figure of eight) while the new McLaren 2005 Kimi goes head to head with the Ferrari 2004 Schumacher in a new C1 set. New this year to the rally front will be the excellent Suzuki Swift JWRC and the Mitsubishi Evo-3. As digital the GT range has been expanded to include the BMW 320 WTCC, Ferrari 360GTC, Aston Martin GT, Séat Leon WTCC, Séat Cupra GT 'Puma', Chevrolet Corvette C6R and the Volvo S60. In the tuning series expect a new shape of car in the form of Ref 61980 tuning car 2 with neon, metallic paint and butch driver!

In the classic range Technitoys have decided to add the Renault 5, details were few but this will be a new model and not a re-release of the Exin mould. This year's Vintage limited edition will be the McLaren F1 1970 in bright orange as driven by Derek Bell.

On the accessories and track front the range has been expanded with two new products; Ref 88630 Chronometer Rally Pack features a start ramp section and single lane track loop with built in timing system. Ref 88620 Super sliding Inner curve 'ice effect' adds to the successful range of winter rally sets and other track

sections. Other figures, track sections, buildings and electronic accessories remain as 2005. A welcome return, and one often asked for by members, is Ref 88640 RX-41 motor. Until now the only replacement motors have been Pro Turbo which are still available.

The new SCX PRO range, initially based around two special edition cars - Citroën WRC and Audi R8 which will feature the very latest in race performance parts with new crown gears in brass and aluminium, Pro spec wheels, tyres, axles and a new guide flag. The rally car will also feature a drop-arm guide and - at long last - replacement chassis will also be available. Bodies will be light weight. The final details of this range are still in development and I will report back to you as soon as I have more info.

Sad news also at the show, the Technitoys Séat Panda and 1800 models will not be released in SCX form. Spain only!

SCX/NSCC Exclusive News

Very hush hush at the London Toy Fair and not officially released until the German Toy Fair I was sworn to secrecy regarding the next new release info. SCX will be introducing (or reintroducing) an off road track system similar to SCX TT. In 1:32 scale the system will feature off road bumpy track, bridges, ramps, dips and climbs and will have two new models to go with it based on the Dakar race; new cars will be the VW Touareg and the Mitsubishi Pajero. I was shown some prototype photos but all details TBC. The second exclusive was the release of a Tuning set featuring the new Tuning cars. Nothing special I hear you say, but the set will feature MP3 playing cars! Again details all to be confirmed and don't expect either range to be available until the end of the year. We do hope to have the new off road system on display at the NSCC Rally GB event.

Well I think that about wraps it up for another year, too many similar products for my liking and frankly not enough rally cars, but that's just me.

Best in show – Scalextric Ford Escort, but the news about SCX off road is great. ■

The theme for this month's report was to be "January Sales", mainly because I was going to take a look at what you could have got for less than £20. However this will have to wait until another month for an in depth review as I need to report on one of the largest collections of cars that I have seen being offered on eBay.

The item was listed as Scalextric Vintage Triang Collection Huge!!!!!!!!!!!! and subtitled "Biggest UK Scalextric auction ever, never to be repeated". The starting price was a wallet busting, (well for most of us anyway) £30,000 with a Buy It Now price of £35K. It actually did not attract any bids in the end but plenty of comments and was viewed over 4000 times by the time the auction closed. The listing itself was somewhat quirky as it started off with very few details but then progressed as the auction went on with loads of links to pictures of the cars and description of the collection. In fact it ended up with so much text that it could have served as the basis for some student's thesis on slot-cars! Brian would have a field day reviewing and correcting the spelling and grammar if this had been a report for the Journal. I have a copy should anyone want one but in summary:

Scalextric: Complete set buildings and tracks, C68 Aston Martin (green x 4, blue x 4 red x 3), C69 Ferrari Berlinetta 250gt x 3, Super 1/24 cars x 6, CK1 AC Cobra x 2, C34 Jaguar x 8, 007 Bond set plus spare Bond Aston, E5 Aston Marshal's car x 5, C57 Aston Martin x 4 plus numerous Lister Jaguar, Porsche Spyder, Mercedes 190SL, TR4, Mini, Go Karts, and Escorts. Also included were some rare resin kits and many Airfix items. Hope you can get the picture if you did not see this listing.

Another incentive listing day on UK eBay increased the number of auctions in January as sellers took advantage of all those newcomers to the hobby who had sets for Christmas and were

looking to expand them. Suddenly new Sport straights and standard curves were fetching £3 and £2 each in job lots and Starsky and Hutch pairs of cars normally fetching £17 or so ended up going for almost double that on some auctions. Someone even managed to sell 4 x C187 banked curves, all be it at 1p plus £4.99 p&p. Top example spotted of bidders getting carried away was for a boxed Williams F1 car at £609. Don't believe all the auctions you see though, as this one had not been completed when I checked with the seller.

Other top prices this month along with eBay listing description were:-

Attention!!!! Jaguar E Scalextric 1/24 with box £830

Scalextric James Bond slot-car set 1968 £1560

1960 Vintage Auto Union Type C MB £460

Scalextric Truck Lorry £46 and £36.20 (Converted Morrison's £5.99 lorry with a Scalextric cab chassis)

Scalextric Maserati Range Presentation 2006 £165.88

Scalextric Preview Ltd Edition 2006 C2680 Maserati £180.01

Scalextric TVR Speed 12 £77.10

(This had a plain yellow body shell, was in a box with no reference number and looked similar to C2316 Brussels limited edition coloured car.)

Some more Porsche/Subaru/TVR body shells as reported last month turned up and have been offered individually on eBay during the month by one of the buyers who bought a job lot. From my inquiries the black TVR is the one in shorter supply but how many that means, I was not told!

Finally an item I found quite amusing on Australian eBay in the slot-cars category, not usually found at a swapmeet, was :- "Tin Sign 'Caution Low Headroom' Great for the Shed" bought for AU\$0.99 by "doctorslotcar", maybe one of our members down under perhaps? ■



Flashback Special

The EJ's Hobbies Indy Roadster

By Peter Emery

I truly believe that we are privileged to live in THE golden age of slot cars. Modern slot cars are incredibly good value and superbly made. And, as for the range of models available – well what more could you ask?

However, for those of you of a certain age, the late 1960s were a magical time for slot car racing. With beautiful Cox, Monogram, MRRC and Revell models, hard shell racing was on the up. The cars got ever faster and gradually the Lexan shells began to replace the hard plastic bodies but even the Lexan shells were pretty good especially some of the Taylormade and Lancer bodies. With brass chassis parts and cheap powerful motors easily available from Richard Kohnstam in Hemel Hempstead, the RIKO brand ruled the roost at my club against the owners of expensive Pitman/Dynamic/Lancer creations. If you sometimes hanker after a new brass chassied, Lexan bodied, alloy wheeled slot car then look no further than EJ's hobbies in the USA.

A couple of years ago I was lucky enough to buy a mint unmade Monogram Ferrari GTO 1964 body shell kit. The Monogram GTO had been my first 'serious' club car back in the 60s and getting my hands on a new one was a joy. When I discovered that EJ's made a replica Monogram brass chassis with all the running gear my year was made and my GTO now resides amongst my most treasured slot cars – and it is damn fast!

EJ's not only sell chassis kits but also complete kits, usually built up from original vintage parts where possible. The next model on my build table will be a EJ's Dodge Coronet 440, the 1960s American Muscle car, using an original Eldon hard plastic body shell with

chrome parts and the aforementioned EJ's Monogram copy brass chassis. That complete kit with ALL running gear costs an astonishing \$55! The subject of this review is however even cheaper, it is the EJ's Indy Roadster kit and it costs only \$40 + post and handling.



The kit is well packed with a packing list and all small parts in plastic bags

The big build up – the body shell

Having checked the parts against the packing list it was time to make a start.

I had decided to make the Dean Van Lines Special, the Pole sitter at the Indianapolis 500 in 1961. I could have chosen any of 5 different Indy roadsters from the late 50s and early 60s as the superb decal sheet offers five different decal sets with the chrome exhaust parts etc. to match the decals.

The first job was to thoroughly wash the Lexan body shell and then leave it to air dry. I then cut it very roughly to size with a pair of nail scissors before wrapping it in cling film to protect it against overspray. Three thin coats of Pactra Sprint White went on (and over my fingers) and the shell was ready for the next stage. I drilled

the holes for the exhaust, roll bar, oil tank etc and then glued these in place with a little clear glue. I then trimmed a piece of scrap Lexan to size for the windscreen, as my kit had no windscreen provided.

After drilling out the holes for the axles to pass through and then applying the transfers the body shell was almost complete. Last but not least I painted the cockpit base and the driver then glued the driver in place. Job done.

The Chassis – seriously simple

Assembling the chassis was next on the list. All the running gear is provided including the excellent Mabuchi Fox FK-130 SH motor. I oiled the motor bearings and put the motor onto a low voltage supply to gently loosen up. These motors go really well but they do benefit from a little running in. The brass chassis is a simple pressing with 'oilite' (phosphor bronze) bearings front and rear. Two screws hold the motor firmly in place. I shortened the lead wires as they were obviously designed to fit a top fuel dragster! The rear axle has a flat on it for the grub screw in the Cox contrate to locate, a nice touch.

A full set of different width nylon spacers are included and the somewhat rudimentary instructions give a suggested selection for front and rear. This sets the track width for the car. As the plastic inserts for the alloy wheels don't have a central hole the axle cannot protrude into the wheel at all. This further fixes the track width as does the shape of the brass chassis pressing at the front of the chassis.

And it is way too wide!



The simple stamped brass chassis

The Indy roadsters had a fairly narrow track and this setup equates to a track of around 65 inches! I was unable to confirm the track of the 1961 Kurtis Offy but the 1963 winning roadster had a track of only 50 inches.

And that is my only real criticism of the kit but it is a big one. It changes this kit from a pretty good replica to a 'fun' car and that is a shame. I have a vintage Strombecker Scuttler 2 chassis, also supplied by EJ's, and that would make this body shell into a super scale model. Perhaps EJ's should rethink the way the model is sold as the Strombecker brass chassis has pretty reasonable performance and would be perfectly scale and period for a vintage slot car.

In the end I decided to narrow the track as much as possible, so I opted to ignore the inserts and merely painted the wheel centres a gun-metal colour and fitted the locking nuts on the outside of the wheels. This narrowed the front track to around 58 inches and I set the rear to match. Overall I think the narrower track was worth giving up some of the wheel detail.

The slot guide provided looks a little strange but in practice it works just fine. At the time of writing I have only run the car on my Scalextric Sport/Digital set up and it runs well with no snagging at all. I elected to ignore the spring clip body fixings and simply open out holes in the .030 inch Lexan body and let the axles secure the body. This works fine in practice. Finally I glued and trued the rear tyres before fitting them to the front axle and repeated the process so that all four wheels were trued. Note that this stage was completed after photography!



The underside of the chassis





And the result?

A cracking drive! These slot cars drive like a mid 1960s car with plenty of tail out action and a lovely benign manner. I could have played about with magnets or lead but frankly they are a hoot just as they are. They would make a great 'fun' class at your club or a really relaxing fun car for your home circuit, either way recommended as being great value for money and something a little bit different to today's precision manufactured masterpieces.

Oh, and by the way, I liked these kits so much that, rather than badger the Editor (all kneel) into acquiring some samples from EJ's Hobbies and then risk somebody else being given them to review, I bought them from EJ's by their (excellent) mail order! People that know me will realise that means I must REALLY like them.

Contact www.ejshobbies.com for more details and tell Ed' that I sent you! ■

GOODYEAR **BITS & PIECES** GOODYEAR

Farewell Newark, Hello Dudley....

An article appeared recently in my local newspaper regarding the Grove Leisure Centre at Newark. This location is, as you are aware, the venue for the Newark swapmeet. The article basically read that the site is to be redeveloped in the near future and a new leisure complex is to be built, to be completed by 2008.

This obviously meant that at best we may have got one more event there before the site closes for at least two years. So, myself and fellow organisers had to find an alternative suitable premise to hold the meet. A chance conversation has resulted in our agreeing to take the event to Dudley in the West Midlands. The date of the event will be Sunday 29th October 2006. It is our hope that the event will remain under the umbrella of the NSCC, the category will be decided when details have been finalised. It is our belief that this move will be beneficial for all parties; the venue is very easy to find and is located in the middle of a potentially massive catchment area (excellent for buyers and traders alike!), with ample parking and on site cafeteria facility. Obviously the overseas members/collectors will be able to access the event by flying into Birmingham Airport and there are a number of good hotels in the vicinity for anyone wishing to travel up the night before.

We will be releasing further details of this exciting new event at Milton Keynes. Lastly a huge thank you to all those members and traders who have supported Newark over the last few years, and we hope to see you ALL and many more at Dudley.

Roger Barker

NSCC Website

The revamped website is now on-line - a couple of sections are still under development but should be available very soon. All comments and suggestions for future improvements would be gratefully received.

Mark Sanderson

♪ 20th Centur-ee Toy ♪

“Traditionally their late night sessions revolved around a mutual passion for Scalextric. John and Marc had set up a sprawling Scalextric track that had begun to colonise the house, room by room, until almost every inch of carpet, every surface, was obscured. There was constant music in the house but now this was joined by a new sound audible in the spaces between songs: the tinny crackle of toy cars negotiating complex slaloms. Each of us - John, Marc, Marc’s girlfriend June and myself - had our own car.

Meanwhile, the track just kept growing, and the larger it got, the more power it required, until eventually John and Marc would embark on an emergency errand to buy more booster packs. They must have been quite a sight; two hippies dashing to the nearest toy shop for another fix of Scalextric.”

The John? - the sadly missed Radio 1 DJ John Peel and the Marc? - Marc Bolan, front man of 70’s glam rockers Tyrannosaurus Rex. Taken from ‘Margrave of the Marshes’, the autobiography of John Peel, written by John (obviously) and finished by his wife, Sheila.

Spotted by David Bates and Chris Lale

Pre-add Body Kits

Anybody wishing to order one of Mac Pinches’ body kits will need his new phone number - 01922 410420.





Sir,
Congratulations on the new front cover of the NSCC Journal, inspired!!!

When Motorsport changed the cover I wrote to complain and was told that the new design was intended to stand-out on the shelf. So how come I have trouble finding it in amongst all the other car mags? How come I nearly bought a copy of Autocar a couple of months ago by mistake? Green might be considered an old fashioned colour these days, but that is what made Motorsport stand out from the crowd. I fail to see how you can make your living out of nostalgia and then get rid of decades of tradition! Still, their loss is the NSCC's gain. All we need to do now is resurrect Jenks and get him to do a few car reviews.

I also wanted to support Roy Snell's request for Andy Priaulx's BMW to be released. As a competitor in hillclimbs during the 90s, I got to know Andy and his father Graham quite well, although we never competed directly against each other as we were never both in the same class (in both senses of the word!). Having watched him take the hillclimb crown, I've followed Andy's career very closely ever since. He's a great driver, a bloody nice bloke and now he's a world champion. Come on somebody, there's got to be some selling power in that surely? Imagine how many Honda F1s will flood the market if Jenson Button ever wins the world championship.....oops, sorry. I had to stop typing then as a pig flew past the window.

I am, yours etc,
Mel Turbutt

Sir,
I don't usually bother to comment on this kind of thing but that new cover is a stroke of pure genius!

I am, yours etc,
Derek Cooper

.....
Sir,
Just had to drop you a quick note to congratulate you on this month's Journal.

Fabulous cover, the best since I've been an NSCC member, and your editorial about Hornby and Marlboro was great too. Keep up the excellent work.

I am, yours etc,
David Harmer

The new cover certainly seems to have struck a chord, I have never had so many letters of approval - thanks for all the kind comments.

.....
Sir,
I had several phone calls about the "Toy Story" article in bits and pieces(January issue). Poor old Graeme Thoburn had enough trouble getting his own car running at the world record attempt so the good old lads at Larkfield Scalextric Club (Kent) offered to lend his daughter a car so she could take part!

Alas our own cars didn't record proper times through the counters but, as we know, our spare one did! Hope we didn't embarrass Graeme too much with his daughter beating him.....

I am, yours etc,
Dave Smith

MMRG Open Challenge

By Peter Solari

On Sunday 8th January, Medway Model Race Group (MMRG) hosted a Ninco JGTC Challenge Event. Whenever I manage to attend a race meeting my main goal is to have fun and hopefully not finish too far down the table. Now there are some people out there with 12VDC running through their veins and when a large enough group gather around a track the atmosphere has the tendency to become very tense. I'm not saying that's a bad thing – but let's be fair, these are scale models we're racing and it's never a matter of life or death, is it? It's fine to be committed to win and I do admire those who have the ability to squeeze that little bit extra from a car but I'm still firmly in the category of racing for the enjoyment factor... *and for those of you who have seen me race, you'll know why!*

It was five years ago at MMRG that I first tried my hand at competition racing and have since raced there on many club evenings. However, circumstances have kept me away from regular racing over the past year, so the opportunity to race at the weekend was a welcome one. The day began at 8:30am when MMRG club members and guests assembled the six-lane routed wooden track.

Open practice followed giving newcomers a chance to familiarise themselves with the circuit. Within the hour, Alan Green addressed the troops informing us of the day's programme. It was made up of four stages with differing point structures and the top places would be awarded to those achieving the most points. With twenty-one entrants and four events, it was important to keep a quick turn around and our aim was to have just sixty seconds between races.

All of the cars were brand new "out-of-the-box" Ninco cars from their JGTC series and, with the wide choice of liveries available, each one was different. Three Honda NSXs and three Toyota Supras were subtly(!) colour coded to match their individual lane using coloured tape on the front windows and rear spoilers. Ortmann Tyres from R/S Slot Racing were the only modification fitted to these cars offering maximum grip to the painted surface of the routed wooden track.

The first stage consisted of 15-lap races where everyone raced once in each of the six lanes. Points were awarded for finishing position (10, 6, 4, 3, 2 and 1) as well as 2 bonus points for fastest reaction time when the lights turned green. Peter Day, one of the club's most ➤➤





experienced racers, won the first round with 52 out of a possible 72 points with Trevor Allen taking second spot.

Heat two was a real change from the norm. Paul Hatcher (*known within the club for his love of big aerofoils and silver paint!*) had built a rather special car for this stage. Each entrant had to complete three laps with this totally unique car, individually against the clock. When everyone had raced, scores were awarded to each position in 5 point increments with the slowest attracting 5 points and the fastest taking 105 points. With everyone watching, and the knowledge that a fraction of a second could cost big points, the pressure was really on. It was a real challenge to keep the car in the slot and many people commented about how different it felt to race alone.

With lunch over, round three took us back to more traditional racing - a series of 5-lap "sprint" races. Lap times for these GT cars on the Medway circuit is in the region of 8.5 seconds, so staying on was vitally important in

sprint races. To ensure these heats didn't resemble half a dozen snails out for a Sunday drive, a bonus 5 points was up for grabs for the fastest lap of each race. This meant that the winner of each race had to have the fastest lap to guarantee taking home the most points. On many occasions, the person finishing second was able to achieve more points than the winner by snatching bonus points for fastest lap.

The final stage was a 12-lap, crash and burn race. For those of you not familiar with "crash and burn", the rules are simple... if you come out of the slot, you're out! The stakes were also raised for this last round by making points available not just for placing but for quickest away *and* fastest lap. Keith Fishenden won this round and was also one of only two racers to take a maximum of 17 points in a race.

Following this final round, everyone helped to dismantle and put the track away while the points were totalled. The day's event had produced three different winners from four rounds but overall 1st, 2nd and 3rd places went to Peter Day, Paul Hatcher and Terry Battersby respectively. The top junior driver of the day was MMRG member Alex Bartlett who finished an impressive 9th overall. All four were suitably rewarded with Ninco cars from the JGTC series.

The varied stages and continuous turn-around kept everyone on their toes and the changing point structure added an interesting element to the mix. It was nice to be able to turn up at a competition with just a throttle and a fiver and not trolley loads of cars, tools and spares! By running the same cars for everybody, it was always going to be a test of driver ability and not how good the car had been set up;- *no whispering behind silver boxes about adding special potions to motors or tyres at this event!* Yes, I know slot-car racing is a serious sport for some, but we all need to unwind and enjoy ourselves round the track every once in a while. Well done Medway for keeping the FUN in slot-racing!!

MMRG meet every Wednesday, 7:30-10pm. Details can be found via the NSCC website or by contacting Alan Green: Tel: 07855 511804, email: Alan.Green@marks-and-spencer.com ■



Carrera Ferrari 575GTC The test continues...

By Mark Hatton

What a top man! Having sent a copy of my review (December 2005 issue) to Colin Spark he comes up with the goods and sends me a pair of those excellent Ortmann tyres to try on the car.

The replacement tyres look different in size and profile before fitting but once fitted they fill the wheel arches to the same proportions as the originals. Below you can see the original Carrera boots on the left and the Ortmanns on the right.



Have a look at the image below and you will see exactly what I mean.



Off the wheel rim comparison of the Carrera tyre (left) and the Ortmann tyre (middle) for size. The other Carrera tyre (right) is down on its side with the front side of the rim resting on it.



The detail of the brake callipers and discs can also be seen. You can also make out the driver's nose and intent stare through his helmet as he waits patiently for the pit stop to complete. The names of the drivers can be seen clearly on the "A" pillar of the car as well as other sponsors' names on the door panel and front wing. Compare these to the Pirelli logo on the wing end plate which looks like a bit of a smudge against the others. The detail of the fuel filler cap, the window access and part of the front grills between the front wheel and door can also be admired.

Ortmanns fitted and off to my current Ninco track again. All magnets installed and at maximum grip = very little change to the standard fit tyres. There is still too much magnetic effect for the motor to deal with and so acceleration is still relatively sedate. I then proceeded to move the centre magnet to its least effective position and several other ones but found that this really didn't make any significant changes to the handling of the car over the original setup.

OK, remove the rear fixed magnet. Now it goes but still not much better, I'm still struggling to spot any performance difference from the standard fit rubber. I tried various positions and combinations and anything with the magnet in was really not doing anything special for the car.

Now for what I thought would be the real test as I have found Ortmann tyres and non-magnet cars very much to my liking in the past. All magnets out and off we go for a lightning lap, or ten, of the track. Yes, now you can tell the difference and the Ortmanns are giving me a lot more grip on acceleration (remember though that the motor is still no rocket and progress is relative), but I can still get the rear end out for a bit of power sliding and the braking has improved a little but only due to the tyres and not from the braking abilities, or lack of, from the motor. The improvement of the handling provides the car with a much more enjoyable driving experience.

However I did find one peculiar new effect with the Ortmanns that did not show up with the regular tyres to such an extent. Even with the monster guide blade I find that, as I come over my bridge sequence of corners on the inside lane with a reasonable dose of speed, the front end pops out, the car slides across the track, hits the Armco and bounces back into the outside lane slot. Now while this is fun doing it on purpose several times with two controllers in your hand (who needs this new digital system?), it doesn't help if you have two people trying to circulate at the same time! Back to the regular tyres and the problem is not so pronounced. I suspect that this is because I have modified my driving style slightly to compensate for the reduced level of grip of the standard fit tyres and, to be fair to the Carrera, I have other cars that are caught out by this "bump" in the track.

In conclusion, would I use the Ortmanns over the standard fit tyres? Well, yes I would but there is a "but". I am lucky enough in this case to be supplied with the tyres to test and I have bought and used Ortmanns for racing in the past and found that they are superior over standard fit and suit my preferred type of driving and non-magnet cars. I have also found them to be better on magnet fitted cars as well on both plexi type and routed tracks. Whether you want to spend the extra money on several sets of Ortmanns, at £2.50 for a pair of tyres (Ref 49a but do check with Colin when picking your tyres if you have any doubts), is up to you. If you do, then don't forget that you can transfer a set of tyres around several suitable cars to maximise your investment but this can also be a hassle that you might not want!

To conclude, whip out ALL the magnets, change the tyres if you want and enjoy the 575 up against other Carreras of your choice, which is quite a good selection at the moment. I used another 575, acquired at a recent Donington Toy Fair, and an Audi A4 (the fantastic liveried Red Bull 26571) against my son and we had a fun half hour sliding, crashing and sometimes racing round our little circuit. Thanks again to Colin and Carrera for supplying the tyres and car. ■



Slot.It® Mercedes Sauber C9

By Phil Insull

Let's not beat about the bush; Slot.It make some great looking slot-cars and they contain some of the best out of the box running gear currently found anywhere. If one had a criticism it might be that they only do historic Group C or IMSA cars, but it's a subject they clearly enjoy and are very good at. The Mercedes Sauber made it into the U.K. late in December with the 1989 Le Mans presentation version with an almost plain silver livery save for a few small sponsors' logos.

evolution of this car the names of Schumacher (M), Wendlinger and Frentzen formed the formidable "Junior" line up.

Bodywork

Even the plain presentation livery has some exquisite details with roof aerials, driver's air intake, exhausts and turbochargers visible through the cut outs in the side panels. Brake discs and callipers show through the black six spoke wheels and there is even a little red photo



The Slot.It Mercedes Sauber C9 1989 Le Mans presentation car

This car was quickly followed by the number 62 car, which finished second at Suzuka in 1989 in the hands of Kenny Acheson, and there should be a number of different livery/driver combinations as in real life this car was driven by Jochen Mass/Stanley Dickens/Manuel Reuter to win at Le Mans in 1989, with other notable pilots including Baldi, Schlesser, Jabouille, Brancantelli and later in the C11

etched emergency electrical cut off handle alongside the cockpit. Once you look past the black seats and scuttle, the cockpit interior contains plenty of details including the full-length driver figure with excellent tampon printing on the helmet, steering wheel, dashboard controls, and even honeycomb panel effects for the cockpit sides which make this a quality slot-car body.

⇒⇒



Running Gear

Underneath the chassis is held by two screws front and rear, with the motor cradle/axle carrier held by four screws that can be adjusted to allow the motor to rock. As always this can be replaced by the magnetic suspension motor cradle for the really serious racers. Axles are calibrated and the rear hubs are aluminium, with a bronze pinion and aluminium/nylon contrate. The guide is self centring and aimed at plexy type tracks, but again is replaceable by a deep slot guide for racers who run on routed circuits with a deeper, wider slot. Finally power in standard form is supplied by the in-line Slot.It 26,000 RPM motor, although this can be changed for various other motors for those who feel the need for it.

around a second a lap off the mark as it came out of the box. I wasn't prepared to race tune mine just yet, but one of the Wolves regulars had done some tuning in the form of zero grip low profile front tyres, deep slot guide and up-rated motor, and was happily trading quick lap times with the best of the Slot.It Porsches and Nissans. To be honest these cars are just too quick for my slowing reactions and deteriorating eyesight to cope with and I have nothing but admiration for the Slot.It challenge guys who can wring every last ounce of speed from them.

Conclusions

In summary this is yet another stunningly quick and highly detailed slot-car from one of the best current manufacturers, and I would expect to



Standard running gear is of an outstanding quality

Onwards then to Wolverhampton to see how the C9 fares against decent opposition. Now I know my limitations so I handed the C9 over to an old friend and Slot.It championship racer to give a try and while it wasn't quite on the pace of some the well prepared earlier Slot.It cars (the Porsches and Nissan 390s) it was only

see plenty of Club racers, home racers, and collectors being tempted by one of these C9s. Next up from Slot.It is the Jaguar XJR9 so we'll be able to re-enact some of the classic Porsche/Jaguar/Sauber sports car battles from the late 1980s on our slot tracks – Fantastic. ■

A Horse of a Different Colour

By Bill Grigg

A few ramblings prompted by Steve Baker's "Can you make a Carrera car perform better?" article last month.

At the annual Christmas, round the spare bedroom, slot-car session I was very impressed with the performance of my newly acquired Carrera Plymouth Road Runner. With the rear magnet thrown away and the front one positioned just less than half way back in its slot the car handled well enough to please my no magnetic aids wherever possible tendencies: well enough to make me invest in a Carrera Ford Torino after Christmas.

The Torino was a totally different kettle of fish. Any attempt to make it go anywhere near as fast as the Plymouth ended in spectacular offs – it was complete rubbish in the going round corners department. As the chassis of the two cars seemed at first glance near enough identical this called for some investigation and I very soon found two marked differences. First, the magnet on the Torino wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding (assuming a topping of iron filings instead of the more traditional nutmeg gratings) and second, when the cars were placed side by side on a spare piece of track and viewed at eye level, I found the guide on the Ford was set up about an eighth of an inch higher than that of the Plymouth. So the terminal understeer type off was due to the tiny amount of guide blade actually in the slot, and the back end suddenly letting go with a spectacular roll type off was due to the inherently high centre of gravity and minimal magnetic attraction. (An aside: have you too noticed that with some manufacturers the tyres are now mainly cosmetic; most of the road holding and 'handling' is due solely to the magnets. Not that I call going round on rails until the limit is reached handling, mind you...)

Anyway, I borrowed a stronger magnet from another Carrera car and lowered the guide blade by filing the top off the mounting so that the blade dropped down and adding a spacer between guide and chassis. Voila! It now goes as well as the Plymouth – but why didn't the Carrera designer man realise that the object of a guide blade is to go in the slot and why isn't there any quality control over the magnets? These Carrera cars are very attractive but they're big, heavy lumps and need all the help they can get to stay slotted.

Further on magnets and Christmas I got one of the rather lovely Scalextric Cooper Climaxes as a present. It's a really good model but it looked ridiculous flashing round at a scale 'million' miles an hour and ran rings round our other F1 cars of a certain era. Not without a little difficult fiddling, I removed the evil magnet. This made it completely undriveable as it has such a whizzy motor, even though that motor is in the sensible, i.e. not at the front driving via a spring, position. Ortmann tyres borrowed from another car made it just possible to complete a few laps in on/off bursts but it was NO FUN and now the other old F1s ran rings round it. I solved the problem by running it at six volts when it was both controllable and fun. I suppose it's time to invest in some adjustable voltage power supplies or throw the Cooper away!

In what I belatedly recognise as a moment of madness I recently bought a Scalextric Caterham at a toy fair and that behaves very peculiarly. Knowing there was no chance of it ever going round corners without its magnet I knew I must grin and bear the evil device. However, whilst the car will quite happily trundle round and round, undeviating, on about three-quarter throttle with no attention from ➤➤



the operator, the moment I push the trigger down on the straight or attempt a bit of ambitious cornering, i.e. race it, there's a *Zzzzzzz* noise and the car instantly throws itself sideways off the track. Analysis shows that this appears to be due to the onset of vicious wheelspin. It appears the power comes in suddenly, the tyres can't cope and they spin round at peak revs, generating a sideways moment.

I dare say some decent tyres would help but as my competitors have Caterhams that do work on the tyres they were born with I wouldn't be popular joining in with an 'unfair advantage' so it's to the spares box with my Caterham – written off to experience.

Finally, to show that all this may be because I'm out of both touch and date (not that I'd admit it), a recent sobering experience. I went to see our Editor (about magazine publishing, not slot-cars) a while ago and thought while I was at it I'd take some of my less common cars to show him how well they went. Well, mine are set up for Classic track and he's got some of that new Sport stuff. Imagine my chagrin when, inter alia, my much vaunted baby racers ("These are great fun Brian"), just spun their wheels and slid gently sideways along the track and my loop braid BRM ("Goes like a rocket!") was extremely pathetic. He did say the BRM was in good nick - which was probably the only compliment he could think of!

Perhaps I should just accept that it's horses for courses. ■