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THE INDEPENDENT CLUB FOR SLOT-CAR ENTHUSIASTS

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I used to have one of those

Strange world - collecting! If I had never played with my Dinky Toys as a child but kept them mint in box then I could probably have retired on the proceeds by the time I was 50. The flipside is that if everyone else did the same then they would have been worth the best part of bugger all and childhood would have been a lot less fun.

I can understand the appeal and perceived value of old toys but I am having a bit of difficulty getting my head around the prices paid for relatively modern items. As part of my ongoing project of garage track construction I have been putting the odd item up on ePay to finance it. I was recently having a rummage through my surplus stuff and came across an SCX 'Vintage' Tyrrell P34 from 2000. In typical absent minded fashion I had pre-ordered one from Pendle Slot Racing, forgot all about it and bought another at a swapmeet, thus ending up with two. It fetched over £100 - twice the price of a 70s original and three times the price of a virtually identical Altaya version - why? Pity I didn't buy 10 of them!

Similarly, I auctioned off an early Slot.It. Audi R8C with equally spectacular results. The P34 was a limited edition of just 2000 but there are thousands more Audis out there. Good quality 60s Scalextric stuff would struggle to reach half the price I achieved for something just five years obsolete.

I wonder whether the high quality of modern slot cars is detracting from the value of the older models which are now, by comparison, just plastic toys. But then, if I knew the answers, I would probably be rich and retired by now!

And Finally - Seasons greetings to you all. Mrs Editor recently visited a well known supermarket and noticed Christmas yule log cakes for sale, complete with Santa and Reindeer packaging - they had a "best before date" of November 26th! The mind boggles. Is it me that's crackers - or the rest of the world?

Till next year

Brian

BY **ROB SMITH**



MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

email: factory@nsc.co.uk

With Christmas rapidly looming you would think that the shops would be stuffed with Scalextric to tempt Father Christmas. However, the opposite is true and new releases are thin on the ground with some of the year's most exciting releases not due until the last possible moment. However, we have had a couple of gems this month.

C2814 Mercedes 300 SLR Mille Miglia Fangio No 658

A new range for Hornby is the classic sportscar and the first release is the Mercedes 300 SLR. It's a stunner too - finished in flawless silver paint with bold 658 racing numbers. The car represents Fangio in the Mille Miglia of 1955 when he raced single handed. Hornby have moulded the car so that up to four different



variations can be made which is very clever when the only real livery differences were the number.

I particularly like the exhaust detail on the offside which is something which cannot be seen within the box. The exhausts thread out through apertures in the bodywork - very neat. The new wheels are also very good with detailed spokes and accurate spinners which I guess are stuck on separately.

So what should the Merc race against? YES, you should hold your breath!

H2836A McLaren M23 E. Villota

The current subscription car for the Spanish MiniAuto Slot magazine is the McLaren M23 of Emilio de Villota. Beautifully finished in white with red details and the logos of Iberia, the Iberian airline and Banco Iberico, this release looks really good. The livery is as raced in the 1977 Spanish Grand Prix where Villota came 13th. See www.grandprix.com for further

information. It still says 'Pond' on the engine covers - a mistake no-one noticed until much too late.

Surprisingly it comes in a cardboard Sport box and is branded SuperSlot, of course. It is a limited edition of 1500 pieces with the etched plate fitted to the chassis.

C1210 Super Street Racers

C2855W Mini Cooper Red

C2856W Mini Cooper Blue

This is a two car set from Toys-R-Us. The cars are unique to the set - C2855W red Mini Cooper and C2856W blue Mini Cooper. These are impact resistant cars and the set is in the shops now - initially at £79.99 and almost immediately reduced to £50. The cars are quite attractive with two white stripes across the bonnets and boots and two matching colour stripes across the white roof.

→→



C1211 Top Gear Powerlaps
C2661W Ford GT
C2857W Porsche GT3R

Another retailer special for 2007 is the Top Gear Power Racers set available exclusively through Marks and Spencer. It is interesting for several reasons.

Firstly the cars. Although the red Ford GT has been released both as a solo and a set car before, this time it contains a white painted driver figure with a white helmet to represent the Stig. The Porsche is a unique livery and it is absolutely stunning. It is a plain white road car with blue GT3RS logos down each side – just like the real thing. The wheels are also blue.

Secondly the hand throttles are tampo printed with an image of the Stig.

Thirdly, several of the track pieces are printed with the names of corners on the Top Gear track. The set contains curves of different radii and not just the usual R2 curves.

All in all a very interesting set. Look out next year for another Top Gear set in the catalogue with different cars and layout. Goodness only knows what this set might contain – so long as it is not - “a reasonably priced car”!

Happy Christmas

So that is it for another year and I hope you had a good year collecting in 2007. Not that the year is over yet and I still have over a dozen releases expected between now (20/11/07) and the end of the year. Hornby are in Top Secret mode as the 2008 range is finalised for the dealer launches in January and I have little hard evidence of what to expect. However there are enough hints to suggest some new digital items, several classic cars and some top notch modern hardware too. Look out for some free software on the Scalextric web site and major changes to the Enthusiasts Club too.

Best regards for Christmas and the New Year. ■





The latest additions to the N-digital range are due for release this side of Christmas... First of all there is a new adjustable throttle known as the “Progressive Controller” (N40307) which includes a 3-position knob. Used in combination with the two skill level settings on the N-Digital control unit, six different settings can be selected enabling the output of the controller to match the driving style, car or circuit resulting in smoother control of the car.

A new N-Digital Starter Set (N40102) should also reach stores in time for Christmas... With around twenty-five pieces of standard track, a pair of change-over straights and a control unit, at least five different layouts can be constructed. With two digital Porsche 997 cars included (one orange / one green), the challenge of digital racing can start straight from the box.

In addition to the above, Ninco are to release four new digital cars - again all Porsche 997s - equipped with N-Digital chips, designed as ‘ready-to-race’ N-Digital competition cars. Each will be of identical specification but in different colours; red, silver, blue or yellow, having individual reference numbers (50472 - 50475) to match.



Watch Out...

The first of the long-awaited Schlessler Raid cars is now available. I haven't had the opportunity to try one of these yet but they certainly look like they can handle the most complex of Raid circuits not only with ease but also with speed! As with all other vehicles from the Raid series, the Schlessler includes all-round ProShock suspension and is powered by the high-torque NC-7 motor. This first release is in the beautifully finished blue “Fox” livery (50499). ➤➤



Another to add to the Raid stable is the enormous Hummer 4x4. However, the first two releases may be more suited to road surfaces as they are the “Yellow” (50457) road car and the “County Sheriff” (50456) police car.

A couple of GT cars to look out for; the Nissan 350Z “Houzan” (50477) and yet another Porsche 997, this time reproducing the “Nupel Catalunya '07” (50478) race livery.

News of the latest Ferrari to be released in kit form is already circulating in cyber-space. Following on from the successful 360 Modena and F50, the next Ferrari kit will be in the form of the classic 250 Testarossa (50470). Made up from around 30 parts, this kit gives enthusiasts the opportunity to assemble their very own car with the same care and attention as when the original cars were assembled at Maranello during the golden age of motor-racing. Extra detail can easily be added before assembly and it is also easier to add up-rated parts during first assembly if desired.

Ninco World Cup

Mid-November saw the 2007 round of the Ninco World Cup, this year held at Stuttgart, the home of Porsche. The Ninco World Cup has quickly established itself as a truly international competition attracting teams from all corners of the globe. It is fantastic that people are prepared to travel from Argentina, Mexico and the United States of America as well as from a number of neighbouring European countries



for this annual 6-hour endurance race - but what a shame that the UK was not represented in spite of a place being reserved for a team! I am genuinely puzzled why a country with such a huge interest in racing and collecting slot-cars, fail to generate enough interest to hold a qualifying event, let alone submit a team; it's certainly not due to a lack of talented drivers. The event spanned a whole weekend alongside the Modell Sud Bau and Bahn exhibition. A superb track was laid out as two 8-lane circuits mirroring each other. Entirely built from standard Ninco track pieces, the two circuits came together for 9.6 metres across 16 lanes. Saturday was dedicated to whittling down entrants to just sixteen teams to take part in the final. With Germany being the host country, three places were allocated to the “home” teams and these were fiercely contested between eight German qualifiers. It was Team Italia (Tommaso Melioli and Mario Arturi) which secured pole position with a fastest qualifying time of 9.997s.



Ninco World Cup grid



Sunday's race saw the Belgian team get off to a flying start, taking the lead and holding on to it for the first four heats. However, as the race continued the Italian and Spanish teams edged ahead, exchanging the lead until Team Italia moved up to first place and stayed there for the final quarter distance. Throughout the six hours, racing was very close, particularly between three of the teams making their World Cup debut - Andorra, Mexico and Sweden - and the more experienced French and German teams. Team Italia finally took the chequered flag in first place with a massive 1787 laps, to be crowned Ninco World Cup Champions 2007. Team Spain finished just five laps behind with Team Belgium managing to take the final podium position. An impressive fastest lap of the race was achieved by Raul Sanchez (Team Spain) with 9.993s. Well done to all those who took part and also to the many people behind the scenes who made the event possible... Here's looking forward to 2008!

Slot City Competition Car

On-Line retailers Slot City have commissioned a limited edition (250 cars only) Porsche 997 in white with the firm's logo on the flanks. A picture can be seen in their advert below.

The owner of the firm, Carl, has generously donated one of the cars as an NSCC prize.

To win it all you have to do is answer the following question - What is Slot City's sister web site? Should you find this question too difficult a visit to the Slot City web site may prove fruitful!

All entries to the editor at the usual address by post, fax or email.

Closing date February 15th 2008

And finally, on behalf of Ninco and The Hobby Co, "Happy Christmas" to all our members! ■



**SHIPMENT
FROM SPAIN**
By Gareth Jex



email: shipmentfromspain@nsc.co.uk

Several new models this month and some prototype pics for you.

Ref 62590 Renault Alpine A110 '71 Monte Carlo Rally Classic – see review this month in the Journal.

Ref 62510 Peugeot 908HDi FAP. Based on the 5.5L diesel V12 as driven in the 2007 Le Mans by drivers Marc Gene, Jacques Villeneuve and Nicolas Minassian. A simple black and white livery, with red, white and blue French flags. RX42B (2007 version) 4 wheel direct drive, updated ARS sprung guide with lights. Ideal competition for;

Ref 62750 Audi R10 2006. Silver overall with red TDI side panels. RX 42B motor. ➡➡





Ref 62740 Seat Leon WTCC. Blue overall with wide yellow panels, as driven by Spanish driver T. Monteiro in the World Touring Car Championship.

Ref 62770 VW Tourag 2 'Lagos' #313. Another superb livery from the Dakar range of Raid cars. 4x4 with long arm guide and suspension etc. As driven by Carlos Aousa in the Lisbon/Dakar who led the event for the first few days, before an extended stay in a sand bank dropped them to 7th at the finish line.

There are also new SCX Digital versions of the Williams, Ferrari and McLaren F1 cars and a new F1 Digital set ref 10050. Lookwise the cars are identical to their non digital cousins that have been previously reviewed in the Journal. On the subject of SCX digital, would any member who has an SCX digital set and regularly uses it, please contact me via the normal channels – thanks.

As reported previously the SCX Ford Escort MK2 has been an ongoing development over

the last year or so. I have received prototype pics of the Cossack livery in both clean and muddy versions. See above. AEC inform me that they are due for delivery prior to Christmas and demand is high. Looks good to me, but I'm biased!

On a similar theme response to the SCX competition is a little slow, quite what we have to do to give away stuff I don't know, but depending on when this Journal hits your doormat you probably still have a chance to win a limited edition SCX car. How difficult is it? Email is fine if you miss the post deadline.

Personally I think it's been a very good year for us slot collectors and racers and SCX have really improved their quality and range of cars. I would like to see a few more liveries on some of the cars as the trend seems to be one release, one livery (excluding the follow on Altaya liveries etc). Keep up the good work for 2008, no doubt January will be quiet with nothing to report on until the rounds of toy fairs. Until then, festive greetings to one and all. ■

November seems to have been a mega busy month again with the last of this year's Wolves Classic meetings, the Penelope Pitlane 1.5 Litre "Half-Tonner" GP. I had already built a number of cars for this meeting and then found out that David Jones is now selling his fibreglass shells through his website at www.JohnDJones.com. I couldn't resist and bought a 1962 BRM V8 "stovepipe", 64 Ferrari Aero and 64 Brabham BT11 and have been busy kitting them out ready for the event. David has a considerable range including 1926 Parry Thomas Special, Birkin Bentley, 35 Alfa Bimotore, 35 Auto Union Rennlimousin, 37 C type, Mercedes W154, 54 and 56, Maserati 250F, Lotus 16, 18, 21 and 25, BRM P25, Lancia Ferrari and Lancia D50, Ferrari 500/625, Scarab F1, 4 and 8 cylinder F1 Porsches and the 63 ATS. Something for everyone and even if you can't build scratch chassis I have found the various Pitlane chassis fit almost all of them.

Sticking with Pitlane chassis you may recall last month Rob Hill had given me a prototype of his new solo venture's sidewinder brass chassis, well Steve has let me have a production version of Pitlane's own new sidewinder brass chassis. I still haven't got around to finishing them off and putting bodies onto them but I will let you see the finished articles - hopefully by next month. As the Pitlane chassis is designed to fit where a PCS32 would fit, I intend to do a back-to-back test and review in the near future. Penelope Pitlane also have some new chassis weights designed to fit inside their existing chassis, some beautiful, cast Bugatti wheels and finally, the long awaited tall alloy wheels and wire inserts for the Birkin Bentley to replace the old Scalextric type. I am also looking to build some semi-scratch chassis using the new slim-line motor and front and rear brass brackets and wheels from BWA in Canada, and also some similar items from Chas Keeling of SCD. ➡➡



Dave Jones' Bodied Lotus' 16, 21 and 25

At last my TRRC Delahaye sports is complete, well almost, I just need some decals to finish it off. Again this car is completed using a Pitlane chassis and wheels and white metal driver figure. Replacing the Delahaye on my to-build list are two new bodies from AA Bodies fibreglass range, these being the curvaceous 1964 Ginetta G4 and the equally lovely 1953 Lancia D54, hopefully I'll have these two little gems up and finished by next month. Talking to my friend Pete Emery I am informed that Spain's Mini-Replicas are producing some new stuff in the form of a Ford Puma, Suzuki Ignis and 1/24th scale Cosworth plus some re-releases of older items such as the Opel Astra Gsi and Lancer Evo 3, look out for Pete's review of the new Puma.



TRRC Delahaye 145 Sports and Dave Jones' bodied Mercedes W154

Protslot's Christmas 2007 releases competition is over and the winners correctly guessed that the two kits will be the Howmet TX Turbine LM68 and the Toyota 2000GT from the 1966 Sports car Grand Prix of Japan. (I was wrong on both counts!). If you can't wait for December, Pendle Slot Racing have a limited number of the Protslot 1970 Chevron B16s made for Bitume SR, and should have stock of the limited re-release (just 40) of Protslot's Ferrari 350 Can-Am. Pendle also have stock of a new Ferrari Dino resin body shell designed to fit the PCS32, which looks very tasty.

Maxi-Models have released their latest 1969 Ferrari 612P, this being the revised version

without the high wing as used by Chris Amon at Watkins Glen that year. This may be followed by the further revised 1971 version of the 612P as used by Jim Adams and now restored and in use at historic events. The Mark Donohue M6B "pinstripe" car is still in progress and will hopefully be available in the new year and, if sufficient interest is shown, the proposed M6 high wing prototype being tested by Bruce McLaren, with Robin Herd alongside him in the passenger seat, could be a release early next year. This looks like a wonderful model and I would urge any Can-Am fan to visit the Maxi-Models website and take a look at his excellent models and see if we can place enough pre-orders to make this fascinating model a production item.



Auto Art Porsche 911GT3 RTR, Spirit Courage and Power Slot Hummer "Robby Gordon".

Finally on the resin side, I have not yet purchased the latest OCAR World Classics kits, but plan to rectify this for next time. These include the 66 Alfa Romeo VSZ Rally, 67 Ferrari P2, Aston Martin V8 Vantage LM79, Rover SD1 and 66 Matra Djet. I understand from John at World Classics that the pending MMK cars mentioned last month, which include the De Tomaso Panterra GTS and the Facel Vega, have been delayed and are not now expected in the UK until January. Cesar at Slot Classic in Spain informs me that their new release, the 61 Ferrari 250GT SWB "Rob Walker Racing", is on its way to me. Sadly, if you haven't pre-ordered, all 500 examples of these exquisite models were sold in advance.



Auto Art 1/24th scale Gallardo Police Car and Ford Mustang

On to plastic then and Pendle Slot Racing now have stock of Power Slot's ready to race new Hummer H1 in both yellow Breitling and black Robby Gordon support vehicle liveries. NSR have now released plain white versions of the new Clio in both sidewinder and angle winder versions, so serious racers can get customising in their own colours. Spirit have just released the Courage C65 in red Pirelli livery and sporting lightweight racing body, calibrated axles, etc. Auto Art have a new 1/24th scale Lamborghini Gallardo Police Car and Murcielago hardtop, while in 1/32nd they have a Porsche 911 Carrera S road car and Porsche 911 (997) GT3 Super cup. Carrera themselves have two versions of the Porsche 911 GT3 RSR out in 1/32nd along with a new 1/24th Willys Coupé Hot Rod. Not available in the U.K. but a quick trawl of eBay found the two new Carrera Nascar "Cars of Tomorrow" digital releases, these being the Chevrolet Impala SS and the Dodge Avenger, both are available in two liveries so far and these digital cars work fine on analogue tracks although only with a resistive controller not with electronic ones. Slot.It have announced a new HRS2 chassis range with inline, sidewinder and angle winder options, these apparently will be lighter, more adaptable and quicker than the already rapid current HRS chassis. It would also appear that Slot.It's new electronic controller is ready for launch, it seems

to have adjustable everything and can be used on digital circuits as well. Prices are not yet published but they have promised to be competitive, although having just purchased one of the wonderful, but expensive Truespeed controllers I doubt I'll be forking out for another one this soon. Finally rounding out this month's release news is the new Lotus 16 from Cartrix, as with all their Historic Grand Prix range this comes on a Perspex plinth, wrapped in a protective cloth inside a presentation tin. However having just built my own from a Dave Jones shell I have to say the Cartrix one looks very average alongside it.



Carrera digital Chevrolet Impala and Dodge Avenger "Cars of Tomorrow"

Very finally, next year's dates and subject matters for the three Wolverhampton Classics meetings will be announced in next month's column, these meetings have proved hugely popular in 2007 and we are pleased that MRE, OCAR/World Classics, and Penelope Pitlane have all pledged continued support, and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to them for their backing. The first date confirmed is the MRE Classic Le Mans for cars up to and including 1961 to be held on Sunday May 11th 2008 at Wolverhampton. Have a great Christmas and a happy New Year, and until next time, keep it in the slot. ■



Since my last report two more cars have been released. One is a brand new model, the other a re-livery of an existing one. There's also news of a further two models due before Christmas and a look ahead into 2008.

Ferrari 350P "Team Gunston" #6 (RCR36)

First off a brand new model from Racer and although the real car is basically a modified P4, this is totally new. This example is modelled on

the car that was victorious at the Cape Town 3hrs Can-Am race in 1968, driven by Australian Paul Hawkins. The car is decorated in pale orange with a broad brown band flanked by gold pinstripes running down the centre and along both sills. Early release shots of this car showed it to be yellow, but as most of us know "Gunston" sponsored cars are orange. Looking at the one I now have in my collection, I can definitely say the colour IS orange, albeit a pale burnt shade. Having said that, the car does tend



to look more yellow when the dining room light is switched on. Under natural light the car looks absolutely gorgeous and stands out amongst the many red Ferraris in the cabinet. Detailing, as always, with Racer is top notch, which includes painted photo-etched grilles on the front wings, an air hose protruding from the bonnet and foot pedals which can be seen through the top of the cockpit. Other features are a securely mounted wing mirror on top of the windscreen, photo-etched side window frames and simulated duct tape around the headlights. A new feature with the driver figure is extra detail given to his face. This has been done with a decal and although Marco of Racer Emmegi is not totally satisfied with its appearance, it does give the driver more character. In fact, I first thought the detail had been hand painted, until I was corrected.

Looking ahead, Racer are planning to release two team Can-Am 1967 championship 350Ps next year, plus the possibility of another "Gunston" sponsored car.

Porsche 935 K3 "Coca Cola" #5 (RCR37)

This is the fifth Porsche 935 K3 to be produced by Racer and represents the car that finished 2nd in the Daytona 24hrs race in 1981. The "Akin Motorsport" entrant was driven by the US pairing of Bob Akin and Craig Siebert, with Englishman Derek Bell. The trio completed 695 laps, 13 laps behind the winning "Red Roof Inns" sponsored 935 K3. Incidentally this car has been previously modelled by Racer (RCR24). In all this was a good race for Porsche as they celebrated a 1, 2, 3 with a 911 SC finishing 3rd, albeit a further 51 laps behind the 2nd place car. The model itself is decorated mainly in red with white "Coca Cola" graphics and definitely looks like "it's the real thing". The only things missing are the ice cubes and lemon slice on the top. Like the Ferrari above, the driver has also been given the extra face detail. ➡



What's next?

Racer have announced the next two masterpieces to come off their production line, which is a pair of official team Ferrari 312Ps. At the time of writing they are being assembled and due for distribution around early December. Depending on which country you live in they could well be available by the time you read this:

RCR38A – Ferrari 312P “Official” #18 – 24hr
Le Mans 1969 – Rodriguez/Piper

RCR38B – Ferrari 312P “Official” #19 – 24hr
Le Mans 1969 – Amon/Schetty

Other News

At the Slotlandia show held in Milan recently, Racer were once again in attendance displaying some of their latest prototypes and forthcoming releases. One of the attractions of the show each year is the “Top Racer” event where all the top Italian slot drivers are invited to compete against each other using a specially prepared “Racer” slot car. This year eight Ferrari 312Ps were used, all sprayed in a different colour to represent the lane. Each car had been set up by a close friend

of Racer and the feedback from the drivers was that many didn't notice any difference in performance between each of the cars. The 312Ps were stripped down racing kit versions of their standard cars with the addition of a lightweight flat cockpit and vac-formed rear grille. The racing turned out to be very exciting with three drivers finishing very close together. To give you an idea of the pace of these cars, they were actually lapping faster than NSR's brand new Renault Clio. Racer are currently working on a racing kit version of the 312P, together with a 330P.

The Chaparral 2E is coming along nicely and although I reported last time that it was ready for production, it has nonetheless been delayed slightly. Despite this the car will be ready by January and Marco tells me it will be “very very nice”.

With the Nuremberg Toy Fair just round the corner, Racer are preparing their line-up for 2008. Although they are keeping everything under wraps, I have been told there are lots of surprises in store and I for one cannot wait! ■

As I settle down to write the last column of this year at the end of November, despite having done this for two years now, I still never know exactly what I am going to write about or what the theme of the month will be, until I have done a lot of reviewing of past finished auctions for the month. This month may be a little easier as there were some attractive models being set free for the big game Scalextric collector to hunt down and for me to report on as Christmas buying gathers apace.

Looking back on the past year it seems the eBay slot market still remains strong in the auction sale format but it does not seem to have grown as much as I would have thought, as at the time of writing, the listing numbers are around 7000 - much in line with the past two festive seasons. I would have thought we would have seen some growth in listing numbers over this time period but it may be down to the fact that more listings are in the shop format now. At this point in time I have not fathomed how to get total numbers on shop sales and monitor them easily. I have said before that shop items only appear in your results if your search results in around 20 listings being found. For example my search on "Slot.It" for any of those cars returned 65 items with no sign of the limited, sought after, Newman model. I then put in "Slot.It. 956" and the auction listings only returned 1 result but several more were listed in the shop listings, including one for the Newman car from one of the top sellers. Mind you it was no cheap Buy It Now price but still, it was there. My tip for this month then is to specifically search in some of the top sellers' shops as well if you are after something specific or add more detail to your search and you will find items that don't appear if you just look at the auction listings. There can be a bonus as well in that the shop listing BIN price is lower than if you had

chased an auction for the same car from the same seller. However, having said all that about the shop side of things, it could be listings are being subdued a bit by the fact that eBay have increased their auction ending fees for all toys from last month until the end of the year and are now taking 8.2% of the sale price up to £30, plus the listing fee which is something many sellers may have overlooked. This does not leave a lot of room for profit on sales for some dealers I would have thought. I am sure sellers are hoping the fee will go back to 5.25% in January.

Auto Union

Waiting for that elusive car seems at times like waiting for a bus. As the saying goes, you wait ages for one and then several come along almost at the same time. Well it could be described as Auto Union bus month as several yellow ones made an appearance over the past month which may have been on the back of the £520 sale reported last month. Top of the shop in terms of condition and price went to a MIB ex shop stock example that made £1519 on a Sunday evening and was the one I said I would report on last month. The same seller had some other interesting MB ex shop stock (some prices listed below) that is reported to have come from the closure of a model shop. So there is still stuff around but there can not be many of these stores left now can there? At around the same time a boxed used example but in very good condition and riding the wave of the MB example price was listed at £699 and went to a best offer of £550. A week later another boxed example but not in as a complete original state fetched £371.66. A very good original example but with only an outer box and no inner made £676.66. At time of writing there is another very nice example listed already over the £300 mark.

⇒



Porsche GT3

I have reported earlier this year the willingness of buyers to chase the prices up of the Red Bull Scalextric models but it seems that several other liveries have been attracting fanatics lately as well. Prime examples are the road livery Racer club cars issued a couple of years back now with the black model C2360 making a whopping £245 and another went for £200 BIN. The yellow partner car C2361 proved less desirable making a more modest £113 and £72. I do think there is a bit of festive "must get this car at all costs" in these prices. They all went to different buyers, not new buyers at that, and a plain white Porsche C2629 made €150 as well so maybe these are the ones to sell now while the market is hot? Mind you I seem to remember picking up a plain white Porsche for around the £30 mark a couple of months ago, so be patient if you want one as they do turn up at a decent price eventually. I have had one or two nice touches lately and have included a couple of items in the price list below. Will you spot the bargains?

Carrera

Just a quick note for the Mercedes fans out there to tell you that there appears to have been a set of road cars commissioned for an International car exhibition in Germany. I have not noticed these before but the set of models all appear to be in the same black finish and model the GL, CL, E and SL class of cars. All limited to 1000 examples, the price of £60 on UK eBay may be a little high for some of you but they can be found cheaper on German eBay if you search there.

Slot.It. Roundup

Interestingly enough there is one seller doing some reliveries of many makes of cars and frankly it must be a labour of love for the return you get on all the time and effort put in. A couple of nicely painted Slot.It. Porsches have caught the buyers' eye though and fetched some reasonable prices this month, namely a yellow fantasy Eterna livery and a fantasy eBay tribute

livery both at around the £50 mark. Back to the real thing - the Newman got pipped to the top spot when I reviewed prices this month by the Kouros Mercedes at a €125 BIN price, though generally the Kouros is attracting bids slightly lower but prices have hardened here since last month it seems. The later Audi models are still breaking the £50 barrier regularly, even the relatively plain test black model. However, the Jaguar and Lancia remain unloved currently price wise and are still widely available anyway.

This month's prices

Prices as listed and spelt on UK eBay unless stated, with the time and auction ending day:

Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles SHREDDER C134 £4.20 (MB example on Sunday night which I know Brian will like!)

SCALEXTRIC C14 MATRA GP MIB SHOP STOCK £92 (Monday night)

RARE SCALEXTRIC CK/2 PORSCHE 904 SHOP STOCK £225.56 (ex shop stock again but with a couple of bits missing as pointed out in auction on Monday night)

ULTRA RARE SCALEXTRIC CK1 KIT A.C COBRA STILL SEALED £411 (Shrink wrapped contents ex shop stock again but showed some storage wear to edges of box on Sunday night)

2 SCALEXTRIC TRIANG A265 CAR CONTROLLER LOT2 £5.99 (Ex shop stock MB examples BIN price on Monday night)

Scalextric Alfa Romeo from Vintage Car Racing Series £510 (Yellow boxed French model that fetched rather more than the seller anticipated judging by comments on the listing on Sunday night)

FERRARI SCALEXTRIC €1015.99 (Yellow 250 GT unboxed model, looked to be all complete and in good condition on French eBay Thursday night)

COMPLETE Collection Scalextric CATALOGUES ALL 48 £500 (Featured auction but went unsold at this starting price)

E5 Aston Martin Marshals Car, ultra rare red, french. £450 (Listed at £450 and only one bidder on Sunday morning)

FLY PORSCHE 917K LE MANS 1970 - GULF - C85 VERY RARE £102.08 (MB example on Sunday night)
 NINCO Polo Position £10 (Used Laptimer computer on Sunday lunchtime)
 NEW SCALEXTRIC CAR FERRARI 375 TINPLATE RARE C2782A £21.79 (Mint model split from 50th Anniversary pack on Friday night)
 Scalextric £2.99 (Not best description perhaps for a very good example of a Vintage Roar record on Monday lunchtime with only 1 bidder)
 scalextric super 124 1/24 Jaguar e-type New and Un-used £1050 (Lovely example on Thursday night)
 scalextric triang car 1950s aprox tinplate needs restor £387.70 (Blue Healey Shell with front wheels and gimbal only for restoration on Wednesday morning)
 SCALEXTRICS - TINPLATE AUSTIN HEALEY SPORTS – SCARCE \$763.00 (UK seller but listed in \$ with motor but no front bumper on Monday night.)
 Scalextric Set Number 1 - Rare - Late 1950's £322 (Tinplate set all complete apart from Shell oil bottle on Monday night)
 SCALEXTRIC TYRRELL P-34 "BANCO OCCIDENTAL" €436 (Unboxed on Spanish eBay on Thursday night.
 EXIN TT. PATROL REPSOL. REF.7304. EN CAJA ORIGINAL. €365 (MB example on Spanish eBay on Sunday night)
 French Green Bentley CC-64 Scalextric Tri-ang Excellent £238.99 (Unboxed example on Sunday night)
 COX Ferrari Dino Mint unbuilt kit. £650 (BIN price on Tuesday morning)
 Rare ELDON 12v Top Eliminator Drag Strip Set MIB \$1026 (2 Drag car set but outer box showed signs of rips and creasing on Thursday night US eBay)
 RARE SCALEXTRIC VINTAGE MM/A233 ENTRANCE BUILDING £13.03 (Unboxed with one entry barrier broken on Sunday night)
 james bond db5 scalextric car/relisted £138.78 (Not in good condition on Monday afternoon)

Scalextric Modelzone C2545 Mustang Boss 302 No.3 Ltd Ed £132 (Another month with a bumper price on a Sunday afternoon. Another went for £122 during month.)
 Scalextric James Bond Box Set 1960s Very Rare £276 (Basically worn box and inner with controllers and barriers on Sunday night)
 1971 Strombecker Ski-Bob Snowmobile Race Set w/box \$250 (Excellent hardly used set with BIN price on Monday night on US eBay)
 Vintage Scalextric Fencing, Gates and Flags £88 (7 white fences, 6 flags and 2 gate units on Sunday morning)

2007 Summary

Summing up this year then I would say it has been another good year slotwise on eBay though it is very competitive out there as more and more people are realising that eBay is a good way to get rid of collectable items like Scalextric. It is also apparent that eBay is still being used as a medium to shift digital sets in the run up to Christmas that were "liberated" from a lorry earlier in the year so just be wary if you are in the market for one of those items.

It is increasingly hard for collectors to get a real gem of a bargain but it is still possible with patience and if you do your homework. I would say though - don't forget about the swapmeets as there are bargains to be had there and the chat and banter is something that can't be replicated on eBay. Lastly, do not forget all the dealers that advertise in the Journal who often do an equally good deal with excellent service. There are some cracking on-line deals available if you take off your eBay blinkers.

But the one lesson I have learnt from this year is that as more obscure and rare stuff continues to come onto the eBay scene you need to learn about sniping as that is increasingly the way these things are won. If you want any further help on that, drop me a line by all means at ebaywatch@nsc.co.uk

I wish you all festive greetings and a Happy New Slot Year. ■





email: flyonthewall@nsc.co.uk

Another 12 months has passed and what a year it has been for "Fly" collectors. I have quickly gone over the summary sheet I keep and counted 107 new models and sets that I have reported on during 2007. That works out at an average of approximately nine per month, with this month being no exception on 11.

Standard Releases

Chevrolet Corvette C5R "Sporza" #7 (88280)

Belcar 2006 championship winner, driven by Anthony Kumphen and Bert Longin. The car is decorated in a putrid pale green with pale blue stripes and although it sounds disgusting it actually doesn't look too bad, but will probably not appeal to diehard Chevy fans.

Porsche 934 "Vallant" #7 (88313)

This is the latest in the racing kit series. Presented in the latest style box with all the parts needed (included spares) to construct an evo-3 racer. The car modelled is the one that took part in the 1977 6 hour race at Dijon, which formed part of the World Championship Of Makes series. It was driven by Bob Wollek, Jurgen Barth and Reinhold Jost and is decorated mainly in white with red and orange pinstripes running around the bonnet, over the roof and along the lower sills.

Porsche 911 GT1 98 (88304)

As reported last month, Fly are now entering into the plain white kit market. This is the first in the series and is packaged in the same style

boxes as the above evo racers and the recent duo kits. It is what it says on the box - a kit. The box contains a white body with all its detail parts in a separate compartment. All that's required is for the purchaser to paint the body shell (if required) and assemble. The best thing about these cars is that they are nearly 50% the price of a standard model.

Porsche 935 K3

In 1976, Porsche introduced a brand new car onto the racing scene. It was based on their road going 911 turbo and given the customary numerical name. The 935 was born and duly entered into the newly formed Group 5 FIA World Championship Of Makes series. Initially as a works only "Martini" sponsored entrant, the car went on to conquer all before it and won the inaugural 1976 season. During this time the front of the car changed to its flat nosed configuration and in 1977 was offered to private teams. However, these teams had their noses put out of joint when they subsequently found out they would be up against the upgraded factory 935/77s. These though proved to be unreliable and the privateers gained an upper hand. In 1978, the wildest and largest of the 935s were produced by the factory and were known as the "Moby Dick" version. The works team lost interest in the car after this season and for 1979 it was left to specialist tuning companies like "Kremer" of Cologne to continue its development. The 935 went on racing right up to the mid 80s in the United States and won prestigious races like the Daytona 24hrs, Sebring

12hrs and even had an outright victory at Le Mans. The car also managed to score enough international victories to make sure that Porsche won every season in the World Championship Of Makes series up to 1981.

This much anticipated brand new model from Fly is now available worldwide and, as we have come to expect, detailing is of a very high standard. I especially like the detailed louvres on the bonnet and the weathered twin exhaust pipes protruding from the rear. To enable a full detailed interior and, in keeping with its real-life counterpart, the motor is situated behind the rear axle. At the time of writing three models are available with many more liveries planned:

"Red Roof Inns" #9 (88268)

24hr Daytona 1981 winner, driven by the American pairing of Bob Garretson and Bobby Rahal with Englishman Brian Redman. It is decorated in royal blue with gold and red stripes running around the front of the car and along each side. A nice finish is the gold detailed BBS brake cooling wheel covers. Many thanks to Terry at Gaugemaster Controls for providing me with the excellent photograph.

"Kremer Racing" #42 (88273)

24hr Le Mans 1980, driven by Rolf Stommelen, Tetsu Ikusawa and Axel Plankenhorn. Despite the 935 being an overall successful car, this particular one had an off day and failed to finish the race. The car is decorated in an eye-catching white with a pink bonnet, roof, rear wing and rear quarter panels.

"Jagermeister" #2 (99087)

DRM championship Spa Francorchamps 1980, driven by John Fitzpatrick. Commissioned by Foroslot of Madrid, the first special edition 935 and surely not the last. It is limited to 500 units and presented in a cardboard presentation hinged box. The car and box are predominantly orange. It is only available in Spain, although I do know a small number are being officially imported into the UK. Rumour has it that a standard edition model is also in the pipeline, although it will be from a different race. This happened with the "Jagermeister" BMW M1 released earlier this year, where a limited edition version was released first, closely followed by a standard edition.

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Racing Films Collection

Porsche 911 RSR "Martini" #8 (99037)

Fourth in the series of special edition cars presented in a book style display box, together with a DVD and booklet. This particular release is focusing on the 100th anniversary of the classic open endurance road race, the Targa Florio. Founded in 1906 by wealthy pioneer race driver and automobile enthusiast, Vincenzo Florio, the event has become as famous as the 24hr Le Mans and the Mille Miglia. Between 1906 and 1954 the race was held as an open event with a seven year break from 1941 to 1947 due to the Second World War. From 1955 to 1973 it formed part of the World Championship, but continued thereafter until 1977 as a national event. The race as it was known ended in 1977 due to a fatal accident, but continued as a rally event. The DVD included, which is titled "100 Anni di Targa Florio", is a documentary charting the race's history. It can be viewed in English, Italian, Spanish and Chinese and has an "extras" feature which includes loads of still photographs. The accompanying 14 page booklet is worth having alone, as it too contains many photographs. Oh! nearly forgot, the car included in the set is modelled on the Porsche 911 that won the 1973 event, driven by Herbert Müller and Gijs van Lennep. It is decorated in silver with the familiar red and blue "Martini"

stripes around the doors, bonnet and rear wing. In fact the car is virtually identical to the previously released "Martini" 911, which formed part of the Team 11 (6hr Vallelunga 1973) set.

Duo Kits

BMW M3 E30 (88302)

24hr Spa Francorchamps 1988 "Camac" #63 and "Boyaca" #22. The "Camac" car has been previously released as a limited edition model (E1701) and is the car presented in RTR format, mounted in a standard crystal case. The "Boyaca" car is a fully detailed body shell and can be mounted onto the accompanying RTR's chassis. It is decorated mainly in white with blue and red graphics on the bonnet and sides.

Bikers in Cars

BMW M3 E30 "Jägermeister" #20 (99067)

Yet another special edition series, this time dedicated to motorcycle racers who have occasionally raced in cars. The Australian 1987 500cc world champion Wayne Gardner, whose nickname is "The Wollongong Whiz", is the subject of this release. The car is modelled on the M3 he drove in the DTM championship at Hockenheim in 1992 and is decorated in the usual orange livery. In fact the car is very orange indeed, including the interior and looks like





something straight out of the “Tango” soft drinks advertisement. An extra feature on this car is the extended aileron on the rear wing. Presented in a standard crystal case on a white plinth and complemented with a picture backing card of Wayne riding his 500cc Honda.

Special Editions

Held over from last month are the following two releases: -

Renault 5 Turbo “Red Renault” #15 (99090)

Rally Costa Brava 1984, driven by J. Frigola and C. Bou. A commissioned model forming part of the Campeonato de Espana de Rallye Catalunya collection. It is limited to 500 units, with each model having a numbered picture backing card and is only available in certain Spanish outlets. The model is decorated in the Renault team colours of the period and this is the third “Red Renault” liveried Renault 5 to come from Fly and should prove to be very collectable. The other two being the standard

edition, but hard to find, A1201 and the Carlos Sainz limited edition, E1201.

Porsche 911 SC “U32 Hobbies” #4 (99091)

A much rarer model this one, being limited to only 300 units. It has been commissioned for the Spanish model shop “U32 Hobbies” fourth anniversary and again is only available through certain Spanish outlets. It is decorated in red with a white bonnet, roof and doors and mounted on a standard plastic plinth in white with a numbered picture backing card.

And Finally...

I would like to wish all NSCC members a Merry Christmas and I hope your slot car wishes come true, especially if they are “Fly” ones. Also, my thanks go to Terry and Ian at Gaugemaster Controls for their assistance and to the various members who contacted me with information and support during the previous 12 months. ■

I Have Plenty Of Time To Build That Car!

Kit bashing an Airfix Triumph Herald with a Pendle PCS32 chassis

By Pete Emery

I often think my nickname should be 'last minute dot com'! I have lost track of the number of times that I have thought, 'oh there is plenty of time to prepare a car for the 'Aberdeen Autumn Cakes event' or something similar only to find that the event is tomorrow... And even if I start something in good time I manage to lull myself into thinking that, having started it, of course it will be ready on time.

I have just got to be kidding myself, most of the time I get complaints from the corner marshals that the paint on my car is still wet!

With the Wolverhampton Club Classic Saloons event on the horizon I decided to start early and get the cars sorted in plenty of time. Good plan.

What to build

The meeting was running two classes for pre 1980 saloons; Scratch built and Pendle PCS32/Slot Classic chassis cars. I decided to enter the PCS chassis class on the basis that I don't mind losing at racing toy cars but with the likes of Mac Pinches, Dick Smith, Don Stanley and Mick Kerr in the scratch built class I would be on a hiding to nothing taking on these fast guys. Why I thought that the competition in the Pendle PCS class would be any less is beyond me! If anything this class was even more fearsomely competitive and the Capri of winner Andy Tyrer was ballistic and qualified 8th overall ahead of a lot of fast scratch build cars.

I decided I would build at least two or three cars and then see how they panned out. An A2M resin Mercedes 220 shell on a Slot Classic chassis soon proved to be too heavy and too prone to falling over so that was 'parked' early in the proceedings – a pretty car though. My

chosen racer was a resin bodied Jaguar 420G powered by a Scale Auto 35K motor with Slot.It gears, Ninco guide and NSR wheels/tyres. The 'wedding car' or 'white whale' was quite a beast and turned out to be pretty quick. My final build was however aimed squarely at the Concours d'Elegance aspect of the competition.

I had discovered that the Pendle chassis fitted nicely into the Airfix Triumph Herald body, needing only a very slight mod to narrow the chassis to enable it to clear the Herald's firewall. As the Airfix model has an opening bonnet (hood to our US friends) and a detailed replica 948 cc motor to fit under it, my challenge was to try and keep as much of this detail as possible. ➡➡





If you build it they will...

I hunted around my bits box and turned out some 3/32nd threaded axles and some nice alloy wheels of 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) diameter, 3/16th inch (5 mm) wide. I think that the wheels and axles are of Super Shells origin from the 1960s but I cannot be sure. However, with a 3/16th wide tyre, traction would clearly be a challenge. The nice folk at RS Slot came up with some Ortmann tyres that fitted the wheels, just needing to be glued and then trued to a sensible size. The rear axle, bearings, crown gear were all Slot. It items as was the motor, a pretty ancient but 'very well run in' V22 but with more than enough grunt for this application. The motor had come from a Slot. It sidewinder installation so I was a bit lazy and merely fitted the Slot. It pinion onto the remaining shaft without bothering to remove the existing pinion. The guide was a standard Slot. It item with their soft copper braids. I glued the PCS step2 'wings' in place with superglue and mounted some 1 mm lead sheet on them, filling the remaining space with some black foam for neatness. That's that – the chassis built and running.



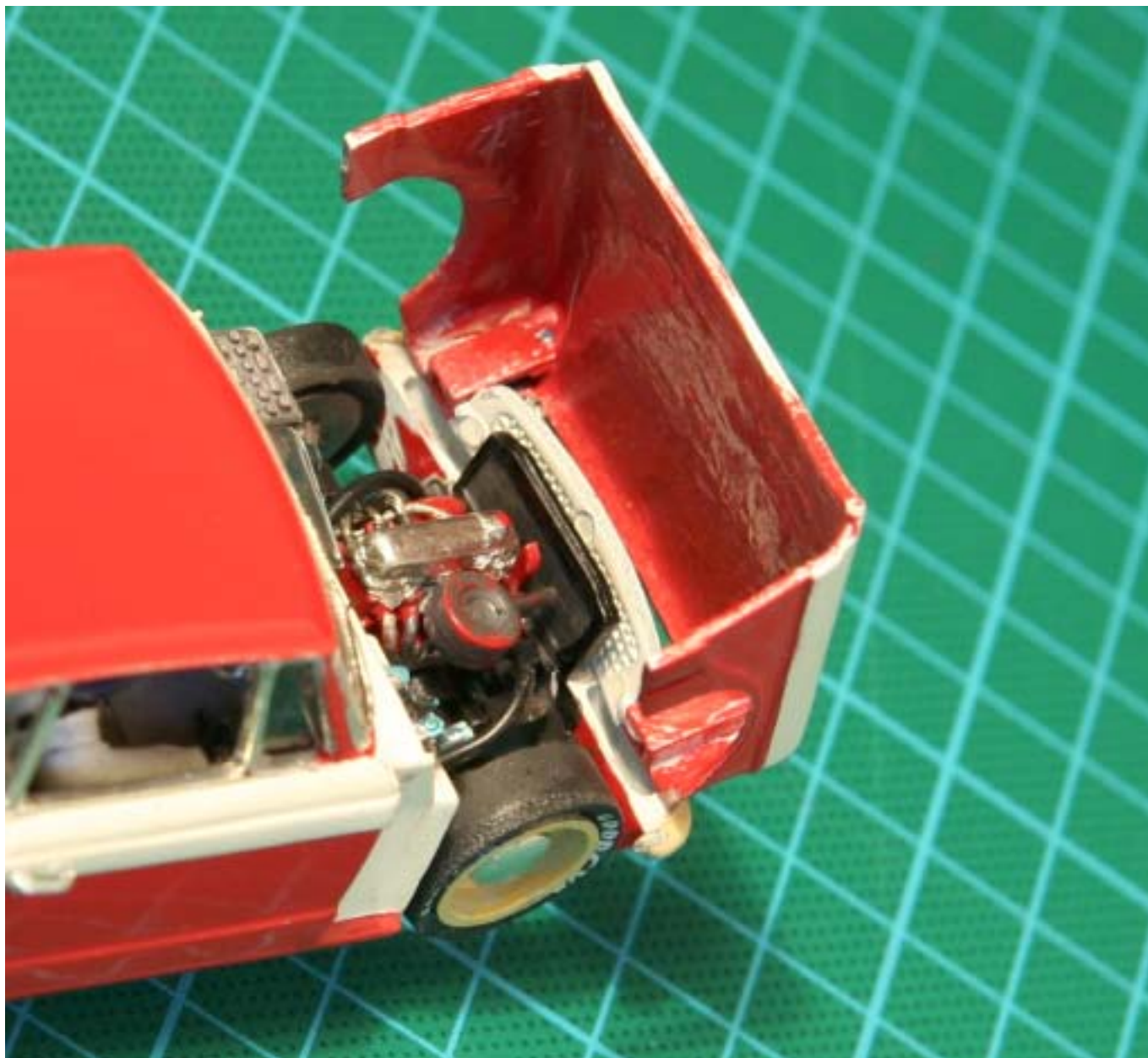
Interior ministrations

I tend to have a standard way of fixing the Pendle chassis to kit bodies which works for me. I fit a length of plastic square section tube across the body lined up with the front and rear PCS chassis fixing holes. This is glued in with superglue, sometimes backed up with two pack epoxy for strength. The chassis is aligned and holes drilled for the fixing screws. A piece of plasticard fitted to the rear apron tidies things up nicely. For the interior a piece of thin plasticard was cut to fit the inside of the body and this was then finished off with the kit dashboard, the tops of the kit seats and a Scalextric driver. This was all treated to a nice period beige colour before a piece of equally beige 'carpet' from a 1/24th Tamiya kit was fitted to complete the job. The interior is held in with tape front and rear allowing easy removal.

Body beautiful

After the body fit had been sorted I sprayed the body shell and bonnet with a Halfords' grey plastic primer rattlecan before masking the shell up for the two-tone red and white scheme. Once again I used Halfords' rattlecans this time in Fiat racing red and Citroën Alpine white. Once the paint was set I put on a couple of coats of Johnsons Klear to protect it and steeled myself for the next challenge, a first for me - applying bare metal foil to the window frames- aarrgghh!

Now the use of BMF is something that I have admired on other people's models but not dared to try myself until now and guess what? It is not as bad as you might think. OK my results are far from perfect but they still look good and far better than paint would look so I am now a convert. Hey, a sheet of bare metal foil, a painted body shell and a cocktail stick and I can be happy for hours.....



I did add the chrome and black rubbing strips down the side of the model but decided it looked a bit cluttered so I removed them.

At the front of the chassis the Airfix front under bumper panel grille and radiator were a perfect fit to the chassis rails so were simply superglued into place. I then made up some strengthening pieces with 2 mm plasticard and glued them in place before painting them black to merge in with the PCS chassis. The Airfix kit engine was treated to a nice shiny BMF valve cover on the top and some rather crude plug leads before being trimmed to fit and glued into position. The bonnet clips onto the standard Airfix kit mounts and appears to be quite secure enough for racing provided you don't get a clout

from your fellow racers. The number plates were from the bits box as was the VIP fuel filler cap to replace the kit item that dropped onto the carpet never to be seen again.

In conclusion

So how did I do in the competition did you ask? Despite arriving back from the west coast of America less than 24 hours before the event, my Jaguar 420G 'wedding car' qualified 3rd and finished 4th in the Pendle PCS class despite the best efforts of a very jetlagged pilot throwing it off track every other lap so all was not lost. And how well did the Herald fair in the Concours part of the proceedings? Well, it didn't. When I tried the car on my home track made of ➡➡



Scalextric Sport sections it was a hoot to drive, power sliding around like a 'good un'. However when I took the car onto the Wolves wood track before the event it was clear that the car was generating too much grip and rolling over on the tighter turns even at dead slow speeds. I did not have another test session as I was off on holiday for the two weeks running up to the event. Come race day I tried three different rear tyres including some really skinny 40 year old Airfix ribbed tyres. The Airfix tyres made the car un-

driveable with no grip at all and the other choices made the car grip and roll as before. As the Wolves rules quite rightly require Concours entries to run at least once during the event I scratched the Herald from the Concours, a bit of a shame after all the effort. Ah well never mind, I will blood the Herald in competition at the Wye Valley Stages Rally event in November where the combination of nimble handling and small size should be a boon on some of the really tight, twisty stages! ■





New Webmaster

If the NSCC web site (www.nsccl.co.uk) looks a bit different since you last visited, well I have volunteered to re-invigorate the site and keep it updated after a long period of inactivity. Like most web sites it's a work in progress; hope you like the new look.

Thanks are due to previous webmasters Adrian and Mark for their efforts in getting all the information up there. I wouldn't fancy starting the site from scratch and most of the information from previous editions of the site is still there but just presented differently.

The Chairman and Committee hope to make the site work harder for the Club in the future, both as a resource for existing members and a place for newcomers to the hobby to find out more about us so, under their guidance, expect some new features to be added in due course.

There is also now a direct link from the site to our discussion forum on www.slotforum.com which has in itself been given a small make-over. If you haven't ever ventured in there do pop along and join in the chat with other members and would-be members.

For now the priorities have been to bring the calendars up to date, make the site a bit more search-engine friendly, but above all (and keeping in mind the tools and skills readily and economically available to the club) to make the site easier to maintain. If a site becomes unreliable as a source of information, it will begin to fall into disuse so it's important to try and keep it fresh. Search engines also give better rankings to sites with recent material too. I create and maintain web sites as my day job, so I am nearly always sat at a computer with the site ready to load on my screen to make changes. The layout should be flexible enough to be updated quickly and easily, in and around other work.

So if your club or event is mentioned on the site do check and let me know if anything needs changing. It would also be good to hear from members about other things that they would like to see (or not see) on the site, for example, ways of buying, selling, and swapping cars amongst members, a members' gallery for their car collections and circuits, race results, or maybe an NSCC "merchandise" shop - to name just a few. There are plenty of other possibilities that could be investigated for cost and practicality so do send over your ideas, and we look forward to being able to implement some in the coming months.

May the cornering force be with you.

Martin Kay

Journal Binders

For those of you who like to keep your copies of the Journal, as opposed to using them to line the cat's litter tray, we have a fresh stock of binders available. They are made by the same firm who supply "Racer" magazine and are in a darkish shade of blue. The copies are retained by stretch cords and the binder can contain 12 issues; year stickers are also provided. We would prefer to distribute them at swapmeets but, if all else fails, then they are available by post.

Prices are as follows:

Collected - £5

By Post - UK - £6.50

Overseas Post - at cost, please enquire.

As they will be posted in my spare time please allow 28 days for delivery.

Cheques should be made payable to the NSCC and sent to the editor at the address on page 1. If you wish to pay by credit card then fax your details - DO NOT send them by email! If you want to collect then please order in advance so we know how many to take to the swapmeet.

Brian

Swapmeet Roundup

By Roger Barker

Bishop's Stortford - Phoenix Rising

I was one of the few who attended the return of the Stortford Meet last year. Those of you that read my report will remember that the event was praised for its location, the superbly refurbished venue, not to mention the vast array of quality slot ephemera that was available on the day. The disappointment of last year was lack of table numbers and, more worryingly, the lack of people through the door which had led many to ask the question, was this swapmeet going to wither and die and had the internet claimed its biggest swapmeet scalp to date? The meet for 2007 was going to be decisive for this once "Juggernaut" slot event, a real now or never, live or die scenario.

The word on the street before the event was mixed, some traders were reluctant to attend, the host (that's Brian to you and me) was concerned at the lack of trade tables sold for the event despite putting on a brave face. I know Brian had put in a lot of extra work promoting the event and encouraging traders to attend. In the end I believe fifteen stall holders made the trip and collectively filled the hall with a mightily impressive array of all things slot, the like of which I will speak of later.

My early morning journey to the meet was, as usual, in the company of my friend Steve Vickers - a man whose knowledge of the subject of slot cars and razor sharp wit as ever kept me entertained on the long journey south. Steve had a good feeling about the day and he is seldom wrong. We arrived in fine fettle to be greeted by the usual suspects. Mark Scale was on day two of a three day slot car odyssey - day one being Sandown Park, followed by Stortford, followed by a trip somewhere way south to acquire another collection. Steve Cannon was going to make it this year (he had two failed attempts last year to get to the meet), Jason had made the long trip down from sunny Lincolnshire, Bob Bott too (Bob arrived fashionably late as usual!).

Mr and Mrs Norman disgorged an interesting array of goodies into the meet, not forgetting Paul Blowes and Graeme Thoburn.

The vehicles were unpacked and the goods rolled into the hall. A wonderful array it was too, not least the most stunning French Bentley set I have ever seen - needless to say it didn't stay on a table for long; a yellow Auto Union also changed hands very quickly. An absolutely fabulous mint yellow Ferrari Berlinetta was also on offer, together with 1/24th cars of most denominations. There were some odd things around too, not least the pre-production blue Austin Maestro picked up on the day.

So the stallholders came, but did the public? Last year it was less than fifty, this year? Over one hundred through the door and traders reported brisk to excellent trading. The public came and the public seemed to like to spend-and spend! In the words of that great media sales icon Barry Scott (who? I hear you say) "BANG... AND THE SWAPMEET WAS BACK".

Towards the end of the meet came the now traditional "Brian's Auction". You have to be there to appreciate one of these, but what starts off as an organised number of lots, metamorphoses into whatever Brian feels like taking off his table and selling! - not to mention the free yellow torch you got for being a winning bidder (some only wanted the torch!).

Just a word about our host for the day - Brian is probably one of the oldest dealers on the circuit now and the effort he put into this event to make it happen was, by any stretch of the imagination, tremendous. I think he tried to ensure that everyone got something out of the day. I believe that both he and the event deserve to be supported in future years. I wish him well with this event and hope it continues to go from strength to strength. I for one will be there next year - hope to see you all there too!



Orpington Swapmeet ... or...Orpington goes into Orbit...

Following on from the Stortford meet just a few weeks earlier, my “Slot spirits” having been somewhat buoyed by the occasion, I could hardly wait for this meet to come around.

The organiser Phil Smith has carefully nurtured this event over the past few years and is now beginning to reap the rewards of those labours. The event has a real international flavour to it, dealers from mainland Europe being well represented, along with the regular UK contingent and a good selection of traders who predominantly attend the southern meets.

Phil had started these meets on a Saturday, due to a lack of availability of the hall on Sundays, but patient negotiation has brought about a change of day for the event to a Sunday from now on. I travelled down to the area on the Saturday and stayed over at a nearby hostelry with my trusted friend Steve Vickers. The conversation, other than the bizarre soccer result in Tel Aviv was very much focused on what kind of impact the move to a Sunday would have on the meet. After several glasses of the local guest ale our conclusions were that it

could only be good for the event. We could not have imagined how the move to the Sunday would transform the event.

We arrived at a very blustery Crofton Halls at around 8:00am to be greeted by an extremely busy car park. Deals were already being done in the backs of cars before the doors were open! The signs were good. Phil managed to get doors open for the traders a few minutes earlier than normal, and pretty soon the hall was filling with stallholders disgorging their wares into the meet. Table sales had obviously been excellent, even the stage area was pressed into full use.

After setting up my table, I took a moment to look round the hall and the view, particularly from the stage area, was a magnificent sight - a room full of slot cars, and all kinds of slot paraphernalia! I have to say at this moment, for anyone who has not “stood” a meet, it is something that you should try, just to experience the early morning chaos that goes to make these events so special...and to those stallholders who support these events, I think you are worthy of special mention, because without your efforts, ➡



not all of which is driven by personal avarice, contrary to beliefs held in some quarters, none of these meetings would be possible, no matter how big or small your table, your efforts are truly appreciated, both by the organisers, fellow stall holders and not least the visiting members and general public who attend.

As the doors opened to the public the hum in the room got noticeably louder, the people kept coming ...and coming...and coming, over the course of the day, a fraction above 200 people through the door...Orpington has lift off! This number of people into the meet in my opinion is a major breakthrough for this event, catapulting it into the realms of Milton Keynes (Feb), only Swindon seeing substantially more through its doors. There was something for everyone at this event, from the very new, to the very old (no not you Mr Chairman!), and just about everything in between! Traders reported generally good sales, and it was great to see some good old fashioned swapping going on! It is still allowed you know!

As usual, people were trawling in the traders scrap trays, looking for elusive spares. On a personal note I picked up some really useful spares to rebuild several 60s classics, which should be ready for Dudley in December...please note that several of the stall holders are attending Dudley on the Saturday evening before the meet for an impromptu Christmas gathering (if you are interested in further details, please contact me). I don't know if this is another first, no doubt someone will let me know!

It has to be said that this was a superb event, Phil is someone who gives much to this hobby and deserves the success that his work in developing the event is now reaping. The Stortford and Orpington meets have been quite telling, I just wonder if the tide is beginning to turn back towards the live event as opposed to the sterility of the internet. It is true to say that both have a contribution to make to the hobby, but I have a sneaking suspicion that live meets are starting to make a comeback. If you don't believe me you should come to Dudley and experience it for yourself. ■



The Great NSCC Tuning Experiment

By Dave Chang

Part 2: Power

This is the second part of the NSCC tuning experiment. Last month saw the box standard car (Std Car) and the tuner car (T Car) checked and prepped, with production variation seeing the Std Car initially slightly faster than the T Car. This month we start tuning the T Car and focus on power, seeing whether the T Car can take the lead.

Pick Up

Electrical power is transferred from the track rails to the car by the braids of the guide. It is essential to make sure that the braids and guide are set up correctly for the car to receive full and continuous power as it races on the track.

The Lamborghinis come with Scalextric's 'easy change' circular guides. The guide blade is attached to the car by a screw, and a removable circular plate holds the braids. Some people have managed to change these for more conventional guides but, whilst I am not a fan of these circular guides, they do not cause a significant problem.

I checked the braids initially by placing each car on a set-up flat plate, which is simply a flat piece of Perspex with a slot cut in it. I use one made by GOM, MB Slot make another, or it

would be simple to make one yourself. The plate enables you to see that all four wheels will sit evenly on the track, and enable you to see how the braids will lie and how deep the guide will sit in the slot.

I checked for bushiness of the braids – if the braids become messy and thick, they can lift the front of the car up, making it more likely that the guide will leave the slot, perhaps carrying straight on at corners. A messy braid may also mean that fewer strands of wire will be flat against the rails, meaning less electrical contact.

I also checked that the braids were making good contact. If the plate of the guide is not pressed against the track, you can bend the braids down so they act like a spring against the track. Getting the angle right is a delicate business: too much and it will lift the guide out of the slot; too little and you will not get optimum electrical contact.

The new braids on the Scalextric cars are flat strips pressed against the plate, and make good contact with the rails. My garage track is quite hilly, and I found that at certain incline changes, the braids did not contact the track properly. I bent them down a little, which cured the problem. ➡➡



Angled braids



Flat Braids

The other point to check is that the braids are clean. With heavy racing they get grimy with dirt and oil, and need cleaning to remain at optimum conductivity. A corner of a cloth soaked in either isopropynol or petrol lighter fluid is good at removing the grease. Note that these solvents are harmful if inhaled or used in an unventilated area, and are also flammable, so do not run the car until the solvents have evaporated from the car. The solvents may also react with the paintwork of the cars, so be careful how you apply them.

How Motors Work

Before discussing making the most of your motor, I shall briefly explain how motors work. If you just want to get on with doing stuff and don't care about the theory, please skip ahead to the next subsection.

Looking at the Mabuchi motor, the metal casing is called the 'can' and the white plastic cap is called the 'end bell'. The rotating axle that sticks out is known as the motor shaft.

If you take a motor apart you can see attached to the motor shaft a 'rotor' or 'armature' with lots of red enamelled wire coiled around it. It has three arms each with a coil.

Each are attached to copper contacts on a ring at the end bell side, called the 'commutator'. Looking inside the can you will be able to see two curved magnets which would normally surround the armature. In the end bell, you will see two sprung blocks which are contacts or 'brushes' which are electrically connected to the contacts on the outside, and when assembled rest against the contacts on the rotating commutator.

When the motor is running and the commutator turning, the brushes switch from one contact on the commutator to another, energising the coils on the armature alternately so that the electro magnetic field they create is always pushing against the nearest magnet, thereby pushing the armature and motor shaft round more.

The ultimate performance of the motor is governed by the thickness of the wire and number of coils on the armature and the strength of the magnet. How close the motor can get to this is dependent on the quality of the bearings holding the motor shaft, the balance of the armature and how well the brushes make electrical contact with the commutator. With simple tuning we can improve a couple of these areas.



Inside a typical motor



Motor Run-In

Most motors and engines benefit from 'running in' – which is a period of running the motor at low power. The idea is that careful wear of the motor will actually make it better than new, and extend its life.

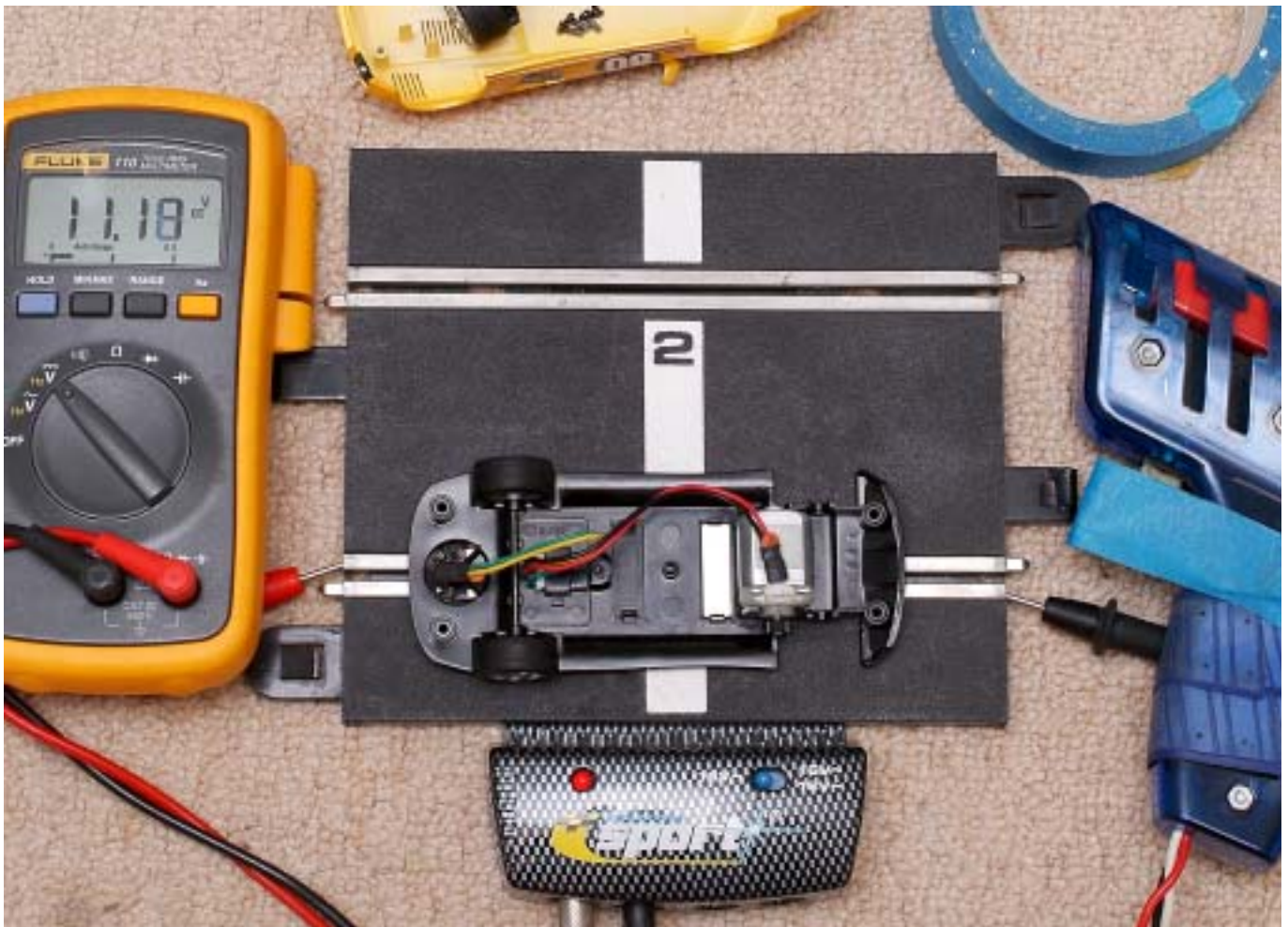
Some people feel that it is a pointless exercise – time spent running in the motor is a waste of the life of the motor, you might as well just race the car straight away so that all the life of the motor is spent on track. The theory behind running in a motor shows that this is not the case – although it is uncertain what the extent of the real world difference is.

To run in a motor, the most common practice is to remove the rear axle to reduce the load on the motor, and provide it with a low voltage (e.g. 3 volts) for an hour or so. Then ramp up the voltage to 6 volts for another half hour, 9 volts for 15 minutes and then 12 volts for 5 minutes. People may disagree on the optimum times, and some advocate esoteric methods of

running motors in submerged in fluid for a fraction of a minute, but the principals and aim remains the same.

There are two main areas which are affected when a motor is running: the bearings which hold the motor shaft undergo wear, and the internal motor brushes wear on the commutator. The initial wear on the bearings can be very beneficial: as the motor shaft rotates, it will wear any rough or uneven areas first, making the bearing fit the axle more evenly. This will fractionally enlarge the hole, but as long as a tiny drop of oil is filling this space, friction will be reduced and the motor will become more efficient. This process is best done under no load and at low power; under race conditions, more wear will occur under acceleration and at points of stress which will be asymmetrical. Anything out of balance – slightly un-round wheels and so on, may set up oscillations leading to uneven wear. How great are these issues? I cannot say, but that's the theory.

⇒



The running in set-up

More observable is the effect on the commutator and brushes. As the motor spins, the brushes switch from one contact point on the commutator to another. If you run a new motor at full throttle, you will see white-blue sparks shining through the plastic. These sparks are caused by 'arcing' as the brushes switch from one contact to another. Arcing is where some of the brushes and/or commutator is vaporised, and will leave a pit. The arcing is also using some of your electrical power to vaporize stuff instead of driving your car. In short – it's not good.

Arcing occurs where there is a small gap between conductors, and enough voltage to bridge that gap. If the contacts meet snugly with no gap, there will be no arcing. Running the motors at low speed helps wear the surfaces of the brushes down to conform to the shape of the commutator better. There is not enough voltage to bridge the gaps, so you have no arcing or pitting whilst the motors run in.

I removed the rear axle and placed the car on the powerbase. The standard Scalextric powerbase supplies up to 15V DC to the track on full throttle. For this experiment I also connected a voltmeter to the rails. I used a Red Fox 40 ohm throttle to control the voltage, and some masking tape to hold the trigger in place.

It is better practice to use a variable power supply to provide the voltage, ideally with a rating of 2 amps, although for running in most motors a lower rating will be fine.

The electrical forces generated by the motor affected the meter, but I was still able to get comparative readings. The minimum voltage I could apply with my controller read as 10V and full voltage read 19.5V. These are not the voltages applied, I recommend starting at 3V. There was no sign of arcing so I went with this as the starting point. I checked regularly to see whether the motor or the controller was getting hot, and it is vital to do so especially if you are using stock controllers. Throttles act as potential dividers, by using up some of the voltage themselves. They dissipate the energy through heat, and dissipate the most when driving the car slowly.

After half an hour, I ramped up the voltage. At about 13 volts there was some arcing visible, so I took it back down to 12 volts for another 15 minutes. After that it could rise to 16 volts with no arcing for 10 minutes, and finally a reading of 19.5 volts at full throttle for 5 minutes. The motor now arcs under acceleration, but not at constant throttle at any voltage.

The rear axle was replaced, the motor re-oiled (see last month for details – remember that too much oil or oil in the wrong place can ruin your motor). The motor again only arced under acceleration so I am considering this motor to be run in.

After letting the motor cool down, the T Car and Std Car were tested for top speed on the rolling road.

Top Speed:

<i>Std Car</i>	29.26 Km/h
<i>T Car (run in)</i>	29.51 Km/h

The results are interesting. Last month, the Std Car was faster than the T Car. I tested a number of times and got consistent results. This time, as we would hope, the run-in motor is now faster than the Std Car, indicating a noticeable performance increase. What is peculiar is that both cars are slower than they were last month. Perhaps the rolling road is sensitive to ambient temperature either in its calibration or in its supply of power to the rails. It just goes to show how important it is to have a control car to measure against.

On Track

It was important not to drive the T Car until the motor had been run in, and so I have waited until now to try either car on track. Before putting the cars on track, I warmed the circuit up by racing some other cars around. I have found that the circuit becomes faster the more it is raced-in. Mainly this is due to the cars wearing the dirt off the rails, and picking the dirt off the track surface with their tyres. The warm up cars had their tyres cleaned frequently during this phase.



By the time the track was ready, the track temperature was 16.5°C and humidity down to 65%. I spent 20+ laps with each Gallardo getting the feel of the cars, which felt a lot quicker and agile than the heavier detailed Scalextric cars which I had been warming the track with. Whilst the T Car and Std Car shared a lot of driving characteristics, there were surprising differences. The Std Car felt much stiffer, perhaps a bit louder, and had sharper brakes. The T Car drove a lot more smoothly and I found it slightly easier to control on the corners. I had been expecting a much more subtle difference with the T Car simply being a bit quicker.

The track times proved that the T Car was faster. I conducted 4 timed runs of 10 laps, alternating between the cars. I discounted the first pair of runs because I was still getting used to the feel of the cars and crashed a lot. Each time the cars got quicker, the T Car always ahead (it was the first of each pair to be run).

Lap Times (lane 1):

<i>Std Car</i>	6.01s
<i>T Car</i> (run in)	5.79s

This was the first time the cars had been raced and I suspect a lot of the differences are not down to the running in. As seen last month, the motors had different top speeds to start with; they may also have different torque and braking. The Std Car has a slightly stronger magnet, which would help its braking and give the car a stiffer feel. Tolerances in the manufacture of the tyres, gears and axles may also be affecting performance.

Track tests do not show which car is 'better' – only which is more suited to that track. In these tests, they are also showing which suits the driver's driving style and the controller profile too. The lap times are not too far apart, with different drivers and tracks the ranking could quite possibly be reversed.

That said, in this experiment I *am* tuning a car to be good on this track, so given the context, the T Car is ahead.

Motor Upgrade

There are many upgrade motors available. The first thing to do is to note the shape and size of your motor, since the replacement must fit in the chassis clips. Here we have a Scalextric standard Mabuchi SP. You also need to consider which end the pinion is to go on. Some motors have the motor shaft extending out of both sides, but others only have the shaft extending out of the can side or the end bell side. This is one of the most common formats, so the choice of motors is large, with a wide range available from Slot.It, MRRC, NSR and Scalextric. If there is space in the car for a shaft to extend both ways, or if you have a Dremel type hobby tool to trim the motor shaft short, the double ended motors can be used in place of a single ended one.

The most commonly quoted characteristic is the motor's RPM or speed at 12 volts, and it is tempting to simply choose the motor with the highest number. However there is another



Replacement motors

important quality of a motor, namely its torque. This is an indication of its pulling power, and is going to have a big effect on how your car accelerates, and how close to the maximum RPM the motor can get when it is actually driving a car. More of it is generally better, although too much and your car may be too responsive, zooming off at the slightest touch of the throttle. This can be generally compensated for by using throttles with greater resistances.

Unfortunately torque is not always quoted, so there is often an element of trial and error in finding the best motor for your car. ⇨⇨

It is important to note that the RPM of the motor does not determine the top speed of your car, because the motor drives the car via the gears. By changing the gear ratio (more on this next month) you change the top speed of the wheels. As the gearing ratio reduces the top speed, it also increases the torque. I guess a coefficient figure of torque divided by top speed would actually allow you to compare the performances of motors in a sensible way, but to date I know of no such listing.

There is one last factor to consider when choosing a motor, and that is its current draw. Motors vary in their efficiency, and you must consider what power will be supplied to drive the motor. If the motor requires more than your track (or the club's track) can deliver, the motor will not perform as well as it is rated. It may perform less well than a theoretically poorer motor.

For this experiment, I have chosen the Scalextric Sport Plus SP 30,000 motor in a fetching pale blue. Scalextric do not quote the torque or current rating, but I am assuming it has been designed to work well with Scalextric power supplies, which have a quite low current rating compared to most club circuits. This is the fastest motor in the range, and I would guess that to achieve that it has a relatively low torque. I will be initially using the original gears and gear ratio, so my suspicion is that it will have a higher top speed but perform worse on the track than the standard motor.

The Sport Plus range of motors come with wires and contacts for the Scalextric circular

guide blade, but were issued before the DPR chassis (with a module for a digital chip) were designed, so changing the motor in the Gallardo requires a soldering iron, some solder and some soldering skills. First unclip the original motor from the chassis, starting at the small clip which is on the opposite side from the gear, and being careful not to crack the chassis. Once removed, move the wires from one motor to the other by de-soldering and re-soldering. Finally the pinion has to be transferred from the old motor to the new one using a gear puller/pusher (more on this in a later article).

The motor was run in as before – although interestingly the voltage readings varied from 4 to 18 volts this time round. After that the car was reassembled, relubricated and ready to run.

On the rolling road, the change in top speed was tremendous:

	Top Speed:
<i>Std Car</i>	29.39 Km/h
<i>T Car</i>	41.91 Km/h

This is actually a little less than theory might suggest – we have changed an 18,000rpm motor for a 30,000 rpm one, so we would expect a proportional change in top speed giving around 48 Km/h. Some of this loss may be due to an effect on the tyres. At full speed, the T Car bounced around a lot on the rolling road. Close inspection shows the reason why: the wheels are rotating so fast that the centripetal forces are causing the tyres to stretch and come away from the hubs, losing a lot of energy. A cure for this is to glue the tyres to the hubs, a practice strongly recommended when club racing. I do not think the car will reach these high speeds on my track and am planning on changing the tyres so I shall not glue them on at this point.

On the track, the car is stunningly quick, as can be seen by the massive distances it now travels when it crashes. I had to experiment a while to find a throttle curve that made the T Car manageable, at first it was faster but so hard to drive that it was only achieving lap times of around 7 seconds (on the laps where it didn't crash).



Soldering the new motor





Having found a better profile (which roughly corresponded to getting a controller with a higher ohmage) I was able to drive the car a lot better.

Lap Times (lane 1):

<i>Std Car</i>	6.06s
<i>T Car</i> (new motor)	6.37s

The car is undoubtedly quick, and the new motor should not have affected the cornering abilities, so there is a good argument that the car is now exceeding my talent level. However, if you uprated the motor in a real 1:1 car, you would have a similar effect. It is normal to also uprate the tyres, brakes and suspension too for the car to be drivable and safe. More tuning is needed to make the car drivable.

Conclusion

Running in the motor seems to have changed the T Car from being slightly slower than the Std Car to slightly faster, and after running in the T Car was beating the Std on track. It should be noted that without careful running in, motors will run in anyway, just not quite as well. In theory this practice should bring out the best performance in your motor and make it last longer, but it is up to you whether you think it is worth it.

Whilst running in had a subtle effect on the performance, changing the motor brought a radical change. What was a fun to drive car has become much harder to control, and harder to

get good lap times with. In this case I have opted for a very high revving motor, so it is not really surprising. Changing to a moderately faster motor may have brought the best of both worlds – a bit quicker and still nice to drive. But the tuning has not finished yet – as they say, power is nothing without control, and next month we shall see whether the motor can be tamed by dealing with traction. ■

Wolverhampton OCAR Euro Saloons

By Phil Insull

For the Wolverhampton “Fall” Classic Event 2007 we had the return of John at OCAR / World Classics as sponsor with a new category running Pre-1980 European saloons. Practice day on Saturday was as always well attended as drivers sought to get to grips with both the new categories and a variety of tyre types on the Wolverhampton wooden International track.

The main event took place on Sunday 14th October. Doors officially opened at 9:00 but many drivers turned up even earlier to get in some last minute practice before the scheduled start time of 11:00. With fifty pre-paid entries we ended up with just thirty-nine racers and two drivers who unfortunately arrived well after the meeting was in full swing and so had to content themselves with some track time after the event. Many drivers and a good number of spectators

sampled the great refreshments laid on by the hard working Ian Scotto, whose legendary bacon sandwiches had sold out well before the lunch break. There were great slot cars to be found at every turn, not just for the meeting but lots of non-participating jewels were on display such as David Wisdom’s beautiful “Ford Racing” display and, as this year’s display centre piece, we had a huge 1/5th scale radio controlled aircraft brought in by its builder and pilot Dave Lowe.

The first feature of the event was the Concours D’Elegance, when poor John, as meeting sponsor, had the difficult task of selecting the winners. Bill Charters improved on last year’s second by winning with his superb little Abarth. David Lawson improved on last year’s third by coming second this time with a fabulously prepared Castrol sponsored Escort.



David Wisdom's "Ford Racing" display



Newcomer David Wisdom's beautiful Alan Mann Escort took third and John added an additional fourth prize for Joel Thura's stunning 72 Mercedes as it had been almost impossible for John to separate the four best entries



Concours winning Abarth

Outside the top four were plenty of other masterpieces including Phil Smith's fetching little Morris Oxford complete with driver wearing a suit and homburg, Pete Emery's Herald with opening bonnet and engine detail, Nic Hirst's 77 Jaguar, and Pete Shepherd's Zephyr to mention but a few.

As normal, drivers ran a three-minute qualifying heat on each lane, with the distance obtained from all four heats determining which division final they would go in at the end. The two classes were scratch and PCS32 chassis cars, with these two groups being separated at the finals stage. Each of the four drivers in each class final would battle it out for a class winner's shield, with the four A division drivers in the Scratch and PCS32 groups then slugging it out for the overall top threes in each.

After the qualifying heats, home driver Mac Pinches led the way with 90.91 laps from Don Stanley, Mick Kerr and Dick Smith, all four of these top class drivers having amassed more than 89 laps from their four heats. Incredibly all bettering Mick's total of 88 laps in last year's event. In the PCS32 class Andy Tyrer of Wolves put in some top form driving, scoring 85.93 laps driving Roy Pritchard's excellent Capri. Second in class was a slightly under the weather Nic Hirst from Pete Emery and Gary Skipp. The 50

lap A Finals ran true to form, at least for the winners, with Mac's Slot It Chassis Rover SD cantering away from second place Mick Kerr with his MKI Lotus Cortina, Dick Smith's BMW in third and Don Stanley's Rover fourth. In the Scratch B division Chris Tyrer won with a well-measured drive with his Rover. Tony Condon took C division honours with his proper scale Rover. Malcolm Scotto took the D division win with my Mercedes 600. Fred Gallone won the E division with his stunningly well-driven little Abarth, while Colin Spark of RS Slot Racing won the F final with his majestic looking "mayor's" Jaguar.



David Lawson's Escort and Pete Shepherd's Zephyr

The PCS32 Division A 50 lap final saw Andy Tyrer completing his dominance with the Capri although Nic Hirst's Jaguar kept him honest to the flag with Gary Skipp's Jaguar finishing third and Pete Emery's Jaguar fourth. Having failed to make the A final cut I managed to salvage some pride by winning the B division with my Jaguar. Pete Shepherd's excellent Zephyr won the C division and Charles Tilley's Alfa GTM took the D division win.

The day concluded with our meeting sponsor John handing out the trophies and some great prizes from OCAR to our winners, with additional prizes for the highest placed OCAR bodied cars going to Nic Hirst for his Jaguar, myself for my Jaguar and Rob Davies of Wrexham with his BMW 1602. The final prize was the Chris Jurkowski memorial trophy presented by Chris's great friend and Wolves regular Phil Parkes to David Wisdom for his wonderfully turned out Alan Mann Escort. ■

Le Mans H:O 24 Hours

By Gary Skipp

I'd heard about Derby H:O Racing Club's annual Le Mans event not long after joining the hobby and, back then, I thought to myself, "That is both extremely impressive, and simultaneously insane". Recently, with the 15th running of the race around the corner, a piece of Le Mans enthusiast that resides within my motor racing disposition leapt up and told me to go and take part. I just HAD to race on that two-hundred and thirty-three foot replica of the Sarthe circuit, Le Mans.

The track is a marvel in its own right, skilfully routed into plastic-coated MDF by Brad Bowman. Situated in the confines of the Rolls Royce Sports Hall, the track itself features the chicane-less Hunaudieres and the famous Mulsanne Straight. When driving, you are flat from Tertre Rouge all the way past the kink and into Mulsanne Corner for any time between

four and five seconds. That doesn't seem long on paper, but think about it. That's a long time for a slot car. And, that's in a fast car..

The event itself represents fantastic value for your ten pounds entry fee, which entitles you to practise all day Friday, sleep overnight trackside if you wish, then race through Saturday and Sunday. More laps for your money anywhere else? I don't think so. And this is one hell of a track to lap.

Most people's issue with H:O scale is the size of the cars. Let me make this clear, they are perfectly visible. I understand I am young and in fortunate possession of my eyesight, but there were several older racers on the rostrum at any given time and I don't think anybody lost their car once during the whole race. Most cars are given a high visibility livery, which stands out well against the dark track surface. Granted, you





can't really tell it's actually car at the furthest points of the track but there's enough of it to follow, and adjust your speed accordingly.

Don't like magnets? Me neither. But the cars DHORC select for Le Mans use low strength magnets and you really need to drive them. Don't even think about hammering the power on too early or else you'll end up in someone's turn-ups. The Porsche Curves are very challenging to get right, and this is really where you can see the men from the boys whilst spectating. Sorry, marshalling!

But this event isn't about the cars, not in the slightest. It's about racing Le Mans, for twenty four hours. It's about seeing how quickly you can take Indianapolis Curve at 3am, or if you're willing to let that Porsche on lane six outbreak you into Mulsanne Corner. Don't let the cars turn you away. When do you ever concentrate on your car as an entity when you're on the rostrum? You don't, you concentrate on its performance. And these Tomy chassis have plenty of that. They are smooth and enjoyable to drive. The track is cleverly run without brakes, so they don't stop dead. The stopping

power is spot on in my opinion, aided by the magnets. They coast nicely into curves and allow you to build a rhythm without maxing yourself out on intense manoeuvres.

The greatest thing about this event, aside from the track, are the little things that emulate reality, things so often neglected in competitive slot racing. Each driver is given a 'pit pass' when racing, and a vast array of statistics are collected throughout the weekend. You get an official practice on Saturday morning, followed by a qualifying session. The race begins after two green flag laps, and ends with everyone slowing to cross the line together. Little touches, it makes the event what it is.

If you are interested in Le Mans, then you have every reason to take part in this event at least once in your lifetime. Don't look at the title and say, "H:O? no way..", look at the title and say, "Le Mans? Yes please!" We enjoy a common thrill, toy car racing. If your toy is 1:1 or 1:64 makes no odds, if it puts the same smile on your face as you chase your rival through Arnage.

If anyone is interested in forming an NSCC team for 2008, then please feel free to contact me. You won't regret it! ■



And now for something completely different - the Mini Replicas Ford Puma S.1600

By Pete Emery

Mini Replicas? Who are they I hear you ask. Well Mini Replicas are yet another small Spanish company making slot cars. We really are spoilt for choice in the naughty noughties are we not? However, although calling Mini Replicas a Spanish company is correct, they are actually based on the island of Majorca.

Mini Replicas produce both ready to run models and kits. The choice of models is eclectic to say the least with Opel/Vauxhall Astra, Renault 4GL, Renault 5, Citroën 4CV, Lancia Fulvia, Skoda 130RS, Fiat Punto and even a Lotus Elan rally car and a 1/24th Ford Sierra Cosworth. They are all nicely mad choices and I want them all, particularly the Lancia Fulvia and the Lotus Elan.

The model selected for review is a RTR version of the Ford Puma S.1600 Rally car as driven by Duval and Fortin on the 2002 Monte Carlo Rally. The Ford Puma was used in the WRC S1600 class during 2001 and 2002 with some success. In between numerous retirements during the 2001 and 2002 seasons Belgian driver Francis Duval managed a respectable 17th on the 2002 Monte Carlo Rally, 20th on the Sanremo and 25th on the Rally Catalunya before bidding goodbye to the Puma and moving on to a Ford Focus WRC model. To tie in with the WRC S.1600 car Ford produced a limited edition and VERY expensive Ford Racing Puma with special 1.7 litre engines kicking out around 150 BHP. The bodywork on the FPR versions aped that of the little WRC racer with fat wheel arch extensions. Contemporary road tests all rave about the little coupés and their ability to rocket down a twisty 'B' road. Around 500 FPR versions were built. This model is also one of a limited run, in this case only 150 cars, and is also available in kit form should you prefer but you need to be quick.



Model behaviour

Our Puma was well packed inside a simple white cardboard box but unfortunately one of the wing mirrors succumbed to the journey, this was swiftly refitted with superglue. The car looks very good, the maroon and blue metallic paint is deep and lustrous and the car had the right stance and look when compared to photographs of the prototype. The chassis appears to be a resin item, fitted with a Ninco motor pod allowing a huge range of motors to be fitted. Our sample has what appeared to be an older model Slot.it motor along with Ninco Pro-race



rear wheels and Ninco ribbed tyres. The resin body is reasonably well detailed and it is fitted with vacuum formed windows and a vacuum formed lightweight interior – both fit well. Unfortunately our sample had the most appalling bubbles under the decals on the roof and both sides. My guess is some sort of reaction between the decals and whatever clear coat Mini Replicas use. The decals themselves are very good, accurate according to the photographs I used for reference and nice and crisp and readable. To get through the remaining complaints I will say that the resin front wheels exhibited a lot of wobble and both head and tail light assemblies showed signs of glue ‘clouding’ and could also have been a more snug fit. Does all this detract from the model? Yes, a little bit. Would this stop me buying the model? No, the model is far too attractive to be put off by these faults and you have to accept that this type of model is hand made without the sort of high cost tooling investment made by the major companies.

Track day

I had hoped to blood the car in competition at the Wye Valley Stages rally event but unfortunately it arrived just too late. What a shame! After some gentle running in on my rolling road the motor was howling nicely and with the lightest of truing with a sanding block the little Puma was ready to go. And go it most certainly does. The handling, non-magnet of course, is sweet and forgiving and the motor and grip strong. This is one quick and highly chuckable rally car. I ran the car extensively on my nine and a bit metre Scalextric Sport ‘little riverside’ home circuit, and it posted times within a tenth of a second of my well sorted Ninco Pro race Subaru and my Ninco bodied, Hobby Slot Racing Mitsubishi Lancer – quick indeed.

If you want to see more of the range take a look at www.minireplicas.com, and when you place an order, and you will, tell them that the NSCC Journal sent you. ■



SCX Renault Alpine A110 'Classic' (62590)

By Gareth Jex

I suspect that many of us buy our slot cars based not just on one deciding factor, but several. Nice model, good performance, favoured brand or just falls into the 'it's made of plastic and has a motor so I must have it' class.

I'll be honest, for me if it ticks the 'it's taken part in a rally' box I'll buy it, regardless of what it is (take my BUM Slot Skoda Favorit 1/25th ish as a classic example). So when Tecnitoys announced that they would be releasing the Alpine this year (at the German Toy Fair) I ordered one. As with many cars, I already have several (OK all) the Teamslot, SRT and BUM Slot Alpines – don't laugh (including the BUM Slot Anniversary editions with snow and mud effects which, to be honest, look like Christmas cracker toys with cheese sauce dropped on them!).

This particular model is based on the car in which Ove Andersson and David Stone won the Monte Carlo 1971 Rally. Bringing home a 1st, 2nd and 3rd for Alpine. (see later in the article for the repeat performance in 2007!). The Alpine (also referred to as the 'Berlinette') was introduced in 1961 and competed in a number

of local and international events late in the sixties. A development from the A108, it used a large number of standard Renault parts. Steel chassis with fibre glass body, each car was hand built at the factory in Dieppe. Taking influence from Colin Chapman's Lotus Elan the car actually used a Lotus Europa 1.4ltr engine until this changed to the Renault supplied 1.6ltr engine. After Renault finally bought Alpine outright in '73 the A110 went on to win the newly formed World Championship Of Makes. The Lancia Stratos put paid to any further victories and Renault thought the A310 would make a worthy successor – they were wrong!

So when the SCX car arrived I was pleasantly surprised. For a start it looks to be spot on scalewise. It's very, very small. Livery wise it's not bad, most of the logos are in the right place, but the national flag chevrons that were on the roof of the real car are missing, but to be fair finding good reference shots of this car is not straightforward and who knows if the car started with this logo or if it was added when the team realised it was on for an historic win! (or indeed if the logo came off during the event).



The body moulding is very good, with accurate detail, the only negative is the thickness of the window surrounds which are a little on the heavy side. Paint colour is a metallic blue. The actual colour of the real car is a form of French blue, but the level of metallic I can't confirm as most of the real cars I have seen have either been flat blue standard road cars or modern historic rally cars recently re sprayed (some of which are metallic). Looks nice anyway.

When I normally review cars I take the car apart, remove the offensive magnet, check the lubrication and give it a quick run in on the Kelvin Light bench to bed the motor in. For this particular car I planned to test it in anger at a slot rally event so I went to town. Off with the wheels and tyres and onto the RSM truing machine. The wheels had only minor flash on the rims which took seconds to remove. The tyres, whilst generally good, needed a little more truing and I took these down to the base, removing all the ribbed treads until I had a nice set of round slicks (front and rear). The motor is the latest version RX-41B 2007 version (two wheel drive). This motor is a great improvement on previous RX4 motors and pulls quicker and needs less running in, but better results are on tap with a good running in or use. The body is held onto the chassis via three screws which I tend to leave a little loose. I didn't add any weight to the car.

I took the car to the Wye Valley Slot Rally event in November and it was one of four Alpines to take part. The stages were a variety of routed wood, Ninco, Scalextric and SCX track with tight turns, elevation changes, straights and water. A pretty fair test of surfaces and stiff competition in the classic class with SCX Fiat 124s, Ninco XK120s, Teamslot Alpines, Healeys and a Mini. Results generally speak for themselves; 1st, 2nd, 3rd all SCX Alpines – (PS I won! – sorry Phil!).

To say this model handles well is putting it mildly – it's great. Easy to drive, predictable, quick, flat and smooth. The latest motor matched to a car weighing only 69g makes it

swift, but not so swift as to look ridiculous in scale speeds. If this is a taste of things to come next year, I can't wait.

Another interesting point to note is the lack of any SCX logos on the windscreen. This is the first time Tecnitoys have decided to do this and future SCX releases will follow suit. Customer pressure or production costs – you decide, but whatever the real reason I prefer it.



The car comes with lights which illuminate the main beams and the yellow spots, but the LEDs also light up the front bonnet of the car like a Christmas tree. OK the body is thin, but it does look daft, a simple couple of coats of black paint on the inside sorts this quickly as does taking a pair of cutters to the connection.

In summary a great little car, just don't call it a Renault Alpine to anyone who owns one, it's an Alpine A110, bottom line - Renault were really only a sponsor (until 1973!). ■