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THE INDEPENDENT CLUB FOR SLOT-CAR ENTHUSIASTS

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A question of taste

There was a time in the not too distant past when it was considered 'not the done thing' to publish pictures of serious or fatal motor racing accidents - particularly in the specialist press. 'Autosport' have totally abandoned this policy in recent years and have even put such photos on their cover.

It was, therefore, with mixed feelings that I tuned into the new series of 'Top Gear' - great to see the Hamster alive, well and with whitened teeth intact but it definitely made me cringe as I watched that near fatal dragster crash. Great TV but was it really the right thing to show? I did watch it to the end though, so am I as bad as the rest of the population?

As you may be aware, Archie, the editorial cat, is named after a great racing driver - Archie Scott-Brown. His predecessor was called Mansell because he whinged a lot and, as Archie has a withered ear, we did think of calling him Lauda but ruled it out as being in somewhat dubious taste.

All of which is a tenuous link to the Scalextric Hunt/Lauda twinpack which is probably in the shops by the time you read these words. In order to get round the ciggy advertising problem they have chosen to base the cars on the one 1976 race in which the cars ran without Marlboro branding - the German GP on the original Nurburgring circuit. Yes, that's right - the race in which Lauda's car did the big firework and Niki came very close to death. How times have changed and, before you ask, yes I have bought the set. I am not entirely happy with my actions though - opinions anybody?

And Finally - for the first time in a very long while I am getting seriously short of contributions for the Journal. In fact the article tank is virtually empty. The next issue is #300 and I would like to make it a bit special but it does depend on having something to print. Over to you folks.

Till next month

Brian



by
Rob Smith



MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

No general releases yet this year so the bulk of the report is about what we can enjoy during 2007 as presented at the Range Presentation meetings at Margate and at the International London Toy Fair. However, to start with we have two cars that are particularly hard to acquire.

C2461 Ferrari P4 Snow Effect

2006 ended on a festive note for Hornby when they sent out 25 snow covered Ferrari P4/330s

to their press contacts as a Christmas gift. The cars are standard C2641s, (the number 21 car) oversprayed with a snow effect with a clever mask showing where the wipers have cleared the screen. The snow was added in the Margate factory and each box has a Christmas greetings message stuck to it.

Disappointingly Hornby didn't send me one and I had to buy one on eBay auctioned by Top Gear Magazine in aid of the Children in Need Charity.

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C2815A Ford GT 2007 Range Presentation Car

The first 2007 release is the Range Presentation car given to retailers who visited the Margate factory to preview the new range and place their orders for the year. The car is a blue Ford GT fetchingly finished with the 50th Anniversary laurels on the roof and Scalextric logos everywhere else. The A suffix doesn't signify a Sport release but that there are B and C releases still to come. This year the limited edition is of just 200 cars making this quite a rarity.

layouts to demonstrate specific items. I was put into a group of resellers and warned to act as a dealer and leave specific, difficult questions until the end. The tour began with us being given a copy of the new catalogue and the tour followed the general order of the catalogue.

So we began with an introduction to the 50th anniversary of Scalextric and a description of the anniversary book. More on that later. Next came the twin packs to celebrate. These are staggered throughout the year and start with the Hunt/Lauda pack we expected at the end of last



Launch Activities

Each year, in early January, Hornby invite their top resellers down to Margate to preview the new year's range and, of course, to place their orders for the forthcoming twelve months. This year I was delighted to be invited to join in one of the tours.

The presentations are made in the demonstration area where a huge SSD layout dominates, surrounded by smaller conventional

year. Two new packs will be produced too. The first is a Mercedes twin pack with the famous 722 Mercedes 300 SLR and a brand new McLaren Mercedes SLR 300 – the higher performance SLR McLaren are just producing. The other is a Ferrari pairing of Schumacher's 2006 car and an all new Ferrari 375 together with the 50th Anniversary book. The 375 is tinfoil to represent the first Scalextric cars produced back in 1957.

Next came the new branding and the sets. The Scalextric logo has been revised for 2007 and whilst still in blue and yellow it looks much more contemporary than before. The set packaging has been revised too with a much more dynamic look to the box art and extra details on the front and sides of what the set actually contains. Several sets are new and there are two distinct ranges with a few basic sets with low detail, damage resistant cars in them as well as the high detail (and cost) sets we are used to. A couple of the sets contain unique cars.

Next up was Sport Digital. There are three SSD sets, a small one with two indestructible Minis in it and two big sets with either F1 or GT cars in them. Hornby are trying very hard to make SSD more user friendly and easier to understand and expand. All sets now contain a simple four car powerbase with the original six car base being an additional purchase. SSD sold extremely well over Christmas but many of the retailers then had difficulties supplying extra cars, track pieces and especially throttles. One important development is the plug and play SSD chip. No longer do you have to get out the soldering iron to convert from analogue to digital.

All new cars (except F1) have a removable plate in the chassis behind which is a four pin plug. You simply remove this plate with a single screw and replace it with a digital chip after plugging the plug into the chip. It couldn't be simpler. It also means there is no such thing as a Digital car in the future. You just buy standard cars and as many chips as you need. This isn't true for single seaters as the plate is too big but Hornby are working on a single seater version for a future release. The existing chips remain in the catalogue for the conversion of older cars.

There are no new track pieces for 2007 but the expansion pack theme has been revised to make it easier to expand a basic set into something more interesting.

Finally we reached the highlight of the tour – the cars. The new range contains 17 new moulds with reliveries of the most popular models too. Surprisingly many prototypes were

on show making it most likely that Hornby will achieve their goal of a brand new model every month! Where to start? The Range Rover is great fun and we could try some prototypes out on the tracks. It is huge but handles well with different gearing to compensate for the huge wheels. There will be both a silver road version with a full interior and a Police drift version with blacked out windows to hide the siren and flashing light electronics. This drift version has a completely different chassis and was great fun to spin around in chase of the villains! The villain is a Lamborghini Gallardo. This has a one piece body with no interior and painted lights. To go with this is a Ferrari F430. This is available both in a one piece body style and in a fully detailed style with lights etc. Whilst on the low cost theme there is a new one piece BMW Mini Cooper too. Lamborghini, Ferrari and Mini prototypes were also on show.

For Rally fans there is a brand new Ford Focus WRC and the prototype looked great with the aggressive styling of the real thing. My favourite was a 1967 Mini Cooper S which is just tiny, especially next to the Range Rover. The prototype on show was a very early example and there is still lots of work to do. It has a brand new motor that is even slimmer than the current F1 motor but which only revs to 12000 rpm. A small contrate gear compensates for this and the tiny 10" Minilite wheels too.

Other new models include the Ferrari 375 in *plastic* as a solo model, a Fangio version of the Mercedes 300 SLR, a Chaparral 2F, Audi and Porsche LMP cars, a new Ford Mustang, Ford Fusion and Chevrolet Nascars and Alonso's new McLaren F1 car. Only pictures of the real cars were available so they will be the end of year releases to look forward to.

All in all I think it is an exciting year ahead with cars to satisfy a wide range of interests. Personally I approve of the more basic models to get youngsters more involved without the disappointment of cars that disintegrate after a few heavy crashes and think that the detail on the other new releases is fantastic- they get better and better.

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For the retailers the tour ended with a presentation of the Ford GT range presentation car but I was packed off empty handed to take my credit card to my favourite dealer!

Toy Fair 2007

If the dealer Range Presentations are a mostly private affair, the London ToyFair is the first public presentation of the new range. Held at ExCeL in Dockland the ToyFair is a trade and press only exhibition where the manufacturers show off their ranges to the retailers. I travelled up with Roger Gillham and as soon as we arrived we were presented with Scalextric 50th Anniversary pin badges to mark us as special guests.

Hornby had a huge area, and the best looking stand at the show which incorporated Hornby Railways, Scalextric and Airfix. BBC TV cameras were there on the opening morning and there was quite a big piece on breakfast TV. Again there were SSD and Drift sets for visitors to try and huge display panels with the new branding and range details.

All the cars seen at the Range Presentation were on show and they were joined by two new prototypes. Firstly there was Alonso's McLaren in grey with hugely complicated bodywork with winglets, diffusers and air intakes everywhere. Secondly, and for me the star of the show, was the Ferrari 375 in plastic. This was a finished model and looks fabulous. The detail in the suspension and cockpit is incredible, the tiny aeroscreen perched on top of the scuttle looks extremely fragile.

One item caught my eye on the Airfix portion of the stand – the plastic kits of Scalextric cars have reappeared with six of them (TVR, Mini, Caterham, Porsche, CLK and Impreza) in a single box complete with 14 pots of paint, glue, brushes, etc.

Across the aisle from the main stand was the Scalextric lounge. This featured huge display cabinets with hundreds of Scalextric cars together with track pieces, buildings, accessories and catalogues throughout the ages. The backdrops to the cabinets were enlargements of pages from the new book and the whole display

was very successful and attracted lots of interest all day. The first day ended with a presentation ceremony to wish Scalextric a happy birthday. Frank Martin gave a short speech about Scalextric's history and the exciting future ahead. I managed to get a couple of sentences about the NSCC into it and lots of people asked me about the club afterwards. Those present were given a copy of the new book and book signings continued for some time. The TV cameras were there again and I did give a brief interview about the NSCC but I didn't see any coverage on the news that evening.

Scalextric Catalogue 48

The new Scalextric catalogue should now be in the shops and is an extremely good attempt this year. The design was done in-house and it looks modern and attractive with far fewer mistakes than usual. With the 50th anniversary laurels and new logo on the front it will be a bit of a collector's item in its own right.

There is also a fold out leaflet with the same cover showing the range in miniature pictures.

Scalextric – A Race Through Time

To celebrate their 50th Anniversary, Hornby commissioned Roger Gillham to write a new book to tell the Scalextric story. This isn't another version of the Definitive Collector's Guide but a beautifully produced coffee table book which shows the significant Scalextric releases each year in context with world events and real motor racing news of the same year. With a really modern and eye catching layout this is a must for anyone with even a passing interest in Scalextric. I'm too biased to write a proper review as the vast majority of Scalextric cars illustrated in it are from my collection, perhaps some one else will.

In Conclusion

I'm sure you will all join me in congratulating Scalextric on reaching its 50th Anniversary and wish it a successful future. Hornby are doing a great job in keeping the brand alive and true to its original concept. Here's to the next 50 years!





Last month I remarked on the two new F1 cars released by Mattel with zero fanfare. Well, this behaviour must be catching because it has come to my attention that Life-Like released yet another Ford Fusion and Monte Carlo in the final week of 2006. The cars, part number 433-9040, at first glance could be dismissed as generic items but in fact they are representations of the car Ford used in their press launch to announce the switch from the long serving Taurus to the Fusion for their ongoing Nascar campaign; likewise General Motors when they updated to the SS version of the Monte. Both these curios are available direct from Life-Like (www.walthers.com) and cost about £15.30 for the pair plus shipping.



Three further unheralded items that passed me by were a trio of 2005 Mustangs, all looking rather nice but especially the white one. Two of the cars are only available in a set, "Mustang challenge" - part number 433-9007, and will

cost you about £31 plus some hefty (I would imagine) shipping costs. The blue version will be available in the summer as a stand alone item.

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With Round 2 also due to release a Mustang set, "Mustang match-up", sometime this year it will be fascinating to see which looks and performs the best.

The third new stock car from the company is the Irwin Fusion of Jamie McMurray, due for release sometime in the next few months. With an Ameriquest #16 Fusion and FedEx #11 Chevy also announced (but without any artwork being shown just yet), Life-Like show continued commitment to Stock Cars which will ramp up in the final quarter of the year when the Toyota models come on stream. For those a little tired of an endless stream of Nascars, the company have released a picture of the Honda Civic (in mock-up form) as destined for their 'Downtown drifters' set (part number 433-9059) due for release at the end of June and with an RRP of \$80.

The direction taken for the Super III comes as something of a surprise, given Tom Lowe's history first with Johnny Lightning and now with his new enterprise. Not only is the chassis an in-line but it is very much a racing chassis.



Just before Christmas I received a surprise parcel from Autoworld. Inside was a mock-up of the forthcoming Super III chassis. Over the past year I have got to know Autoworld boss Tom Lowe and the team at Round 2 pretty well, had some input into the design and come very close to having my adjustable magnet idea included in it. More on that later. The outcome of that was being the first person outside the company to get really hands-on with the Super III.

The concept borrows heavily from the Wizzard Patriot, with adjustable brush tension, accessible commutator and strong motor magnets in evidence, as well as an almost identical pick-up shoe and spring system. The motor seems plenty powerful and the magnets (*unlike* Wizz cars) are Neodymium. Gearing is a spot-on 7/25. It looks as if the collector is to be well looked after too. Not only are the wheels very nice looking but the chassis has no less than four wheelbases. These

mean that everything from short bodies for the pancake cars right up to long wheelbase Tyco stuff can be fitted with some work plus of course this gives AW itself a huge amount of scope when designing bodies or planning what to create next.

To date I have not run the S3. It is still very much a work in progress, the pick up shoes are not fitted very well and the gear mesh is poor. Then there is the superfluous clip, a hangover from the attempts to incorporate my magnet idea, which looks like it has not translated well from my sketches to Autoworld's factory in China and then back to the USA. Overall, much will depend on what bodies are available, and of course performance and cost. I would hope that it would perform below the Wizz chassis it is based on and similarly cost less, and the exchange rate should help with that if it holds.

ToyFair

I was fortunate yesterday (as I write this) to go to the British ToyFair. This was my first visit since it moved to ExCeL in the old Docklands area and there was no doubt that the size of the overall fair was larger. However I have had the misfortune to go to ExCeL a couple of other times and always find the place soulless. Then too, on my last visit there were H:O cars to sample from four companies and this time only the one, Scalextric. Scalextric had of course pushed the boat out in this, their 50th year and the stands look very impressive. I had already been tipped off that a couple of new Micro sets were on the way in 2007 but it was nice to see their confirmation and chew the fat with Scalextric staff about them.

Last year's A1GP set showed that Scalextric are at long last taking the Micro range more seriously and the McLaren tie-in shows that this policy has continued. There were no pictures of actual cars but I was able to glean that the intention is to produce an all new body (as opposed to re-using the A1GP body) and that the cars will be 2007 (Alonso, Hamilton, Vodafone) as opposed to the 2006 ones shown in the display (Raikkonen/Emirates).

The McLaren set will feature smaller Scalex logos than in the past, with the McLaren logo itself more prominent. This is the plan for the Spanish market at least and expect the #1 car to feature very large on the final box art! Retail price is expected to be £40.



Whilst the McLaren set was easy to spot, the other was much less so and I nearly missed it. Housed in a small cubicle, designed to keep out prying eyes and with a net roof to prevent people holding their cameras over their heads, was the current development items that will make up the Micro Scalextric 'Transformers' set. Like last year's Batman set, this is a movie tie-in. As far as I could see, there is no plan to produce a 1/32nd scale set and this should be a major boost in getting kids interested in H:O. The movie is due for release in July and is directed by Michael Bay so expect the usual brash and big-budget summer eye feast.

The Scalextric set features what looked like a yellow 70s Camaro and a more contemporary Mustang police car, a crossover, a track split and that wonderful 6inch hairpin used to good effect so many times in the past. Naturally enough the cars will transform, but at this time development on that is at an early stage and there was nothing to play with - only static resin items. Once in transformed mode, the 'cars' will become much too wide to pass each other cleanly and this of course will be the whole idea. The last time ➡➡



there were H:O scale Transformer cars (1986) Tyco made a mint on them and those cars MIB fetch good prices on everyone's favourite auction site. The franchise itself has endured since its inception in 1984 despite a couple of dips that would have killed off many toy lines. Hopefully Scalextric will have a hit this time around and invest the profit in more Micro sets!

Finally, last month I left you with a picture of an unusual H:O scale F1 car. The car is a perfect example of how the cottage industry steps in when something in a hobby is lacking. As I have covered before, pretty much every H:O car has to fudge around the fact the chassis length is not in proportion with the width. But the Brabham, from Slot Car Innovations (<http://www.slotcarinnovations.com/>) is different. At 1.8inch, its wheelbase is a pretty accurate rendition of the real car, and the use of styrene for the body keeps the looks nice and nimble.

SCI originally played around with making their own chassis, but that went on the back burner when a clever solution presented itself.

Toy companies are always coming up with ways to save seemingly insignificant sums because they become worthwhile once you factor in the production numbers. Most H:O front axles pop in and out of the chassis via a keyhole shaped opening, but many years ago Lifelike changed their chassis to a simple 'U' shape hole. To keep the axle from falling out they modified the guidepin by adding a third flange, and the axle sits between this and the second flange. What SCI did was use the Lifelike pin to place the axle in front of it (and well ahead of the normal position) on a Tyco chassis, and then making a brace, cleverly made to look like the front suspension, to keep it in place. The result of the outside-the-box thinking is a faithful rendition of a classic F1 car from the Turbo era.



Kits 'N' Bobs

A round up of recent kit and resin releases

By Phil Insull

The first thing I must do in this article is correct an error I made last month. I told you that MMK had released a Cobra Daytona; sorry my mistake, they have in fact released the 1964 AC Cobra Coupé, made famous or infamous by Jack Sears, who tested the Thames Ditton creation at 180 mph on the newly opened M1 motorway early one morning. This ultimately led to much debate and a resultant 70 mph speed limit being applied to UK motorways. The MMK model is based on that same car, which was then shared at Le Mans in 1964 by Sears and Peter Bolton. The French MMK website is also showing a 1966 Serenissima Le Mans car, but I am still awaiting confirmation from importers World Classics Limited of this being available in the UK



MMK's new 1964 AC Cobra Coupé

Last month I told you about Ocar/World Classic's new Surtees Lola T70 coupé and also the new Lotus Elan Modsport, well I have just completed building both and as promised have pictured them on my new home made diorama setting. The Lotus should be white with the wing mounted directly to the boot, but I found a picture of an even more radical version with an eye-catching (or eye-watering) yellow and green

livery on the Internet and so I modified my Modsport kit. While I've not had news of these from the official UK importer I have just purchased via eBay several new kits from a very nice Spanish chap, who may be the owner of A2M. These include a Renault Schlesser Dakar buggy, a 1970 Lancia Stratos Bertone show car, Citroën DS23 Dakar, Renault 4 Dakar, Ferrari 750 Monza, and an Abarth 030 Pininfarina, more about these next time



Ocar/World Classic's new Team Surtees Lola T70 Coupé and the modified Lotus Elan Modsport

I have been speaking to a few people over the last few weeks, UK body kit builder AA Bodies have two new releases, which David Yerbury has kindly forwarded for me to build, these being the 1958 Le Mans winning Ferrari Testa Rosa and 1959 Costin bodied Lister. Other interesting offerings from AA Bodies include a 450S Maserati, Lotus 15, Lotus 47, and Chevron B16 all designed to utilise the PCS32 chassis, and the Cooper MK5 500 and Kieft Norton 500 F3 cars, which were at the forefront of the British post-war racing boom in the early fifties. I am currently in the process of building several AA cars and will bring you pictures, hopefully next month. ➡➡



Equally intriguing was my visit to the Penelope Pitlane workshop near me in Wolverhampton to see developments to the production chassis, with several sizes being available to take both the slim-line Moto GP motor and standard Mabuchi type motors. The guys also gave me a pre-production prototype of a really tiny, narrow version with the Moto GP motor mounted on its side, which I have found is ideal for the AA Bodies Cooper MK5 and Kieft. They also showed me prototypes of their forthcoming front motored/prop-drive chassis. The production versions feature not only adjustable wheel base but also adjustment of the guide position in relation to the front axle line as well, remarkably useful to all us kit and scratch builders. In addition to the excellent new alloy wheels and variety of white metal inserts, they have also developed an incredibly realistic photo-etched wire wheel insert and spinner to use with their alloys and are truly the best I have ever seen. Incredibly Rob tells me that he will even be putting a miniature valve on the outer wire insert and that the spoke numbers and patterns are checked against the real thing and are 100% accurate. Finally Steve has been busy on the next Penelope Pitlane bodies with wonderful detailed 1960 Scarab and Lotus 18 Grand Prix cars for the 2.5 Litre series. To start the planned 1.5 litre series is the 1961 Monaco Grand Prix Lotus 18, with boxier nose and open lower cockpit sides, complete with exposed tubing and a clever method of showing Moss's legs, just as in the real thing. As with the Aston DBR4/250 and the Bugatti 251, all of Steve's body kits are designed to fit straight on to one of Rob's terrific etched brass chassis and all details of the cars, chassis, wheels and how to order can now be seen at their website at:

www.Penelopepitlane.co.uk

Rob and Steve also revealed some very exciting proposals for 2007, of which I will bring you more news throughout the year, suffice it to say it will be worth waiting for.

Rounding out the UK items - two kit cars I have managed to complete while trying to sort out my Early Bird cars and have a picture of, are my BMC MG Midgette, supplied as a complete

unpainted kit these can be obtained either direct or through Scale Models, and the Bond Bug available on eBay from a seller called Microfan, who is also selling a Smart car kit.



BMC's MG Midgette and Microfan's Bond Bug

Across the pond and news from Reinecke Motorsport that the 1980 Chevy Nova and Buick Apollo should soon be out to complement the already released Oldsmobile Omega and Pontiac Ventura. These will be designed to fit the Artin stocker chassis available from Artin North America/Slot Car World.com based in Texas. Reinecke Motorsport also confirmed that work was progressing on the static sixties race transporter truck, the 1966 Chevrolet Corvair and 1970 BRE Datsun 510 Trans-Am cars and also a Plymouth Fury, all hopefully for release in the first half of 2007. Slot Car World also tells me that the new improved 1/32nd Artin Saleen is now available. Staying state-side, Resilient Resins have some new body kits out, the Dan Gurney Lotus 19B, Lotus 25, Cunningham C5R and Chaparral 2G. Future releases for 2007 will include a Cunningham C4R, 1965 Chaparral 2, 1960 Watson-Offenhauser roadster, all in 1/32nd scale along with a Scarab Chevrolet MK3 sports car, Long-nose D Type Jaguar, and Lancia-Ferrari D50 in 1/24th scale.

Moving on to Europe and Protoslot have announced that the 1968 Alpine Renault A220 and a Spyker LM2005 Le Mans cars will be their next projects, while Le Mans Miniatures have released their Bentley EXP Speed 8 Le



Revell-Monogram's Trabant 601s and NSR's Gulf Mosler

Mans 2003 kits in both unpainted and pre-painted form. PRS have produced a re-issue of their excellent little Mini Pick-ups and Fiat Abarths, both of which are available in the UK through Pendle Slot Racing, along with Anni Mini's re-issued Ferrari 250 GT Breadvan, if you didn't get hold of one first time out.

Switching to plastic - Sloter have two new liveries of their Lola T290 out. These are a fetching blue Gitanes and a bright yellow Swiss-cheese sponsored machines. MRRC have a Chrome AC Cobra for those who love collecting the shiny stuff, Auto Art have their new Bugatti Veyron in several colours, and Revell have released a Mustang 350 GT as a blue Mark Donohue limited edition.

Last month I mentioned that Revell had just put out their new Trabant 601s car and promised you a picture and here it is, I think it

is rather cute, but it needs some electric train technology to make it more realistic. We need a sound card for the pebble in a tin can engine noise and a smoke generator fitted into the car for that genuine "former Soviet Bloc made car" experience.

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PRS Mini Pick-up "Gulf" and Anni Mini Ferrari 250 Breadvan



Two new Revell-Monogram releases currently out in the States (but seemingly not destined for Europe) are the Honda Civic and Acura Integra “tuning” cars. Revell-Monogram have announced some new cars and liveries for 2007, these include the previously promised Simca Rallye, Chaparral 2, Porsche 904 and Cooper-Ford (King Cobra) and a new VW Beetle “Uniroyal Silhouette” car, along with new liveries for the NSU, Jaguar E Type, BMW 320i and a Jim Clark edition of the Lotus Cortina.

NSR have started delivering stocks of their Gulf liveried Mosler into the U.K. although most dealers seem to be sold out as soon as they arrive.

Finally rounding out this month are Slot.it's plans for 2007 these include a Porsche 956 in Bburago livery, Ferrari 312PB #87 Watkins Glen, Ferrari 312N1 Monza, Ferrari 312, and Ferrari F40 all in kit format. Due to the licensing deal Slot.it have with Ferrari they can't manufacture ready to run slot cars, but these kits are just so easy to build and as well detailed as any other Slot.it car. They also plan a Porsche 956KH “Hightail” Boutsen-Schlesser car, Nissan R390 Unisia livery and in plain white, a Sauber C9 AEG livery, Jaguar XJ9 Castrol #60, Lancia LC2 in Martini #4 & #5 livery and last but not least the McLaren F1GTR in both Fina and plain road car liveries. ■

GOODYEAR BITS & PIECES



The Calm Before The Storm

Every year, news of new releases is hard to come by as any new innovations are saved for launch at the annual Toy Fair held at Nuremberg. So be patient, I hope to bring you lots of exciting news in the March edition.

Look out for the new Ford Focus WRC (50425) as pictures of this little beauty are already circulating cyber-space. The all new body and chassis, complete with ProShock-2 suspension give this model the handling to rival the great rally cars already available.

Club Races

Last month, I was lucky to compete in some of the heats of the JGTC Club series at MMRG (Medway Model Race Group) in Kent. All drivers competed using "Club Cars" made up from the wide range of Ninco JGTC available. With a starting grid of six cars, two each of NSX, Supra and 350Z, it was truly a level playing field and with the "crash and burn" rule in play, the racing was as close as it gets! In the summer, a Ninco Megane Trophy round is planned so for more information about the club and events, please contact MMRG.

If any other clubs would like to announce Ninco races scheduled at their club this year, send me the details and I'll give you a mention in Ninco News! ■

Not a lot to say this month as everything has been held back (news wise) for the German Toy Fair and gathering info has proved impossible. A few rumours regarding the pending launch of SCX Compact, a 1/43rd scale system, but no confirmed info.

One item I missed last month is the news that the SCX Nascars are now available outside the USA. Ref 62180 Ford Fusion, Ref 62190 Chevrolet Monte Carlo and Ref 62200 Dodge Charger. All feature the latest rocking motor mount.



The only two new cars I can tell you about are as follows:

Spanish Club car 2007

Seat Panda in a light blue colour with chequered strip down the roof and bonnet. Circular roundel number 7. Ref number unknown at this time; to see a picture visit the .es web site and follow the links to the club page, click on the club book and turn a few pages. Sorry I can't print a picture.

Also available to a select few will be the Germany Toy Fair special edition car which I'm informed will be a Seat, but not sure which one - sorry. ■



Toy Fair 2007

By Peter Zivanovic

Well, here we are, 50 years after its legendary launch at the Harrogate Toy Fair and Scalextric is not only still with us but growing stronger. You wouldn't have missed the golden jubilee at this year's Toy Fair. Apart from the usual large display of its wares, Hornby also offered attendees a separate lounge bounded by a comprehensive display of its history. Cars, catalogue pages and accessories were set out in clear displays with other reminders of the times. For some though, the Scalextric items seemed to be of less interest. Two ladies looking at the '90s display were more interested in comparing the embonpoint of Posh Spice with that of today's evolution, Victoria Beckham.

The first cars I saw were in the 1976 F1 Classic Collection twin pack, Hunt's McLaren and Lauda's Ferrari. These were much nicer

models (and in much better condition) than the ones I bought in 1978. These are about to hit the streets with their companions, Villeneuve and Regazzoni, due later as single cars. Two more twin packs are planned for this 50th anniversary year. The easier one to describe pairs the 722 variant of the McLaren SLR with the original Mercedes 300 SLR #722 driven by Stirling Moss to victory in the Mille Miglia race of 1955. The Mercedes will be a new mould. The other pack comprises a current Ferrari F1 car with a modern re-make of the Ferrari 375, one of the original 1957 tinplate cars. In the pack the 375 will, like the original, be modelled in tinplate but a plastic version was on show which will be issued as a single car as well. The Ferrari twin pack will also include the book "Scalextric A Race Through Time" which was also available to see.

⇒



Better late than never - Hunt/Lauda Twinpack imminent



Ferrari 375 (Above)

Prototype Range Rover (Below)

Of course, business goes on regardless of anniversaries and lots of new sets, cars and liveries are planned for this year. These will be covered in “Messages from Margate” throughout the year but look out for the Audi R10 and Porsche RS Spyder, a new Subaru sponsored by Scalextric with the race number 50 and the latest Ford Focus, more Classic cars - a Chaparral 2F and the 1967 Monte Carlo rally winning Mini, and some road cars - the Ferrari F430, Lamborghini Gallardo and a couple of Range Rovers, including a Police version with a siren and flashing everything. The Police Range Rover will be paired with a Gallardo in a “Street Pursuit” set with rotating guides (like the current Nissans) for power sliding. Among the mock-ups displayed was that for the Range Rover. It’s enormous, so we can expect new, larger packaging.



DPR

All new car designs will be made Digital Plug Ready (DPR) where space permits. The plug is a little smaller than a stamp so will fit into most cars except open-wheel types which are too narrow. DPR cars will all be sold with dummy plugs for analogue operation but can be digitised by fitting a Digital Plug. This process is an utter

doddle: undo a single screw from under the car, take the dummy off and fit the Digital Plug onto the 4-way connector, locate the plug in the chassis and replace the screw. This concept will benefit Hornby as they will only have to make one variant of each car and we users will only have to buy as many Digital Plugs as we will need at any one time. Brilliant.

Absent Friends

Hornby put on a jolly good display at the Toy Fair - as befits its home market but pickings from foreign manufacturers were very thin. I've never seen Fly at the Toy Fair but this time SCX and Ninco were absent as well. Slot.it were displayed on part of a distributor's stand. Sadly, Mauricio Ferrari could not be here so only current items were on show and I couldn't discover anything about future plans.

(Right) Jim Clark Lotus Cortina

Uniroyal Fun Cup Beetle (Below)

Revell

The Revell stand had a good selection of present and future cars on show. Pride of place went to something like a Beetle bedecked in every type of ground effect and aerodynamic aid as raced in the Uniroyal Fun Cup, a low-cost endurance series. Beetles are always recognisable but these come as close as I've seen to barking mad. Also headed our way are a Porsche 904 and a Shelby King Cobra. Three new limited edition cars were shown too: a Lotus Cortina as driven by Jim Clark in 1965, a Shelby GT 350R (Mark Donohue) and the winning E-type from Sebring, 1963. I'm a bit of a sucker for these old cars and I'm looking forward to their arrival. ➡➡





A Race through time with Scalextric (Above)

Spot the fake (Below)





Happy 50th Scalextric



Carrera

The only other foreign presence was Carrera on the Nikko stand. On display was an analogue circuit and quite a few recently issued cars. I only saw and played with two new cars, the Evolution 1/32nd Audi R10 and Porsche RS. (These cars seem to be popular!) It looked like Carrera are doing a better job of finishing their cars than I've seen before. In the absence of much new product on display, I was briefed about what was coming.

Starting with these Audi and Porsche models, Carrera have developed a new style of chassis. The rather odd adjustable central magnet has gone. Downforce is supplied by two magnets, one lying between the motor and axle and the other forward of the motor. These are set across the car and are quite long so will still act if the car slides out at the back. They are attached by two screws and can be completely removed or the height adjusted with spacers. All these new chassis have been designed to be used

for both analogue and digital cars. I think their work has paid off; both cars were fast, smooth and easy to drive.

DIGITAL 132

On the digital front, changes are afoot. Not all the information is available yet and some was vague. The system has been developed and re-branded as DIGITAL 132. Much of this should be compatible with the earlier PRO-X system (especially the track sections) but Carrera's lawyers have yet to decide what compatibility (if any) can be formally committed to. The new system can handle up to six cars and the new digital cars are now compatible with any analogue track. Programming cars to controllers is much easier and it is possible to run up to three "Ghost" cars without manual control. I'd like to see that working – particularly if one Ghost is faster than another. As implied by its new brand, Exclusiv 1/24th scale cars will not be sold with digital capability but, since kits to upgrade cars



How many manufacturers will release versions of these in 2007?

are now available, any car (including 1/24th scale cars) can be digitised.

Stock Cars or Hot Rods feature strongly in the catalogue for 2007. In 1/32nd scale, there are models of a '32 Ford and '41 Willys Coupé. Each is available with closed, cutaway or no bonnet making six variants - and another six in digital. Four similarly styled versions each of a '34 Ford and an anonymous '41 Hot Rod (actually an un-badged Chevrolet) are to be produced in 1/24th scale making a grand total of 20 custom cars due this year. New additions to the Exclusiv range include the ubiquitous Audi R10 and Porsche RS as well as a Chevrolet Corvette C6R.

Apart from the Audi and Porsche I saw, Carrera will be releasing several new 1/32nd cars including a Peugeot 908, Red Bull and Toro Rosso F1 cars, Porsche GT3, some Mustangs with flashing lights on their roofs and some Opel Commodores from the mid '70s with bigger wings than an Airbus. The BMW Z4M coupé will appear as digital only, as will "Car Force"

cars. These are four vaguely futuristic looking "cars" designed to survive the crash and bash when digital sets are played with enthusiastically. In other words, they're in bright, clearly differentiated colours and have no mirrors, wipers, spoilers or anything else that would snap off at the first spill. Well, slot cars are toys – aren't they?

And that was that. I didn't have much time to wander aimlessly and look at other delights of the Fair but I did happen to walk past a large (6 ft) inflatable punch bag that caught my eye. This had a drawing of a man with instructions to "punch him here", "kick him here" and "knee him here" with arrows pointing respectively to the head, shins and, er, well, um, let's just say, below the waist. Covering the head was a clear plastic pocket so that owners could insert a headshot of the person of their choice. The unchivalrous cads on the BV Leisure stand had stuck a picture of Jade Goody there which meant that I had to leave the hall by another route. ■



Souvenir books are becoming very popular it would seem - Ninco produced one for their 10th Anniversary, complete with the obligatory L/E car and Scalextric have followed suit for their 50th. It is currently available as a stand-alone item and later in the year, not to be outdone by Ninco, complete with two cars and the customary 'fancy box'.

Ninco's effort was a serious tome (apart from some hilarious Spanglish howlers) which gave a detailed history of the brand. However, as Roger Gillham has already produced the definitive history of Scalextric in several editions, a new approach had to be found for this one.

The result is a book laden with photos of Scalextric cars through the years but very light on text. It hardly complies with my personal criteria for a 'good read' but, as a celebration of 50 years of a truly extraordinary toy, it works exceedingly well.

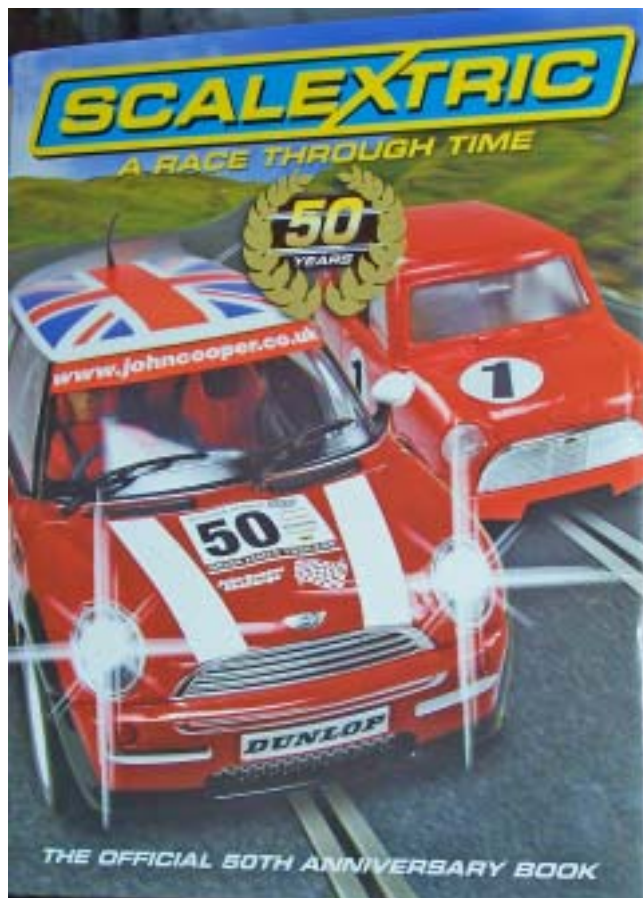
There are no chapters as such, just a page or four devoted to each year from 1957 to the present. The major events in the real world are listed plus a mention of the F1 championship result and the rest of the space is taken up with photos of the relevant catalogues, sets and cars of the year in question - simple but highly effective. Mind you, if you are of my generation, it is a potent reminder of the advancing years when you can actually remember every event in the real-life history bit!

Apart from the main sections, split into decades, there are four extra pieces covering vintage models, TV/film tie-ins, police cars and real racing people with their Scalextric sets. I found the last of these very interesting as I have tried in the past to produce something very similar for the Journal. I found the task simply impossible as racing drivers just ignored any requests for information. Roger informs me that he faced the same frustrations, even with the backing of a major manufacturer like Hornby.

"A Race Through Time"

Scalextric 50th Anniversary Book

By The Editor



As with all publications the book is not perfect - my copy is an early sample kindly provided by Roger and I believe there are some deficiencies in the quality of the colour printing. Many of the red cars have a seriously pink tinge to them but I know not if this is a general fault.

There is also an error in the text on page 44 - the Le Mans winning 1928 Bentley was not the 4½ litre supercharged version modelled by Scalextric as stated. The blower Bentley never actually won a race of any note. Editorial pedant - moi?

No matter, the book is a great memento of the 50th Anniversary and the only real decision you have to make is whether to buy it now, or wait till the autumn and get the set with the glorious tinplate Ferrari! Mind you, one lucky member won't have to buy it at all - Roger has signed the review copy and it has been added to the Christmas prize pile. ■





We are now entering speculation time with mystery upon mystery on what each manufacturer will be producing for the forthcoming year. Although Fly are keeping tight-lipped about what new models are in store for 2007, they have revealed some information concerning a new “exclusive” collection and various other limited editions and ranges.

This month sees the release of eight new models, which includes the brand new Audi Quattro announced at Nuremberg last year “vorsprung durch technik”.

Oops!

Before I go any further, did anybody spot my deliberate mistake last month? As soon as I received my January Journal and read through my piece, it jumped out at me. I always strive to produce as accurate information as possible, but this time my checking procedure failed! On page 18 I stated that the Ecurie Francorchamps (Team 14) Ferrari 365 GTB/4 was race #34, but the picture I took clearly shows race #36 *doh!* After further research car #36 took part at Le Mans in 1972, a year earlier than car #34 and fared much better, finishing 8th overall after completing 302 laps. It was driven by Derek Bell, Teddy Pilette and Richard Bond.

Recent Releases

Porsche Carrera 6, white #148 (A1605), Targa Florio 1966

Driven to victory by Herbert Müller and Willy Mairesse after completing 10 laps in a time of 7 hrs 16 mins 32.3 secs. The car is mainly white and has a red bonnet with a white stripe down its centre.



Porsche 917 LH “Gulf” #17 (A1405), 24hr Le Mans 1971

Like the #18 car released last year, this too posted a ‘DNF’ with crankcase failure after qualifying third, driven by Jo Siffert and Derek Bell. Decorated in the familiar “Gulf” light blue with a wide orange oblong in the centre as you look down on the car. Once again slightly spoilt by the missing rear wheel spats, but sure to be a collectable of the future. All we need now is the #19 917K car to complete the team *hint hint*.

Lancia Beta Montecarlo “Lubrifilm” #68 (88239), 24hr Le Mans 1981

This all Italian driver line-up of Martino Finotto, Giorgio Pianta, and Giorgio Schön finished 14th overall after completing 292 laps. The car is mainly white with red graphics down each side. This is the first of the 2007 releases which are detailed later.

Dodge Viper GTS-R “Playstation” #55 (A2010)

The final model in the 2006 10th Anniversary Collection, is a re-issue of A85, with the addition of the anniversary logo printed onto the driver’s side front wing.



This car competed at Le Mans in 1999 and was driven by Emmanuel Clérico/Guy Martinolle finishing in 16th position.

Saleen S7R, "Acemco" #66 (Fly 12), evo 2 racing, 24hr Le Mans 2006

Another in a growing line of genuine liveried race spec cars fitted with a lexan interior, racing motor etc. Decorated in silver with a yellow stripe down each side and is mounted onto a red plinth.

"Vorsprung Durch Technik"

German for "Progress through technology", which can also be said for Fly's latest brand new model. The Audi Quattro is the first model from Fly to feature a 4WD system and drop down guide arm. Watch out for a full review soon.

Audi Quattro A2 "Audi Sport" #1 (A1901)

Driven by Hannu Mikkola and co-driver Arne Hertz taking part in the famous 1000 lakes Rally in 1983. I know this works livery has been done previously by other well-known manufacturers, but none are as detailed as this. It has a fully detailed interior, detailed lights and silicon mud flaps.

Audi Quattro A2 "Funkberater" #12 (E1901)

Rally Safari 1984, driven by Franz Wittmann and co-driver Peter Diekmann. This version has all the detail of the previous model with the addition of two spotlights mounted high on the bonnet and "bull-bars" with more spotlights incorporated, sturdily mounted onto the front grille. It is a limited edition of 2000 units and to



make it extra special is mounted onto a sand coloured base and has a colourful backing card. Included with this model is a little blue envelope taped to the underside of the base which carries a decal sheet. The five tiny decals needed to complete the car are of a well-known cigarette brand, and if you look closely at the picture you may just see them applied.

V-Rally

Once again, my thanks go to Steve Langford for alerting me to yet another unannounced limited edition. Well done Steve, keep up the good work. **Porsche 911 SC (Red) #1 (E932), Rally Classic – V-Rally d'hivern 2006**

Following on from the E931 car reported and pictured last month, a sequel has emerged. At first glance you would think both cars are identical, and you wouldn't be far wrong. Both are decorated in red with white bumpers, are race #1 and have the classic rally logo stamped on. The only difference of note is the sponsors name on the bonnet. Apparently these cars were available to purchase at their respective rally events and not produced for any shop, although inevitably a few did make their way onto eBay etc. Like E931, this is also limited to 500 units and has the yellow front /white rear backing card.

Announcements

Fly has now published details of their forthcoming releases for January/February. All of what you are about to read is prior to whatever will be announced at this year's big toy fairs. 2007 looks to be another bumper year for Fly with some exciting and interesting releases.

First off, the catalogue numbering system is to be changed. All the catalogue references currently prefixed with an "A, C and E" etc are to be scrapped in favour of a 5-digit numbering system. Although a numeric numbering system has been in service for some time now, it will no longer be an alternative to the alpha/numeric numbers which have been used by Fly since they started business in 1996. Regular and Race-tuned cars will start with 88*** and special editions with 99***.



The good news is there will be a catalogue published this year after last year's absence. As before it will be available as a single catalogue and as a special edition boxed set combined with a special edition car. This year the car will be an Audi Quattro A2 (Ref. 99016).

Just when you thought you had finished collecting the 10-car anniversary collection, another series has been planned for 2007. After obtaining the licence Fly have permission to produce a collection of "Playboy" cars. They are listed as a 12-car collection and each car will be available in two different formats with each format having a different reference number. The first type will be presented in the familiar crystal cases, the other will be in a special box. At the time of writing there are no details as to what the special box edition will contain, or whether the cars themselves will differ in any way. Watch this space for further details. The first car in the series will be a Ferrari 512 CL (Ref. 99017 and 99030), which will be decorated in black with red graphics and of course the "Playboy Bunny" logo. The second car will be a Porsche 911S (Ref. 99019 and 99031), which will be decorated in silver with black graphics and again will feature the trademark logo. 'Buster', my Fly consultant rabbit, is most chuffed to have a series of cars made in his honour and likes to think the logo was modelled on him.

Another new collection to come this year is a series of cars which include a DVD of the film/documentary to which they relate. The first in the series listed for February is called "The Speed Merchants" and features a Porsche 911S (Ref. 99020). Other film titles in the series are "Le Mans", "The Cobra - Ferrari Wars", "Jo Siffert - Live Fast, Die Young" and "Las Temporadas Argentinas 1947-1972". Details of the cars included with these films will be announced at Nuremberg.

Finally, there is news concerning the light-weight racing series cars which are to be re-packaged together with "extra accessories". It appears the cars will come in kit form (similar to the Ninco Pro-race series) and have all the parts required to go racing, including a new red flag "Guss" guide. The "extra accessories" bag will

contain extra crown gears, tyres, two different coloured springs, screws, braids and a different engine cradle. At this point it is not known whether all of the racing series cars will come in this new guise, so once again watch this space for further developments. The first car listed for February will be an orange Porsche 911 SC Rallye (Ref. 88249).

There are of course some regular models listed for production during January/February. In catalogue reference order, they are as follows:

88239 - Lancia Beta Montecarlo - Le Mans 1981 (January) - detailed in Recent Releases above.

88240 - BMW M1 - Procar, Niki Lauda "Marlboro" (January)

88242 - Porsche 911R - Tour de France 1970 (January)

88243 - Alfa Romeo 156 - Racing series, red (January)

88244 - Alfa Romeo 156 - Racing series "Bosch" (January)

88245 - Audi Quattro A2 - RAC Rally 1983 (February)

88246 - Renault 5 Turbo - Rally Du Var 1982 "Marlboro" (February)

88247 - Ford GT40 Mk.III - 24hr Daytona 1966 (January)

88248 - Porsche 908/2 - 12hr Barcelona 1969 (February)

88251 - Ferrari 365 GTB/4 - 6hr Watkins Glen 1972 (February)

99018 - Porsche 911R - Hockenheimring 1972 - H+T special edition (January)

99022 - BMW M3 E30 - Art car in special box (February)

Watch out for the return of the 'Gaugemaster' limited edition series this year. There are two models planned, one of which will be a Ferrari 250 GTO. The other will be one of the unannounced new models planned for 2007. Talking of new models, Fly are planning to produce six brand new models for 2007. One of which could be the single seater reported last year! I hope to bring you details of this and other future models next month. ■

Well, for those of you who are regular buyers on eBay, I hope you managed to get a bargain over Christmas and during the January sales so to speak. If not, then maybe you picked up some nice collectable slot items as there have been a few things in that category that fell onto my radar this month which you can read about further down.

On UK eBay another 10p listing day at the start of the month and a 10p BIN day at the end certainly boosted listings taking them to 8000 at the time of writing - up 3000+ in a day. Completed listings for the past 30 days showed 18,000 plus items. Doing a check of the other major countries showed the US and Germany almost equal with around 10,000 live slot auctions and 27,000 completed. Much further behind was Spain with 2300 and 6600 listings and France with 1700 and 2400.

As noted in my last report, bargains were available but not all the time as the post Christmas new slot buyers set about expanding their layouts and fleets. This meant we saw new unboxed standard Scalextric straights fetching £4 a piece in big lots of eight or more, something much in line with retail prices, as well as your unloved classic C187 banked curves (all be it six of them) fetching a fiver with £4 P&P. Usually you can not give away or bribe people to take C187s off your hands at a swapmeet! Again, following on from last month about ex set cars, there also appears to be many being sold off in groups of cars by various sellers to try and shift more cars in one go, rather than list lots of individual items. This can prove a better way of getting a bargain provided you want all the cars. Examples were five groups of 18 set cars which went for between £100 and £150, five groups of 10 MotoGP bikes for between £33 and £51, and groups of five cars around £30.

Continuing the international theme it is evident that more international sellers are listing on the UK site, backing up reports that Britons are the world's highest spending eBay users, trading an average £50 a year per person. Sellers from Spain, Holland and France are getting quite common now on the UK site so it is more important than ever to make sure you check the P&P before bidding. That £50 figure seems a bit low to me though. Mind you there are 15 million users in the UK so it could be right, though there must be loads of people not buying anything to counteract my spending each month!

I often wonder if those bidding against me are doing so to get a good price. A recent report in the Sunday Times highlighted this practice of "shell" bidding where the seller gets someone else to bid on their auctions or even bids themselves with a different identity so that the buyer does not get a real bargain but only at the price the person is prepared to sell. It is also made harder for buyers now as for anything that goes above £100 you can only see the bidders identity as bidder 1, 2 etc. For this reason, personally I am wary of accepting second chance offers when being outbid on one off special items, even though they may be genuine offers, as I feel I have been pushed into bidding as much as possible rather than picking up a genuine bargain. However, on newer items where the seller has lots of stock to shift, a reasonable bid can mean picking up a very good deal with a second chance offer if the seller sees you are a good buyer. My tip for buying then is to look at completed listings and other auctions from the same seller and if they have several of the same item don't chase the price on one auction but wait for the next auction or put in a bid at least one increment up. If you get



outbid, hope for a second chance offer. Incidentally I have picked up a couple of Vanquish MG cars like that myself this month as one of the big sellers has had a good selection available. If you are after a cheaper VMG for your slot racing stable then check out eBay UK soon.

Rarities?

This month has seen quite a few of what can be genuinely classed as rarer items appear. There were two separate Scalextric Bond sets with one fetching £1400 and the other reaching £870 but not the reserve. You have got to admire the cheek of a punter though who offered to buy the £1400 set from a seasoned slot seller for €150 BIN price. A polite "Hello, No thanks", was the reply. A C70 Bugatti at £2250 went unsold. Also available was the new Scalextric 2007 Range Presentation Ford GT which is similar to the Racer club "free" car, and probably described in detail elsewhere in the Journal. The first listed presentation car was snapped up for £250 BIN and several others subsequently listed went for between £205 and £270. Making appearances as well have been the Range Presentation cars from previous years with the Ford GT40 from 2004 most popular, attracting a £200 bid. Presentation cars from 2003 back rarely get bids of over £100 lately I have noticed though.

On to NSCC related items then where a C306 Red Alfa made £335 and a 1988 MRRC Porsche 936 £41.20. A complete set of mint Scalextric dragsters remained unsold at £9000, from Geronimo not surprisingly though. However I am pleased to report that not all his auctions start that way and was able to bid on one, a yellow Alfa, which started at 99p with no reserve but ended a lot higher! A MIB yellow Alfa from a different seller made €803.

This month's prices

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

Carrera Evolution Special Edition Becks - Beck's Limited €456 (Special Edition Jaguar F1 Becks on Sun night Germany)

von ca 1935: MÄRKLIN AUTORENNBAHN 65 Teile Blechauto €4098 (red single seat rail racer car, no driver but with track Mon night Germany)

Ford Mustang DSCF Special Edition NEU/OVP €300 (Listed for BIN price of €599 in Germany. Offer of bargain? €300 was accepted. 1 of 190 White Ford Mustang made for Deutsche Slot Car Forum)

Carrera EVO LOLO'S Maserati NEU/OVP Limited Edition €205 (German eBay Sunday evening. Three others sold around the same price but two at €250 remained unsold)

Scalextric 1:32 Nascar Collection 9 Cars John Deere NEW £106 (all mint unboxed ex set cars including John Deere, De Walt, Motorcraft, Conesco and Valvoline Fri night. John Deere and Motorcraft unboxed made over £30 each in separate auctions!)

scalextric VERY UNUSUAL BLUE 1275 GT MINI original L@@K £78 (plain blue Mini not painted. Sunday night)

1960's Scalextric Pit Stop Z crossing set - New & boxed £155 (Both in and out crossover tracks for 4 lane pit stop track on Wed afternoon)

RARE SCALEXTRIC FRANCE SWIVEL GUIDE VANWALL GREEN MIB £162

(French seller on UK eBay Mon night)

FLY RENAULT 5 TURBO - Poly 31th anniversary - £28 (E1203 LE of 400 for Poly shops in Spain in Marlboro like colours. Spanish seller on UK eBay. Sat night)

A MUST SEE GRANNY RACERS HARD TO FIND LOW STARTING 99P £8.27 (Small Maplins Xmas special set with the Granny racers shown in Journal pictures last year. Tues night)

Lastly, to sum up and show that it does not always pay to have a witty item description was a listing described just as "A Nice pair of Pits" that fetched £30.50. Yes it did make me smile and read that description again. The seller maybe thought he had a winner but not really for two complete classic pit stop tracks.

I am hopefully going to the Milton Keynes swapmeet, so if you read this before then, and are going, by all means try and seek me out for a chat. ■



Sir,
The Escort saga continues!



Above is a photo of Timo Mäkinen winning the 1974 RAC Rally in the Colibri Escort. As you can see this car is definitely left hand drive, although the wiper configuration is for a right hand drive model, which makes the Scalextric version wrong on both counts of the driver position and the wipers. Would it take that much engineering to provide a variation for the interior of the car to be made in both LHD and RHD versions?

It will probably always be an issue with the works Escorts of that era as virtually no two cars were the same. Ironically, the wiper configuration used on the model is correct for the majority of the works Escorts produced after 1970, with the exception of the two models produced by Scalextric so far. So with a few more liveries to come we may get one that is correct! Now come on Scalextric and make a Mk2 Escort to complement your otherwise excellent efforts of the Mk1.

I am, yours etc,
Nic Ayre

Sir,
Whilst I am constantly preparing material for the 7th Edition Scalextric book I have seen two Scalextric licenced games on eBay of which I have no knowledge. The images are poor quality but one is a board game and the other a hand held electronic race game. Would any members have any information on these and even better if they have the actual items. A free copy of the 7th edition and a mention in the book if anyone can assist please. I can be contacted on:
scalextric@rogergillham.co.uk

I am, yours etc,
Roger Gillham



GOODYEAR BITS & PIECES GOODYEAR

PR Job Vacant

Unfortunately, due to work and family pressures, Gareth Jex has reluctantly decided to step down from his position as Club Promotions Officer.

As you are probably aware, he had already announced that he would not be putting on any large scale events in the near future, but the securing of a very large International contract by his firm, plus the responsibility of bringing up his young daughter, has meant that he has even less free time to devote to the NSCC.

He will however, continue to perform the SCX liaison role for the Journal and has not ruled out a return to the promotions position in the longer term.

We therefore need a replacement so, if anybody feels they could help promote the club at various events and in the press, perhaps they would like to get in touch with Gareth, in the first instance, to find out what the job entails. All help and advice will be freely given.

I am sure I speak for the whole club in offering our sincere thanks to Gareth for a job superbly done.

Brian

Stranger than fiction

The December edition of the Journal contained a picture of a slot dragster A35 van - not so fanciful perhaps! See below.

Alan Slade



Drag Racing Forum

Following December's article on Drag Racing, the link to the Slot Drag Racing Forum (at <http://ukslotdragracingclub.forumup.co.uk/index.php>) has had to be locked, due to unsavoury characters hacking into the site and basically making it unusable.

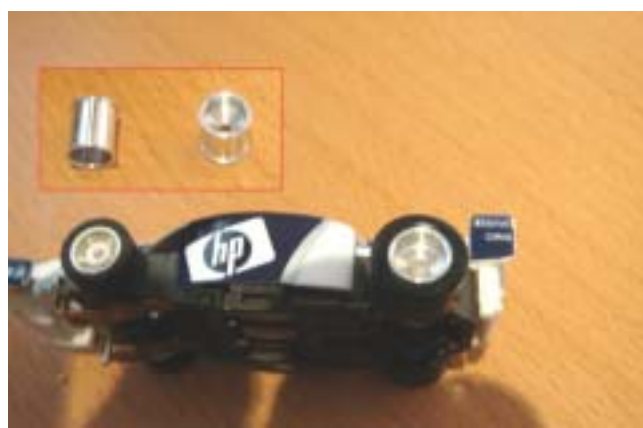
However, good news; the Forum has been recreated and can be accessed at this new location: <http://sdraeurope.forum5.com/index.php>.

Those of you who are interested in joining in the discussions on this new Forum will be very welcome, though you will have to register (which is free) to view any of the detail. My apologies to everyone for the inconvenience.

Robin Clark

H:O Metal Wheels

Just thought you might like to see my latest venture, metal wheels. These are for Tyco rears at the moment but I plan to get some fronts made too and other styles will follow.



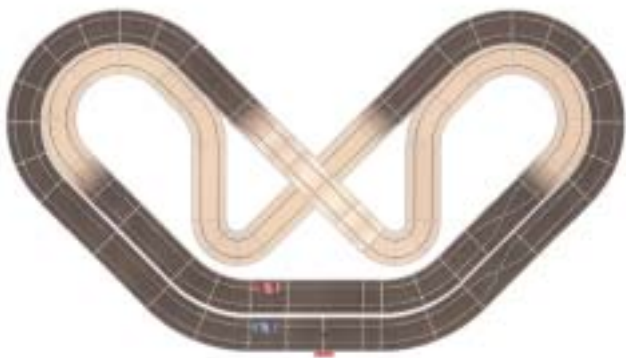
I'd like your feedback please, what kind of money would you pay and so on. Also, for those of you in the UK, should they be club legal? I don't see why not myself but I await your comments...

Deane Walpole

Race of Champions Track

By Peter Solari

When asked to run a stage at last year's Slot Rally GB, I wanted to design a circuit where two cars could race simultaneously against the clock but without the risk of coming into contact with each other. The layout would ideally fit within 2m x 3m area, preferably 2-lanes and definitely of equal lane length. I have seen race events on television where two cars set out at the same time on apparently different circuits but come together again to cross the finish line and this idea appealed to me as something different for Slot Rally GB. I didn't have to look far for my inspiration as I found an article in a motorsports magazine showing pictures from a recent "Race of Champions" held at the Stade de France in Paris. The layout was perfect and turned out to be quite easy to translate to 1/32nd scale, using of course, Ninco track. I sketched the plan and then "virtually" pieced it together using the Ninco TrackMap software. On the third attempt I had a design using all standard pieces that, on screen, fitted together exactly... well, almost exactly.



With the scheduled event being a rally, I wanted to include some Raid track sections and as the design allowed for a bridge, it was a good opportunity to utilise the Dune track. The original design included a bridge, but a couple of cross-over sections were suitably placed to ensure that both lanes were equal in length as

well as having exactly the same amount of inside and outside lanes of each type of track surface. With my design complete, I had plenty of time to try it out... I just needed some spare time and a big clear area. As we all know, time can pass quickly and very soon, Slot Rally GB was looming. I sent the outside dimensions of the layout to Gareth so that suitable boards could be made and all I had to do was ensure I turned up with the right amount of track pieces and all would be well. Although I had every confidence in the TrackMap software, I managed to find some time (*very late one night*) to set up the track just to be sure. However, the first time it was fully assembled and connected to power was actually the night before Slot Rally GB – and yes, it did fit together perfectly!

As the cars were simultaneously racing against the clock and time was the key for this event, it was important that the two cars did not interfere with each other. As you will see from the pictures, the layout has the appearance of a 4-lane circuit for the most part, with only the 'infield' section breaking into two 2-lane tracks; one going under the bridge, the other going over it. This design allowed for both cars to start at the same start-line which extended across all four lanes even though they were effectively half a lap apart. The Ninco Pole Position Lap counter is, in my opinion, the most versatile off-the-shelf slot car timing device available and was ideal for the job of monitoring the lap times on this circuit. One of the functions it offers is to operate on only one of the two lanes, therefore two can be fitted to the same track with one programmed to operate on lane 1 and the other to operate on lane 2. Now, I'm sure this is not a normal requirement but for this particular design it is perfect as the two lap counters can be laid side by side giving a mutual start-line even though they are quite far apart in distance. Remember, this is still a 2-lane circuit. In this instance, it is not necessary to join the two lap counters using the link cable. ➡➤





To enhance the visual appearance, I added red/white borders and barriers to the outside of all the asphalt sections and stone wall barriers to the Raid sections. When each race is run, the cars look terrific as they set off from the start-line, drift round the sweeping bends before parting company, one to go under the other to go over the Dune bridge. Any difference in lane length or distance covered on different track surfaces at the half way stage is evident as the cars cross the start line to begin what appears to be their second lap. This second half of the stage evens out the differences as they swap roles going under or over the Dune. As the last bend is taken, the cars should approach and cross the finish line together leaving the Pole Position timers to determine the winner!

To reproduce this circuit, here is a list of the 70 pieces of track required... *just add cars, transformers and controllers!*

Asphalt sections:

- 10101 40cm Power straight x 1
- 10102 40cm straight x 7
- 10103 20cm straight x 2
- 10104 10cm straight x 2
- 10107 Outer Curve x 20
- 10108 Grand Curve x 4
- 10111 Change-over straight x 2

Raid sections:

- 10153 40cm straight x 4
- 10151 20cm straight x 2

10152 Standard curve x10

10154 Inner curve x 6

10156 Dune bridge (4 sections) x 1

Special sections:

Asphalt to Raid 20cm straight x 4

Lap timer 20cm straight x 2

Track Statistics:

Area required = 3.5m x 2m

Track length = 17.1m (per lane)

Note: Later this year, the real Race of Champions comes to Wembley Stadium... ■



Chevrolet Corvette C6R "COMPUWARE"

By Steve Baker

Well, first impressions upon taking delivery of this SCX Corvette C6R. Not my favourite type of motor sport, but it's a very nice looking car. But this is getting a little ahead of ourselves.

First the box, and finally a manufacturer that has the sense to make the box clip together, how many times have you picked up a crystal case by the lid to see the base, and car go in the other direction? Well I've done so too many times, I've even had this happen after I've taken the card surround off the case. Surely it can't just be me? So regardless of whether the case shows the car to its best advantage or not, I like these cases, you can be sure you'll get the car and not just the lid. The next challenge was to get the car off of the base, unscrew the plastic retaining pin, and pull, nothing, pull harder

making sure to keep a good grip on the car so that you don't end up throwing it across the room, and 'Click' there you go.

This Vette is a sort of pale mustard shade of yellow, with black trim, number 64. It was raced at the 2005 Le Mans 24 hours, and has a number of banners on it stating as much. On the roof just above each door the driver's names are shown J. Magnussen, Olivier Beretta, and Olivier Gavin There are some very good photos of a number of Vette C6Rs on the gallery pages of Jan Magnussen's website;

<http://www.janmagnussen.com/>

The car has the familiar SCX features of a sprung guide and the powerful single magnet mounted just in front of the rear axle. The chassis is the latest style, which has a separate sub-chassis section on which the motor, ➡➡



magnet and rear axle are mounted, this allows a little movement of the sub-chassis. The car is fitted with bright (Xenon?) headlights, the tyres are very grippy and feel as though they may have a rubber/silicone compound. Lastly it's powered by the latest 19,000 rpm RX42 motor.

Track Time

But how does the car handle on the track? Well it's an SCX car, so of course it handles well. The first testing was done literally straight out of the box, nothing done, just plonked on our club circuit (100ft 4 lane Ninco track), and it went... slowly. That's not entirely fair, it went well but nothing like as quick as I'd expected, but then it's nearly always the case that SCX motors need to be well run in before they reach their best and I think this is the case here as well. In this standard guise it was pretty much glued to the track and was just fast enough to be fun for a while. Not wanting to do all the required running in myself it was time to let everyone else have a go and get their opinions. The general consensus was that it's a car that looks far better on the track than it does in its box (very true), but as an out of the box car the motor isn't up to the job the magnet makes it do - it just doesn't have enough grunt. OK, so next take it back again the following week, blag everyone that I've oiled the relevant bits, so can they try it again please. Actually I'd done nothing to it as I wanted to test it sans magnet before I did, I just didn't want to continue running it in. This time the opinion was that it felt a little faster, a little freer, but it still didn't have the power to overcome the drag of the magnet. Third week, and this time I removed the magnet before letting everyone have another try. This makes the car far better to drive; without the magnet there is more feel, being such a low, wide car the rear kicks out in a nice predictable and controllable manner. Obviously without the magnet it's faster, even on our relatively tight circuit the lap times were getting on for a second a lap quicker without the magnet. I was more prone to losing it in a few of the more tricky corners, though I blame the still tight motor for this and nothing to do with poor driving (lots of coughing at this point).

Now by a fortunate coincidence James Turley at Farnham had got this hands on the Carrera version of this exact car to review so we were able to put them up against each other. They do look very similar, but then they should - they're supposed to be the same car. Side by side the SCX Vette looks the better of the two in my opinion. The nose sits lower to the track, whereas the Carrera car looks like it's trying to pull a wheelie by comparison. But how did they compare when being driven? Well I'm sure James will have his own ideas on this, we tested the cars both with and without their magnets; the SCX car won, we swapped cars - I had a go with the Carrera, James the SCX, and the SCX Vette won again. By a much greater margin this time; not that I'm saying James is a better slot car driver than me, the blaggard! Next without the magnets the SCX car won both times again. The Carrera car was losing its nose into a number of corners, a common problem with Carrera cars. When will they learn, and change their guide for one that works properly?

So, in conclusion, a 4-0 whitewash to the SCX car shows well enough which is the better of these two cars, also as the SCX Vette isn't fully run in I don't believe we got the best from it. If it had been run in, then the performance margin between these two would have been even greater. If you are looking to buy this car then it's a difficult choice, the SCX car sits lower and the SCX body looks better on the track. However the Carrera car is a nicer shade of yellow and has detail under the rear window whereas the SCX rear window is blacked out. If you're buying the car to race, then the SCX car is the better of these two, but I'd try to find something else. The SCX car will probably last the race duration without falling off, but against a GT car from Hornby, Fly or Ninco its pace is lacking, even after it's been well run in it's not as quick. This car really does look a lot better on a track than in the box (yellow car, red case...not good) and, as I've said, I'm not doing the Corvette full justice as it isn't fully run in, it will undoubtedly be better once it is. ■

Penelope Pitlane Aston and Bugatti

By Phil Insull

A new face to the slot world is Wolverhampton based Penelope Pitlane, whose first offerings are resin kits of the Aston Martin DBR4/250 and Bugatti 251 50s Grand Prix cars. Both kits are designed to fit the equally new Penelope Pitlane etched brass chassis with choices of either Moto GP or Mabuchi style motors depending on whether you choose the FJ1 slim-line chassis or the slightly wider SF1 chassis that will accept standard shape Mabuchi type motors such as offered by Scalextric, Scaleauto and Slot.It. The cars both come as unpainted resin kits with pre-moulded mounting posts, resin driver figure, Lexan for screens and white metal steering wheels. The Aston also contains a white metal twin pipe exhaust and correct style number and roundel decals depending on the car. At the time of review Penelope Pitlane were still in the process of making their aluminium wheels and photo etched wire inserts available, so for mine I used PRS wheels for the Aston and TRRC wheels for the Bugatti, with Ortmann race rubber on the rears and PRS hard rubber at the front.

The Bugatti 251 must be one of the prettiest but shortest-lived Formula One cars ever, designed by famed engineer Columbo it was Bugatti's last hurrah. The futuristic car featured

a box section space frame chassis, with De Dion suspension, radius rods and telescopic dampers and aerodynamic front wheel fairings. The car also featured a 2,430 cc straight eight twin overhead cam engine mounted transversely behind the cockpit, which developed a healthy 275bhp at 9,000 rpm. Sadly the car's only appearance was the 1956 French Grand Prix at Rheims where Maurice Trintignant qualified eighteenth out of twenty starters. Worse was to follow as the Bugatti retired after only eighteen of the sixty one laps due to jammed throttle slides. Clearly the car needed development but Bugatti had no money and the project was abandoned.

The Aston DBR4/250 was a handsome front engine design which, despite a 280 bhp six cylinder engine, disc brakes and De Dion suspension, suffered from appearing too late. Aston had begun looking at building a single seat GP car based on the successful DB3S as early as 1955 but painfully slow development saw the DBR4/250 debut in 1959 just as the rear engine revolution was coming to fruition. At its non-championship debut at Silverstone Roy Salvadori put the car on pole and finished an encouraging second, but this was to be a false dawn. The car's world championship debut came at the Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort, ➤



where Carol Shelby qualified tenth and Roy Salvadori thirteenth out of fifteen, with both cars retiring with engine maladies early on. At its next Grand Prix at Aintree, Salvadori equalled Jack Brabham's pole time, but faded to a distant, lapped sixth place finish. Salvadori also managed sixth place in Portugal but was over three laps behind Moss in his Cooper. A lightened redesigned version appeared at the 1960 Dutch Grand Prix only to be withdrawn after a row over start money. Two cars for Salvadori and Trintignant were entered at Silverstone; they qualified thirteenth and twenty-first with Roy retiring and Maurice finishing five laps down in eleventh, in what was the last championship event for Aston Martin. Thereafter the Salvadori car was acquired by the Donington collection as a box of bits and was restored to original 1959 specification for the museum.



Assembly of the kits onto the FJ1 brass chassis was simple, using a Moto GP motor, Slot.it axles, bearings, gears and guides. I was able to simply line up the completed chassis with the mounting posts and drill the screw holes. I did have to shorten the front chassis piece slightly with my tin-snips for the shorter wheelbase of the Bugatti as I gather I should have ordered an FJ1S, which already has a shorter front chassis piece for this kit (silly me). Once the running gear was mounted it was a case of painting the cars, fit the driver, steering wheel, screen and apply the decals. I chose to use acrylic paint mixing my own shade of metallic green for the Aston with white roundels bearing a black number 2, which was Salvadori's 1959

Aintree car, to finish this off I polished the exhausts up with metal wadding before fitting to the car. The Bugatti is finished in French blue with white number 28 as it appeared at the 1956 French Grand Prix.

On to Wolverhampton with the two cars on the Wolves wood track. I had fitted self-adhesive lead strip to the chassis to keep the centre of gravity as low as possible. From the off the two cars were promising with 9.05 for the Aston and 9.20 for the Bugatti, the Aston's handling being slightly more predictable due to its longer wheel base. The chassis feels nice and taut and far better than my own home made brass chassis from last year's Early Bird cars, although the Moto GP motors still feel very peaky compared to a Mabuchi. I thrashed round for some time being consistent but struggling to lap below 9 seconds, so I feel I may use these chassis in some

narrower GP bodies I have and switch to the wider SF1 with a Scaleauto motor, which should be smoother and therefore quicker.

In summary these kits build up into beautiful little 50s Grand Prix cars, and with the right motor could well be very tasty performers. The chassis is beautifully crafted and dead simple to assemble and fit, and the narrowness offered by the FJ1 will make it ideal for very tight narrow bodied cars and are a real boon to people like me who struggle to make their own. For race ability I would go with the wider chassis and Mabuchi motor which can be fitted to these cars. Again though a great first product, I wish Penelope Pitlane well and hope to see more of their kits in future. ■

Lotus Eater

By Dave Yerbury

In 1958 Formula Junior still had to make an impression. The Formula for up and coming drivers to test their skills was the 1100cc sports racing class. With most cars powered by the Coventry Climax FWA engine it was a level playing field. In this class the key to winning was low weight and good road holding. Lotus had taken a grip on this category with their Eleven whose only competition came from the odd Elva. Things were about to change in the middle of the year when Eric Broadley introduced the Lola Mk 1.

It had a multi tubular chassis weighing just 60lb without fittings but the key to success was its superior road holding. So, at Brands Hatch on August Bank Holiday on the old short circuit, it became the first sports car to lap in under a minute. During practice it was noticeably quicker through the corners than anything else. In heat two it immediately opened up a 28 second lead driven by Broadley himself from the Elva of John Brown to win and equal the class record of 60 seconds in the process. The final was a disaster as, after being shunted on the grid, Broadley spun out at Bottom Straight. The

writing was on the wall for the Lotus Eleven. In 1959, even with the new Len Terry designed 17, Lola blew everyone away with the two Peters, Ashdown and Gammon, in the works cars being the most successful. But what goes around comes around and the Lola stayed in production until the end of 1962. In 1963 Lotus got their own back with their all conquering 23 model but that's another story.

I struggled a bit finding enough information for this car and was saved by Glyn Jones, the historian at Lola who sent me some helpful information enabling me to complete this car. It will be a good racing companion for the Lotus Eleven already available.

Motorising the car was simplicity itself as the Ninco Porsche 356 chassis is a perfect fit. The usual two plastic pegs fore and aft for the chassis to be screwed into after a little trimming. Two Airfix Cooper F1 rear axles are used as the wheel pattern and size are just right. The body was sprayed with what I thought was a near colour of plum red and two silver stripes down the centre of the body. With a moulded in driver all that was needed was a period driver's head from Cartrix. ■

