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THE INDEPENDENT CLUB FOR SLOT-CAR ENTHUSIASTS

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Nostalgia ain't what it used to be

In recent years there has been an explosion of interest in 'historic' motorsport events with many more being added to the calendar every year. It is not just the big meetings such as the Goodwood Revival either; the VSCC and HSCC club races are attracting an ever larger following as well.

In fact, it is quite some time since I have visited anything other than an historic event. "Ah", I hear you mutter, "The old fool is living in the past. He will be telling us how it was all so much better in the olden days next!" Now this could well be true, after all I did watch Stirling Moss in his heyday, but these meetings are not attended solely by people of my age group. Well over 50% of the audience consists of much younger people than myself so the appeal would seem to cross the generations.

The slot car manufacturers certainly seem to have latched on to this trend as well - their output of historic vehicles is threatening to outstrip the production of modern cars. Slot.It in particular are mining a rich seam with the Porsche 956/962 variants and these are beginning to fetch silly money on eBay. Hornby must also be highly satisfied with the sales of their 'Classic' range, my own purchases alone must have swelled the coffers significantly!

There is a slight downside to this trend though - historic racing cars (both 1:1 and 1/32 versions) are travelling increasingly quickly. In fact the racing drivers of yesteryear would have a bit of a shock if they got back in their original cars today. They would be lapping an unchanged Goodwood circuit several seconds faster than the aces achieved in the 1950s. This is mainly due to modern tyre technology but also due to the fact that the rules about 'original condition' are not policed very effectively. Similarly with slot cars - it is somewhat silly when a slot version of a 1980s Porsche is capable of thrashing a modern Japanese GT slot car.

And Finally - I've just watched the Monaco GP (as in "Grand Procession") and realised just why I prefer historics these days!

Till next month

Brian



BY **ROB SMITH**

MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

Just three new releases this month and all are reliveries. That said, they are very good ones!

C2795 Dodge Viper Competition Coupé Kenny Hawkins Motorsports No58



This Viper is a stunner in bright yellow with grey details. These Vipers go very well and make a colourful GT grid. This Kenny Hawkins Motorsports version raced in the 2006 Speed GT World Challenge in the US. This is a GT3 series sharing the grids with the ALMS series.

Hawkins won his first race at VIR in 2001 driving a Dodge Viper in T1 SCCA Club Racing and has three years' experience competing in SCCA events and three years in the SPEED GT series racing at Road Atlanta, Sebring and Virginia.

C2796 Chevrolet Camaro "No 78"

Although it is now getting a bit long in the tooth the Camaro remains popular and with such great liveries as this white and maroon version it is easy to understand why. This car still has the old easy fit guide and not the latest system.



Car owner Tony Toulis put up some of the necessary funds for the team to compete in one race in 1977. Tony and his wife Sassy owned Glades Restaurant and the lounge at the back known as Tony's Back Door. On March 19, 1977 at Sebring, Florida the car started from 43rd spot on the grid and finished 11th overall. The team was ecstatic with the finish. The only make of car which beat the #78 Camaro was Porsche taking the top 10 positions. Of all the big buck hardware out on the track from all over the world, the lowly eight year-old Camaro had beaten everyone else. They had beaten the Ferraris, the Mustangs, and even a few of the mighty Porsches. In essence, they were the FIRST American-made car across the finish line out of 72 cars which started the race! A huge accomplishment for a privateer team.

C2801 Nissan Skyline GTR Pennzoil

My favourite of this month's releases is the Nissan Skyline. It's the best livery yet released in yellow, black and white. These Super GT cars are super quick too. However, it is the details which makes this car really stand out. ➡➡





Not only is the livery beautifully finished with loads of tiny, but crisp and clear printing but the bodywork bristles with ducts and etched metal grilles. This particular Pennzoil sponsored car is one of two R34 Skylines campaigned in 2001 in the GT500 category by Nismo (Nissan Motorsports) and was driven by Frenchman Erik Comas and Japanese driver Tetsuya Tanaka. The pairing had a number of second and third place finishes during the year which contributed to Nissan winning the 2001 constructors' championship.

News from Australia

There has been a change to the planned release of Australian V8s for 2007. Instead of two Holdens and two Fords which we expected there will just be three Ford Falcons. These will be: C2829 Ford Falcon Craig Lowndes 2007, C2830 Ford Falcon Steven Richards 2007 and C2831 Ford Falcon Steven Johnson 2007.

News from Spain

The next club car from Hornby's SuperClub SuperSlot will be Ferrari F430 driven by Bartyan. The reference is C (or H or S as you like) 2835. There is a possibility that this will also be a UK Collector's Centre car, perhaps with a different racing number. The car is blue and white and looks great.

Coming Soon

Although new releases have been thin on the ground this month there is lots of news about the next batch of cars and sets to hit the shops. We should soon see set C1199 Street Pursuit – the drift set containing the Police Range Rover and a Lamborghini Gallardo. Also expected is C2795, the Ferrari 312T of Clay Regazzoni.

Maserati MC12 Wings

No-one contacted me about the narrow winged version of the MC12 to confirm which versions are out there somewhere. I have managed to determined that the narrow wing version was at least in the triple car digital set. ■



Long time no see? Well to be honest after the London Toy Fair it was all pretty quiet, then a couple of releases and then I was really busy and now we have loads to check through, so eyes down for the latest SCX products to have been released and available via your chosen pusher of slot material.

Let's start with new track sections;
Ref 88680 Banked Curved Set, This gives you a complete 180° radius '3' curve with 15° banking. The boxed track comes with supports and Armco barriers (Classic non digital).
 For SCX Digital fans: **Ref 20250 'Closing Straight'** and **Ref 20260 Outer Curve**.

Both track sections have been previously announced but have taken a long while to finally come through. These two sections complete the entire standard track package at this time.

Something a little more up my street - a couple of classic rally cars;

Ref 62470 Ford Sierra RS Cosworth, Colin McRae, Lombard RAC 1989. See a full review in this edition.

Ref 62530 Fiat 124 Spider, Markku Alen and Ilkka Kivimaki, Monte Carlo Rally 1976. Blue with yellow strips in OLIO FIAT team livery. Full review soon. ➡



Not quite classic, but not too far off; **Ref 62230 Subaru Impreza, P Solberg 2006.** Blue and gold/yellow livery.

Two new F1 cars have also been released; **Ref 62450 Williams F-1 2006**, Nico Rosberg blue and white, a car I suspect Sir Frank would prefer to forget but, none the less, it's well represented in the SCX form. A revised rear track width improves its looks over previous releases.

Ref 62440 Ferrari 248 F-1, 2006, Michael Schumacher. Red. Again all the wings, flappy bits, aerals are all faithfully reproduced on this SCX model. Both cars are reviewed elsewhere in the Journal.

As reviewed last month, both the SCX Pro cars are now widely available in the shops, Ref 50250 for the 4WD Xsara and Ref 50260 for the 2WD Audi R8. The review for the Audi is taking longer than anticipated to finalise as the car is being sent to several clubs for trials on a variety of track surfaces.

On the GT front the new C4 set has been released with new liveried Aston and Chevrolet. Both cars are available separately:

Ref 62500 Aston Martin DBR9 'Team Modena' grey and black and **Ref 62520 Chevrolet Corvette GT.**



That about wraps up the latest releases but several new models are due in the early summer, including the Vintage BRM, a couple of Nascars, DTMs and the new Ford Escort RS Cosworth.

Until next time. ■



There's news this month of a new limited edition collector series. This will be titled "Mythical Circuits" and include a car (obviously), together with a reference book in a special edition box. The booklet will contain information on the car and the "mythical" circuit. The first in the series features a "Gulf" Porsche 917K #24, driven by Derek Bell and Gijs Van Lennep, taking part in the 1000 kms at the, now abandoned, Montjuich circuit near Barcelona in 1971. The catalogue number for this will be 99072 and is an addition to the previously announced June releases. At the time of writing there is no further information on the rest of the series.

Also this month there is some confusing news concerning catalogue numbers for the forthcoming March 761. I say confusing, as I have been issued with two different schedules and it's not clear which one is the definitive one. By the time you read this the March should be available at your local slot car dealer and will clarify the situation much more. Anyway, I will proceed to describe the possible changes as I understand them. 88256 – Italy GP (Ronnie Peterson) has now been changed to Canada GP (Hans Stuck). 99042 – British GP (Hans Stuck) has now been changed to Italy GP (Ronnie Peterson). In a nutshell it means that the limited edition model and the first standard edition have swapped over. This could, of course, be a load of nonsense, in which case I will go and sit quietly in the corner.

Recent Releases

Lancia 037 "Rothmans" #4 (88257). Rally Costa Brava 1985, driven by Salvador Servia with co-driver Jordi Sabater, finishing in 3rd position. This long awaited iconic livery has finally been produced by Fly and is a welcome addition to the range. Decorated in blue and white, divided by red and gold pinstripes it is very striking, but looks "naked" without the cigarette sponsor's name printed. This is soon rectified by applying the decals, which are found, taped to the underside of the plinth in a blue packet. See accompanying picture for "dressed" version.



Chevrolet Corvette C5-R "World Car" (99026). The "Design a Livery" contest winner has been revealed. This was a competition set by Fly back in February/March this year, in which people were invited to design a livery for the Corvette C5-R. The winning livery chosen from the many entrants is of the world, which is along the lines of the current Honda F1 racing team ➡



- why didn't I think of that! It is decorated in matt black with the world in silver and some of the graphics (albeit as outlines) extend over the windows. Limited to 1000 units, it is displayed in the regular crystal case together with a white numbered backing card. Pictures of the first four placed entries can be found on Fly's web site - www.flycarmodel.com.

Audi Quattro A2 "Becker Autoradio" #1 (99044). This is a specially commissioned model not previously announced and limited to 800 units. It is decorated in an eye-catching red and white livery and presented on a white plinth. The numbered backing card is in two-tone red with the sponsor name printed. The model itself is fitted with spotlights and front bull-bars, which have extra lights incorporated.



BMW M3 E30 "Santa Lucia" (99045).

This attractive 1993 Spanish Touring Car Championship team set is presented in a yellow and red, square, cardboard, cigar-style box, in which two cars are displayed. Both have identical liveries in yellow and red, with yellow BBS wheels. Car #8 is driven by Rafael Barrios and car #9 by team-mate Alain Ferté.

MAN Truck (08051). From out of the blue and just before the copy date, this previously unannounced truck has been released. It is decorated in red with silver laurel graphics and is a special edition of 800 units celebrating Antonio Albacete winning the ETRC in 2005 and 2006.

2007 Catalogue

Following last month's limited edition release of the 2007 catalogue/Audi Quattro box set, the individual publication is now available. The layout is A4 landscape with 34 pages in full colour. The front cover has a picture of a very attractive blonde, who also features on many of the pages, together with a brunette later on. Flicking through the pages quickly, you could easily mistake the publication for something you would buy off the top shelf of your local newsagent. Once you manage to divert your eyes from the "models", pictures of racing cars come into view. In fact, the only "model" pictures in the catalogue (bar one) are indeed ones of the female gender and must be the only slot car catalogue of its kind. Included with the catalogue is a CD, which contains photographs of many of Fly's previous releases. A nice touch here is the ability to save each photograph into a file or external device of your choice. Just click on the icon below each picture, choose your file location and save. Overall, a nice publication and a welcome return after a year's absence.

Addendum

Following an email from an NSCC member, I would like to clarify the "Return of the #69" part of last month's article. This concerned the latest release of the "Gaugemaster" special edition series. I said that "the 250 GTO becomes the 13th model to be decorated in this now iconic livery/number combination". It was pointed out to me that there are in fact 14 models decorated in maroon with race #69. This extra model being a Ford GT40 Mk.II (E182). Although this model is very similar to the "Gaugemaster" series, it was produced for the 2004 East Coast Hobby Show and has no bearing at all on the "Gaugemaster" collection. As the piece was particularly aimed at the "Gaugemaster" special editions only, I stand by what I wrote. Apologies to anybody who may have been confused by this and thank you for reading. Whilst on the subject of #69/maroon cars - there is another, a Porsche 911 SC (E901). Like the GT40, this was also produced for the East Coast Hobby Show, but the year after in 2005. ■



After a long time I am pleased to announce the return of Carrera Corner. Due to various reasons, including a change of staff at Nikko (the Carrera importer) and Carrera production, there have not been many new models arriving in the UK. However, that is set to change and there are some exciting new cars on their way.

Those of us who watch eBay probably know that the Americans were lucky to have a range of 1/24 Exclusiv Hot Rods late last year and also some stunning new 1/32 Evolution cars.

I visited Nikko recently and in their showroom was a display of the cars they currently import and there were still some of last year's Ferraris in the Exclusiv range. There was also a poster of the new range of Evolution cars – including the three Hot Rods pictured in last month's edition.

These have not yet been imported but were imminent. I have bought some from America and tried them out on my home track and they do run well. Front and tail lights are bright but the two magnets give almost too much grip for racing.

After taking out the rear magnet – very easily – the car was able to slide round corners. There is a seriously firm self-centring guide which looks like the same one from the 1/24 scale cars.

Each of the three cars is slightly different so you can either race them or simply have your own Hot Rod Cruise!! Personally I like bright shiny things so will probably just drool over them and buy an extra one for racing!!

I also imported a Mustang Fire Marshall's car. This has the older style guide and two magnets. And I'm sure would be eligible for the American Muscle class.

Running the car straight from the box on the track at Farnham, which is a 110 foot plastic track with a mix of straights and a twisty in-field section and bridge, I was able to get the lap down to just under eight seconds. With the rear magnet out, the best lap time was just under 10. I was impressed – all this AND flashing lights on the roof bar and front and rear lights. Lovely!

Finally, with the increasing interest in H:O racing and the fact that a lot of people don't have the space for children to race 1/32 scale cars, the GO range of 1/43 cars and sets are ideal for starter sets or even to set up on a dining room table.

Nah Nah! Nah Nah!

I had the opportunity to try the Police Pursuit set and thought I would see how long it would take to set up and start racing.

First of all the box is enormous and there is a cut away on the front so you can see the red Viper and police car that is in the set. Also on the front it states that you are getting over 18 feet of track – yet this will all fit on a table that is about six foot by three foot.

Once the box is opened there is the usual mass of cardboard and twisted wires that hold the pieces of track firmly in place during transit.

The diagram of how to set up the track pieces is extremely clear and I had the layout built within 10 minutes. I had a loop the loop, ➡➡





Mustang Fire Marshall's car

banked curve, crossover as well as a narrow chicane and lap counter... plenty of opportunity for the police car to nerf the criminals!

There is a lot of tension on the track with the cars looping the loop as well as powering round it and the clever little people at Carrera have come up with a simple but effective method of preventing the track coming apart. Little bits of plastic with a lug at each end hold two pieces of track to each other ...and it works. My two sons and I played (tested!) for a good hour or so and the track held in place.

The two cars are very detailed considering their size – they are a lot more detailed than some other Micro racing sets and even have a separate magnet instead of it being part of the motor. SO in theory you could remove it ... but don't..ok? !!

At the Slot Rally weekend a similar set was on the Carrera stand and all day the children were able to launch the cars into the air and crash onto the floor – even with a magnet! But over the whole weekend only one car suffered damage – and there are plenty of spare guides and braids included in the set.

This is a superb set for small children – six and above as “small parts which may be

swallowed” – although I wouldn't recommend it! and is also a welcome change for grown up children who want to have some fun!!



Another benefit of a smaller scale set is that it can fit in smaller areas and not take up the living room floor – I had this on a table in the dining room, but it could equally be fixed to a piece of MDF and stored somewhere when not in use.

Together with this set in the smaller Go range there are a number of other sets including Casino Royale as well as other cars and extra track available from local stockists.

More news, pictures and reviews soon and I hope we can get more Carrera News on a regular basis. ■



There is a real spirit within the H:O community in recent times. Thanks to the example set by John Ovens and the myriad contacts he has made, I notice a real desire grew to 'sell' H:O to those that race other slot car disciplines. This is why he and I put on demos at both of the Epsom events, to allow the hard body community a chance to see for themselves what H:O is all about. It seems to be working - at a recent race 75% of those attending came from a 1/32nd scale background.

I'm very grateful to the Chairman of the British Slot Car Racing Association (BSCRA), Rob Lees, for giving the H:O community another chance to show off to a new audience. I'm also glad to say sometimes luck can fall your way. H:O Slots of the South (HOSS), based in Newbury, joined EAHORC around the time Rob became BSCRA chairman. Rob works for Vodafone in their impressive HQ also in Newbury and kindly offered HOSS the chance to put on a demo at the BSCRA "Nationals" at that venue! Talk about timing being everything.

With travelling distances not an issue, Andy Whorton and David Vaughan from HOSS could 'merely' focus on putting something impressive together, which they duly did. Whilst John Ovens' home track, as used twice at Epsom, remains the best home layout out there, the closeness of the venue for Andy meant something much bigger could be considered. Neither John nor I had an exact idea of what to expect the end result would be but suffice to say HOSS had exceeded our wildest hopes. When I arrived on the Saturday morning, the sight

before me was very impressive. Parked next to the BSCRA Nationals track the H:O track, lanes colour coded the day before, held its own. There was a good mixture of turns and even some banking, but the emphasis was very much on speed in a bid to appeal more to the BSCRA runners. We were advised to go this route by John, and he was very much on the money given the speed of the BSCRA cars. I would not have believed cars without traction magnets could travel that quickly if I had not seen it for myself.

The track had, at this point, already seen one day of use, with Vodafone staff taking part in a team charity event where an amazing £21,000 had been raised. For this the BSCRA track had been used of course but nonetheless the H:O track had seen plenty of use. This theme continued through the weekend, about half those in attendance having enough 'down time' and inclination to have a proper go. In addition, Andy took part in the Production ➤➤



Multiple BSCRA champ James Cleave (second Left), surrounded by other 1/32nd racers, on the H:O track and fully on it



race and finished second overall which was another great shot in the arm for H:O. Naturally the desire was to show H:O in the best possible light.

Some common sense was needed with regard to the cars, though. Some of the rarer ones were on display in cabinets that Andy had made, and he had additionally put up pictures and even had a lap top with a slide show for others. This took a lot of work but it did mean the cars to be used could be good, fast no-nonsense work horses! Still some good looking stuff, but cars that could be run into the ground, which many were. I was gratified to see that many of the BSCRA guys were drawn to the Wizzard cars, their speed and looks gelling no doubt with their own rockets. I was prepared for one of the usual criticisms of H:O, that it is too easy as the cars have traction magnets. We were able to show that, whilst magnet cars may be more forgiving, Martin Brundle's adage that "the limit is the limit – go find it" still applied. Driving a car at 10/10ths where there will be no

warning of a de-slot is no harder or easier than using feel to drift a car, just different. We also had on hand X-traction and G-Jet chassis, as mentioned in past columns, which do not have traction magnets. The G-Jet especially was mighty impressive, just 2.5 seconds off 'magnet' pace despite running on 16V when it is designed to run on 12V. Passing magnet cars going up to and through the banking was especially good fun! Overall it was worthwhile being at the Nationals, regardless of extra members gained or otherwise. The environment, full of very focused racers in a corporate setting and racing on a top-notch track was very inspiring, as was the attendance (70+, and remember these are only the guys who qualified through regional heats). I said to Rob Lees at one point, this is where I want H:O to be in 5-10 years time. I'm glad to say, thanks to the efforts of some great people, if such a scenario does not come to pass, it will not be for lack of effort.

If this is the year you finally decide to give H:O racing a proper try, contact me (01268 561203 or email dw@eahorc.com) or check out www.eahorc.com to get the ball rolling. ■

Kits 'N' Bobs

A round up of recent kit and resin releases

By Phil Insull

We start June's Kits N Bobs with a brand new manufacturer: Avant Slot have released their first new kit, the Audi R10 TDI. The kits are virtually complete, just requiring a motor to finish them, hopefully I can bring you the full low down next month.

New in after something of an extended wait is the BMW McLaren F1 GTR from Slot.It. The first release is the bright orange machine that took part in the 2005 Goodwood Festival of Speed. On the slot track this car has been outstanding with Slot.It's own high performance standards taking another leap forward. A full review of this fantastic new car appears elsewhere in this month's edition.

Last month I mentioned Reinecke Motorsports new 1965 Plymouth Fury well, the decals are now available from our good friends at Slot Cars 4 U. The one I have chosen is the white and red #86 version driven by Buck and Buddy Baker. Just arrived on my work bench is the fantastic looking RMS Ford transporter kit, this is a static 1/32nd resin kit of a sixties open back transporter and once mine is built next month I'll bring you some pictures of it.

Other cars I have completed from last month include the AA Bodies' Chevron B6, Lotus 47 and Maserati "Birdcage" Tipo 61. The latter features an all-new front motor chassis from Penelope Pitlane, which proved just the ideal size for it.

⇒



Reinecke Motorsports new 1965 Plymouth Fury and Resilient Resins Hussein Dodge





AA Bodies' Maserati Birdcage, Chevron B6 and Lotus 47



TRRC's Delahaye 145

Also completed from last month is the TRRC 1938 Delahaye 145, and TRRC have also introduced their new 1939 Auto Union D Type which I hope to have built for you by next month. This is designed to fit Penelope Pitlane's SM1M chassis. Not content with that, they have added some more classic cars to their future line-up with a 1938 Maserati 6CM and Alfa Tipo 158 in the Grand Prix series, and 1939 Delage D6, Lagonda V12, and Gordini-Simca T8 joining the sports car line up.

New from France this month is Le Mans Miniatures' Bentley EXP Speed 8 in its victorious 2003 form. Available as unpainted or pre-painted kits, again hopefully I can complete mine and bring you pictures next month. Not quite with us yet is the latest offering from

Protslot, the 1967 Paxton Turbine STP car, this car has been designed to fit their brand new PY02 steel chassis. Slightly offbeat is the news that a new kit manufacturer called Desert Slot intend to bring us 1/35th scale Desert Raid support trucks starting with the Alucona Pegaso Troner from the 1988 Paris-Dakar. Staying with new companies BRM have just released the first of their 1/24th scale Porsche 962s on the continent, expect to see them in the U.K. at some point in the near future. Word also has it that a Toyota CV88 is soon to follow.



Auto Art Ford Mustang FR500C

On to ready to run slot cars and news that Revell-Monogram has been purchased by the Hobbico Company although the present Revell operation is unlikely to change in the short term. MMK bring us their smart looking little ready to run resin bodied Matra MS620. Spirit have just released their second BMW2002, this time as the 1973 RAC version driven by Waldegard and Thorszelius. However, if the Lauda version was anything to go by, stock in the UK will be limited and snapped up pretty quickly. Also a second Esso liveried version has now been added to the Peugeot 406 Coupe range. Cartrix have added a second BRM P-25 this time, the number 8 version of Franco-American driver Harry Schell. Finally, Auto Art have released two 1/32nd versions of their new Ford Mustang FR 500C modelled on cars from the 2005 Grand Am Cup, along with two 1/24th versions of the Bugatti EB 16.4Veyron. ■

Well here we are, half way through the year already and things are slowing up a bit on eBay which is usual for this time of year, as most regular users know, as we head towards Summer. At the time of writing the listings in the UK are just below the 4000 mark which is the lowest for some time. However, this may also be due to no incentive days for listing as well as a couple of the big sellers being on holiday this past month.

Round Up

Whizzing round the world though showed the downturn with the US at just under 10,000 slot car listings, Germany 5800, Spain 1700 and France 1200. Looking at what is actually selling, a quick review of 10 completed pages of UK auctions showed anything from 20 to 50% of auctions remain unsold or not even attracting a bid. This was particularly evident for items being offered at near normal retail prices on a BIN basis or starting at that price. There are also a number of what I would class silly auctions unlucky to attract many bidders like 3 banked curves for 99p plus £2.90 P&P and a fair bit of Micro Scalextric small auctions as a result of breaking down of sets.

A few choice items are to be had but overall I get the impression that the market is being dominated by a lot of modern, lightly used Scalextric cars and to get good sales sellers' prices have to be very competitive - great for buyers but not so for all sellers. Remaining unsold this month was a Scalextric Bugatti at £1750 and, probably not surprisingly really, four different coloured C55/C87 swivel guide Vanwalls but they did have an £8000 starting price. No prizes for guessing the seller.

Sniper!

More and more auctions are being won in the last few minutes or even seconds of an auction. I have mentioned in the past about "snipe" bids and thought it about time I explained further as it could help you win more auctions. Basically a snipe bid is one that is placed in the very last few seconds of an auction to hopefully win the auction and to limit the time for further bidding. Any normal buyer competing against a sniper bid is unlikely to have time to place a higher bid, particularly if they are not on a Broadband internet connection. It also relies on the fact that many buyers will not put in the maximum they are prepared to pay but just a bid increment up, as often even with less than a minute to go the price can still be really cheap. There are a number of snipe programs out there with some charging a fee and some free but they work on the same principle. You sign up with your eBay details and then select the auction item number you want the program to bid on for you. Once you have confirmed, you then determine the most you want to pay and how many seconds before the end of auction you want the program to place the bid. Many buyers choose three or four seconds but I prefer a slightly longer time. As an example, you like an item and think £20 is a good buy. Starting price say was £10 and there could be a single bid or several already but the price has not risen much. Set your price to £20.10 (remember from last month to bid that just bit over round numbers) and then the bid to be made six seconds from the end. Bid is currently at £13.26. With a few minutes to go someone spots the auction and thinks it is worth a bit more and puts in their bid of £17. The auction price jumps to £15.50 as the previous high bidder was only prepared to pay £15. ➡➡



Someone else is watching the auction and with less than 30 seconds to go places a bid at £18.10 and is immediately the highest bidder at £18 only for your bid of £20.10 to be launched with six seconds to go. You then win the auction unless another snipe bid comes in at less than six seconds and for more than £20.10. I have tried the free Goofbay version and it does work! Other programs allow you to set up several snipe bids until you win the item you want and then cancel the rest which is, in effect, what a new eBay tool called "Bid Assistant" claims to do that has just been announced hot off the press as I write this column, last minute as always! This could be of major benefit to buyers who are prepared to wait for the right price but don't want more than one of an item, and increases your chances of grabbing a bargain I reckon.

Following on from last month's Slot.It spotlight there have again been good prices realised with the New Man Porsche reaching a new high of £165 and the Kenwood with the Canon Porsches around the £60 mark. However you can get the latest releases sub £30 including P&P with careful bidding. Candidates for bid assistant maybe?

This month's prices

Prices as listed and spelt on UK eBay unless stated, with the time and auction ending day:-
Fly T2 Porsche GT1-98 Paginas Amarillas, Very Rare £352.99 (Monday night on UK eBay but Spanish seller.)

FLY T1 Posche GT1-98 Telefónica Imposible De Encontrar €876 (Tuesday morning Spanish eBay same seller as above.)

FIAT 600 RACER. RACE TUNED #C99,IN BOX .scalextric £313 (Saturday morning.)

Scalextric slot car 1 of 500 produced ltd EDT £75 (Jersey Police LE Sunday night)

Scalextric Jaguar limited edition £73.16 (Cummins LE Jaguar Saturday Lunchtime)

caterham 7 road trim scalextric bnib c2272 £67.56 (green and yellow stripe car Tuesday night and week later same model sold for £56)

Scalextric Digital cars and controllers. £53 (5 Audi and Porsche and 5 digital controllers on Sunday night)

Spares or repair! Scalextric 007 Bond Aston wreck. £256 (Many bits missing & non runner Tuesday night)

Scalextric 007 Goldfinger Bond Aston and Mercedes set £730 (Same seller as above but slightly better condition Tuesday night)

French E5 Aston Martin MARSHAL Scalextric £250 (VG but one bulb failed. Sunday night)

Scalextric Datsun 260Z NSCC - Décalques / Tranfers €22.50 (Decals only French eBay Friday night)

SCALEXTRIC Logo NSCC 1985 - Décalques / Tranfers €22.50 (2 black NSCC logo transfers Same details as above)

Scalextric conversion BA's The A team van unique Fast £22 (Diecast conversion Tuesday night. Seller has sold more than one and also done the three wheeler Delboy Robin Reliant Stretch Limo, Noddy and Disney cars)

Lionel-Triang Scalextric Race Set # G.P.1 * MINT \$282.77 (Unused set near mint US eBay Sunday night)

Scalextric TVR Speed 12 JAAR Limited Edition C2302 £97.09 (Green Dutch Club car Saturday morning)

C2815A Ford GT 2007 Range Presentation Car #126 of 200 £237.23 (This was on a dealer's website unsold at considerably less before selling for this price on eBay on a Monday night)

FLY SLOT CAR CATALOGUE 1997 - Viper / Porsche / Marcos \$5.65 (UK seller despite price in \$ on Tuesday night.)

ASTON MARTIN MARSHALL VON SCALEXTRIC MIT BOX €184 (German eBay Tuesday night all complete with flags as far as I could tell as all in German.)

Finally, something a bit different and of appeal to Sci-Fi fans was a "Scalextric Dr. Who Dalek conversion UNIQUE Superb fun" in black on 1/32 running gear that fetched a tidy £48.99 though a gold version on the same Saturday evening only reached £29 in comparison.

Happy bid sniping and contact me at stevelangford66@googlemail.com if you need any help. ■

Scalextric Ford Escort RS1600 MK 1 Upgraded

By Hub Habets

I am cycling to the first special stage of the Belgium Kempenrally. It is March 1975 and I am 17 years old, too young to have a driving licence, but I desperately want to watch this round of the Belgian and Dutch rally championship. So I travelled by train and hired a bike at the station to get to the start in Turnhout, about 30 miles away.

A few cars of the organisation have already passed me at one minute intervals, so they show me where the first secret special stage is situated. After about five miles of cycling I hear a roaring sound coming from behind me. It gets louder and louder. "I am too late", is my first thought,

so I pedal even harder to reach that first stage. Suddenly the sound is very loud and clear. It is beautiful to hear. Belgian rallystar Gilbert Staepelaere passes me in his Ford Escort RS1600 MK 1 at about 100 mph on the public road. It looks like I have no speed at all on my bike! It was stunning, and I never ever will forget it!

That was the first time, I saw the Colibri Escort RS 1600 MK 1 in action!

After the victory in the RAC Rally of 1974 by the Finn Timo Mäkinen, the car went to Belgium. There it was also a winning car in the hands of Gilbert Staepelaere. ➡➡



It is now 2002 and I am fortunate to attend the NSCC/Hornby weekend at Ramsgate. Scalextric asks the participants which cars they would like to see in production for next year. It is very clear for most people: the Ford Escorts MK1 and 2 are the most desired rally cars!

As everybody knows already, we still had to wait till Summer 2006 before it arrived in the shops. But the long wait was rewarded.

The first release is the 1972 RAC winning car of the great Roger Clark. It is a beauty. The only negative comments concerned the reversed windscreen wipers and the pace notes in the hands of Tony Mason - not the correct method of competition for a secret event, as the RAC was in those days.

The second release is the above mentioned Colibri Escort, winner of the Lombard RAC Rally of 1974. Now Scalextric got some heavy criticism. Not only about the windscreen wipers, but also the reversed position of the driver and co-driver was not what people expected from Scalextric. Luckily they did the names in the correct position on the top of the front wings.

In my memory the car was nearly black, not as brown as Scalextric painted it. It had only a brown shade. After searching in some historic rally books by Reinhard Klein, I managed to confirm this recollection.

Mudflaps

In the meantime I got both Scalextric Escorts and tested them on my wooden Trio Track. During some sliding, I cracked a rear mud flap of the Clark Escort.

Well, what to do in this situation? The solution was very easy and simple: I made new mud flaps from bicycle inner tube in the same shape as Scalextric did. Now they are shock resistant. After studying the pictures of the real Colibri Escort, I became more and more interested in modifying this beautifully scaled Scalextric car. The real car had much longer mud flaps behind the rear wheels, in the bends the outer flap made contact with the road! With a pair of scissors I shaped these flaps also out of some bicycle inner tube. In front of the rear axle,

the car had two flaps underneath the floor pan for protection of the brake lines and the rear axle. To avoid water and mud splashing on the windscreen, it had also flaps on the front bumper. From the same bicycle inner tube I made these parts including the straps on the front flaps and painted the bolts on these front flaps with some silver paint.

Challenge

Now I accepted the challenge to swap both people on the inside of the car. Because of the symmetrical shape of the dashboard, I realised that the the job was indeed possible.

First I removed the glued co-driver out of his seat with a screwdriver and a hobby knife. Then I tried to slip the driver out from behind the steering wheel. Here I had a problem. They glued the steering wheel onto the hands of Timo. Very careful handling was now necessary. I stripped the dashboard, but could not avoid breaking the steering wheel. It was also glued and heat-sealed onto the dashboard!

With a sharp hobby knife, I split the parts, which included the dashboard instruments, and glued them back into place in the opposite positions. Driver and co-driver got some painful operations on their backs and arms with the hobby knife. Now they fitted into place. The co-driver sits a little bit lower in the car as in reality. He underwent even more operations on his back than his driver.



Co-driver after some painful surgery



Colibri Escort crew in their proper places

The next job was gluing the broken parts of the steering wheel. With some patience I managed it. Blue striping on the overalls and leather gloves for Timo followed with some paint from the model shop. To get a safer ride, I also painted Henry Liddon a pair of glasses on

his face. Co-drivers do not wear gloves during their job so, with some skin coloured paint, he got his hands visible.

With lead under the rear axle on top of the floor pan, the Colibri Escort is now a real star on the track. Power sliding this detailed car makes real sense!

The drivers inside the Uniflo Escort also received some extra paint. They got orange helmets and the same blue stripes on their overalls as during the British event in 1972.

The third release is the Rally Monte Carlo 1973 Shell Sport Escort of 4th placed Hannu Mikkola, co-driven by Jim Porter.

Like the Colibri version, driver and co-driver have to be replaced in the car. Now, I first cut the steering wheel before removing the driver. The blue striping on the overall, gloves for the driver and skin coloured hands for the co-driver is all I had to do. ➡➡



The upgraded Mikkola Escort



Detailed Uniflo crew

Respraying the Colibri Escort in a darker brown colour is too difficult for me, to get it right again. It is the same story for the position of the windscreen wipers.

I only found one picture of the Mikkola car on the web, on which the position of the wipers is very difficult to see. It looks like they are right for this car. Otherwise, I would not change them, to avoid damage on the body.

Now the Escorts are a little more realistic, and give a lot of pleasure sliding around the track, just as Gilbert Staepelaere did when I arrived by bike at the first special stage situated on an old deserted air field near Turnhout in Belgium. Staepelaere won the event outright in front of the second placed Nussbaumer in a Renault Alpine. Dutch rally champion of 1974, Bergsteyn, got third in an Opel Ascona.

After watching some other cars, it got dark. The rally cars disappeared into the darkness of the Belgium landscape for their second special stage. I went back to the station on the hired bike, with the roaring sound of that beautiful Escort still in my mind. ■



The modified Escorts tail sliding round the Trio track

An Idiot and a Track (and a cat)

By Richard James

A few years ago my good lady bemoaned never having had a Scalextric as a youngster and having to go round her friend's house, whose brother had a set, to have a go on one. That Christmas a Beetle Cup was a nice surprise for her (along with the usual extravagance expected). I was whisked back to my early years and re-hooked on the world of Scalextric. Older and a little wiser I discovered a whole new world and the NSCC introduced me to so much more. We moved. A smaller house relegated my (sorry, our) classic track to the loft and a smaller circuit but I had turned more to collecting. Finding the loft floor a pain on the knees and using the track less, I longed for a table top track to have a bit of racing fun on (I have never been a serious racer only a plug "n" go home user).

The NSCC has shown me a great many things slot and one of these is H:O. Very impressed at Epsom in 2005 and again in '06 I

thought OK, it's not 1/32nd that I love but it means I can race slot cars that are more than just toys and have fun which to me is what it's all about.

Now we get to the point of the article, at last. As a plug "n" go user I had no idea how to wire up a track and use hand controllers with plugs as seen at Epsom and surely there must be at least one other idiot like me who wants a challenge. If so read on, if not skip it and enjoy the rest of the Journal. Now I need a track that will go up in the spare bedroom and/or dining room at a push but will store away easily when necessary (probably in the little bit of room left in the garage). I had two bits of 12mm OSB board approximately 48" x 38" so I pulled them out and fixed them to some battens. Great, just manageable up and down the stairs. Three bolts and wing nuts to join the two bases together and a reasonable area was achieved. Actually it is as large as I could practically go but I see no ➡



A track and a cat - the idiot is hiding

reason not to use three boards if you have room or three smaller boards if you want to make the sections easier to manage. Bare boards look bad and noise can be a nuisance so I found some scraps of laminate floor underlay and put those down and covered them with a green polyester velvet fabric, sort of grassy?

Meanwhile a scouring of eBay obtained me some track. Tyco and Tomy, they share the same radiuses and with a converter track can be used together. Now to work out my track with the pieces I have and get the pieces I don't. Having decided on going four lane with a flyover I settled down to plan the track piece by piece as two lane, allowing room for the second track width ensuring a short straight was used wherever the track crossed the joint between the two boards. I copied down the track pieces and ordered as much of the required track as I could get in the UK, all Tomy. I had enough for two lanes so I started building the flyover and laying the track. First surprise, Tyco and Tomy are OK parallel to themselves but not each other! Scrap the Tyco, Tomy fits together easier anyway.

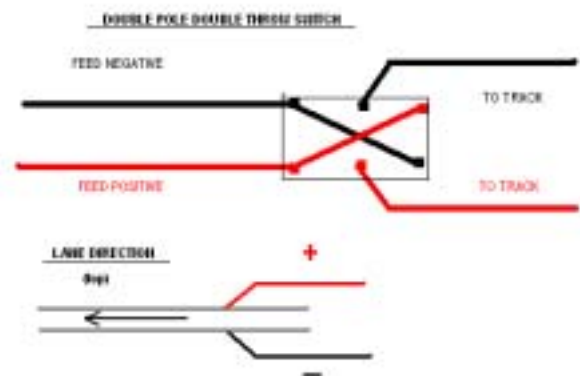
Building the flyover first with 6mm ply and soft wood supports and screwing the track down with fine countersunk screws, a border was also cut from 6mm ply and painted with blackboard paint to match the track. Blackboard paint would be used to hide the screw heads later as well. That was done but to finish the other board I needed more track as I had to replace the Tyco. At this point I would like to thank Deane Walpole for the help, encouragement and attempted enticement to EAHORC meetings on the other side of the country, who pointed me in the right direction. Track ordered and arrived from across the pond, fitted and done. Now then, how will it work? Clipping one end of each of the joining sections (the short straights over the ends of the boards) to one board I stood the boards on edge and lined up the second one, located the bolts and started to tighten the wing nuts carefully checking the connections were sliding correctly into the track on the second board as I went. This is a lot easier than it sounds and only takes a minute.



I started by temporarily fitting the standard Tomy power straight and controllers and tried out each lane. They all worked really well. Good start. My original idea was to use three points on each lane to feed power and avoid dodgy power spots but, as the track performed so well on the proprietary equipment, I decided to cut that down to two. This meant, with the track crossing back and forth over the two boards, I could contain the wiring for the lanes on separate boards, no wires crossing the joint saves a bit of work when setting up. I wanted the driving stations set two each side, more elbow room and if only two are using the layout then, depending on the lanes used, they can stand opposite and marshal the whole track as well. My idea was to solder “fly leads” onto the back of the track, drill through the board and take the wires through, wiring up beneath the board so no controller or transformer wires are trailing over the track. I counted out the track pieces and worked out where to fit the wires so that there are the same number of track joints between each feed point, the best thing about this is you can supply power to any piece of track and not just a long straight. I marked these pieces with a sticker noting the lane numbers and direction the cars would travel with an arrow. Off to my local electronics store where I found some appropriate wire and connectors. No help from the staff mind, I don’t know what this branch’s mission statement is but customer service and product knowledge doesn’t seem to be in there. Sorry, just off on one, back to the project. I figured that I needed wire rated for a minimum of 18 volts and maximum 3amps, still don’t know if that’s right but I’ll await the tirade of corrections from those in the know. Lifting off the marked pieces of track from one board (lanes 1 and 2) I soldered the short “fly leads” on to the back of the rails making sure that the wire colours corresponded on each piece to the arrow on the sticker on the top of the piece of track. Marked and drilled through the board and fitted the track pieces back in place. Luckily, having used a velvet covering, the track had left a nice impression in the pile so drilling in the right places was a lot

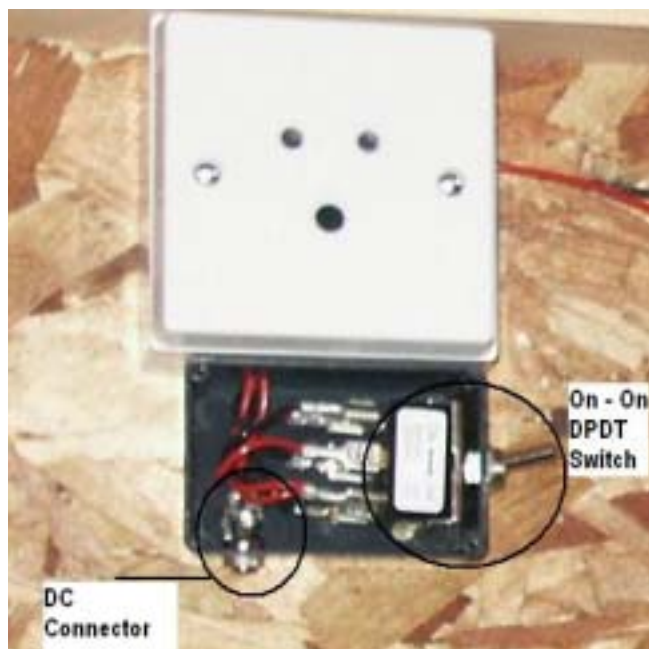
easier. Same procedure on the second board (lanes 3 and 4) and I was ready to figure out what I was going to do next.

Having secured a set of four round pin plugs and sockets with patresses (plastic backing boxes), I fitted these to the four driver points and laid wires from the track “flies” to these points. As suggested by Deane, I intended to use the Skytronic transformers which come with a range of connectors. I also wanted to make the track reversible so I needed a switch to reverse the poles. Orders sent off for a couple of transformers and Parma controllers and off to the electronics store again. No help there so I had to work out the switch myself. I didn’t want to fiddle with physically swapping over wires but I couldn’t see an option as there didn’t appear to be a ready made pole reversal switch. A search on t’internet and problem solved. I needed a double pole double throw switch (more like double Dutch), wired up in reverse with the feeds crossing diagonally (see!). The diagram should help.

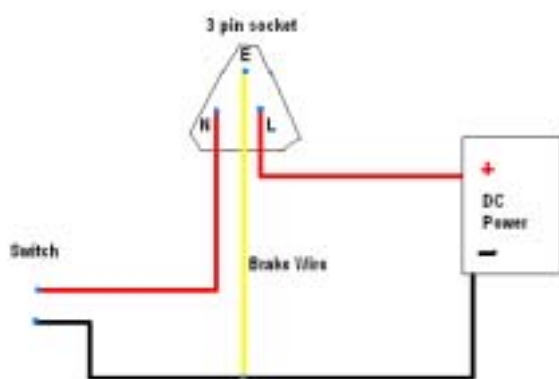


Back to the store. Switches, DC connectors to match one of the Skytronic connectors and a nice little ABS box to fit them to and off we go. With no guide as to the correct connections to solder to on the DC connectors and three to choose from, it was a bit hit and miss with the first and took several goes to connect the correct wire, negative and positive, to the right points. Sorry I don’t have any clues to offer but you must get them the right way round, especially if you intend to wire in a brake from the controller! A test run with the wires connected directly ➡➡





from transformer to track showed that all was in the right direction, red was positive and black was negative, so now to wire in the switch and socket. If you intend to connect a brake wire then this will need to be included now and will be connected to the negative wire BEFORE going to the switch. Negative (black) from DC connector to connect with brake wire (yellow) then into switch. Brake wire (yellow) from Earth in 3 pin socket to connect with Negative (black), OK so far? Live (red) from DC connector and into Live in 3 pin socket. Live (red) out of Neutral in 3 pin socket and into switch, Live and Negative from switch to track as diagram. To use the brake you will need a hand controller with three wires, these should come with their own wiring instructions for wiring to the plug, just remember how you wired the socket!



Please note that the wire colouring was my choice of what made sense to me, I actually used a white brake wire but that wouldn't show up on the diagram and when I wired up the controllers they had used a different colour system (probably an internationally recognised system but hey, I did say this was for idiots didn't I). Wired up with the switches working to reverse the pole if we want a change, an adjustable voltage on the transformers for a little control on such a tight track and brakes. Back to the track and a little lane tape dotted around to help marshalling and some kerbing. Finally I put some FISA tape (www.slotcarportal.com) on the kerbing for a little tail out action and a plywood wall around the outside of the boards to save the cars flying to their doom on the floor. I may even get round to putting small banners on them.



This has been a fun project and would apply to other scales equally I guess but you do need to get the right voltage and amperage transformer, wiring etc. Now then, the queue to correct the idiot starts here. H:O racing when done on even such a smallish track is a LOAD OF FUN. As yet I only have a few cars but next, like my 1/32nd, I'll be looking to get some without magnets and knock the voltage down accordingly. Looking at the pictures and short video footage on the EAHORC website, the massive tracks set up for races would be a real challenge but H:O definitely has a big place in the slot car fun stakes, have a look on eBay or some of the US sites to see a whole wealth of bodies, cool, fun and funky, produced over the years. Now, as a collector this could be a whole new direction... ■



World Cup 2007

The Ninco World Cup will be held in Portugal this year and rounds have already started to fill the final places on the grid. Open to teams from around the world, each country can enter at least one team of three drivers to compete in an endurance race to be held towards the end of this year. The first two places have been filled following the French qualification rounds recently held in Paris. The contest took place alongside a related fair and was made up of qualifying, warm-up and finally a 4-hour endurance race.

More competitions are to be arranged in other countries to fill the grid and I will advise of such events as soon as I hear about them. If any teams wish to participate, please contact your local Ninco distributor. As far as UK teams are concerned, notification came too late in 2005 and poor interest resulted in only one team going forward to represent the nation. Now I know there are many people who love to compete out there, especially at inter-club level - so, come on, it's time to put the UK on the map as far as competition racing is concerned! If there are any UK teams wishing to take part in this year's event, please contact me (PTSolari@aol.com) and I will forward your details to The Hobby Co.

Super Supra

A great new livery for the Toyota Supra is due out. This time, the JGTC car is released in the instantly recognisable white, red and green of the Castrol sponsored, factory supported TOMS team. Tachi Oiwa Motor Sport have

been associated with Toyota for more than thirty years making aftermarket parts for Toyota and Lexus brands. Today they continue to be heavily involved with Super GT racing.

The Ninco model of the Castrol Supra (50459) is superbly finished in a high gloss coating and is sure to be popular with racers in this series. Power will of course come from the NC-5 Speeder motor mounted in the angle-winder position.

The NSCC's very own Gareth Jex will have the pleasure of driving a similar liveried Toyota Supra - carrying *the same number 36* - during the 2007 Beaujolais Run to be held in November this year. Apart from bringing back a few bottles of Beaujolais Nouveau, his primary goal is to raise a great deal of money for some very worthy causes; The RB Foundation, Down's Syndrome Association and Winston's Wish.

Serious Racing

For those who enjoy fine tuning and setting up their cars precisely to match the track, the beautiful Ferrari 360 is due for release as a ProRace kit (50455). Previously available as a standard self-assembly kit, the ProRace version of this great little car is supplied complete with all the different gear ratios and special tuned parts to make up a truly competitive GT racer. Two bodies are included; a red "Ninco" sponsored race version (actually driven by Jose Maria Jara) and a plain silver body ready for custom decoration. The angle winder chassis is not only ready for the ProRace axles and wheels, but also ready to house the NC-6 Crusher motor. ■





Renault Mégane Trophy 50437 Frutta and 50438 Tepac

By Dave Chang

The Race, The Car

Renault is a company firmly committed to motorsports, and runs an annual World Series championship. The races in this series involve identical Renault cars, which ensures fairness and puts the emphasis on driver skill. In 2005 they introduced the Eurocup Mégane Trophy, a touring car class to feature a prototyped race version of the popular Mégane, called the Mégane Trophy.

The Mégane Trophy is a mid engine V6 which can develop 330bhp, and is designed to

utilise ground effect aerodynamics to improve handling. The car has a top speed of 250km/h. It is built around a tubular chassis incorporating a protected driver's cell and has passed FIA crash and crush testing. It is a racing car which has very little in common with street Méganes, apart from ideas in the body styling and the general look. The main goals of the design team were to produce a car that was affordable to race teams, and gave the drivers an excellent driving experience. One of these can be yours for a mere €120,000 plus tax.



The Model

Many NSCC members may already be familiar with Ninco's rendition of the Mégane Trophy, since this model was chosen as the 2006 club car. Of course, many of these will have been whisked straight into the humidity and temperature controlled, nitrogen filled vaults for safe keeping, so even owners of the club car may benefit from a detailed description.

Up for review are #50437 (Frutta #19 in orange) and #50438 (Tepac #5 in blue and yellow), based on cars from the 2006 season. The body captures very accurately the bold lines of the real car, the wide square wheel arches featuring open rear vents. Grilles in the front vents are rendered in black plastic which looks thoroughly authentic, and there is a chromed Renault badge glittering at the front. The lights have silver blank panels, just as the real cars (the 2007 real car has working lights). Red rear lenses are at the back, as well as the rear diffuser and exhaust pipes (in black plastic, unpainted). Panel lines and catches have been neatly moulded.

The hubs are good replicas and feature chromed brake discs visible through the spokes. The tyres are made of the grippy Ninco rubber, and are well proportioned. Unlike the real tyres, they have 'NINCO' logos on them – but the embossing is not visible from any sort of distance and does not detract from the appearance.

The windows have the sun-visor, driver name and car number printed on. Through them you can see the tubular 'chassis', fire extinguisher, dashboard, steering wheel and what at first looks like a full driver figure sat in a racing seat. In fact, the car does not feature a full interior, but an effective deep-pan. The driver is incomplete beyond his knees, but there is plenty of him visible to give a good effect. The driver's body has red seatbelts and gloves printed on, the extinguisher has silver bands and labels. The dashboard has a peculiar series of numbers printed on it which represents the XAP digital instrument panel, and the rear portion of the car is a black shallow-pan.

The car has been built very accurately to 1/32 scale: width (60mm), length (136mm) and wheelbase (81mm) all match up within 0.5mm. This may be one of those examples where the manufacturer passed on the CAD designs of the 1:1 car to be used for the model.

The finish and printing on the cars is very good. There is a lot of detail, and the ink has covered properly into all the shut lines. The Frutta is in a vivid orange with mainly black and white logos and lettering tampoed on. The Tepac is in a fetching metallic blue with day-glow yellow arches and bumpers. Both liveries are very striking and stand out well on the track.

⇒



The finish is a little shy of excellent. The roof and bonnet of the Frutta car has a slight 'orange peel' texture to the paint. The day-glow yellow of Tepac on the other car is not as opaque as it might have been, and some of the silver lettering has not covered completely. This really is nit-picking though, I only mention it since we have been spoilt by a few manufacturers (e.g. AutoArt and Scalextric) who are really raising the bar on quality in this area. I don't think anyone would be disappointed with the finish or liveries on these cars.

As a model, the biggest shortcoming is the axle width. The front and rear axles are about a millimetre short, which means that the wheels sit inside the arches instead of flush with them. To correct the issue, you would need to get new wider axles. It is again a small detail, but one that other manufacturers manage to get right.

The Gubbins

Turning the car over we can see a familiar Ningo chassis. An NC5 Speeder motor (20,000rpm 290g/cm) is configured as an anglewinder, and we can see the Ningo red angled pinion and spur gear (32:12 ratio). At the front, there is a sprung guide. There is only a couple of millimetres travel in the guide, but this should be enough to cope with uneven track surfaces. Four screws hold the body to the chassis.



Inside, all is very straightforward. The front axle clips directly into the chassis, the rear axle is held by brass bushes clipped in. The front axle fixing may at first look like a cost-saving design, but it may actually allow a performance advantage. The axle can move up and down a bit, meaning that the car can apply more pressure to the guide as the front wheel rises out of the way.

The motor is also clipped in and sits in a hole in the chassis so that it can be as low as possible, helping to keep the centre of gravity down.

In front of the motor is a strong button magnet. By being placed centrally to the car, it provides down-force to both the rear wheels and to the guide. The placement is better than at the rear, since it allows the car to slide out a bit whilst still covering the rails. Most of the other manufacturers have moved over to bar magnets, which allow the car to slide still more before the attraction (and grip) is suddenly lost. Whilst Ningo have made the best of a button magnet, I cannot see any advantages over a bar magnet. Maybe Ningo assume that anyone buying a Ningo car is going to take the magnet out and stick it to their fridge, so they are not worried about it. My thoughts are – if they are going to include a magnet at all, why not make it as good as possible?



The chassis features struts to aid the stiffness. One criticism of the Ningo angle winder chassis is the flex between the motor and the rear axle. Due to the cut-out for the motor, this area is not very rigid. This causes a problem because movement here affects the gear mesh and the transmission of power. When the car is fully assembled, the body will provide the structural integrity to hold everything in place, eliminating the issue. However, many racers like to have the body loose. In this instance, it may be an idea to reinforce this area with hot-glue or extra plastic or by some other ingenious means!

On the Track

I tested the car on my garage track which is twisty and hilly Scalextric Sport powered by Sport World. It contains compound curves, hairpins and sweepers. I ran all the cars pretty much box standard, with magnets, cars oiled and tyres trued.

First I warmed up with a Slot.It McLaren F1. It was very fast, smooth and quiet, achieving a fastest lap time of 6.11 seconds. I moved on to a couple of Scalextric cars – a recent Porsche GT3R (6.35s) and a tourer – the Opel Vectra DTM (6.67s). All the cars were very controllable and smooth.

On to some recent Ninco cars, which share the same chassis layout as the Mégane. First the Mosler, and then the Ferrari 360 (available as a kit). These achieved 7.32s and 7.97s respectively, the back ends tending to kick out uncontrollably at the corners if you were a tiny bit too fast.

Finally, the Mégane – direct from the box. It has a slightly shorter wheelbase than the Mosler, and seemed to handle better, but still only achieved 7.89s laps. My first thought about the lap times of the Ninco cars was that the central button magnet just was not providing the assistance in corners that the bar magnets gave to the Scalextric and McLaren. But I still had to test the Mégane with some basic tuning.

I tried the tyres and rounded the edges. The tyres were already pretty round, but had a bit of a bulge in the middle and very squared edges, so the contact area should have been improved. I noticed that the rear axle had a little more side-to-side play than I prefer. It is held in place by the spur gear and a red clamp either side of one of the brass bushes. There was almost enough room for a spacer-washer, but not quite. Instead I pulled the red clamp nearer the bush, thus eliminating the gap. Finally, when I replaced the body, I loosened the screws by half a turn to see if some body rock would help the cornering.

It was like night and day – now the car handled the corners with confidence and predictability, and the lap times were down to 6.84s! I certainly was not expecting truing or a bit of body rock to change the times that significantly, so I wondered whether it was the axle-clamp tweak.

I performed the same tuning on the other Nincos, and their lap times also dropped significantly to 7.08s (Mosler) and 7.07s (Ferrari). All three Nincos have the same chassis layout and motor, so it is not surprising that the Mosler

and Ferrari score similarly. The difference in lap times between the Mosler, Ferrari and Mégane may be partially attributed to the weight of the cars. The Mosler (87g) and Ferrari (92g) are heavier than the Mégane (84g). Alternatively, it might be due to random differences in motor performance.

Straight from the box, the Mégane is a real handful, but still offers some driving fun and a good amount of challenge. Tweaked, the Mégane is a satisfyingly quick, well behaved car that can race against other Méganes or be matched with touring cars from other manufacturers.

Conclusion

Ninco made a great choice with the Mégane Trophy: it appeals to both motorsport fans and to boy racers. There is a wealth of exciting liveries to be made, Ninco have already released five liveries, and a lot more are scheduled for the near future.

With so many liveries, it makes a great club racing class on its own, allowing for even and fair racing whilst the drivers can identify their own car easily.

As a model, the Mégane is very good. The proportions are right and it definitely captures the look of the real car. Although Ninco were one of the first companies to push the realism and model appearance of slot cars in the nineties, they seem to have changed their emphasis and priorities. They have forgone full cockpit, dashboard details, air holes in the windows and rivets holding the windows in, those extra touches which some manufacturers would have included. I would say that as a model, this satisfies very well, without being over indulgent.

As a racing slot car – it can perform very well with a little work. Straight from the box, it was very jumpy and could not achieve fast times. With the tweaks mentioned above, it was transformed into a fast and fun to drive car, echoing the qualities of the real car on which it is based. ■



Diversity And Perfection

By Gary Skipp

Every year slot enthusiasts the world over fawn at the latest releases announced at toy fairs and in press releases. Great news! SlotCo are bringing out so-and-so, and Slot, Inc. look likely to release a few wotsits too. Everybody smiles, dances and then proceeds to feed the cat.

However, a different reaction to a new model in the line-up presented itself to me the other day. I'd been beaten to it, a car I'd been scratch building. And now it's being made, so it won't feel so special. I was discussing this in slightly different circumstances with a friend on Slotforum, and it seems I am not alone. Scratch builders world wide no longer have such a free choice of models to be different with, because the major manufacturers are actually listening to what people want, and they're making just about everything! Our special builds are becoming less special because a big factory somewhere is churning out thousands of near flawless examples. Now, just to put things back in perspective. I don't build scratch cars in a quest for glory, they're not good enough for a start. But I'd at least like someone to say, "Oh, that's nice, haven't seen one of those before..."

Vive Là Différence

I build scratch cars to be different. To line up on the grid with something a little obscure, eccentric, not-the-norm. Something the average Joe can't buy in a toyshop. If it looks better, worse, goes faster or slower it doesn't bother me. But I want to be the only one on the grid running a so-and-so this time, thank you very much. I'm frequently told by older types that my generation have it better than anyone before, even in slots. "When I was your age, we had four cars a year come out and three were reliveries..."

Well, I say, great! 'Cause you get much more opportunity to be different. I was actually shocked and surprised when lining up on the grid at a recent club night to gaze down to the lightbridge and notice that all six cars were different! That hasn't happened for a long, long time. And with RTRs I guess it's understandable because there tends to be one or two cars that are a little bit more competitive than the rest, so if you want results you kinda have to run them. But if you line up on the grid for an open event, with scratchbuilds and modified cars allowed, I expect it to be different. Not to be the second of three wotsits with the odd thingum in there for diversity...

The Future?

Thinking about all this leads me to ask the question, what'll it be like in the future? What will I be telling the next generation about 'when I was a lad?' You'll probably be able to download your highly accurate blueprinted bodyshell from the internet and run it on some pre-assembled lightweight alloy super chassis. Scratch building might not exist! You want a body of that weirdo car, you type it into Google V6.0 and your 3D solid printer constructs it for you. Or anyone else that wants it. And scarily, such technology exists today! I think a change of tune is required. With the future of scratch-building looking uncertain, I best get as much done as I can, whilst I can! Who cares if SlotBrand are bringing it out in August. It'll never run as well as mine, and I think the bodged paint job gives it character. A famous motoring journalist stated once that all flawed things, they have a soul. The slightly imperfect scratch built car then will always have a place in the hobbyist's heart. There's no such thing as perfection. Unless you build it yourself... ■



Sir,

Over the last few months there have been some great articles in the Journal on building circuits, advertising circuits and generally showing off circuits. All of them have been interesting and very informative, but what I would like is more detail and information on the building of the flyovers and bridges from scratch.

I am not fortunate enough to have room for a permanent layout, but often build one from scratch taking up most of the lounge. This can be a bit limiting sometimes as I find that the Scalextric bridges are not up to the job, often coming apart during the racing and putting unnecessary strain on the track. Flyovers are therefore usually banked up with books and other such handy banking material, not very professional or pleasing to the eye. The smooth sweeping bridges on the circuits look really great and really add to the racing experience.

So if there is anyone who can offer me any advice or direct me to an appropriate website then I would be most grateful. I would like something that looks the part, but is a temporary, more solid structure on the lines of the ones shown in the articles.

Finally keep up the good work, I recently signed up to the Racer magazine for the GT40 - great car, not so keen on the magazine though, not as informative as the Journal.

I am, yours etc,
Graham Smith (the other one)

Sir,

I was pleased to receive confirmation of the white team's victory at the NSCC Weekend in the April Journal. Unfortunately I had to leave before the prize-giving and so missed the opportunity to congratulate my fellow team members - which I would like to do now (well done chaps, cool under pressure, a great team effort!), and I would also echo the comments of others who found the event very enjoyable. It was my first visit and I would definitely apply to go again, and I'm sure Hornby will have found it worthwhile too.

In passing, if anyone who attended the event is developing a taste for digital, they may be interested to know that we have recently redeveloped our digital track at Bay Rose House for club and enthusiast use. Nothing on the scale of the Ramsgate track but it does still use a double pit lane and the same timing software.

So, any members who fancy a "slot car short break" in Somerset, hop over to:

www.bayrose.co.uk for more information. You are welcome to bring your own SSD cars or use some of ours.

I am, yours etc,
Martin Kay



What's in your wallet?

Sir,

I recently attended a toy fair with my good lady, she to collect Cindy and Barbie, me for slots. On our last lap prior to leaving I noticed two cars at the bottom of a pile that would go rather well in my collection. I approached the stall holder to see if he would accept a cheque as the "readies" I took had already been blown.

"Yes, I will take a cheque", he said a little uncertainly, "What were you after?"

Well I pulled out the cars I wanted and the deal was done so I wrote the cheque. Now this was not a small amount of money and we came to the position of proving both it and I were genuine. The guarantee card did not cover the amount so I wrote my address on the back but, of course, that could be fictional too.

Now I do not blame a chap for being careful. I mean, a bloke wanders up to his stall, wants to buy some expensive items and offers a cheque with no real I.D. I proffered my NUS card (I'm a mature part time student) which has a photo and signature.

"That's better", he said, still hesitantly, "Have you got anything else?"

"Only my NSCC card really", I answered despondently, my thoughts turning to losing the cars.

"That's fine then!"

Problem solved. Happy stallholder and happy purchaser. Who'd have thought that being a member would give so many benefits.

"NSCC, says more about you than money ever can."

I am, yours etc,
Richard James



**62450 Williams F1 2006,
Nico Rosberg
62440 Ferrari 248 F1 2006,
Michael Schumacher**

By Sinclair Trotter

Having agreed with Gareth to undertake a review of a couple of new SCX F1 cars I set to pondering how best to go about it. My mind was made up for me when a couple of days later the two review samples arrived. One was the Ferrari of Schumacher and the other was the Williams of Rosberg. I already had in my possession the Ferrari of Massa and the Williams of Webber from Scalextric so I thought it would be interesting to compare stable mates from the two different manufacturers.

I must say my first reaction on opening the SCX cars was most favourable. At first glance SCX have the upper hand as drivers' helmets bear some relation to the real men's headgear, as opposed to the plain yellow and red helmets worn by the Scalextric drivers.

Closer inspection leads one to wonder if we are indeed looking at the same cars from both manufacturers. In my opinion both SCX cars are more accurate representations of their full-scale counterparts than the Scalextric versions. I realise there are variations between team mates' cars and indeed on the same driver's car from race to race, but I've come to my conclusion based on what I've seen of the real cars on telly and in photos.

The SCX cars simply have much more detail modelled than the Scalextric; apart from driver helmets, the mirrors, front, rear and side aerofoils, all seem a much more accurate rendition of the real thing. The detailing going into the barge boards is also much superior on the SCX versions. A clever innovation on the SCX cars is that all the protrusions like mirrors





and side foils appear to be made from a more pliable plastic than the rest of the car, making for durable fixtures and fittings in the event of the almost inevitable offs during the course of F1 races (this proved quite fortuitous in the light of what was to come during track testing).

The SCX cars have representations of the radio antennae prevalent on all modern F1 cars; on the Scalextric models these are non-existent.

Another example of SCX's attention to detail is the tyre branding shown on both sides of the tyres, however where Scalextric have the advantage in this 'tyre war' is in the application of the branding, they have the wording printed onto the tyres (albeit one side only) whereas SCX are using what appears to be some sort of decal; this becomes apparent as soon as you try a tyre change, as the markings tend to crack up, disintegrate and fall off the SCX tyres.

Another plus for Scalextric, as far as the Ferrari is concerned, is in the shade of red used. I think Scalextric have got it right and SCX are using too bright a colour. Again the colours on the Williams are different once again, in my opinion Scalextric, with the darker shade of metallic blue, have got it right.

Another criticism that has been levelled at many recent SCX F1 cars, that the wheelbase is too wide for modern F1 cars, seems to have been addressed on these cars, as they are now more or less identical to the Scalextric cars; that is the wheelbase has been narrowed making the overall look seem much more in keeping with the real thing.

So now enough about their looks! How do they perform?

For track testing I took them to the circuit my club uses at Old Forge Models. Here we have available to us a six lane circuit made from Scalextric Sport track. Average lane length is 110 feet, or 36.66666666 metres in new money. Power is supplied by Sport powerbases and 35ohm Parma hand throttles. We use a DS lap counter.

Prior to doing timed laps I ran each of the four cars for 50 laps, box standard, straight out of the packaging, just to get them warmed up. The Scalextric cars gave little or no bother, in fact in 50 laps the Ferrari came off once and the Williams twice. The SCX were a different kettle of fish. Both cars found it hard to ground both their front wheels at the same time.

After spending ages fiddling with guide blades and braids, I came to the conclusion that the spring in the guide blade assembly is too strong causing the front wheels to lift off the track. This may be a contributory factor in poor road holding, compared to the Scalextric versions. During their 50 lap warm ups both the SCX cars departed the slot once every four or five laps.

The following is the method I used for testing: each car runs ten laps on each of the four centre lanes of the circuit. The lap counter gives the two fastest lap times for each lane, adding these eight times together and dividing by eight gives an overall average fastest time over all four lanes (sounds complicated, but I know what I mean).

Before testing these cars, the fastest time for one of my box standard cars, using this method, was 9.15 seconds, achieved by an SCX McLaren, of 2004 season vintage.

Our four test cars attained the following:

SCX Williams	10.7 secs
SCX Ferrari	10.68 secs
Scalextric Ferrari	9.43 secs
Scalextric Williams	8.76 secs

So it was really no contest, Scalextric have the faster cars with much superior track holding capabilities.

In conclusion, in my opinion the SCX cars are by far the better model, so definitely add at least one to your collection if collecting is your thing. If you are more into racing then Scalextric are the cars for you. I know I only tested these as box standard, but I don't think any amount of tinkering or adjustment is going to make up the 1.5 – 2 second per lap deficit my testing results show. ■





A Very British Affair! Ford Sierra RS Cosworth Classic Series Ref 62470

By Gareth Jex

Generally speaking in sports when something is described as British it means that it's actually Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish and seeing as the reviewer (me) is an Englishman then we will stick to the British notation. The car is a Ford (USA) but built in Boreham (Wiltshire), The driver (Colin McRae) is Scottish as is the navigator (Derek Ringer). The rally (1989 Lombard RAC) is actually English/Welsh and comes as close to Scotland as you can without crossing the border. That all said, Colin fluffed this event so perhaps we should follow form and call him Scottish (English people only say British when we have won!). So now I have offended most of our cousins in Great Britain and confused our worldwide members let us return to the subject at hand.

The Car

Cast your minds back to the eighties. Maggie was in power, Pacman was all the rage, Michael Jackson was a pop star, Band Aid, CDs, the fall of the Berlin wall and Group B was ditched by the FIA for being too dangerous. Group A was the premier class in the WRC and the major manufacturers had settled down to find their best performing turbo-charged shopping trolleys. Ford had a very poor run, winning very little in the WRC and 1989 was no exception! The team scored only once (6th in Corsica). Efforts on the home front were better with Russell Brookes and Jimmy McRae coming second and third in the British Rally Championship (behind David Llewellyn in the Toyota Celica).



But to be fair it was a time of change for Ford. The 2WD Sierra RS Cosworth was homologated in '87 and was always going to struggle against the 4WD Lancias, Mitsubishi's and Toyotas. In fact Ford spent most of '89 testing their 4WD systems in a cut and shut Sierra (the front was from a 4WD Sapphire, the back half was an old rally car) and working on the top secret Escort! It did them little good.

The car on paper was a winner, it had more bhp than any of its rivals, but delivering all that power via its two back wheels and carrying a fair amount of weight just didn't cut it. So why is it still so well known? Well I suspect the fact that virtually every salesman in the UK was driving a Sierra at the time might have had something to do with it. How many of them bolted a massive tea tray rear wing on their 1600!

The Model

SCX have chosen to model Team Ford's 1989 Lombard RAC rally entry driven by the infamous (to be!) Colin McRae. Overall the car is white with blue trim and diagonal stripes over

its rear and a dark blue 'tea tray' rear wing. Getting quality reference shots for the original car has proven difficult but, based on what I can find, the decoration is spot on with every logo and detail in the right place. Proportionally the model looks right, fat and long with not a straight line to be seen. Silver alloy effect wheels finish off the side profile. Attention to detail extends to the underside (although I have never understood why) with painted skid plate and engine detail.

True to the real car, its two wheel rear drive via an improved RX42b motor set into a pivoting (or rocking cradle) is a first for an SCX rally car. The new motor really feels like a step up from the older RX motors, with higher top end speed and smooth braking. Acceleration is swift and consistent. SCX have definitely cooked up some new rubber. The tyres on this car are superb, once trued and given a few laps they are sticky slicks providing good grip levels whilst not being too grippy to topple the car on the corners. Breaking slides are easy to control and drifting around the corners a real pleasure.





With a heavy back end and rear drive you would be advised to put a little weight over the front to help keep the guide flag planted in the slot or think about changing the braids to a single loop rather than the double as standard. It's also worth checking that the two metal contact sprung arms are actually making contact with the top of the braids rather than caught under, as this can happen and reduces the turning of the guide with inevitable de-slots.

As with all my rally cars I tested without magnet, removing it straight away before putting it on the track. That said, the new RX42b motor does appear to have a reasonable amount of 'natural magnatraction'. The motor cradle sits very low to the track and the construction is thin enough to allow you to feel the effect when placing the car on the track. The body is held onto the chassis via five screws, which is a little over the top, but I suppose the pivoting motor cradle helps. I always recommend loosening the screws a few turns just to free everything up.

As you expect from a modern slot car, the model features lights front and rear which are bright!

To sum up – a real pleasure. The new motor certainly helps to keep up the pace with other manufacturers whilst still keeping a useful amount of motor braking. It's an easy car to drive and get to grips with easily. The only real problem is finding suitable cars for it to race against; SCX Lancia Delta, SCX Toyota Celica, SCX BMW M3. Come on SCX, make an Opel Kadett or Mazda 323.

Look out for the Carlos Sainz liveried Tecnitoys Sierra due later this year in the Altaya Sainz collection, Tour De Corsica 1988 livery with spotlight cluster.

Thanks to Tecnitoys for supplying the review car. Tested on the Farnham Ninco Track (no brakes, 12V) and the Home Farm routed MDF track (no brakes, 14V). ■



Slot It BMW McLaren F1 GTR Review by Phil Insull

Ninco produced one of its finest slot cars with the BMW McLaren F1. However, one thing it failed to do was produce the long tail version of this stunning Grand Tourer. Maurizio Ferrari, owner of Slot.It, seems to be a man in tune with his customers as lots of people asked him to consider the long tail F1 GTR and now here it is.



The plain livery really doesn't do this wonderful car justice.

Having won Le Mans outright in 1995 with the short tail car and taken the first four places in the GT category they were beaten to the GT1 honours in 1996 by Porsche's latest 911GT1. For 1997 the McLaren F1GTRs sported the long tails to help improve speed and stability on the long straights and this paid off with second and third overall and first and second in the GT1 class.

At the time of its release, powered by a 600 bhp BMW V12 motor, with state of the art Formula one based engineering including an X-trac transmission and copious use of carbon fibre, the BMW McLaren F1 GTR was the world's fastest production car capable of 231 mph. With such high performance came an equally high price tag, and the F1GTR's customers were strictly limited to the rich and

famous. The closest most of us mere mortals could come to this dream machine was at events like the Goodwood Festival of Speed, and so with this in mind the first release from Slot.It is actually based on the orange road going version driven by BMW's Product Chief Dr. Ing. Burkhard Goeschel at the 2005 Festival.

Presented in the standard crystal display box with the bright orange sleeve, the black base tells you what the car is and has a standard fixing widget to hold the car firmly in place. As a bonus, underneath the base is a packet with two spare Slot.It silicon-racing tyres. The plain orange road livery still has some exquisite details with roof aerial, driver's air intake, exhausts and rear vent grilles, a myriad of intake vents and NACA ducts, towing hooks, wiper, silver multi-spoke wheels and even perforation vent holes in the cockpit side glass. The interior is mainly black but with the correct central driving seat, gearshift, and extinguisher detail along with the full-length driver figure it still oozes Slot.It quality.



The standard running gear from underneath, note the chassis can be used for sidewinder or angle-winder set up.

Underneath, the chassis is held by two screws front and rear, with the motor cradle/ axle carrier held by four screws that can be adjusted to allow the motor to rock. As always this can be replaced by the magnetic suspension motor cradle or side or angle winder cradles and gearing depending on your preferences. ⇨⇩



Axles are calibrated and the rear hubs are aluminium with a bronze pinion and bronze/nylon contrate, the guide is self centring and aimed at plexy type tracks, but again is replaceable by a deep slot guide for racers who run on routed circuits with a deeper, wider slot. Finally, power in standard form is supplied by the inline Slot.It 26,000 RPM motor, although this can be changed for various other motors depending on preference for motor or layout.

Onwards then to Wolverhampton to see how the F1GTR fares against some decent opposition. Despite my limitations I decided that I wanted to try the McLaren for myself, and used the Slot.It Nissan and NSR Mosler as comparators. First up with the Nissan, using a deep guide but standard 26,000 rpm in line motor I ran three minutes with a quickest lap of 8.325 seconds, not too bad for me but the Slot.It Challenge boys can get modified Nissans round in 7 seconds. Next up my unmodified NSR Mosler, again over three minutes I managed a best lap this time of 7.95, which is not too shabby for an old duffer like me. Finally the McLaren and from my first three minute stint the car was smooth but the best I could do was 8.5, clearly something not quite right here. Ah yes, change the standard guide for a deep flag version and switch the rear tyres as I had for the Nissan, and now we're cooking. The next three-

minute stint produced a best time of 7.675, really outstanding for me these days. Better yet the McLaren stayed in the groove for the whole three-minute period and never looked like deslotting, something not to be underestimated when you consider how much time can be lost even with the most attentive marshals. Later during the evening a number of regular Slot.It Challenge guys turned up with F1GTRs that they had done some work on and during the evening some of these young chargers got regularly into the 6.9 second bracket with the McLaren. Everyone I have spoken to so far who has bought one has simply raved about its performance and it really does look like Mr Ferrari has pulled out another quantum leap in slot performance with this car.

Any criticism from me? Well if I'm being picky just this, I really do find road versions of modern cars pretty boring to look at. I know that this is a commercial venture and if a manufacturer releases a fantastic race liveried car first then they're unlikely to sell many plain road versions later, so I do understand. Good news here was the same day Pendle Slot Racing supplied my shiny new McLaren they also took stock of some brand new Jagermeister decal sheets from DMC, perfect for jazzing up the plain orange F1GTR don't you agree? ■



Jazz the F1GTR up with some DMC Jagermeister Decals from Pendle Slot Racing