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It might be rubbish

Why don't slot car manufacturers make garbage cars any more? No, I don't mean poor products but slot car versions of abysmal real racing cars. Nowadays the various manufacturers compete with each other to rush the latest McLaren, Ferrari or Renault world beater to the market place but universally neglect the Spykers and Midlands (or whatever weird name they currently race under). I find the heroic failures of the racing world so much more interesting than the all-conquering state of the art stuff. For those who share this attitude - have a look at f1rejects.com, a website dedicated to the truly dire end of the F1 world.

It was not always so - Scalextric and its Spanish namesake often used to release cars whose racing pedigree was strictly bottom drawer. I have loads of them in my collection - Scalextric's very first plastic car was the Lotus 16 - a car that suffered terminal understeer and which would usually fall to bits long before it ever saw the chequered flag. Then there were such masterpieces as the Matra MS11 with a glorious sounding V12 which wouldn't pull the skin off a rice pudding, the March 240 six wheeler that never even raced and the first Renault turbo car which rarely lasted more than five laps before coming to a steaming halt at the side of the track. I have a whole shelf full of uncompetitive Tyrrells, Minardis and Arrows plus a smattering of Ferrari and McLaren's less successful efforts.

Alas, such gems are rapidly becoming an endangered species and we may be doomed to suffer an endless diet of silver or red cars for the foreseeable future. Perhaps all is not lost though. SCX have re-released two of the all time turkeys in the Vintage series (McLaren M9A and BRM P83) while Scalextric have brought joy to my heart with the Honda F1 'Earth' car - a car so truly awful that it has struggled to beat the previous year's model in the form of the Super Aguri. Apart from being slow it also features the ugliest livery to be seen in F1 for many a year - definitely a candidate for front row of the display cabinet!

Till next month

Brian





BY **ROB SMITH**

MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

email: factory@nsc.co.uk

After the excitement of four new moulds last month we have lapsed into a strange pre-Christmas lull with only a handful of new models being released. Several of the new F1 cars are in short supply too.

C2781 Renault F1 2007 No 4

Last month we had the digital version of Giancarlo Fisichella's Renault and it is the standard version which is hard to find. However we did receive the number 4 Heikki Kovalainen version.

C2817D Honda F1 No 7

Jenson Button's Earth Car in digital form is now available with a fascinating livery. The standard version is hard to find but there is also a digital version. Hornby have very cleverly managed to apply the satellite image of the Earth very effectively across the car, and in the same orientation as the real car with the UK clearly visible above the driver's legs. The mould has not been changed from previous releases. ⇒





The application of the image is very clever. It is in fact a waterslide transfer, applied mechanically with a very sophisticated process. The transfer is floated in water and then applied in a vacuum chamber. A warming process then seals the transfer to the car.

Retailer Christmas Specials

There are two retailer specials for Christmas this year.

The first is C1210 Super Street Racers. This is a two car set from Toys-R-Us. The cars are unique to the set - C2855W red Mini Cooper and C2856W blue Mini Cooper. These are impact resistant cars and the set is in the shops now @ £79.99. The cars are quite attractive with two white stripes across the bonnets and boots and two matching colour stripes across the white roof.



The second is C1211 BBC Top Gear Supercar Showdown. This contains C2661W Ford GT- red and C2857W Porsche GT3R. I believe the Porsche is unique to the set and is white. This is not yet in the shops at the end of October.

I am advised by Hornby that there are no other retailer specials this Christmas but I remain unconvinced. ■



email: flyonthewall@nsc.co.uk

A rather subdued month as far as new releases is concerned. In fact there are more special editions than standard releases, which I guess is no surprise. Anybody who is anxiously waiting for the brand new Porsche 935 K3 to arrive will have their prayers answered soon. At the time of writing I believe the first model (88268) is available in Spain so will feature it next month once it is readily available worldwide. Also on the near horizon is another brand new model, the Ferrari F40. See announcements below for details of the first three releases. The first of these plus a special edition is scheduled for December (just in time for Christmas).

Standard Releases

Audi Quattro A2 "Clarion" #8 (88276)
 RAC Rally 1985, driven by Per Eklund with co-driver Bjorn Cederberg. The model is decorated mainly white with black and orange V-stripes running diagonally across the bonnet and meeting in a point on the roof.

BMW M3 GTR "Red Bull" #6 (88303)
 Latest in the series of racing kits with extra accessories. The model is decorated in blue with yellow and red graphics and based on the car that raced at Laguna Seca in 2006, driven by F. Bouvy, V. Vosse and D. Quester. Fly appear to have abandoned the foam lined racing cigar shaped boxes for the type used by the duo kits. =>



Lady Racers

March 761 "Lavazza" #10 (99082)

This is a brand new limited edition series from Fly dedicated to "Lady Racers". The first in this collection is focusing on the Italian driver Lella Lombardi, whose real name was Maria Grazia Lombardi. Lella took part in 17 Grand Prix from 1974 to 1976 and is the only female driver to date to finish a world championship F1 race in the top six. Lella only managed to score 0.5 (half) a championship point during her career. This was due to finishing 6th in the shortened 1975 Spanish GP and therefore, as the rules dictated, only half the points for each position were awarded. Her F1 career started off driving as a privateer entrant in an old Brabham and she also had a one-off drive for Williams. 1975 was Lella's most successful year, driving an entire season for March. Her career ended with some success driving sports cars, but unfortunately she died at the early age of 51 from cancer.

The model depicted is the high air box March Lella drove in the 1976 Spanish GP. It is predominantly white with a silver rear wing and minimal red graphics. Like the previously released Ronnie Peterson limited edition

(99042), this too is presented in a cardboard presentation box. At the time of writing this model has only been released in Spain, but should be on general sale by the time you read this.

Special Editions

Porsche 911S "Chiquita" #79 (99081)

Thank you to Lee Cook for alerting me to this car. Lee emailed me and within a few minutes I had located one on eBay, paid for it through Paypal and less than a week later it had arrived from the Netherlands. With just a day to spare before copy date it enabled me to photograph it for the Journal. *Phew!*

A specially commissioned model by the German importers "H + T" and limited to 500 units. It represents the car driven to first place in the GT class by Dieter Fröhlich and Pauli Toivonen, competing in the Nurburgring 1000km in 1970. It is decorated in an eye-catching bright yellow and has two black bands running parallel down each side of the bonnet. The model is presented on a white plinth and is complemented by a numbered picture backing card.



BMW M3 E30 “Telefunken” #4 (99092)

This is a specially commissioned model virtually identical to the previously released standard edition A1701. It has been produced for the Spanish national rally championships and has extra tampo printing sponsorship on the roof. I'm not sure of the numbers produced, but it is sure to be very low and one to look out for to complete your Fly rally collection.

Renault 5 Turbo “Red Renault” #15 (99090)/Porsche 911 SC “U32 Hobbies” #4 (99091)

Both the above Spanish only cars are limited to 500 and 300 units respectively. I will feature these in more detail next month with photographs, as they only became available just before the copy date and there was not enough time for the parcel to arrive from Spain. (Thanks JB).

Announcements

Fly have announced the cars (and trucks) they will be producing in November and December. In catalogue numerical order, they are as follows: -

- 88276 – Audi Quattro A2 “Rothmans”
- 88282 – Porsche 935 K3 – Daytona 1980
- 88283 – Ferrari F40 – Imsa Topeka 1990
- 88284 – F40 – 24hr Le Mans 1994 “Pilot”
- 88286 – March 761 – “Jagermeister”
- 88287 – BMW 320i “Hasseroder” racing kit
- 88289 – Ferrari 512 CL – 24hr Le Mans 1970 test car
- 88290 – Porsche 935 K3 – 24hr Le Mans 1980 “Apple Computers”
- 88291 – Porsche 934 – 24hr Le Mans 1977 “Meccarillos”
- 88299 – Chevron B21/B23 – 24hr Le Mans 1973 duo kit
- 88302 – BMW M3 E30 – Spa 24hr 1988 duo kit
- 88304 – Porsche 911 GT1 98 – Plain white kit
- 88305 – Lola T70 Mk.IIIB – Plain white kit
- 88311 – Porsche 908 – Plain white kit
- 99037 – Ford GT40 “GT40 La Historia” Historic Film Collection
- 99069 – Ferrari F40 – 24hr Le Mans 1996
- 99070 – Marcos 600LM “PPG Rallies XII”

99074 – Porsche 917K “Lucky Strike” Mythical Circuit – Kyalami

99083 – Audi Quattro A2 “Marlboro” Lady Racer Collection

08053 – MAN Truck – Jarama 2004

An interesting point from the list above is Fly's introduction into the plain white kit market. At the time of writing I don't know how these will be packaged, or whether they will be marketed in the same fashion as Slot. It has with their white kit range. I guess they are a good idea as it gives the individual the chance to decorate a chosen model in a livery which has not been produced, but this will only appeal to a small niche in the market. Of course, production costs are also cheaper and this is reflected in the RRP, which is almost 50% of a standard edition model, unlike Slot. It's kits which are the same price as their standard models.

Further to the above list and scheduled for release in December is the second of the “Gaugemaster” special edition models for 2007. Following my scoop in the May Journal, the car will be the brand new Ferrari F40 and will once again be decorated in the usual maroon with race #69. It has been allocated catalogue reference number 99066 and, like the Ferrari 250 GTO released earlier this year, is limited to 500 units.

And Finally...

Anybody with deep bottomless pockets and an eye for the unusual may be interested in my last piece of news. You may remember that earlier in the year I reported that Fly were making available 80 pre-production prototype March 761s produced in nylon and resin. With the imminent release of the Ferrari F40, Fly are to release a very limited number of this model too. Once again it will be made of nylon and resin and like the March will not include a motor. The March was limited to 80 units, but it is not known at this stage how many of the F40 will be available, although I guess it will be a very similar amount. The catalogue reference number is ES420. ■



email: kitsnbobs@nsc.co.uk

With a trip to Rally Catalunya and the OCAR Euro Saloons meeting to organise at Wolves, it has been a busy month for me and the workbench is littered with unfinished stuff so a bit of a short one this month I'm afraid.

One completed project this month was my OCAR Jaguar XJ12 Saloon just in time for the Sunday meeting at Wolves. Having had a disaster in the first heat with my Cortina MKIII, I switched to the Jag for the rest of the meeting

and running with the PCS32 step 2 chassis, Slot.It motor, and gears and a late switch to NSR tyres the smooth running car helped me to at least salvage a B division win in the PCS32 class. Thanks to meeting sponsor John, plus help from Sean and Nic of Pendle Slot Racing for getting me the necessary parts and decals together so I could even get it to the start line. OCAR's Alfa Romeo SZ 1958 Alpine Rallye winner is due imminently and hopefully I should have one to show you next time.



OCAR Jaguar XJ12 Saloon in 1976 livery



Proto Slot Porsche 914 and Ferrari TR61 LMs

I'm afraid my TRRC Delahaye sports is still awaiting my attention with the paint. However, their website brings us news of a second series of Grand Prix cars hopefully due next year, which should include the Mercedes W154 and W165. This month I did receive the Protoslot Porsche 914LM and Ferrari TR61 pre-painted kits and have managed to get them together in time for this month's article. The quality of Protoslot's kits is first rate and they look great when finished even by a duffer like me. A visit to their website reveals an interesting competition - to win simply guess what two cars Proto Slot are planning to release at Christmas 2007.

Staying with resin, news of planned new releases from Le Mans Miniatures includes the Panhard 1962 LM Coupe and Matra MS670B from Le Mans 1974 to be available as pre-painted kits or in ready to run form. They also announced the Peugeot 905 LM 1992, Pescarolo Judd LM 2007 and Audi R10 TDI LM 2007 as ready to run cars and the Audi as the Sebring 2007 winner as a limited edition ready to run. Hopefully they will all be available this year and can be pre-ordered from MRE. Last but not

least on the kit side, AA Bodies tell me they are progressing with their Ginetta G4 and Lancia D24 Mille Miglia bodies, which should be available by late November.

On to the plastic manufacturers and I can bring you pictures of my new NSR Renault Clio, they look good but you do need to glue and true the tyres before you run them and I found a touch of lead weight and a deeper Slot. It guide helped it at Wolverhampton's wood track. ➤➤



NSR Renault Clio and Carrera BMW Z4 Coupé





Slot.It "Schiesser" Porsche 956 KH

I have also obtained the new Carrera BMW Z4 Coupé in blue, Red Bull livery and the Opel Commodore and Porsche GT3 releases can't be far away from reaching the UK.

Pendle Slot Racing have some pictures of the pre-production Pagani Zonda from MB Slot so expect them sometime either late this year or early in 2008. Meanwhile Slot.It have released the blue Schiesser liveried Porsche 956 KH in the UK along with plain white kit versions of the Sauber, Jaguar, Lancia and Porsche KH for all you custom livery fans. Finally at the Saloon Meeting, I was handed a prototype sidewinder brass chassis by Rob Hill, designer of the Penelope Pitlane Chassis range. Rob had run a similar chassis in the scratch class to a very creditable seventh place so I will report back as to how I get on with it over the next few weeks. ■



email: howorld@nsc.co.uk

If past releases over the last year or so would seem to suggest Scalextric are more serious about their Micro range, then the two new Aston Martin DBR9s pretty much confirm it. Released first as part of a set exclusive to Woolies, the cars are now available on their own and for just over a tenner. They are quite simply the best looking Micro Scalextric releases to date.

The #5 would make the better racer, due to the yellow roof aiding visibility. Modelled on the Phoenix motorsports car as raced by Fassler/Deletraz in 2006, the body sits nice and low on the standard chassis. The weight is a little on the high side, at about 6gm, but there is plenty of scope to dremel it much lower. Proportionally everything looks right and the fitment of the wing to the body and body to chassis is very firm. Hard to say how well the wing would hold up at an EAHORC race, with the track on tables and straights up to 30' long almost inviting a big crash, but I had no hint of trouble running the cars on a modest floor layout.



The #57 works car (from Sebring 2005 I think) is of course the far more iconic of the two. The green finish is superb, as are the tampo decals. At first glance the yellow flashes around the window look a little 'weedy' until you realise they are like that on the real car. One minor quibble is the painted headlights, but at racing speed these are acceptable and details such as the bonnet indents more than make up for it.



Scalextric have managed to squeeze in three more releases before year end and I hope to have decent pictures next time. This must mark the most quality releases in one year for a long time and it seems there is also some thought to clever marketing going on. The three Nissan 350Zs are depicted on the box art but I believe they are 1:32nd scale based and/or computer generated. The set is available exclusive to Argos, and last time I looked on-line the cost was £40.00. ■



Swindon Swapmeet 2008

It's that time of year to start firming up on the attractions for the next Swindon Swapmeet on Sunday, 6 January 2008. As you may know from previous years we put a lot of emphasis on trying to be a bit different by bringing in circuits and encouraging first-time and occasional stall holders. As well as Four Lane Black Top's circuit we hope to be welcoming the Slot Drag Racing Association's (SDRA), 60 foot long drag strip for 2008.

However we would welcome more circuits, demonstrations, displays etc so please drop me a line at swindon@slotcentral.co.uk if you would like to participate. We are usually able to provide the space for free.

Please also get in touch if you would like to discuss having a stall and this will be your first time. Collector's tables are just £10. I know from feedback that first-time individuals can feel a bit unsure but allow me to put your mind at rest!

Robert Learmouth

New Figures

NSCC member Lawrence Attrill is producing some rather good 1/32 figures and accessories.

His products go under the name of 'Tarn Model Foundries' and the ever expanding range of (primarily) rally figures, were on show at the recent MK swapmeet. These are cast white metal which need some assembly and a coat of paint - not cheap, but of excellent quality and ideal for that "special scene" on the layout. I recently purchased a large quantity of his new fire extinguishers and was highly impressed.

Lawrence is keen to offer pieces not made by any of the major firms and he would welcome suggestions for new items.

Contact via: www.tarnmodelfoundry.co.uk

Scenic Items

Another NSCC member, David Jessett, is also producing some worthwhile stuff under the banner of 'Slot Track Scenics'. David has been doing a lot of research into the subject and you may have seen his early prototypes at Slot Rally GB.

He has developed a complete system of fencing, tyre walls etc with an ingenious clip device which allows everything to be attached to standard plastic track. Once again these items are not cheap but the quality and ease of use is far superior to mass produced products and they are well worth the money. David is also open to suggestions for further items so look at the advert elsewhere in this issue for contact details.

Journal Survey

Many thanks to all who completed the survey, over 200 of you but, unfortunately, less than a quarter of the membership - so nowhere near enough votes to justify full colour next year.

I am still collating the results but a few requests were repeated many times and I am already starting to act on them:

More tuning articles - your wish is my command - see page 18.

More kit/scratchbuilding articles - working on it - coming soon.

Most popular request - scenic track articles - again I am working on it but there aren't huge numbers of such tracks within the club so I am having to look further afield.

More 'collecting' type articles - I have been struggling with this one for some time. I have received many offers of help in this department but nobody ever produces the goods. There is a wealth of material in the archives which could be updated if only someone reliable would be prepared to do it.

Brian

The Great NSCC Tuning Experiment

By Dave Chang

Part 1: Out Of The Box

This is the first in a series of articles on the basics of tuning cars. Whilst this will be familiar territory to many NSCC racers, to newcomers and to collectors this can be an area of mystery, often preventing such slot fans from delving deeper into the hobby and sometimes even causing a fear of going to a club.

Tuning a car is not just about making your car faster; it is also about making it handle better and making it more fun to drive. Sometimes it is not about the top speed at all but about improving the acceleration or the cornering.

In this experiment I shall be starting with two identical box-standard Scalextric cars, one of which will be progressively tuned. The other will be kept box-standard throughout to enable objective comparison of the performance change, irrespective of changing track conditions (cleanliness, temperature etc).

The aim is to illustrate common tuning practices, and see what the real world effect of these methods can be. It will not be a definitive answer on the value of the different techniques – the results would be different on different cars, on how well the procedures are executed, and will also depend on the track the car is to be raced on.

I mention the track because this is a vital aspect of how a car is tuned. The tyres must be matched to the track surface and the car's performance to the track layout. A car with a great top speed will do well on a circuit with long straights, but may be beaten by a slower car on a tight twisty circuit if the slower car has better cornering.

If you are thinking of tuning a car to race at a club, be sure to check the rules to see what is allowed and what is not. There is no point having a fast car that is ineligible to be raced. If

you are using your home track to benchmark your car, take into account differences between your track and the club track as you tune.

At the end of the series, the tuned car will be given away to a lucky NSCC member as a competition prize. I am keeping my fingers crossed that it will actually end up faster than the standard car!

This first instalment will outline the cars and tests, and also document basic car preparation. Future articles will cover power, traction, gearing and downforce.

The Tests

The best test of a car is lap times on the circuit on which it is to be raced, and I will be obtaining best times based on 10 lap runs on my garage permanent layout. The 13.7 m circuit is built with Scalextric Sport track, various radii curves from hairpin to sweeping R4, and a straight of 2.5 m. It is powered and timed by Scalextric Sport World. The track features various inclines to add to the challenge.

I will also be using some specialised slot-car test equipment. I will be measuring top speed using a Tamiya 'Mini 4WD Speed Checker' rolling road test machine which has been adapted to work with 1/32 slot cars. At the moment these can be found on eBay for less than £15 inc. p&p, and the modification can be very simple. The device is designed for 1/32 mini-z radio controlled cars and has two pairs of rollers for the rear wheels to sit between, and a front roller for the front wheels. This front roller needs to be removed and replaced by a short strip of track for the guide of the slot car. I used two pieces of plasticard and some copper tape to make the track piece, glued on with hot glue. Then all you need is a way to connect the rails





to a power supply. I added a variable speed controller, but for test purposes I am using it on full power, so I might as well have connected directly to a power supply providing 12V DC and giving a couple of amps current.

The rear wheels of a slot car work best perched on the flat rear roller, which is also the speed sensing roller. A display at the front of the machine shows the speed in Km/h or the time taken to cover a distance.



I will also be using a DS pocket checker to measure gauss – the magnetic strength of the cars. If you wish to measure the downforce of your cars, it is vital to take into account the ride height of the car, because the distance of the magnet to the rails is critical. To measure this, I will place the cars on my test-plate, an 8mm thick Perspex sheet with a slot in it, and position the gauss sensor flush with the bottom of the Perspex, ensuring a consistent downforce reading which will be relative to the car's ride height and actual distance to the track rails.

The Cars

The cars chosen for this experiment were Scalextric's new 'Super Resistant' Lamborghini Gallardos. These are cheaper than standard highly detailed Scalextric models and feature a one-piece body, blacked out windows and no interior. They are the latest models in this range that started with the Audi TT and Porsche Boxster, but look a lot nicer due to the metallic yellow paint job and open vents. Surprisingly in a super-resistant car, the wing mirrors are not rubber but special 'easy-to-break-off' hard plastic!

These were specifically chosen not for their price, but because these cars are built for racing. I am a big fan of detailed full interiors and working lights, but these details add weight to a car and inevitably reduce their potential performance. The Audi and Boxster already have a reputation for being fun and quick, so hopefully the Gallardo will follow suit. The car to be tuned has been given a fictional livery so that it can be differentiated easily from the box standard car in testing and in the photographs. The standard car will be referred to as the *Std Car*, and the tuned car as the *T Car*.

The car weighs in at a nimble 71 grams and is held together with four screws. The car has a standard Mabuchi SP motor rated at 18,000 rpm, fitted as a sidewinder driving the rear wheels. It has an 11 tooth pinion driving a 36 tooth spur gear, giving a 3.3:1 ratio. It is also fitted with a flat bar magnet just in front of the motor. Tyre diameter is 21mm, wheelbase is 80mm and width is 60mm.

⇒

Using the DS Pocket Checker, gauss was measured for the cars. For the initial test, I have measured the magnet strength by placing the sensor flush with the underside of the car's chassis, as well as the car's magnetic downforce.

Magnetic Strength:

<i>Std Car</i> magnet strength	1330
<i>T Car</i> magnet strength	1327
<i>Std Car</i> magnetic downforce	253
<i>T Car</i> magnetic downforce	242

Straight from the boxes, the Std Car has more magnetic downforce than the T Car – which should translate to slightly better cornering and slightly worse straight line speed and acceleration.

Basic preparation

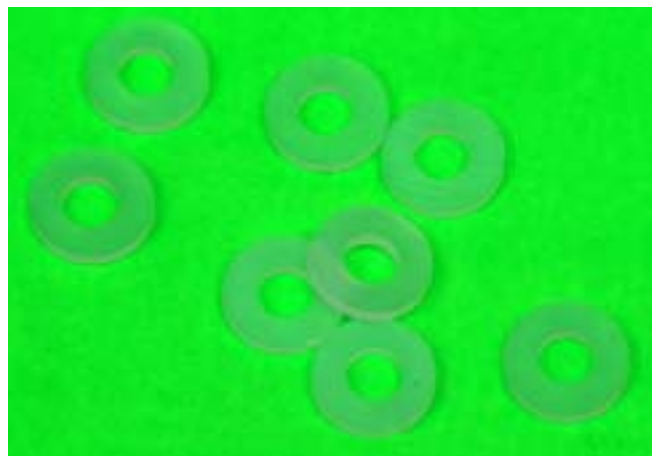
There are a few things to do to any car before running it. The first is to dismantle the vehicle, and check that all the bearings (also known as 'bushes') and the motor are properly in place. Sometimes the cars have either not been assembled properly, or else have had an incident in transit from the factory. The gears can be damaged if they are out of alignment when the car is run – so it is better to check that everything is in place first.

Doing this on the first Lambo, I found that the right bearing of the rear wheel was rotating in its clip. The bearings should stay still, and whilst this may not cause a problem I felt it was better to sort it out. There was some grease around the area, so step one was to unclip the axle and remove all the grease. Then it was replaced, the axle oiled (see below) to ensure that any excess glue did not lock the axle to the bearing and then add a drop of superglue (also known as CA or cyano-acrylic) was applied to the outside of the bearing and the chassis clip. I use superglue because with care it can generally be 'cracked' and the bearing removed again later.

Many racers always glue in the bearings and the motor to make sure that they do not pop out during a race, or move within their clips during acceleration and braking.

Turn the wheels with your thumb to see that they can turn smoothly. If not, investigate what is causing the problem. Are the gears sticking or sloppy, is the axle not straight? If the gears are not right, you need to sort this out before lubricating. This will be covered in a later instalment.

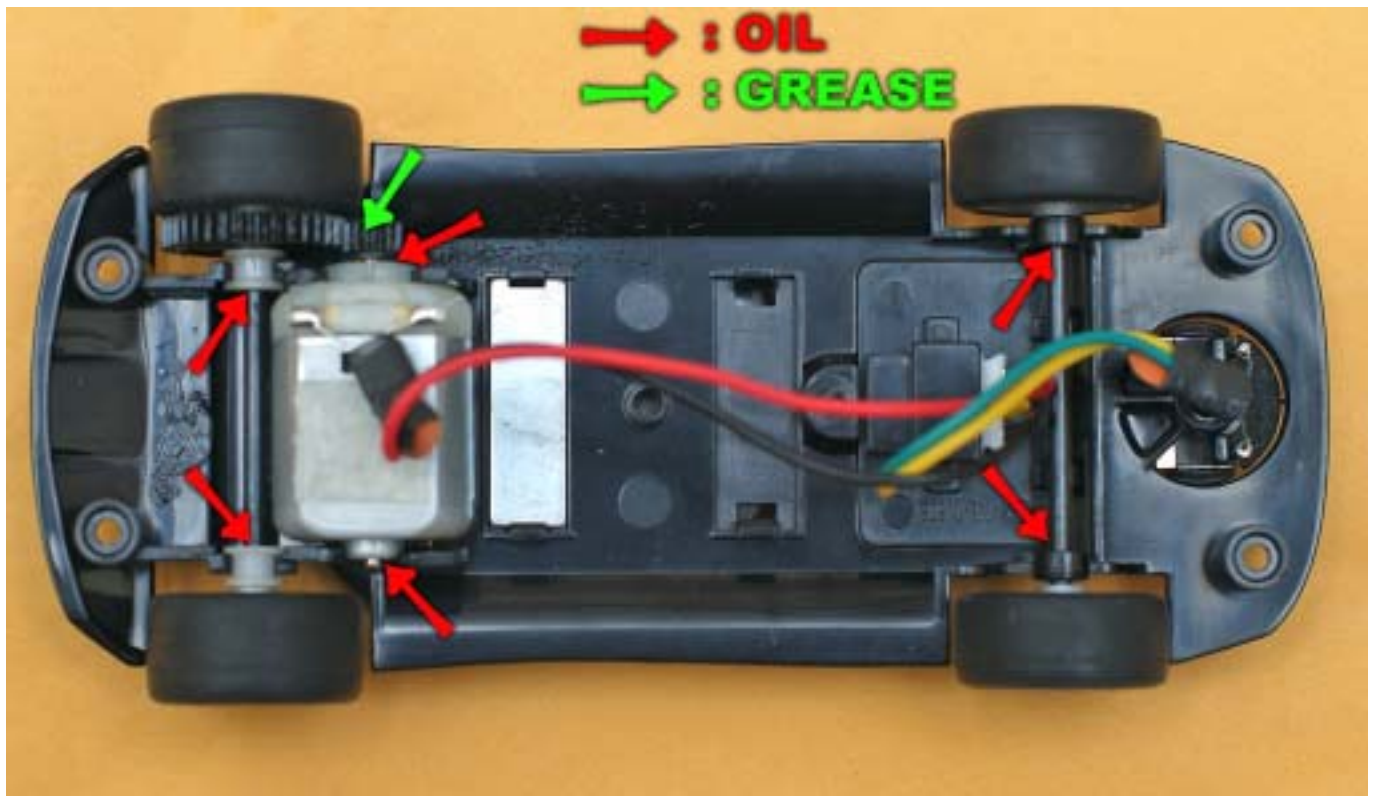
Also check whether the axles have side to side play. Ideally there should be about a paper's thickness of movement – more than that can lead to unpredictable cornering as the body will shift on the axle. This can be corrected by shortening the axle – a procedure fraught with pitfalls when dealing with standard press-fit wheels – or more easily with nylon spacers. These are small plastic washers, and when a slit is cut so they make a closed 'c' shape, can be clipped on to the axle without removing the wheels.



After gluing the bearing in the Std Car, there was negligible axle slop. On the T Car however, there was too much movement, so a spacer was inserted. I removed the rear axle, slid the bearing away from the spur gear and clipped a spacer in. Then pushed the bearing back and returned the axle to the car.

Finally, oil and grease the moving parts. Moving mechanical parts work at their optimum when they fit together perfectly. One of the functions of the oils and grease is to fill the tiny gaps so that they do fit well. When moving parts slide against each other, as when the axle rotates in the bearing, there is friction which will use some of your car's energy and slow it down.





If there is oil between the axle and the bearing, there will be less friction and your car will run better. As well as making the car work better, the oil also reduces the wear on the parts making the car last longer too.

All the points where axles rotate within bearings need to be oiled. The important thing to remember with oil is that 'less is more' – you only need the tiniest drop per bearing. The easiest way to apply this is using a pen style

pinpoint-oiler which has a thin hollow metal tube to allow you to apply small amounts of oil exactly where you need it. SCX make one of these called the 'SCX Pro Racing Lubricant'. Alternatively, you could put a drop of 3-in-1 oil on the point of a needle and transfer the oil to the correct place that way. You only need to provide the thinnest film of oil for it to work at its best – any excess oil will just collect dust and dirt.

⇒



The drop of oil needs to be put where the axle goes into the bearing. It will be drawn into the gap, turn the wheel manually to spread the oil.

As well as the axle bearings, I prefer to also oil the points where the motor shaft enters and exits the motor. If you do this, be very careful: too much oil will ruin your motor. Most oils do not conduct electricity, so if they get into the electrical parts of your motor, it may stop working.

Some manufacturers are now greasing the gears for you – you will be able to see some gloop on the gears if they have been greased. If they look like new clean plastic, you will need to add some. Finding suitable grease for a slot car is not easy and I do not think there is strict consensus on what is best. If your favourite slot car dealer cannot help, I suggest you try radio-controlled model shops where they sell a range of greases in small tubes made for small plastic and metal gears. You do not need much grease, the excess will be flung off the gears the first time you run the motor, so it is best to run the car with the body off and well positioned rags to catch the grease. Mind your eyes too. The Lambo gears were already factory greased.

The Std Car's top speed was checked before and after lubrication to see if there was an actual performance difference. Because the gears were already lubricated, I did not anticipate much of a difference. There was a small speed difference, but this could be because of the motor running in rather than due to the oil. Note that lubrication is also to extend the life of your car as well as to hopefully give a speed advantage. I only tested the T Car once, after lubrication. This is because I do not want to run the motor much until it has been properly run in – more on this next month.

Top Speed:

<i>Std Car</i> fresh from box	30.2 Km/h
<i>Std Car</i> oiled and bush glued	30.6 Km/h
<i>T Car</i> oiled	29.6 Km/h

Conclusion

Both cars have now had basic preparation applied. Most clubs will allow all of the above in their 'box-standard' class of racing, but check with your club to be sure.

Straight from the box, you can see that there are differences in the motor speed and magnetism of these cars. Some racers have been known to use this variance to their advantage in box-standard races – making sure that their box standard car happens to be one of the faster ones.

Always remember that 'less-is-more' with oil and grease, you only need the tiniest amount, using too much can be detrimental to your car.

Next month we will delve into tuning properly and look at power.

All cars and parts for these articles have been generously donated by Hornby Hobbies. Further information on tuning is available in my book 'The Slot Car Handbook' from the Crowood Press. ■





The test cars (above) and the test track (below)



The Good Old Days

By Clive Mills

Back in the days before Mr Fly and Mr Ninco were even thought of, slot car racers had very limited options when it came to choice of cars. There were the early Scalextric of course and, if you were that keen, VIP. However, some people were not only racers but superb model engineers. I am always walking around boot fairs looking for the odd slot car item and I recently came across my find of the year - a very scruffy metal box full of early slot cars and parts. On opening the box I thought, "Oh dear, it has been in a wet shed", as the bottom tray had rust in it. There were several carved balsa bodies and loads of old MRRC parts, but the real gem was a scratch built SSK Mercedes. The builder must have been weeks constructing it. The motor, wheels and gears are MRRC but every thing else is

hand made. The chassis rails have been cut from brass as have the front axle and stub axles. The amazing thing is the amount of work put into the front suspension/steering. The axle is mounted on tiny leaf springs. The stub axles have been made to pivot on very tiny king pins and track rods operate the steering from a hand made slot guide. The body is carved from balsa wood and has then been covered with very thin aluminium sheet with all louvres cut along the bonnet. The cockpit is trimmed in thin leather. On the dash are the hand made dials and gear lever. The mudguards are made of thin metal and mounted on small brackets to the chassis. The whole car is a complete work of art.

When I got home I thought it would be too good to be true if it ran. I put power to the pick-ups and the motor tried to run. After very





carefully removing the motor which was secured with a threaded screw each side through the brass chassis, I cleaned and lightly oiled it, then refitted. IT RUNS! The rear tyres were hard but in the box with the other parts were a new set in the MRRC bag. After fitting these the car was tested on my Ninco track and it ran as sweet as a new car. (Maybe better than some!). I have great fun running the car and can get some quite good lap times as it is quite heavy and handles



very well on the thin soft tyres. Please don't get the wrong idea, this was not cheap. I had to pay a fair price to get them from the antique dealer who had them, but I feel that it was well worth it. The car will not be restored in any way as it has its own charm as it is.

If any members know who might have built this car I would love to hear from you. ■

The listing numbers on the UK site continue to remain buoyant, averaging around 5,500 (without any cheap listing days) and completed auctions around 11,000. It is clear that the mood is swinging towards thoughts of Christmas presents in the listings, and prices have been varying widely as less experienced eBayers tend to chase prices higher and sellers put “ideal for Christmas” in their item descriptions. The unboxed modern new Batmobile is ranging from £5 to £18 plus p&p this month which shows you need to wait for the right auction to get the best bargains currently. Mind you no one seems to have got carried away buying the Hamilton McLaren yet with prices in the £20 to £25 range even with the odd seller describing it as ‘rare’.

Rare?

I noted around 400 completed and 200 live auctions on UK eBay with the ‘rare’ word. There are some ‘rare’ prices in my monthly list below but it is interesting to see what some sellers classify as rare - like Micro Scalextric track pieces, Dunlop bridge (the modern yellow one!), Porsche Boxsters and any bit of Scalextric classic track that is not a standard straight or curve. Often the term is extended to “rare vintage” to describe your run of the mill Shadows and BRMs from the 70s and 80s but, as most of us who regularly visit swap-meets know, these cars are far from an endangered species. Mind you there was a rare Metro in pale pink of all things that went for £29.12. With a factory sprayed white roof and faint markings of the set C317 MG Metro, this was definitely an oddity for the brave collector out there.

The only Scalextric Bond offerings I spotted this month were a Mercedes that sold at £241 with a couple of minor faults, and a James Bond figure at £30. Staying on a rare note there was

a “Lionel 1912 Automobile Racing tinplate slot rail set”. For those of you who did not see this featured auction it was described as, “The cars run on two concentric circles of track being guided by a central rail similar to a train, the power is collected by a central roller that runs along the rail and also steers the car and two solid metal pick-ups that rub along the track surface.” A rare piece indeed with a price to match at £2000.

As I have reported before most new cars are usually discounted, sometimes quite heavily, but one of the recent car releases, the Scalextric F430 Sara model C2835, is proving popular. It has fetched up to £50, though at the time of writing I do know they are still available in the shops. A bit of careful searching might yield a result as they are not just for the special concession shops as was originally reported.

Digital

On the digital front, sets do seem to be selling fairly well in the UK. There are still plenty of the Scalextric Super GT sets being sold for £150-£170 with the odd one listed above the £200 mark. This went unsold. Digital cars in general do not seem to be commanding the premium you would expect though, with most selling at £25 or below - on a par with non-digital cars. The relatively new Scalextric Police Range Rover, chipped ready to go, has proved more popular - attracting bids around £37. Whilst Scalextric is definitely the most popular of almost 400 completed digital listings, SCX does make an appearance and the odd set can be picked up a lot cheaper than a Scalextric one at around the £60 level for a used set. There are a few SCX cars appearing now as well so keep an eye out if you are in the market for a cheap car to expand your digital stable. ⇨⇨



Slot.It

Apologies for again more information on these cars but I have been amazed at the story here as prices seem to go from strength to strength with a new record that I have seen of £171.69 for a press presentation model Audi ref SIA01D on Monday night. (Makes a US sale of the same model five days earlier look cheap at \$185!) This was from one seller offering the complete range individually on one evening and prices ranged from £50 for the later E and F models up to just over the £100 mark for the first test car models. Mind you there have been very few listed lately so maybe that is why prices are going to these levels. Of the rest of the range the Kenwood Porsche attracted a £95 bid and \$89 for a slightly used "20 slow grandma laps" example whilst the "Newman" LE bids were around £80. The Kouros Mercedes attracted a \$150 BIN buyer but other auction sales were nearer the £50 mark. On the Nissan model front earlier examples fetched £40+. However it seems that maybe the odd seller is getting ahead of the game in the US though, with the latest Porsches and Lancias listed for \$120 or more BIN prices so do search carefully when looking for these models.

Prices

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

Ex Shop Scalextric Car Display Cabinet – VGC £206.11 (Monday lunch time including top name board that is often missing).

Vintage Scalextric Control Centre K/703 BOXED 100% £245 (BIN price on Monday afternoon for unbuilt kit).

Scalextric AC Cobra CK/1 Kit Car, Race-tuned, BOXED. £180.99 (No inner tray and couple of small bits missing on Sunday night).

Triang Scalextric Super 124 Set 200 Mega Rare. £373 (Only one car - an Alfa Romeo on Wednesday night).

Scalextric B1 Typhoon Motor-cycle & Sidecar Shop Stock £92 (Boxed unused red model on Saturday night).

Very Rare Scalextric 124 1/24 Ace Series Ferrari F1 MIB £761 (Saturday night).

Rare Scalextric Audi R8C 1999 Le Mans £63.57 (New, one of first models released on a Friday night but cracked case. Missing out the word Slot.It cost the buyer here I reckon).

SCALEXTRIC LEYLAND T45 TRUCK & TRAILER, VINTAGE, RARE £41.22

(No box or chrome and needed rewiring on Thursday night).

FLY RARE 1/32 SCALE SLOT CAR PLASTIC DISPLAY STAND NEW £8.20

(Perspex stand which if I remember correctly was available to order a few years back for considerably more than that).

VINTAGE SCALEXTRIC ELECTRIC LAP RECORDERS BOXED RARE £10.49

(Looked complete and in vgc but untested on Sunday night).

RARE Scalextric Classic C191 LE MANS Start Track VGC! £33 (sold on Tuesday night.

Another one reached £24.71 on Sunday night with different seller and bidders).

Rare Scalextric Perris Bugatti 59 C95 Blue MB £820 (Sunday night).

RARE SCALEXTRIC ASTON MARTIN DB4 GT BODYSHELL IN BLUE £84.95

(Some black marks and English screw inserts for those dedicated collectors out there on Sunday night).

Ancien batiment compte tours Scalextric SCX N° 3268 €56.55 (Boxed early Spanish lap counter, French eBay on Saturday night).

VINTAGE BOXED SCALEXTRIC AUTO UNION C-96 YELLOW £520 (Very good condition all complete but box tatty on Monday night).

Scalextric 50 years Lapel/Pin Badge NEW £29.51 (Monday afternoon)

SCALEXTRIC 1st EDITION CATALOGUE – EXCELLENT £71.57 (Excellent condition but light fold on Friday afternoon.)

Finally one description that amused me (and hopefully was not one of our members!) was: "Huge Lot Of Scalextric *NAGGING WIFE FORCES SALE!!*" that went for £39. Wonder if he got nagged that he should have got more for it? ■

Viking Scalextric Club - 10th Anniversary Fun Day

By Adrian Norman

A lovely Indian Summer's day in October 2007 was the fortunate date chosen for Viking Slot Car Club's 10th anniversary race day. 10 years previously I had met another Scalextric fan in a toy shop in Ramsgate. The shop owner introduced us to each other and before the conversation was a few minutes old we'd already decided to set up a Scalextric club. Neither of us had undertaken anything like this before or knew much about Scalextric racing, nevertheless we soon drew up plans for a wooden/copper tape 6-lane circuit of about 80 feet in length. Within three months we had our first meeting and the club soon grew and hasn't looked back since. Several circuits have come and gone and we currently have a six lane Scalextric Sport track of about 130 feet in length with full computerised race management.

Back to the present, and on the Sunday morning we started an endurance race of 500 laps using Ford Mustangs. Drivers arriving during the morning were assigned to a team and would take up the baton and continue the race. A great way to 'get your eye in' with some long stints at the wheel. Club members from the past 10 years who had hung up their controllers during that time had been invited. The long distance race was pretty close all morning and with 30 laps to go the cars were driven their final laps by members of the fairer sex, remarkably ending the race on the same lap just nine seconds apart.

Members had all been encouraged to bring food and drink to create a bit of a party atmosphere and by noon the BBQ was in full swing and was a welcome break after the endurance race. New members met some of the old-timers and the social intermission was also a good time for wives and families to mix.

The afternoon was when the main races were scheduled. We hold these fun races annually. They create a good feeling and, of course, they're not taken seriously. We have every Monday night to get a little serious with our championship GT, Rally, Touring and F1 races. After shepherding everyone back into the clubhouse, and leaving the sunshine, BBQ and hot-dogs behind, we were able to start the fun races. The first one was a relay. We ran Fly trucks with home-made flat-bed trailers with the new Scalextric Lamborghini Gallardo. The cars simply rested on the trailers, there was a slot in the trailer bed for the guide to sit in. The idea of course is that you have to keep the cars on the trailers - not easy on corners as the car wants to slip off and, when it does, causes complete mayhem on track whilst the truck driver has to wait patiently for the marshal to recover the 'loose load' and replace it on the trailer. Brian George made the trailers for us.

Having chosen teams of two, each had to run half the race with the Lambo on the trailer pulled by the truck, then the other half of the race just racing the Lambo. The race could be started with the truck/trailer/Lambo or just the Lambo - but at half distance you are called in for the compulsory pit stop where vehicle and driver are changed. This was great fun, as some teams started with the Lamborghini cars which darted in and through the slower trucks/trailer/car ensembles, hopefully avoiding the motorway-esque carnage that the trucks and trailers inevitably caused - much to the enjoyment of all. When a team reached the halfway point the pit stop changes were made and those teams that chose to start with Lamborghinis now had to change to slower trucks and soon the teams changing to Lambos were on their heels. ⇒





You have never seen some of the most stupendous crashes imaginable! Tears of laughter of the marshals desperately trying to untangle trucks, trailers and super cars and get them on their way again, trucks and trailers bent double in hilarious entanglements just as we all were. Side splitting stuff! Due to popular demand, various permutations of this relay were run with or without trailers, etc.

The next race with a difference was also popular - a blindfold race. Teams again, and the co-driver had to instruct the blindfolded driver as to how much trigger to use, for how long and, of course, when to slow! Not easy. Then, at the halfway point, driver and co-driver swapped

round and the new driver was blindfolded and received instructions from his new co-driver. Hilarious fun for all.

A Batmobile race was another special race held for the six youngest visitors on the day. Despite the Batmobile's short wheel base the youngsters definitely enjoyed some good racing with the little vehicles.

Running a club for 10 years is always rewarding when events like this are held as it reminds us that it is a hobby which can be taken lightly, lest we forget ourselves and take things far too seriously. I recommend to all clubs who have never had a fun-day, try it - you won't regret it. Viking Scalextric Club is looking forward to the next fun day and to another 10 years.

All this is just fun of course and light relief from the normally more serious racing of a regular club evening. It's nice to have this kind of a more social event now and again.

So, 10 years of Viking Scalextric Club. "Who would have thought..." was often said during the Sunday. ■





NASCAR Dodge Dealers/ U.A.W. Dodge Charger (ref 62680) By Martin Peterson

National Association for Auto Stock Car Racing (NASCAR) was set up by William France senior on February 21 1948. France did this with a group of other people to take customised cars off the public roads. Nearly 60 years on it is a major motor racing series with over 75 million followers in 150 countries, making \$3 billion dollars on licence products yearly. It's no wonder SCX and others are making models of these cars!

The Dodge Charger has been around for nearly 40 years, its history closely linked with NASCAR through to road cars. The Dodge Charger I'm reviewing is the Dodge Dealers/UAW: NASCAR driven by Kasey Kahne who is currently running mid-field and in his third season of racing.

My first impression was that it was not doing itself any favours in its plastic presentation box, (although SCX do present their cars very well). The reason for this is that SCX and the Dodge have almost the exact same brand colours white/red - it just does not work. SCX have also made the same car last year (ref 62200) same number/driver except in red/white - beware!

Once out of the box and on the track it comes alive even before it is run. To my artisan eye scale, paintwork and tampo printing is very good. It looks fast and when I tried it, it was. I'm not going to bore you with track times but when run on our MDF club track the general opinion of all my other opponents/colleagues was the same after having a go with it. Once the motor is run in it will get even better. This will be great for people like me whose race preparation is non-existent. It has the normal sprung guide system and magnet and the motor rocks with the rear axle giving good stability. The wheels do protrude out of the body unequally at the rear, the tyres could have more grip and there's only half a driver but, hey ho, it does say age 6+ on the box.

Overall I liked this car - it's presented well with forty odd sponsors advertising on it giving a good representation of the real car. For the collector it's another great livery to have and for the racer it's fun. Also very child/adult friendly as there are not many parts (mirrors, bumpers, wiper blades etc) to fall off. Thank you SCX for making another car for the slot enthusiast that may otherwise not have been. ■



Bolwextric Club Endurance Race

By Paul Atkins and Chris Dulledge

Having held our first 12 hour endurance race back in 2005, as a club (Bolwextric, near Portsmouth) we felt it was time to repeat the event so invites were giving to all those that attended the first meeting. The news that we would be using Scalextric cars was greeted with some disbelief - "They won't last 12 minutes let alone 12 hours," "I hope you have plenty of spares," and "You're joking" were just some of the more printable comments and a complete team pulled out because they wouldn't race them.

However, we managed to cobble four teams together from two local clubs, all the drivers were impressed with the cars and a few attitudes were changed about the robustness of Scalextric cars for club racing. The event ended with everyone talking about next year's race, and I certainly would like this to be an annual event.

The main reason for the event was the collection for the Hornby charity "Cancer Care" and £270 was raised. A big thank you to all those that attended and dug deep, to Tony Bolwell who let us have the track free of charge so we could raise this money and lastly to Adrian Norman and Scalextric for sponsoring the event by providing the spare cars that we never used.

The cars chosen were GT cars to give a mini Le Mans feel to the event, with four cars to be picked from a selection of ten and the least experienced team picking first, down to the winners of the 2005 event picking last. The cars to pick from were, Aston Martin DBR9, Porsche GT3R, Maserati Coupé, TVR 400R, and Dodge Viper Competition Coupé.

Paul Atkins

Now over to fellow team member Chris for the race report:



Two of the members from the victorious team of 2005 were available for 2007, but I had a 'challenge'.... "Can I come Dad? Can I race Dad?" A little bit of arm bending and the rules were changed to let 12 year olds race. Well, it gave everyone else a chance!

Sam had joined me at the Rally last year, and proved he could drive for 30 seconds or so, but this was a bit different: it looked like 20 minutes or so of driving once an hour for 12 hours. A summer training session proved he could concentrate for nearly 20 minutes, and could keep on the track (well, on one lane anyway).

With home advantage and as reigning champions, we got last pick of the cars. The DBR9s went first, then the very pretty Porsche GT3. That left another Porsche, two TVRs and two Vipers. Paul fancied the TVRs, but I refused point blank, as the real thing is unreliable enough. We left it to Sam, but I confess to whispering in his ear, and the yellow Viper was ours. Front engine, and with a bit of a reputation, everyone else looked a little shocked (and smug). I decided that if it made it through the first half hour, it would at least give me one run before it blew up.

From the start the two Astons cleared off, the GT3 chasing, and the Viper, on the worst lane, slid around at the back. Sam took over from Paul and proved himself a reliable endurance racer, driving within his (and the car's) limits. One of the DBR9s suffered fuel problems (there was a bad electrical connection to be found and fixed), but we were well off the pace. 35 minutes and I wrestled the controller from him: within two laps it was clear the car was our problem. No grip and no traction. I arranged a pit stop: clearly we needed a miracle, so off with the body, out with the superglue and the prop shaft was fixed in place, then the bearings. The motor was solid, so we grabbed some Ortmann tyres (the supplied alternatives), threw them on, rebuilt the car (with a secret modification), and back to the track. 40 laps down on a 12 second lap looked to be a 'challenge' (I couldn't afford the fine for the swear box), but the car was

transformed! It was now over a second per lap quicker, and a delight to drive. It no longer felt like ice racing with a front wheel drive car. It was well balanced, easy to control, with plenty of traction and (apparently) a top speed advantage on the straight (I dispute this, believing it to be better traction out of the corners).

Session two and I carried on for a bit, it was clear we had the best car, but I still thought we were only there to give everyone else the satisfaction of not being last. But the car was FAST. At least it was until the added ballast came loose and jammed the rear wheel. Throw it out, and the car still performs well beyond expectations.

As the time went on, and food appeared in the pit area, Pitstop Pansies moved into 3rd, then 2nd, and everyone was looking suspiciously at the Viper, accusing us of 'tweaking' the motor, and any other part that might be outside the rules. By this time, all the cars are on the same tyres, so it wasn't that. In fact the GT3 seemed to be very hard to drive with the extra grip, the Astons were starting to judder, but the Viper got smoother and quicker. We had a chance! Curiously, nobody else thought to take their cars apart.

During one of the session changes someone noticed the body was loose on the Viper. Rumbled! But still nobody followed suit. By half way, with Sam taking full responsibility for recording the scores and keeping us all informed of the positions, it looked as if we could catch the leading car, which was the GT3. The next session would be the clincher, where Pitstop Pansies took the black, bogey lane again. The car was perfect, the drivers just about matching it, and we recorded some astonishing lap times.

After nine hours we took the lead, and it was clear the Porsche was starting to suffer. But it took a while longer before any action was taken, and by then it was too late. The GT3 was running with a flat tyre, worn through by pushing too hard (my opinion, anyway). The team did take the opportunity to loosen the screws though, and it was clear in the last couple of sessions that this made the car much easier to drive quickly.

⇒→



The last session was a worry: we had a fairly comfortable lead (about 8 minutes), but it was decided to run it in (almost) darkness. Scalextric lights are like the lights on my old motorbike: ok to be seen by, but not to see anything with. So it was guesswork how fast to go on the white (other bogey) lane. This has two tight hairpins and I didn't want a crash at this stage. Cars had to be running at 12 hours to be classified. Eight minutes to go and I nervously handed control to Sam, who brought the car home. We had won! Our Ortmann tyres were shot though, worn to a paper thin piece of rubber.

Surprises? A few: no mechanical failures from the cars, a front engined car that had perfect balance without magnets, and ran times that would match Slot.It Group C cars, how much food can be consumed while racing and marshalling, but most of all how much fun it was, as nobody took it too seriously (apart from me).



Thanks to Paul for the organisation, Tony for the track, all the drivers for turning up, Sam for keeping score, me for the spreadsheet(!), Paul's wife for the sausage rolls, and the nation's cows for not getting foot and mouth until after the race! Next year, it will be bigger, better, with different cars, but with the same winning team - we hope!

Chris Dullede (PitStop Pansies founder; captain, and proud father!) ■



C2803 Ferrari 375

By Dave Yerbury

Why choose this car? Well, it was not around that long but it will be remembered for two things. Firstly, it was this car that finally ended the years of Alfa Romeo domination and secondly it was the first car to lap Silverstone at over 100 mph.

Enzo Ferrari had first thought that, like Alfa Romeo, supercharging was the way to go. Having gone down that route for a while he still could not catch the Alfas. The alternative to the 1.5 litre superchargers was an up to 4.5 litre-unsupercharged unit. For a while Ferrari had been watching the big French Talbot Lagos which were 4.5 litre unsupercharged and could do the full GP distance without refuelling. By running the big engine Talbot achieved considerable success.

Ferrari came to the conclusion that an efficient 4.5 litre engine might just be the answer against the fuel hungry supercharged cars that needed to refuel during a race.

Lampredi, working on Colombo's earlier drawings, managed to come up with an interim engine for Spa in 1950 which surprised everybody as the project had been top secret. The initial unit was a 12 cylinder of 3.3 litre and driven by Ascari. This indicated to all in which direction Ferrari was going and by July at the Genoa GP it was up to 4.1 litres. By the time of the Italian GP it had reached the full 4.5 litre capacity. Wheelbase for these cars settled at 7' 6" from a longer 7' 10" for the 3.3 litre car. It showed up well with Ascari unofficially breaking the lap record. The race itself saw Ascari mix it with the Alfas and he even led for two laps. After 22 laps Ascari's car failed and when Serafini came in for tyres Ascari took over. With his enormous ability he hauled the Ferrari up to a commendable 2nd place at the finish. Alfa Romeo looked worried and the writing was on the wall.

The 1951 season started with two wins for Villerosi at Syracuse and Pau. Both run with no Alfas present and Ferrari in 1950 cars, as the new '51 cars were not ready. The San Remo G.P was next but the expected Alfa/ Ferrari dual was dashed by Alfa's last minute withdrawal. Ascari won easily from Serafini. Next at Silverstone it was Ferrari's turn to withdraw, as the races would be run in heats thus handing the advantage back to Alfa Romeo. The race turned into a farce in torrential rain which slowed the Alfas, allowing the previous year's model Ferrari, 125 supercharged car, the win but it was in the guise of the green Thinwall Special of Tony Vandervell driven by Reg Parnell. At the Swiss GP the race was on but things did not go so well for Ferrari as Ascari was out of form having been burnt at Genoa. Villerosi had to give up after 13 laps. Taruffi drove an inspired race to a good second behind Fangio's Alfa.

On to Spa where Ferrari had three 375 1951 cars for Ascari, Villerosi and Taruffi to face the Alfas. At the finish on this speed circuit Ascari and Villerosi had managed to stay on the same lap as the winning Alfa.

The circus moved on to the French G.P - with Taruffi otherwise engaged, Ferrari employed Fangio's fellow countryman in the shape of "Pepe" Gonzalez. The Ferraris arrived with slightly reshaped bodywork and curved windscreens for this speed circuit. Ascari, out on lap 10, took over Gonzalez's car on lap 34 and ran a strong second but was unable to catch Fangio's Alfa, with Villerosi coming home third. The time and place had come for Ferrari to realise his dream - the British G.P at Silverstone. Ascari and Villerosi were in the 1951 cars but Gonzalez had to make do with a 1950 model.

It did not matter as he shook the Alfa's foundations with the first ever 100 mph lap. ➡➡



Even the great Fangio could only get to within one second. At the start a tremendous battle ensued with the Alfas and Ferraris running close together. However, when the Alfas had to pit for fuel the game was up. Pepe (the Pampas Bull) Gonzalez had finally broken Alfa's stronghold with a great drive. Fangio eventually crossed the line over a minute behind and only just ahead of Villerosi.

After the defeat at Silverstone, Alfa Romeo were in a state of chaos and only Fangio seemed to be on his game at the Nurburgring where he managed a good second against the winning Ferrari of Ascari. Gonzalez finished third ahead of Villerosi and Taruffi. Pescara saw the only Ferrari left running come first with another win for Gonzalez after another Alfa no show. Although Alfa were badly wounded, they roared back in Bari with a textbook exhibition by Fangio with Gonzalez in the Ferrari second. Monza saw two brand new Ferraris with the high headrest flared into the tail and curved screens. Ferrari ran out winners with Ascari first and Villerosi second, Fangio netted a good third for Alfa.

So off to Barcelona for the last race of the season and practice saw Ascari 1.5 seconds to the good over Fangio. As it transpired, Ferrari

ran into tyre troubles which slowed them. So in the end Fangio won in his Alfa to take the World Championship from under the nose of Ferrari. Gonzalez tried hard but could only manage second with Ascari a struggling fourth. At this point a happy Alfa Romeo team announced its intention to retire from racing.

The Acid Test

Following on from a distinguished line of post war GP cars, the Ferrari 375 keeps up Hornby's standard of excellence. The car tested is the plastic bodied one which I think is a well-executed model. The new crystal box is an improvement and the car is very visible without the need to actually open it. But open it I did, as the whole reason was to see how well the car would perform. So, on Tuesday night, we were off to Pendle Slot track which fortunately is only five miles away. The Pendle track is a copper taped wooden 5-lane affair of about 115 feet in length. It has a good mix of undulating smooth corners and reasonable length straights adding up to a pleasant driving experience.

During a few exploratory laps the car performed well but, this being a smooth track, grip was at a premium. To get a real idea of how it would go I enlisted the help of Mick from



Pendle Slot. Hot from his Slot.It Championship win on the same track at the weekend, he seemed keen to see what the latest offering from Hornby would be capable of. After a bit of attention to the rear tyres and pick up braids with the magic potions known to slot racers all, it was back to the track. After a few laps the car was going well and down to a time of 11.5 seconds. With a little more treatment and a few more circuits our hotshot was down to a time of 10.5 seconds. Mick was sure that with a little more time and set up there would be more to come but as the rest of the lads were ready to get on with the saloon class races it seemed like a good time to call it a day. To compare times these saloon cars with PCS chassis, Mabuchi power and lightened interiors run at a very low height and are capable of times in the low eight second bracket. So the Ferrari 375 stands up well in this strange environment, acquitting itself very well.

This is a great little car with the engine up the front where it should be. It will be a great addition to race against the previously released post war GP cars on the home circuit where the

magnet is King and grip not so important. Overall this is a beautifully made car with a finely detailed body. The cockpit detail is very intricate with all the gauges easily visible in front of the nicely posed period driver. The whole thing is mounted on a lovely set of period spoked wheels fitted with correctly patterned tyres. From the excellent radiator grille to the drum brakes, suspension links and filler cap all is nicely chromed. The twin exhausts running along each side just finish off this great little car. When it was on the track it would have been easy to slip back in time and imagine Gonzalez hustling this beast around Silverstone at over 100 mph in 1951.

For the lovers of all things that are 1/32nd scale this car is within 1mm when scaled down. Full marks to Hornby on another job well done. And thanks for the opportunity to look at and test this great addition to the range. Now if Mr Hornby is listening - how about an Alfa 158/159 (Fangio) as a playmate some time in the future to create a nice period race between two great marques. Well I can dream - or is that now taxable? ■





Subaru '06 Tuning (50388)

By Peter Solari

Earlier this year, Ninco added a street-racing version of the Subaru Impreza to their category of Tuning Style cars. To many, the Tuning Series is the Marmite of slot-cars... "You either love it or you hate it"! Personally, I'm not a big fan of the yeast extract spread but I am attracted to the difference in appearance (*and handling*) of the tuned-up road going versions of cars usually offered only in race liveries. There are a growing number of enthusiasts who like to make modifications to an otherwise standard car with an emphasis on bolt-on goodies, an over-the-top entertainment system and rather eye-catching paintwork and graphics. The Ninco Tuning series represents that genre and so will undoubtedly appeal to an audience outside of traditional motor-sport.

As well as an attractive colour scheme, the Tuning series often includes an up-rated motor to ensure the 'standard' race car will be given a serious challenge in an out-of-the-box showdown. The Subaru Tuning is no exception.

Based on the 2006 Impreza, it is an exact match in dimensions to its Rally counterpart commonly found in the distinctive metallic blue and yellow WRC livery. The Tuning car includes a few subtle changes, some more noticeable than others. To start with the most obvious, this car is finished in a crisp white body-colour with an outlined gold decoration to the nose, tapering towards the rear along each side

in a dashed line of blocks. A few choice equipment manufacturer logos are dotted along the side sills and rear quarter panels and a pair of gold "Ninco Tuning Style" logos adorns each side of the rear bumper. The massive boot-mounted rear spoiler and fine roof-mounted aerofoil - as found on the rally car - match the heavily tinted black windows. Chromed, eleven spoke wheels finish off this striking livery but I can't help thinking they should have been gold...

A strained look through the tinted glass reveals a driver figure, without crash-hat, sitting at a plain dashboard, on one of two red sports seats. Any more interior detail would just be lost behind the blackened windows. In fact, the window tint is so dark it would be a hazard to drive in anything other than midday sunshine. A chromed fire extinguisher (*or is it a Nitrous Oxide canister?*) can also be identified behind the passenger seat.

Removing the two standard screws from the chassis, the body comes away cleanly to expose the inner workings. Bearing in mind this Subaru is fitted with all-round ProShock suspension, lights back and front *and* belt-driven four wheel drive, I was prepared for a spaghetti-like interior to be revealed upon separating the body from the chassis. It was therefore a welcome surprise to find the neatest arrangement of wires I have seen on any lighted slot-car. The chassis for rally





and tuning versions are identical, making a quick body swap an easy way to upgrade your rally car. The lights are mounted on narrow circuit boards which are welded in place on purpose-built supports at each end of the chassis. A single two-core wire joins both boards and a second pair of wires from the front circuit board draws power, via soldered connections, from the motor. As mentioned this is a really neat assembly; my only concern would be removing the motor. As the light circuit is hard-wired to the motor, any motor change would involve some 'light' soldering (*no pun intended*) making it necessary to break the welded plastic joints securing the circuit boards to the chassis.

Other chassis-fitted features include Pro-Shock suspension, cylindrical magnet and 4WD 'O'-ring belt. The yellow "hard" type shocks are fitted, ideal for burning along a tarmac surface but these are interchangeable with the blue "medium" or red "soft" shocks for a little off-road action. The single belt drive supplies traction to the front wheels giving extra grip and sure-footedness when cornering at speed as well as offering some extra braking from the front wheels.

Re-assembled and ready to race, the Tuning car faced a head to head against its WRC-liveried, NC-5 powered stable-mate with identical ProShock settings. As soon as power is applied to the Tuning car, the lights immediately glow - a sharp ice-blue from the front headlamps and bright red from the tail lights. When racing side by side, attention is always drawn to the Tuning version, the lights almost hypnotic as the car completes lap after lap. My biggest disappointment came each time the throttle was released; to my surprise, the lights only remain on when power is applied. Although this is

common among lighted slot-cars, having experienced the excellent Ninco light kit (80907), I had expected a similar type of circuitry to be incorporated into this model, keeping the LEDs alight from a stored charge within a capacitor. Apparently not. *I am aware that the N-Digital system has a function to control lighted cars, so perhaps this particular lighting system is designed for compatibility with N-Digital(?)*.



The extra power from the NC-6 Crusher is truly noticeable on long straights and sweeping bends with the rally car struggling to keep up. However, through twisty sections, the 3,000rpm advantage over the NC-5 is less apparent. With magnet removed, it is possible to hang the tail out when cornering, (no doubt, aided by the slick tyres). This inevitably led to a 'drift' style competition which really does suit the overall look and feel of this car. So for outright power, it has it... For eye-catching looks, it has it... For style - in appearance and in handling, it has it.



Let's face it, the Tuning series are here to be noticed and this Subaru, with its crisp paintwork and sharp lights, just cannot be ignored. ■





MY BEST "PICK-UP"



I thought it would be interesting to invite members to contribute stories about their luckiest discoveries. It's sure to make readers itch for the elusive catch just around the corner.

My luckiest find was a few years ago, at a garage sale, when I had a very modest collection of about 40 cars.

After glancing at a few derelict toys, I noticed some rusty old Scalextric track and quickly sorted through to see if there were any cars. Nothing! Next to the track was another old box and I forlornly lifted the lid. My pulse jumped! There smiling up at me, was a whole jumble of 60s cars. As I quickly checked for the usual cutaway guards and the broken engine mounts, the extent of my find became clear. Below the Austin Healey, a Typhoon and a lovely red Spyder emerged. Then came the Aston Martin DBR, the D-Type and a black underpan. It took a few more seconds searching the box to find the matching top to a beautiful Aston Martin Marshals Car!

Trying to look casual, I pulled out my wallet like a gunfighter from the OK Corral, paid their price, and retreated to the privacy of my car for a closer inspection. Just for good measure, the treasure trove also included a Race Tuned Cooper, a green C76 Mini, a Lotus 16, a Junior Porsche and Catalogues 2 and 4. It had been a good morning!

Most of the cars had been in pieces. With a few hours work a wonderful assortment of cars, mostly intact and in surprisingly good condition, were assembled.

Although I have heard some people object to collectors not paying the full market value for old cars, the memory of that great find has sustained me during the endless searches at winter markets and far-flung destinations. That's one of the joys of collecting. After all the kilometres that end in zero, there may just be a dusty treasure waiting at the bottom of some long forgotten, tatty old cardboard box.

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