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THE INDEPENDENT CLUB FOR SLOT-CAR ENTHUSIASTS

Contents

Events.....	2
Diary Dates.....	5
Jobs Vacant.....	6
Messages From Margate.....	7
Ninco News.....	11
Fly On The Wall.....	13
Shipment From Spain.....	16
Kits 'N' Bobs.....	19
Tuning Rally Cars.....	22
Competitions.....	27
SCX Review.....	28
Scalextric Birthday.....	31
Letters.....	33
Racer News.....	34
Milton Keynes Swapmeet.....	37
H:O World.....	38
Ebay Watch.....	41
Ninco Review.....	43
Chairmans Chat.....	47

Editor

Brian Rogers
27 Paige Close
Watlington
King's Lynn
Norfolk
PE33 0TQ
Tel:- 01553 813090
Fax:- 0870 7051127
e-mail:- editor@nsccl.co.uk

Trade Advertising

Adrian Leggett
Roseville
Westwood Lane
Normandy
Guildford
Surrey
GU3 2JG
Tel:- 07773 967333
between 09:00 - 18:00
01483 810102 evenings
e-mail:- sales@nsccl.co.uk

Anything can happen in Formula 1....

And it usually does - as dear old Murray Walker was fond of saying. Mind you, he also maintained that 'If' is F1 spelt backwards. Actually 'ONE F' is F1 spelt backwards but we know what he meant. Certainly the whole "Stepneygate" affair has given the media and fans something to talk about during a sequence of stupefyingly boring races prior to the recent monsoonfest in Japan.

The motorsport forums such as the Atlas F1 Bulletin Board are a hotbed of conspiracy theories with various factions blaming everything bar global warming for the whole sorry mess and you would not believe the abuse that is flying back and forth between the Alonso/Hamilton/McLaren/Ferrari disciples.

In truth, the reason for it all is fairly simple - Bernie Ecclestone has had a bit of trouble with the scriptwriters again. Following the Indianapolis exploding tyre debacle he brought in a new writing team from the BBC who came up with the "plucky novice stuffs world champion team mate" scenario which boosted viewing figures no end. Unfortunately, by mid-season they had run out of fresh ideas and reverted to the old stand-by plot - red (or silver) car disappears into distance and any overtaking is done in the pitlane. Bernie was not best pleased and told them to get their act together and do something about it - pity their previous experience was with a court room drama series!

As far as I am aware the spying saga has not been repeated in our own little world of toy plastic cars and the SCX designers are not in possession of a 780 page technical document smuggled out of the Ninco factory. However, I am having a spot of bother with my Scalextric McLarens; the 'Alonso' version was a bit slower than the 'Hamilton' one, which was to be expected, but I have now started to receive mysterious threatening emails regarding their respective positions in the display cabinet. Apparently, the fact that they have received equal treatment and been displayed side by side is not good enough and I should be giving the 'Alonso' version a preferential spot at the front of the cabinet as befits its #1 status!

Till next month

Brian



BY **ROB SMITH**



MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

email: factory@nsc.co.uk

The new releases have continued at a fast pace this month with no less than four brand new models! It is difficult to know where to begin and the new models are even more detailed, accurate and finely printed than ever before. It was bad enough for collectors when we had Standard and Sport releases to find; then we had lower detail set cars, sometimes with printing differences and sometimes not; then we had digital versions; and finally we now have drift versions. Do you collect them all? If not, what priority do you use to choose which one(s) to buy? Moulding differences? Printing differences? Would you like to see all of these variations as different releases, perhaps with just racing number differences? I would love to know where *you* draw the line. As many of you know my line is drawn well past the edge of sanity.

So, where do we begin? Release order is as good as any.

C1199 Street Pursuit C2833W Police Range Rover C2834W Lamborghini Gallardo

Set C1199 is a small offset figure of eight circuit with just one aim in mind - drifting. The cars are fitted with 360° guide blades making drifting or spinning round and roaring off in the opposite direction great fun. The Police Range Rover is visually identical to the solo release but the chassis is quite different. The metallic orange Lamborghini Gallardo is only available in this set.

C1208M Street Racers C2820W Mini Cooper Yellow C2821W Mini Cooper Red C2848W Mini Cooper Blue

C1208M is a Littlewoods exclusive set and quite expensive at £149.99. The yellow and red Minis have been seen before as set exclusive cars albeit in digital form. The interesting car here is the blue Mini finished in that superb shade of metallic blue seen on real cars and on the exclusive BMW Shop Mini Cooper S. The blue and red cars are in a polystyrene tray with the additional yellow car in a separate plastic tray. All are the impact resistant versions with no interior.

The blue car is likely to be quite rare as the set is unlikely to be economically broken for the individual pieces.

C2810 Lamborghini Gallardo "Yellow"



For those of you not wanting to drift, the first standard guide Gallardo is now available. ➡



Finished in a suitable Lamborghini colour of metallic yellow it is not for the shrinking violet. The painted front and rear lights are effective enough and the one piece shell has black windows. Very suitable for the novice but please can we have a fully detailed and painted version too.

C2780D Renault F1 2007 No 3

Although this is an R24 chassis painted in the 2007 livery, the new Renault doesn't disappoint. The colourful livery featuring the lion logo of ING bank is reproduced well. This first release is the digital version but the standard version should follow soon. Perhaps Hornby are trying to drive sales towards digital by releasing this version first.

C2804 Ferrari F430 GT

C2835 Ferrari F430 GT Scuderia Playteam

The new Ferrari is superb. Superbly detailed with vents and grilles everywhere and superbly decorated with a detailed livery perfectly executed. The engine detail beneath the rear window caught my eye with the traditional red cam covers clearly visible. There is plenty of interior detail generally which adds to the overall effect. There really aren't too many 'superbs' in this paragraph!

C2804 is a general release in the red, white and blue colours of Scuderia Écosse with a sort of Saltire on the bonnet. The much rarer car is C2835 which is a limited edition of just 2000. You will have to shop around to find this one as they have gone to some Concessions and some Service Centres - depending on who found out and ordered it first!

The SuperClub SuperSlot car for 2007 - a SARA liveried Ferrari but with a different racing number, is also out in Spain but mine is still there so I can't describe it yet.

C2807 Classic Mini Cooper

I have been awaiting this release with a degree of anticipation since I first saw the tiny prototype towards the end of last year. The car modelled is the 1967 Monte Carlo Rally



winning version number 177. Like most 60s cars the livery is simple with just a red body and white roof. The paint finish is perfect with no blemishes on my example. The car is well detailed with all the rally accessories of the day including four spots on the front and one on the rear. As a Cooper S, this car had twin fillers and these are present in shiny chrome. The rally plates are tiny and beautifully printed. One is mounted on the boot lid and one stands upright on the roof. This is printed on an etched metal plate and is very delicate with two small pins to locate in holes on the roof. Wisely this plate is supplied in a small plastic bag sellotaped to the underside of the box. Make sure yours is present when buying this model. I imagine that this plate will be very vulnerable in racing incidents and many will get lost.

The Mini Cooper is so small that there is no room for either a digital plug or a solder in chip. There just isn't space for the LED in the chassis.

C8515 EasyFit Digital Plug

Also finally released is the plug and play digital plug which is fitted to appropriate cars by removing a screw and the blanking plate from the car, plugging in the trailing wire and socket onto the digital plug and replacing the screw to fasten the new plug to the car - extremely easy.

Formula SuperSlot

The Spanish F1 partwork has begun to arrive on the newsagents' stands in Spain and the first four parts, containing Alonso's McLaren, are now available. The first three parts are on big display



cards which you don't get as a subscriber which will make them quite rare. I haven't opened these copies yet so I can't comment on the content of the magazine but it is punched for a binder which I assume will come later in the collection. The car parts are very well packaged and won't be as damaged as some of the Tecnitoy's Altaya collections have been. Each issue contains a bespoke plastic tray holding all of the bits separately including the tiny screws. This tray is blister packed onto a SuperSlot branded card. It all looks very professional and well thought out.

Not Coming Soon

Fans of NASCAR will be disappointed that this year's proposed Nascars have been cancelled. Driver changes between teams and one of the proposed teams stopping racing has meant that Hornby are reviewing their plans. Look out for some new proposals for 2008 in due course. ■



email: ninconews@nsc.co.uk

True Brit

A real classic arrives this month – the Jaguar XK120. This truly is a beautiful car and is released on the special classic-style brick-effect base. Painted in stunning silver with dark parallel lines running along each side, this sleek Jag is based on a classic “Le Mans” racer (50465). The interior simulates red leather and has a set of dials printed on the dash. Other detail includes a printed brown leather bonnet strap, chrome bumpers and light surrounds and classic wire wheels.

Rally Time

Every year, Ninco release a special-liveried car with the title “Catalunya Rally”. Two are normally produced with very subtle differences - one for release as a limited edition, the other exclusively supplied to the drivers who compete in the slot-car rally alongside the full-size rally event. 2007 sees the new Subaru WRC as the base car for the special decoration. Carrying number “07” (to denote this year’s model), the Subaru will be an array of blue, white, red and light green with various sponsor logos across ➤



the bonnet, roof and bumpers. As a highly collectable series, this attractive model (50471) is certain to be snapped up quickly, so make sure you're quick off the line when this goes on general release.

Staying with the rally theme, a new liveried Peugeot 307 WRC has just landed on our shores. In the bright orange colour of their main sponsor, the "Team Expert" (50466) car will really stand out on all three Ninco track surfaces; tarmac, dirt or snow. During the 2006 World Rally Championships, this car was piloted by Norwegian driver, Henning Solberg, older brother of fellow rally driver Petter. The Ninco version comes with ProShock suspension and powerful NC-5 Speeder motor. The 307 is one of the finest rally cars Ninco produce and with superb handling on the race track, it remains one of my particular favourites to race.

The new Ford Focus WRC car has found success both in the full-size world of rallying as well as the scaled down version. This car is now reproduced in the green-on-white "Munchis" (50441) livery from the 2006 WRC season when the number 10 car was driven by Argentinian, Luis Perez Companc during the Rally of Japan. Again, all-round ProShock suspension gives this car sure-footedness around any 1/32nd scale rally stage.

GT-Fest

The highly popular GT category continues to swell with some great new additions over the coming weeks...

Firstly, the relatively new N-GT category sees the Porsche 997 in rally guise and is the first of this model to feature a co-driver in the cockpit reading from a set of pace notes. Although this slot car is in the livery of the Nupel Porsche Team, it takes the name "Vallejo" (50464) from Sergio and Diego Vallejo, the Spanish brothers who piloted/co-piloted this car during the Spanish Championship.

Another Porsche 997 is also due for release, this time sponsored by Dutch building project management partner, "Burgfonds". This car appears in the 2007 catalogue with reference

number 50461, however I am reliably informed that it now has reference number 50468 allocated to it.

Next up is the Ascari KZ1. Even in a plain colour this car is an absolute stunner! So imagine what it looks like in metallic blue... that's right... *GORGEOUS!!* This latest release brings the Ascari in the race livery of a Spanish-based high technology company, "Hanscan" (50463). This and the previous Gigawave car can also be found in a new Ascari Race Resort set.

On the subject of the Ascari, those of you who have contacted me about the Ninco Club Car can expect delivery very soon. Since returning from the long summer break, it appears that those ordered before August have now been shipped; *I received mine mid-September*. A variety of options still exist for ordering this car direct from Ninco through their website. By logging on to **www.ninco.com**, Club Car no.4 (50443) can be ordered individually, as a pair or with car no.3, the Mosler (50411). All are supplied with digital chips for installation should they need to be raced on the N-Digital system.

To keep the Ascari on its toes, a new liveried Ferrari 360 GTC "Le Mans" (50454) is due for release in kit form. This is the first basic Ferrari self assembly kit to be offered in race trim but joins the race liveried ProRace kit released earlier this year. These kits give the opportunity to build a competitive racer with the standard parts supplied or, if desired, some components can be substituted with different or up-rated gear from the ProRace range.

Rounding off the GT releases is news of a ProRace Mosler (50453). In its standard form the Mosler is quick and sticks to the track like glue even when cornering at speed, so in ProRace trim this is sure to be unbeatable! Rumoured to be supplied on a fluorescent yellow presentation base, the 1/32nd scale rocket will have a lightweight interior, alloy hubs back and front, ball-race bearings and the powerful NC-6 Crusher motor mounted in the 'anglewinder' position. In addition, accurate body-roll can be set using metric screws. With all these upgrades, it's more likely to be a *Monster* than a *Mosler*! ■





email: flyonthewall@nsc.co.uk

After last month's plea, I would like to thank the members who contacted me with information on the special edition BMW M1 produced for the German importers H+T. Further details can be found under "Special Editions".

Standard Releases

Porsche 911 Carrera "Unichrom" #44 (88274) 24hr Le Mans 1973, driven by Jean-Francois Piot and Peter Zbinden. Unfortunately, the car posted a "DNF" due to gearbox failure after completing 110 laps. The model is mainly yellow with white side panels in between the two wheel arches and has two individual spot lamps mounted on the front.

Ferrari 250 GTO #168 (88275). There can never be enough 250 GTOs, the same goes for any Ferrari in fact. This is the latest to come off the Fly production line and is decorated in a gorgeous Ferrari red. The model represents the car driven by Jean Guichet and Michel de Bourbon to 2nd place, taking part in the 13th Tour de France Auto race in 1964. True to its original counterpart, there is a driver and co-driver present, who incidentally is holding some detailed pace notes. Another nice detail touch is the representation of duct tape around the front race entry plate, tampoed on the bonnet.

Porsche Carrera 6 #37 (88277). 24hr Le Mans 1967, driven by Vic Elford and Ben Pon to 7th position after completing 327 laps, ➡➡



which is not bad after starting from 33rd on the grid. In fact the car was 1st in the “Sports 2000” category, beating the only other car in the class (another Porsche 906) by six laps. The model is predominantly white with a red bonnet and sills running along both sides.

Porsche 911 SC “Jocavi” #1 (88278).

About six years ago I sold all of my Spanish Exin collection which included a “Jocavi” Porsche 911. This car, amongst a few others, was difficult to say goodbye to. Apart from being a particular favourite livery of mine, it was also one of the first Exin cars I bought. Ever since Fly started producing the 911 SC I had been secretly wishing for this livery to be produced. Now my wish has come true and I must say, I don’t remember the Exin version ever being as gorgeous as this one. Decorated in orangey red and blue, it has a covered spotlight cluster on the bonnet with two further spotlights mounted on the front bumper. The model depicts the car that drove in the Rally Catalunya in 1980, driven by Antonio Zanini with co-driver Jordi Sabater. Included with this model are five small “adult only” decals to apply. One to the top of the windscreen, the others to the front bumper and each side door.

March 761 “Ovoro” #35 (88279). USA West GP 1976, driven by Arturo Merzario. The fourth March 761 to come from Fly and the first to be produced with the high air box. This is symbolic of the era and epitomises 70s F1 racing. It is predominantly white with yellow and black stripes running along each side pod and around the front spoiler. The air box has the Italian national stripes painted around it. Once again with the classic F1 series, the car is mounted on a grey plinth which has a starting grid tampoed on.

Duo Kits

I’m not sure whether the word “kit” is quite the right term for this series. Yes, there is some assembly work involved, but only if you wish to change the body over and even then not necessarily kit building in the way you would build a proper kit. Each set is presented in a sturdy cardboard box which has a window display. Through the window, two cars can be

viewed. One is a complete RTR (Ready to Run) car; the other is a fully detailed body shell. Fly have quite cleverly marketed these in that the RTR car has been previously released. In order to make up the other, never before released, car a little modification work is required, hence “kit”.

Firstly, you need to disassemble the RTR car. Unscrew the chassis from the body and then gently prise apart the four fixing posts that hold the interior onto the body shell. This is done by removing the plastic weld around the posts with a small screwdriver or modelling knife. Once removed, the interior should come out. Supplied in each set is another window assembly and drivers’ heads. These are designed for the alternate body shell and are a simple task to fit. Once you’ve done this, the interior can then be fixed into the alternate body shell. I welded mine in by heating up a hot screwdriver over a gas stove and using it to melt the plastic lugs to give a strong bond. You could of course use glue, but it’s down to personal preference. All that is then required is to screw your new body assembly onto the chassis. On the M3 there were some cigarette sponsorship decals to apply also. To my surprise the RTR car is mounted in a standard display case with backing card just like any other standard release car. The only downside is that the race details printed on the plinth are of the original RTR car and a new label is required (not supplied) to display the alternate car properly. Overall these cars are excellent value as they are cheaper than a standard car and you get more for your money. Question is - why can’t all the cars in the range be at this lower price?

Renault 5 Turbo (88296). Rally Monte Carlo 1984 “Diac” #16 and Tour de Corse 1982 “Sodicam” #3 (Diac car formerly released as A1206).

BMW M3 E30 (88298). Rally Montecarlo 1989 “Fina” #18 and Tour de Corse 1992 “Rothmans” #20 (Fina car formerly released as A1702).

Renault 5 Turbo (88300). “Elf” #28 and “Europcar” #41, both from the 1981 Europcar Series (Elf car formerly released as A1207).





Special Editions

BMW M1 “MSW” #111 (99063). Le Mans 24hr 1986, driven by Pascal Witmeur, Jean-Paul Libert and Michael Krankenberg, but was not classified as a finisher despite completing 264 laps. The model has been produced for German importers “H+T” and is also available in Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands. It is limited to 500 units and mounted on a white plinth with a numbered picture backing card. As mentioned last month, the car is black with a white chequered pattern on the bonnet and roof and has white wheels. Special thanks to Lee Cook for the photograph.

Lister Storm “Burn” #07 (99064). A special commissioned model for a soft drinks company, limited to 800 units. Decorated in black with flame graphics running up over the bonnet, along the roof and down the sides. The model is mounted on the traditional black plinth with blue backing card and should only be bought if you have a “burning desire” to collect all Fly cars. A collectable of the future for sure and one which could prove “too hot to handle”.

Announcements

Fly have announced the cars they will be producing in October. In catalogue numerical order, they are as follows: -

- 88280 – Chevrolet Corvette C5-R
- 88288 – Alfa Romeo GTA-J – DRM 1972
- 88313 – Porsche 934 – Vaillant - Dijon 1977
- 99055 – Porsche 917K – Playboy Series
- 99056 – Porsche 917K – Playboy Series
- 99065 – Kremer Porsche team set – 911 (Sebring 1972) and 935 (Le Mans 1981)
- 99067 – BMW M3 E30 – Jagermeister, Wayne Gardner
- 99086 – BMW M1 – Sunset L/E

And Finally...

Another “DHL” special edition has been produced by Fly. This time, a Saleen S7R, which now makes 4 in the series. It is blue in colour with yellow “DHL” logos on the bonnet, doors and rear wing. It comes in a crystal case with a yellow backing card, which is numbered and limited to 1500 units. ■



email: shipmentfromspain@nsc.co.uk

"Good things come to those who wait"

No not an SCX Guinness livery! Occasionally, just occasionally, manufacturers do take an interest in what we have to say and value our input and advice. Most of the time they ignore our suggestions and plough on regardless, but over the last year or so things have started to improve.

When AEC Models took over the UK distribution of SCX I was very lucky to work directly with them at the London Toy Fair (designing and building their stand). This time together allowed me to bend their ear and give them my (and your) thoughts on what was good, what was bad and suggestions for future models etc. I'm not alone in doing this, ask any of the club's factory liaison guys and they do the same - advise, suggest, question and give feedback.

Steve from AEC is different! He actually likes slot cars and motorsport (rallying especially). This might sound the norm, but trust me it isn't. So when we began to talk about future SCX slot cars there was a mutual interest in classic rally cars. I gave him a list of cars that you had requested and it was no surprise that the Ford Escort was top of the list.

Over the last 12 months we have discussed further the possibilities of releasing this car and I'm pleased to say we have a result! Why any manufacturer has not produced this model already is very hard to explain, but their loss is SCX's gain. I understand that a lot of arm twisting was required for AEC to secure the production of this car and Steve is to be given full credit for this.

AEC have commissioned, and paid for, a UK exclusive SCX model (only the second one ever produced - the first being a trade only Ford Focus promo at the Toy Fair). The model will be the Ford Escort Mk2 RS1800. The first livery to be released will be based on Roger Clark's 1976 Lombard RAC winning car in the classic 'Cossack' livery. (For the younger readers - Cossack is/was a men's hairspray! - This was the 70s).

The model will be a UK only limited edition of 5000. 4000 cars will be in a start line livery i.e. clean and 1000 will be in a finish line livery i.e. dirty. The SCX ref number will be 62800. There will not be a different ref number for the dirty version, but most dealers will either add the prefix 'D' or 'FL' Dirty or Finish Line. In most cases you will have to buy a clean version to be able to purchase the dirty version, but check with your normal slot pushers.

Pictures of the real car on which the model is based can be found in the centre pages this month together with a related competition.

New Releases

So what else is happening in SCX land this month? Latest releases to hit the UK include; Ref 62720 Chevrolet Monte Carlo 'Intimidator' - this is actually a USA limited edition in a presentation box. Available from most UK dealers.

Ref 13430 Ford Fusion #17 'DeWALT' Livery Matt Kenseth - SCX Digital.

Ref 13440 Dodge Charger #9 'Dodge Dealers' - Kasey Kahn SCX Digital



Ref 13450 Chevy Monte Carlo #29 'Pennzoil' Livery – Kevin Harvick SCX Digital



Ref 62770 VW Tourag 'Lagos' Livery as driven by Carlo Sousa in the 2007 Dakar Raid/rally
Ref 62570 Mc Laren F1 Alonso 2006 livery.
Ref 62750 Audi R10



Ref 13460 Chevy Monte Carlo #3 'Intimidator' livery – Dale Earnhardt SCX Digital

Ref 62740 Seat Leon WTCC. Bright blue and yellow livery. – New model.

Ref 62590 Renault A110 1600 Metallic blue livery 'Ove Anderson' 1971 Monte Carlo rally.



News and pictures are starting to filter through of the prototype SCX Porsche 911 GT3 Cup model - no more specific details, but take a look at the picture below.

News from Spain of some success for the Tecnitoys sponsored Seat Leon race team. Luis Carlos Maurel came third at the Spanish Touring car race held at Catalunya. Congratulations to the team who turned around a disappointing 10th place the previous day to take their first podium position for the season so far.

Finally for those with web access, check out <http://www.altaya.es/categorias.php?categoria=scalextric> for a short promotional video showing the new Altaya Seat collection with some classic footage. ■



This month I start with some unfinished business from last month's article, namely the now completed Birkin Bentley from Penelope Pitlane. I have chosen to model this version in pale blue as the car apparently appeared in 1929-30 before it was repainted in the dark reddish colour it remains in to this day. The body kit comes with white metal exhaust, blower unit, filler caps and also, if you are building the later version, a streamlined fairing for the gear and handbrake levers. I chose to use a Le Mans Miniatures driver and

wheel and some spare Racer photo etched bonnet straps to finish mine with. Sadly the wire wheels to fit the Bentley have suffered a slight delay so this was finished with plastic Scalextric Alfa ones, good news is the wires should be ready for early October. Chassis is a Penelope Pitlane F1RL with standard Scalextric Mabuchi and axles and a Slot.It deep track guide for the Wolves wood track.

Another completed project this month is the Resilient Resins' Porsche 804 as driven by Dan Gurney to Porsche's only World

⇒⇒



Penelope Pitlane Birkin Bentley 1929

Championship Grand Prix win at Rouen in 1962. Before anyone writes in I do know they also won the following weekend at the Solitude Grand Prix but this was a non-championship event. Again I have added a few touches to the basic body shell and screen, the roll-bar and suspension arms are from piano wire, the driver is a Fly historic cut in half, steering wheel is from Pendle Slot Racing's sourced spares. Wheels, inserts, decals and gearbox are from Penelope Pitlane, and exhausts are offcuts from axles. Running gear wise she has a Penelope Pitlane SM1s chassis with Slot.It gears, axles, bearings and guide; it is propelled by the Scalextric GP slim line motor and uses Ortmann rear tyres and Cartrix fronts. This car has put in some decent times at Wolves and is eligible for the upcoming "half tonner" GP at Wolverhampton on November 25th for which a few places are still available.



Resilient Resins Porsche 804 Rouen 1962

It's a busy time of year for me with a planned trip to the Rally de Catalunya and the upcoming World Classics Saloon Classic at Wolverhampton on October 14th. I have finally finished the A2M Jaguar MKII and Mercedes 300 ready for the event and have partly completed one of the first Jaguar XJ12 Saloons and am just waiting for the production interior, glass and decals so I can finish it for the meeting. Running on the PCS32 step 2 chassis with Slot.It motor, gears, etc with Ortmann rears, the Big Cat certainly purrs along but will it be quick enough in my hands on the day? Well I doubt it.

I am told that Slot.It Challenge champion, Pendle Slot Racing's own Nick Hirst has one ready and he really should be able to wring some performance out of it.



A2M Jaguar MKII and Mercedes 300 with unfinished OCAR XJ12

MMK's 1/32nd scale Ferrari TR61LM and the 1/24th scale 1952 Lago-Talbot T26GS kit have now arrived in the UK and both are superb looking, although the Lago does suffer from being very heavy even with a sidewinder Slot.It Boxer motor to push it along. The Lago would benefit from slightly less "wooden" rear tyres than those supplied in the kit but you can have some fun sliding the tail out across three lanes and still getting it back. The kit has a pre-painted body and comes with everything you need bar detailing paints. Assembly was easy - taking me just a couple of evenings. Staying in France, Proto Slot have announced a new Chevron B16 in three liveries, sadly this is exclusive to bitume-slot racing.com but word has it that Pendle are trying to obtain a limited few for the U.K.

On to Spain and resin masters Slot Classic have already pre sold all 500 units of their next release, reference CJ29, the Rob Walker 1961 Ferrari 250GT SWB as driven to the TT victory at Goodwood by Stirling Moss. Back here in the UK and TRRC have released the kit version of their Delahaye 145LM but with everything on my bench I just haven't had time to start it let alone finish it to show you. Over in the States David Reinecke of RMS informs us that he is



MMK Ferrari TR61LM and 1/24th Lago Talbot T26GS "Levegh" 1952

still working on the much anticipated Mercury Cougar and Datsun 510 body kits, while his UK based Decal partners Slot Cars 4 U have just released "General Lee" decals to fit the Carrera Dodge Charger and have a new range of "Grey-side" decals for 1970-1990 Nascars like the RMS Oldsmobile Omega and Pontiac Ventura.



Revell's Uniroyal Fun Cup Beetles and Jim Clark Ltd. edition Cortina

On to the plastic manufacturers and Avant Slot have new race-tuned versions of their Audi in either yellow or red with an extra chassis thrown in amongst other upgraded parts. NSR

have two new colour schemes for their popular Mosler and more pre-launch photographs of the new Renault Clio. Carrera have released the new BMW Z4 Coupe in white M-Sport or blue Red Bull liveries along with two more versions of the 1/24th scale hotrods. Auto Art have new race versions of the Porsche 997 GT cup car, along with four versions of the new 1/24th scale Ford Mustang FR500C and two 1/24th scale Lamborghini Murcielago Roadsters all in stock at Pendle Slot Racing. Pendle also bring news of some upcoming new releases from Power Slot, these being two versions of the Hummer H1, and a Volkswagen Super Polo 1600. Finally, just in at MRE are the new Jim Clark limited editions 1965 Lotus Cortina MKI and two versions of the Uniroyal Fun Cup VW Beetles all from Revell although I believe the Beetles are selling like hot cakes so order yours quickly. The Beetles are lots of fun to drive and pretty quick with the magnets left in on a steel rail track and look outrageous with the massive flared arches and big back wing.

Finally, for all of you who can't make the World Classic Euro Saloon Event, here's a picture of my PCS32 challengers: the 1973 Ford Cortina MKIII and 1970 Vauxhall Victor. Till next time - have fun and stay in the slot. ■



Ford Cortina MK III and Vauxhall Victor



Tuning Scalextric “rubber band” drive rally cars

By Hub Habets

Since the early days, slot car manufacturers have not only tried to copy the shape of a car but also the configuration of the engine and the drive train. In past decades this configuration evolved just as the 1:1 cars on which they were based.

At first, the inline engine with rear wheel drive was a reasonable copy of the layout for the cars of the late 50s and early 60s. This came to an end in 1965 with the Scalextric front wheel driven C76 Mini Cooper.

For this car, Scalextric used the engine and drivetrain of the Formula Junior cars. They just turned it 180°. It was not a success, because the front wheels never stopped spinning.

In 1968 Scalextric decided to solve this problem on their new C7 Mini. It returned to an inline engine with rear wheel drive. This configuration was used till the 90s.

In the 80s, the powerful group B rally cars with their four wheel drive also appeared on the slot track. Scalextric extended the inline rear wheel drive with a rubber band connected to the front wheels. In this way, cars like the Audi Quattro and the Ford RS 200 (originally produced by Exin in Spain), could also scramble for grip on the slot track with all four wheels. Although people usually refer to these cars as “rubber band drive” the correct technical term for the device is an ‘o-ring’. These are widely used throughout the engineering world for many purposes and I will use this term for the rest of this article.

In Spain, Exin Scalextric soon abandoned the o-rings and followed a different route for the Porsche 959 which had an inline RX-81 engine with two drive shafts. A short shaft powered the rear wheels and a longer shaft transmitted the power to the front wheels. Today SCX uses still this concept for their rally cars.

Scalextric first tried out the sidewinder configuration with the TVR Speed 12 followed by the Ford Focus in 2000 which was the first sidewinder Scalextric rally car.

For the slot historians, I have to mention the driveline concepts of the motorcycles with sidecars. In 1963, the Typhoon and Hurricane got a sidewinder engine configuration with an o-ring drive to the rear wheels. So the use of an o-ring to transmit the engine power to the driven wheels is rather old.

In 2004, Scalextric introduced, with the Skoda, four wheel drive with a sidewinder placed engine in combination with an o-ring connecting the front wheels.

In 2005, Scalextric placed the engine as a sidewinder in the front of the Peugeot 307 WRC and transmitted the power with an o-ring to the rear wheels. Essentially this car is front wheel driven just like the C76 Mini was.

At the beginning of this year, this drive line concept was also copied in the Subaru Impreza WRC 2006. The Impreza is now available in three different drive line configurations and this was the reason I decided to have a closer look at the system.

All three 4wd Scalextric rally cars have the same problem. It appears as if the engine is not powerful enough to slide the car round the track.

I removed the o-ring on the Skoda WRC, so I got only rear wheel drive from this sidewinder. The car immediately became a lot quicker. The o-ring caused a lot of friction.

I then did a lot of testing and tried to understand how the o-ring acts in the slot cars with the engine in front (Subaru, Peugeot) or rear (Skoda). O-rings are used in all kinds of machines, there are many different dimensions available but only two are used by Scalextric - 56.87 x 1.78mm (Skoda and Subaru) and 60.05 x 1.78mm (Peugeot).

The full range goes up in intervals of 1mm, and a thinner 1,5mm o-ring, instead of 1,78mm is also available. Testing the thinner sized o-ring with the optimal pressure is what I did, to get the friction in the drive line as low as possible.

Skoda WRC

Removing the o-ring on tracks with long straights will make the Skoda faster but, when you have a twisty track, an o-ring 59 x 1.5mm gives optimal performance. It stabilizes the car and the front wheels will push the car in the direction of travel thus making the car faster than box standard.



Peugeot WRC

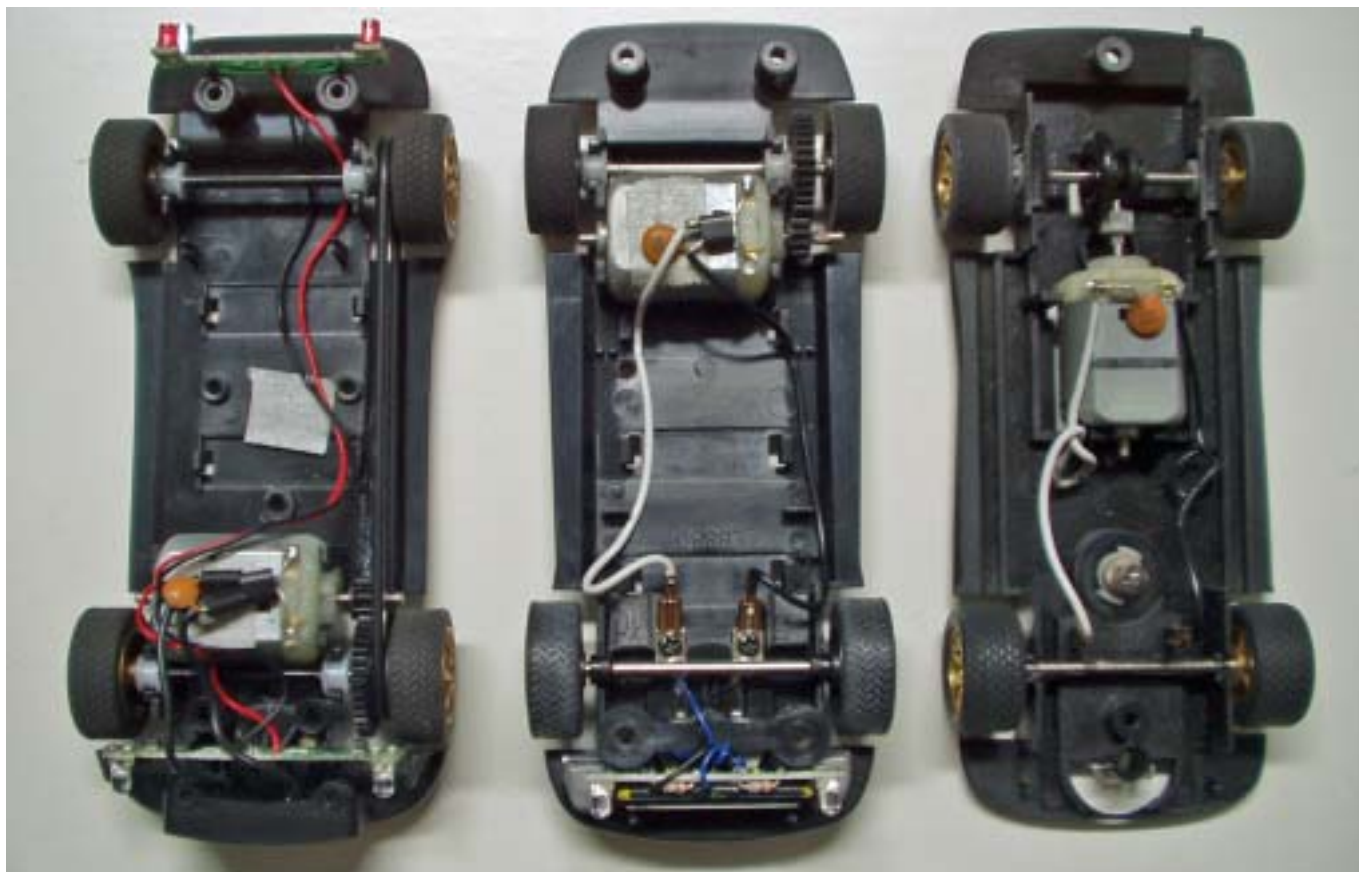
Like the C76 Mini, the Peugeot is essentially a front wheel driven car. Without the o-ring, the car's front wheels spin helplessly.

To get more pressure on the front wheels, you can change the way of attaching the braids into the guides, like SCX does. The car will then sit lower on the track.

An o-ring 60x1.5mm will make the car 2% faster but, in spite of these improvements, the Peugeot is still not a friend of bumpy tracks like Scalextric Classic. On a flat wooden track, this car is at its best.

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Three different drive trains for the Subaru and a wide choice of o-rings to use





Subaru Impreza WRC Works 2006

The Subaru Impreza has the same drive train configuration as the Peugeot. So, also for this car, the attaching of the braids should be done in the SCX way. With an o-ring 58x1.5mm the Impreza becomes 8% faster. The reason for this large improvement is the great pressure on the shafts, caused by the standard o-ring. With the metric o-ring I managed the same track times as with the two door inline Impreza of 1999. The four door sidewinder Impreza is still 1% faster. So with the 2006 edition, Scalextric made the Impreza slower than the previous version.

After a lot of testing I came up with this formula to calculate the correct o-ring choice:
o-ring inside diameter =

$$\frac{2 \times \text{wheelbase} + \pi \times 10.5\text{mm} - 8.5\text{mm}}{\pi}$$

10.5 mm = o-ring pulley inner diameter

8.5mm = optimal pressure length.

$\pi=3.14\text{mm}$

Example: Subaru:

$$\frac{2 \times 79 + \pi \times 10.5\text{mm} - 8.5\text{mm}}{\pi} = 58\text{mm.}$$

Result: 58 x 1.5mm

Peugeot:

$$\frac{2 \times 82 + \pi \times 10.5\text{mm} - 8.5\text{mm}}{\pi} = 60\text{mm.}$$

Result: 60x1.5mm

Applying the formula for the Skoda, an o-ring 57 x 1.5mm should, in theory, do the job but, as

a rear wheel drive car, the front wheels only support the rear so, the pressure on the o-ring can be taken a lot lower with the 59 x 1.5mm. Friction is also a lot lower, and the car is more fun to drive.

With the Subaru and the Peugeot the front wheels are driven so the pressure length of 8.5mm is necessary because the rear wheels have to transmit most of the power to the track.

With the formula, I calculated the o-ring pressure length of the standard o-rings from the Scalextric cars out of the box:

O-ring pressure length:

Skoda: 8.3mm

Peugeot: 8.3mm

Subaru: 12.3mm

Now it becomes clear why the Impreza increases 8% in speed with the correct o-ring and the other cars only improve a little. The pressure on the o-ring of the Subaru gives a lot of friction in the drive line of this car.

Conclusion

With the formula you can find the correct o-ring for your Scalextric WRC slot car.

An o-ring will cost you about €1 (Material: NBR 70° Shore) and is readily available at any engineering supplies store.

After changing to the correct o-ring, the beautifully made Scalextric WRC cars will be a lot more fun to drive. ■



Long awaited by slot rally fans
SCX Ford Escort Mk2 - the real thing
(Photos taken at Chatsworth House Rally Day by Gareth Jex)



SCX Competition Time!

Depending on demand, SCX may release further liveries of the car pictured on the opposite page. What Ford Escort MK2 livery would you like them to release next? Simple! Send your suggestion to me (with or without a picture). Include your name, address and membership number. My daughter will pick a winner from her toy box and the winner will receive a Limited Edition SCX Dale Earnhardt 'The Intimidator' Chevrolet Monte Carlo Nascar ref 62720. The runner up will receive an SCX Matt Kenseth Ford Fusion Nascar ref 62690. Suggest one livery only please, not a wish list of hundreds! Entries must be received no later than 15th December.

Email entries to shipmentfromspain@nsc.co.uk or post to:

Gareth Jex
2LK Design LTD
The Courtyard
17 West Street
Farnham
Surrey
GU9 7DR

Results will appear in the following Journal – Good Luck.



1st prize - Dale Earnhardt Nascar

Pendle Slot Racing Competition

Sean Fothergill has generously donated a Hummer H1 as a prize this month. It is made in Spain by 'Power Slot' - the same firm that produced the lunar rover!

Simple question - the full size road-going H1 is now discontinued - what year did it first appear for sale?

Answers to the editor at the usual address - post, fax or email. Closing date 15th December. Winner announced in the following Journal.

Slot Car Handbook Competition

Still time to win a signed copy of Dave Chang's book - closing date October 26th. See September issue for details.



Hummer H1
Lisboa Dakar 2007
Assistance Team
Robby Gordon



(62480) Ferrari 360 GTC Scuderia Ecosse Le Mans

By Pete Emery

These are terrific times for slot racing enthusiasts and in particular those who are proud to call themselves Tifosi, the Ferrari faithful. It seems to me that there is a new Ferrari slot car announced just about every week from one or other of the manufacturers. The only downside to this is the effect on my model car budget. Now this is a problem I can learn to deal with, too many Ferrari releases? NOT!

If you take a look at the subject of this review, the new SCX Ferrari 360 GTC, it joins a market that already has two different Ferrari 360 replicas - the Ninco 360 GTC kit in two different colours and the ProSlot 360 challenge/road car in various liveries. It is not only the liveries that differ between these various 360s but the engineering approach too, with in-line/SCX, sidewinder/ProSlot and angle winder/Ninco transmissions. But, before we take a closer look at the SCX 360, what exactly is a 360 GTC?

The 360 GTC

The 360GTC was developed from the 360 GT, which itself was based on the 360 Challenge Stradele car, so the GTC is a natural and very effective evolution of the road-going 360 Modena. The development of the 360 GTC was carried out by Michelotto Automobili on behalf of the Corse Clienti Department in Maranello. A lot of work was carried out in the wind tunnel to create substantially different aerodynamics from the 360GT. With improved electronics from Magneti Marelli and a six speed sequential gearbox, the GTC is a pure racer. The 90° V8 3586.2 cc engine produces 445 bhp (332 kW) at 8750 rpm to haul around a dry weight of 1100 kg.

The SCX model is a replica of the Scuderia Ecosse entered 360 GTC, which lined up for the 2005 Le Mans 24 Hours race driven by the Scottish trio of Kinch, Kilkaldy and Reid. In the pre-race test session it was sixth in class. During



The real thing on track - © <http://www.all-free-photos.com/>



Top to bottom - Proslot, Ninco and SCX versions

the race, car #93 suffered accident damage including a rear spoiler replacement at the four hour mark and a serious accident at the six hour mark. The car was officially retired after eight hours having completed just 70 laps.

Under the skin

This SCX model follows the recent trend towards mounting the motor and back axle in a cradle or sub frame that can move around a central fore/aft pivot point allowing it to rock a little. This decouples the transmission from the

rest of the chassis and body which is all good news for the handling. The chassis itself is VERY flexible, so much so that the material may well be chewing gum or Blu Tak! This matters not one jot as the body and chassis are joined by no less than five screws giving a very stiff assembly so that the rocking motor cradle can do its work.

The rear bearings are floating semi spherical brass jobs 'a la Slot.It' and the front bearings are a nylon type plastic. Good to see front bearings being included.

⇒



The motor and indeed the lights (yellow front, red rear) are connected by the now standard SCX copper strips - it works fine so no further comment needed. The guide, sprung both vertically and horizontally, carries the SCX signature four braid setup - which once again, works, nuff' said.

A small moan at this point. More and more slot cars, and SCX in particular, are being produced with one or more tyres showing proud of the wheel arches, my review SCX Seat WTCC car was particularly bad. SCX please cease this shoddy work and sort your quality control, and club scrutineers start throwing out cars with a wheel sticking out of the wheel arch - good, moan over.

Running the SCX 360

After a little running in on my nine metre Scalextric Sport test track - Little Riverside - it was off to see those great folk at the Wolverhampton Slot Car Club and a run on their Ninco, Wood and Slotfire tracks.

I took the Ninco 'kit' 360 GTC along as company and ran both the Ninco and SCX in 'out of the box' condition, minimal running in, tyres trued, magnets thrown in the bin.

The Ninco was clearly faster. Although the latest SCX RX motors are better than they used to be (yet not as good as it will be as they always get faster when thoroughly run in) a 0.5 second a lap disadvantage around a track this size is an

age. The Ninco NC-5 Speeder fitted to the Ninco 360 GTC has plenty of grunt and is considerably faster than the SCX on the straights. But, the Ninco is also pretty horrible to drive, with a very sudden breakaway and minimal engine braking. The SCX is much, much nicer to drive. It is really sweet and well balanced, easy to drive to the very limit.

The ProSlot was not run in this comparison but past experience would suggest that it might be the quickest of the three once a fair amount of TLC and tuning had been used. The ProSlot cars are very poor runners out of the box as they are fairly shoddy in the build quality department but they do have the advantage of being MUCH cheaper than the SCX and Ninco.

If you run on a large club track the SCX is a passport to a world of pain as Ninco, NSR, Scalextric, Fly and other GT cars blow you away on the straights but if you run on a home track, even a reasonably large one, the sweet handling SCX will win you over and win you races - and don't forget SCX RX motors get faster with age! All in all a very likeable slot car and if you like the livery, Scalextric will shortly release the later Ferrari F430 as an Scuderia Ecosse Le Mans car. ■

Happy Birthday Scalextric

By Rob Smith

September 18th saw the “official” 50th birthday of Scalextric celebrated at a press reception held at the Innovation Centre in London. This is a fascinating building just off Tottenham Court in central London and is the home for a variety of exhibitions, seminars and events. Hornby took over the foyer and 5th floor all day for a steady stream of radio and TV interviews. You might have seen something on several news programmes during the day. In the foyer was the current Honda F1 Earth car – what an interesting livery to see close up, and a ½ scale McLaren wind tunnel model. Perched on top of the Honda was the Scalextric version which also looks great and I have yet to work out how Hornby have achieved it. The livery is

correct, i.e. it is the same satellite image positioned in exactly the same way as on the real car. Also in the foyer were the big display cabinets that have been touring the country full of cars and accessories to tell the Scalextric story over the last 50 years.

My evening started in the bar where I had a fascinating opportunity to chat with John Surtees and his son Henry. Both were extremely interesting to talk to and Henry is a very confident 16 year old who has his racing career mapped out before him. I hope he makes it all the way to F1. Also present was Diana Francis and her two daughters. Diana is the widow of Fred Francis, the inventor of Scalextric. ➡➡



Scalextric 50th Event - l to r Adrian Norman, Diana Francis, John Surtees, Frank Martin and Henry Surtees



They are a charming family and seemed really touched by the continued success of Scalextric and the high affection that so many people hold for it.

After champagne and canapés we were ushered up to the 5th floor for two presentations. Frank Martin welcomed us all and introduced Hornby Hobbies plc, the Scalextric brand and its 50 year history to the attentive audience. A highlight of Frank's presentation was a short video showing clips of Scalextric through the ages, many of which were taken from old TV adverts.

John Surtees then took to the stage and told us about his career and how Scalextric had been an ever present sideline. As World Champion on two and four wheels he had an interesting tale to tell and one which hasn't finished. Henry's career is really taking off under John's careful guidance and, after success in the Formula BMW series, he is moving on to Formula Renault next.

Presentations over and a screen was drawn back to reveal a huge four car digital layout and a racing competition started with heats followed by a fastest timed lap by the winner. The four fastest lappers then competed in the final which was won by Pedro Avery, Director at BLM, Hornby's media buyers. Fastest lap went to Kieran Meeke, a reporter from the Metro Newspaper who was delighted with his success.

How did I do? My race included Roger Gillham and Diana Francis. Roger and I were considered to be cheating by having done it before so Diana was given a three lap start. I had a great battle with Roger but a mysterious "hand of God" appeared right on the last corner to hinder our progress. Diana won, of course!

Guests left with a goody bag containing the 50th Anniversary Ferrari twin pack as a fitting memento of an excellent evening. Happy birthday to Scalextric once again and thanks for inviting me to join the celebrations. ■



Sir,

With reference to your last editorial, I agree in principle with the eBay issue, although I miss the NSCC small ads which are a great way of selling things protected by the club rules. I have used them on many occasions in the past for both buying and selling and picked up some nice items. It is also a great way to make new contacts. Ebay can be very impersonal and every one appears to be out to make a profit. I realize this is how it works but I feel this is at the expense of the collector and enthusiast.

Anyway these are just my views, perhaps when the "new look" NSCC website is updated then this can be another forum where the small ads are brought back to life. By the way, I did return my survey form with some of these comments included. It was also great to see the full page member's advert in the September Journal which prompted me to write this letter.

I do use Internet shopping and, in particular, Pendle for all my needs. I find them fast, efficient and informative. I have tried other sites, but always come back to this one, trust I guess. However the downside is my local model shop is closing down because of Internet competition. The upside - I did pick up the new Ford Focus WRC for £15...plus a load of spares at rock bottom prices.

Finally, not sure about the new Scalextric boxes, great for displaying Formula 1, but too small for the Ford Focus, one of the roof aerials was squashed against the top.

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

Sir,

I've just received the Scalextric C2782A 50th anniversary set, which - appropriately enough - was given to me by my partner on my 50th birthday.

What an utterly superb set! Scalextric are to be congratulated on producing this terrific limited edition, especially the tinplate Ferrari 375 which is an utter joy. I am amazed at the detail that they've managed to reproduce, especially as the car is tinplate. This set - complete with the 2006 Ferrari 248 F1 and the "Scalextric: A Race Through Time" book - will be one of the mainstays of my display cabinet for years to come. Tremendous.

Many thanks to Pendle for rushing the set, recorded delivery, to my partner, shortly after it had been released so that I received it in time for my birthday.

And finally, my thanks to my partner for choosing such an appropriate 50th birthday present. I couldn't have had anything better on my half century.

I am, yours etc,
Paul Strange





email: racernews@nsc.co.uk

This month there are two new RTR (Ready to Race) and 1 new RK (Racing Kit) releases to report on. Also, there's news on current developments and what's in the pipeline for the foreseeable future.

Ferrari 250 LM "Mecom" #29 (RCR34)

Driven by the American pairing of Mark Donohue and Walt Hansgen, taking part in the 1965 Sebring 12 hour race. This was the 2nd round of the World Sports Car Championship and after completing 183 laps the car was placed in a respectable 11th position.

The model itself is decorated in a bright metallic blue with a white stripe running down the centre. Unique detailing to this model includes an air duct on the driver's side front wing and further air ducts on each side just behind the rear wheels. As mentioned in my last report, this is modelled on the car that drove during the daylight hours, as it has body coloured headlight covers. The limited edition



(70 units) version has uncovered headlights which represents the car driven during night-time hours (see August's Journal for details).

Ferrari 330P "Maranello Concessionaires" #14 (RCR35)

Le Mans 1964 was a good year for Ferrari as they took all three podium positions. This latest masterpiece to come from Racer is modelled on the car that came 2nd. Driven by Graham Hill and Jo Bonnier, they completed 343 laps, 5 laps behind the winning works 275P, which was driven by Jean Guichet and Nino Vaccarella. Incidentally, the 3rd placed 330P (race #19) driven by Lorenzo Bandini and John Surtees has been previously modelled by Racer (RCR26). The question remains; will Racer now produce the winning #20 works car? The model is decorated in red with a light blue stripe running down the centre and around the front grille. The rear panel is also decorated light blue. A unique detail feature of this car compared to the other two 275/330Ps previously produced is that it has a photo-etched wind deflector mounted on the driver's side bonnet. The driver figure has been modelled on Graham Hill and has the easily recognisable helmet design, but alas there is no moustache present. After reading Brian's SCX BRM classic F1 review in the August issue, at least with no moustache he can't be accused of looking like a "Mexican bandit"!

Both of the above are the first to have the new box labels fitted. Out (sadly) goes the helmet and glove design and in comes the red lettering on blue background design to match the Racer web site.



Ferrari 330 P4 Racing Kit (RCR-K3)

The third racing kit is now available. Like the previous 250LM and Porsche 935, it is available in four colours; red, yellow, green and white. The body is void of all unnecessary photo-etched detail parts like filler caps and windscreen wipers etc, but does include a plastic chassis, flat pan interior, alloy wheels, alloy rims, wheel inserts, axles, tyres, guide blade, braids, driver figure (arms and head only), screws and windows. There are not even any headlights as they have been moulded in with the body. You will notice that there is no motor or motor mount included. These have been left out on purpose as it allows the individual user to decide what they want to use and also helps keep the cost of the kit down. Many racers have spare motors etc in their pit boxes anyway.

Coming Next

The next car to come off the Racer production line will be the brand new Ferrari 350P Can-Am "Team Gunston" #6. This has been given catalogue reference RCR36 and at the time of writing is in production and due for distribution around the end of September. By the time you read this, the car could well be available, but it will depend on what country you live in as distribution dates vary. The model is depicting the car that took part and won the Cape Town 3 hour race in 1968, driven by Paul Hawkins. Since Racer published pictures of this model in mid September, there has been some debate on whether the colour is correct. The pictures give the appearance that the model is yellow, but the debate is that it should be orange. Marco of Racer tells me that the model is painted in an orangey yellow and that the photos do not show the model in its true light. Racer have a trusted source who advises them on colours etc for all ➡➡



their models and they have taken the decision themselves to decorate it this way. The brown band that runs down the centre and along the lower sides is not under debate. The “Gunston” Lola T70 and Chevron produced by Fly is a much darker orange and could also be a subject of debate? Another indicator to Racer’s decision to decorate the car this way is that they have a picture from a South African car magazine of the 350P parked next to a Gulf Ford Mirage M1. The difference between the orange stripe on the Mirage and the orange on the 350P is most noticeable. Extra detailing includes accelerator, brake and clutch pedals which are visible through the wide open cockpit. Other detailing of note is the air hose protruding from the bonnet.

Following this will be the fifth Porsche 935 K3 (RCR37). This will be the “Coca Cola” sponsored Akin motorsport #5 car which competed at Daytona in 1981. Further details of this next time. A sneak preview picture of this and the 350P can be found on the Racer web site (www.racer-emme.it).

Slotlandia 2007

This year’s show is taking place over the 28th/29th/30th September in Milan. Racer will be attending and displaying a variety of new models, including some of the latest prototypes. One on show will be the eagerly anticipated Chaparral 2E, which is now finished and ready for production. Racer anticipates it could be available for delivery in December, but may slip back slightly. One to put on your Christmas list maybe! The only other prototype on show will be the Ferrari 250/275P, which is very near completion and in Marco of Racer’s own words “very nice”. I suspect this could well be a personal favourite of his. The first of these will be from Le Mans 1963/64. Apart from the new 350P “Gunston” (RCR36) and 935 K3 “Coca Cola” (RCR37) mentioned above, there will also be some reliveries of existing models. These include two works Ferrari 312Ps (Le Mans 24hr 1969, #18 and #19) and another Porsche 935 K3 “Interscope”, although the 935 won’t be available until early 2008.

Until my next report, get saving as there’s plenty of exquisite models to come. ■

Milton Keynes Swapmeet

By Roger Barker

Loughborough 2007 seems such a long time ago. We have endured much through a “slotless” summer - fire, tempest, oh and flood here and there. That, you might say, is just a typical English summer. I, sadly, have to wile away my summers doing my job of a hard pressed operational front line Police Officer, something I have done for over twenty five years.

I have seen much, you might say too much. Enough to say that my time in the world of slot cars, amongst decent honest people, is time I cherish. It is where I can switch off my ‘Copper’s head’, relax, and revel (pardon the pun) in looking at, buying, or selling slot cars and be me again. I knew that Milton Keynes was going to be special. Nigel, as ever, had everything meticulously prepared (including the catering Mrs C!), table sales were again excellent, only a handful short of a full house.

There was a buzz of expectation on the circuit, as my good friends Mark Scale and Steve Cannon had recently made an epic trip to somewhere in mainland Europe to acquire a colossal collection, which was to be viewed and bought by the great and the good of the slot community. I woke bleary eyed on the Sunday morning, at something called 5am, and shortly after was collected for the journey down by Steve Vickers, whose encyclopaedic knowledge of Scalextric never ceases to amaze me. We arrived early and yet again failed to beat Phil Underwood. If you are reading Phil, I intend to travel to Orpington on the Friday night and camp out till the Sunday - you have been warned!

Nigel managed to get the doors open slightly earlier than usual, so the traders could disgorge their wares into the hall. The overseas reps were again well in evidence - always good to see you boys, don’t forget Dudley in December is a joy to behold and tables are selling fast!

It was around 9.30, when my illusions of the close knit slot family were shattered. There was a thief among us. A trader while setting up had just dusted and put down two identical cars on his stall ready to be displayed, he returned to them a couple of minutes later to discover one had gone - this before the doors had opened.

This personally was a sad moment for me, as I now had to face a reality that not all slot people are honest and trustworthy, a reality that would raise its head two further times during the day. There was an awkward silence in the room when I had to ask everyone for vigilance as an item had been stolen.

Eventually the room began to fill with the familiar chatter of all things slot, and the odd “whodunit”. My stall was close to the door and come opening time the constant stream of people through the door was a great sight to see. During the course of the day I spoke with several traders who reported decent trading. Derek’s collapsing auction was well received, although he did complain about people interfering with his cock! I believe he was referring to his chicken count-down timer!

As the day drew to a close, I had time to reflect on the day’s events. The swapmeet was certainly memorable, still for more good things than bad. This is a superb event put on by a thoroughly decent man who does not deserve to have people through the door who tarnish the reputation of this great hobby. Members who come to this event and others like it, I salute you. Those who choose to stay away, I say, come you might enjoy it and you may find you have something in common with others in the room. Those who take things that do not belong to them, it is simple - stay away you are not welcome and to the individual who stole two steering wheels off two used Ninco karts on my table, I simply say this - it is in your interests to return them. ■





email: howorld@nsc.co.uk

Micro Scalextric's two most recent sets could not be more different. It would be all too easy to knock the 'Transformers' set (as previewed in the May column) as gimmicky but it does 'exactly what it says on the tin'. The cars, box art, play mat and track pieces are brash and loud plus there is a crossover to promote collisions and all of this is in keeping with the ethos of the Transformers franchise, including the spectacular if rather shallow movie of the past 'summer'. The transformed cars looked OK in normal mode, if understandably a little chunky. If anything the "Barricade" Saleen Mustang Police car looks all the better for this whilst the 'Bumblebee' 1970 Camaro perhaps does not. The Mustang would have been even better if Scalextric had included the "To punish and enslave" slogan from the movie on the side of it.

The other set is the Vodafone McLaren Mercedes set (same retail value as the Transformers set, £40) which shows a shaven and smiling Fernando Alonso alongside Lewis Hamilton on the sober box-art, with the Micro Scalextric logo fairly low key amongst all the corporate red and silver. That the Spaniard's regulation McLaren haircut looks faintly absurd now shows how much water has passed under the bridge and one can imagine future McLaren Licensed products are going to be a lot more expensive when there is \$100,000,000 to be made from what Ron Dennis referred to as other revenue streams! Anyway, it looks as if the body used for the A1GP cars may have been a one off as we are back to the normal second

generation F1 body here. The chrome and dayglo colours are executed very well, although we are talking more of a silver than a reflective surface. Much better than the grey featured on the Scalextric website though. Whilst I wish the helmets were more detailed, I did like the Bridgestone markings on the tyres. The detail level overall is high and the tampo's very crisp.



I built the suggested UK and German layouts to try the cars out, and then performed my usual trick of adding in more straights to see how they fared. The grip level from these cars is astonishing and I have to take a step back from being a club level racer to really remember that. On a larger track the cars really looked superb, the extra distance (plus the cars' speed) obscuring the fact the body is rather high sided due to the relatively large chassis (once again using a plastic guide I notice). I do wonder what racing the two cars side by side will be like; telling them apart is likely to be difficult. All in all a great effort and hopefully a sign of more F1s to come in this scale.

A few weeks ago I received a 'Downtown Drifters' set from Life-Like's parent company Walthers. The sets don't retail outside the USA so consequently I had no real idea what to expect. Once it was opened I set about seeing if any alternative layouts to the space saving one specified in the instructions could be built - without success. Whilst the standard layout was not particularly inspiring it was compact without being a stupid figure of eight as gets used far too often. Life-Like did miss a massive chance by not offering extra track in the set literature, something that is all too common amongst the H:O manufacturers. The two Scalextric sets both make this basic error too. I did like the 12" banking pieces included though. These were rigid and self supporting, without the need for lame and poorly executed braces and posts and the angle of the pieces was realistically shallow. Unfortunately the layout calls for flat 9" curves to be nested inside these at one point and the contrast between banked and flat is not good. The controllers are very toy like but, to be fair, no worse than in a Tomy or Micro Scalextric set of similar value (around £40). They are hard wired to the terminal track, presumably to keep things simple and save a few cents, but in a nice touch the cover over the wires is screwed on so that it is easy to wire in other controllers and/or sockets and plugs if you so wish.

The power pack looked fairly normal for this kind of set, but of course it was an 110V item so I had to splice in a UK compliant unit from my own stock. Even from the limited size of the set it is clear, as I had seen mentioned on many forums, that Life-Like place their track rail quite a bit higher than their rivals. As a result my own cars performed very badly and even the Life-Like cars I have set up for EAHORC races could not lap as cleanly as the set cars with their high and rock-hard standard rubber tyres. The track connection was an old fashioned style, offering up the opposing tabs side by side and then pushing one piece down as opposed to the end-on-end connecting of all the other systems. The connection seemed very solid, if a little slower than the other method, but I can see

further down the line having problems with the rail ends being folded over as opposed to crimped and slightly sprung. A quick tweak should keep things running smoothly though. Overall the track quality was good, just not quite as high as Tomy AFX (the recognized leader in this field).

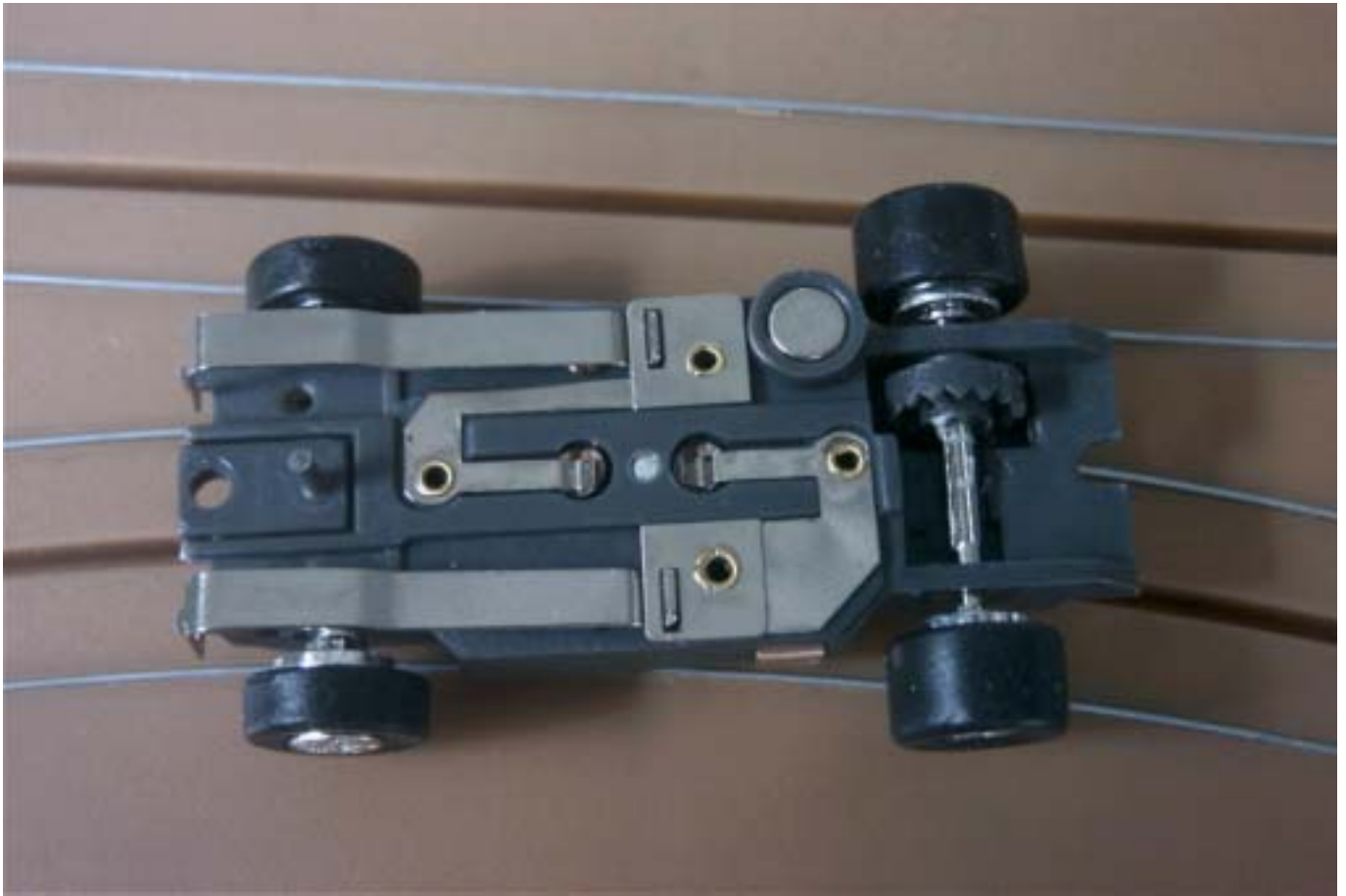
As for the cars, there are two Honda Civics, a grey version and a red one. Understandably this is not the Euro Civic with mad triangular exhaust and other bizarre (but awesome) features, but the USA Si model. Still sporty, but I would have much preferred the Euro car.



The paint job is not massively detailed on these, and is obviously designed to be in keeping with the 'Street' theme of the set. It is good to see that Walthers are prepared to do more than just their normal NASCARs and maybe some other eclectic cars will be released in the future.

Another US company, Round 2, have caused a minor stir with their latest chassis. With the Super III still on schedule for a December release, they seem to be easing their customer base into being used to magnet cars before then by adding one traction magnet to their two ➡➡





Autoworld R2 XT and R2 TJ chassis



existing pancake (vertical motor shaft as opposed to horizontal) chassis to make "Ultra/G" versions of them. Although there is only one magnet, it is Neodymium and seems to give good grip. Eventually comparisons between this chassis and existing in-line magnet cars will trickle through from the US, both in terms of lap time and 'play fun'. It will be interesting to see how it stacks up, bearing in mind it's still a cheap chassis giving good value for money (chassis go for about £6 on eBay). At the moment the ThunderJet chassis has the magnet whilst release four of the XT chassis (which has lights for the first time) merely has the pocket but no magnet. ■

I have not been able to keep as keen an eye as usual this month on eBay as I had to deal with preparing for a new computer system at work as well as being given notice that my job is to become redundant. Therefore apologies if the report may have missed some interesting items, but I think I have got enough bits to keep you reading. Listing numbers are finally starting to creep up, as we head towards winter, with the UK around the 5000 level.

Continuing from last month on the digital stolen set theme, there still seems plenty of evidence of sets turning up on eBay but prices seem to have hardened up to just under £150 with buyers starting to think of Christmas gifts now. One interesting remark made to me from a trader at the recent MK swapmeet was that he had a customer who was a policeman ring him up for extra bits to expand the cheap digital set he had bought off eBay!

Another remark from the swapmeet (thank you Derek) reminded me of the potential problems when bidding for specialist items, particularly at the top end of the market if you don't leave your bid until the very last seconds, so here is a quick reminder. If you put in a high bid it only takes you to the next increment above the previous bidder until someone comes along and beats it or bids up to your bid. So, if someone puts in a stupid excessive bid they can immediately see how much you have bid as they outbid you. However that person's high bid is then withdrawn and you are again the highest bidder. The result is that they can wait and outbid you in the last few seconds so you can lose out. That is why I would recommend using a snipe program to do your last second bidding on any big ticket items. I use the Goofbay one which is free, though there are many others out there. Talking of Goofbay there is another misspelling site I have recently come across -

www.callidae.biz which produces similar results. However it does not have the range of search options and tools that Goofbay does. It is amazing what you can find out about other bidders and sellers with these programs - a little test on my own ID showed that Goofbay did not find everything I had bid on even though the history goes back up to 120days!

Rarities?

There were a couple of interesting items that did manage to catch my eye this month - Scalextric 40th Anniversary Minis in some pre-production colours of flame red and purple. There was also a reported green and a blue model as well but as far as I can tell they did not make it onto eBay. The models looked to be tampered in exactly the same livery as the actual green car that was released. However, the auctions were ended early so I can not bring you any price details and it may explain why you missed them, as I reckon the seller got a very good offer for these. Incidentally the seller did indicate there were two of each colour produced. The same seller must have some good connections as they had a black TVR Speed 12 from the 1999 City Challenge event printed with Big Ben on the bonnet, which was the design rejected for that event and this found a home in the NSCC ranks at £171 though not mine. Staying on the NSCC theme of the same era and a bit more affordable was a NSCC Goodwood Track Marshal 99 badge that fetched £2.20 though a NSCC XJ220 Jag attracted a buyer at the £90 mark. Some sellers do strike it lucky! Other potential rarities were gold and silver chromed Scalextric BMW Mini Coopers - promotional prizes which were reported as from a dealership event earlier this year and fetched a rather tidy £255, selling to a mini fanatic I presume as the buyers ID was "skinheadmini". Still on the chrome plate ➡➡

front the same seller had a Fly Alfa 147 but this only made £31.11. Another interesting piece for you vintage collectors was one of the reissued "De Havilland Scalextric Red Bugatti" that made £521 on a Sunday night. An interesting item of a supposedly prototype yellow Scalextric Protec Audi A4 from a Dutch seller did not catch the buyer's eye though, only reaching £32.56. However Modelzone Mustangs must be rare as one buyer splashed out £176 for one and another buyer a still relatively high £103.

Catalogues

French eBay seems to be the place to get some good deals on early literature at the moment with often more reasonable prices on very nice examples of catalogues, including English ones. Just check the seller takes Paypal though as many French sellers don't. If you are used to paying that way you may not get the bargain it seems after paying bank charges. A good example was a #1 catalogue with price list in as new condition that could be secured for around the £50 mark. More prices below.

Slot.It

As expected, the New Man Porsche continued to attract strong prices fetching £116 with a BIN price, from a new eBay buyer though and a once used example fetched just under £80. This was closely followed by the type 2 "satin black" Roll out Audi at £72 and a Kouros Mercedes at £65, all on UK eBay. A similar price picture was seen on US eBay for these cars. The Jagermeister Porsche 956 has started to creep up above normal retail prices in some cases now so, if you want one of these, I would not hang around unless you are happy to pay over the odds later.

Prices

Prices as listed and spelt on UK eBay unless stated, with the time and auction ending day:
French E5 Aston Martin Marshals car (green) £425 (Repro flags and slight transfer damage but otherwise excellent on Sunday night)
Scalextric FIAT ABARTH 850 TC Spain SEAT C 42, 1969 ! £260 (Red model on Sunday night)

Boxed Scalextric Super 124 24C/100 Alfa Romeo GTZ 1/24 £200 (BIN best offer price having been listed at £395 BIN sold on Friday morning)

CATALOGUE SCALEXTRIC de 1962 €26 (French no. 3 in excellent condition on French eBay Friday afternoon)

SCALEXTRIC TRI ANG CATALOGUES vers 1960 €24.50 (Main part was a no. 2 catalogue in excellent condition on Tuesday night)

SCALEXTRIC CAR FERRARI 375 TIN-PLATE RARE C2782A £29.50 (Single car from 50th Anniversary set on Weds night. Several have been available at just above this price or BIN for around £50 if you have no patience but just want this car.)

Scalextric Start/Finish Banner £2.45 (Boxed example on Wednesday night)

Collection of 8 scalextric cars £21.01 (Not listed in slot cars and besides Le Mans 90s cars included two C54 Lotus on Monday afternoon)

SCALEXTRIC C7 RALLY MINI- COOPER FOR RESTORATION £167 (White car with black roof and early motor according to seller on Tuesday afternoon)

SCALEXTRIC I BET YOU HAVE NOT GOT A CAR LIKE THIS BMW £170.12 (White mould flush marble finish on Thursday night)

SCALEXTRIC PORSCHE 911 GT1 "5º ANIVERSARIO TECH-NITOYS" €415 (Spanish eBay on Thursday night)

SCALEXTRIC CAR LAMBORGHINI GALLARDO ORANGE from C1199 £12.10 (Set only colour from new drift set on Thursday night)

SCALEXTRIC stockist window display sticker/poster £3.71 (56 x 24 cm window sticker 90's black and yellow logo on Wednesday night)

Rollcenter Lap Timer £93 (A timer used for 1:1 real car racing but listed in slot cars on Thursday night. A slot car buyer would have a job fitting it in the car!)

Thanks again to those who have sent in things they have spotted, and don't forget it is ebaywatch@nsc.co.uk if you need to contact me. ■



50460 'Classic Corvette C'

By Jim Butt

I'm delighted to report that the subject of this issue's review is of Ninco's latest offering in their "Classic" range, the 1956/7 Corvette in street trim (item # 50460). The Corvette is an American icon, truly larger than life to many enthusiasts both in the USA and around the world. Having been released initially in 1953, the first few years were essentially off the shelf Chevrolet components, repackaged in a sexy fibreglass body. While certainly visually exciting, the performance left a bit to be desired. The in-line six-cylinder engine coupled to an automatic gearbox was hardly the stuff sports cars were made from. Thankfully, Chevrolet realized that in order to boost sales they needed to make the car appeal to the performance car set. Probably also spurred on by the 1955 introduction of

Ford's Thunderbird, the Corvette began to develop some power. In 1955 the first cars were available with what became the legendary Chevrolet V8, and a manual transmission.

For 1956, the Corvette really began to shine. The car was given a complete facelift, and now included such niceties as two tone paint and roll up window glass! The V8 engine was now available with 2x 4 barrel carburetors, and was rated in that configuration at 225 horsepower. Performance was stirring, and a version of the car was entered in the 12 hour race at Sebring that year, driven by John Fitch and Walt Hansgen. They took 9th place overall and were first in class, beginning a long Corvette racing tradition. (The Sebring car was the subject of a prior Ninco release).

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♪ It winds from Chicago to L.A. ♪

In the early 60s there was an American television programme called “Route 66” starring Martin Milner, George Maharis, and the Corvette. The show was filmed on location along Route 66, which runs from Chicago to Los Angeles for some 2448 miles, crossing eight states and three time zones. Their adventures each week while travelling Route 66 were the dreams of many young men of the time. To many, the real star of the show was the Corvette. The big advertising campaign slogan of the era was “See the USA in your Chevrolet”! Between racing successes, street performance, and Corvette’s starring roles in many television shows and movies, a legend was born.

And so, without further ado, let’s take a look at the Ninco Corvette street version.

The Ninco website officially calls the car “Corvette Class C Blue”. No year is listed, but the car is either a ’56 or ’57. The only difference other than the engine and transmission options was the interior rear view mirror. Since I can’t tell which it may be, we’ll just assume from here that it’s a ’56.

Upon initial examination of the car on its plinth, the first thing I notice is that the colour doesn’t seem quite right. Ninco refers to the car as “blue”, but it’s decidedly light green. It’s certainly appealing, but not the factory shade. Strangely, the Chevrolet name for the colour was “Cascade Green” but every photo I’ve been able to find (and memories of the one that resided three houses up the street from me in the early 60s) looks much more blue than green. No matter, it’s still quite fetching.

The paint is nicely applied, but my example had quite a bit of dust in the horizontal surfaces, it was a noticeably rough feeling to the fingertips. The paint on the sides of the car was much smoother. The inset coves on the sides are correctly tampo printed in white, but the coverage was a bit thin in spots. At the leading edge of both doors and the trailing edge of both front wheel openings the tampo ink didn’t quite adhere, leaving a bit of body colour showing through. It’s not terribly objectionable, but

would bother the shelf queen crowd. The rest of the printing is quite nice, but I really must take Ninco to task for the simulated leather bonnet straps. Perhaps they were used on the Sebring racecar, but on a street version? Not likely.



The chrome plating on the detail is very nicely done. The grill sticks out a bit far from the front of the car, and the winglet bumpers should be separate pieces, but that’s certainly the best way to mould them and have them durable enough for hard racing. The turn signal lenses should be clear instead of amber, but we’re really getting picky here. I also would have appreciated if the registration plate would have represented one from the USA.



Moving to the interior, it’s a very accurate representation of the real thing, and done to a high standard. The details of the dash, gauges, steering wheel, rear-view mirror, shifter, and even the shifter bezel on the floor are quite

accurate. A driver and passenger are included, but one does wonder why in a street driven vehicle are they outfitted in racing overalls and crash helmets? Off to some illicit street race, perhaps?

Pulling out the calipers, I was VERY pleasantly surprised to note that Ninco have got every measured dimension of the car exactly right, even the height over the convertible top. I've become so used to the manufacturers stretching the truth a bit to widen or lower their models that I was expecting that right from the start. A tip of the hat to the designers at Ninco for releasing a truly SCALE model automobile!

Innards

On the mechanical side of things, Ninco have made a departure from the past Classic releases with the fitment of the new NC8 "Thruster" motor. Rated on the label at 16,000 RPM, 87 gm/cm torque at 14.8 volts, it would appear that we now have an heir to the old stand-by NC1! The can is the same form factor as the previous Ninco motors from the NC-2. onwards, but in a shorter version. Thus, it needs an adaptor spacer to fit the chassis, which was designed for the longer can motor.



The remainder of the chassis is pretty much standard Ninco Classic fare: 20 x 7 treaded tyres in a nice soft compound on decent representations of the Corvette wheels, 27:9 gear ratio, brass axle bushings at the rear, spring loaded guide, etc. The tyres were decently round, and were given no attention whatever until the end of the testing. Also, of course, is the standard button magnet in front of the motor. Interestingly, the front bumper overriders are a part of the chassis instead of being fitted to the body.

Performance

And so, we're off to the races (well, maybe not, since this is after all a street car, but the pilot's got a helmet, so why not?)

I decided to pit the Corvette against a few contemporaries to see if it would live up to its reputation. Finding their way to contest it were a Ninco Austin Healey with a NC-1 a Ninco Jaguar XJ-120 fitted with an NC-6 and a 60's vintage Revell Cobra with 16D power just for a grin.

The first thing I noticed was how close in size the Healey Jag, and Corvette were. In real life, the Corvette should have dwarfed the Healey. Once again, a tip of the hat to Ninco for scale accuracy.

For initial testing, I set up a roughly nine metre Carrera circuit. I plucked a Ninco button magnet from the side of the fridge and installed it in the Healey, just to have something to compare the Corvette to. With magnet installed, the Healey's NC-1 was struggling to pull itself around the Carrera track. It managed to average 4.09 laps, but was flat out almost all the way, and I would expect that too much of that would have let the smoke out of the motor. The Corvette fared much better, averaging 3.62 laps with ease. The new NC8 motor pulled the magnet along quite well, and had noticeably more torque exiting the turns and heading off down the straights. Right from the box I'm impressed.

Removing the magnets from the cars made things more interesting. The Healey dropped to 4.60 laps, while the Corvette was running at ➡➡





4.14 consistently. The magnetless Jag managed to be close behind with 4.19 laps, while the poor Cobra could only spin its wheels on the slick plastic and managed a best of 4.88. The Corvette comes out a champion on plastic, both with and without magnet.

From here on, the playing (ahem, testing) was conducted on my 87' routed wood track, Flying Cow Raceway. With the magnets still in place, the NC-1 powered Healey lapped consistently at 9.22, while the Corvette showed its heels with 9.10 laps. At this point I could hear the gears begin to seat, and the mechanical bits begin to bed themselves and get comfortable with each other. Things just got better and better from there.

With the removal of the magnets (and reinstalling them in their proper place holding the grocery list) we now had a four car field again. The Cobra could now stretch its legs and find some traction, 10.11 laps were usual. The

Jag, with the 23,500 RPM of the NC-6 motor, propelled itself down the long straights with ease, but began to experience some tyre chatter (the dreaded Ninco Hop) exiting the turns. Still, it averaged 9.96 laps. The Healey had me feeling a bit sorry for it, as the NC-1 just plain ran out of steam, and could only manage 10.30 average laps.

The Corvette? Ruling the circuit, just as The Almighty and Chevrolet intended. It easily lapped at a 9.79 average, and was getting faster as the evening ended. With a bit of very minor sanding of the tyres, a drop or two of oil in the bearings, and some further time breaking in the motor, times dropped to 9.66 averages. It was absolutely stable, consistent, and just plain fun to drive.

Something I've noticed over the years is that while I own many cars, there are a few that I just keep coming back to. When I fire up the track for a bit of fun, whether I'm alone or have a few friends joining me, I naturally reach for one of the cars that bring a smile to my face, lap after lap. Those cars are easy to drive, run well with minimal attention, and look great while making it look easy. Time will tell, but I'm pretty certain that this Corvette will be among that handful of cars that fit that description.

No matter if you're headed out for a race meeting or just a scenic drive along a winding country road, this Ninco Corvette is a worthy companion. ■





Swapmeets

When the Club first started in the early 80s, attending swapmeets was just about essential for anyone aspiring to build a collection. These days, with the wealth of good, new product to interest collectors and the Internet to discover and acquire it, they are not so vital to the buying of cars, etc. To me though, they remain an essential part of the hobby. No Internet, photograph or review will ever be as good as seeing a real car. If you're buying older, used collectables, no description or condition code (except perhaps "Mint") can give a buyer the same confidence as seeing it for yourself. Furthermore, you don't have to pay postage! Beyond the simple matter of buying, I find the less tangible benefits of meeting and chatting to fellow enthusiasts about successes, failures, triumphs and disasters just as enjoyable and valuable. Without that, I think the hobby would hold little interest for me. What seems clear though, is that quite a number of members consider swapmeets to be entirely optional.

Swapmeets need both buyers and sellers to succeed. The more dealers that go, the more attractive they are to buyers – and vice versa. A growing swapmeet feeds itself and continues to grow. By contrast, a declining swapmeet descends into oblivion. Since I've been a member, we've lost Evesham, Liphook and Leeds at least. It's true that some others have arisen but your Committee is keen to see

swapmeets thrive so that they continue to offer their unique mix of trading and socialising. We are kicking around some ideas for making them more attractive to members, which we hope to bring to you soon.

In the meantime, we know that geography is a limiting factor for some members who would like to see real people and real slot cars. Most organisers run their swapmeets as commercial events. Since most members live towards the south and east of the country, that's where most of the swapmeets are. The NSCC though can, and I believe should, be more flexible to try and do more for all its members.

There are many places where swapmeets never go: Scotland, Wales, the South-West, the North of England - and Ireland of course. If you believe you can organise a one-off event based around a swapmeet in one of these areas, please let us know. It will need local members to set it up and run it but the Club can give advice and assistance. It can also offer some financial support but, if you can find sponsors in local authorities or businesses, so much the better. Some dealers have expressed an interest in coming to such an event but the more attractive you can make it to them (both in terms of the venue as well as numbers of members, prospective members and general public) the more they will want to come and the more successful the event will be. Perhaps it could be organised as part of a larger local event – a fair or show perhaps. Let your imaginations go; don't be constrained by what's gone before. Let us know your ideas and, if we think we can make a success of it, we'll give it a go.

We don't have the resources to do more than one of these in any year. But if this sort of thing can work, we can do it again the following year somewhere else and together refresh the parts that other swapmeets cannot reach. Over to you.

Vacancies

I'm sorry to have to report two changes in personnel. Because of increased commitments to work and family, Mark Sanderson has had to relinquish his position as the Club's Webmaster. Mark did a lot of work to update and refresh ➡➡



the site when he took on the role and I would like to thank him for this and wish him well. For similar reasons, Tony Sandom is no longer able to become our new Editor. Apart from being apprenticed to Brian, Tony has done valuable work in the Committee and I hope that he will be able to continue working for the Club.

A notice asking for volunteers to take on these roles appears elsewhere in the Journal. I would ask you all to see if it is possible for you to help us. Many people do a lot for the Club but I don't think anyone would argue that the Editor's job requires the most commitment. It is also one of the most important and satisfying. Brian has been doing it for some eight years now and it is time for someone else to take over the baton. We are also wondering whether it would be useful to have an Editor's Assistant so if you can help, don't be shy – let us know.

The Webmaster position is likely to be of increasing importance. The Club's site could give more value to members and do more to attract and enrol new recruits. If you're handy with all this web stuff, we'd love to hear from you. I've not been on the Committee long but I have found it very satisfying doing my bit to help the Club develop. So far it's been enjoyable and that's how I would like it to continue. The more the merrier.

Organisation

One of the things exercising the Committee at the moment is the Club's constitution. At present, it reflects the way things were in the early 1980s. We all know that the hobby and life in general has changed since then and it is our view that the constitution (as well as the rules) should reflect these changes. The Committee is already larger than the six posts originally identified. Beyond that, does every post need to be subject to an annual election? There is also a growing opinion that, in these litigious times the Club should incorporate in order to limit the potential exposure of members, and Committee members in particular. We have made some progress and hope to make firm proposals to the membership in the coming months.

The Committee has also considered the matter of elections. It was our unanimous decision that the Club should not hold an election at the end of this year. There was a substantial election held earlier this year at some cost – both financial and to the Club's smooth operation. More importantly, it was felt that we should complete the work on the constitution and rules and hold elections at the end of 2008 after it is completed and within any new framework it sets out.

North-South divide

Apart from my first six months (about which I remember very little) I have been a southern Jessie all my life. Two years ago my wife got herself a new job up north but neither of us was terribly thrilled about moving (the weather's rubbish, the beer's worse - and they talk funny) so we didn't. Spending much of our time 200 miles apart is no fun. Neither is servicing the mortgage we took out so she had somewhere to live. Her job's been good but the real up side for me has been spending odd weeks and weekends up here; it's been much more enjoyable than we ever imagined. It is a real treat to see the different architecture; the peaks, moors and dales are super and it always makes me smile to see places that you normally only hear of during the classified football results.

Of more interest to a slot-head is that I find myself much closer to two well-known names: Scale Models and Pendle Slot. I left the choice of where to live to Maureen and we ended up just over a mile from Mark and Julie Scales. They've set up a couple of huge Scalextric Sport tracks in a nearby mill and I've been able to race there on a couple of occasions. Quite why I bother is another matter. Brian used to claim he was a crap racer but I bet I'm crapper than he was. I tend to do better when the marshalling is better - I don't end up quite so many laps behind everybody else.

This time, the best bit came after the racing when I had my first ever play with an NSR Mosler. That is one wicked car. It's fast and it's smooth with a great guide. It's all so well set up

and balanced that it's very forgiving when you take a corner too enthusiastically. Even with its small magnet removed, it can often hold its own against other magnetically equipped cars. Unfortunately it is eye-wateringly expensive - but it does do the business like nothing else I've ever played with.

On this trip up north, I also got to visit Sean Fothersgill at the Pendle Slot shop in Colne. That was brilliant with several tracks set up and a vast range of cars, spares, accessories, scenery, etc - a real Aladdin's cave. I was tempted by a set of Preiser figures that included a young lady returning one of her bumpy bits into her cossie but I thought I had better confine my purchases to cars. Sean also offers club racing on a wood and copper tape track. Since this is in a different part of town, I managed to avoid making an idiot of myself again.

If you're ever in Cheshire or Lancashire, try to look them up; you'll be made to feel very welcome. Northern beer's still rubbish though - and what the blazes is a barm cake? Even my spell checker's never heard of it.

And Finally

Whilst at the Milton Keynes swapmeet, Brian and I sometimes found ourselves outside. During one of these "fresh air" breaks, Brian mentioned an article he'd received for this month's Journal from Hub Habets about band-driven 4-wheel drive slot cars. Apart from off-road vehicles, I've never understood the point of 4WD on slot cars. The rear wheels provide the drive, the guide does the steering and the front wheels are just there so that the car doesn't look stupid. Well, it seems I'm wrong. Hub's done some tests on these cars and I'm looking forward to seeing an objective assessment of this feature.

Finally, on the subject of off-road cars, I need help. What is it with the recent issue of the TT Pajero/Montero? 60 sov's and they expect me to apply the stickers - what a crock! If anyone has done it, can they please get in touch and give me some hints as to how best to go about it. It looks like a horrid job with flat stickers supposed to go over complex curves and cut-outs. This does not look like fun. ■

