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THE NSCC
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THE INDEPENDENT CLUB FOR SLOT-CAR ENTHUSIASTS

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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

The first slot car of Spring

Things are looking up - my local club has a brand new track and the swapmeet season has opened with the annual February trip to Milton Keynes.

Following the sad demise of Mussel Bay club's original wooden track we had struggled on with the plastic stuff for a couple of years but my heart was not really in it and I stopped attending some time ago. However, a brand new 100ft routed copper tape track has just been completed and the first meeting was held recently. Was it a triumphant return to competitive racing then? Er No!

Apart from the fact that I was somewhat race rusty the track is not yet "rubbered in" and the grip levels are akin to an ice rink. My trusty ProSlot Toyota spent the first heat doing Torvill and Dean impressions and I was lucky to salvage a third place finish. A switch to a less powerful SCX car in the other heats helped a bit and I ended the evening with a pair of second places, so not a total disaster.

I look forward to further outings and I am sure it won't take long to get the hang of things again. Mind you, it is a long while since I have had to judge a braking point 30 feet away and my eyesight is not getting any better, so who knows?

Incidentally, Norfolk seems to be quite a little hotbed of slot car activity at the moment. Apart from Presto Park at Aylsham, which was featured in last month's issue, there is also Meridian Raceway on the other side of Norwich as well as our own club in King's Lynn. All three are well attended so the hobby would appear to be thriving in our part of the country.

I rounded the weekend off with a trip to the Milton Keynes swapmeet. It was excellent as usual and why people prefer to conduct their hobby sat in front of a computer screen is beyond me. I actually spent so much time socialising that I totally neglected to spend any money. I had intended to buy a few necessary spares for the next race meet so, on my return home, I had to send out a series of panic emails to people I had met just a few hours previously. Ah well, no change there then!

*Till next month,
Brian*

BY **ROB SMITH**

MESSAGES

FROM MARGATE



email: factory@nscc.co.uk

With no new cars being released this month there is very little for me to write about. Hornby promise me that there will be plenty of new product released towards the end of March and in early April. I hope so.

UK Toy Fair 2008

Although slot car dealers were thin on the ground at the UK's annual Toy Fair at Excel in London's Docklands Hornby put on a good show as usual. For me the most exciting item there was the Gulf liveried Aston Martin DBR9. This looked superb and will make the range later this year. Also present were the prototype BMW 320 touring car and Mercedes 300 SLR coupé.



BBC TV were there recording some news footage and the Stig from Top Gear looked impressive but didn't actually do anything. John Surtees also put in an appearance to endorse the product - a charming man with much enthusiasm for motorsport and Scalextric.



Catalogue Additions

So we have a new catalogue item in the form of the Gulf Aston and this will be C2960. The aim is to release this in conjunction with the car's appearance at this year's Le Mans 24 Hour race in June.



Another addition is C2957 a plain white Nascar COT Chevrolet for the USA market only. Possibly only 1200 of these will be made.■



**SHIPMENT
FROM SPAIN**
By Gareth Jex



email: shipmentfromspain@nsc.co.uk

Email: shipmentfromspain@nsc.co.uk

Busy busy busy! Some new releases now available from your preferred slot pusher and news for 2008.

Let's start with the recent releases this month; two new DTM cars:

Ref 62920 Mercedes DTM 'Trekstor', "De La Rosa". Bright orange car with minimal livery, race number 18. 2WD with floating motor mount.



Ref 62930 Audi A4 DTM 'Castrol' "Kaffer", livid green and silver livery, race number 14. 2WD again with floating motor mount.



Looking to 2008 after the German ToyFair lots of new cars and reliveries to tell you about:

Saloon/GT

New liveries for both the Ferrari 550 and 360, BMW 320i WTCC, Seat Leon, Aston Martin and a stunning new livery for the Volvo S60R which involves a brand new tampon printing technique reproducing a full colour photo. New cars include the Ferrari FXX and Morgan Aero 8!



F1

Two new models planned for release around October this year, BMW Sauber “Heidfeld” and ING Renault F1 Team.

There will also be a new F1 set this year and a brand new accessory called ‘**Pit Box**’ which looks like a refuelling device (full review soon)

NASCAR

No fewer than eight new cars/liveries all due around May/July, including Dodge Charger “Montoya/Texaco”, Dale Earnhardt Jnr/ Wrangler”, Chevrolet Impala “Jeff Burton/ AT&T” and three Ford Fusion ‘COT’ cars.

Tuning; no new liveries planned.

Off Road/Raid

New livery for the VW Touareg and a brand new Hummer H3.

In addition to the existing off road extension track sections there will be a new raid/off road suspension bridge.

Rally

New liveries for the Citroën C4, Suzuki Swift and a brand new Skoda Fabia. The Skoda will be released in two liveries this year, Red Bull and Carlos Sainz’s privateer entry into a round of the Spanish Rally Championship (which he won!)



Classic

Long anticipated Seat 131 and Renault 8 Gordini. Note the SEAT not FIAT 131. There are also plans for another Ford Escort Mk2,

livery unknown at this time, but results of the NSCC competition were passed on – hint hint.

Vintage

Samples were shown at the German ToyFair of a Vintage TT Pajero (ex Exin in original cardboard box). However, latest information is that it will be released in Spain only and in limited numbers at approx 100€.

Pro Range

Two new liveries for the Pro-range rally Citroën Xsara “Duvat/OMV” and a new livery for the Audi R8. There will be a new Pro Spec Porsche GT3, also new for 2008 is the inclusion in Pro sets of Parma Controllers. These will also be available separately and will represent excellent value for money (I’m told).

Bikes

Yes that’s right Bikes. Tecnitoy have secured exclusive rights for the GP series and plan to release the motor bikes initially in their 1:43 range and later in the year as 1:32. Early indicators are that the 1:32 bikes will lean, but will not have a rider figure, not planned for release until the end of the year at the earliest.

Accessories

Several new accessories are due, in addition to those previously mentioned, including “Time Manager/Radar”, a timer/ speed indicator and “Race Manager”, a lap counter and stop start control bridge.

Digital

Most of the new 2008 releases are planned in SCX digital as well as analogue. Also two new accessories “Digital Stop light Bridge” and “Digital Wireless hand Throttles”.

Special editions

There are several planned special editions that I hope to be able to confirm to you next month, watch this space. ➡➡



Compact

It looks like the Company's 1:43 range will soon be available for the first time in the UK with F1, Moto GP bikes, DTM and GT cars available separately and in sets. There are also plans for the new "My First SCX/Driving School" range to be released for the under 4s.

Spain only plans for 2008

Info on any Spanish only models is hard to confirm, but it looks like some of the Altaya Spanish releases will find their way into the standard Spanish catalogue, look out for the Seat Ibiza Bimotor Ref 6307 and the Seat Fura ref 6313. No actual mock ups of the real cars, but liveries do appear to be different from the Altaya releases. The Spanish only club car this year is a Porsche GT3 and the Toy Fair Car is similar to the club car.

Sloter

Many of you will have seen the recent releases from Sloter (Manta), the new UK distributor is AEC Models and the tie up with SCX continues. The Mantas released last year (not via AEC) had a major problem with the chassis design and most of the cars were delivered with broken chassis and/or drop arms. Sloter have been quick to issue a new chassis and offer a free replacement for people registering on their web site. I did and am pleased to report that my replacement chassis and wing mirrors arrived within the week. Next month I will give you a round up of new Sloter models planned for 2008, but a quick round up - new liveries for the Manta, ZYTEK, Racing kits for the 312PB, and Lola T290. New Models; Lola T70 Spyder, Opel Corsa Super 1600. ■



A New Chapter

2008 brings about a whole set of “news” for Ninco; a new image, new sets, new tuning parts, and of course some great new cars! This year also brings about a change in how Ninco distribute their product within the UK as A.B.Gee take the reins from The Hobby Co. as Ninco’s new UK distributor.

The Nuremberg Toy Fair was the ideal launch-pad to announce Ninco’s change of corporate identity. The Ninco name now takes on a darker theme as it appears on all new sets and literature against a black background. The famous “Red Triangle” remains but the typeface used has also been updated bringing the logo in-line with the new image which will establish themselves further as a serious manufacturer of slot-cars and products for those dedicated to the hobby.

Magnificent Seven

The first of seven totally new models from Ninco this year was announced last month and is already widely available. The Porsche 550 Spyder is an iconic classic and the combination of the new NC-8 “Thruster” motor and a low centre of gravity is proving to be a winning formula on the track.

Next on the list of new models is the stunning Lamborghini Gallardo. This model is set for release in both road and race versions with the first of the two due for delivery this month! The road car will be finished in silver whilst the race version will be based on the black and orange livery of the Reiter Engineering



team; both will sport a large rear aerofoil although this can be seldom seen on the road cars. This model will surely lend itself to being produced in the colours of the Italian Polizia Stradale (*Traffic Police*) to compliment Ninco’s range of police cars. In reality, the Italian police used several Gallardos primarily to transport organs for emergency transplants although they have been known to be employed for enforcing traffic safety measures! The full-size Gallardo utilises its very own All-Wheel-Drive system ➡➡



(no surprise with Audi as their parent company) which gives it a real advantage over its rivals especially in wet weather. This model was designed as a direct competitor to the beautiful Ferrari 360 and it will be interesting to see how the 1/32nd scale replicas compare on track. In place of the 5-litre V10 lump, the Ninco version is likely to be fitted with NC-5 “Speeder” motor although the NC-6 “Crusher” will be right at home in this model.

Bowled Over

One of the most exciting vehicles on Ninco’s agenda for this year is the Bowler. Following on from the success of their Wildcat, Bowler Off Road Ltd., are now concentrating their efforts on producing a more powerful and more refined off-road racer – the Nemesis. Although this year’s Lisbon-Dakar event had to be cancelled, a number of Bowlers entered into the event will, like all 2008 entrants, have priority entry for next year which is scheduled to take place in Argentina and Chile from 3rd to 18th January 2009. Likely to be available in the second half of this year, Ninco’s Bowler Nemesis will include all-round independent suspension, drop Pro-Arm guide and the high torque NC-7 “Raider” motor.

C4 - Highly Explosive

Last year saw the long-awaited Citroën C4 WRC car explode onto the circuit claiming a 1-2 victory on its official debut - the Monte Carlo Rally 2007. Ninco have faithfully reproduced this model for release in the first half of 2008 based on the No.1 car of Sebastian Loeb from the Swedish round of the 2007 World Rally Championship. A second livery based on Citroën team-mate Dani Sordo’s No.2 car is also planned. As with all current Rally cars from Ninco, interchangeable ProShock suspension can be expected with power being supplied by the NC-5 “Speeder” motor. In the next few months we will see just how the C4 shapes up against the Focus, Impreza and 307...

“Passionate Pursuit of Perfection”

Around twenty years ago, Toyota set out to produce a vehicle that combined luxury with reliability and a brand that would become synonymous with quality not just in product but also in service. This goal was achieved and the Lexus brand is consistently among the top five most reliable vehicles in major customer service surveys. Lexus entered the world of motorsport in 1999 when Team Lexus entered two GS400





race cars into the North American Street Stock Championship. This impressive debut season continued with the introduction of the Lexus SC430 in the GT500 class of the 2006 Super GT (*formerly known as JGTC*) series. Ninco now expand further their Japanese “Big 3” range by adding the Lexus SC430 alongside the Toyota Supra, Nissan Fairlady Z and Honda NSX. In fact, the SC430 replaced Toyota’s Supra for the 2007 season. Preliminary pictures show the 2007 Round 1, GT500 Class-winning car of Tachikawa and Takagi - the Cerumo No.38 Zent car as well as the No.25 car of Toyota Team Tsuchiya. In addition, some “TRD” (*Toyota Racing Development*) liveries were spotted at the Toy Fair but these are believed to be ‘set’ cars.

The Ninco GT cars are well represented each year and the Lexus slogan “The Passionate Pursuit of Perfection” is nicely suited to this latest model.

The Return to LMP

Ninco have not produced an LMP car since the BMW V12. The return to this category with the Acura LMP2 is therefore a welcome one. Acura is the luxury brand of Japanese automotive giant Honda and was the catalyst that sparked the brands of Lexus (Toyota) and Infiniti (Nissan). They have been involved in American motorsport for over fifteen years and in 2006 announced their plans to enter the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) with Le Mans Prototypes (LMP) starting from the 2007 season. Their announcement also included plans to run these vehicles in this year’s 24 Hours of Le Mans with

an eventual move to the LMP1 class. Their debut at Sebring saw one of their three teams winning the class and taking a creditable 2nd place overall! This has obviously grabbed Ninco’s attention and with beckoning success at Le Mans, looks set to be a future classic. Ninco displayed a pre-assembly prototype at the recent Toy Fair; the finished model is likely to be available towards the end of this year.

Concept to Reality?

The final new model in Ninco’s 2008 line up is the Chevrolet WTCC car. The first pictures circulated are of the Chevrolet Ultra Concept Car that was shown during the 2006 Paris Motor Show. The main idea behind this vehicle was for it to be powered by a 190HP diesel engine – and with the success of Diesel power at Le Mans, it could be a reality in the WTCC sooner than we think... The current Chevrolet WTCC car is a more conventional touring car and can be seen in the UK when the event is held at Brands Hatch in July. It’s not as mean-looking as the Ultra and I think it would be great to see this little beast on a plastic track, even if it doesn’t make it to the tarmac!

Other New Items...

Ninco are well known for their innovation and development of product does not just include cars! An entire range of new sets will be offered this year with an initial line-up of four sets consisting of track, barriers, power, throttles and cars as follows:- an oval layout with two Lexus SC430s, a Rally figure-of-eight with Citroën C4 and Ford Focus, a GT figure-of-eight including two Porsche 997s and a more complex double-bridge layout offered with two Lamborghini Gallardos. Two N-Digital sets will be offered, one with and one without cars included.

The ProRace range of components evolves into the ProRace EVO range with the addition of 3/32” diameter axles and corresponding in-line/angle-winder gears, bushings and wheel hubs. All of these are detailed in the latest Ninco catalogue which will be available from your local supplier very soon. ■

I begin this month with more news regarding trackside scenery and accessories. Tarn Model Foundry have released some more of their excellent die cast trackside figures, new for this month are a police officer standing at ease, an Italian polizia officer, a fly fisherman with rod and a police set with the aforementioned officer plus a gatso speed camera officer. Slot car Scenics have now put into production their first spectator banking sections, and are busily working on some new ideas. Hopefully I can bring you some photos in April. Finally on the scenic side I have had some samples of new wall sections from a new company called Slotplastic Ltd. The first ones are in black and white as pictured, however red, yellow, green, blue and orange should eventually be available. These pieces clip onto the track and I understand that Martin and Bernarde are looking for companies who would be willing to sponsor or provide advertising stickers to go on them so if anyone out there can help please contact them at slotplastic@btinternet.com. I know they also have some other exciting products planned like trackside rally logs, rocks, walls and gates but need resources to put these into production.

I have been quite busy building this month but don't seem to have finished much off. I have completed the Proto Slot Kit '66 Toyota 2000GT and '68 Howmet Turbine, with work having just started on their new '73 Porsche RSR kit. News does come however that Proto Slot now appear to have tied in with Bitume Slot Racing for all future releases, which should include the Ferrari TR61 in NART colours and the '69 Porsche 917 long tail. Also built but not quite finished this month are Reinecke Motor Sports new '67 Mercury Cougar, designed to fit on a slightly modified Scalextric Mustang Chassis. I have in fact built three but am waiting for the new resized decals being produced by Slot Cars 4 U which should cover around six versions, including the famous Bud Moore entered cars, pictures next month on these beauties. Other works in progress includes Bauer's re-released 1/32nd Cheetah Spyder available through MRE. A couple I did manage to finish were Le Mans Miniatures' new '62 CD Panhard and OCAR's Aston Martin DB3S.

Actual releases in ready to run this month include Slot.It's all new angle winder chassis Audi R8C designed to take their new "Flat Six"



Slotplastic Ltd's new barrier walls with LMM's CD Panhard and OCAR Aston



Proto Slot's Toyota 2000GT and Howmet Turbine

motor, available as the Snetterton roll out version or in plain white for repaints. While talking repaints look out on eBay for some great stuff by 'Chris from Crewe' who is producing excellent re-liveried Slot.It Porsches and Lancias as shown below. Also out now are Avant Slot's new 2007 Pescarolo and Peugeot 908 both as individual releases in race and test colours and also as part of a three car 2007 Le Mans Winners boxed set including the victorious Audi. Also hot off the press this month are two new 1/32nd sports car body kits from AA Bodies, these being the Lotus XI and Brabham BT8 - both designed with either PCS32 or Penelope Pitlane chassis in mind. I should hopefully have them built for next time.



Avant Slot's new 2007 Le Mans Winners Set.

The biggest toy fair in the world, the annual Nuremberg show, has just finished and we have plenty of news regarding planned releases from there and elsewhere this month. Auto Art have plans for a Mitsubishi Evo IX in 1/32 and 1/24, while B.R.M. had pre-production versions of their new 1/24th Porsche 962 IMSA, Toyota 88C and Mégane Trophy cars. Cartonic have branched into 1/24th with a new set including Audi R8s and had mock ups including Porsche 935 and 917s and a Birdcage Maserati. Carrera had the most new stuff lined up with a digital 1/24th range including a planned 1/24th Ferrari 250GTO and, in 1/32nd, De Tomaso Pantera GR5, Chevrolet Monza, '60 Plymouth Fury, '57

Chevy Bel Air, '73 Opel Manta, Mk I Golf Gti, KTM X-Bow, Audi R8, Dodge Charger STR and the 2007 Ferrari, Williams, McLaren and Renault F1 cars. Newcomers HPI are starting off with a 1/32nd Nissan Skyline GT R32. Le Mans Miniatures have their planned '92 Peugeot 905, '07 Pescarolo, '74 Matra Simca 670B and the infamous Porsche 917/20 "Pink Pig". MB Slot are producing the Ferrari F430, MMK have a new Alfa Romeo Disco Volante and kits of the '77 Alpine A310LM and '60 birdcage Maserati, and MRRC still plan to bring us their Ford GT40 MKIV, Porsche 910, and Cheetah. NSR had pre-production prototypes of their Ford GT40 MKIV while Osterero have some strange new "Dream Cars" that look like 1/32nd scale "thingies" with metal chassis and lexan bodies, but on the bright side they also propose an exquisite looking Lotus 79. Penelope Pitlane are producing a Brooklands Rolls Royce and will hopefully be co-sponsoring a pre 1940 event with TRRC for multi-seat or offset seat cars on Sunday November 23rd. Sloter had details of a Lola T70 Spyder along with a new Opel Corsa S1600. Slot.It have their long awaited Alfa Romeo 33/3, Ferrari F40 and two new cars being a long tail version of the Nissan 390 and a Jaguar XJR12. Spirit is producing a Halfords' version of their Peugeot 406, four Courage liveries and a new VW Golf MkI. Finally, Team Slot is planning a restyled Lancia Delta Super Intergrale, an Opel Ascona 400, and also a Golf MkI road car.

Very finally this month we have news of a one off special car. This was a 1960's 1/24th scale Merit kit owned by Wolverhampton's Malcolm Scotto and given out at a previous Early Birds event to renowned concours builder Joel Thura in order for it to be finally built into a slot car. With much work and skill Joel completed the Lotus in a stunning bare metal foil aluminium and red livery, motorised it and has presented it back to Wolverhampton to be auctioned with all funds going to our chosen charity the Acorns Children's Hospice. This fine car will be auctioned on eBay UK under the Scalextric cars section starting on Saturday ➡

March 22nd with an opening price of £95 under the description Merit Lotus XI charity car. This truly is a unique and beautiful slot car and I

hope you will bid on it, our thanks to Joel and Malcolm. All being well we can raise a decent amount to help these children. Till next time - keep it in the slot. ■



Merit Lotus XI being auctioned for the Acorns Children's Hospice via E-bay listing on March 22nd



I was hoping to bring you news of the brand new Ferrari F40 this month, but still nothing has surfaced. Despite this, there are 10 new models to report on and there's news from this year's Nuremberg ToyFair.

Standard Releases

Audi Quattro A2 "Rothmans" #6 (88276)

Rally Antibes 1986, driven by Attila Ferjancz with co-driver Janos Tandari. The model is decorated in the traditional "Rothmans" livery of white for the top half and blue for the lower. A feature of this car is that the cigarette sponsorship has been tampon printed and really shows the car in a true light.

Porsche 908/3 "Tergal" #5 (88281)

24hr Le Mans 1972, driven by the all-Spanish driver line-up of Juan Fernandez, Francesco Torredemer and Eugenio Baturone. Despite completing 278 laps, the car was unclassified as it was not running at the finish. The model is decorated in yellow with green stripes running down the centre and around the sill.



Porsche 935 K3 "Coca Cola" #05 (88282)

Daytona 24hr 1980, driven by the all-American driving team of Bob Akin, Roy Woods and Bobby Rahal. Despite being classified in 54th position, the car suffered engine problems after completing 156 laps and failed to finish the race. The model is decorated predominantly red with white "Coca Cola" graphics adorning the bonnet. It features covered spotlights mounted on the bonnet and covered main headlights.

Ferrari 512 CL (Kit) Red #5 (88289)

24hr Le Mans 1970 test car, driven by Ignazio Giunti, Jacky Ickx and Peter Schetty. On race day the car raced with #6 and was driven by Nino Vaccarella and Ignazio Giunti (catalogue reference C72). It proved not to be a good race for this car as it broke down with engine problems after only 7 laps. This particular version is unique in the Fly 512 CL (Coda Lunga) range as it doesn't have any rear winglets fitted. Oddly though, the diagram on the side of the box shows the car fitted with winglets and it had them fitted on race day. ➡➡



It appears that the only way to produce an official model of a Ferrari these days is to either pay a hefty licence fee to Mattel, or produce it in kit form. The kit method has been successfully deployed by the likes of Slot.It with their 312PB and now Fly are going down the same route. Unlike the Slot.It cars where the body shell is complete and all you need do is assemble the chassis, Fly have taken a slightly different stance and you need to build not only the chassis, but also some work is required on the body shell as well. The red Ferrari box states that there are more than 25 assembly pieces. The one I purchased took no longer than 10 minutes to build and although the instructions are folded up as part of the backing card, assembly is really simple and self explanatory. The interior already has the driver and steering wheel fitted, so all that's required by the purchaser is to attach the engine flutes section and the two filler caps. Once done the completed interior is then secured into the body shell. Other detailing parts are the rear exhaust section, front centre headlight and the underside rear body work. All of these just simply clip into position, either on the chassis or body shell. The headlights really need gluing, but if, like me, you only intend to display the model then just simply using the chassis to hold them in place is sufficient. All that remains is to fit the tyres onto the hubs, clip in the motor and axle assemblies, attach the braids and wires to the guide and screw the chassis assembly to the completed body. A crystal display case is supplied in the box which fits onto a red plinth.

The kit method will also be deployed for many of the forthcoming F40s (when they arrive). The exception being maybe some of the commissioned special editions like the Gauge-master version, for example.

BMW M1 "Red Lobster" #25 (88315)

Daytona 24hr 1980, driven by Kenper Miller, Dave Cowart and Christine Beckers. The car was classified in 47th position despite an accident on lap 222. The model is white with red sponsor graphics and complemented with silver BBS wheels. Although very similar, this version is not

to be confused with the hard to find special edition produced for a Spanish slot magazine a couple of years ago. They both have the same sponsor and are both white, but the special edition version has "IMSA GTO Champion 1981" stamped on the plinth. There are also some subtle differences in the livery. One to look out for to complete your M1 collection.

Playboy Collection

Number three in the series and, like the previous two, available in a standard crystal case and presentation card box. The first catalogue reference number from the list below represents the crystal case version: -

Lister Storm (99023) and (99034) The model is decorated in black with white snow flake graphics and features the December 1970 cover issue on the roof. This particular issue stars the American model Carol Imhof.

Special Editions

Lancia 037 (White) #1 (99088) Rally El Corte Ingles 1986, driven by Salvador Servia and Jordi Sabater. This is a limited edition model of 500 units mounted onto a green plinth with a numbered picture backing card. It is predominantly white with red, gold and yellow pinstripes down both sides. It also comes complete with a set of cigarette decals for you to complete the car.

Porsche 935 K3 "Mambo" #54 (99101) DRM champion 1979, driven by Klaus Ludwig. This was produced for this year's Nuremberg ToyFair and is a limited edition mounted in a crystal case on a white plinth. The model is decorated in light blue with orange and yellow stripes running around the bonnet and along the sides.

Circuitos con Historia

Porsche 917K "Lucky Strike" #4 (99074) 9hr Kyalami 1970, driven by Tony Adamowicz and Mario Casoni. This box set forms part of the historical circuit series and focuses on the South African circuit, Kyalami. Oddly enough,



the box text refers to the car modelled as taking part in the 1970 race, but I have been unable to back this statement up. After a little research, my findings reveal that the car actually took part and finished 4th in the 1971 event, which formed the first round of the Springbok GT series. Even the classification table printed in the booklet refers to the 1971 event, which proves my findings are correct. Anybody want a job as Fly's proof reader?

The 917K modelled is decorated mainly in white with a red tapered band running from the top of the cockpit to the rear wing. As is the current trend now, the cigarette sponsorship has been tampo printed instead of using decals. The informative booklet included has text written by David Piper and includes many colour photographs.

Nuremberg 2008

Fly had three prototypes on display at this year's show, plus the announcement of three further cars planned for 2008 and beyond. The prototypes on display included the long awaited Ferrari F40, a Ferrari 250 LM and the "Flyer"

series Riley Mk XI. There was, however, no news of the Zakspeed Mustang listed in the 2007 catalogue. Talking of catalogues, I have been unable to confirm whether there will be a 2008 catalogue or not - watch this space so to speak. Also on display was the reintroduction of the pit lane accessories, which includes a new building and three covered boxes to represent the new car announcements. The new pit lane building is a marshal's hut which fits on the wall section, similar to the team paddocks. New cars announced are a Williams FW07, Ferrari 512BB and a Lamborghini of some kind. Fly have not elaborated further on what this will be. I hope it's the Miura, just because I prefer classic cars. The only other cars on display were of current cars and limited editions. One of these is a very special edition with a production run of only two. The car is a Ferrari 250 GTO and is decorated in white. The only two people to own these cars are Rafael Barrios, who is the owner of Fly Car Model and The Pope. This explains why the car is decorated white and has the Vatican emblem on the car. One to put on your wants list, knowing that you're never going to own one! ■



Sir,

Once a year the Solent Slot Car Club hosts race meetings for children affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. This year we decided to do a bit more and hold an event to raise money for the charity which organises their visit to the UK. We held a 12 hour race on our club track on Feb 9th (as advertised in this very Journal).

We ended up with five teams made up from the Solent senior, junior and Bolwextric club up the road. We used Scalextric Lamborghini Gallardos. The magnets had been removed and 20g of weight added, 10g in the front and 10g in the middle. Each team raced for an hour on the six lanes changing driver every 15 minutes. Teams consisted of 2-3 drivers. Then after six hours the whole thing was repeated. Teams paid an entry fee to raise money. Our club track is a six lane "classic" Scalextric track. We also built a Ninco rally track that anyone wandering in to see the race could try and set fastest time.

We had several visitors during the day including NSCC chairman Peter Zivanovic. The race was run from 0900-2100h and a good atmosphere prevailed throughout the day. We were even supplied with home-made cakes during the event! The winning team completed 3916 laps and £240 was raised for the charity. A big thanks to all who attended, organised and supported this event.

I am, yours etc,
Cedric Whiting
(Solent Slot Car Club)

Sir,

Firstly, I enjoyed your concept of Jason Plato's slot car racing set in the editorial of the February issue.

Secondly, I am saddened by Jason Wright's article about the closure of Swaton Raceway. It may seem harsh but I look forward to receiving my Journal every month in order to read about all things exciting in the world of our hobby. I found Mr Wright's piece to be whingey and detract from the otherwise light and enjoyable reading the Journal makes elsewhere. It is unfortunate he has been forced to cease trading due to circumstances outside of his control, but I feel an extensively prepared and frankly biased synopsis of various types of pushers and pullers in the slot market is completely unnecessary. Yes, the world is an unfair place at times. But I don't wish to read about it in my toy car magazine!

Thirdly, congratulations to Dave Chang who has definitely proven his engineering worth by aligning precision components with "a large hammer"! That's the way to do it!

I am, yours etc,
Gary Skipp

.....
Sir,

I was very sad to read of the demise of Swaton Raceway as a slot car supplier. I have used them on several occasions and they have always been very good. Not everything on eBay is as it seems, postage costs are higher and sellers are covering their Paypal fees in the P&P. Boxes often arrive cracked because of poor packaging.

I am, yours etc,
Alan Clark



Carrera Corner is now back after a while away - just like an old friend who's back from a long holiday – or a bad penny!!

As many will have probably been aware, the previous distributor for Carrera within the UK ceased trading a while back and thus the ability to get the latest models was proving difficult. This really was a shame as the quality of the cars had vastly improved over the last couple of years and they were sorely missed. A number of people had to resort to importing cars from the USA in order to keep up to date with the latest models – but no more!!

The new distributors, Hobby Company, invited me along to their head-quarters late last month – (on the day before copy deadline, hence

a begging email to Brian!!) – to learn of their plans for the short and long term and what the latest models will be.

The list of new models is impressive and some people may not be aware of the entire range – so I would like to remind you of the various scales.

First of all the smallest scale is 1/43 – but to call the GO!! range toy cars would be doing them injustice – they are finely detailed cars approaching die-cast quality rather than being one mould with just different paint jobs.

New models for the future will be a larger F1 range, as well as a rally series and of course some superb new movie tie-ins: James Bond, Batman, Speed Racer and some wonderful quirky Mario Brother karts.

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The next size up is Evolution – the 1/32 scale car and Carrera will be introducing some innovative and new cars to complement their existing range. F1 will have a major presence in this series, with the widest number of cars on the starting grid from any manufacturer.

The popular Hot Rods will also be available easily within the UK which will curb my internet shopping! These cars just look superb whizzing around the tracks! A number of other different cars will also be available throughout the year.

Anthony Shaw of The Hobby Company was keen to point out that they had listened to comments from racers that the depth of the guide on Carrera cars often made it difficult to run on non-Carrera track. So all cars will in future include a replacement guide for other tracks – and they are so simple to change over – no messing about with fiddly screws and wires – after all we'd rather race the cars than take them apart!!

The largest models are the 1/24 Exclusiv range. These cars are not so common but Carrera are introducing some lovely Endurance cars (Ferrari 575 and Corvette) as well as the Ferrari GTO soon. The wonderful thing about racing these cars, which will fit on a standard track, is that they take time to build up speed and brake and are more like the real thing!

All the range from GO!! through Evolution and up to Exclusiv are also available in digital format now – but to make life easy the names are Digital 143, 132 and 124.

To avoid the need to buy a different set of cars for analogue and digital, all the digital cars can be raced on analogue tracks – of whatever make. Another cool feature of Carrera is that because of the reversible switch the cars can race the other way around the track.

When I tried out the digital layout it was possible to tune the cars with different braking and acceleration and top speed settings for each driver. We also put in different fuel settings so that a faster car will drink more and have to pit for longer. Luckily the flashing lights that warn you when you are running out of fuel avoided the embarrassment of doing a Montoya!!

The Hobby Company release schedules are not yet finalised but I do know that the next few cars to coincide with the start of the Grand Prix 2008 series will be: 2008 Renault, 2008 BMW, 2008 liveried McLaren and the 2007 Ferrari. These will be joining the Red Bull and Toro Rosso cars already in the range. All these cars will be available in both the Go!! and Evolution ranges AND they have detailed driver helmets!!

One final bit of good news that I was able to find out is that whilst a number of other manufacturers have needed to increase their prices – not only will Carrera be offering a superior quality and finely detailed cars, but they also intend to be competitively priced which is a joy to hear from someone who tends to buy to collect AND race!

Future releases and news and reviews will be in the next edition of Carrera Corner – which will be a more regular column.

If there are any comments or questions about Carrera cars or where your local stockist is, please send me an email.

Until next month. ■

World Classics Kit Build

Part 2 - Painting

By Clive Mills

The most important things to remember when it comes to paintwork are preparation, keeping everything clean and temperature. When you have trimmed the body give it a good wash as there will be some release agent still on the body where it came out of the mould. The easiest way to do this is to put some washing up liquid on it and rub this all over the body, and then wash it off under a warm running tap. I also rub it with a nail brush at the same time. The next thing is to give it a light sanding all over with 800 grade wet and dry paper.

The body is now ready for its first paint. The best way to spray a body without getting your fingers all over it is to use a stand. I made mine several years ago and it is simply made from a piece of wood 2.5" x 4" with a piece 1.75" x .75" and 1.5" high screwed together. A lump of Blu-Tack is used to hold the body in place.



I hold the stand and spray the body starting along the sides, then across the front and back. Then I spray the top moving the spray across the body working front to back. If you wear a latex glove when doing the paintwork, you will not have your hand covered in paint. As soon as the body is painted it needs to be covered. I use a Carrera clear cover as these are so large.

I always use acrylic car paint as there is such a vast range to choose from. The first coat needs to be white primer. You will find the primer dries quickly and will show any blemishes there may be. These will need to be filled and sanded with another coat of primer over this. When the body is ready for the top (colour) paint it is best to give the primer another light rub with the wet and dry paper. This can leave a small amount of dust on the body, which will need to be wiped off using tissue or better still a Tac Rag. These are tacky cloths which remove all dust from the surface. They can be purchased from a car paint supplier. The car we are showing had a blue stripe on the nose. This was done by painting the front of the car Ford Bermuda blue. The stripe was masked off with Tamiya tape and the whole body was then painted, Audi Laser red.



When you start the colour coat the paint flows better and gives a greater shine if it is warm. I do this by warming the can in a jug of warm water - not hot as this could be dangerous. The water should be warm enough for you to hold your hand in without being hot. Shake the rattle can frequently so that the paint mixes well and is just warm. If the weather is warm the spraying can be done outside, but it must be warm and dry air. If you are unable to do this, it could be done in the garage as I do. ➡➡





This avoids conflict with the wife. (It's strange that they don't understand how important slot cars are). When spraying, I pass the can past the model quite quickly but closer than it is stated on the can - approximately 9" from the body. Do not stop over the body as this will cause a build up of paint and runs. Put only a light coat over the body first, just a mist coat. After a couple of minutes spray another slightly heavier coat and finally a heavier coat over this. After each application of paint, put the cover over it to prevent dust from getting on the wet paint. When you are happy with the finish, leave the body under the cover for a complete day

It should then be hard enough to handle. If there are any marks they can be polished out using car polish, but only after a couple of days when the paint has cured.

You should now have a shiny car body. I always give the body a polish about three days after painting as this helps protect the finish in race conditions. ■

The Powersledge Bugatti Revisited

By Mike Ronald

As a child I drooled over the pictures of the four vintage vehicles in 60s Scalextric catalogues but alas, Santa never came up with the goods. The decades passed and the “Power and Glory” series was released so I finally obtained a Bentley and Alfa Romeo. Later on Pink-Kar reproduced the other two - Auto Union and Bugatti - so I had a complete set at last.

I like to use my cars and none of these really performed very well on the track so some work was necessary with motor changes etc. I also tried out alternative paint jobs as some may have seen in the display cabinets at Ramsgate weekends. The ultimate dream though was to fit original 60s motors and get all four running on an equal basis. I eventually managed to acquire used original versions of the C64 Bentley and C65 Alfa at a good price and soon got them running very well. The Auto Union and Bugatti were definitely out of my price range though so I was stuck with the Pink-Kar copies.

Various options were tried without success when, as if on cue, issue 300 of the Journal arrived with a massive article about the Bugatti

Type 59. It is definitely my favourite article in 10 years membership of the NSCC and, towards the end of the piece I found the answer to my quest - the powersledge Bugatti.

I studied the photos and read the article again - the car might have been a genuine factory item or “it is entirely possible that it was just modified by a club racer in the 60s.” Great - that meant I could have a go as well!

I started by building a yellow one but got a bit carried away and ended up with a fleet of seven - not to mention the powersledge Auto Union! On the yellow car I used green Bentley wheels to match the prototype of the original article. The blue and red versions retain Pink-Kar Bugatti wheels while the black one, which is a repaint, is also fitted with Bentley wheels, painted black with Ninco spinners inserted.

If you would like to have a go yourself then read on - it is not necessarily the definitive way to do the job but it worked for me. It is not exactly a cheap project as Pink-Kar Bugattis are starting to rise in price and you need to source a good powersledge motor as well. Once you have cut the chassis there is no going back, so take care.

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Parts needed

- Pink-Kar Bugatti less motor and steering assembly. It is essential to start with a good car - no distortions in body alignment.
- Powersledge motor complete with all the relevant bits.
- New front axle.
- “HAMA” beads - see later.
- A household pin.
- Roundels/number decals.

The only tools required are a very fine saw, a half round needle file, craft knife and wire cutters, although a Dremel will make the job easier.

This is what you do

Remove both body screws, motor, rear axle and front guide/wheel assembly.



Compare underpan to photo. Cut with very fine saw and deburr. There is a groove just behind the original motor mount which is a guide for the cut.



Offer up a pre-tested, strong running sledge motor - if tight fitting, open out the rear axle holder with a half round needle file. This should be done a bit at a time, as you require it to be a loose fit but not sloppy.



Now to the upper body - remove front body screw pillar. I did this by simply snipping away with narrow wire cutters.

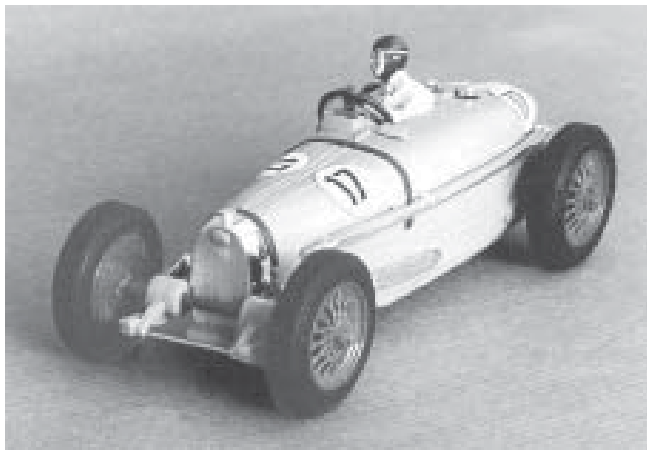


Re-assemble body top to the short underpan and sledge motor. You will find the guide sliding bit has to be at its shortest, which puts the guide nut in-line with the radiator. You may find that the nut on the side of the motor just fouls the bodywork - in which case remove the tiniest sliver of plastic with a craft knife to enable a perfect fit.

Remove the radiator (chrome bit and black insert), cut to accommodate the nut on top of the guide assembly. Reposition and glue back in place.

The photos in the original article do not, unfortunately, show the front axle assembly on the sledge type cars so the front end is copied from the picture of the prototype in the same article.

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You now need some "HAMA" beads which are kiddies' play items - they are normally used to make pictures and can be found here: <http://www.beadmerrily.co.uk/>. Take a round needle file and make a half round slot in the two sticky out bits at the front of the body top. Take care here as there is not a great thickness of plastic at this point and overenthusiasm in the filing department could lead to disaster. These beads hold the front axle and are glued into the slots you have just made - Araldite is best. They must, of course, be horizontal so insert an axle with wheels and check before gluing. The beads come in all the Pink-Kar Bugatti colours so no painting is needed. Use two black beads as spacers on the front axle.



If the front wheels do not quite touch the track then you will need to remove a small piece of plastic from underneath the cockpit (driver) to enable the powersledge assembly to sit a little higher.

A household pin, with its head cut off can be positioned at the front of the radiator and axle to reproduce the round bar at the front of the body.

The powersledge rear axle is too long so replace or cut to the size of the Pink-Kar original.

The front Pink-Kar wheels are a push fit to stub axles so will need to be drilled out to fit a standard axle. Alternatively Sean at Pendle Slot Racing can supply an original rear axle with push fit wheels which you can use instead.

RS Slot Racing have Ortmann tyres (ref 28n) to fit the wheels if a bit more grip is needed than the originals supply. However, you will have to radius the edges slightly or the car can tip over on the bends rather than sliding out.

A small paint job completes the work - radiator badge, driver and cockpit tidy - plus a set of Scalextric roundels/numbers.

As I mentioned earlier, Pink-Kar Auto Unions can be converted in a similar way and these will be the subject of a later article.

Editor's Note

When Mike sent me this piece I was intrigued and immediately wanted a powersledge Bugatti myself. As a scratchbuilder I make a damn fine editor, so I called in some help in the form of Clive Mills. I gave him the necessary bits plus Mike's instructions and left him to it. A couple of weeks later he returned with a pair of the beasts - a yellow one for himself and a blue one for me. They are absolutely brilliant performers and we have spent many happy hours racing them on my garage track. The powersledge motor has been much maligned but a good one has an excellent turn of speed and is perfectly suited to these cars. If Scalextric had ever put the revised original on the market I suspect the whole Bugatti story may well have ended differently and it wouldn't be the rarity it is today.

Clive built each car in an evening and kindly provided the build pictures in this article. He also found a couple of ways to modify the process and I have included these within the instructions. ■



62740 Seat Leon WTCC Monteiro

By Ben Leigh

Last year was a great season for the WTCC. At the start, BMW dominated with SEAT close-ish behind. With the release of the TDi engines however, SEAT became a lot more competitive. The car for this review is the SEAT Leon of Formula 1 refugee Tiago Monteiro.

After the final round at Macau, Tiago finished 11th in the championship with 38 points, 54 off eventual champion Andy Priaulx. Tiago had three podiums, one 2nd at Anderstorp and two 3rd places at Pau. All in all, it was a relatively strong debut season for the Portuguese driver.

Appearance

This SCX version of the SEAT Leon is only really comparable with the Scalextric version in terms of looks and performance, which, thankfully, I have. The car is finished in a dark blue and yellow livery, like the Red Bull cars but Tiago has a different title sponsor, which is,

Caixa Geral de Depositos, which, I believe, is a bank. The tampon printing is crisp and clear with no obvious orange peel and the paint is finished evenly. However, the paintwork around the rear lights is smudged and this is quite noticeable even from a metre away and you do see a very thin green line running in between the yellow and blue paintwork but this is not noticeable from more than 3 or 4cm away. Other than that the paintwork is very good.

The bodywork looks very fragile with the spoiler connected with two thin black plastic bars. The mirrors are held on by thread but they are nicely detailed. Overall, this car looks very menacing from the front and more aggressive than the Scalextric version.

Performance

This is the third SCX car I have and the other two are lacking a lot in the performance department so I expected this to be a similar affair, oh how wrong I was proved to be! ➡➡





This body is held on with five screws and another two for the magnet. Inside is what I think is the standard RX- 42 motor as we now see in most SCX cars.

I put this car on my 6ft Scalextric sport track with the magnet in and gave it a blast. It was astonishingly quick. I ran lap times within a tenth of a second of the Scalextric Leon.

However, when I took the magnet out it was a completely different story. The SCX car can be pushed a lot more and is more controllable and predictable than the Scalextric equivalent. The SCX Leon was about one second faster which really blew me away.

The results were very similar on my MDF routed track. The SCX was about one second faster again, so a very outstanding car for me.

Comparison

In looks, if you want a good looking car with no sponsors appearing to be missing then go for the SCX. If you want a fast magnet car then buy the Scalextric, but if you're a club, non-magnet, racer then, from an amateur's point of view then get the SCX version.

Conclusion

If you can live with some minor blemishes (well, big when you think about it) then this is a fantastic looking car. However, if you want an immaculate looking car then maybe this isn't for you.

Performance wise, if you are an out of the box magnet racer then there are quicker cars but if you are a non-magnet racer then this is well up the list. All in all, this is an excellent car, a massive improvement over SCX cars of old. This has to be one of the best all round cars I have and I would to thank Gareth for letting me do this review and SCX for producing it. ■



Email: racernews@nsc.co.uk

I will start this report by congratulating Racer Emmegi for winning the Mini Auto 2007 slot car of the year award. This was for their outstanding model of the Ferrari 350P “Gunston” (RCR36).

This month there are two new models to report on and some exciting news from the Nuremberg Toy Fair. Not only are Racer making great strides forward, they are also making a “sideways” move in the market.

Nuremberg 2008

One of the big announcements at Nuremberg this year was that Racer are to start producing a range of cars out of plastic. The first in the series is the Daytona prototype Riley Mk XX and, because it is fully licensed, Racer can produce the 2008 model. The brand name for this series is titled “Sideways”. A prototype Riley body shell was shown with an accompanying poster of some of the liveries planned. Although there was no chassis on display, when fully developed it is expected to be configured either for an in-line or anglewinder motor. The motor and running gear will once again be supplied by Slot.It and although not confirmed, the motor could well be the brand new Flat 6 (announced by Slot.It at this year's fair also). Detailing and finish will be of a similar standard to that of the resin cars and costwise should compare with other slot car brands such as Slot.It and Fly, perhaps slightly higher. At this point it is impossible to say until production is in full swing. The expected release date for the first model is around September, but could of course slip due to any unforeseen development problems.

With the announcement of the plastic series, Racer are continuing to develop new models for their resin range. This was further enhanced by the announcement and display of 10 new models/liveries plus four prototype body shells.

New liveries of existing models include a “Sachs #70” and “Interscope #00” Porsche 935 K3, together with three new liveries of the Ferrari 350P. These were; a second “Gunston” livery (#4, Kyalami 9hrs 1968) and two official team cars decorated in red (#23 and #27, Laguna Seca 1967). The “Sachs” 935 is in production as I write and due for release in March and could be available in some countries by the time you read this. This will be given catalogue reference RCR40. The “Interscope” 935 and 350Ps do not have any planned release dates yet.

Also on display were five fully decorated new models, some of which were announced at last year's show. These include two versions of the Ferrari 330P, a Chaparral 2E and two versions of the previously unannounced Ferrari P3. The first of the 330Ps is currently in production and will be allocated catalogue reference number RCR39. It will be modelled on the “Scuderia Bear” #26 car that competed in the Sebring 12hrs in 1965 and features some intricately detailed rear vents and brand new wire wheels. More details on this model in my next report. The other 330P on display was a “NART” #15 sponsored car and scheduled for release in either the 3rd or 4th quarter of this year. Also due for release in the same period will be the two Ferrari P3s. These are modelled on the “Scuderia” team that competed at Le Mans in



1966, with race numbers #20 and #21 respectively. They will both be given the same catalogue reference, but appended with either an A or B. The final model on display and certainly not the least was the Chaparral 2E. Although this model is behind schedule it has certainly been worth the wait. The reason for its delay was simply Racer's desire for the perfect model and that is what they've ended up with. Detailing is second to none and I wouldn't be surprised if they win the Mini Auto 2008 award with it. The only downside is that it won't be available for another three to four months. This is due to having to wait for some of the plastic parts, such as rear wing, windshield and chassis. Also this car will probably demand a slightly higher rrp due to the fact that it takes 20% longer to produce and has many more detailed parts.

Prototypes

There were also four resin prototype shells on display, with the first of these being an Alfa T33/3 in both short and long tail versions. This particular car was announced at last year's fair and although it is still at an early development stage, Marco of Racer Emmegi is happy with its shape. The other two were previously unannounced models of a Ferrari 312P Spyder and Ford P68 (also known as the Ford 3L). These two are also at an early development stage. The Ford P68 was pencilled in as being the first new shape release of the year, but due to taking a lot of time in getting the shape right has meant that the Alfa will probably be finished first.

Diverging from 1/32nd scale, Racer are currently working on a 1/24th scale Renault 5 Maxi Turbo, which is designed to fit onto the Plafit metal chassis. Although not decided, it could well be produced as a kit. Further details later in the year.

Other news from the fair concerns an improvement in resin technology which is much easier to work with, it's also lighter, gives better detail and much stronger. Depending on the car, around eight to nine grams can be saved in weight. The 1/24th scale Renault 5's body shell,

for example is 40% lighter, coming down from 51 to 31 grams. It is not known exactly when this new resin will be used, but it is anticipated it could start with the Racing kits. Finally, due to imperfections in the plastic used for the display boxes and the inability of the manufacturer to rectify it, a new box is to be introduced. It will be smaller than the existing one and should be easier to stack. At this time it has not been decided whether it will be used for both resin and plastic series cars.

Latest Releases

The Ferrari 312P was manufactured in a time of uncertainty, the rule makers having banned sports car prototypes of over 3 litres from racing in 1968, unless 50 were produced. While Porsche continued to develop its 3 litre 908, Ferrari in contrast pulled out of sports car racing altogether that year. For the 1969 season, Ferrari based its 312P sports car on its current F1 platform and used a slightly detuned version of its 3 litre V12 Grand Prix engine to power it. Only two of these beautiful cars were made, as they were soon to be superseded in 1970 by the 5 litre 512S, when the rules had been relaxed to producing just 25 prototypes.

The second pair of Ferrari 312Ps is now available and follows in the wheel tracks of the previously released RCR31 and RCR32 NART cars. The latest official team cars are both decorated red (as you would expect) and are virtually identical to each other. Differences between each car are the arrangement of the sponsorship decals and of course a different racing number. Also, the white identification stripes on the drivers side rear wheel arch are different, in that one is vertical, whereas the other is horizontal. In addition, the #18 car has red markings around its headlights, whereas the #19 car doesn't. Bodysell wise they are identical, but do have some subtle differences compared to the previously released NART cars. Firstly, the latest models do not have front winglets fitted, nor wing mirrors, but do have the addition of two protruding air intakes on the rear of the engine cover. The NART cars have

a single protruding air intake, but further forward on the driver's side. Another noticeable difference is that the rear winglets of the Le Mans cars are of a much shallower angle. This of course is to increase the car's top speed down the Mulsanne straight.

Ferrari 312P "Official" #19 (RCR38B)

24hr Le Mans 1969 driven by Chris Amon and Peter Schetty. Like its sister car above, also failed to finish the race. This was due to an accident and subsequent fire on the first lap. This car was given chassis number 0870 and it too started out



#18 (RCR38A)

24hr Le Mans 1969 driven by Pedro Rodriguez and David Piper. The car completed 223 laps before retiring due to gearbox problems. The chassis number for this car is 0868 and was the original works prototype, built as a spyder (no roof). It crashed heavily at Monza with Pedro Rodriguez at the wheel, but was then rebuilt as a coupé and after the Le Mans race was sold to NART.

life as a spyder (open roof) car. It first appeared at Brands Hatch where it qualified in 2nd place. Despite a puncture and the throttle cable stretching, Chris Amon managed to bring the car home in 4th position. The car regularly raced throughout the season and was fitted with a coupé body for the Le Mans race, after which it too was subsequently sold to NART. ■

BY DEANE WALPOLE H:O WORLD



The Super III chassis from Autoworld has been in development for so long that events have overtaken it. Life-Like have announced a ramp-up of their Nascar licence and AFX have released some great stuff and announced even better releases for this year. Scalextric are taking the Micro range more seriously, last year's Aston Martin DBR9 being one of the best bodies of recent years by any manufacturer. All this means that AW need the S3 to be superb from the off. Unfortunately, the initial pictures that have leaked online do not fill one with confidence.

or that AW have not used them. Both decisions beggar belief, at a time when their rival's cars are raising the standard, such a 'strategy' seems crazy unless the cars will be very cheap.

Of course all will be forgiven if the chassis is a good performer, especially if those longer wheelbase options have survived. Bodies from other makes can be adapted and the original bodies bypassed. The chassis under the cars in these pictures appears to have the same over-thick pickup shoes as the prototype and the same wheels. Hopefully this is because prototypes were used for the 'photo shoot' because if the



It is not so much the generic colour schemes used on the Stock cars, disappointing though that is, as the stumpy and generally cartoonish look of all five bodies. The prototype chassis as seen in Oct 2006 had four wheelbase settings, some of them quite long, but it would appear either these have not made it to the final design

final product IS unchanged then AW are in for a rocky ride. At the price point being mooted, consumers will expect the same performance and quality the get from other in-line and magnet cars in the \$25-\$30 bracket, and they just won't get it. Watch this space.... ■

Well, two months nearly into the New Year now and things remain a bit slower than I would have thought for this time of year in terms of volume, as the number of listings has not breached the 6000 mark this month in the UK by my reckoning. There seems to be plenty of discussion around about the effects of eBay as can be seen from the Journal last month, but the domination of eBay in the online auction market unfortunately gives little real choice for sellers who want to achieve good prices and sell in volume. With the recent headline announcement that listing fees would be cut to 10p you would have thought it a better time to sell, but there is a sting in the tail because the actual final value fee has been increased significantly from 5.25% to 7.5% for sale price up to £30 and then 4.5% up to £600. Granted there are volume discounts for big sellers but you need to be turning over £95,000 or sell 5000 items consecutively for three months to achieve that! That is an awful lot of slot stuff, and coupled with the fact that DSR's (Detailed Seller Ratings on description, communication, timely despatch and P&P charges) have to be at least 4.6 out of 5 to get the best rates, it seems sellers may be getting fed up with the way they are being treated. Ebay have also announced that sellers will no longer be able to leave negative feedback on buyers which is supposed to be so that buyers can leave more honest feedback without fear of retaliation from the seller and thus reward good sellers. Personally I am not convinced by this, as with a little homework you can easily tell who the best sellers are from their feedback comments, (many of whom can be found at your NSCC swapmeet incidentally). From the eBay forums it seems sellers are generally not impressed either with the feedback changes. I can see this meaning fewer bargains long term and the cheap listing days becoming

ever more important to the cost conscious seller with items only being listed at the sellers minimum price they are prepared to accept on these cheap listing days.

Catalogues

After that bit of gloom above, are there any goodies to report on, you may ask. Of course, and catalogues fell onto my radar this month particularly as probably one of the finest collections seen for some time was sold off individually. Virtually all the items were mint with price lists and were sold off over one weekend. Rather than list them all fully below, here is a summary of number and price for the first 30 English issues unless noted otherwise. 1 £73, 2 £120.01, 2 (USA) £50, 3 £104, 4 £22.10, 5 £36, 6 £31, 7 £8.05, 7 (Canadian) £8, 8 £21, 9 £26, 10 £26, 11 £25.09, 12 £10.50, 13 £32, 14 £16.01, 15 £15.60, 16 £12.50, 17 £16, 18 £6.07, 19 £7.70, 20 £10.50, 21 £7.50, 22 £5.73, 23 £10.05, 24 £10, 25 £5.50, 26 £18.95, 27 £8.84, 28 £3.71, 29 £7.70, 30 £0.99. Many of these were keenly sought after and at the top end price wise, but considerably cheaper ones have been available during the month for those patient buyers out there.

Rare?

The After Eight Minis continue to appear but surprisingly only in very small numbers and prices have remained firm with one set on German eBay fetching almost €500. Buyers beware though as one auction looked a relative bargain at £100 unless you read the listing carefully as this was for the set only in the box without the cars! The leaflets enclosed somewhat disguised the fact the cars had been removed. For all you rally fans out there was a SCX Mk II Escort in Rothmans livery! I do not

know whether this will be an official SCX release in the future but this was a one off re-livery of the recent Cossack model, sprayed and decaled by P&J Models, who were regulars on the slot swapmeet circuit a few years ago until diecast rally cars became their main business focus. (Item number was 330210466112 and it made £65) A C58 green Cooper with double guide fetched 1320€ from a Spanish seller but the red and blue ones with BIN of 2800€ and 1300€ from Geronimo, who I have mentioned before, were unsold as of writing. A supposedly one-off prototype, Scalextric C128 plain black BMW "Batwing" attracted strong bidding to just over the £200 mark. There was a nice yellow boxed Auto Union from a Scalextric non expert seller that just failed to top the £1k level, so I bet they were pleased.

The 2008 Scalextric Range Presentation Aston continues to attract buying interest up to just over the £200 level and has resulted in a couple of other earlier presentation models being listed as sellers cash in and think they will fetch this kind of money if you read their sales blurb! Another clued up seller had a "Perris" Blue Scalextric Bugatti for sale and may have been a little disappointed to get £511 as they stated one had gone for £840 a few months ago and another for £570 in August 2004.

Slot.It

Apart from the more recent releases, there seem to be fewer earlier models being listed lately with an early Audi SICa01A being the only really interesting one I picked up on at £87 though there is the odd bargain out there still with a Porsche Canon only fetching £36.

Prices

Prices as listed and spelt on UK eBay unless stated, with the time and auction ending day:
 Scalextric Porsche GT3R No44 Hamleys Ltd Ed C2469 Boxed £197.69 (Saturday evening).
 Vanquish MG GP4 Lotus 72 J Rindt World Champion 1970 £117.54 (Saturday night).
 James Bond Scalextric Set 1960's - inc Aston & Mercedes £1172 (Mostly complete with a couple of bits missing on Wednesday night).

Scalextric James Bond 007 Set 1960s £845 (No Aston Martin but nice box and mostly complete on Tuesday night).

VINTAGE TRIANG SCALEXTRIC YOU STEER YS400 SET + EXTRAS £125 (3 cars - Ferrari, Lamborghini and Mirage on Sunday night).

Scalextric Spares Kit No.100 box. £35.56 (Blue box only on Thursday afternoon).

Scalextric Rare Catalogue 3rd Edition 1960's £26 (Excellent condition but no price list on Thursday night).

Scalextric Tri-ang brochure £22.55 (Good condition #2 catalogue on Sunday afternoon).
 SCALEXTRIC C36 HONDA RA273 F1 ULTRA RARE COLOUR YELLOW £52 (Mexican model on Sunday afternoon).

scalextric aston martin marshal excellent condition £149 (Listed as French model with some scuffs and ends of bumper missing on Sunday night).

FERRARI F430 GT N°36 SCUDERIA PLAYTEAM - CLUB SUPERSLOT- 44€ (Spanish Superslot club car eBay on Wednesday night).

VERY VERY RARE THE FIRST TIN PLATE SCALEXTRIC CARS £180.01 (Very good condition but no drivers on Tuesday night).

Vintage Scalextric FJ BRM C72 Chrome VG Slot Car £35.60 (Sunday night 300196271243).

SCALEXTRIC FRENCH 23RD EDT CATALOGUE 1982 - EX V. RARE £7.51 (Excellent condition on Sunday night).

Scalextric C2466 Police Car Vauxhall Vectra Jersey LE £88.02 (MB on Sunday night).

Scalextric super 124 Set 200 boxed & complete 1/24 £636.99 (Box cover worn and taped and E Type had usual warping selling late on Thursday night).

Scalextric Dealers Range Presentation 2005 Mini Cooper £260 (On Wednesday afternoon).

C99 Fiat TC 600 - Red #10 - 'Rare' - Superb in Box £380 (Wednesday night).

NINCO - RENAULT CLIO NSCC LIMITED TO ONLY 500 £122 (1st Ninco club car with decals not applied on Saturday night). ■



Graham Pritchard seems to have kicked up some dust in the January issue with his exhortations to use the free advertisements in the Journal. Two pages of members' adverts in February is more than we've seen in the last several years. I agree with everything Graham wrote as well as Paul Strange's comments last month.

I would not limit your advertisements to lower value items though. We all know that eBay can be a lottery for both buyers and sellers. The James Bond set I advertised in the Journal on behalf of a non-member sold for the asking price. The seller was not a keen eBay user and knew nothing about the set. The buyer had the chance to speak to me about the set, to meet the seller, check the set and conclude the deal. Both were delighted with the process and the outcome. It's a pleasant, relaxed and civilised way to do business. It is not fraught with the tension of the auction or waiting to see whether your expensive purchase will ever show up or, if it does, turn out to be a bag of nails. If you have something to sell, please try it.

Web stuff

The Committee are looking at various ways the Club might improve members' ads. In the first place, we are looking at condition codes and limits to see if those can be changed to help. Beyond that, we are also looking at the feasibility

of hosting members' ads on our web site. We're very early in that process but I would be happy to receive any views you may have about these ideas.

Having mentioned the web site, I would like to give special thanks to our new Web Master Martin Kay for the work he has done since being appointed. The site looks much brighter and the events, etc. are bang up to date. In the calendar sections, you can now access a form to tell us about your upcoming events. Fill it in and it'll be placed in the calendar in due course.

Another key development Martin has made is to allow new and existing members to enrol or renew their subscriptions on line. If you know anyone who hasn't renewed their subscription yet, get them to try this facility. We'd be interested in your comments.

Swaton Raceway

Like many others, I was saddened to read Jason Wright's article last month. Swaton raceway will be missed, particularly at swapmeets where they usually had a substantial presence. Jason articulated many questions that have exercised many in recent years. To some degree at least, the solution is in buyers' hands. If we value service and are prepared to pay for it, good dealers will thrive. If we buy purely on cost, they will struggle. The trouble is that it can be hard for we buyers to see beyond a "bargain".

As far as eBay is concerned, I have little time for it. I do use it but only occasionally. I think it is absolutely brilliant for getting hold of things that are or were not sold in the UK. I've bought 60s German slot cars and US released records (vinyl for heaven's sake!) with great success. Without eBay, these would have been very hard to get hold of. I've even sold a few things there as well if I think it has a wide appeal, if I have no access to another appropriate market or speed is of the essence. But I can think of few things more soul destroying than conducting a business or building a collection by sitting in front of a computer screen. In the past, I have relied on eBay's feedback to decide whether I want to bid on an item. Now that eBay are



compromising that system, I feel even less inclined to use it and very much less inclined to sell anything there.

I don't think manufacturers' objectives are very different from anyone else's. If they can predict the market for a model correctly, everyone does all right – including them. Of course, if they have overproduced a model, the surplus has to be sold off somehow but there is no incentive for them to set out to make too many - they will never make a proper return that way. Dumping surplus stock has happened and still does but I believe that some manufacturers are striving to reduce this unhappy practice for their own benefit as much as everybody else's.

There is a more substantial problem, which is that compared to some hobbies ours is relatively small. I don't have any numbers but pop in to any decent sized newsagent and look at the magazine racks. You won't find any dedicated to slot cars but you will find all sorts of other hobbies represented, many of them served by several competing titles. If that is indicative of the size of the slot car market place, it is not perhaps surprising that it can only support a limited number of suppliers.

I trust we all wish Jason and Jenny the best of good fortune for their future. Whilst the hobby may no longer be their livelihood, I hope they continue to enjoy the fun and friendships they have made from the other side of the fence and that their club thrives. ■

In Praise Of Magnets

By Andy Frazer

It has oft been written in these pages that this wonderful hobby of ours has never had it so good. I completely agree. The quality, variety and accessibility of slot-related items, particularly cars, is unprecedented and every year it seems that manufacturers, both large and small, find new and thrilling ways to raid our wallets. Even now we can purchase (from the Gonzales brothers of southern Barcelona), the Whatchamacallit Mk II Coupé (RTR or pre-painted kit) which placed eighth at Spa in 1963 and many other equally eclectic models. One can only wonder what they'll think of next.

There are several theories as to why we're so spoiled. It could be the improved technology which allows for better tooling and greater scale accuracy; perhaps the tampo printing is the key. However, my theory as to why we have such a brilliant choice of slot cars these days revolves around a simple little piece of silver-grey metal often found in the chassis near the motor and running gear: Dear Readers, may I present to you, the humble Magnet.

We'll pause briefly here whilst the Anti-Magnet Brigade groans collectively and adjusts their seating position...comfy now? All right, we'll proceed.

One aspect of the Journal that has become frightfully tedious is the monthly dose of magnet-bashing in each issue. Often found in the reviews of new models, one is constantly confronted by ridiculous phrases such as, "I removed the offending magnet" and "Why do they even bother to put magnets in at all?" Oh please. It's pseudo-macho posturing which is akin to the gin-sozzled cheerleading of back-bench Parliamentarians during a late-night bill reading. Presumably these tough guys don't eat quiche either...

The reason that slot car manufacturers put magnets in the cars is because **THEY STAY ON THE TRACK BETTER**, and those same manufacturers, particularly those which produce track systems, know that this is important.

Now before you all start, I'm not some recent convert to slot cars. I've been playing, collecting and racing for the last 35 of my 39 years and I've run on tracks produced by most of the major manufacturers as well as wooden tracks. I've known the joys of tail-out power-slides on MDF and the amazement at how a quarter turn on the magnet bracket can easily transform an ill-handling SCX car. Like so many of us I'm sure, I grew up with early

Scalextric. So early in fact, that it was Dad's stuff that he'd bought during the 1960s, and as a young kid in rural Canada in the 1970s, this was magic. In those pre-internet/Playstation/I-pod times, the fact that one kept coming off wasn't the signal to move on to some other form of entertainment, rather it was the spur to keep at it and improve and eventually achieve those glorious moments of sideways action.

Sadly, with so many other distractions these days which compete for both money and mental energy, lots of people wouldn't have the patience to persist. There are plenty of individuals who wouldn't have the slightest notion that the reason the car keeps de-slotting is because they're not driving properly. Nope, cars don't stay on, chuck it back in the box, flog it on eBay. This is where the magnet comes into its own. By keeping the cars on the track, it keeps people involved in the hobby for longer! While we may scoff at the impatience of some, at least the magnet allows them to hang on (literally) a little bit longer and make some great discoveries.

Imagine the scenario: Dad wants to buy a birthday present for the young fella and in the dim recesses of his mind, he remembers the Scalextric set he had at the same age. A quick trip to the local hobby shop and he is soon faced with a bewildering range of choice. Sure, he sees Scalextric, but it looks nothing like what he remembers. Are these really slot cars? They look like static models the quality is so good! And what's this stuff? What's Ninco? What's Fly, SCX, Revell, etc? Do these work on Scalextric track? And as for this digital lark...

The set is purchased, opened and set up. Dad and Lad (or Lass) get cracking and they are amazed at how well the cars stay on. It sure wasn't like this for Dad way back when and he checks under the car to find the magnet and the penny drops. Not only that, but confidence grows and it's not too long before the set cars aren't enough any more and another trip to the hobby shop is required. Might pick up a couple of those Slot.It cars this time and next payday I'll grab some pit buildings. Pretty soon, what started as a nice gift for the child has become a full-on hobby and still more money is spent.

The next step up is to find a club, especially as it's a fun thing for both parent and child to do together. Once there, they might be lucky enough to bump into an NSCC member who ushers them over to the tracks, one of which is a four-lane wooden monster with all manner of dips and swerves and a whole new world begins. Just think, if the cars in that initial purchase kept coming off, would either parent or child have the capacity to stick with it? Probably not. The kid would head off back to his Nintendo and Dad would most likely box it back up and stick it in the shed. Sure, he'd promise himself to get it out again at some point, but things are really busy at work just now and the back bedroom needs re-decorating...

I'm not anti the Anti-Magnet Brigade, I just want them to remove the blinkers and see how a simple magnet can prolong the joy and enthusiasm for slot cars. By prolonging the enthusiasm, the expenditure is prolonged and the manufacturers know this only too well. When the manufacturers make money, then we, the enthusiasts, begin to see the really cool stuff that gets our juices going. As dyed-in-the-wool hobbyists, we may like to think that we are the be-all and the end-all, but I reckon a large part of the reason why Hornby et al can offer Limited Edition Twin Packs is because they they'll make enough money from other people purchasing Mini Challenge sets etc to cover it.

Speaking personally, when it comes to racing, a magnet is just another aspect of tuning the car. Simple as that. In our little club here in Perth, Australia, we run on Ninco track and most of our classes are box-standard, so the magnet is always a factor. Even more than that, there is one guy in our group who suffers from a disability and therefore his co-ordination is not the greatest, so having a magnet allows him to participate more fully with the rest of us and enjoy his hobby.

So if you're the type of person who gets the magnet out of the car as quickly as possible, that's fine. But as you slide the phone bill under it and stick it up on the fridge, just remember that that little piece of metal is a big part of the reason why we're having it so good. ■



E.T. Grip

By Deane Walpole

I am ashamed to admit it now, but for the longest time I attached no importance to using the right kind of controller. It was an H:O thing, when I started out the clubs provided basic Parma units and nobody questioned it. Of course times change and the explosion in the 1/32nd 'Scalextric' market has been matched by the controller sector growth and racers in all scales are spending considerable time, effort and hard cash to find the right unit including using BSCRA type controllers and paraphernalia.

The ET Grip is an attempt to improve the comfort of your unit once you have selected which one you are going to use. It comes in two versions, one for Parma/Ruskit cases and one for Professor Motor/Trinity and costs just \$7.00 (so about 9p last time I looked at the exchange rate!) For the money not only do you get one grip but also a packet of multi-purpose hand cleaner! As you quickly discover, this is because the ET is undersized and therefore form-fits your handle with the help of the hand goop as lubricant.

I must admit that I was a little nervous about the process, given that I am to DIY what Max Mosley is to an even-handed 'president'. The instructions tell you to use a goodly amount of lube but in fact I found about 20% of the packet to be ample. It did look quite a lot once smeared inside the grip and on the trigger and the process was a tad messy (using hands, no tools as per the instructions) but it turned out I had nothing to fret over.

Having offered up the ET to the bottom of my controller dry I was dubious that it would stretch enough with the lube. However getting the edges of the grip over the handle proved easy, and after a little initial resistance it began to slide up the handle nicely, pushed along with my thumbs and some mild pressure. There was some excess lube left but this wiped away easily.



I already had a small H:O track set up for another purpose, so I was quickly able to try the controller out. For the purposes of the review I used a pretty basic 35ohm Parma controller, the other grip will wait until I get my SCP-1. To my delight I found that I liked the ET grip right from the word go. It felt more tactile than before and my big hands responded well to the fact the handle was now a couple of millimetres wider. The acid test will come at a club race of course, and even more so if I enter the 24hr H:O race in November, where the sweat factor really comes into play. Maybe whilst the other drivers are alternately wiping their hands on their trousers I will be able to look on and laugh.

If you would like to investigate the ET grip for yourself check out <http://www.etgrip.com/catalog.html> ■

The Great NSCC Tuning Experiment

By Dave Chang

Part 5: Downforce and stability

This is the final part of the tuning series during which a Scalextric Gallardo has been progressively tweaked to out-perform the box standard car. Here we will explore downforce and stability.

As with 1:1 cars, the downforce and stability of the vehicle will have a major impact on performance. Despite having a guide, slot cars do parallel real cars surprisingly closely, and these factors have a similar impact on performance. Real cars and slot cars are affected by weight and weight distribution. Modern 1:1 racing cars also depend on aerodynamics, and slot cars can mimic this with magnets.

Balance

As seen in Part 3, traction makes a big difference to a car's performance. We looked at tyre materials and contact patch size as ways to increase the traction, the friction between the tyre and the road. The other factor governing the amount of traction is how hard the tyres are pressed against the road. This pressure is the 'downforce', and in road cars this is supplied by the weight of the car.

One of the heaviest components of the car is the engine, and the location of this within the car affects the balance of downforce between the front and rear wheels. High performance cars often have the engine placed near or around the drive axle, usually the rear wheels. Porsche put their engines behind the rear wheels for optimum grip, although other manufacturers prefer to have the engine placed between the front and rear axle because when the car is cornering a rear engine will tend to make the car oversteer more than a mid engine. The mid engine also places some weight on the front wheels, helping them grip when you want to steer.

Motor placement can also be important in slot cars, especially for non-magnet racing where the weight distribution of the slot car is the only downforce. Many racers favour the sidewinder configuration as seen in the Gallardos as the motor is in an optimal place to provide grip on the drive wheels.

The downforce at the front of the slot car is also important. Although we do not want the front wheels to grip, we do want the guide to stay firmly in the slot and the braids to make good contact. There are no absolute answers regarding the weight distribution but, by watching how your car handles, you may decide you want to shift the balance in one direction or the other.

It will also improve the handling of a car if it has a very low centre of gravity. This means less weight in tall parts of the car and more weight lower down – preferably below the level of the axles. When a car goes round corners, there is a sideways force. If the centre of gravity is high, the car has a larger chance of rolling. A car with a low centre of gravity is more likely to stick to the road, and if the force is still too high, the back is likely to slide out, which would be more controllable and preferable to a roll.

Body Weight

More weight is good for traction, especially if it is placed low in the car. However, there is a price to pay. Increasing the mass of the car will increase its inertia, which is its resistance to change. The heavier your car is, the more strain there is on your motor. By adding weight you will reduce your acceleration and usually your top speed too. The added inertia usually reduces your braking effect too.

Conversely, reducing weight will increase these factors. As an experiment, take one of your



cars and get a lap time. Now take the body off and race the chassis round. You will find it is much faster and also more stable. There is less weight, and what is left is very low down.

Some racers will replace the modelled interior of their cars with lightweight versions; some may skim the interior of the body shell to reduce the mass. Check club rules before modifying your car in this way. The Gallardos do not have an interior to start with.

Magnets

Real racing cars derive a lot of downforce from aerodynamics, using rear and front wings, the shape of the car, ground effect and rear diffusers to get the air to push the car down. This force only starts to work when the cars are at high speed. 1/32 cars driving at around 30 to 50Km/h are too slow and small for aerodynamic effects to make a difference.

Although hated by some racers, magnets are the slot car equivalent of this effect and share some properties. The main advantage of aerodynamics and magnets is that they add downforce without adding mass, so the car's inertia is not increased. Inertia is the force that wants to keep a car going in the same direction, and is related to the mass of the car. Using magnets instead of weight is beneficial for acceleration, braking and cornering.

There is still a downside; both aerodynamics and magnets add drag. This is a benefit to braking, but adversely affects acceleration and speed, and makes the motor work harder.



The Scalextric Gallardos come fitted with a 2.5mm thick bar magnet; other makes of car may have a button magnet. The bar is just ahead of the motor, near the rear wheels, thus providing most of the downforce over the drive wheels. There is also an alternative holder for the magnet near the centre of the car to enable you to perfect the balance of the downforce.

The magnet holds the car to the track using the attraction to the rails. Button magnets are about the width of the rails, so when the car slides out a little, the magnet is suddenly too far from the rails to work, resulting in a catastrophic loss of downforce, often resulting in the car crashing spectacularly. This uncontrollable loss of control is one of the factors that makes some racers despise the use of magnets, however, similar loss of control can be seen with real cars using extreme aerodynamic downforce.

Bar magnets help alleviate this effect. As the car slides, the magnet is still over the rail which makes it possible to drive with controllable power slides.

The Scalextric Sport Plus tuning magnet set comes with a thin and thick bar magnet, a staggered magnet and a few button magnets, so I shall experiment with a few magnetic set-ups.

I should point out that you can do a lot of setting up without getting replacement magnets. As we saw earlier in the series, truing the tyres or having hubs which raised the car by 0.125mm made a difference to the magnetic strength and to the performance of the car. If you want to reduce the magnetic effect on your car, simply put a piece of paper or thin card under your magnet to raise it slightly. You can also move the magnet about within the car to experiment with the front/rear balance. Lowering the magnets is not so easy, although some SCX and Carrera chassis have magnets in holders with screws to adjust the heights. It is usually easier to increase the magnetism with more magnets. The easiest way to increase the effect is to stack magnets, simply put another magnet on top of the one already in your car.

The first thing I wanted to try was the staggered magnet. This is a bar magnet that is very thin in the middle and gets progressively

thicker towards the edges. The idea is when that the car is going straight, the thin part is over the rails, providing the least magnetic effect and so the least drag. On corners when the back slides out, thicker and thicker parts of the magnet cover the rails giving you more grip when you need it.

This was installed instead of the thick bar magnet, and gave a reading of 143 gauss – significantly less than before, the meter was not accurate enough to differentiate between the centre and edges of the magnet.

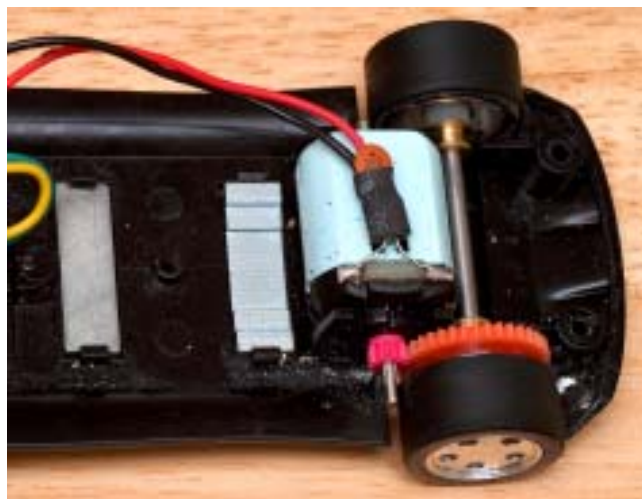
Lap times (lane 2):

<i>T Car</i> staggered magnet (143 gauss)	7.68s
<i>T Car</i> staggered plus thin magnet	5.65s
<i>T Car</i> thick plus thin magnets	5.36s
<i>T Car</i> 2 thick magnets	DNF

On track the main thing I noticed was a tremendous reduction in grip and the car sliding a lot on all the corners, and was definitely a step in the wrong direction. I then went for a 2 magnet set-up, using a thin bar magnet in the central position. This brought the lap times but it still slid about more than I liked.

Next I tried a high magnetism setting, with the thick bar magnet back at the rear and the thin bar in the central position. The drag was now very strong, brakes increased and the motor really had to work. Cornering was much faster again, and when it did crash they were more dramatic than before. The lap times were similar to the best I had achieved with one magnet, so I think I lost in drag what I gained in cornering. I was surprised that this did not yield a big improvement in lap times, my previous experimentation with magnets would have suggested that more magnets = faster cars, until things get ridiculous.

I wanted to check that more drag would result in slower lap times, so set the car up with a thick magnet in the rear slot and another thick magnet in the front. Now when I pulled the trigger, there was too much current draw from the motor and Sport World indicated an overload, so I could not get a lap time. It was interesting to see the increased current demands and stresses of the high magnet setup.



Weight

Many racers race exclusively without magnets, and routed tracks with copper rails offer no magnetic purchase. Downforce can still be modified, usually by the addition of carefully placed lead weights.

Non-magnet racing can be very frustrating on home tracks: because the cars have less downforce, they are affected by any track irregularities, for example the joins between each piece of plastic track. The experience is quite different on a smooth routed track, and a well tuned car helps too.

Trued tyres and straight axles are known to be even more important in non-magnet racing, so it will be interesting to compare the Std Car and the T Car when we simply remove the magnets.

Lap times (lane 2):

<i>Std Car</i> no magnet	11.01s
<i>T Car</i> no magnet	8.74s
<i>T Car</i> no magnet loose body	8.62s
<i>T Car</i> no magnet plus weight	8.33s

The Std Car was a lot slower than the T Car, and represents a car straight from the box with the magnet removed. I do not believe that the difference was down to the motor or the gearing – I did not reach the Std Car's top speed, and when I did pull the trigger hard out of the corner, the wheels span rather than pushing the car forwards. I attribute the poor lap times down to lack of grip, the tyres not being true, and the different tyre material.

The T Car is a lot faster than the Std Car, but very skittish and fishtails wildly after each corner. Although it is harder to control without the magnet, it is still quite enjoyable to drive, which surprised me. The next step is to loosen the body shell screws, so the body can move relative to the chassis. This has two effects. The body normally acts to strengthen and stiffen the chassis. When the screws are loose, the chassis regains some flexibility, perhaps acting as a stiff suspension. The second thing is that when there are forces on the car caused by cornering or bumps in the track, normally the whole car is flung to the side or bounced up in the air. With the body and chassis decoupled, these reactions do not affect the chassis so much.

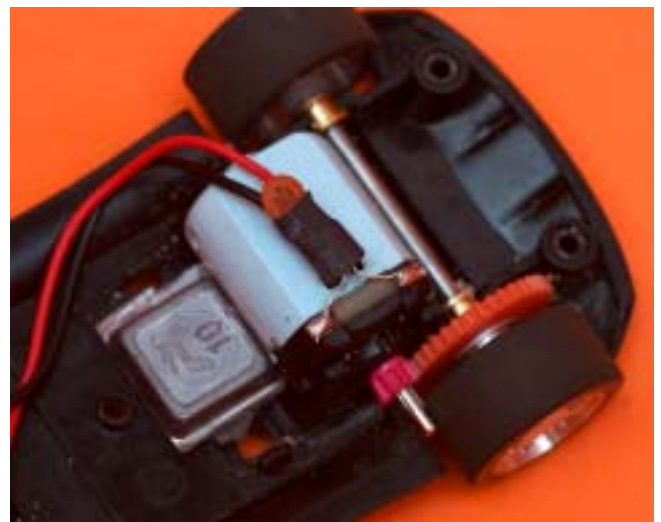
This brought down the lap time, but had a greater effect on the handling. The car was now more likely to slide controllably at the corners rather than hop out, which should be a great help during a race. Loosening the screws is a tuning technique which also works with magnet cars. It is good practice to put tape over the screw heads. This stops you losing any screws if they come undone during the race, and stops the loose screws shorting out the track if they did fall out.

The final thing I thought I would try was to add lead weights. Weights can be bought from slot car specialists, from angling and aquaria shops, and from motor shops for balancing 1:1 wheels. Some come with a self adhesive backing for easy fixing. Alternatively, you can attach the weights using foam sticky pads, hot glue, epoxy or superglue. Weights can also be taped into position, but make sure the tape is sticky enough to hold the weight in place in the event of a crash.



Weight increases inertia, but it aids traction and the centre of gravity. It should be placed as low as possible for the centre of gravity. Some people use thin brass or lead and stick it underneath the chassis – if you try this make sure you coat the bottom of the metal with tape or glue, so that it will not short out the rails if it makes contact.

Depending on the rules and the chassis, it may be better to place lead inside the chassis. A common starting place is 5 grams just in front of each rear wheel, to add traction and stability. The Gallardo chassis is raised in front of the wheels, so I opted to place 10 grams centrally where the bar magnet used to be since this was lower. A few test laps gave me the impression that the front could do with some weight to keep the guide in the slot. There was not much space inside the car, so I taped 2 grams under the chassis just behind the guide. The car's total weight was now 86 grams. Again this brought a handling gain and a small lap time improvement.



I felt that the 30,000rpm motor – even though it has been slowed down with gearing – was too much for this car on this circuit. A slower motor would have made the car a lot easier to drive, and may have brought the lap times down for me. The T Car has been tuned from the start to perform with a magnet; the motor choice and gearing were chosen based on the car's characteristics with a magnet. To tune the car properly for non-magnet racing, we

would need to go back several steps, and then spend some time working out the optimal amount of weight and balance. Hopefully this cursory dip into non-magnet racing has still been illuminating.

Summing up

We have seen how a car can be tuned to be faster and to handle better. In magnet form, the Std Car could manage 6.83 second laps in lane 2, whilst the T Car could do 5.34 seconds and be easier to drive. Tuning bought the non-magnet lap times down from 11 seconds to 8.33 seconds.

I was expecting the Std Car to increase in performance during the testing, as the motor brushes conformed to the commutator, and as their tyres wore down on the track. Despite quite a lot of racing, there was no sign of any improvement, showing that you really do need to run in motors and true tyres if you wish to see the benefits.

But is it always a good idea to tune? Sometimes you will want to tune your cars to correct poor handling or performance to bring the car up to the speed of your other cars. I believe it is always a good idea to do the basic prep – checking that the car is assembled correctly, and lubricating the parts. These steps can make your car last longer. I prefer to true the tyres on all my cars, and see this as removing factory imperfections and allowing the cars to handle better. The Gallardo really needs true tyres on lane 2 of my hilly circuit. Running in a motor is good practice, but the difference is slight.

If you are racing in a club, that might be the edge you need, but for home racing it is up to you. If you are racing at home, then remember that for fair and exciting racing, all the competing cars need to be equal. If you upgrade one car, you may need to upgrade all the cars it will race against.

As for changing the tyres, downforce and gearing, I think it depends on context. If you are racing at a club and wish to have a chance at winning, you really need to upgrade and tune your car as much as you can within the rules;



your competitors will have done so, and the car set-up is all part of the competition. The person who can tune the most and the best within the rules will have an advantage in the race.

I have found the results of this experiment interesting and hope you have too. There is more on the subject in 'The Slot Car Handbook', and the best way to learn more is to dive in and try it yourself. ■