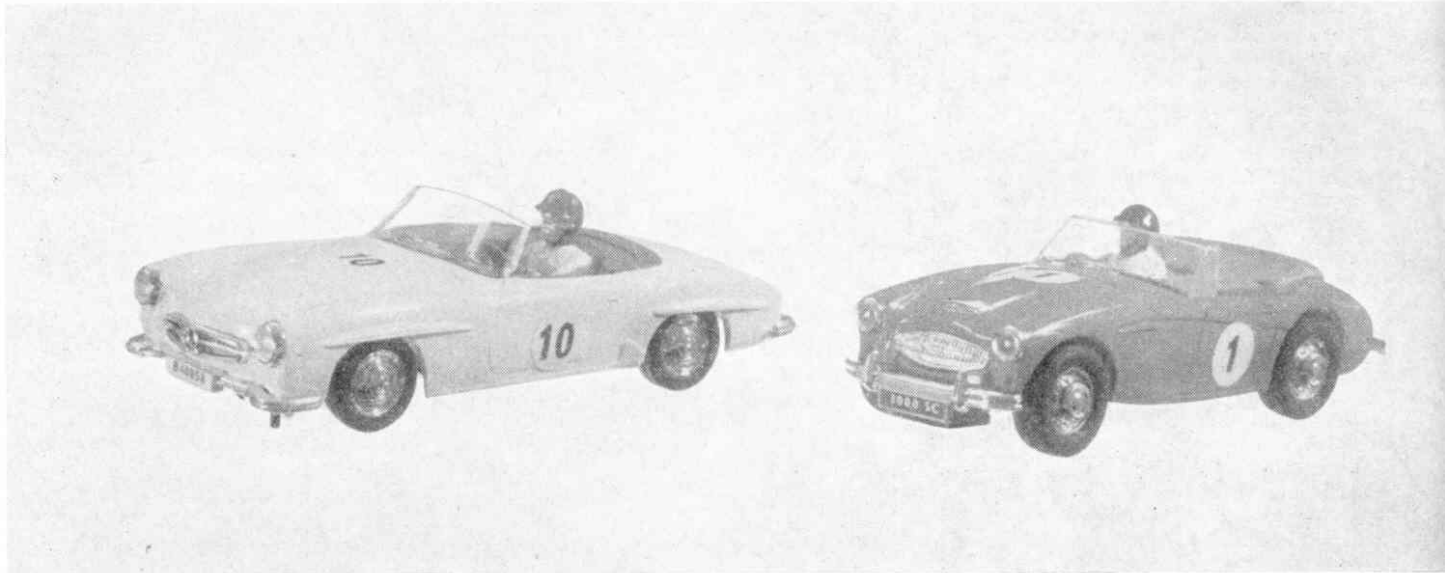

TRACK CHAT By Pit Man



The Austin-Healey chases the Mercedes. Two exciting Scalextric models which you can incorporate into your model

LAST month I talked about track and buildings, with some ideas on how to lay out a Scalextric circuit. Later in this series, I shall deal in detail with the making of extra buildings and the assembly of some of the Scalextric kits, but this month, I should like to talk about the Scalextric cars.

I don't know if you have noticed, but at any real car race meeting you see the mechanics in the paddock checking and

rechecking the racing cars, listening to the engines and cleaning, right up to the call for the cars to go to their positions on the starting grid. Remember this point with your own cars, look after them, inspect and service them and they will never let you down.

Other than normal wear and tear, most stoppages and slow running faults are caused by dirt and lack of maintenance. To prevent these troubles, we must pay

particular attention to three parts of the car—the commutator, the rear axle assembly and the pick-ups. I shall deal with them in that order.

With the variety of Scalextric cars now available, you will find that there are several methods of dismantling them in order to reveal the motor, but as each type of assembly is very simple, we'll simply describe how to dismantle the motor.

To get at the commutator we remove the carbon brushes by squeezing together the brush springs and allowing the brushes to drop out (Diagram 1). Clean between the commutator segments using a needle or pin (Diagram 2), afterwards brushing over with methylated spirits to remove all the carbon dirt and grease. Wipe over the carbon brushes themselves and replace.

Maintenance

Remove the rear axle assembly and brush off all dirt—it is amazing how much dirt, hair and fluff is attracted to this part of the motor. I always have a packet of pipe cleaners in my kit for this sort of job; they are most useful and only cost a few coppers.

Replace the axle after greasing the bearings with vaseline and slightly oiling the felt pad, if one is fitted. When replacing the rear axle assembly, make sure that it is positioned correctly and that

PIT STOPS WASTE TIME!

the crown wheel is on the correct side of the pinion, exactly as illustrated in Diagram 3.

Whatever type of pick-ups you have on your cars, they must receive constant attention. Clean them and trim them so that they rest equally on the track rails. For those on the Formula cars, use a brush to separate the strands and never twist them; level off the ends with a pair of scissors.

As you well know, tyre surfaces and pressures are of considerable importance in motor racing and in the same way, a little time spent on the tyres of your models will pay off in extra speed, acceleration and road holding. The important thing is to ensure that you have the greatest possible area of tyre on the track.

Clean off the ridge in the centre of the rear tyres with sandpaper and the easiest way to do this is to hold the paper on the track, position the car in its slot and with your friend operating the hand controller, ease the rear tyres over the sandpaper. In no time you will have a broad flat surface, which should then be cleaned with methylated spirit. It is well worth cleaning the tyres after each race, as they soon pick up dirt and grease and become slippery, which affects the cornering.

Driving the cars

Try to imagine that it is a real car you are driving. Try not to jerk your hand controller and keep up a smooth running speed, increasing and decreasing

as the variations in your circuit demand. When entering a banked bend, try it at various speeds and go back again and again until you are satisfied that you can successfully control your car around it at the highest possible speed.

If you stop suddenly on the banking, you may find that your car slews round, which necessitates repositioning with a consequent loss of time. On the other hand, if you take it too fast, you may 'run out of track' and slide over the edge.

Faults such as these can be cured by constant practice. Take each corner and bend in turn and practice until you are perfect, then go on to the next one and so on, until you can take the whole circuit confidently and at the greatest possible speeds.

Race practice

All Scalextric drivers, even the champions, come off the track at some time or another. Young Fritz Jakob, of Switzerland, came off several times in the European Scalextric Championships last year, but he still won the final. By continuous practice, however, you can cut this down to a minimum and after all, sturdy as your Scalextric cars are, falling off the table is not the best way to ensure a long life.

Put your cars away after use and if dad or your younger brother want to race, make sure you are there to supervise. Dads in particular, are inclined to get too excited and over confident, especially when friends are watching.

You can't really blame them, Scalextric is an exciting sport, but your cars will never look the sleek thoroughbreds they are if they are continually being patched up with Sellotape.

I have been trying out the new Mercedes 190 SL. It really is a beauty. Apart from its performance which, as you would expect, is faultless, it is a perfectly moulded replica of the real car with chromed grille, bumpers and rims, etc. Like the other sports car in the same class, the Austin Healey 3000, it has the new type body shell moulded in one piece for easy inspection and maintenance of the engine.

SCALEX ON SHOW

One of the big attractions at the "National Model Show" to be held at the New Horticultural Hall on August 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th, is a giant Scalextric circuit. Everyone is invited to try their skill, there is no entrance fee and a prize will be given each day, except Saturday, for the fastest time. Why not bring Dad along and show him what you can do, but don't bring your car—this is strictly for "Works" cars only.

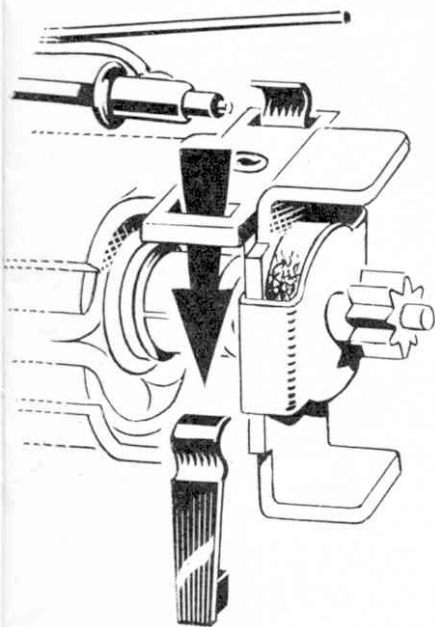


Diagram 1. This illustration shows you how to remove the brushes by squeezing them together and allowing them to drop out. The commutator is then accessible

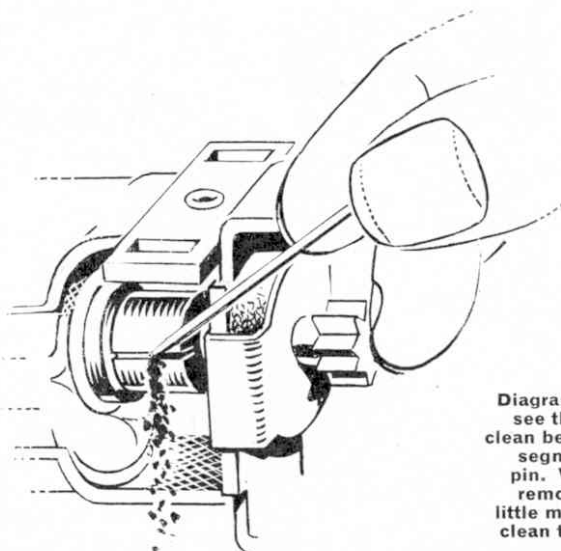


Diagram 2. Now that you can see the commutator clearly, clean between the commutator segments using a needle or pin. When the dirt has been removed, brush over with a little methylated spirits. Next clean the carbon brushes and replace them

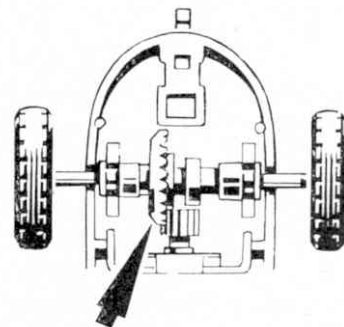


Diagram 3. When replacing the rear axle assembly, make sure that it is positioned correctly and that the crown wheel is on the correct side of the pinion