

FOR THE RACER IN YOU

# SLOT CAR

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## McLaren M6A

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# McLaren

by Ric Woods

# M6A



**As Slot Car Magazine's resident 'Mr Average slot car builder', I was a little apprehensive to be given the task of putting together a very early example of the new Thunderslot McLaren M6A/B Can-Am white kit.**







a full-face helmet, the other with the open type. Dan Gurney used a very early Bell Star, so that was my choice.

The build itself was quite straightforward, once I had sorted out which parts I needed to use and which would go in the spares box. Almost inevitably, there were a few left over that baffled me. Firstly a couple of mouldings that would seem to be destined for the front air intake, but I couldn't make fit without removing the moulded radiator at the front of the chassis. Secondly, there was the large finned cylinder, which I remembered fits at the rear of the Lola T70, to hide the screw post. I think maybe it

represents an oil catch tank or perhaps a big subwoofer for the sound system, but anyway it doesn't fit the McLaren so you won't be needing it. The body itself is very light with almost no 'flash', though there are some moulding lines that I noticed once the car had a coat of primer (see pic) that I didn't manage

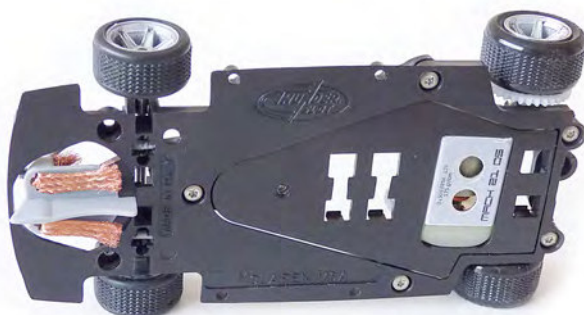
to completely eradicate on the finished article, thus ensuring that my status of 'average' builder is safe for the time being. Also evident were a couple of tiny holes on the nose section, as if the drilling of the posts had gone too far. These were miniscule, though and easily filled.

I painted my body – or, more accurately, I painted my left hand and forearm



and the McLaren body – with Humbrol Midnight Blue acrylic spray, before adding the engine detail. For my version, I carefully removed the 'Chevrolet' lettering on the engine block and attempted to angle the (medium-sized) trumpets inwards a little, to represent Gurney's Ford. So they look a bit wonky for a reason, folks. Decals came from Patto. They aren't 100% correct, so I'll have to keep the car moving so people can't tell which bits are wrong. Overall, though, I was reasonably pleased with the finished thing.

The chassis came partly assembled, so I just had to add the wheels and tyres. There are couple of points to mention, though. There is a small

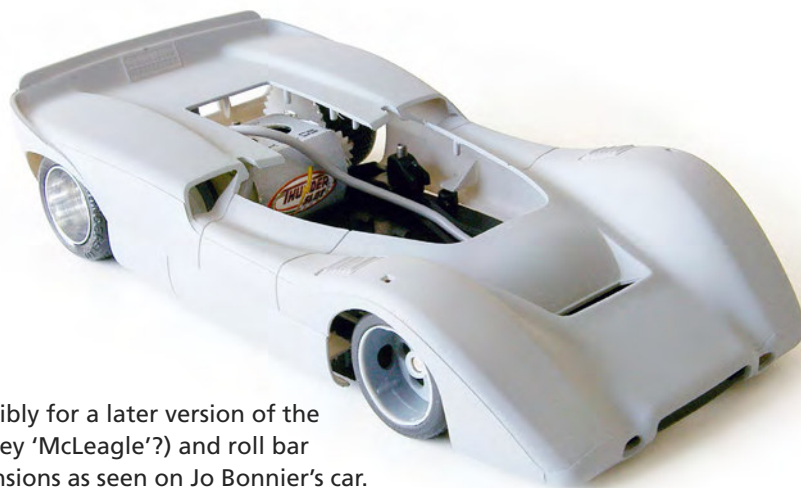






**A** sharp intake of breath accompanied the unpacking of the myriad little plastic bags, full of barely-recognisable parts. Where do they all go? Keep calm, let's see what we have here.

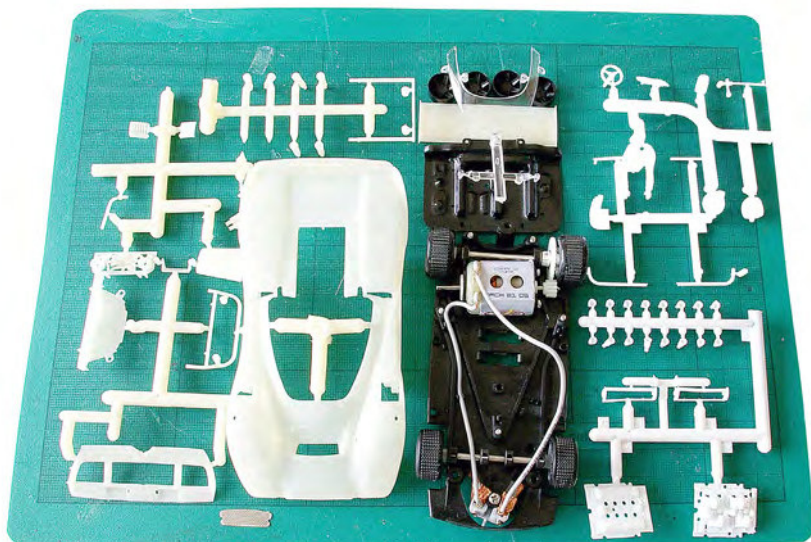
A few moments of closer inspection revealed that there are numerous different versions incorporated in the kit. Engine-wise, there's the top of the earlier small-block Chevy of the works 1967 M6As and the altogether beefier unit used in the later, customer, M6Bs – together with more trumpets than a Louis Armstrong convention. Interestingly, there's also the engine scoop as fitted to the 1968 Penske M6B, which surely points to a RTR release of this version at some point. If you decide to go for this one yourself, good luck with all the pinstripping... Also to be found are a large wing with strut assembly



(possibly for a later version of the Gurney 'McLeagle'?) and roll bar extensions as seen on Jo Bonnier's car. I opted for an early incarnation of Dan Gurney's M6B, when it still

looked pretty standard, apart from different wheels. It so happened that the Lola-type inserts supplied with my kit aren't massively unlike the wheels that were used; as yet there are none of the standard McLaren four-spoke inserts, but these will be included as soon as possible, I'm told.

Thunderslot cars are intended primarily for the club track, so a few liberties have been taken with the dimensions; that's the way it is with the fastest slot cars and that's fine by me. The interior is a vac-formed job, although the separate fire bottle, gearshift and driver's head do much to restore the realism. The kit comes with a choice of two heads, one with





spacer included for the rear body mounting screw. If you don't use this, there is a chance that the tip of the screw could make an unwelcome appearance on the rear deck of the body. Being a cautious type of chap, I also cut a couple of very thin spacers from plastic tube for the front screws, just to be safe. I also removed the motor and moved the pinion a fraction further up the shaft, to give a little more clearance for the rear tyre on that side. Front axle height and travel is fully adjustable, using the supplied grub screws. Before I started the test runs I added a little weight towards the front end, mainly to counter the undulation on the test track's main straight, where the quicker cars can get excitingly light at times.

The benchmark for the test was obviously going to be the Lola T70 Spyder, which is one of my favourites at the moment and is beautifully quick, smooth and stable around the 50-foot painted Carrera track. The McLaren was immediately smooth – I do like a car that's easy on the ear – and it steadily gathered speed as the tyres gripped up with some applications of oil. I played about with the motor pod and body Torx screws and soon it was matching the Lola's lap times, then beating them, then it set a new lap record! Over 300 laps and zero de-slots. Work will now commence on the Lola to bring it up to the speed of the McLaren, of course... The good thing is that the M6 doesn't immediately render the T70 Spyder uncompetitive – far from it – but it does provide an excellent alternative.

All-in-all, I'm delighted with the Thunderslot McLaren. The build wasn't as difficult as it first appeared to be, though I must say that some instructions or an exploded diagram on Thunderslot's website would be a big help. There again, I think that goes for every slot car white kit I've ever built! Hopefully this article will at least provide some assistance to those of you taking the plunge. My thanks to Giovanni Montiglio for supplying the review car and to our Marc and MRE's Gary for helping me to overcome my initial panic.



By Marc Abbott

**G**iovanni Montiglio was kind enough to send us one of his last test cars that he made up prior to the general populous getting their hands on them when they go on sale.

This is perhaps the final model he has run and used extensively to test for any particularities. We know for sure he has been racing it at his club in Italy. He also told us that he was very pleased with the final result and commented that the headaches that go into design and production are finally worth it.

On receipt of the parcel, I (and a few lucky drivers) did lap after lap at the large Nascot Wood Club (Ninco track). As Jo (Giovanni) is a man we can trust on set-up, the car was placed straight on the track and run ragged. It was immediately on the pace and we were all amazed by the amount of grip and solid performance it gave. So much so, that when I came in for a change of driver, I lifted the back end off the

track to see how much magnetic pull the motor had – and was very surprised that it wasn't in any way excessive.

This model is easily as fast as the Lolas and once the tyres have been bedded in properly, I'm sure it might even edge ahead... but we will have to see. Personally, I find this car easier to drive than the Lola CanAm, which has a minor "urgency" in the corners.

Whatever, I believe that if you love the Lolas, you'll love this as much, if not more.

On my home track (again a Ninco), the conclusion was the same. Nice and steady and lap times that are so easy to maintain. To be precise, I think all of us completed about 100 laps on the club circuit and me the same at home... and not once did we de-slot.

By the time you read this I'll probably have a ready-to-run new version and a kit in my collection – what a joy to drive!

