

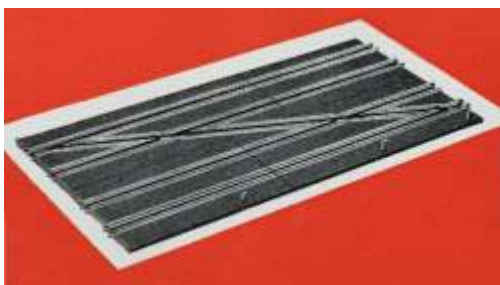
EDITORIAL

Welcome to my seventh Newsletter and Christmas has come around once again. My very best wishes to all of you, my readers and your families. The articles in this issue includes the famed Pit Lane Multi-Lane Changer below and opposite, the first part of a more detailed review of the individual packaging items in the various set boxes, an article on the variety of home-made and custom collectors, some photos and details of a very professionally-built power unit that was assembled for multi-lane running and finally some news about the 'lost' Wrenn 152 paperwork. I do hope that you enjoy reading this issue.



PIT AREA MULTI-LANE CHANGER

Unfortunately this item of track was always advertised as 'available later' and although never reaching final production, prototype samples were manufactured. The first was displayed at the 1962 Brighton Toy Fair and featured in the report within the April issue of the Model Maker magazine. A photo of this version also appeared in the current Catalogue, as below, but failed to appear in any of the subsequent ones.



Then a seemingly developed version was finally displayed on Wrenn's stand at the 1965 Brighton Toy Fair. Rob Miller carried out some research into it's existence previously and I have found a couple of articles in the 1965 April & May issues of the Miniature Autoworld magazine, please see opposite.

PIT AREA MULTI-LANE CHANGER continued

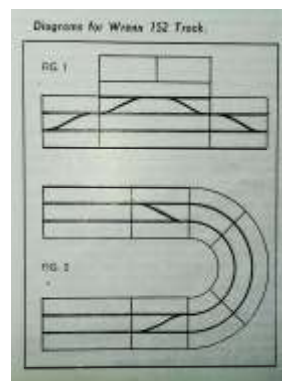
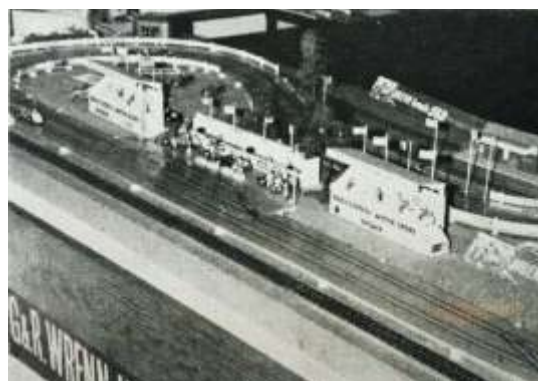


Figure 1 shows the use of two of the 'lane changing' track sections in conjunction with the special 'pit stop' track as in the photo above. Whilst Figure 2 shows how a pair of the 'lane changing' half tracks could be used before and after a bend which could have replaced the Deflector Track. Just another of Wrenn's 'what ifs'.

Interestingly in one of these later review articles, it does mention another prototype which Wrenn had produced which was of an alternative slot system which they called 'Wrenn Miniature Roadways'. It was described as having a very small, almost indiscernible slot with the cars using the Maximiser motor.

So what was this? Could this have been the precursor to the later 9-volt system? Although it may just have been a coincidence. Were you there, did you see it or do you have any information about this system?

SET BOX INNERS - 1st GENERATION

This article is an opportunity to look at the Wrenn set boxes in more detail. There were only two standard types of boxes produced for all of the Wrenn 152 slot racing sets. As mentioned on the website, the box lids and bases of the 1st generation boxes were actually constructed from separate pieces of strawboard and they were supplied with two different depths of box base so that they could accommodate the different components required for each set. The box bases were covered with a glossy Dark Red outer paper and they had inner compartments also constructed from strawboard and faced with coloured paper, in either Pale Blue, Yellow or an off-White.

There were two rectangular and tubular strawboard track containers which were covered in a Pale Blue paper, these were glued, and usually, stapled to either side of the box leaving a central area for the cars, controllers and the bottle of oil. Different cardboard packing pieces were used to 'fill' the spaces below and to the side of the track pieces depending upon which track sections were to be included in the set.

The set box for the smallest Set No1 included a unique one-piece Blue central support with individual cut-outs for the components. All of the other set boxes had a similar common central layout with half of this area taken with another track container. The remainder was left for a plain rectangular card support and above that a folded Yellow card holder with seven cut-out sections. The central, smaller one, for the bottle of oil and the other six cut-outs were to accommodate small rectangular Blue cardboard trays. There were three smaller ones for the cars and three slightly larger trays for the controllers. Seemingly if the set only had two cars there were two, additional lids provided, one for the car tray and a larger one for the controller tray. It is very rare to find an early set box complete with these lids and only one example of a set box complete with these has ever been seen and even the Yellow or Blue packing pieces seen opposite are only infrequently seen.

Later sets had all of this cardboard engineering of the central area replaced with a simple vacuum-formed Pale Yellow styrene unit which had a raised ring with the 152 numerals in the centre. This change was the way forward for the 2nd generation of set boxes.



SET BOX INNERS - 1st GENERATION continued

The Extension Pack box was similarly constructed from strawboard with paper wrappers but there were no additional standard internal retaining pieces. The box base had a similar construction to the set boxes with a glossy Dark Red paper cover. However there was a single, small folded card which was printed in Red & Black, included in the Extension Pack No1 which acted as a packing piece and as a direct replacement for the boxed car and controller in the Pack No1A. I have included below a photo of the Extension Pack box and also one with all of the individual packing pieces of cardboard engineering seen, to date, which Wrenn used within these 1st generation set boxes.



CUSTOM COLLECTORS

In my years of collecting Wrenn 152 I have seen so many alternative ways of replacing the Collectors under the cars when new ones weren't readily available. These range from very crude versions such as just flat pieces of copper or phosphor bronze and some are just pieces of twisted wire or even very thin braid, similar to Wrenn's solution for the 9 volt cars. A pair of simple solid wire ones have been seen (4th pair from the left in the photo below) which actually mimic the very early VIP pick-ups which were used to pick up the supply from their metal track. I have recently seen some intricate custom ones where the owner actually had small, thin phosphor bronze wipers made, similar to minute spades, with the thin section soldered into the ends of the later springs. A bag of these was seen in a set box so I am assuming that the owner/racer had a small batch of these specially made. I have included some photos below of these various attempts. Have you seen any ingenious solutions to our constant burden?



Part 2 of this article, reviewing the 2nd generation set boxes, will appear in the next Newsletter and if you have any further information on the 1st generation boxes or even the 2nd generation ones, and you would like to share with an acknowledgement, then do please let me know.



MULTI-LANE RUNNING

As you may already be aware, or if you consult your A10-'152' Instruction Manual, when introducing a third car in order to achieve successful multi-lane running, and alleviate the influence of another car, a number of transformers have to be used to provide an independent supply to each of the cars. Wrenn did latterly offer this with the introduction of their twin output transformers, however a very professional solution was seen recently for sale.

I have included these front & back photos of the unit below for your information, although I do apologise for their poor quality. There are three Hammant & Morgan AC transformers mounted onto a timber base with a single isolating mains switch. There are also four Mk 1 E1 Controllers with their accompanying pairs of fixing rails. You can hopefully see that there are four small two-pin plugs which mate up to the white sockets in lower photo. This is a great job well done.



WRENN 152 PAPERWORK

Exciting news. I have been in contact with Maurice Gunther, who purchased the remnants of Wrenn items that were left when Dapol decided to sell what was left from the original Wrenn factory sale that they did not want. Maurice believes that he has some Wrenn 152 paperwork which is scattered throughout a very large undocumented pile of Wrenn company papers. Maurice's main interest lies with G&R Wrenn's model railway output so when he has the time to sort through all of these documents, and when any specific Wrenn 152 items come to light, I am sure that he will allow their sharing and distribution for all of you Wrenn 152 enthusiasts out there. Stay tuned for further news.



STOP PRESS

This is advance notice of next year's UK Slot Car Festival, it is taking place over the weekend of 19th & 20th May, so make a note in your diary.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Site includes a forum for all slot car manufacturers including Wrenn 152 and a Swap Shop.
www.slotforum.com

Also try Rob Miller's <http://wrenn152.freeforums.org>

Site covers Wrenn railways and Wrenn 152 and includes a list of currently available items for sale.
www.wrennspecialist.co.uk

French manufacturers of reproduction urethane tyres for Wrenn 152 who sell either direct online at www.slotcarstyres.com or via eBay as seller dauremy.