

EDITORIAL

Compliments of the season to you all. As the Winter nights draw in (for some of us that live in the Northern Hemisphere, that is) welcome to my last Newsletter of the year. The features this time include two rare, and significant Price Lists that have been discovered. The next article is something that I have been searching for for the past couple of years and it has finally turned up. Next there is an article on the different illustrations of the Cars that were used in the various Catalogues and Leaflets. Finally there is some news about some new and reproduction buildings that have been produced and also a collection of early Wrenn 152 which has just come available. I do hope that you enjoy reading this.

As an addendum, I feel that I must make a special comment about the amount of Wrenn 152 that has been appearing for sale recently on eBay. You may have noticed as well but during the last three months there were times when there were 20No individual cars for sale and 12No sets. This must be the most that I have ever seen advertised at one time, which is great if you are looking for anything to add to your collection but unfortunately most of these items, I believe, were definitely overpriced. My only recommendation is to be sensible when bidding or buying.



THE VERY FIRST TRADE PRICE LIST

As you may already know, when Wrenn launched their Formula 152 system to the public in September 1960 they issued their first, typeset No1 Retail Price List to accompany the launch. I am delighted to be able to tell you that Maurice Gunter has discovered the very first Trade Price List which includes a number of details and supply dates for the individual items. It also includes the Retail Price and the Purchase Tax of the items, as well as a tear-off section at the bottom which would enable the dealers to place their orders. The significant dates show that the initial deliveries of the No1 Basic Sets would commence during October 1960, whilst the individual Cars, Track sections, Controllers & Return Leads would commence from Mid-October, as would

THE VERY FIRST TRADE PRICE LIST - continued

the Service Spares. The deliveries of the Deflector Sections were due to commence from late October but, as we know, these didn't finally appear until February the following year. Finally the T8-Curved Track Sections were going to be available from early November. This list is typewritten on the face of a White foolscap-sized piece of paper with a blank back. All of these details point to it having been produced prior to the actual launch to the public, so this would have been printed at some time prior to September 1960. It is great to find this important document and please see the photo below. I have managed to record a few other Retail Price Lists but these are all very late ones from the period 1965-1967. If you have any earlier ones from 1961-1965 with Wrenn 152 on one side of the sheet and Wrenn railway track on the other, it would be great to hear from you.



OVERSEAS TRADE PRICE LIST

Secondly Maurice has also located an Overseas Trade Price List for November 1962. This is the first time that I have seen one of these and I must admit that I am a little surprised to see that it has been typeset and also printed exactly like the current Retail Price Lists. This

OVERSEAS TRADE PRICE LIST

has also been printed double-sided on a very Pale Cream paper with Blue ink. The majority of the items are exactly the same as the current Retail Price List, however there are a few interesting small differences. Firstly it states that the 0072 & 0073 Baseboard Frame Kits were not available outside of the UK and secondly the C1-Catalogue and Circuit Leaflets were not available singly Overseas but in packs of 100. Unfortunately I do not have a UK Trade Price List from this date in order to compare the prices but on this Overseas Price List they are all in Stirling. Please see the photos below



PHOTO OF LAYOUT IN 'GRAND PRIX' MOVIE

I am delighted to be able to share with you something about the photo that I included back in the December 2020 issue of the Newsletter. At the time, this actual publicity still had turned up in America and I did not know anything about it. Well in the meantime I have finally discovered what the photo had been used for. In order to promote new movies, film companies produced Exhibitor's Campaign Books for the local cinemas.



These usually included a short synopsis of the movie, and details of the characters, there was also a list of all of the advertising artwork that was available to be used in local newspapers etc and suggestions for any supplementary advertising that could accompany the showing of the movie to create more interest. Well I have been very lucky to obtain one for the 'Grand Prix' movie. This large softback book was produced by MGM for their American market. Besides showing the various artworks that were available it lists a number of other related products that could assist in endorsing the movie.

PHOTO OF LAYOUT IN 'GRAND PRIX' MOVIE cont.

It lists items such as Umbrellas, Hats, Shoes etc and there is even a suggested Restaurant Menu for a Grand Prix Dinner! On one of the pages there are listings for 'Toy Stores', 'Travel Bureaus' and 'Model Car Raceways' and it is the latter one which uses this actual photo and suggests using the public race tracks which were very popular in the US at that time for additional promotion. So finally the mystery has been solved. Please see the photos below.



IDENTIFYING THE DIFFERENT CATALOGUES

Surprisingly, Wrenn didn't have a Catalogue printed until over a year after their Formula 152 range was launched. They had been managing with their original, free launch leaflets, 'Sensational New Winner' and their 'Real Life Racing Circuits'. When the first Catalogue was finally launched in October 1961, it was also made available to the public as a free item. This continued with the 2nd version but Wrenn did start to charge for the Catalogues when the 3rd version was launched in July 1962. The charge of 4d was retained for the next (4th) version, which was made available from August 1964 and the final 5th version had a price increase to 6d which was available from February 1966. The above information has been collated from available Retail and Trade Price Lists.



Although the original Catalogue front cover design did not change throughout all of the different versions, the main 'background' printing colour did. Coupled with this, the price was also included on the later versions and these points, as well as the inside Car pages, all help to identify the different versions. Over the five different Catalogues, Wrenn featured the current range of Cars with only three different designs of internal pages. At the time that the first Catalogue was launched, the only Cars available were the Vibrator-motored Dark Green & Blue Coopers and the Red & Yellow Ferraris. This remained the same design in the second Catalogue. In the third Catalogue, the page featured the full range of Vibrator-motored cars, including the Coopers, Ferraris, Maseratis and Vanwalls. Although, as can be seen in the photos below, both the Cooper and the Ferrari now had new 'half-tone illustrations' generated which aligned with the view of the new Maserati and the Vanwall as in the second photo. As you may have already appreciated, these original illustrations had been used in the very early literature and were not quite as accurate as these

IDENTIFYING THE DIFFERENT CATALOGUES cont.

later ones. Finally the last design of the Car page showed the full range of DC-motored Cars, including the later BRM and Porsche Cars and this design was featured in both the 4th and the 5th versions of the Catalogue. So the rarest Catalogues seem to be the 1st, Dark Blue, version because it was only available for approximately two months and also the last, 5th, Turquoise version with it's 6d price label. As a footnote, you may be aware that the Italian importer, Alessandro Zeni, was given access to the Wrenn 152 Catalogue artwork. Their version of the Catalogue (or the only one seen as yet!) uses the exact UK front cover, including the English headline text, the rest of the Catalogue retains all of the UK illustrations but all of the texts are translated into the Italian language. However the Car page does differ in that it includes the illustrations of both the Cooper and the Ferrari but also just lists the Maserati and the Vanwall cars without their illustrations. Please see the photo opposite for clarity.



STOP PRESS

Great news, I recently managed to discover a very late Retail Price List, dated February 1967. This could well be the very last one supplied by Wrenn to feature their Formula 152 range. Their new Grand Prix range was only about 8 months away from launch, so maybe. If you have a later Price List than this one I would be grateful to hear about it, so do please let me know.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Rob Miller has a website forum for Wrenn 152.
www.tapatalk.com/groups/wrenn152/

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

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

This French manufacturer is again making the reproduction urethane tyres for Wrenn 152 and they are selling direct from their website.
www.slotcarstyres.com

