

EDITORIAL

Compliments of the season to you all and your families. Welcome to my last Newsletter of the year, I am hopeful that you will find it of interest. I was delighted with the response to the article on the Master Mariner sets and Wonder Boat sets that I featured in the last issue. I have therefore decided to follow that up with this first article on Wrenn's other products that you may not be aware of. This is followed by an article on something that I have partially seen recently on a website and I am hopeful that perhaps one of you may be able to assist me with. Finally in the Stop Press section one of our subscribers has discovered a new online shop that has some Wrenn 152 items for sale. Enjoy.



WRENN'S OTHER PRODUCTS

As you are probably all aware Wrenn started their company with the production of model railway track, including points and crossovers, in two gauges (initially OO and later TT) back in the early 1950's. Their first new product was the introduction of their unique Wrenn formula 152 from 1960 to the mid 60's and the later Grand Prix slot car range during 1967. After Lines Brothers had bought a 50% share in the company in the mid 60's Wrenn wound down their production of Formula 152 and replaced it initially with production of the Hornby-Dublo range of locomotives and rolling stock from the moulding tools that Lines Brothers had already acquired from Triang. Other manufacturer's ranges of model railway tools were also subsequently used by Wrenn and latterly they had their own range of tools produced. The information for all of Wrenn's model railway production is vast and I would suggest that if you are interested in this field and would like to read further on this I would like to suggest that you consider Maurice Gunter's excellent books on the history of the G&R Wrenn company and all of their products. Over the later years Wrenn introduced a number other toys and products which were grouped together and all of them contained in a simple leaflet which you can see in the following photos. Unfortunately I do not have a definitive date for these items nor the catalogue.

WRENN'S OTHER PRODUCTS continued

I have included a couple of photos below of one piece of Wrenn's railway track together with it's carton.



Wrenn's later other products included two battery-powered Motor Boats, two construction toys the Doodle-Discs and the Fit-Discs, a clockwork Pull Back 'n Go Super Mini and even a Baby Alarm! All of these later items were included in a single four page colour printed leaflet and since this was also intended for export it included descriptions duplicated in two other languages, German and French. I was lucky enough to see one of these leaflets for sale quite a few years ago and I managed to copy the photos following.



WRENN'S OTHER PRODUCTS continued



These two battery-powered boats were manufactured in coloured polystyrene. Both of them were quite large, the R.A.F. Crash Tender was 16.25" (420mm) long whilst the Vosper Yacht was 19.5" (500mm) long. Some of you may recognise these models, they had previously been produced by Victory Industries Ltd (who also had produced their range of 1/32 slot cars in competition with Scalextric back in the late 50's and 60's). The R.A.F. Crash Tender had originally been produced back in 1954 and the Vosper Yacht was produced from 1960. Although both of these ceased to be manufactured in 1969 when Victory Industries closed for business. Wrenn bought the moulding tools and the remaining stock of moulded parts for both of the boats and continued to produce them for another two years.

NB * See note opposite.

WRENN'S OTHER PRODUCTS continued

*NB When David Boyle purchased the remains of Wrenn's company and stock he moved it up North to his company, Dapol, in Winsford. That is where I managed to see some of it. This included some items that Wrenn had purchased from Victory Industries. There were some of their 1/32 slot car bodies but I didn't see anything for these boats or any of their larger scale models.



These two construction toys were designed for young children aged 2-5 years. They were designed with individual hexagonal pieces that could be assembled together in unlimited shapes. They were moulded in different coloured plastic, which was probably either polystyrene or nylon since they were advertised as being hygienic and washable. I unfortunately have never seen these so I cannot say anything further than the leaflet copy.

WRENN'S OTHER PRODUCTS continued



WRENN'S OTHER PRODUCTS continued



The Baby Alarm was perhaps an oddball product in the middle of Wrenn's toy production but was probably thought of as a related product that parents would be eager to buy for their babies and very young children. They also targeted it's possible use as an intercom in a sick room or to safeguard the elderly. The Main Unit and the Microphone Unit were advertised to have 'easy-clean plastic casings in grey' with 'gilt metal grilles'. It is unfortunate that these have not been seen.

The Pull Back 'n' Go Super Mini was a very special toy. It was not battery-powered but had a self-winding clockwork motor, similar to the Scalex cars that Fred Francis sold in the 1950's. The operation stated that the Mini should be pulled back about 18" (460mm) and then it would race away over 12' (3,660mm)! The Mini was very accurate, it was 6.5" (165mm) long, moulded in polystyrene with clear polystyrene windows, it had a silver-plated radiator grille, bumpers and fittings and ran on rubber tyres. The only example that I have seen had a Red body with a Cream interior.



This photo is just for the completists among you, it just shows the rear page of the folded leaflet. This includes the German descriptions on the left hand side and the French descriptions on the right hand side. Finally there is Wrenn's address at the bottom and the printer also has their name underneath.

ANOTHER SWISS CATALOGUE?

I was looking through some images online recently and came across an interesting item as seen in the photo below. The photo was on a Swiss auction website which was for an early Wrenn 152 Set. All of the literature in the Set were the standard UK versions in English but, as you can see, there was one leaflet that I hadn't seen before. Unfortunately the Set had been sold and there weren't any other photos of this leaflet. Looking at it in detail (as much as I could) it reminded me of another catalogue that was printed by Waldmeir, who imported Wrenn into Switzerland and probably Germany as well, during the 1960's. I featured that catalogue in a review back in Newsletter No18 and if you care to compare this leaflet or catalogue with that you can hopefully appreciate the similarities. Firstly, this document is also printed on a Cream paper with Black ink. It includes a photo of the medium-sized, figure-of-eight layout that the factory had built and was used on the rear of the UK Catalogue. This was also the source of the 'Formula 152' lettering with the Wrenn 152 Roundel Logo and the truncated version of the Cooper logo were extracted from the Real Life Racing Circuits leaflet. I am assuming that this leaflet was actually an early Price List and was just a single piece of paper with the prices printed on the reverse side in German and the Catalogue that I featured previously was a later version. Did you purchase this Wrenn 152 Set? If so, it would be great to hear from you to discuss what it actually contains.



RECENT FIND ON EBAY

You may have noticed that there have been a few interesting Wrenn 152 items appearing on eBay recently, even one of the rare Wrenn Lapel Badges (with a pin). Although it had a small surface chip out of the Green enamel in the outer ring, it was therefore at priced quite cheaply. I have noticed that it has been sold so hopefully it has gone to a good home.



STOP PRESS

Clive Mills, one of our regular contributors, has discovered a new source for Wrenn 152 items and he has kindly shared the contact details. The new online shop, is called Secondhand-Model-Shop, and caters for other slot car manufacturers and even includes Triang and Subbuteo sections. In the Wrenn 152 section there are individual Cars, some Body Tops and Chassis, a few Drivers and Spare parts and even a used Vibrator Motor Coil. The link is Secondhand-model-shop.com and I have already reached out to the owner to make an initial contact. Looking at the site overall I do think that some items are overpriced but my advice would be to just check first.

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 now just selling direct from their website.
www.slotcarstyres.com