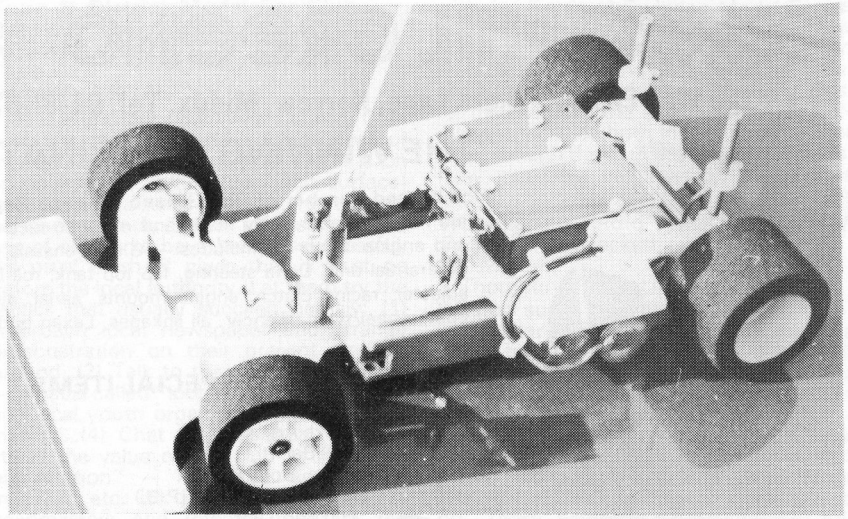


ASSOCIATED RC 12E

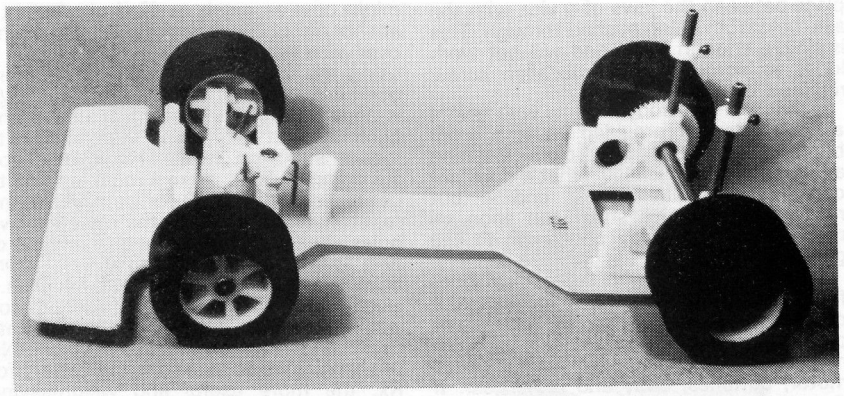
1/12 ELECTRIC

MY extravagant friend 'phoned from America: "What do you think? Those Associated people have cleaned up again; this time they've done it with the U.S. Electrics Nationals!" Details sadly lacking at £2 a minute but that is the gist of it. I loved the prototype seen at the German Toy Fair earlier in the year, now I have managed to get hold of one of the first batch of six coming into the country to make up and write about, and have no reason to revise my earlier opinion that it is something very special.

Gene Husting does not really do justice to it in his introduction when he says it is "not a converted gas car." To the extent that it is not a production power chassis put to another use he is correct, but, in fact, he has used the company's know-how to make up a little car that enjoys all the design features of the 1/8th scale range scaled down to 1/12th. Let's just recap some of the special points: GRP chassis, radio tray, light weight, mid-engine design — that is engine is forward of rear axle — to bring better weight distribution between front and rear wheels. There are a number of other useful benefits in the design and accessories but these are the most pertinent.

Presentation of the kit in its box is first class. Small parts are grouped in bags and the larger items are separately listed. Advice is given not to take small parts out of the bags regardless. We checked ours carefully and after removing the staples refastened with sellotape until used. Touches like this are very welcome; as was one of my principal sources of aggro — there was a far more than adequate supply of what they call "E-clips" over there or circlips to us. I could actually lose one or two safely! Instructions for kit assembly are amongst the most comprehensive I have yet to read, so that there is very little that need be said on the step-by-step procedure.

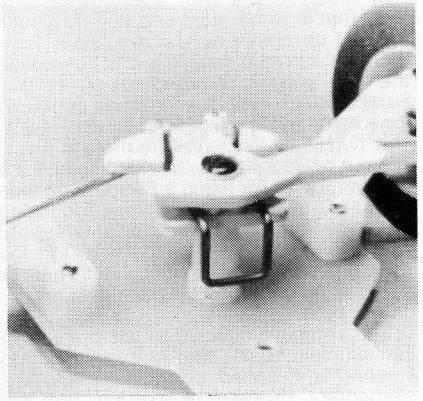
Servo saver is simple, ingenious and practical with a good exploded drawing to make sure bits are put together in the right order. Very nice nylon steering blocks with very little flash to remove. Steering tie-rods follow the rather awkward practice of being just bent wire — a couple of cranks one at each end. Drawing shows them thus, so does the handout photograph, but I note that picture on the box goes one better with the introduction of the little grub screwed metal blocks used to adjust brakes, throttle etc., on 1/8th scale. I have used the plastic retainers that come on a little tree of about a dozen from Micromold. This makes a really free



swinging steering unit come easily.

Wheels on nylon hubs by the way are trued and glued, saving quite a bit of sticky work. My tyres are very much outdoor style — hard as iron at the front and medium soft at the rear so there should be a good market for some of the other degrees of softness for the coming winter sessions.

Provision has been made on rear axle brackets for ball bearings if required as extras. In their absence the ready bored recesses for them are filled with suitable nylon rings provided. An up-grade can thus be made at any time without much trouble. Engine location allows sufficient movement of motor to enable a variety of gears to be fitted. Novelty, the small motor gear is a drive fit and must be pressed into



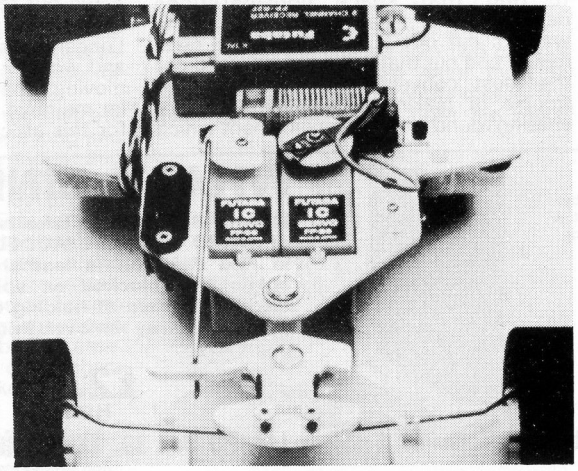
Car on the cover is the Associated RC12E in prototype form.

Heading shows Phil Green's car with Nick Adams' Speed Controller (very neat) single servo, and Rx slung under radio plate.

GRP chassis assembled showing forward engine location.

Detail of servo saver showing arrangement of simple spring.

Two servos in place, with "Parma" type speed control resistor wiped by servo arm. Note track rods fitted with grubscrewed retainers.



place between the jaws of a vice with the axle held from being pushed through. This is simple enough to do and will not work loose as some of the grub/allen screw retained gears do.

Front and rear body mounts with height adjustments are provided as is a front bumper. You may find as I did — wanting a Renault F/1 bodyshell — that it does not conform to the body front end — but never mind a bit of sheet can soon be made to suit; or body chosen to fit the goods provided.

The kit as offered in basic form goes further than many U.S. kits in that a complete box of bits for the chassis is provided without need to add supplementaries. That is to say the car lacks motor, batteries, body and radio gear. If these are added to cost of the kit it comes very much in line with the middle range cars, that is to say a bit dearer than British but not so costly as U.S. "exotics."

So far as radio installation is concerned the radio plate is provided cut out to take Futaba on/off switch, with small container for six side by side nicads across the body, plus two cable ties to secure them in place; cut-out holes for a smaller tie to secure the receiver; holes for fixing a Parma-type wire speed-controller resistor; holes for fitting an unspecified jack socket for re-charging; and a big hole for sundry wires to go through to under the radio plate. There is also a simple stylised diagram of 4 and 6-cell circuits.

The choice is now up to the builder. In its simpler form two servos operate steering and speed control. I made the elementary mistake of cutting out my radio plate to take two 17M Futabas only to find that space considerations demanded the smaller 16 type. So be warned: cut out a thin card radio plate replica and cut that out for size first to get the most convenient layout and save trouble of making a new plate and/or chasing round to buy a replacement which might cost as much as £2 if obtainable. I am not altogether sure that I like the swing over wipe on the wirewound core which is using the servo as the actual instrument operating with the attached wiper arm (it is done of course with both Mardave and Lectricar, but with some modification to reduce strain on servo). However if you are going to do it, make a mock-up first to get the exact position for both servo and resistor. This is fixed to the plate via two holes already drilled thereon by means of two little angled brackets bent up from tinplate or dural and slotted into the ends. I also made up a couple of deep alloy washers to keep it well clear of the plate itself and act as mini-heatsinks. No provision is made for a separate battery for Rx, the more useful and weightsaving method of tapping into the main nicad pack is to be preferred. Bold people can do it just like that, with a common negative lead. Others will prefer to wire in a voltage regulator to save them from themselves.

A lot of drivers will opt for an electronic speed controller to do away with one servo. This can be either Smoothtronic, Electrocraft (and its British derivatives as per Nick Adams) or the latest Viking. Electrocraft, by the way, are now advertising an additional gimmick to give full reverse whilst Viking will be having this on theirs soon if not already available by the time this appears. Fitting of this offers a problem or two. Smoothtronic is the easiest to fit, set side up with the wires showing, it can be secured with a U-shaped bracket screwed to radio plate to keep it just clear of the GRP chassis. This looks less tidy than having it wiring side down but this would involve some space difficulties with smaller bodies. Ted Longshaw is the main British distributor and word or letter to him will get things moving. Thanks, by the way, to Ted who let me have one of the precious few kits for this article.