

CLOD BUSTER



JOHN BICKNELL looks at Tamiya's new monster, 4 x 4 x 4 truck.

As the owner and great fan of a Tamiya Blackfoot, I was more than pleased when asked to review their new monster truck the four wheel drive, four wheel steering Clod Buster. Although still 1/10 scale the first impression when opening the box was one of amazement at the size of the tyres 165mm dia. and 110mm wide. Delving deeper into the box one finds exactly the same format as all other Tamiya kits have. Everything is well labelled and cross referenced, with the instructions so no mistakes should be made.

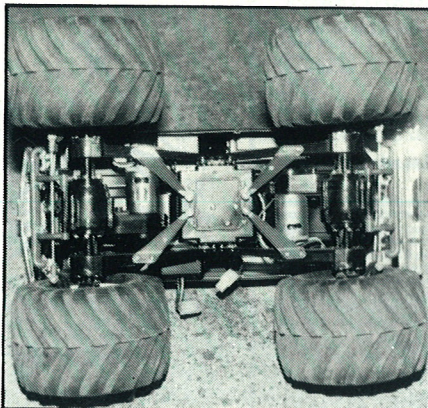
Before building any Tamiya kit I always tip the well marked screw bags into small individual plastic containers with each bag header in front for reference. This saves hunting through the bags, they split open and all the bits get mixed up.

Construction

The first task is to install both steering and throttle servos into the bath tub style chassis. No servo tape is used only screws and brackets. The steering servo is mounted in the middle of the chassis with operating rods going to the front and rear to operate the four wheel steering. Make sure the correct rod goes to the front or else the steering will operate in the opposite direction. A large on/off slide switch is installed and at

this point one tends to wonder why. On investigation the switch controls the voltage to the twin drive motors, changing their wiring from series to parallel thus giving power or economy mode. When all the radio is installed and checked a start is

Looked at from below, the double ended design of the chassis makes identifying the front end difficult.



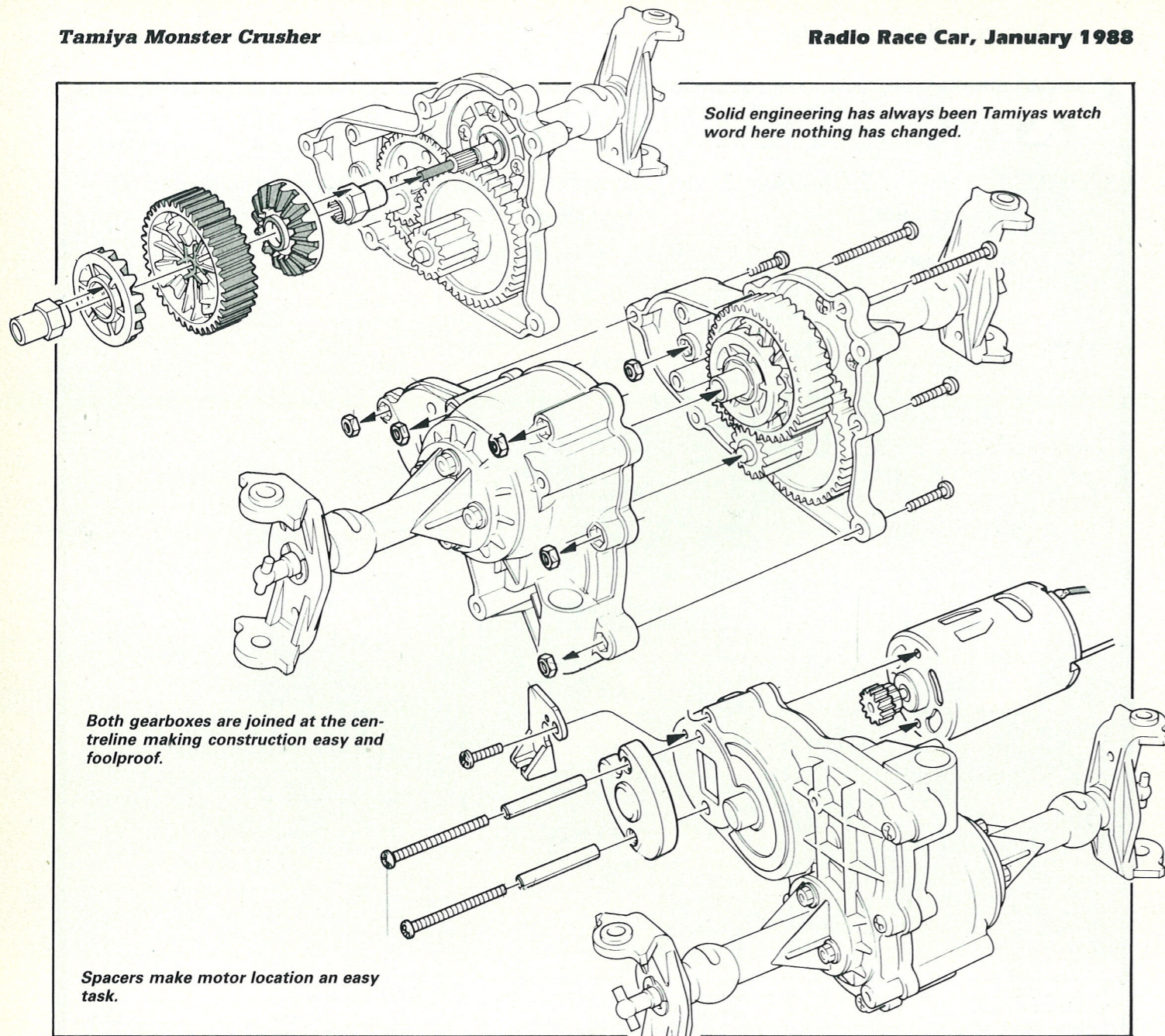
made on the gearboxes.

Two identical gearboxes are built and a Johnson motor fitted to each. No choice of gear ratio is available as front and rear have to be the same. During construction I opted not to build one completely and then the other, but part assemble each one to a certain point check it for freedom of running and then follow with the other. When fully assembled a test run of each box is a good idea to make sure the differential is working properly.

Axle assemblies presented no problems in fact it makes a change to build something more suited to large fingers. Everything on Clod Buster is big. When the axle assemblies have been attached to the gearboxes, steering arms and tie rods are fitted, at this point the assemblies take on the identity of front and rear.

The two complete drive assemblies are joined to the chassis and eight, yes eight shock absorbers are built and added.

When fitting the tyres to their hubs I thought I might have to pop down to the local tyre fitting centre, but they weren't that bad to fit. Attention needs to be paid to the direction of the tread pattern on the tyres otherwise they look stupid if the treads go different ways plus the fact that it will affect the grip.



Solid engineering has always been Tamiya's watch word here nothing has changed.

Both gearboxes are joined at the centreline making construction easy and foolproof.

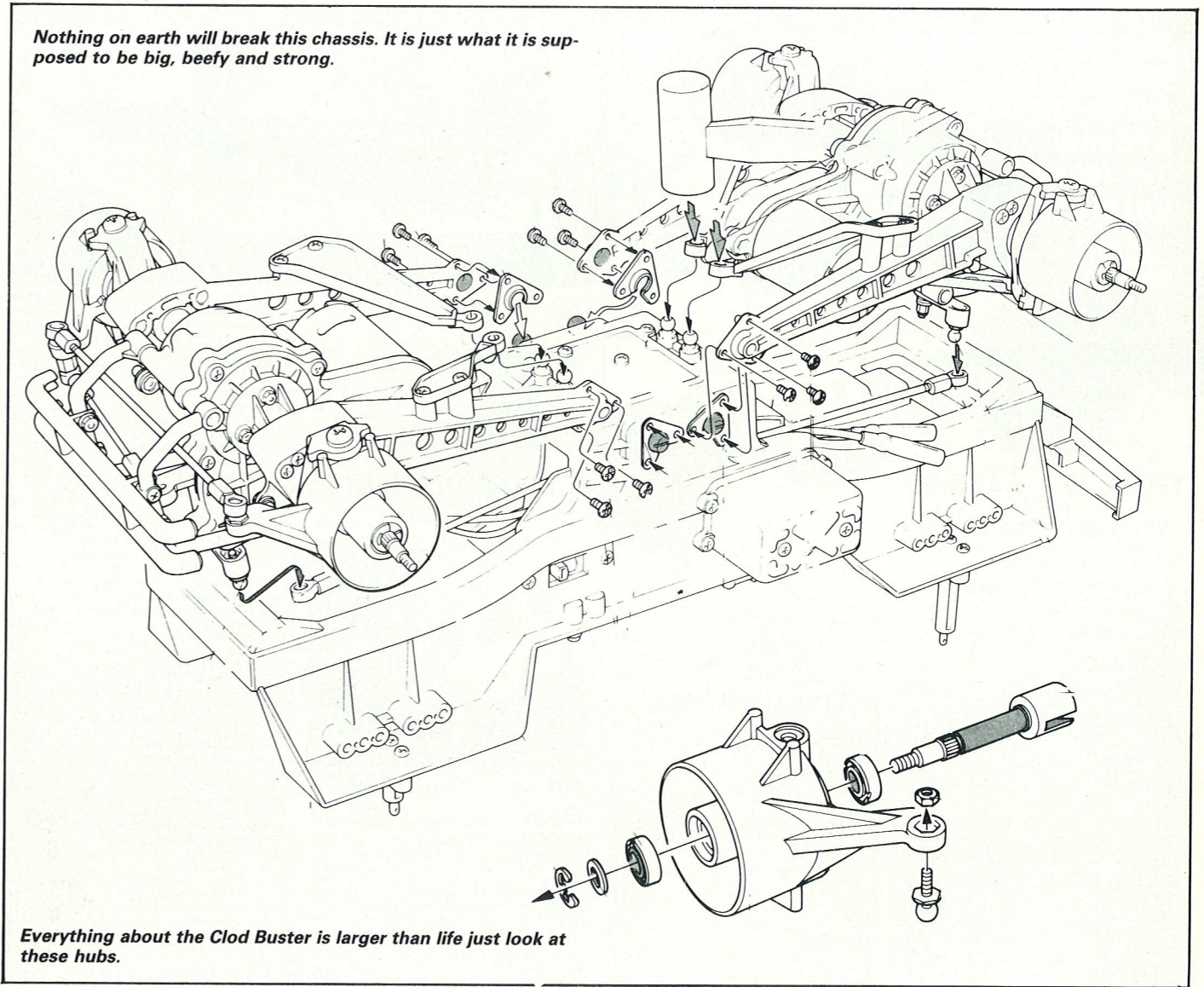
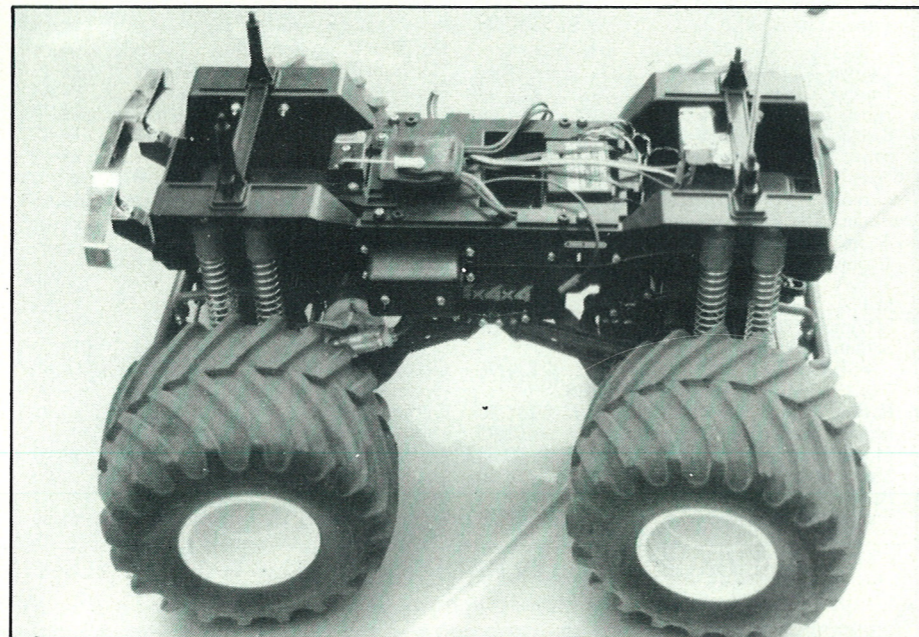
Spacers make motor location an easy task.

Body Assembly

The body's base colour is white so to achieve a box tap look alike it means a 'paint job'. I chose to airbrush the body with cellulose paint, but care must be taken as the body is made of a styrene material. Anyway after many fine coats I was happy with the result. All body parts are bolted together in fact no glue is required anywhere during construction of Clod Buster. Next came the stickers again no problem at all, only the fact that it is getting near to a first run.

After checking that everything was as it should be and armed with a freshly charged 7.2 volt nicad battery out into the back garden I went. By the way the weight ready to go is approximately 10lbs.

The rolling chassis is an impressive sight as big as a block of flats, eight shockers and four huge wheels combine to make the Clod Buster king of the crushers.



Nothing on earth will break this chassis. It is just what it is supposed to be big, beefy and strong.

Everything about the Clod Buster is larger than life just look at these hubs.

Running

Great! One word sums it up. In economy mode a slow highly manoeuvrable vehicle ideal for picking ones way through the flower beds, then when switched into power mode you are in control of a machine that takes no prisoners. Flowers flattened, the rockery became a mere wart in the garden. When on the lawn wheelies were possible both forwards and backwards. Understeer was evident when cornering under full power, but this is to be expected with the width of the tyres.

Summary

A definite winner from the Tamiya stable.

The only additions I intend to make is to fit wheelie bars (front and rear) and working headlights.

Perhaps now that we have what would appear to be a genuine Monster Truck replica, some events can be held for them. In fact if I know Richard Konstam the importers of this truck plans are already in the pipeline.

Have fun with the monster truck but a final word of warning, it's rough ground performance is habit forming and can be hazardous to your health, especially if like me you destroy a complete flower bed.

P.S. Make sure you have a good screw driver as there over 190 screws and bolts to do up.

The finished article as the sticker says a real powerhouse.

