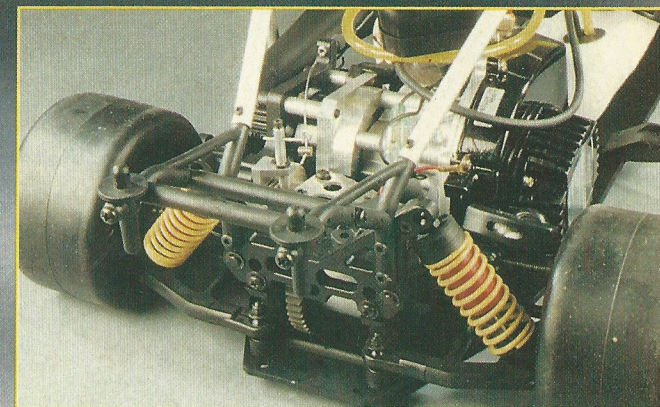
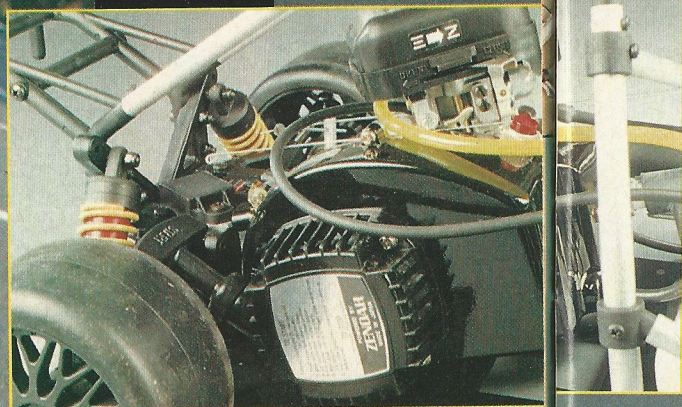


Could this be the ultimate RCMC kit review and test drive? Alan Harman gets his hands on FG's impressive 1:5 scale 22cc Mercedes C180 Touring Car and feels the earth move...



Left: Close up of the powerful 22cc Zenosah engine that comes in the Mercedes kit. Above: In action - the car handled well during its debut at Halifax.

TALK TORQUE

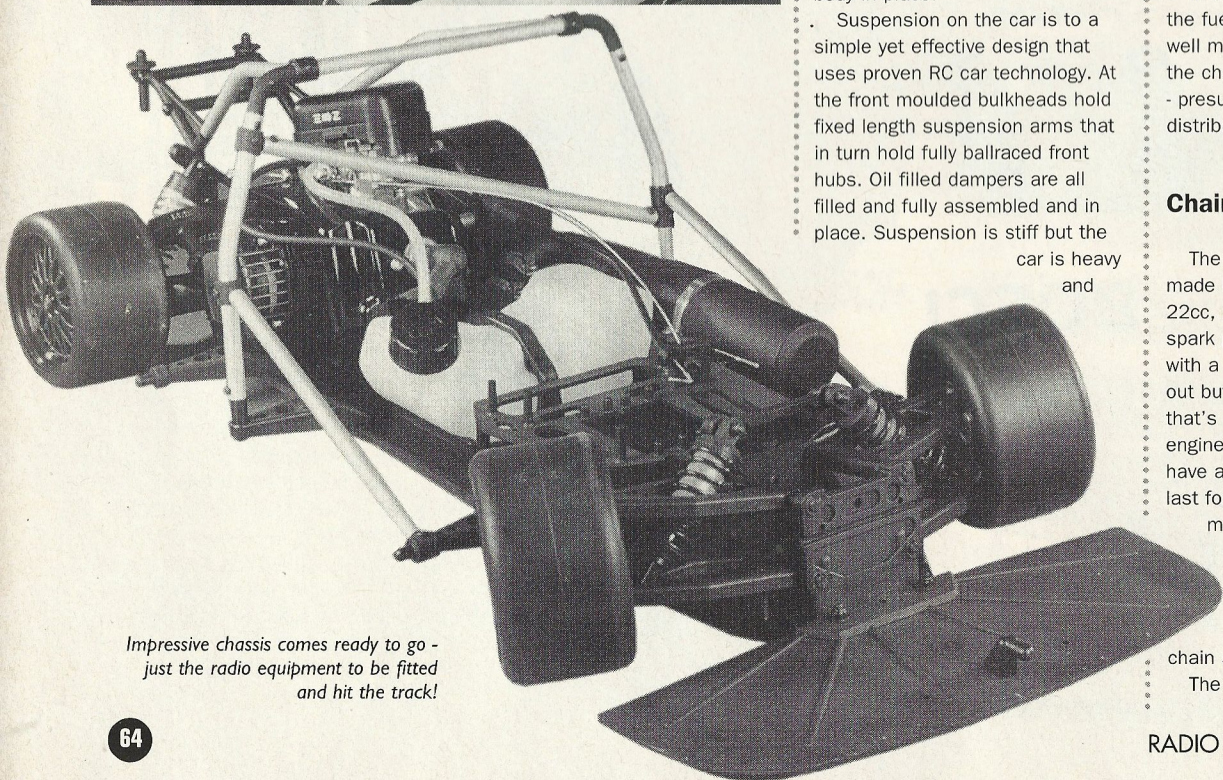
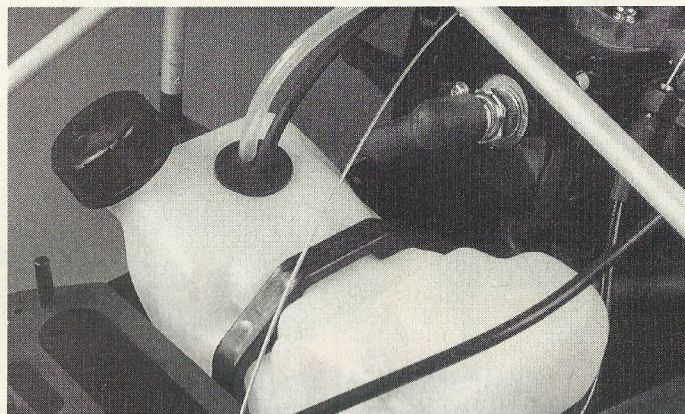
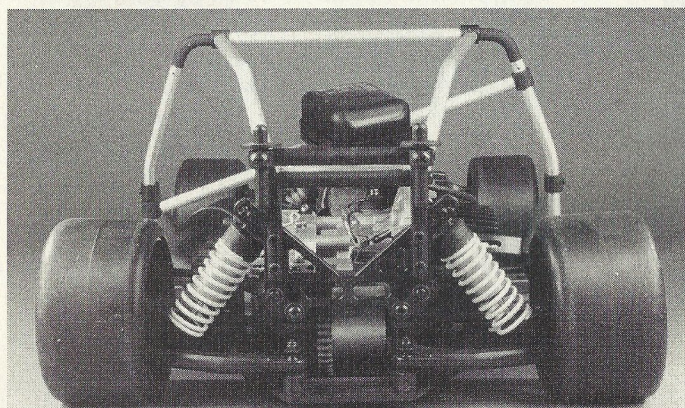
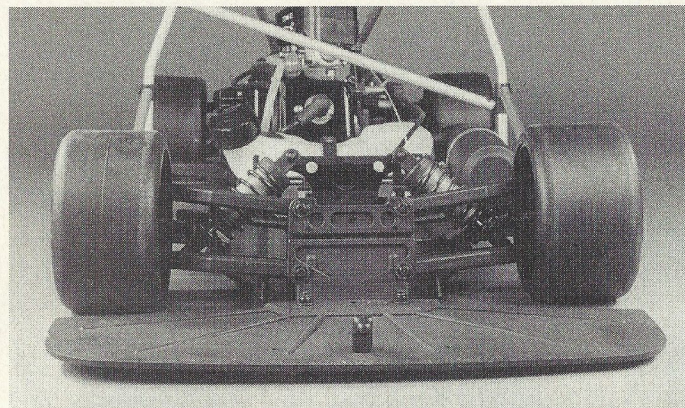
When the box arrived from King Cobra Models we knew this was a serious kit review. Eric - our post man, out of breath, delivered the box to the RCMC office and dropped it with a thud. The kit was the first C Class Mercedes in the UK made by FG (Franz Grolsh) in 1:5 scale - this was the biggest car review RCMC had ever taken on....

Before agreeing to review the car RCMC had little to do with large scale racing - after all they were all big, lumbering slow lumps that didn't handle and were overpriced - weren't they?

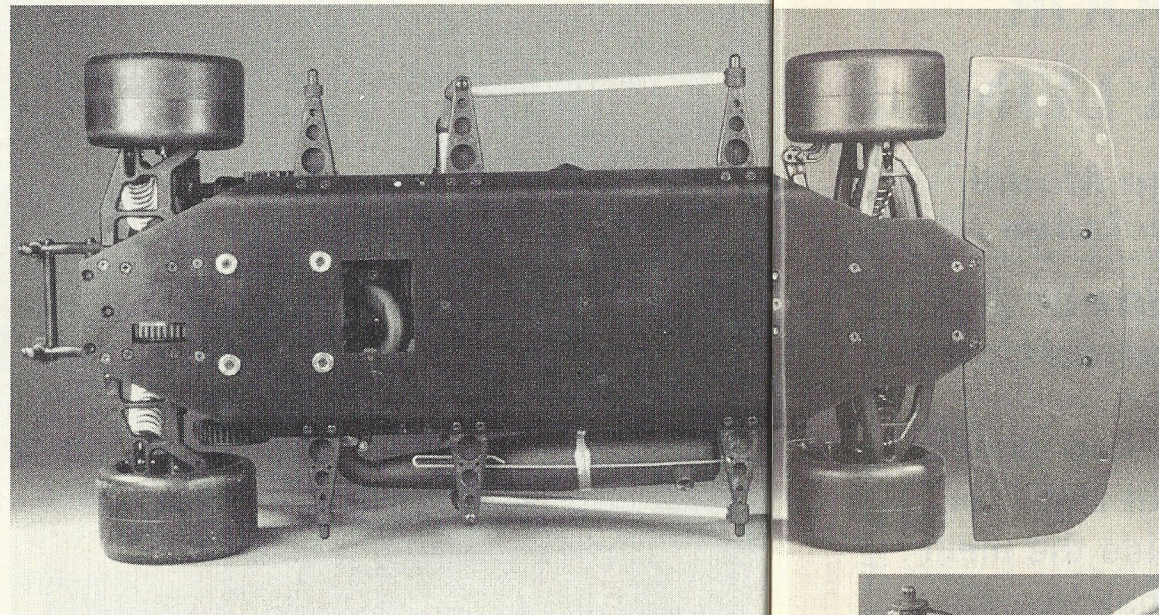
On opening the box the first surprise; the kit is not a kit - it comes ready built - now it becomes obvious why the box is so big! On removing the car from the box (not easy) the body shell has already been cut out and placed on the chassis - most of the hard work is therefore already done.

The big surprise is the quality. Big scale cars have had an image of being a little agricultural but the FG car is detailed and designed to a high standard. The bodyshell is amazing - just like an enormous Tamiya body - detailed, clear and well moulded and just the right shape. The body is actually in two pieces with

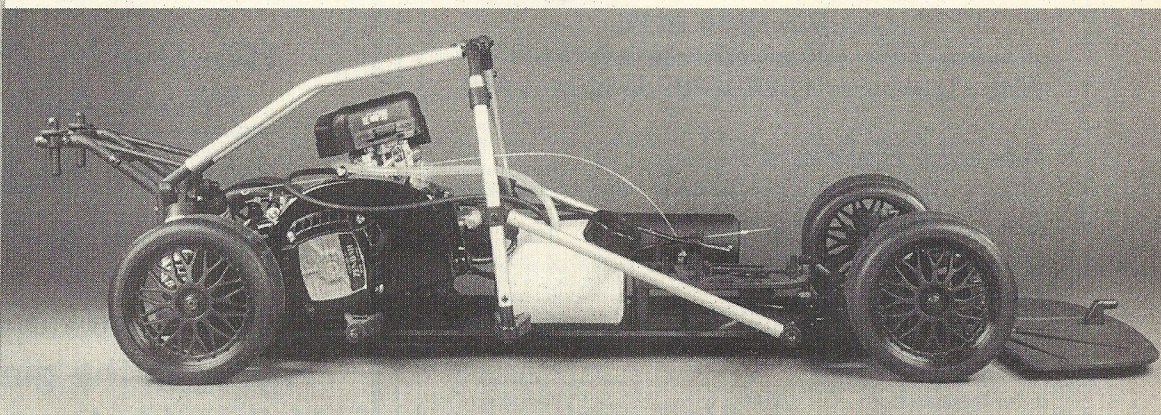




Impressive chassis comes ready to go - just the radio equipment to be fitted and hit the track!



Left: Underside of the alloy chassis shows the extensive body mounting system. Below: Fuel tank sits in the centre of the car. Bottom: Fan system on the engine allows cooling even when the car is not moving...



the front bumper being bolted into place after painting.

Closer inspection

After removing the body by slipping off the seven clips the chassis can be closely inspected. A super thick alloy, anodised chassis is the rather sturdy base of the car, folded at the edges for strength the chassis is very stiff and has surprisingly few screws holding the mechanics to it. At the front a large (everything is large!) bumper is fixed that acts as a saver in crashes and holds the body in place.

Suspension on the car is to a simple yet effective design that uses proven RC car technology. At the front moulded bulkheads hold fixed length suspension arms that in turn hold fully ballraced front hubs. Oil filled dampers are all filled and fully assembled and in place. Suspension is stiff but the

car is heavy and

needs to be kept off the ground. Steering is also all ready to go - just the RC equipment to be fitted. Two large Futaba brick servos! are used on the steering and these need to be wired together so that they operate at precisely the same time. We suspected that the car would need to be taken apart and played with to free up and tune all the factory assembled parts - maybe even a little locktite here and there would be required? - but none of this was necessary. All the parts are well cleaned up, free from binding and securely fixed - this kit really does just need the RC gear and you're off.

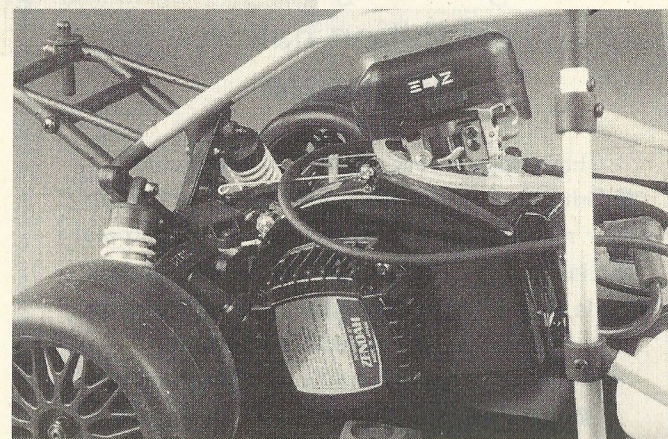
In the centre of the chassis is the fuel tank. Large (again) and well moulded it is securely fixed to the chassis in the centre of the car - presumably for the best weight distribution. Next is the engine...

Chain saw?

The engine in the FG cars is made in Japan by Zenoah. Full 22cc, pull start with a really big spark plug! The engine is fitted with a choke for easy starting, cut out button and air filter. Really that's all there is to say about the engine - they are reliable, powerful, have a built in fan for cooling and last for absolutely ages with no maintenance. They also tick over for ever removing the need for a mechanic and start easily - simple.

Rumour has it that it is a chain saw motor...

The rear of the car features a



differential housed in an alloy casing, steel drive gears pass the power from the engine clutch unit through an idler gear that also houses the disc brake, this in turn drives the diff. The drive system is very simple and is virtually maintenance free. From the diff dog bone drive shafts take the power to the wheels which again is all fully ballraced. Rear suspension again uses pre assembled oil filled dampers with large coil springs. The rear of the car has more suspension travel than the front and again is smooth and well assembled.

At the back of the car is a moulded body mount - this is also ideal for picking the car up and joins to the alloy roll cage that protects the internals of the car and again is an ideal pick-up point!

Two cans...

Painting the body is something else - for start it is really quite heavy being moulded from thick lexan and needs a little cleaning

up and washing. After a lot of masking it took two cans of Custom Colour yellow to cover the area and a can of matt black for the outside. The FG stickers are excellent and are available for various schemes seen in the GTCC, we just put the high quality stickers in place and the car looked great!

Finishing the car off beautifully are the wheels and tyres. Moulded just like the real things the wheels are excellent and look really good - they are also very stiff and will work well. The tyres need to be glued into place and this must be done correctly as they take a real bashing during cornering.

1:5 Scale - an option?

In the past large scale racing was happening in the UK but wasn't well organised and tended to be sporadic. Bob Stiles at King Cobra has now changed all that. The cars are excellent and the race series has been a great success this year and now has a good base

to build on for next year. The cars are raced in standard form and the costs are low after the initial high outlay. The racing has been hard fought but close with some real long battles on the track. The best part of the racing though is the level of friendliness, just like when all RC Car classes start the main attraction is the fun element and the racing is just that.

The cars are easy to drive in many ways as they are very stable. The original thoughts of slow and sluggish are soon removed as the power and torque from the Zenoah engine gives the car a kick off the line - power needs to be smoothly brought in when the tyres are cold as the grip is low - if you don't the car will start to slide, just like a real car the action is slow, there is time to react! - the cars are controllable and you can feel the weight of the car through the transmitter - it's strange but fun!

Plans for the racing series for next year are well underway. The cars cost just over £1000 and King Cobra have a series of easy to pay plans. Once the initial outlay is made costs seem low. Fuel is cheap and breakages seem very few and far between, bodies do get a little bashed about and cost over £100 but will last a season if repaired and looked after.

The racing is fun - in the next issue of the magazine we will have report on the 1994 Championship results and finals - the meetings are fun and the driving very rewarding - if you're looking for something different and really interesting this could well be for you.

For details of the full range of on and off road cars from FG including

Touring Cars, Marders and the new Group C cars see the advertisement in this issue or call King Cobra direct on Tel. 0706 220780.

STOP PRESS

See next issue of RCMC for full championship results and meeting report from Halifax finals.



TOPSA NEWS

Topsa News is the scales newsletter that is available to anyone interested in 1:5 scale racing. The newsletter is very up to date with race reports and the latest kits and product news. The newsletters include full colour pics and details of up coming meetings and important hints and tips.

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