



MAKING MANTUA

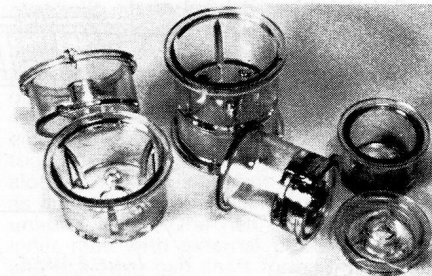
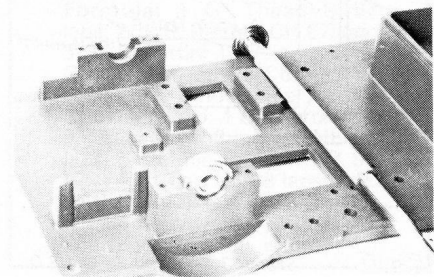
The Mantua kits were amongst my favourites at the German Toy Fair this year and I was delighted to learn that C.I. & R.A. Thompson were bringing them in as distributors. Two options are offered the Model 1000 (which is the one about to be built) selling at around the £50 mark and the rather more conventional Model 2000 at twice the price intended for the more ambitious driver. At first sight the kit is a model trader's delight being so elegantly packaged for display with all the parts in their purpose-made pockets under a protective clear sheeting. But watch out, Mr Model Trader, and ensure that your customers check that everything has been accounted for before throwing away the wrappings! I had almost written off for a replacement shoe spring when it was shaken out of the box at the final shake; otherwise there is just enough of everything, though I do wish kitters would

Elegant packaging of Mantua kit with all, or nearly all, to view Moulded axle and engine mounts on chassis. Clever clear plastic wheel hubs.

slip in a couple of extra things like circlips to save that regular gravel for flipped out bits.

The one piece chassis made, so the instructions say, in nylon-fibreglass, is a sturdy 1/8th in. thick or more, with strengthening ribbing on the underside for threequarters of the length leaving the front with some flexibility. Radio box and the lower parts of the rear axle plummer blocks as well as the lower part of the engine mounting blocks are moulded integrally with the chassis. Most of the assembly is with self-tapping screws through ready-drilled holes, some of which are not compatible with the more usual servos, and may even not be in the right place. To avoid scratches file down their protruding tips.

Front axle beam is of the same black nylon fibreglass and the king-pin bearers should be well filed to remove moulding ridges and ensure that the axle pins have room to move freely. These axle pins are very neat being quite straight with turned axle at one end duly threaded for retaining nut, the other end having a milled flat drilled to take the steering connection. King pins are secured with circlips

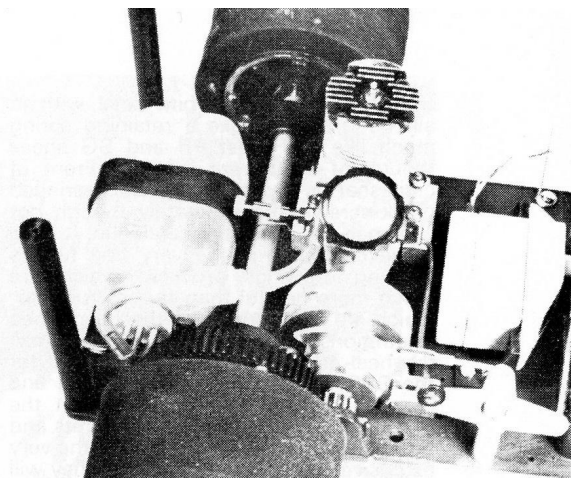


(horrible things!) The nuts holding on the wheels were not as described locknut type but plain nuts, so should be secured with Loctite.

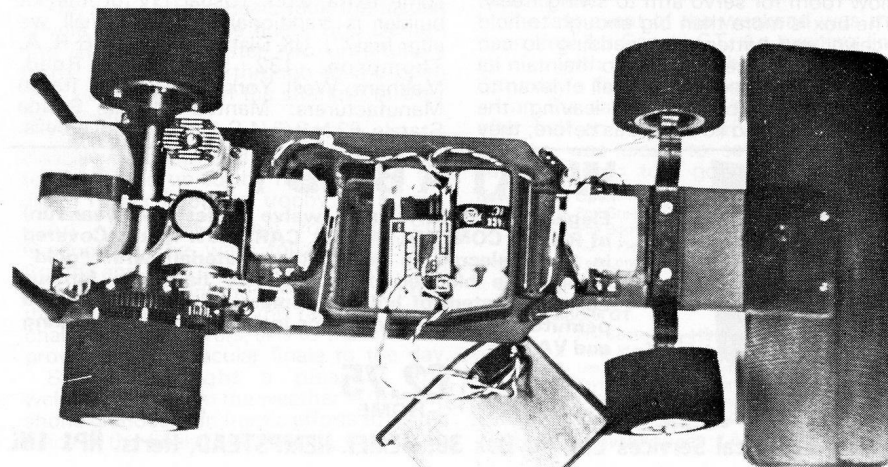
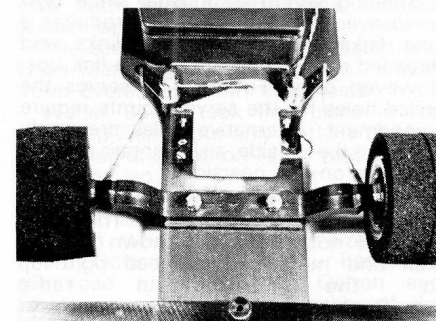
Wheel-hubs introduced another novelty. They are clear Macralon and each is in two pieces to be screwed together with three selftapping screws. Front wheels contain bronze bearings which go between the two parts before screwing together; do not overlook tapered bearings to go on rear axle. Wheels have slight rims to retain the tyres. No mention of any need to glue the tyres in place appears in the instructions. The little rims will **not** hold the tyres on and they should be glued on with Evostik or similar in the usual way. Before assembling them I gave the hubs a quite spray of silver paint.

Rear axle is tapered at the ends and threaded for wheel retaining nuts. A brass tube spacer is provided. Double shielded ballbearings locate in the plummer blocks with retaining blocks to screw over them. Crown wheel is fixed to driving wheel with four selftapping screws separated from the Macralon hub by four distance pieces of brass. Engine for which the test chassis was intended is the OPS (perhaps a little ambitious for what is really a low priced **almost** beginners' kit) so that motors such as the ubiquitous Veco 19 or Fuji (which I happen to have looking for a good home) involve a little, a very little, filing down of the side walls of the moulded blocks. It only took me a few minutes with a side miller on the Unimat's flexible drive — a file would do the job equally well. Ready drilled holes in the chassis and in the two white metal mounts fit the Veco or Fuji and doubtless other motors.

Car with all in place (less silencer and heatsink).



Rear end set-up showing radio box cutaway. Curious double fail-safes on steering.



Clutch shoes are of white metal, with an all round slot to take a retaining spring much like the latest PB and SG shoes though of a different material. Front of crankshaft is supported in a ballbearinged block screwed on separately though not shown in the illustrated catalogue. It does however appear in the very fine fullsize working drawings provided which are much more helpful than the instructions, which are really no more than captioned illustrations of progress stages. The small flywheel cone provided and intended for the OPS engine did not fit my Fuji and required machining down to fit on the crankshaft. Alternative motor mounts and some adapters are listed amongst the very extensive spares shown: whether they will be extensively carried here I do not know. Anyway many model shops, craft teachers etc would soon produce or modify cones for the builder, or so I trust.

Fuel tank is clear plastic and is fitted behind the axle with a rubber strap fixing rather like some of the stock car set ups. There is certainly no room in front for it!

Steering set up is unusual since **two** servosavers are fitted, but it produces a neat linkage. Excellent quick-links and threaded rod is provided for the link ups. However, using Futaba 17M servos the drilled holes for the servo mounts require amendment. Alternative holes are ready drilled on the off side, a similar pair need to be made on the nearside.

Set-up for throttle/brake linkage requires even more changes. The servo just will not fit where shown on the plan and must be advanced right up to the moulded-in radio box. Rear of this must be cut away to allow room for servo arm to swing freely. (The box is more than big enough to hold receiver and battery plus padding so can happily be reduced in size. To maintain its usefulness I added a cross wall of lexan to complete the box again, leaving the original sides and lid almost as before; they

could be cut away. No suitable hole had been drilled to take the rear throttle/brake set-up. Plan shows it correctly placed and a pair of dividers was used to scribe its exact location in the chassis plate: an appropriate hole was then drilled. Again adequate and elegant quick-links are provided.

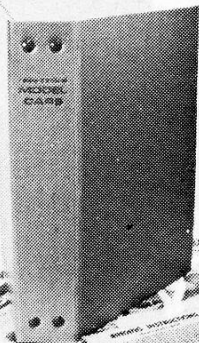
Brake set-up is a very fine brass quadrant set in a brass block which screws onto the chassis. Shoe is of rubber. Braking action is straight forward push for "on" without any spring tension. An alternative spring-loaded version can be obtained the instructions say.

With rear location of a plastic tank any form of stand up dustbin type silencer is not possible. But the latest Fuji includes what seems a very adequate silencer which can if need be used to operate a pressured fuel tank so I fitted that. It has not been tested by me for noise level so is installed hopefully . . . Flat type heatsink will be fitted but is not in place as it would obstruct my photos.

Body to be used will be a bright red ready coloured Sports/GT from SG reputedly Ferrari or a fairly near relation . . it suits the kit body mounts. Also to be fitted — especially in view of rear and fragile fuel tank is a small rear bumper. Front bumper also of nylon fibreglass is adequate.

So there it is. Intended, I think, very much as a beginners' kit. I am not sure that it falls precisely into that slot since using the more available British accessories involves a fair number of changes in layout. Local Italian/European bits and pieces may be more suitable. But I liked it when I first saw it; now that I have made it up I still like it and enjoyed the need for some extra work (Usual cry of the kit builder is traditionally: "What shall we alter first?"). UK Distributors: C. I. & R. A. Thompson, 132 Slaithwaite Road, Meltham, West Yorks, HD7 3PW. Italian Manufacturers: Mantua Model, Strada Statale, 62 N.2/3/4 S. Lucia di Roverbella.

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