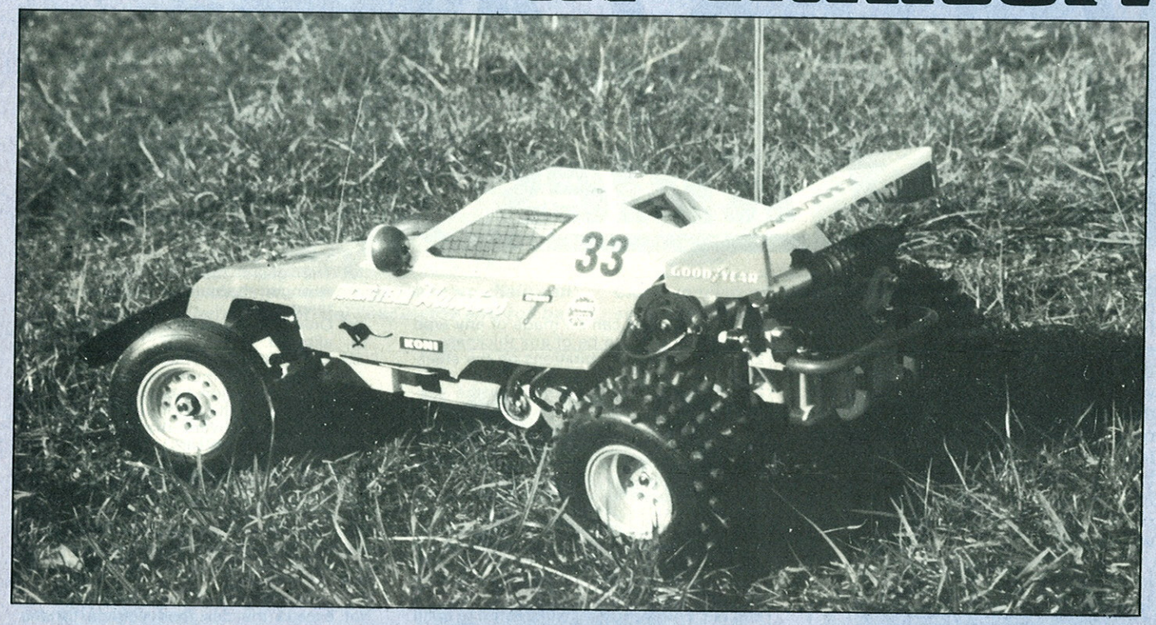
The Marui Hunter.

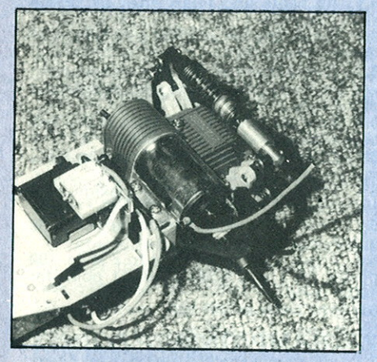


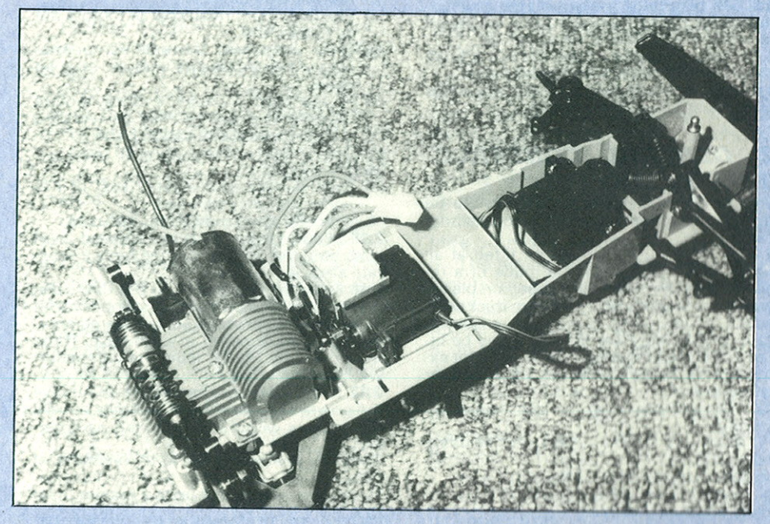
1/10th Scale Racing Buggy

Imitation, they say, is the sincerest form of flattery for it's an acknowledgement that the first party has 'got it right'. Marui's mimicry of a notable style of box top art was therefore predictable. Under the box lid, however, much of the Marui Hunter is original.

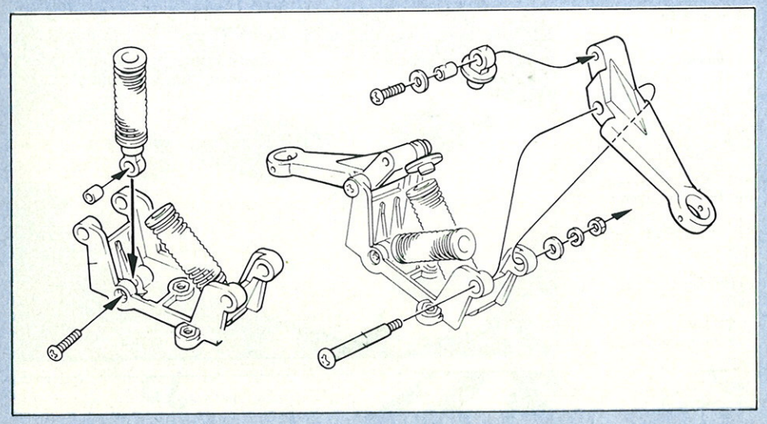
An injected moulded plastic bathtub chassis is used, this incorporates the gearbox at the rear. The nicad is carried outside the bathtub, positioned across the chassis, where it can be easily charged without dismantling the car and gets the maximum cooling effect. The motor — a Mabuchi 540 — is also all but fully exposed for maximum cooling, being positioned above and slightly forward of the gear train.

All the gears, with the exception of the motor pinion, are moulded from nylon, the final gear carrying a double planetary gear differential. Rear wheel suspension is via a single wishbone and the single universal joint is cast from an aluminium alloy. A single oil-filled suspension unit with adjustable springing is connected to the wishbones via bellcranks and connecting links styled like shock absorbers. All the suspension arms, links and gearbox casings are moulded from a glass filled nylon and 'oiless metal' bushes are used throughout the transmission. These are identical in size to the bearing bushes found in Tamiya kits and no more need be said about a potential source of ball races.





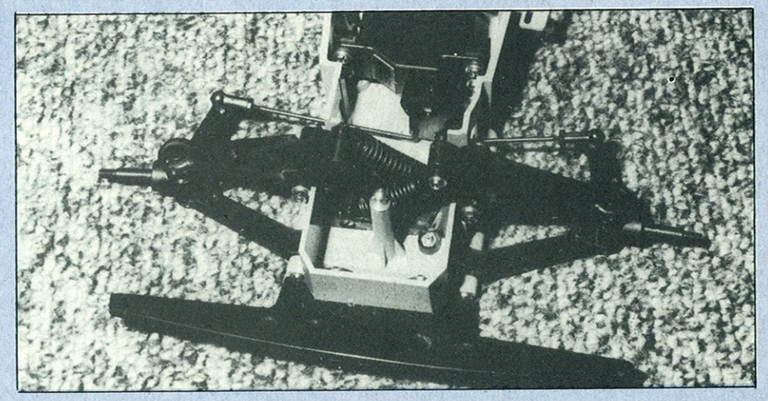
Above, the speed controller with its two integral ceramic resistors can be seen mounted on the throttle servo. Right, the whole chassis showing the compartment between the servos which takes the receiver and radio battery pack.

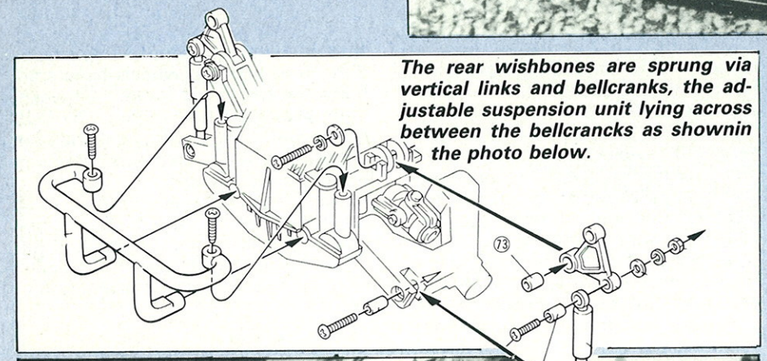


Section from the instructions (above) shows the assembly of the front suspension as a module, the photo below showing the suspension fitted into the chassis.

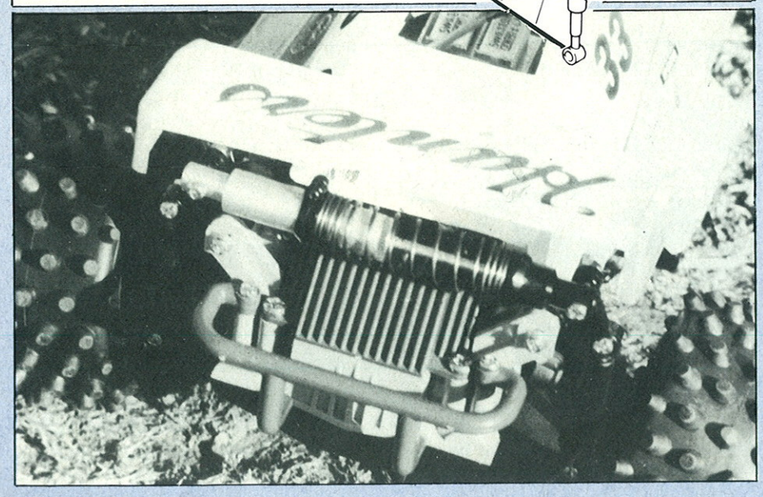
The front suspension takes the form of a wishbone carrying the bottom of the king pin and a single arm supporting the top. Unusually, the stub axles and knuckle arms are able to slip up and down the king pin, having a light coil spring to absorb the smaller bumps. The main suspension springs are coils that extend diagonally across the bathtub between inboard extensions to the upper suspension arms and the opposite lower corner of the chassis. Each side independently sprung but there is no damping of any sort. However, the dimensions of the springs are such that Tamiya or Kyosho suspension units (coil-over-shocks) could be fitted.

A three forward—one reverse speed mechanical switcher type of speed control is used and the 'single seat desert racer' body shell is a Lexan moulding. So much for the basic description, how did it go together.





The rear wishbones are sprung via vertical links and bellcranks, the adjustable suspension unit lying across between the bellcrancks as shownin the photo below.

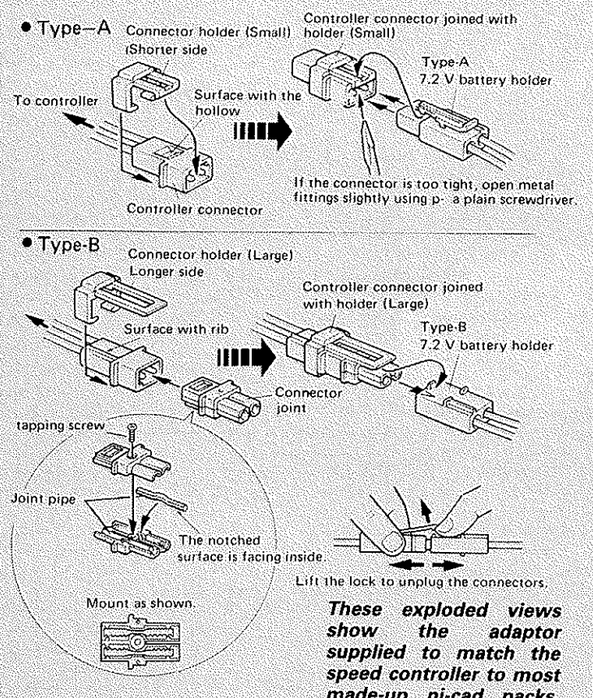


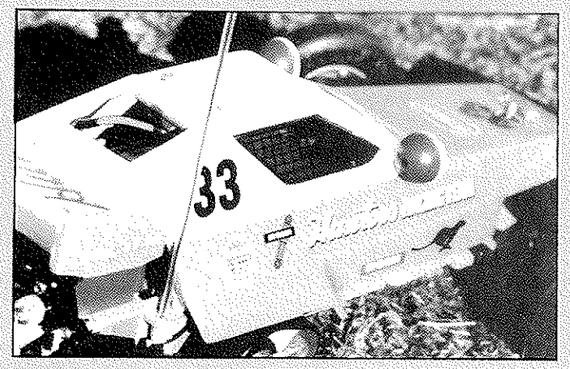
On the line

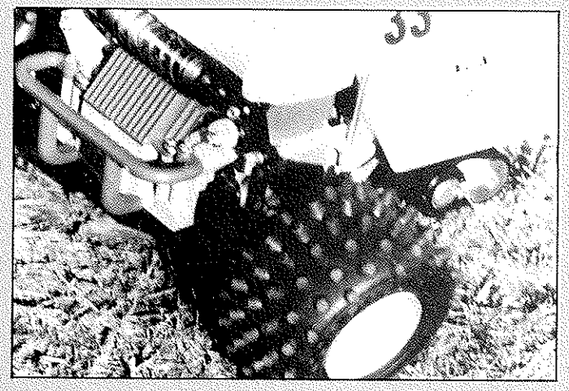
There's nothing factory-assembled about the Hunter, with the exception of the speed controller. Nevertheless, construction is very quick and a weekend's leisurely work will get the Hunter on the prowl.

A well illustrated instruction book helps things flow along and the various small parts — nuts, bolts, self tappers — are packed up in small bags with card labels showing all the relevant components drawn full size.

Construction starts with the assembly of the spring loaded front upper arms into a one piece suspension mount which is then bolted into the chassis. The whole car is designed with the thought of simple maintenance in mind, much of the steering and front suspension being quickly dismountable. The lower wishbone is attached to the chassis with a single long pivot bolt and the king pin between the outer ends of the suspension, upon which the stub axles pivot, are held in place by spring pins. The servo saver fits directly on the steering servo and is of the type using a split plastic ring 'spring', while the servo is mounted with bolts to a pair of pillars which are then fixed to the chassis with self tapping screws. Most servos can be used as the mounting has slots that allow a considerable variation in size.







These exploded views show the adaptor supplied to match the speed controller to most made-up ni-cad packs. Right, a close up of the rear tyres shows the unusual five-four pattern.

The gearbox is very easy to assemble, the instructions even showing the sequence in which the planetary differential gears are fitted. Two bearings are fitted on the axle shaft and this assembly is tapped between the chassis and lower pan. Above the chassis, an idler shaft with gear is fitted and secured with the motor mount, formed from alloy plate. Three motor pinions giving a choice of 18, 20 or 22 teeth are supplied and the mount allows the motor to pivot to set the correct gear clearance. The kit even goes as far as to supply a sheet of thin plastic which is trapped between the gears when the ratio is changed. Two plastic covers are fitted to completely enclose the gears but leave the motor casing exposed.

Assembling the rear suspensino presents no problems. The Hunter has a simple hydraulic damper with double O-rings forming an oil seal and a neat touch is the provision of a marked dip-stick which allows accurate filling of the damper cylinder.

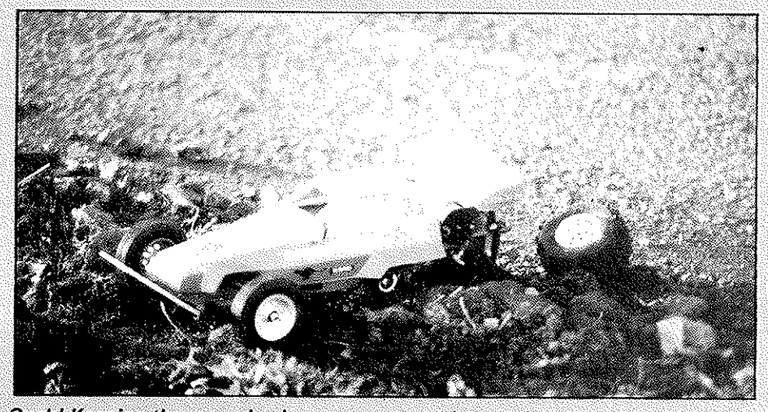
The speed controller is a compact unit with the two ceramic resistors for controlling forward speed directly incorporated with the wiper board. Servo tape is used to join servo and controller, then the assembly to the chassis. It's worth noting that the flat open space that carries the mechanical speed controller is large enough to accept most electronic units.

Radio receiver and battery box are carried in a sealed compartment formed by the chassis and a bolted down cover.

Fitting the Ni-Cad pack (which is not supplied) reveals another neat touch in the form of an adaptor to suit either of the major ni-cad plug types.

Completing the rear wheels proved to be the most frustrating part of the construction. Getting the tubular hub spacer into the tyre was a hassle as the tyre material refuses to be stretched, but after some cussing the spacer eventually slipped into place. Both front and rear wheels have split hubs, the tyre being trapped between them, which are held together by four self tappers. The front wheels ride on plastic bearings, nyloc nuts retaining front and rear wheels.

Preparing and painting the body presents no problems even for the beginner thanks to the graphic and in-depth instructions which indicate techniques for cutting out and painting.



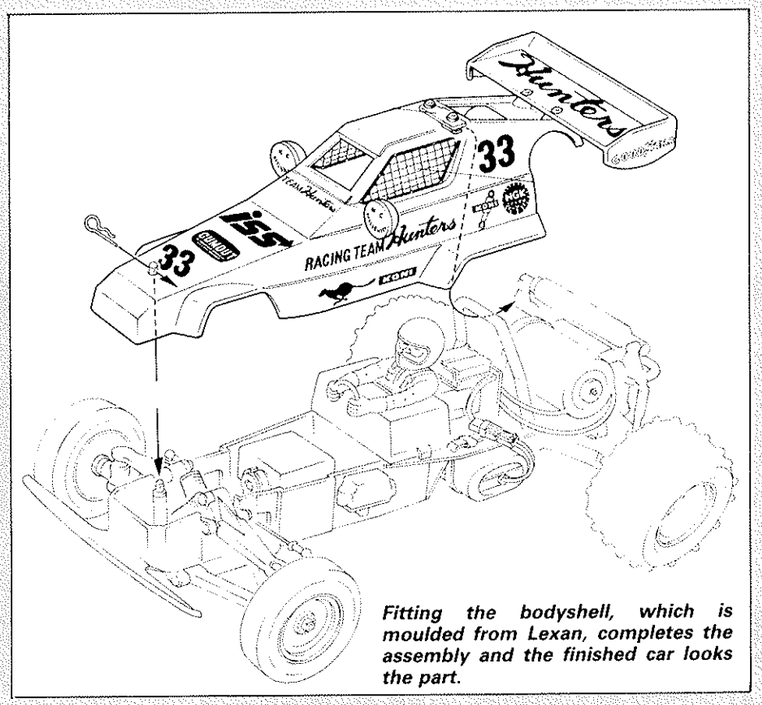
Ouch! Keeping the rear wheels on presents a minor problem — minor in that its easily cured!

Raising the dust

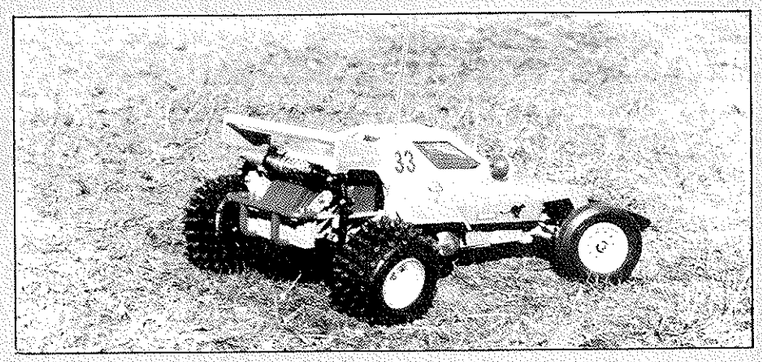
The Hunter has an interesting mixture of good and not-so-good points. Initially the mid-range gear was fitted, which means that improvements could be made one way or the other, the spring tension on the rear damper being set at the mid-range for the same reason.

The Hunter had to be photographed before the ravages of the race track destroyed its pristine appearance. To do this it was taken to an area on the local common that was well tended with short cut grass, but when we arrived the only area that was well lit was the side of a steep hill. This was not ideal, but the Hunter went up the one-in-two incline like the Space Shuttle going for orbit! Who needs 4WD? Traction was shown to be good, but back on the level the difference between power-on and power-off cornering was excessive, at full power the car all but ignoring the effect of the front wheels on loose or slippery surfaces. Fitting dampers to the front may well assist in curing this, in the meantime the owner will have to put up with chopping the throttle for corners and accepting the speed loss.

Trying to over-do the jumps and dust-throwing for the camera proved how durable the car is, the major problems being the steering rods popping apart — like Rough Riders, and the solution's the same — and also the rear axle pulling out from the u/j.



Fitting the bodyshell, which is moulded from Lexan, completes the assembly and the finished car looks the part.



Back in the pits

Essentialy, the Hunter is an inexpensive car with, for the newcomer, an acceptable performance. It is practical to retro-fit the extras that owners might regard as necessary, such as front dampers, electronic speed controller, ball races, 'proper' ball links rather than snap-on ones, etc., while the experienced driver could go the whole way to start with.

As far as catching Frogs, Grass hoppers, Hornets, Scorpions and Beetles goes, that depends upon the skill of the Hunter.

Available from Amerang stockists, the Marui Hunter costs £69.99.