

It isn't very often a completely new 1/8 off road car hits the scene. TAG may be a new name to most of us, but not me. At the Euro Champs in Germany, I renewed my friendship with the owner of the company, Daniel Spongia. This name again may not be very familiar but he worked many years at Garbo and was always on hand to give us help and advice in setting our Garbos up using the latest bits and pieces developed on the works cars. When Garbo was taken over by Mantua Models, Daniel decided to form his own company to design and produce his own range of off road cars both 1/10 and 1/8.

The 1/8 car is called the Booster and is available in both 2 and 4WD versions at reasonable prices and an update kit is available should you wish to spread the cost a little and update later.

Booster Package

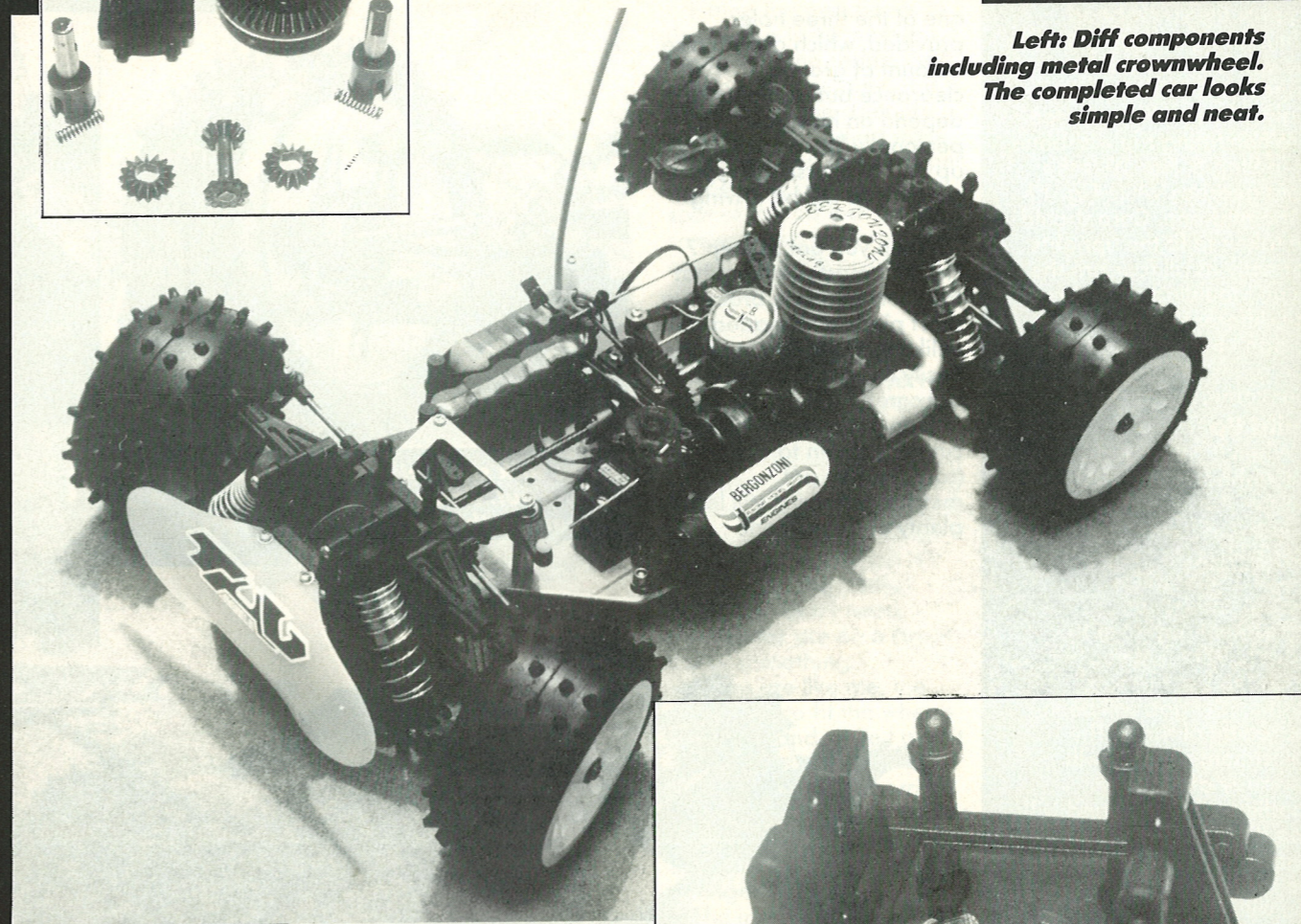
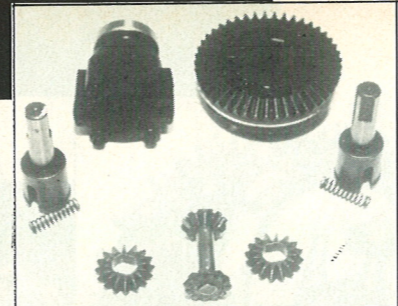
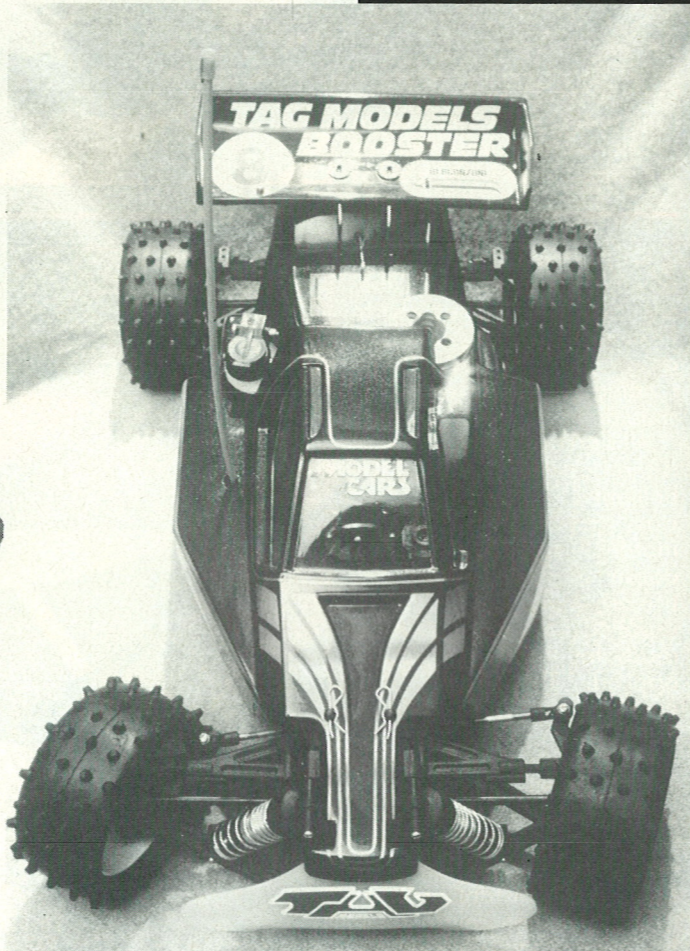
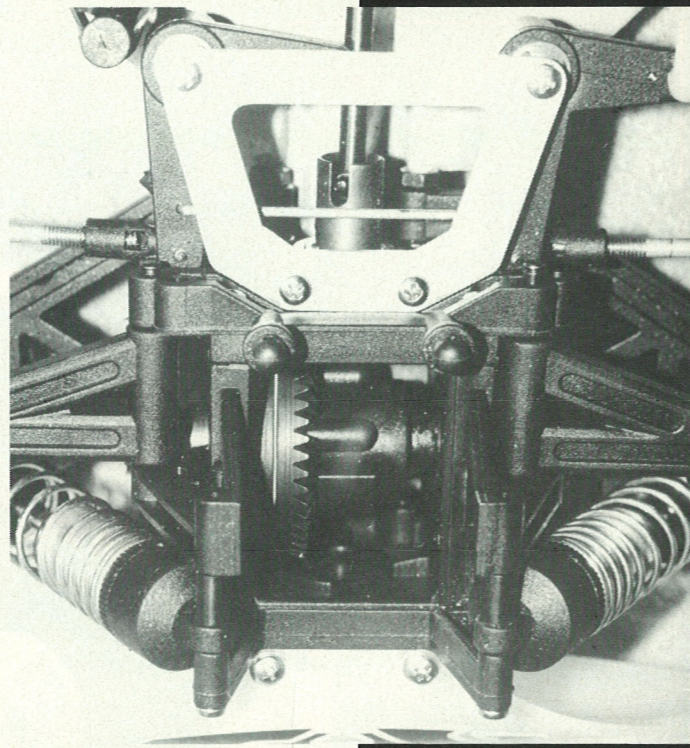
The Booster comes in an attractive box as you may expect, when the lid is removed it reveals a selection of all the interesting bits, diffs., axles, gearbox mouldings and wishbones vac-formed onto an inner lid, I mention this as when this is removed and you start ripping the numerous plastic packets open to start building, you will find various bits missing and after searching everywhere you will find them, you guessed, vac-formed to the inner lid.

No special tools are required for assembling the kit, just a Philips screwdriver, a pair of pliers and a couple

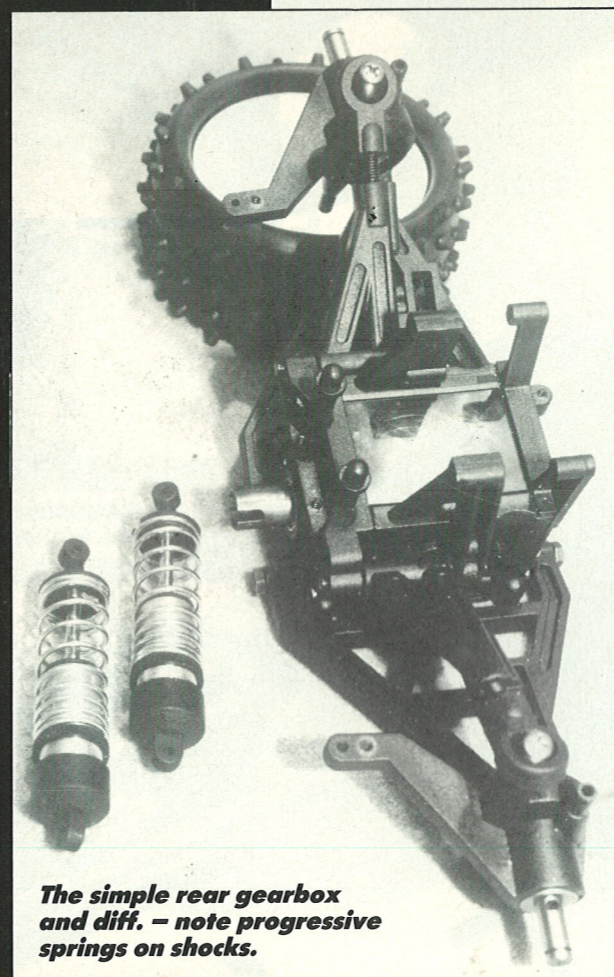
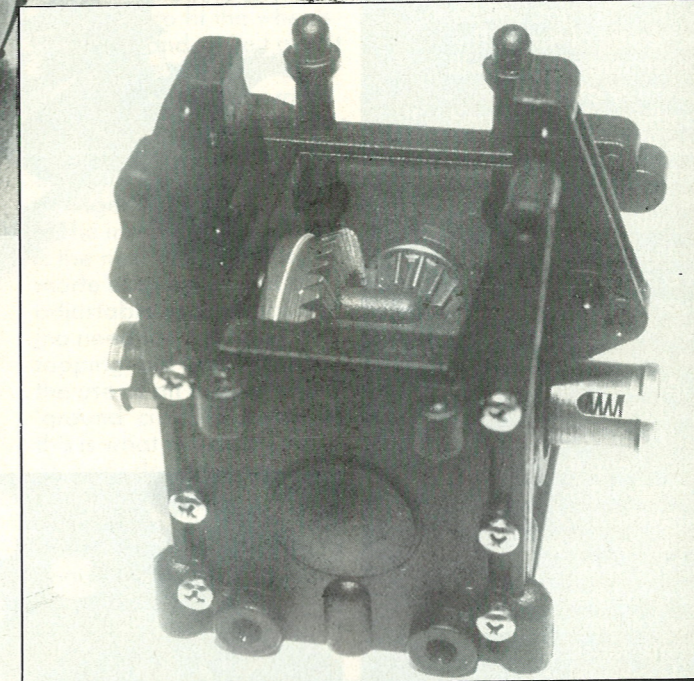
of Allen keys. I also used a good locking compound where told to, silicon oil for the dampers and in the diffs. and a spray type chain oil for the crownwheel and pinions.

The instructions come in the form of a 12 page booklet and cover all aspects of building the car, they are in three languages and should present no problems if they are followed. There have been one or two minor changes to the kit since the instructions were printed so I will go through the building of the kit as I found it.

The first and most important change is in Step 1 which concerns the fitting of the crownwheel to the diff. body. The diff. casings are now made of plastic, not alloy as originally shown, the steel planet and satellite gears are already fitted inside but it would appear that the flange inside which carries the crownwheel is slightly thinner than the alloy and the retaining screws are therefore slightly too long and require filing, don't be tempted to force these screws that last little bit as they could easily shear off, I also found that the use of only one of the gaskets provided for backlash adjustments was just perfect. It is most important when the diff. is installed in



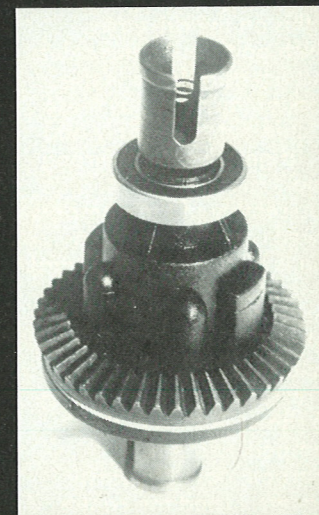
Left: Diff components including metal crownwheel. The completed car looks simple and neat.



The simple rear gearbox and diff. - note progressive springs on shocks.

the gearbox that it all spins quite freely but without too much backlash.

The same applies for step 3 which is the rear gearbox, I used chain lube in both gearboxes as you only need use a little and it doesn't fly off as you will see through the clear lids., Step 4 covers the installation of the uniballs into the wishbones, I used a pair of pliers but with a piece of cardboard covering the jaws as the balls are alloy and could easily be damaged. These balls do have a slight countersinking on one side which should always be



TAG BOOSTER

Tony Marsden builds the latest Rallycross title contender

against the screw head when fitting the uprights to the wishbones the spigot appears to fit into the ball slightly easier that way too.

When fitting the wishbone as in Step 5, Fig. 10 is the front gearbox while Fig. 11 is the rear one. Care should be taken to fit the uprights correctly as all four are the same mouldings, but they use different pickup points, so don't fit the screws until you are sure you have all four corners correct.

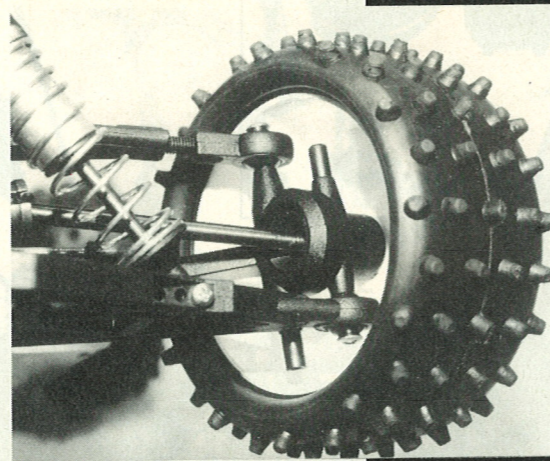
Build Up

When it comes to fixing the wishbone assemblies to the gearbox sides you will note two different possibilities for the pivot pin, the inner one will require the top wishbone adjustment gap to be in the region of 7mm, if you decide to use the outer position the gap will be in the region of 4mm. The adjustment of these will obviously affect the handling of the car and will also depend on how you personally drive. If you use the outer pivot point setting, you will notice that the camber change is greater on compression of the suspension than it is if the inner one is used. As you are assembling the suspension you will also need the cups to the drive shafts and also the springs which keep the shafts pushed out from the diffs., I suggest a spot of silicon sealer on the ends of these springs as they will be easily lost at a later date when they fall out when doing maintenance, etc., the sealer should stop that. I also used just a slight smear of this on the drive pins which go through the axles and act as a driver in the back of the wheel as these to slide out very easily and could get lost at the wrong time.

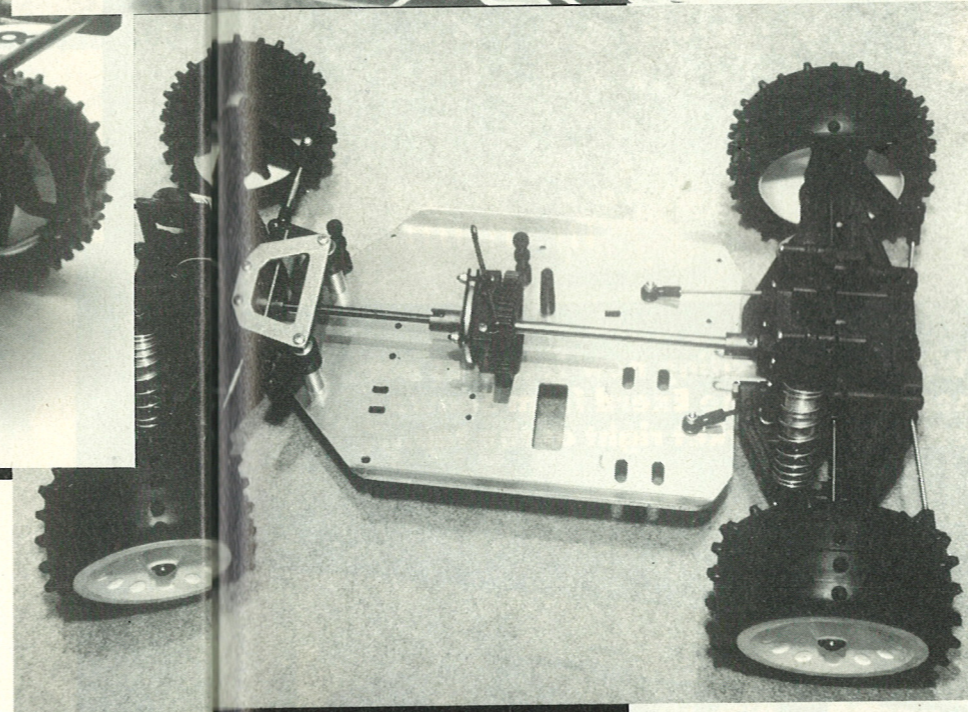
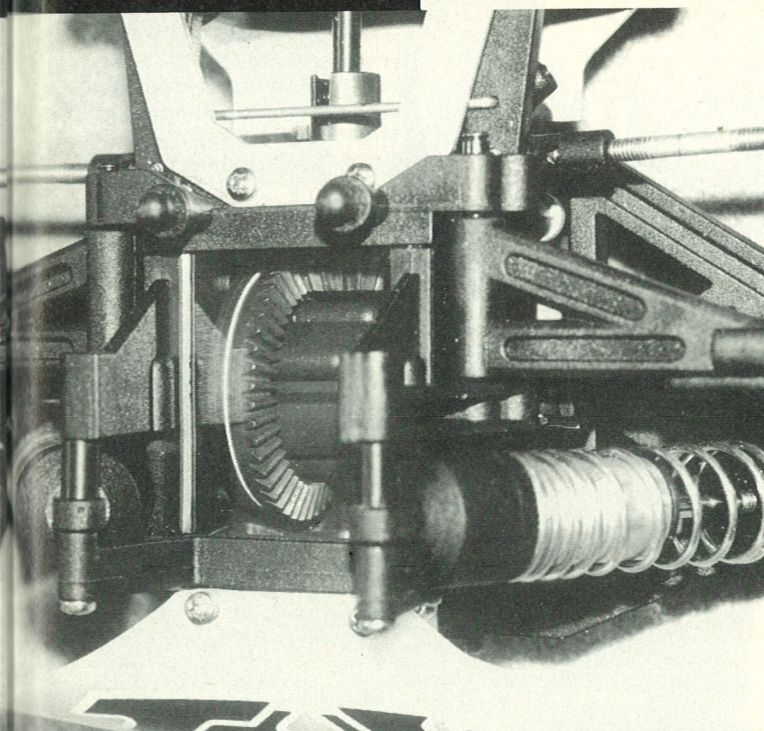
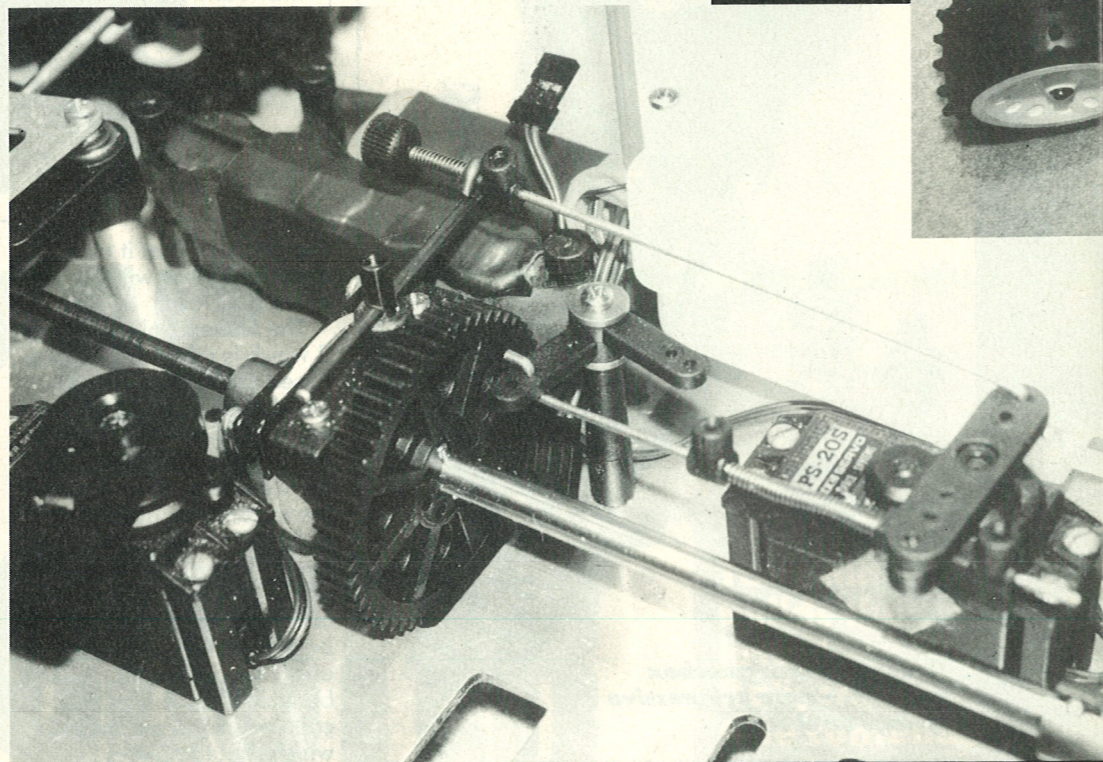
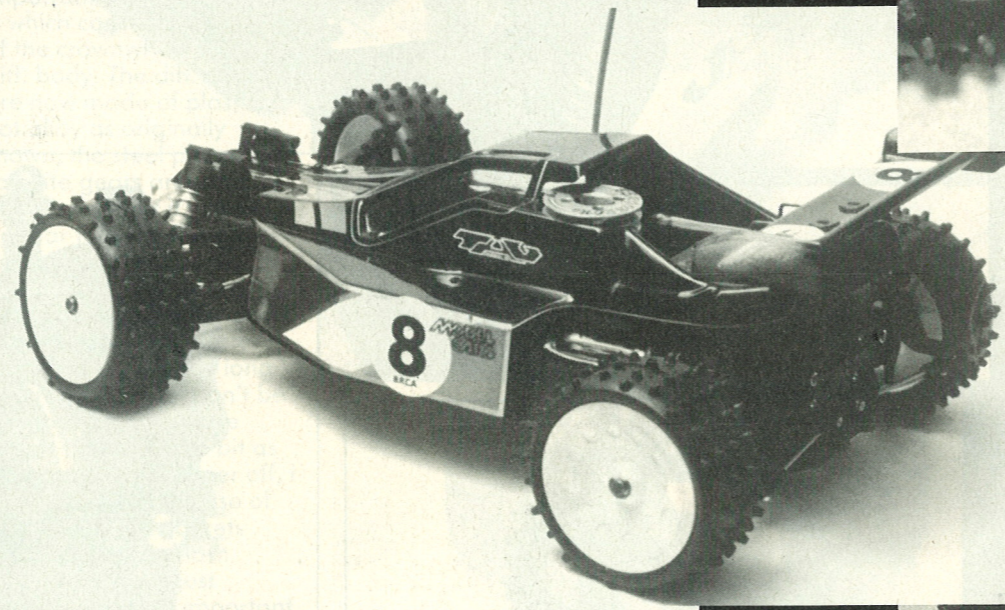
Assembly of the dampers is well covered in Step 6 and is quite straightforward. As the top of the damper has an 'O' ring seal, you tighten them up enough by hand and should not need to resort to using pliers. Fig. 15 shows how to fit the dampers to the front gearbox, note the plastic spacers. I used the centre

one of the three holes provided, which gave a nice amount of ground clearance but again it will depend on how you personally like a car setting up and of course the type of terrain you will be driving over.

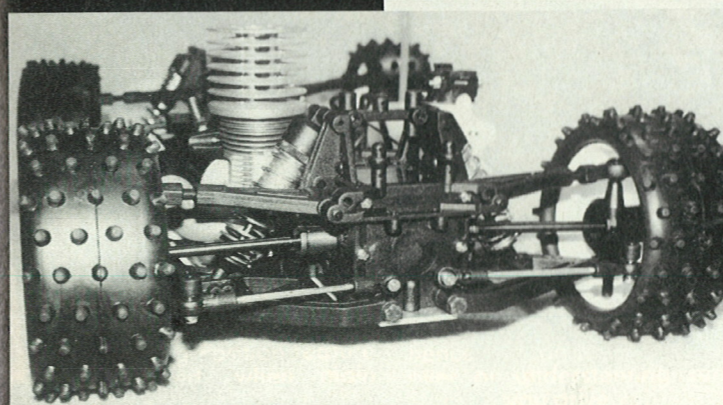
When you get to Step 7 Fig. 17 I must mention that the short gearbox brace is a short piece of threaded rod unlike the longer one and is easily overlooked if you are not careful. The brake arm in Step 8 is rather long and I cut mine down to 1 1/2in. (sorry I never got metricated) which still leaves plenty of adjustment.



Large lock stops eliminate the drive shafts falling out. Below: Neat bodyshell resembles the Burns.



Above: Pressed alloy chassis is light and tough. Left: Centre gear and brake set-up is all included in the kit.



Fitting the gearboxes to the chassis is the next job along with the centre shaft and brake assembly. This is followed by the steering linkages, etc., adjust track rods to about 26mm as per instructions but also put a spot of thread lock on the screws which go through the chassis into the pivot posts (Fig. 24).

Radio Installation

The servo saver is servo mounted and comes with its own instruction in the packet, they are, however, in Italian but there is also a drawing you should have no problem. There is a small piece of plastic about an inch long in the packet which you don't need, I think its for use on a circuit car or something.

If you are like me, the next job is to fit the wheels and tyres and while I admit gluing tyres on with cyanoacrylate is a horrible job, it is the only way but do take care as the finished job does not look good with bits of finger stuck on!

The installation of a motor is the next task which is made easy by the use of adjustable engine mounts (no need for drilling or tapping) but I recommend the use of an engine with a 'ground' crank (SG type) as this is what the clutch nut, etc., are designed for, I decided to use a 'Bergonzoni' using the theory that, if it's good enough for the European Champion, it's good enough for me.

Assuming you will be using a pressurised fuel system, before fitting the lid (Step 12) the hole in the end of the spigot on top of the tank needs blocking up (I used a small screw) and a hole needs drilling in the side of this spigot (just below the screw) and a nipple fitting.

You are really on the last lap now with the installation of the radio, which couldn't be easier, all the wire is pre-bent and I liked the plastic collets but don't be tempted to overlighten or they may strip. I feel that the pop-on ball joint on the steering arm will need replacing as in my

experience anything that pops on will pop off when you least want it too.

The final job of fitting and painting the body is made easy as the body is already cut out to fit and only needs a hole drilling for the aerial before painting. If a simple paint job is done using just one colour, the final car can still be made to look attractive by the use of the large sticker sheet that is included.

Unfortunately the Booster was finished too late to race at any BRCA meetings but initial testing in the back garden (while my wife was out I might add) showed that the car was extremely quick. The brakes are well on top of the job and indeed I will reduce the movement at the servo end of the brake rod as they were too good.

While I appreciate that a run in the garden and a race meeting are quite a different kettle of fish, it all seemed to work very well, the turning circle was quite tight, the dampers seemed to work OK and the kit tyre gave excellent traction. As the wife still hadn't returned, I put the car on the kitchen scales and was pleasantly surprised, 6lb. 8oz. (still not metricated) which explains why it is so lively. This means that even with all the competition goodies which I understand are now available, i.e., Torsen centre diff., twin brakes, etc., the Booster will still be under 7lb.

Sid Bennett from SB Modelsport will be importing the TAG Booster along with other cars which the company manufacture which I understand include a new belt drive 1/10 electric off road car, and they will be available through selected model shops, so if you have any problems give Sid a ring and he will give you your nearest stockist.

UK Distributor: SB Modelsport, Chatham, Kent ME5 8JE. Tel: 0634 67598.

Overall length: 450mm
Wheelbase: 320mm
Front track: 260mm
Rear track: 250mm
Weight as tested: 6lb. 8oz.