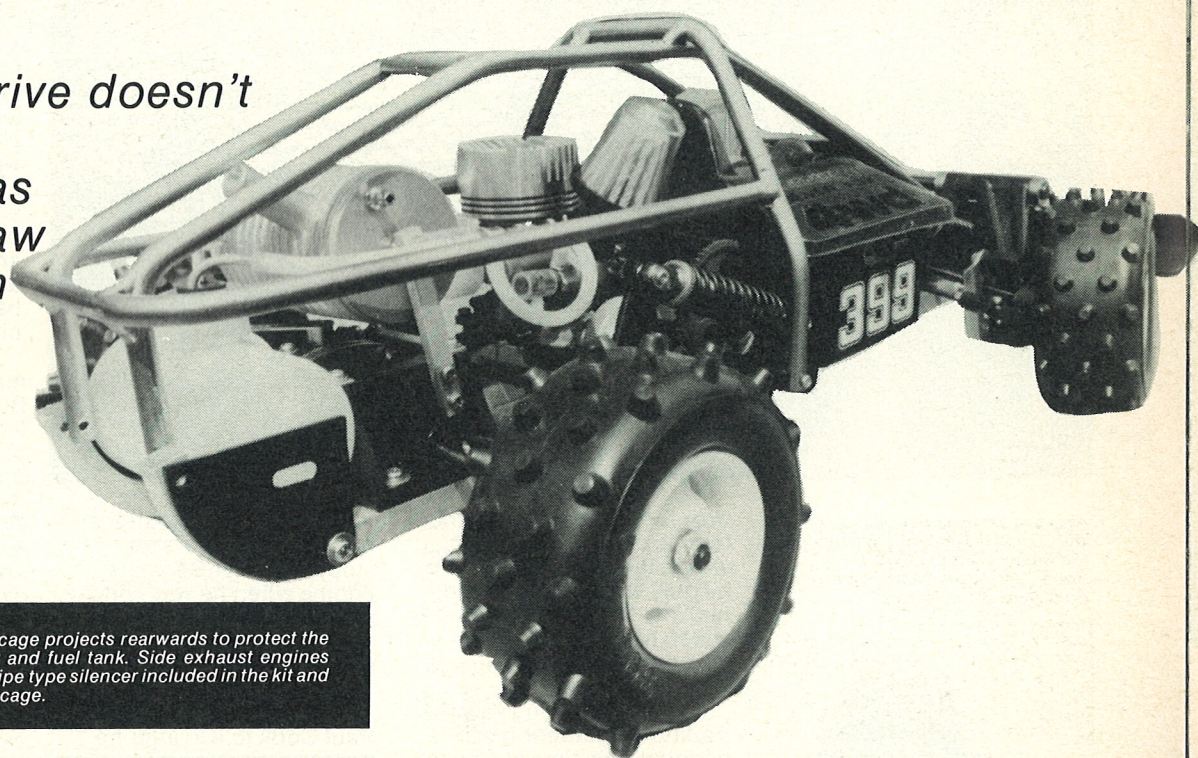


# Thunder Tiger 'Silver Fox'

Four-wheel drive doesn't have to mean complicated as Bill Burkinshaw found out with this 1/8th scale Off-Roader



Above: the ultra strong welded roll cage projects rearwards to protect the Thunder Tiger 21 engine, silencer and fuel tank. Side exhaust engines have to be used to match the mini-pipe type silencer included in the kit and stay within the confines of the roll cage.

THE CASUAL OBSERVER could easily mistake this Thunder Tiger 1/8th scale IC powered Buggy for an earlier product from the Far East but as soon as a deeper examination of the 'Silver Fox' is made, the resemblance is realised to be superficial. It is a significant step forward for a far eastern producer to choose injection moulded plastic for the major suspension components for example. Die cast light alloy components have long been felt to be a weak point obviously recognised by Thunder Tiger, as also is the lack of differentials on such a model; the 'Silver Fox' incorporates two.

The third area chosen for

criticism on this style of Buggy, namely the chain drive, has also benefitted from careful thought in the provision of a chain tensioner which removes the need to constantly adjust that component.

From the above the astute reader will have gathered that the 'Silver Fox' employs chain drive, has plastic moulded suspension wishbones and two differentials. What remains unsaid is that the Buggy is four-wheel drive, a metal ladder type chassis, full engine mounting necessities and silencer, fuel tank, all R/C equipment linkages, equipment crate, welded roll cage, decals and full instructions. Overall if the Thunder Tiger engine is used

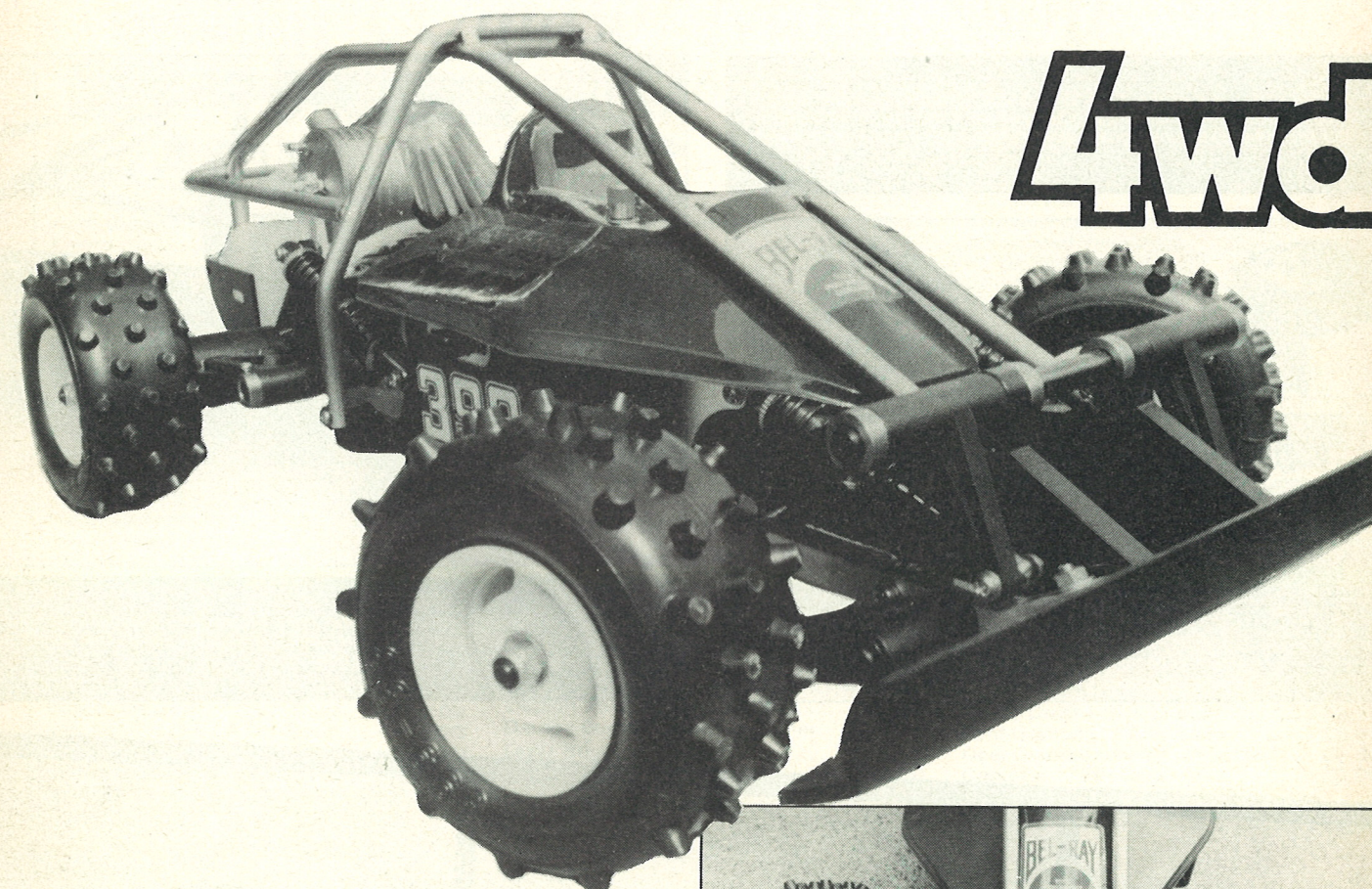
then this is probably the quickest and easiest to assemble as well as having the most comprehensive specification that it has been my pleasure to review.

### Shake the box!

To be totally fair, I have assembled a fair number of Buggy kits over the years and that experience does give a head start over the comparative newcomer to the job. In common with most far eastern products there is no shaping of parts to be done, no drilling of holes, very little bending; in other words it is definitely a kitchen table spanner and screwdriver job. Instructions take the form of a series of

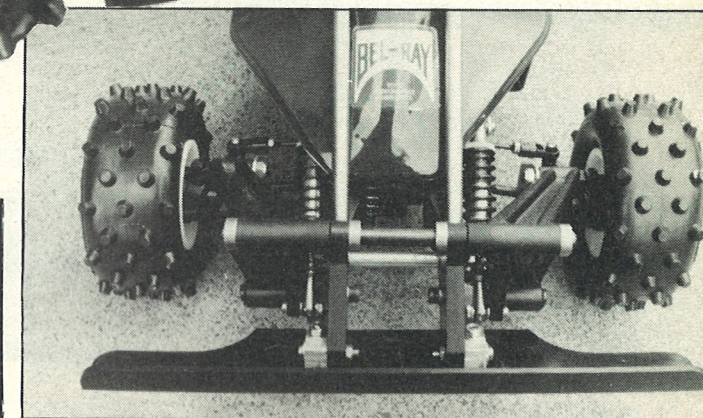
'exploded' drawings which lead the builder through a logical assembly sequence. I did not find any step confusing, from start to finish the rolling chassis assembly and engine installation took less than four hours, not on the kitchen table but on my desk in the sitting room.

Differentials are already assembled and these are soon incorporated into the substantial injection moulded mountings in their supporting ballraces. Both front and rear differentials are then mounted on the full-length square section aluminium alloy chassis rails. Sizes and types of screws are clearly marked on the drawings as is the need for



# 4wd

Above: the polycarbonate driver figure and cockpit also acts as cover for the radio crate and is secured by a single screw lock. Right: close up of the front-end. The coil-over shocks are anodised in green - very attractive. The damper barrels feature full length screw threads to allow spring adjustment through screw collets.



either or both thread locking compound or oil. Self tapping screws provided are plated and of very coarse pitch and care should be taken to ensure that the screwdriver used fits the slots in the screws accurately.

Engine fitting was a delight. Roll pins do need to be pressed into the flywheel but by using the PTFE shoe as an assembly jig it is easy to tap them in with a small hammer to the correct depth and get them upright too! If using this method, when the pins are pressed down flush with the top of the shoe, remove the shoe and give the pins a further tap to make sure that they don't project over the top of the shoe and thus foul the inside of the clutch bell.

Trimming dimensions are given for the engine crankshaft end which exactly correspond to the Thunder Tiger engine as supplied so with this engine no trimming is needed. Two sizes of clutch spindle are supplied, 1/4 UNF and 6mm thread, grip the flywheel in a vice whilst tightening the nut, do not use thread lock, it is not needed and will make it very difficult to remove the flywheel or even tighten it up if it should be subsequently needed. A roller bearing is supplied for the clutch, this should be kept well lubricated during running. The engine mount will accommodate virtually any engine, it is a clamp-on type, easily adjustable.

A drum style silencer bolts to a support on the rear differential housing and the silencer is coupled to the exhaust manifold supplied with silicone tubing and fixed with tie wraps. Chain drive tensioner is fitted and the chain connected up with a split link just as used on a bicycle chain, a spare link is provided, very useful for on track repairs!

The radio crate is a substantial injection moulded plastic box drilled for universal metal servo mounting brackets and cut out for servo pushrods and R/C switch. Rubber waterproofing boots are supplied for the pushrod output holes and a gasket for the box lid making this a very good protective housing for the

equipment. A complete set of links, over-rides and connectors is supplied making the job of connecting up the servos simple.

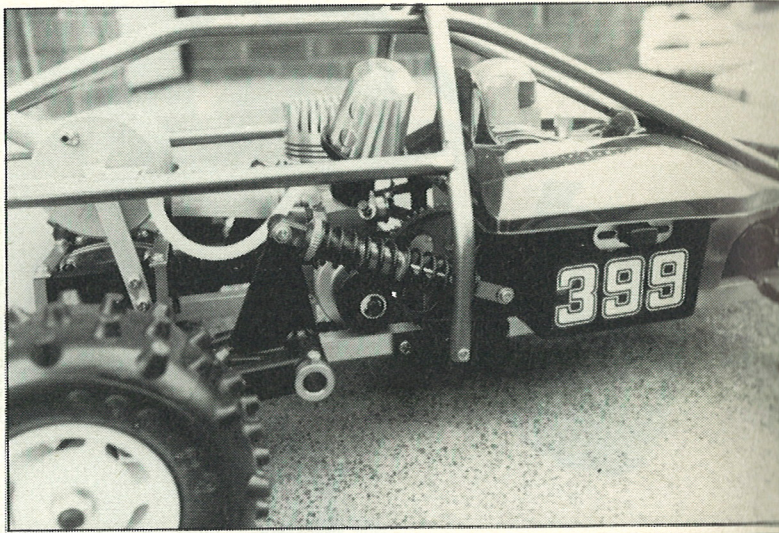
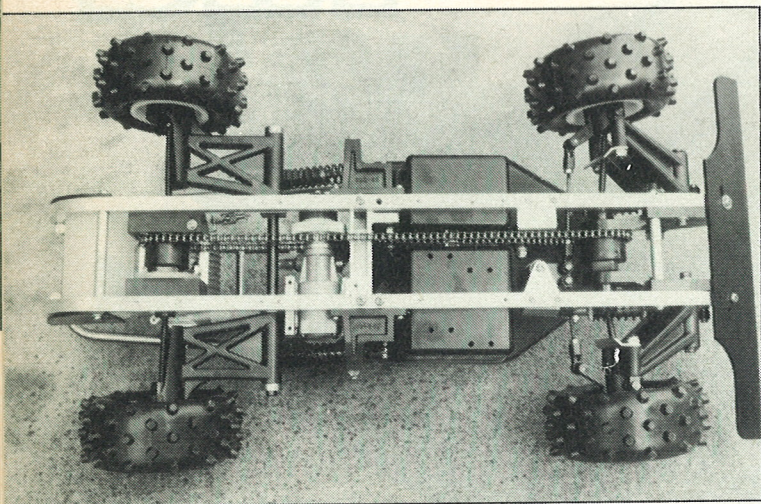
Suspension trailing arm wishbones are very robust, springing is accomplished by coil-over damper units which are connected to bell levers moulded onto the wishbones keeping both front and rear units well in towards the chassis giving very good protection. Ride height is adjustable by screwing sleeves down the shocker barrels.

The dampers are supplied assembled but need to be dismantled so that they may be filled with oil. I used 20W 50 multi grade motor oil.

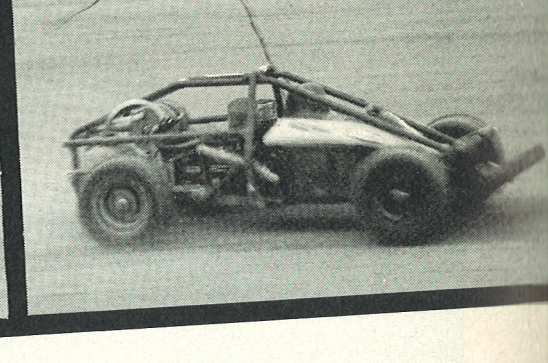
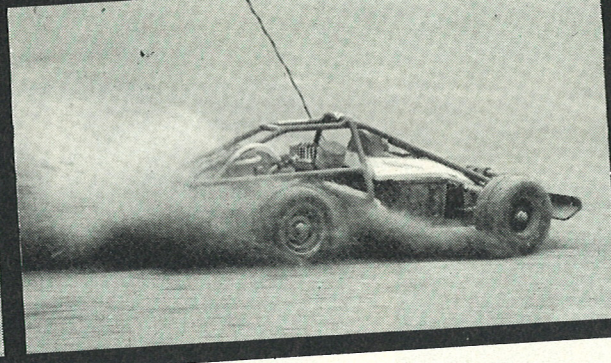


# Track Test

Below: underview of the 'Silver Fox' showing the aluminium 'ladder' type chassis, drive chain and engine flywheel. Although not included in the kit, a thin lexan underguard would protect the chain from dirt and grit.



Above: the rear trailing arm suspension links incorporate damper mounting points. Behind the damper can be seen the clutch bell and large ring gear. This gear is manufactured from steel and should last some time.



Steel ball and pin drive shafts fit into very deep sockets making it unlikely that they will come out, steering stops are bolted to the front uprights to further prevent excessive steering movements allowing drive shafts to pop out. Track rods are substantial steel rods with heavy duty ball joints driving the steering via a chunky servo saver.

A moulded plastic fuel tank with a screw top is supplied which feeds the engine carburettor via a remote needle valve system. This latter and a length of silicone fuel tubing is supplied. All that remains to be done is super gluing the tyres to the hubs, spraying the driver figure and bolting on the roll case.

## Start it up

The flywheel is not in the most accessible of places and if ever there was a case for a starting box this is one. If such a box is not available, the traditional friction ring fitted on the starter will be much easier to use by a novice if it is reduced in width, even split into two. If this is not done it is all too easy to foul the chain with the starter. The *Thunder Tiger* motor started easily and the twin needle valve carburettor is easy to adjust. Previous experience with a chain drive trailing link suspension Buggy led me to expect understeer but this was not present in the 'Silver Fox' to any greater extent than in any other 4WD Buggy.

The twin differentials certainly help here, steering lock is adequate for most racing circuits and the car is easy to drive and predictable. The brakes are very good and to my mind the trailing link suspension is still the best available providing the engineering problems inherent in getting drive to the wheels can be overcome. Stiffness in the joints is no problem, good accurate mouldings see to that, the steering being free right from the start.

## Overall impressions

In the 'Silver Fox' *Thunder Tiger* have produced a very good product for the newcomer to the sport that ought to provide a satisfying

performance. Most reservations concerning the fallibility of trailing arm, chain drive transmission systems have been recognised and eliminated as far as any potential problem in any buggy can be foreseen and overcome. Fit and quality of the parts throughout was very good, kit specification puts many competitors to shame. If pure fun and the occasional club race meeting is your interest then the combination of 'Silver Fox' and *Thunder Tiger* 21 engine will provide headache free assembly and satisfying performance.

**UK Distributor:** Amerang Ltd., Commerce Way, Lancing, Sussex. BN15 8TE.

**Price:** £199.99.  
Ready assembled: £229.99.