

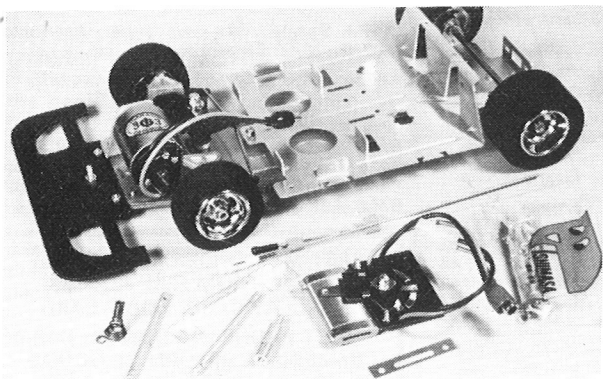
GRAUPNER FWD 1-12

Not very much has been seen competition-wise of the Graupner Front Wheel Drive electric car in the South though it has been going great guns in Scotland and the North as well as picking up a load of wins not only in Germany but also in France where it enjoys a strong following. I was reminded of my omission to try it out when I received the first racing accessory specifically designed for it in the shape of a rear block and axle from Walker Racing of West Lothian. So here it is up for appraisal.

The kit comes with choice of two Lexan bodies Porsche or Renault Mirage. I selected the latter since there are a lot of Porsches about and as a former Dauphine (I never rolled it!) and TL5 driver I have a slight sentimental attachment to the mar-

que. It could be described as "almost ready to run" since the difficult part has already been done, notably the assembly of the front wheel drive. This comprises a very stout injection cast alloy front axle bearing/engine bracket assembly which I would regard as virtually unbreakable (famous last words perhaps?)

A separate L-shaped casting holds the motor in place. A robust brass pinion gear is attached to motor via an Allen screw. Motor bracket allows some degree of adjustment so that the enthusiast can fit other gears if desired. Novel feature here is the presence of a differential with bevel gears and straight spur drive from the motor gear. This is in a hard plastic and not enclosed so that its condition is always visible. Drive to the road wheels follows



The car is French livery and decorated with the decals provided.

As the car comes out of the box with drive and motor ready assembled.

Close up of substantial castings for motor & steering parts with differential.

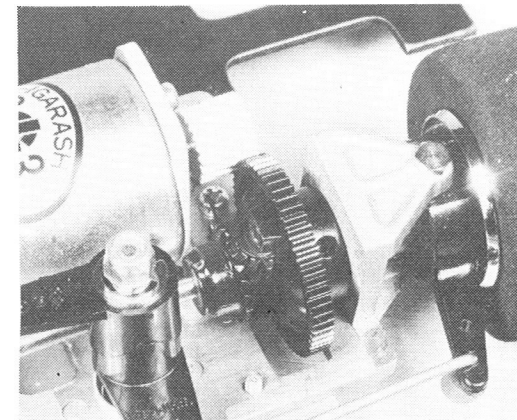
Front end on view, again showing strength of castings and Igarashi motor.

the usual slotted driving-dog principle. It is the smoothest sweetest running I have yet seen as already mounted. Servo saver and steering tie rods also fitted in place.

Motor provided is Igarashi which deserves a great deal more praise than it has enjoyed. Perhaps this car will help it towards a greater public approval – certainly for the longer race times of the future in standard trim. Power pod and rear axle assembly are joined by a GRP chassis comprised of a parallel strip approx 2-3/8 wide and 1-16in thick which gives a good degree of flexibility. This can be adjusted within limits by tightening the metal radio plate. Radio plate is designed to take a four or five cell nicad pack. If the more likely 6-cell is installed the bent-up end plates can be flattened with pliers to obtain extra width.

Speed controller follows the usual wipe resistor style favoured by cars of Japanese origin, but has much more positive mounting than some I have seen. Servos mounted side by side bolt to an angle plate which in turn bolts on to the rear axle bracket. A smaller flat plate secures the forward ends of the servos and is supported by two metal tubes through which long bolts go attaching the set-up to the ratio plate. Slotted holes allow for servos of various sizes to be attached. Rear axle bracket has neat provision made for Rx on/off switch.

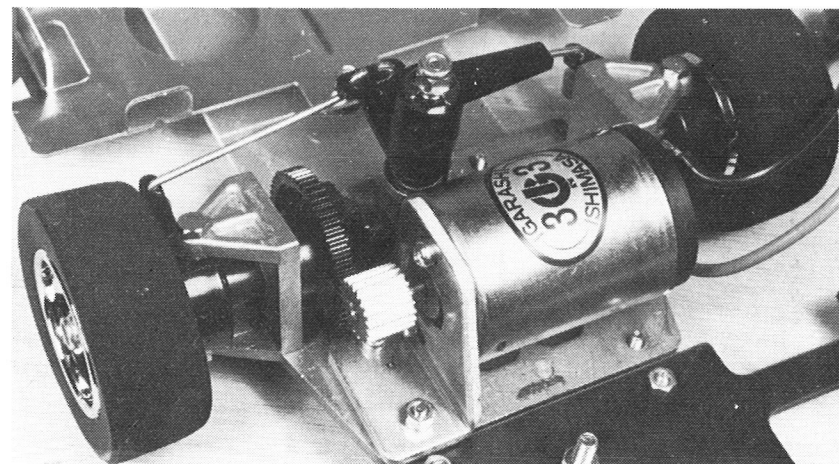
Suitable slots and bent up plates are provided for Rx and its battery which go each side of the two operating servos. I have put mine together initially as per instructions, but will be running it as well using the L & M electronic proportional

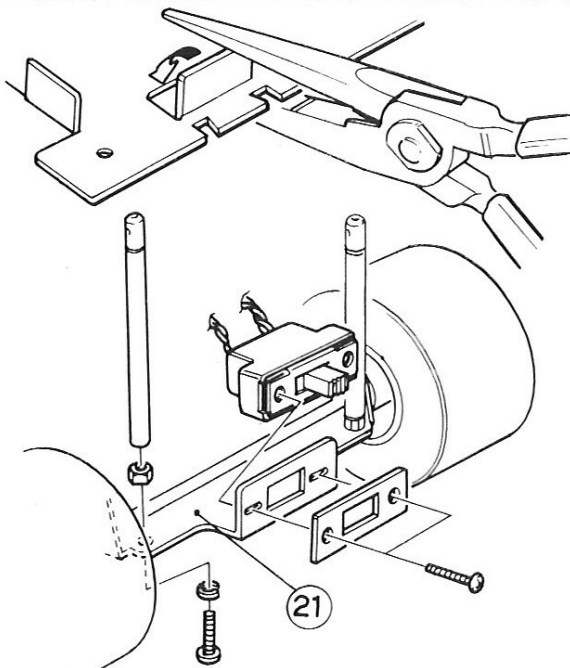
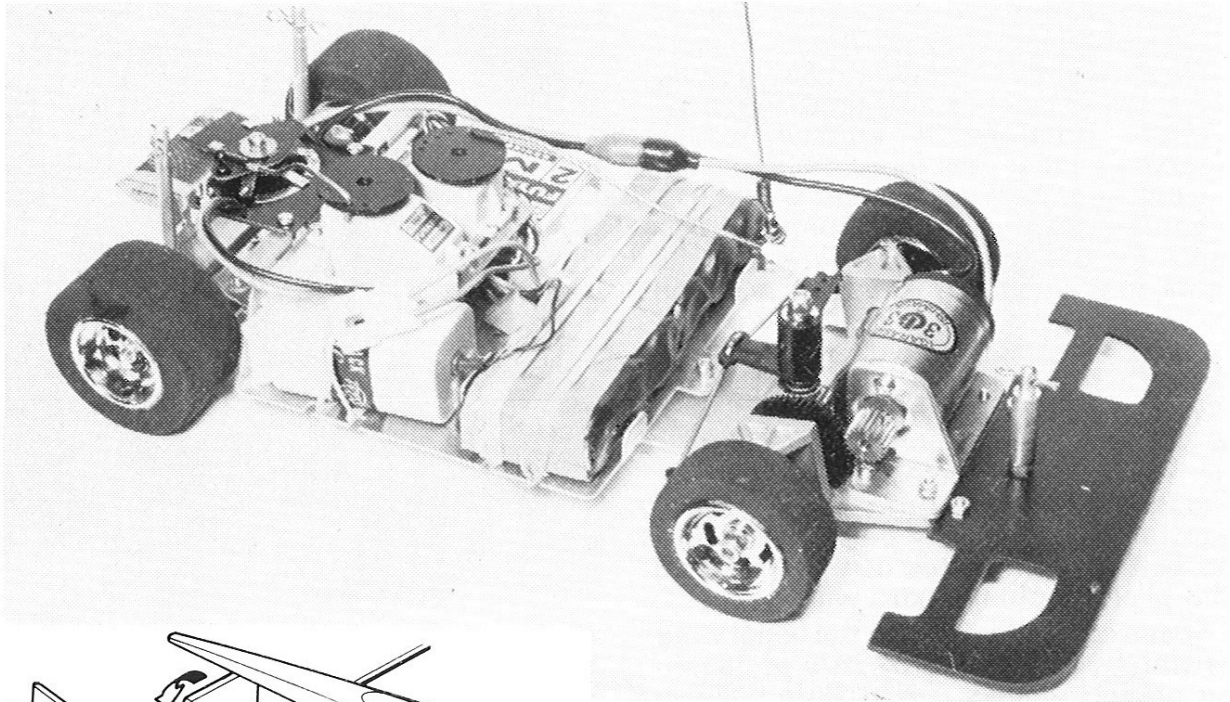


speed controller as supplied by Red Baron some time ago which will dispense with one servo and allow some latitude for trying out various weight distributions.

A stout front bumper is provided in the kit but the rear end with its fairly exposed speed controller resistor looks a bit naked so will fit a rear wire bumper which also serves as a useful pick up handle and can be fixed quite easily to the rear axle bracket.

Lexan body is very attractive and worth the trouble of making a nice paint job. The blue and white design on the box lid can hardly be bettered though many users may have the same bright idea so perhaps should be regretfully eschewed. A separate driver's head goes behind the built-in driver's helmeted figure and can be painted to match your favourite ace.





Above: Completely assembled car. Bending clip to make room for a 6-cell nicad pack. On/off switch placement at rear.

Below: Stouter rear end available from Walker Racing.

Instructions and line sketches in German are accompanied by a shorter version in English. Most of it is so straightforward that words are hardly needed, but do pay attention to the warning that positive motor connection low down and close to the power pod should have some insulation between it and the metal of the pod otherwise nasty things will happen should they touch as no fuse is provided. A charging lead is not supplied.

I also show the strengthened rear axle bracket and axle now being raced by Walker Racing under official title of "Team Graupner - Scotland". For serious races this is recommended as standard rear end can be bent in a crash (and who never has one?) Bearings are PTFE rod, almost frictionless, axle precision ground stainless steel. (Further details from Walker Racing, 84 Forrest Walk, Uphall, West Lothian EH52 5PW).

