

## Marsh Models

In the last issue we chatted to Colin Fraser of Formula Models. For the final instalment of our mini-tour of Sussex and British Model makers, we popped next door in the same medieval farmyard complex in the beautiful Sussex countryside, where we found **Marsh Models** and John Simons.

### FSW - How did you get started modelling?

JS - Like most modellers, I started building models as a small boy. Initially I built in balsa wood using plans found in WW2 aircraft recognition books and then moved onto plastic kits as my pocket money would stretch to them. I fondly remember buying my first Airfix Spitfire in Woolworths. I continued to build aircraft as a hobby but it wasn't until I was made redundant from Dungeness nuclear power station in 1980 that I built my first white metal car model.

### FSW - What pushed you towards 1:43rd car models?

JS - After being made redundant, I was looking around for a new job and an old friend (who happens to be a pattern maker) Ian Pickering put me in touch with Max Kernick at Abingdon Classics. I started building for them and initially the intention was to just supplement my income while I was still looking for a real job, then in 1981 I decided that I could earn a living building models full time if I approached it the right way. So as not to have all my eggs in one basket, I also started building for GPM and Lamberts and that was it.

### FSW - When did you decide to start creating your own models?

JS - The quality of many of the early white metal kits was pretty poor and having been building these for a couple of years I came to the conclusion that I could do better myself. The aim was to make kits that were both accurate and easy to build, as with the kit offerings available then there were few that managed both. The name Marsh Models came about as at the time we were situated on Romney Marsh in Kent and the logo is based on the Marsh Frog (coincidentally we are now on Pevensey Marsh). I'd always been interested in sports racing cars and I remembered watching the BOAC 500 race at Brands Hatch in 1967 and particularly seeing the Chaparral 2F run, so decided that this would make a good modelling subject. In 1984 this appeared as the first Marsh Models kit release, with Ian Pickering having helped with the pattern. It was all metal, as were all of our early kits.

### FSW - You've built a reputation and following for Can-Am subjects. What made you decide to head in this direction?

JS - Can-Am came about as an idea for me in about 1986/87. The Chaparral and other American engined cars had been well received in America and I realised that no one was making any models of Can-Am cars. I thought it might be a good idea, so I rang GPM and had a chat with Brian Harvey about it and whether he thought it would be a good idea. He told me that he didn't think that there was any demand, so I ignored his advice and went ahead anyway! It has to be said that it has been pretty successful for me!

### FSW - Do you have any favourite subjects?

JS - My favourite subject is probably the Porsche 917 and we have just reworked the long tailed Le



John & Pam with a small selection of the Marsh Models collection.

Mans cars as the shape was never quite right on our original. My favourite model is probably the McLaren M6A, though I have absolutely no idea why.

### FSW - Do you have a particular model that you are most proud of?

JS - Always a difficult question, it's like having to chose your favourite child. I suppose it would be the Shadow DN1. This was a new departure for us building a single seater and proved to be an interesting challenge. To start with we only did it as we had a Shadow theme going. It was helpful having Colin next door as he has plenty of experience with this kind of model and we can bounce ideas off each other.

### FSW - Do you collect yourself?

JS - Yes. We collect our own models and try to keep a museum with an example of each. I also have a collection of Nelson Piquet cars. Most of these were from kits which I got Colin to build for me. He was building a lot of F1 kits at the time and does a good job.

### FSW - With new projects, how much time does the research take and how much is done in house?

JS - I do the research for new projects but most of the pattern work is farmed out. In the old days it was Ian, but now most of the patterns are done by Chris Sargent. The research is the bit that I enjoy most and the time it takes can vary a lot depending on the subjects. Some are relatively quick and easy as I know the subjects very well, others take a lot of digging and time spent. Chris makes the patterns next door in the same unit as Colin so if he has a query he can pop in and check with me. Also having Colin and Pat Land (Model Assemblies) here, we have plenty of expertise and different perspectives should there be unusual challenges.

### FSW - What is a typical working day?

JS - I'm very rigid with my time and I am very methodical with the way that I work. The day starts at 8am, break for lunch at 1 and home at 5.30. My wife Pam works mornings and does all of the paperwork, deals with the emails and packs up the kits. I am near enough building all day. The only difference is photo-etch or instructions to draw, but

this is usually done at home at weekends.

### FSW - What's next?

JS - More of the same! We have a lot of Can-Am projects still to do, as well as a few other classic sports racing subjects and maybe the odd F1 car. There's the new Deco Art series of hand built, covering some of the more interesting pre-war coachbuilt cars and there are also a long list of Aerotech kits to get through.

I'm 61 this year, so hope to be able to step back a little and delegate a bit more. I've been building models full time for 27 years now and calculate that I have built somewhere in the region of twenty thousand models. Maybe it's time to slow down a little? That said, I can't ever see myself retiring.

### FSW - We were so concentrated on cars, we'd forgotten about Aerotech, how did that come about?

JS - It was from personal interest mostly. My first love was aircraft and Chris had a book of patterns for the Luft 46 projects, still-born Luftwaffe projects which never got off the drawing board at the end of WW2. Model aircraft have a bigger market than model cars and it is always useful to have a second string. The 1:32nd Schneider Trophy planes have proved very popular and it is these that we're now concentrating on.

## Future Marsh releases

<a href="#">MM152</a>	Mecom Hussein 1964 Foyt
<a href="#">MM159</a>	Chaparral 2 Laguna Seca
<a href="#">MM161</a>	Shadow MkII 1971 Oliver
<a href="#">MM163</a>	Lola T163 STP Unser Mt Fuji
<a href="#">MM169</a>	Ferrari P4 Le Mans 1967 - 3 versions
<a href="#">MM174</a>	Audi R10 Sebring 2008
<a href="#">MM175</a>	Porsche RS Spyder LM 2008 #34
<a href="#">MM176</a>	RS Spyder Penske Sebring 2008
<a href="#">MM177</a>	RS Spyder 2008 LM Essex
<a href="#">MM178</a>	Jaguar XJR-5 LM 1985 - 2 versions
<a href="#">MM179</a>	Lola T163 Simoniz
<a href="#">MM180</a>	Jaguar D-Type - Krause
<a href="#">MM181</a>	Jaguar D-Type - Jack Douglas
<a href="#">MM182</a>	Ferrari P4 BOAC 500 1967
<a href="#">MM183</a>	Ferrari 312P BOAC 500 1969
<a href="#">MM184</a>	Ferrari 512M NART Monza 1071
<a href="#">MM185</a>	Ferrari 512M Watkins Glen 1971
<a href="#">MM186</a>	Jaguar D-Type Pierce Wood
<a href="#">MM187</a>	Porsche 917 Piper Kyalami 1969
<a href="#">MM188</a>	Ferrari 312P Le Mans 1970
<a href="#">MM189</a>	Ford G7A Cannon 1970
<a href="#">MM190</a>	AC Ace Bob Oker