

The 1/12th Electric Stockcars are now branching out into pastures new, with a group of racers visiting Austria to demonstrate our form of oval racing, which will add to our growing list of countries where our type of stockcars are raced, we already race all over the UK – England, Scotland and occasionally in Wales, add to this Holland, in the north and the south of the country, firstly at the Fryslan 1 club and also at the Lobith club in the south of the country, to date we have already run two World events and run two European Championship events along with our colleagues at the Fryslan 1 club not bad for a section sustained by a cottage industry, after Mardave stopped production of the kit that was once available to purchase from model shop's. We could soon be rectifying this problem, we have the car builders within our section, and there are plans afoot to re-launch a kit that will soon be available in model shops!



Hello Austria



Some time back in May of this year Andy Cattell mentioned a possible trip over to Austria to demonstrate / race our stockcars, the plan at this stage was for Andy's Austrian contact, who was proposing to build an oval track somewhere inside their current circuit track for us to race on, and hopefully us Brit's will loan a number of spare cars for them to have a go themselves. Andy's contact will be over in the UK, during September to watch the Brisca F1 world final – for the first time – and then compete at Andy's national meeting at Stoney Stanton on the next day, along with their new car's that are being built by Andy. As this trip was too far to drive to, it was also planned that we look into flying into Austria along with our equipment, at this stage some advice was sought from Jim Spencer on how to proceed with any problems that might be encountered at the airport, his reply to this was - never had any problems taking kit on a flight, normally couple of times per year. All of it has to go in the hold luggage so it must be in a good strong case and very well wrapped in foam or bubble wrap though, other than that it might be worth just checking with the airline, but you'll have no problems.

So begins the dream of a trip to Austria which will contain a lot of firsts for me and my son Nicholas, i.e. our first time on a plane, as we have always driven on our trips over to Holland.

Over the coming months much talk went on about the planned trip over to Austria and what it would be like, for me it could not happen soon enough, a chance to visit another country and demonstrate our hobby, what more could one ask for !

Finally the loose plan of the arrangements were out, the message to the interested party's from Andy Cattell – BRCA European 1/12th Oval rep were –“ Ok guy's here it is, loose plan but no indication of how we are going to watch the rugby!!!! Come on England! I'll explain more on how it will work on the way over.

Accommodation is fairly simple, four people will be staying at Wolfgang's, Geoff Needham and his wife are in a hotel, my family and I are staying at Reinhard's and two people are in a hotel/hostel, who is going where we will sort out as and when”.

“The 1/24th scale racing on the Saturday is a 1 hour race (in teams) each team has two cars, one racing and one charging/repair, we brits have four cars so we will have two teams, again who/where/what we will sort out on the day. Paul Riddle and myself are taking over KO radio gear with spare receivers to fit in these cars. A new formula for us brits to try (scaelectric cars with sticks)

See you at the Airport or on the A14”.

“Lets go and have a laugh, meet new friends and show off our sport to a brand new audience”.

How I booked the flights for Nicholas and myself

It has amazed me on how cheap you can get flights these day's, I booked mine over the internet, found an offer that was available for five days on the appropriate flight, success! Me and Nicholas flying out of Stansted airport on Friday 21st November at 06:40 am arrive Salzburg 09:25 on flight FR 304 return flight on Monday 24th November depart Salzburg 09:50 am arrive Stansted at 10:40, all for the pricey sum of £99.94 this is with Ryanair, even found a discount of £14 when you book the car park over the internet!



Thursday night / Friday morning 21st November

The big day or should I say morning has finally arrived, the alarm was set for 2.30am, as Nicholas and I were meeting up with Stuart Preston and Karl Spencer at 3.00am ready to set off for Stanstead airport, on the way we met up with the Cattell family on the A14 en-route to the airport, we had a trouble free journey – no surprise for that time in the morning! Once parked in the car park we were joined by Paul Riddle, a quick telephone call and we found out that Ben Harding was en-route and would join us in the terminal building, where were Geoff Needham and his wife? As it was raining we boarded the bus and headed for the terminal, once inside we found out that Geoff was already through the check-in and was waiting in the departure lounge! There was just Ben to join up with us now and after a quick telephone call we found out that he would be with us shortly.

Once we were all together at check in, we found that it was surprisingly easy to book in, we were advised to take all our luggage that contained our radio gear in, over to the part of the airport, where the bigger x-ray machine could scan our luggage, this would save us having to open all of our luggage that contained our radio gear - hopefully! Success we all went through without any problems, just customs to go, not much of a problem here either just me and Paul Riddell had the joy of a body search, and I had to empty Nicholas's bag, dam game boy! Off we go to find our terminal and board the plane, longest walk you could imagine, about as far as you can go inside the airport without being on the tarmac! On the plane at last, all of us successfully on board and ready for take off- me and Nicholas for the first time and there was Geoff and Helen already on the plane and ready to go!

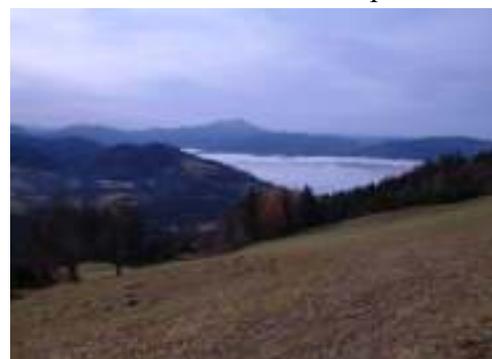
We were ready for take off, nearly on time too, destination Austria, and all that I can say about the experience of the take off is – exhilarating! (Just to keep it short)



All too soon the flight was nearly over, and the mountain range around Salzburg airport was soon coming into view, very soon we will officially be on Austrian soil, with the flaps of the plane fully down we had touched down, then I experienced the reverse thrust of the jet engines for the first time, boy that was good!

Once we were through customs, and were reunited with our luggage once again, we headed outside ready for our adventure to start, as we were a little ahead of schedule Andy made a phone call to find out where our transport had got to, and with impeccable timing Reinhard and Wolfgang were pulling up within minutes of us arriving outside

the airport, once aboard we were off on a sightseeing trip, once we had left Salzburg we headed into the north of the country, driving through scenery that one could compare to the lake district, we were heading for an area known as Salzkammergut, when we had arrived near to a lake by the name of Attersee we headed up a mountain track, where the plan was to have breakfast at a restaurant near the top called the Gahberg, unfortunately this was closed but we were treated to some fantastic views over the lake Attersee and the valley below and beyond into the Alps, after a brief rest we headed back down, and were treated to a sumptuous breakfast Austrian style, thank you to our host's, Wolfgang and Reinhard and the hotel that accommodated us without any warning and made us most welcome. Refreshed we then headed off to upper Austria, near to the town/city of Perg and the region of Austria, where we were to be based for our stay in Austria.

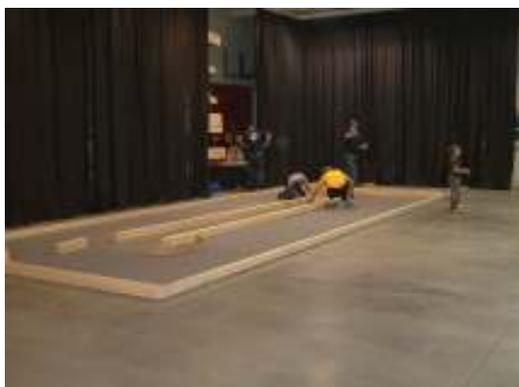


Andy Cattell and family along with Stuart Preston were accommodated at Reinhard's mum's house at a place called St. Valentin, Paul Ridell and Geoff Needham and Helen (Geoff's wife) were accommodated in a small hostel at a little village called Mitterkirchen, which left me and Nicholas and Karl Spencer along with Ben Harding at Wolfgang's house in Baumgartenberg which was most convenient as the venue was just a short walk from here.

Once new friends had been acquainted, we all rejoined together at Wolfgang's place, we then unloaded our race gear and had our first look at the track along with some practice with our cars, also the local ale could be sampled as there was a very handy supply right by the track well almost! after some unwinding and our fleet of ever changing transport was assembled we were ready for our first evening out, which was to be in Perg, at an Italian restaurant, once again this was a new experience for Nicholas and I – very sheltered life we have! After a very enjoyable meal we headed back to our various accommodations, with a changed fleet of transport again! after a very long day, one which I would have not missed for the world, we finally settled down to some very welcome sleep, in Ben's case it was even more sleep.

Saturday 22nd November

After breakfast, it was time to head to the venue of the racing, the track which had been set up inside a glass factory, where Wolfgang is the managing director and just a short walk from where my group were staying, to give you an idea of the size of the new track that had been made specially for this meeting, you could compare it to Leven's track in length and shape, the address of the factory is Baumann/Glas/1886 Gmbh, GewerbePark 10, A-4342 Baumgartenberg 00, the web site address of the glass factory is www.baumann-glas.at, the plan for today was to race one round of the stockcars and to loan out our spare cars, and to race the 1/24th scale cars, after some practice, our teams had been sorted out by drawing straws the night before, they were to be Karl, Ben, Ryan and Stuart in one team and Andy, Paul and Nicholas and I in the second team. We were also keen to hear how the rugger was going, come on England!



1/24th Scale Team racing

Once ready we had three races with the cars this was to sort out the grid positions for the one hour race, the best scores went to heat one – there were six teams in all – Worrnan Worrnan 83, Horvatits Ernst 80, Reitbauer Schonlechner 80, team GB 1 Ryan Cattell 73, Schon Tauer 70, team GB 2 Andy Cattell 63. Heat two, team GB 1 Karl Spencer 78, Horvatits Ernst 76, Worrnan Worrnan 74, Reitbauer Schonlechner 65, team GB 2 Nicholas Cooper 55, Schon Tauer 31. Heat three – Horvatits Ernst 79, Reitbauer Schonlechner 78, Worrnan Worrnan 77, Schon Tauer 58, team GB 1 Stuart Preston 56, and team GB 2 Mark Cooper 55. Some good scores by the brit's after very little practice, Ryan was placed fourth in his heat and Karl Spencer won his! Unfortunately our best car (team GB 2) was having teething problems and Nicholas recorded his score with the slower of our two cars, please note that all of the cars that us brit's were using were brand new and had not been raced before. By now the rugger had started, and we were being informed of all the scores by text messages, come on England!

Stockcar's round 1.

After a lot of practice during the morning we were finally ready to demonstrate/race our car's with our new Austrian friends out on track with the loaned car's except for Wolfgang, and Reinhard who have their own stockcars, for Wolfgang this will be his second meeting as he raced at the Stoney Stanton national meeting as did Reinhard, but Reinhard has also raced at a Stoney club meeting so this will be his third meeting, and we also have Rene Worrnan who will be racing a brand new car. It will be interesting to see how the rest of the Austrians get on, as over here they only have the steering wheel type of transmitters, and most of them are more accustomed to flying model aeroplanes rather than cars.

Race 1.

The honour of the first official race win went to Andy Cattell with 74 laps followed by Paul Riddell on 72, next across the finish line was my good self with 62, then we had the first of the Austrian's finishing on 58 this honour went to Geri Zochlinger, who was using my spare car, Geri was followed by Rene Worrnan with 29 and a very young Rafael Worrnan on 17 laps using one of Andy's spare car's.

Race 2.

As expected Ben Harding duly won race two with a new track record of 80 laps chased by Ryan Cattell on 74 (like father like son) car wrecker Nicholas Cooper came home in third place with 69 followed by Sigi Huber racing a Ben Harding spare car on 46 followed by Richard Lung on 41 using Paul Riddell's spare, then we had Thomas Worrnan with 19 laps using another one of Andy's cars.

Race 3.

Up went the track record again, this time it was Karl Spencer setting it at 84, he was chased by Wolfgang Worrnan on 83 laps, and this was after a lot of car preparation by Ben! third place in this race went to Stuart Preston with 75 followed by Lauren Cattell on 64 using a car loaned for the trip by Gary McMullen then we had Christoph Schoenlechner with 60 laps using one of Karl Spencers cars. Extra time in the rigger, the stress was unbelievable!

The 1/24th One hour team race.

The grid order for the start of the race had team Worrnan-Worrnan starting on pole followed by Horvatits-Ernst, third place on the grid went to Reitbauer-Schonlechner followed by an excellent fourth on the grid for team GB 1 consisting of Karl Spencer, Ben Harding, Ryan Cattell and Stuart Preston (master mechanic) fifth place went to team Schon-Tauer and last but not undaunted was team GB 2 which was made up of Andy Cattell, Paul Riddell and Nicholas Cooper and myself.

To cut a long story short, GB 2 were soon at a disadvantage as they were down to one car which was the slower of their two cars, GB 1 were putting up a tremendous display with some slick car change over's by Stuart and were right in the hunt for a top three finish, but they also had to soldier on with only one car after they had broken the rear pod of one of their cars, we could only watch in awe at the slick change overs by the Austrian teams, one by team Worrnan-Worrnan took just about 30 seconds or so, this was to change cars and take out the transponder from one car and reload into the next car and back onto the track.

At the end of the hour of racing, in reverse order (looks better for my team) yes that's team GB 2 finishing with a paltry 149 laps, fifth place went to Schon-Tauer with 671 laps, then with some satisfaction at beating one of the Austrian teams we have GB 1 in fourth with a grand total of 765 laps, team Worran-Woran was just in front of them by a mere 67 laps to take third place, which gave them a grand total of 832, then we find team Reitbauer-Schonlechner just an incredible ten laps ahead in second place, after the full one hour of racing, no need for the calculator to work out their finishing total of 842, which leaves us with team Horvatits-Ernst as the outright winners with a total of 887 laps. So victory went to team Horvatits-Ernst, but we did not care as we had heard that England had won the rigger in extra time thanks to a Jonny Wilkinson drop goal, you should have heard the cheer- drinks all round.



Shortly after the finish of the 1/24th one hour race there was a trophy presentation to the top three teams, these were presented by Franz Baumann jun, the owner of Baumann glass.

During a little speech at the trophy presentation, and much to our surprise we were invited out to a meal by Franz Baumann, as he was impressed by having so many English people in his factory all at the same time, and insisted that we all join him at one of his favourite eateries tomorrow evening, amazingly we did not need asking twice!

Afterwards we again went out for a very pleasant evening, sampling some of the Austrian cuisine and hospitality.

Sunday 23rd November – Race day

After breakfast we headed off to the venue, which is where a very hectic day for me was about to start, let me explain – Nicholas decided to get some early practice, un-known to me he had a wire break on the top of his receiver and to cut a long story short Nic is not going to make the grade as a welder, after changing one scrap receiver and servo we were back in action, as Nicholas had broke his chassis the previous day I had already decided to change it and put on a new one ready for the day's racing once complete Nicholas again took to the track with the instruction of do not break it! well it took him all of a couple of minuets to break chassis number two (murder was on my mind by know) lucky for me Andy had a complete chassis with him which was duly attached to Nic's car- end of practice for Nic! It does not end there, as I also broke my base plate on my race car, luckily our Austrian host's had a new one which matched up to my old one and one complete re-build later team Cooper was back in business.

By now we were very near to our first heat of racing, Andy had sorted out the heats along with our Austrian friends who were going to use our spare car's, there were three heats with six cars in each race,

Race one for today, but it was qualifying round two, as yesterdays round was also going to count, which went to Mark Cooper after all the trials and tribulations of the morning, in a new track record of 86 followed by Andy Cattell with 84, Rene Worrان posted 73 followed by Geri Zochlinger with 63, then we had young Rafael Worrان with a creditable 31 and the gremlins seem to have moved over to Paul Riddell as he only managed to record just two laps after his steering servo was not responding, it looked like radio interference. Race two was a win for Ben Harding with 79 laps chased by Ryan Cattell on 75, then we had Martin Hovvatits with an impressive 71 followed by car wrecker Nicholas Cooper on 67 and Thom Worrان with 55 followed by Richard Lung on 52.

Race three and the track record is smashed once again, this time it was Karl Spencer with 90 laps chased by Wolfgang Worrان with 80, in third place we had Stuart Preston with 76 laps which was just one lap in front of the 75 by Reinhard Branstatter, then we find Sigi Huber with 43 and Lauren Cattell with 34.

The last round of qualifying, (round three) but round two today, race one was another win for Mark Cooper with 85 chased by Andy Cattell on 80, third and fourth place was separated by split time's after Geri Zochlinger and Rene Worrان had both finished on 72 laps, Paul Riddell had still not got rid of the annoying glitches and recorded a low score of 46, Paul was followed by young Rafael Worrان with 16.

Race two and what a result for Ryan Cattell winning with 82 laps and beating Ben Harding into the process too! Ben finished just one lap behind Ryan on 81 then came Thom Worrان with 70 followed by Martin Hovvatits with 64 and Nicholas Cooper on 54 followed by Richard Lung with 42 laps.

Race three went the way of Karl Spencer once again, this time out he recorded 86 laps followed by Stuart Preston with 78, and Wolfgang Worrان on 74 closely followed by Reinhard Brandstatter with 69, then we find Lauren Cattell with 65 and Sigi Huber finished with 14.

The end of qualifying saw some happy faces amongst the Austrians, and we were happy not to report on much damage to our loaned car's, would this still be the case after they have experienced eight cars on the track at the same time, well did I say eight that would have been the normal format but as we were here for the Austrians to gain experience Andy decided to run an eight car final and a ten car consolation so that no one missed out, the line up for the consolation was

From the UK – Nicholas Cooper, Paul Riddell, Lauren Cattell

From Austria – Rafael Worrان, Thomas Worrان, Sigi Huber, Martin Hovvatits, Geri Zochlinger, Rene Worrان and Richard Lung.



The Consolation Race

Not a race for the faint hearted, but credit to the Austrians when everything is considered they put up a great show, but in the end experience prevailed with the win going to Paul Riddell on 62 laps after finally sorting out his car, Paul was chased by Nicholas Cooper on 60 in second place which was by a split time after Geri Zochlinger had also finished on 60, then it was Thomas Worrان finishing with 55 laps which was just two in front of Martin Horvatits in fifth place with 53, next finisher was Lauren Cattell with 43 followed by Rafael Worrان with a creditable 35, eighth place went to Richard Lung with 31 followed by Rene Worrان with 17 which was just two laps in front of the 15 by Sigi Huber in tenth place.

The Ground Breaking Grand Final

The first ever stockcar final on Austrian soil was about to get underway, but first let me list the racers that were about to create a little piece of history, in order of qualification

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| 1. Karl Spencer | British Open Champion 2003 & Austrian track record holder |
| 2. Ben Harding | BRCA national points champion 2003 |
| 3. Andy Cattell | Welsh Open winner & Hathern national winner 2003 |
| 4. Wolfgang Worrان | Team Austria |
| 5. Mark Cooper | Former national points champion & winner of Mike's born to bash meeting 2003 |
| 6. Ryan Cattell | World & national & European junior point's titles to his credit |
| 7. Stuart Preston | Heat winner at the High Wycombe national meeting 2003 |
| 8. Reinhard Brandstatter | Team Austria |

The winner of the first Austrian final was Karl Spencer with 87 laps, followed by Ben Harding with 84 and the final rostrum place went to Mark Cooper with 81 laps, then it was Andy Cattell on 79 followed by Wolfgang Worrان with 75, sixth place went to Stuart Preston with 73 and Ryan Cattell was just behind with 70 laps in seventh place, eighth place went to Reinhard Brandstatter with 50 laps.

Congratulations to all who took part in the weekend of racing, which I am sure will be hailed as a great success and will go down in the annals of history.

Just the little matter of packing the track away and restoring the factory back ready for the workforce the next day, and then we will be off to get ready for our evening out with our host Franz Baumann jnr, and once again the ever changing fleet of transport was ready to whisk us off. Once we were refreshed and freshened up it was time for us to go and experience a delightful evening, which was a pleasure to attend, without too much detail we were treated to a meal in an old castle in a place called Saxen, what was special about the meal you ask, well it was cooked - the meat that is - in front of an open fire, and some of us had an unusual starter course to our meal, which was pancake soup!

During the evening there was a little trophy presentation to the top three in the final, presented by our host Franz Baumann jnr, along with Reinhard and Wolfgang (team Austria) which was followed by a short speech on our behalf by Andy Cattell, which should have been prepared by him and read by our official translator Paul Riddell - yes they could understand Paul better with his slight Scottish tone.



Sunday night - Monday

All too soon our evening was over and for some of us an early start was waiting, as we had to be at the airport about one and a half hours before our scheduled flight at 9.50 am, which meant the early start was set for about 5.00 am could Ben get up in time? We had just enough time for a quick breakfast before we departed, on route we picked up Paul Riddell from Mitterkirchen and then at a later stop we joined up with Reinhard who had Stuart Preston on board with him,

good time was made on the way to the airport and we arrived quite early, once again our host's insisted on treating us to some refreshment's during which Ben Harding was called to the airport security where he had his luggage checked, much to our amusement, all too soon it was time to depart and leave Austria and head home and back to normality.

We had left behind Andy Cattell and family as well as Geoff and Helen, they were lucky enough to have some time to sample the delights of Austria, whilst we were travelling home they were on a trip to Linz, where Tracey (Mrs Cattell) could shop to her hearts content after her disappointment at finding the shops closed on the Saturday, later they went to a traditional Austrian christkindl market and in the evening they found a traditional Irish pub which was in Linz.

Tuesday

On the last day of their stay and my first day back at work! they went back to visit little the café that was closed on our first day of the visit and enjoyed a coffee whilst taking in the view, then they enjoyed a few hours sightseeing around Salzburg, taking in a cruise along the river Salzach into the centre of Salzburg to see the birth house of Mozart before it too was time for them to head back home.

From my point of view the trip was worth every effort that we had made to come over to Austria, we had seen more of Austria than we could have imagined that we were going to, so much had been experienced in such a short space of time, we had arrived as total strangers but had left with so many new friends, so many people had gone out of their way to help make us feel as welcome as was possible, to put in words just how much our stay was appreciated is beyond me, and I am sure that this can be said of everyone of us that had made the trip, I hope that one day we can return the kindness that we have experienced during our stay in Austria when and if they decide to come and visit us back in England, all that is left for me to say is a very big thank you on behalf of us all.

