

## Hesketh 308, 1975

1975 was the year in which James Hunt won his first Grand Prix, notably holding off Niki Lauda in the Ferrari 312T at Zandvoort, Holland. This was a race, which started in wet conditions, later changing to dry, requiring a change to slicks. It was Hunt who courageously took on slicks earlier than others when he realised there was an advantage to being on dry tyres a lap or two ahead of the opposition. This enabled him to get ahead and win the race. The somewhat outrageous team effort which began in 1973 was now firmly on the map, giving Hunt that vital confidence from his first GP win, in turn resulting in him being signed up for McLaren for 1976, the rest is history as they say.

I first wanted to build a 1/12 model of this car when I saw John Shinton's 1/43 example. I bought a kit to act as a reference and John supplied me with a few photos of the car in a state of renovation and some scale drawings.

I built an exact monocoque from plasticard, using the scale drawings. The rollover bar was made from 3mm brass rod, which can be annealed on a gas cooker flame and then shaped more easily. The forward dashboard hoop was similarly made and the essential monocoque was complete. It was absolutely necessary to observe some of the complex angles of the tapering chassis and the inwardly inclined chassis sides towards the region of the footbox. The rollover bars were firmly secured inside the monocoque with epoxy resin. The front suspension pick-up points were refashioned in detail from the photos and the scale drawings. These were then firmly bonded to the tub. The front suspension components were scratch-built from plasticard, brass rod, aluminium tube and Milliput. Their shapes and dimensions were taken from the scale drawings and the few photos I had. I wrote to Harvey Postlethwaite regarding some details of the car. He replied by return and was extremely helpful and willing. It is especially sad he is no longer with us to see the results of this work with which he helped in the early stages.

At this time, I happened across a Jim Clark mechanic who was now involved in this same rebuild of one of the original Hesketh 308's. I was invited to view the car which helped enormously in the detail applications and general arrangements of plumbing and wiring etc. I took a large number of photos and measurements, quickly applying some alterations to my partially complete chassis. The engine and gearbox from a broken-up example of a Brabham BT44 was pressed into service, the rear suspension detail apparent on the real car being replicated, often involving scratch-building etc. The front nosecone support frame and the fantastic rear wing support with oil-cooler arrangement slung beneath was faithfully reproduced paying particular attention to plumbing of these coolers and the additional gearbox cooler.

The bodywork was fundamental in being 'right' in terms of appearance and dimensions. This was slowly achieved using a combination of plasticard and Milliput and a lot of

sanding and filling before applying Halfords gloss Appliance White. The rear and front wings were relatively straight forward. However, the airbox, cockpit surround and nosecone had to be carefully constructed and patiently fine-tuned to satisfy my strict judgement. The side body panels were fixed to the chassis, but the removable upper body panels were made in such a way as to show an outer overhang and inner lip too, into which the cockpit surround would sit snugly. The patriotic red, white and blue stripes were applied and then the hand made decals and lettering. The finishing touches included body fasteners (three types, namely Dzus, Pip-pins and Allen key studs) and fittings to secure the airbox. To me, it is most important that the body panels can be removed to reveal all the engineering. So it is with this model that all the naturally removable bits of bodywork are removable to view all the hidden detail, originally seen on the car I photographed.

The wheels were strictly 'March' on this car and there are no wheels close to these in any Tamiya 1/12 that I know of. Therefore, I made a specific journey to see the car again and take photos and measurements of these wheels. I then scratchbuilt them and sprayed them satin-black; once fitted, they set the car off very well. This was a thoroughly enjoyable project which took about eighteen months to complete.

If you have enjoyed reading this and would like to see the car, please come along to IPMS (UK), Telford, October 21-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2000. There, I hope to show this car and a number of other one-offs, alongside the beautiful work of Richard Hewer, Shane Price and other members of MRM.