

## Profile

# PHIL GREENO

**V**ERY FEW R/C MODEL CAR ENTHUSIASTS can never have heard of Phil Greeno. At some time or other in their activities they will have phoned the shop (bright Green decor as might be expected) for some hard-to-get item, or grabbed a few minutes helpful advice for free. If they are top drivers then they will certainly have conceded to him the winner's circle at the track, or beaten him to make a bull point at the next club social occasion. Which also goes for a great many 'aces' all over Europe, for Phil has consistently shown the flag with the Continental Circus of recent years... So I went along, after making a suitable 'slack time' appointment to find the Maestro, as requested, festooned in some of the nearly 300 cups and trophies he had won in his sporting career. Here is our chat:

**Dickie:** How long have you been modelling Phil?

**Phil:** I started making models when I was about 4½ years old with balsa chuck gliders. Then I bought my first ever kit in 1954 — it was a KeilKraft Hurricane 3/6 old money (17½p)

**D:** So that makes you what nowadays — 30

**P:** 33

**D:** How long have you had the shop?

**P:** Six years, but it has been in the family since the week I was born

**D:** What first triggered off your interest in r/c cars?

**P:** One of my friends brought an r/c car into the shop; it appealed so much that the next day off several of us went down to Ted Longshaw's showroom in Kent, brought back a load of stuff, and since then we've never looked back.

**D:** First of all you were interested in pylon racing weren't you?

**P:** The first competitive modelling I did was slope soaring. In '70/71 I went to meetings at The Long Man, Wilmington, Eastbourne, Clwydd, Mendip Ivinghoe, and over to Germany to fly at the Wasserkuppe with thermal gliders.

**D:** But no radio control at this stage?

**P:** This was all r/c. I started in '63 with a single channel — the first radio I ever had was a valve Rx from MacGregor then I bought a Mini Reptone and lost loads of models out of the park... then followed a break of about six years when I had girl friends, motorcycles, cars and things.

**D:** Cars now — do you like going fast? Fullsize?

**P:** Yes, I must say, I do get a certain thrill in the right conditions?

**D:** Still Porsche-ing?

**P:** Yes, I've got a new Porsche — a 924 Carrera GT limited edition Turbo.

**D:** And that reflects your philosophy does it?

**P:** Well, it's nice to have nice things if you've worked hard and can afford them

**D:** Worked hard? ... Seven days a week?

**P:** Almost... yes, I would say certainly seven days a week.

**D:** What do you reckon it costs you, in, say, the Continental Circus? I remember you once saying you could almost afford to run a rally car on what you were spending.

**P:** I suppose it must cost at least £3,000 a year in travelling, car spares for our cars and so on.

**D:** Coming to your model car, you've been a PB man most of your time, haven't you?

**P:** Yes, I started off with an Associated RC100. At that time, 1976, the PB International was not yet available, the only PB car being the PB Expert, which I don't think Keith would mind me saying was not as good a car as an equivalent Delta, Associated or Marker. At that time Dave Martin was doing very well with the RC100 and chose it too, but I went on to the International at the beginning of 1977 and had one of the first of the kits.

**D:** But you consistently improved it — or shall I say put go-faster goodies on it...

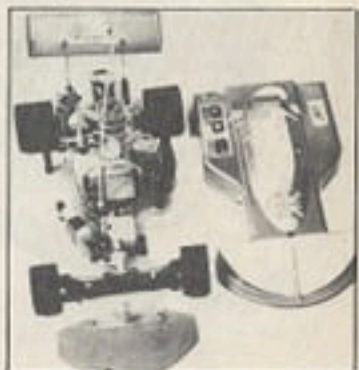
**P:** We did go through such a stage... yes... fitting differentials... power plus mufflers and so on and changing the chassis... yes, different brakes, ballrace... we did consistently improve it.

**D:** When did your interest move over to include 1/12th?

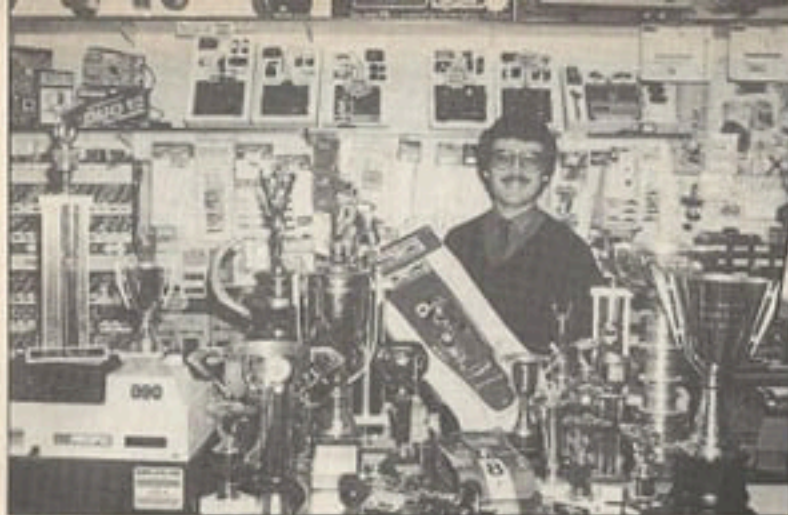
**P:** I started racing 1/12 at the very start of racing in England at Ally Pally. In the winter of 76/77 Dave Rogers and Doug Blair of Enfield bought the then new Lectricar which was the first ever electric car available on the British market. They rented a hall at Ally Pally for an evening and invited a number of people along of whom I was one. I got a kit together in the shop and went along.



Moment of triumph! Phil receives first Monaco World Cup 1978. Seconds later he was in the swimming pool just to remind him not to forget the day. (Photo: Photo World)



The winning Monaco car. A number of replicas were sold during the following year and later.



△ The shop — colour scheme green of course.

□ Phil at the till — surrounded by some of the three hundred or thereabouts trophies, cups, plaques he has won over the past five years.

We had a hilarious evening with cars that didn't handle — no cars did in those days! — and that's how it started, right through 1977 I stuck with Ally Pally and enjoyed it a lot. I think I was one of the very first people ever to run a Bo-Link car in this country. After that first outing at Ally Pally I thought there must be something better available. After reading Larry Hubbert's *Racing Circuits* newspaper report of the US Nationals worded by Gary Kyes with a Bo-Link base, Electrocraft and Jerbee chassis I got one from Ted Longshaw...

**D:** You sold me the very same car set-up, which I still have and it still goes...

**P:** I immediately began to win every meeting... carried on with it for the next two years... didn't do much then until the end of '79 when I came back and designed the Gemini, when electric racing had got bigger. With more national meetings I started to get interested again.

**D:** Did you have any sort of technical training?

**P:** Yes, I went to technical college when I was training to be a structural engineer and did my ONC and HNC. For 10 years I worked in a drawing office as a structural draughtsman.

**D:** What would you say was your most satisfactory win?

**P:** Undoubtedly Monaco! At that time it was a very prestigious competition and I was trying to do well in model car racing as an up-and-coming whizz kid. Like Bob Errington was a year or so ago. I had a car with a lot of parts in it which I had made myself. I think I am right in saying that the works driver for Mantua and I were the only drivers running OPS engines there, everyone else was on K and Bs including all the Americans... I had one of the fastest engines by quite a considerable margin and we were also developing the AMPS differential. I was working with Ian (Agnew of AMPS) for three months to win what was a very long 45-minute race without any mechanical problems. I won it easily by seven laps... it was a good team with Ian and Martin Samuel as mechanics; I drove well, and it was very satisfying to

win such an event. Ever since it has been hard work... Monaco in 1980 was far harder for me — I came third — but to get in the final was much more difficult than it had been two years before.

**D:** What about the radio side? Do you keep to Futaba or have you moved around?

**P:** I used Futaba for the first 2½ years because it was the only thing that was readily available and suitable. In 1979 MacGregors imported the new JR FM from Japan (JR stands for Japan Radio); it was the first 2-channel FM which was really custom made for cars. It had a rate switch for steering, variable throttle control, ballraced servos and of course it was FM. I've used it ever since.

**D:** I believe I've seen you changing your servos before a final?

**P:** I must admit it did happen at one stage, though now I don't think we need to...

**D:** What did you do with the old ones?

**P:** I used to sell 'em off in the shop 'one careful owner never been raced or rallied'...

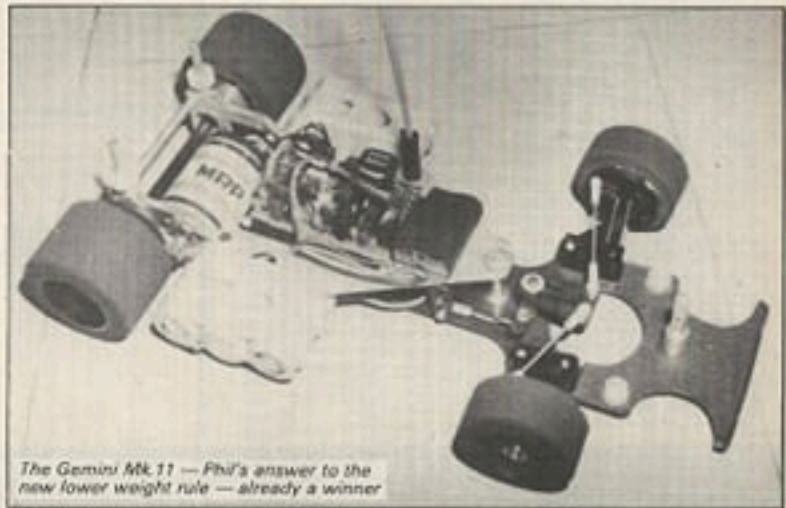
**D:** We ought to touch on who helps you

in the shop... I believe your Mother does the accounts and keeps you from breaking the law etc...

**P:** That's right. Then Robin Ellis handles the trade orders, Russell here is working in the shop, and of course Nick Adams makes the Demon speed controllers... about 100 a month.

It is very much more than just the shop now. We've 45/50 trade accounts to service in the UK supplying a full range of lexan bodies, 1/12 car kits. I distribute MRP in England, MRP motors, nicads, bodies, clear and painted, 1/8th tyres, 1/8th bodies and the items I manufacture. Jeff Page across the road has a workshop doing almost 100% work for me. Nick, too works almost fulltime on the Demon speed controllers in its two versions D1 and D2 and now the new Demon DM3 which has a full power relay. We have sold nearly 1000 units in all over the past 12 months...

**D:** Thanks Phil. A great story, I'm sure a lot of our readers will be inspired to try and do likewise...



The Gemini Mk 11 — Phil's answer to the new lower weight rule — already a winner