

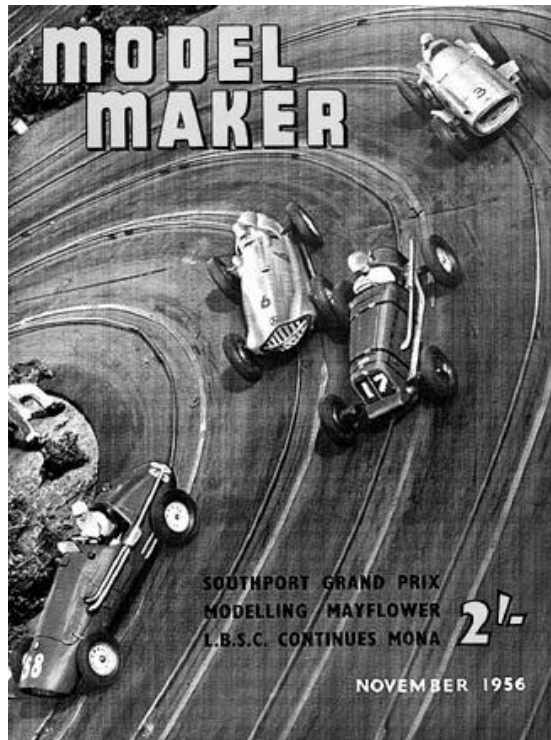
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VIP Electric Model Roadways

The New Hobby

Part 12

The original concept behind the Roadedge and Pathfinda project had been to develop a means for fans of road and racing cars to emulate their counterparts in model railways, allowing them to build tracks and layouts around which individual cars could be driven. This idea stemmed from various articles which had been appearing in the *British Model Maker* magazine around that time. The Roadedge & Pathfinda system was a simple way to produce a working roadway utilising the existing Victory model range. It went some way towards meeting that concept, but suffered from the fact that even the most basic of layouts took up a great deal of room. Fine for a car showroom where space was less of an issue, but rather impractical for most households. The reaction of the press and the public to the display at the 1956 British Industries Fair convinced everyone that whatever the shortcomings of the Roadedge & Pathfinda system, a truly viable commercial project was not far away so even before the fair closed its doors, Victory's designers were set to work on the next step.



The pages of *Model Maker* revealed how electric rail car enthusiasts at the pioneering Southport Model & engineering club had settled on 1/32 scale as a standard for their track. The Southport club adopted this scale for a variety of reasons chief among them being that 1/32 scale offered a good compromise between cars that were big enough to avoid over-sophisticated engineering (i.e. existing motors would fit without extensive modifications) and tracks that were small enough to be manageable. Victory were quite happy to follow this and many other leads from the pages of the magazine in the configuration of their own design.

Electric rail cars did suffer from a basic failing. Because the cars had to ride a fixed rail above the surface of the track, the cars had to be designed to run with a relatively high ground clearance placing many restrictions on motors and gearing. Victory's un-blinkered experience with the electrified track at the B.I.F. meant that a clear solution to these problems was self-evident. Simply split a conductive road surface into two separately insulated halves and guide the car by an insulated peg between the two. Not only was this simpler to mass-produce, it also avoided the problem of the raised rail which proved to be an unnecessary throw back to gas-powered rail cars

Victory's experience with small electric motors and with injection moulding plastic meant once the basic parameters were established, the design of the models became fairly straightforward. It did however take some time to produce the tooling for the injection-moulded cars and in the mean time Victory lost valuable publicity to Scalextric by only revealing their prototype system to a select few. When both systems reached the shops, Victory's product was vastly superior but by then Scalextric was the name that everyone heard about.



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The first advert for V.I.P. Model Roadways from July 1957

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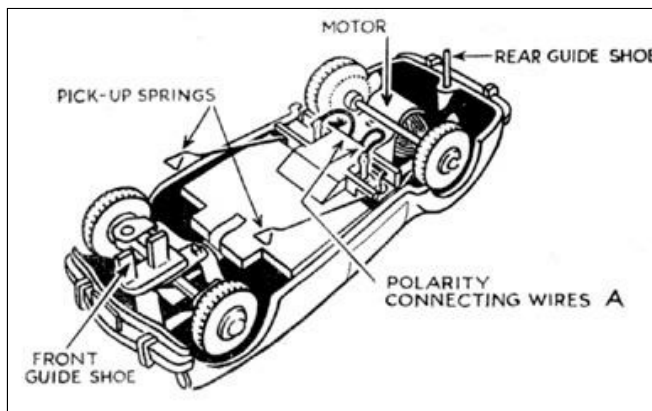
Part 13



This photo shows the complete contents of one of the first 1957 VIP Electric Model Roadways Set 'A'.

Victory's slot cars were a great hit and their Set 'A' remained in continuous production from 1957 until 1961. During this period many thousands were sold worldwide and consequently its not a very difficult set to find today. Throughout its production, the cars, the set, its contents and the box all underwent various changes and I'll attempt to detail these over the next few pages.

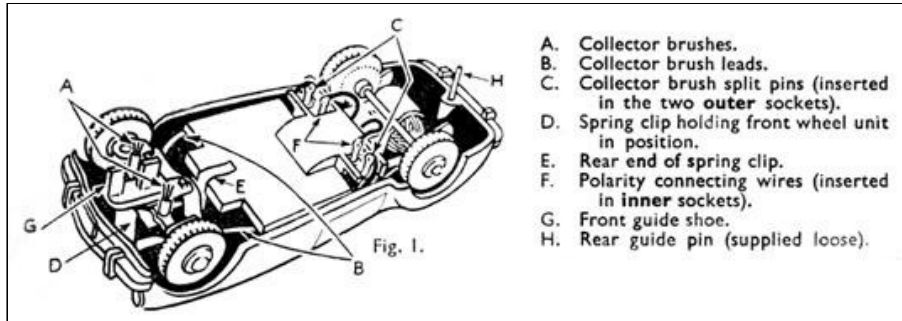
The Cars



Early style of pick-up's

1957 - Steel spur gear, large section carbon motor brushes pressed into brass mount, paxolin brush carrier, orange colour motor windings, large diameter commutator with notable gap between it and motor windings, large cross section motor bearings, large flat holes on base of motor side plates, small

bearings, small dished holes on base of motor side plates, driver and steering wheel heat welded into place. Other details as 1957.



Later multi-strand pick-ups (collector brushes)

Autumn 1958 - Small section carbon motor brushes pressed into brass carrier, large sleeved suppressor, no metal weight, two holes in front axle crossmember, multi-strand phosphor-bronze pick-ups. Other details as Spring 1958

Spring 1959 - Motor brushes now soldered into brass mount, black nylon brush carrier. Other details as Winter 1958

Winter 1959 - Black nylon spur gear. Other details as Spring 1959

1960 - Moulded line beneath V logo on chassis flattened down (don't ask me why!). Other details as Winter 1959

The cars then remained unchanged in this form. The sets were discontinued in 1961 and this version of the individually boxed cars in 1962.

The set car MGA's and Austin Healey's were produced in Yellow, Yellow, Red, Red, Green, Green, White, White, Dark Blue, Dark Blue and Grey Blue Grey Blue colours. From the examples that I've seen to date, White cars only appear to have been produced up until early 1959 when this colour was discontinued and replaced by the Dark Blue variety. White cars only seem to appear in the sets.

[VIP Model Roadways Part 3](#)

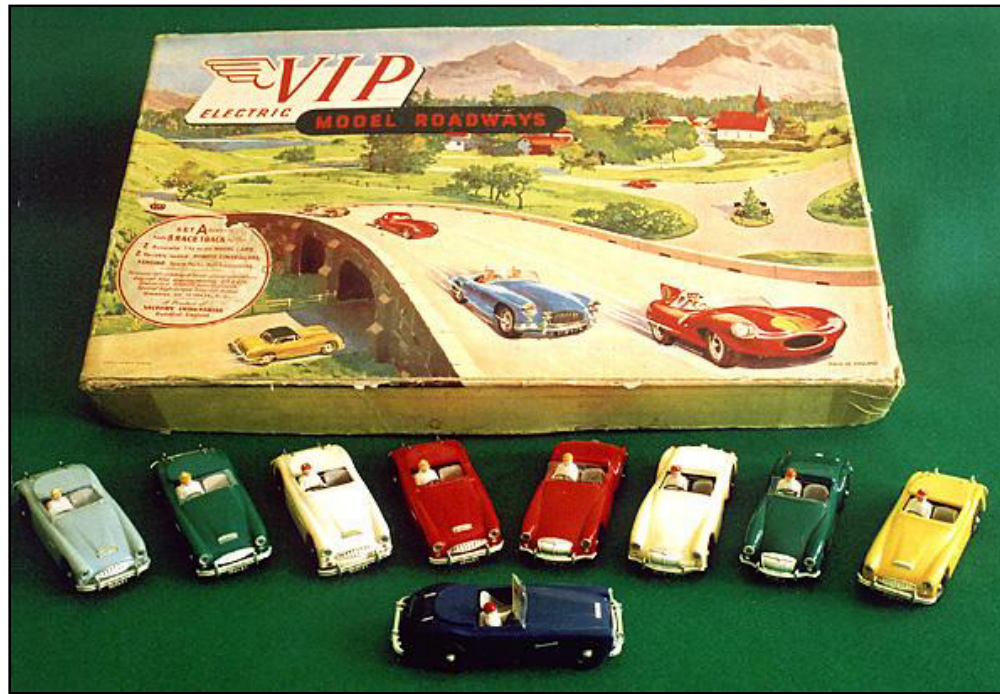
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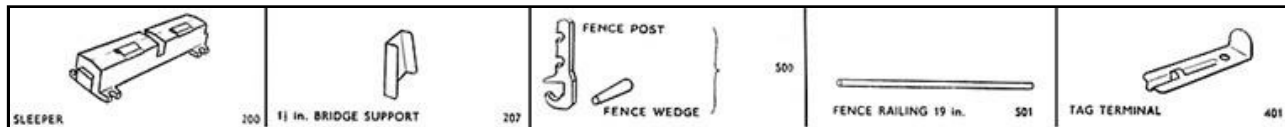


Part 14

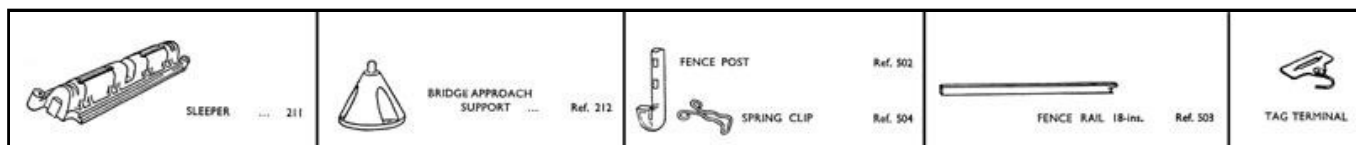
The Set Box & Contents



Several changes were made to the set from the beginning of 1958 to make the assembled track more rigid and to improve electrical continuity. Most highly visible was the change to the box lid, a picturesque alpine scene (above) replacing the rather plain design used previously. Inside the box the grey plastic sleepers (MR200) were replaced by a completely new design in brown plastic (MR211). The small metal bridge approach supports (MR207) were replaced by triangular plastic piers (MR212). The fence post and railings (MR500 & MR501) were replaced a new design with spring clips (MR502, MR503 & MR504) and the separate L shaped tag terminals (MR401) were replaced a soldered on rectangular version . This changes are shown in the two pictures below.



The parts shown above were replaced by those shown below in post 1957 sets.



As well as the changes to the cars noted previously, the set instruction leaflet was frequently revised and this is another good guide to the age of a set as they generally carry a printers date mark in the bottom left-hand corner. A single car Set 'B' with a small oval of track was made available during 1958 but it sold poorly and was dropped by the end of the year.



A rare line-up of individually boxed early type MGA's

From 1957 until mid-1962 the sidewinder powered cars were available as individually boxed models under part numbers: MR 100 - Austin Healey and MR 101 - MGA. These models returned to the range in the early part of 1963 under part numbers: R64 Austin Healey and R65 MGA following a brief absence while their tooling was modified to enable them to be fitted with in-line motors. In this form they remained in production until the company closed in 1969. From 1963 until the end of 1967, Club special versions with hotter in-line motors were also available under part numbers: R64S Austin-Healey and R65S MGA. these motors are easily distinguished by their silver side plates.

Because the original sets sold a lot better than individual models, individually boxed MR100 & MR101 versions of the Healey and MGA are very much harder to find than early set cars. Conversely individually boxed R64 and R65 versions are much more common than later set cars as very few of the later sets included the Healey and MGA.

To bypass some company history and go to the next developments in the VIP Slot Car Range [Click Here!](#)

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