

# Personality Profile Of The Week

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Gary Brownridge, owner and manager of the Lorne Park Family Hobby Centre started out recently in the hobby retailing business with the idea that the work would be interesting, and the hours not too long. He was right about the first point, but wrong about the last as it turned out.

A friend had asked Gary to try out one of the little scale model cars at a local slot car track in Kitchener -- and that's how it all started. He became so enthused with the idea of starting his own track that he and his father went into the Lorne Park Family Hobby Centre on a 50-50 basis.

All important decisions were talked over by him and his father, but stock and day-to-day operations were and are his sole responsibility. The Centre was originally a bowling alley and a "tremendous cleaning job was needed to get it ready for the public," he said.

"This is still a big headache because you have to clean up every day. Some nights I don't get home until 11:00 at night."

Born in Toronto in 1942, Gary came to public school in Port Credit, then went on to Lorne Park Secondary where he took the general course of study. While in high school he played football every year, and was very active in young people's affairs in his church. In fact, this was where he met his wife Iris.

After leaving high school he went to work for two different insurance companies, and by 1965 had risen to assistant manager of the Kitchener insurance company. It was at this time that he became greatly interested in scale model cars through the friend.

The entire family lends a hand at the Centre when the going gets rough. Just last week, when most public and high school children were on holidays, business was at a peak. Gary himself, a part-time Lorne Park student, Jim Wemyss 18, and the entire family helped out during the rush.

Mr. Brownridge has two brothers and two sisters. Gail, 19, is studying honors mathematics at Queen's University and is in her second year there. Glenda, one year younger, works at Argyle Chrysler in Cooksville as a receptionist. Gordon, 16 and Glen 13 attend Lorne Park Secondary and Owenwood public school respectively.

According to Mr. Brownridge most hobbies are carried



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ied in the Centre, but very few crafts as yet. A typical youngster who wanders into the Centre will find models of all types and description, from slot car racing kits to a do-it-yourself human body. In addition to models, Mr. Brownridge carries a full line of plastics, "safe" chemical sets, and electric trains.

But the one biggest item in the Centre is definitely the slot cars. The Fall Racing Meet was recently completed with a television set going to the smiling winner. Good crowds turned out every Tuesday night to watch the drivers pilot their little cars through the fast course.

Gary would like to see inter-city competitions in the future right across Canada. He said slot car racing could be divided into two classes of adults and teen-agers with scholarships offered as prizes to the student drivers.

When asked if slot car racing was just a fad he said it definitely was here to stay, but probably the smaller tracks would lose out to the larger. This already has happened in the United States. The hobby itself is relatively inexpensive as hobbies go, the main cost being the car itself.

Mr. Brownridge has two lovely children, Jamie, 5, who has just started kindergarten, and Kim, 3, who is still at home.

During the Christmas holidays Gary has been working a 14-hour day, but when business slows down a little, he will return to his love of building scale models. In the summer he golfs at Richview as much as possible, shooting in the low 90's.

When asked what new additions he might purchase for the Centre, he replied, "a golf machine,"