



NZFMM MAGAZINE

Volume 29 No 6

December 2005



Christmas Greetings to our readers.



This is Daryl Anderson's Marble Roller which has been seen in action at exhibitions for a number of years. Detailed instructions are from page 3 on.



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Editor: Bruce Neilson,
P O Box 1009,
Palmerston North. 06 355 0776
Email: <rbneilson@inforen.net.nz>

Compositor: John Ince,
5 Lennox Place, Feilding. 06 323 7075
Email: <johnince@man.quik.co.nz>

Roving Reporter: Bob Prescott,
16 Watford Drive, Kapiti Village,
Paraparaumu 6010. 04 9052963
Email: <bobandanne@paradise.net.nz>

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Letters are welcome and may be sent by post or by email. The author's name and address must be supplied. Publication of letters will be at the editor's discretion.

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Lloyd Spackman, Villa 22, Redwood Village,
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Email <fishplate@paradise.net.nz>

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Garry Higgin's
Yellow Submarine -
see page 21



Have you been a Good Boy?

Elsewhere in this issue, is a little article about Ashok Bannerjee's (India) 11 1/2 " and 7 1/2 " Roller Bearings recently imported by a lucky, dedicated, loved, or just nostalgic New Zealander. John Hansen received permission from the owner to unpack and assemble the Roller Bearings for the purpose of the article and shared the experience with Bruce Geange and myself. My emotional reaction to the careful unwrapping then sight and smell of new, pristine red, green and brass Meccano parts duplicated the reaction of many years ago when Christmas was the occasion of the year and the receiving of presents the highlight.

Perhaps the emotion of expectation is heightened and treasured more in times of scarcity and even more so when the present is brand new rather than a hand-me down.

Then there was the grownups ploy of "If you are a good boy, Father Christmas will bring you some nice presents." Yeah, right! The letter to Father Christmas laboriously written out by hand asking for a dog was totally ignored. (Mothers do have very strange logical reasons :-)).

But there were substitutions (Meccano) that made up for the initial disappointment and became the prized possession of a growing boy.

Joining Meccano and emotion together is a strange fellowship but if your house caught fire, what number would your Meccano collection be on your list of items to save? The weight might be a problem but I would bet that most Meccanomen would have a tear in their eye if their collections went up in flames. No, lets try that again. Your Meccano would be blackened, possibly distorted, but probably mostly salvageable and repaintable.

This brings me to the point that happiness is still obtainable, even in the world and times we currently live in. If you are too late for this Christmas there is always next year. Come out of the closet, tell your nearest and dearest(s) that you want brand new Meccano in your favourite colour for Christmas, to be put in a big box and wrapped in Christmas paper with a red ribbon bow, and to be available on Christmas morning. Give your dearest some guidance of sources of supply and leave them to it to get the maximum surprise.

To all the people involved in the NZFMM Magazine from beginning to end, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Also on behalf of NZFMM folk, I would also like to wish Don Blakeborough (NZFMM life member) and his wife Joyce, all happiness on the occasion of their Golden Wedding celebration on 24 December 2005.

While in the also mode, a week before the above happy event, John Ince and his wife Edna celebrate their Golden Wedding.

R. Bruce Neilson.

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Marble Roller

designed and built by Daryl Anderson.
text and pictures by Bruce Neilson.

1 – History – Originally built in 1990 to entertain the public (old and young), the Marble Roller has run for hundreds of hours and millions of marbles. The Marble Roller also has the advantage that it can be left unattended for reasonable lengths of time while the proud owner is doing other things. Small boys' fingers are the usual problem.

2 – The model consists of the basic machine plus some unessential entertainment add-ons. The glass marbles are 1" (25mm) diameter and 20 grams in weight.

3 – Use round head Bolts with heads inside where marbles roll.

4 – The model is not complicated and all features are clearly shown in the figures. Most but not every detail has been supplied so a careful study of the model plan is required. The hole counts for the vertical ends start on the base. Also note that the text, alpha-number in brackets (), and photographs have been prepared by checking off the completed model. A CDRom containing additional large digital photographs is available. Contact the Editor.

Detailed Instructions.

(A) Vertical End Left.

(B) Vertical End Right.

(C) Horizontal Base.

(D) Horizontal Top.

(E) Sloping Marble Runs.

(F) and (G) Sloping Marble Holding Pen.

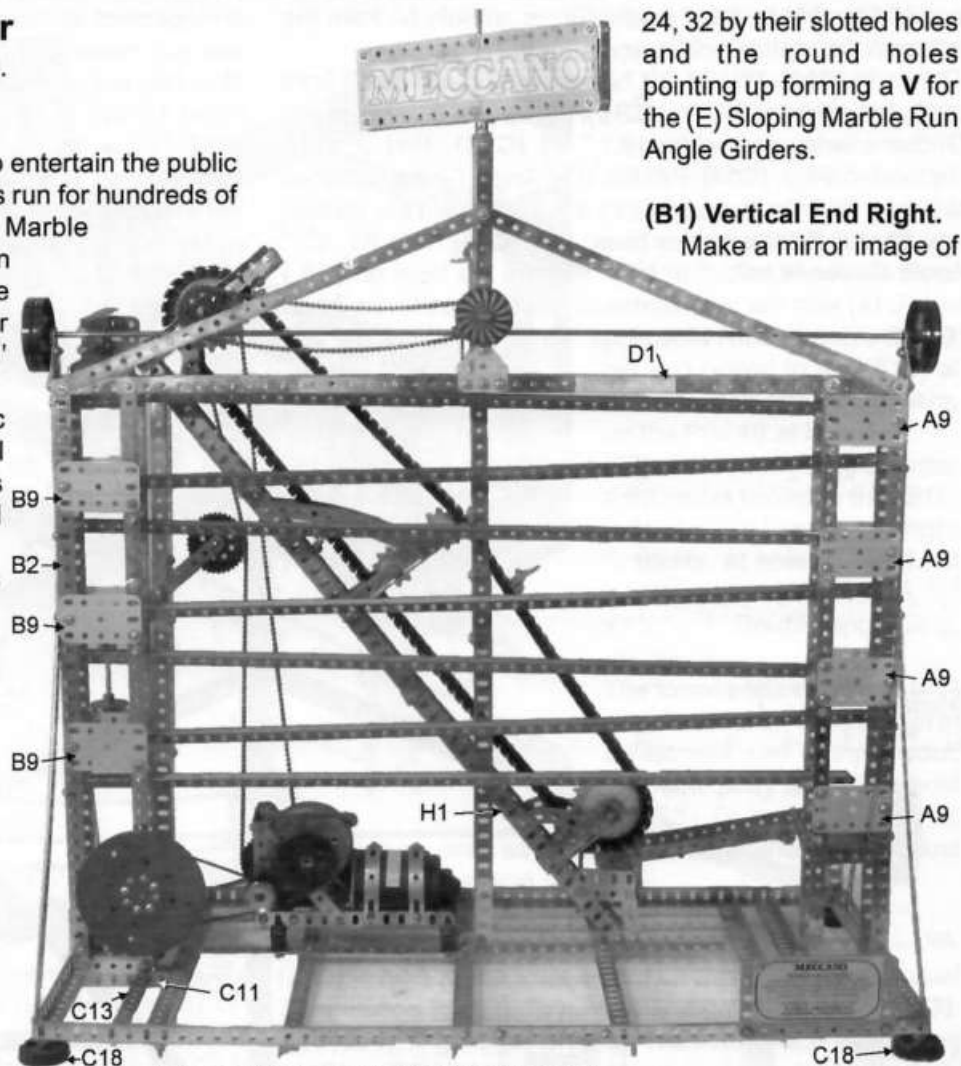
(H) Sloping Marble Lift.

(A1). Vertical End Left.

(A2). P/N 7a, 18 1/2" Angle Girder, two of, bolted together by (A3) P/N 48, 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/2" Double Angle Strip, two of, at holes 2 and 36 and (A4) P/N 126a, Flat Trunnion, at hole 37. (A5). P/N 1, 12 1/2" Perforated Strip, four of, each pair overlapped thirteen holes to make thirty-seven hole Strips. Each Strip is bolted to (A2) by (A6). P/N 5, 2 1/2" Perforated Strip, two of, and (A7). P/N 48, 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/2" Double Angle Strip. The (A5) Strips have further (A8). P/N 48, 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/2" Double Angle Strip, four of, bolted to them (lugs down) at holes 10, 18, 26 and 34. The Bolts securing the (A8)s will also attach (A9). P/N 188, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" Flexible Plate metal, seven of. (A10). P/N 51, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" Flanged Plate, has a P/N 12c, 1/2" x 1/2" Obtuse Angle Bracket, bolted inside by (A11). P/N 37b, Bolt, to force the marbles out onto (A12). P/N 54, 4 1/2" Flanged Sector Plate, and a (A13). P/N 12, 1/2" x 1/2" Angle Bracket, to secure (A10) to (A5). (A14). P/N 9d, 2 1/2" Angle Girder, bolted by round holes to support the (A12). (A15). P/N 12, 1/2" x 1/2" Angle Bracket, six of, in pairs bolted to (A2) at holes 16,

24, 32 by their slotted holes and the round holes pointing up forming a V for the (E) Sloping Marble Run Angle Girders.

(B1) Vertical End Right.
Make a mirror image of



View of the back of the Marble Roller

(A1) by repeating steps (A2), (A3) at holes 2 and 34, (A4), (A5), (A6), (A7), (A8) three of at holes 14, 22, and 30. The Bolts securing the (A8)s will also attach (B9). P/N 188, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" Flexible Plate metal, six of. The (B2). P/N 7a, 18 1/2" Angle Girder, have (B15). P/N 12, 1/2" x 1/2" Angle Bracket, eight of, in pairs bolted to (B2) at holes 12, 20, 28, 36 by their slotted holes and the round holes pointing up forming a V for the Angle Girders. (B16) P/N 9d, 2 1/2" Angle Girder, is bolted to holes 36 on (B2) and (B5) to rest (G) Sloping Marble Lift on.

(C) Horizontal Base.

(C1). 25 1/2" compound Angle Girder made up of P/N 8, 12 1/2" Angle Girder, two of, slot holes up, separated by one hole filled by P/N 8a, 9 1/2" Angle Girder, round holes up inside the P/N 8. (C2). Mirror of (C1).

Join (C1) and (C2) with (C3). P/N 8, 12 1/2" Angle Girder, bolted underneath at hole 18 from the left; (C4). P/N 8, 12 1/2" Angle Girder, bolted underneath at hole 27 from the left; (C5). P/N 8, 12 1/2" Angle Girder, bolted underneath at hole 37 from the left; and (C6). P/N 8, 12 1/2" Angle Girder, bolted underneath at hole 45 from the left.

Then add (C7) P/N 8, 12 1/2" Angle Girder, at hole 1 from the left, with the slotted holes up and to the left; (C8). P/N 8, 12 1/2" Angle Girder, at hole 6 from the left, with the round holes up and to the left; (C9). P/N 8, 12 1/2" Angle Girder, at hole 9 from the left, with the round holes up and to the left;

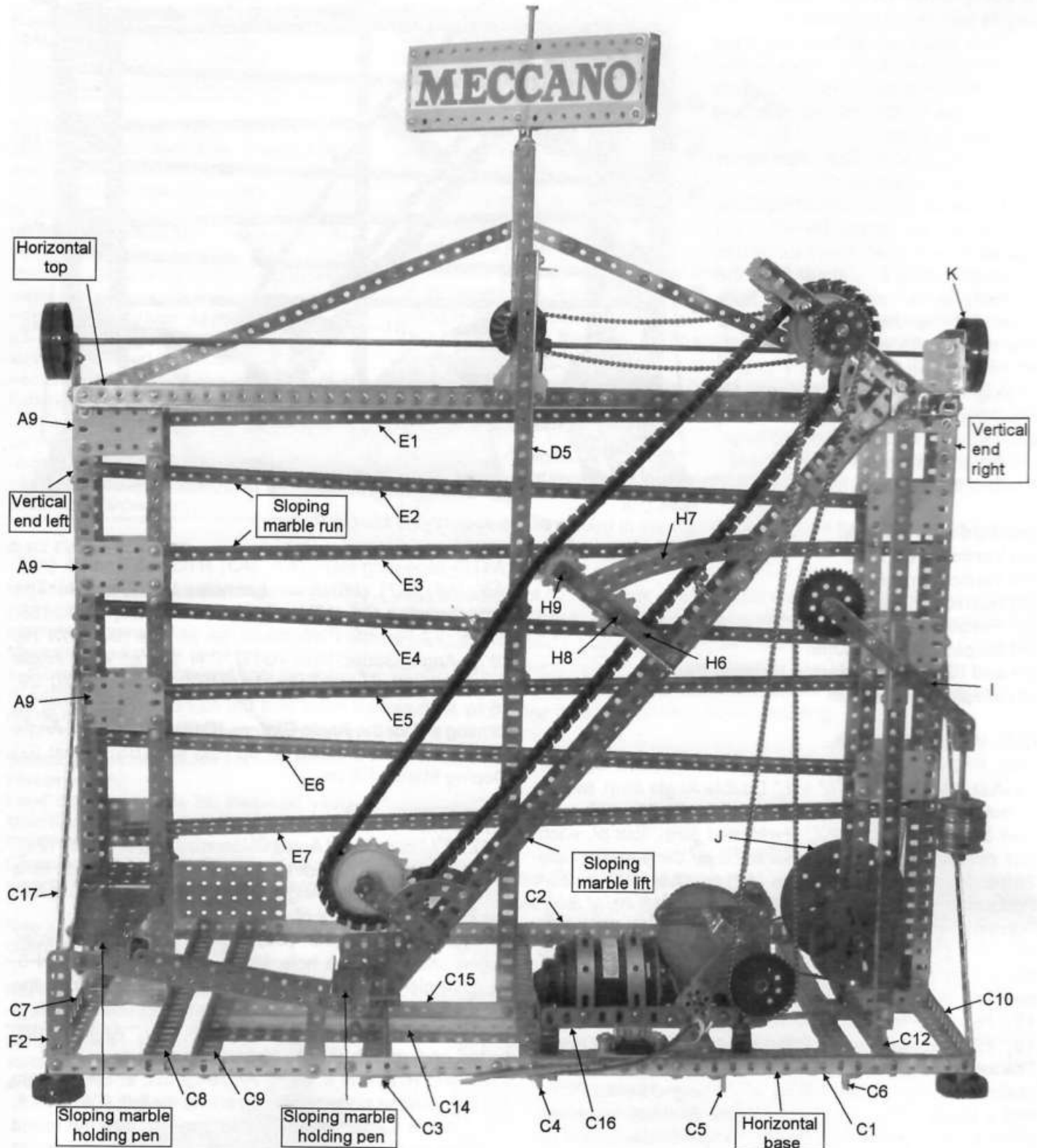
and (C10). P/N 8, $12\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, at hole 50 from the left, with the slotted holes up and to the right.

Then add (C11). P/N 9b, $3\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, at hole 13 from the front between (C6) and (C10); (C12). P/N 8b, $7\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, is extended to $12\frac{1}{2}$ " by (C13). P/N 2, $5\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strip; (C14). P/N 8a, $9\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, is bolted to hole 6 from the front on (C9) and (C14) with the vertical row of round holes to the back; and (C15). P/N 8a, $9\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, is bolted to hole 10 from the front on (C9) and (C14) with the vertical row of round holes to the front. (C16). The motor mount is not described as the

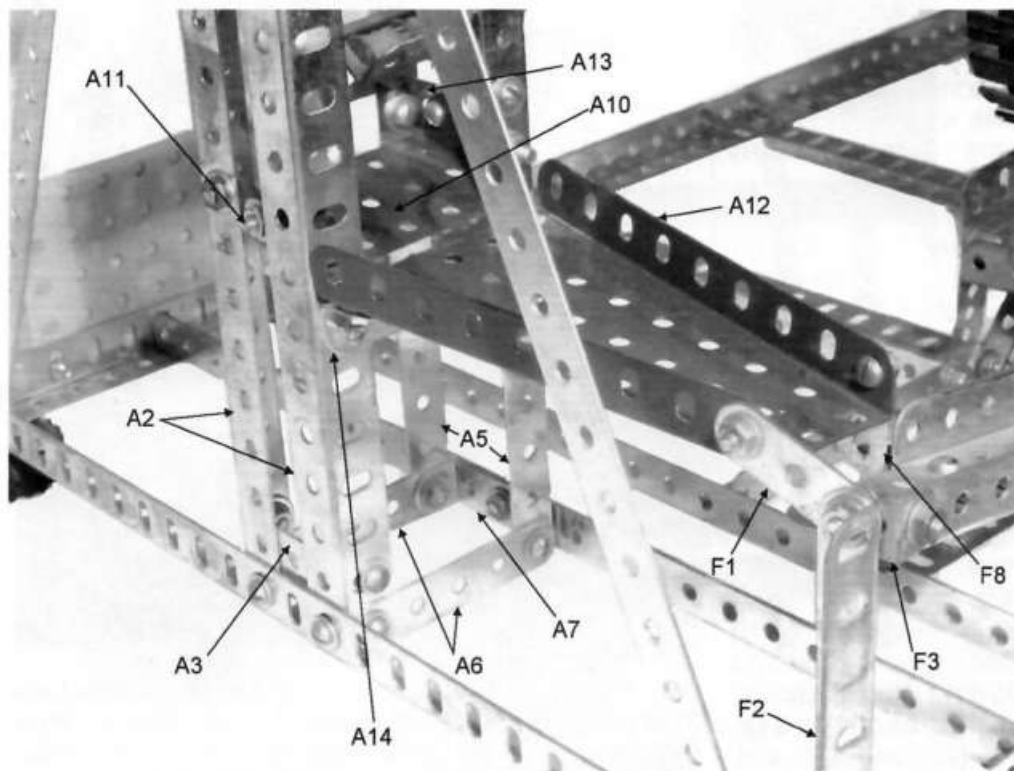
arrangement will depend on the motor used. Rubber bushes are recommended.

Now bolt (A) Vertical End Left onto (C) Horizontal Base at holes 12 and 14 of (C7) and (C8) and brace with (C17) Brace. P/N 1, $12\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strip, which is bolted to hole 2 on (C7) and hole 23 of (A2). Repeat with (B) Vertical End Right and the other three braces.

(C18). Bolt on four feet made up of P/N 22, 1" Pulley with Boss, P/N 142c, 1" Tyre, P/N 38, Standard Washer, two of, and P/N 111d, $1\frac{1}{8}$ " Bolt.



A general view of the front of the marble roller with parts identified



Vertical end left with sloping marble holding pen

(D) Horizontal Top. Back compound $25\frac{1}{2}$ " strip made up of.

(D1). P/N 1, $12\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strip, two of, joined across the one hole gap by P/N 2, $5\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strip, two of, bolted on each side of the P/N 1. Bolt (D1) to holes 37 of the (A) Vertical End Left and (B) Vertical End Right.

(D2) Front compound $23\frac{1}{2}$ " strip made up of P/N 1, $12\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strip, then gap of three holes then P/N 1a, $9\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strip, The three hole gap is filled in by P/N 2, $5\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strip, two of, bolted on each side of the P/N 1a and P/N 2. Bolt (D2) to holes 37 of (A) and (B5).

(D3). P/N 8, $12\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, is also bolted to (D2) and a **(D4).** P/N 12a, $1" \times 1"$ Angle Bracket, to join (D2) with **(D5).** P/N 8, $12\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, two of, overlapped five holes. (D5) is also bolted to (C15)

(E) Sloping Marble Runs.

(E1). P/N 7, $24\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, right end is bolted to the (B15) P/N 12, $\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Brackets, at holes 36 and left end resting on (A8) P/N 48, $\frac{1}{2}" \times 1\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Double Angle Strip, at hole 34.

(E2). P/N 7, $24\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, left end bolted to the (A15) at holes 32 and right end resting on the P/N 48 at hole 30.

(E3). P/N 7, $24\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, right end is bolted to the (B15) P/N 12, $\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Brackets, at holes 28 and left end resting on (A8) P/N 48, $\frac{1}{2}" \times 1\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Double Angle Strip, at hole 26.

(E4). P/N 7, $24\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder,

left end bolted to the (A15) at holes 24 and right end resting on the P/N 48 at hole 22.

(E5). P/N 7, $24\frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Girder, right end is bolted to the (B15) P/N 12, $\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Brackets, at holes 20 and left end resting on (A8) P/N 48, $\frac{1}{2}" \times 1\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Double Angle Strip, at hole 18.

(E6). P/N 7, $24\frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Girder, left end bolted to the (A15) at holes 16 and right end resting on the P/N 48 at hole 14.

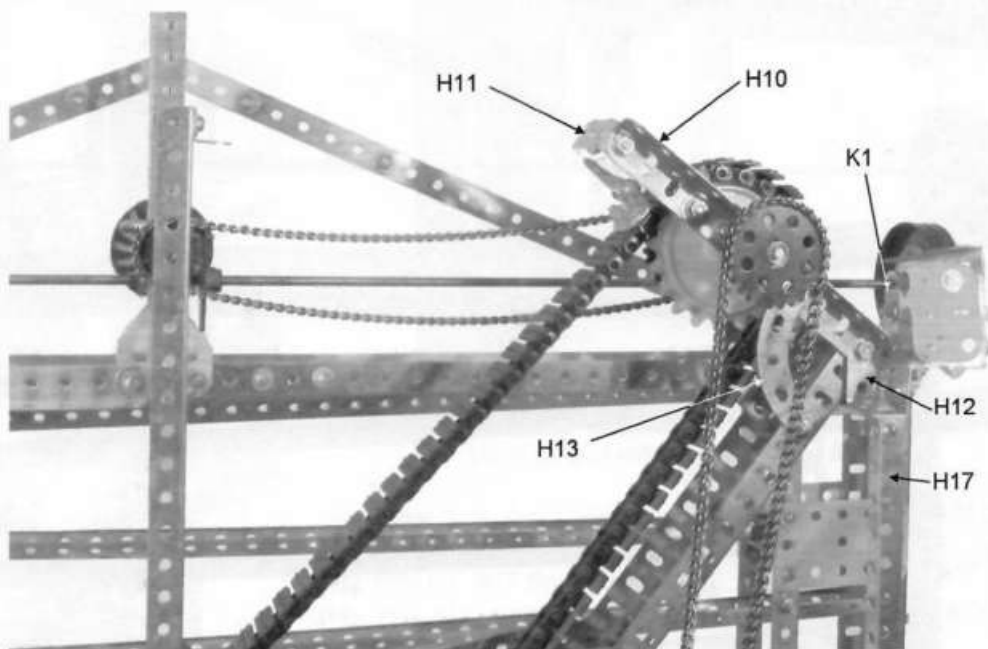
(E7). P/N 7, $24\frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Girder, right end is bolted to the (B15) P/N 12, $\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Brackets, at holes 12 and left end resting on (A8) P/N 48, $\frac{1}{2}" \times 1\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Double Angle Strip, at hole 10.

The loose ends of (E1) to (E7) need room for lateral adjustment and in the model, 'BluTack' putty is used to hold the P/N 7s in place. Wire or

string can be used as an authentic Meccano part but must not impede the rolling marbles.

(F) Sloping Marble Holding Pen.

(A12) is held at the front by (F1). P/N 6a, $1\frac{1}{2}"$ Perforated Strip, bolted to (F2). P/N 9b, $3\frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Girder, and (F3). P/N 12, $\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Bracket. The bottom of (F2) is bolted to (C1). (F4). P/N 8b, $7\frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Girder, is bolted to (F3) and (F5). P/N 5, $2\frac{1}{2}"$ Perforated Strip, (F4) is widened by (F6). P/N 103k, $7\frac{1}{2}"$ Flat Girder, which has an inside wall from (F7). P/N 9, $5\frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Girder. Additional support is given at (F8). P/N 12b, $1" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Bracket, bolted to (A12), extended by P/N 10, $1"$ Fishplate, in turn bolted to (F7) and (F6). (F9). P/N 12b, $1" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Angle Bracket, bolted to (F7). (F10). P/N 12c, $\frac{1}{2}" \times \frac{1}{2}"$ Obtuse Angle Bracket,



The top right hand side of the front of the marble roller showing the marble lift

bolted to (F4) to push the marbles around the corner.

In preparation to building (G), bolt by slotted hole with bolt heads inside (H1). P/N 7, 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, two of, to the holes 9 of (C14) and (C15), and hole 12 of (D5). Join the two (H1)s at holes 8, 22, 35, and 49 with (H2). P/N 48, $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strip, four of. The lugs of (H2) are on the outside of (H1).

(G) Sloping Marble Holding Pen.

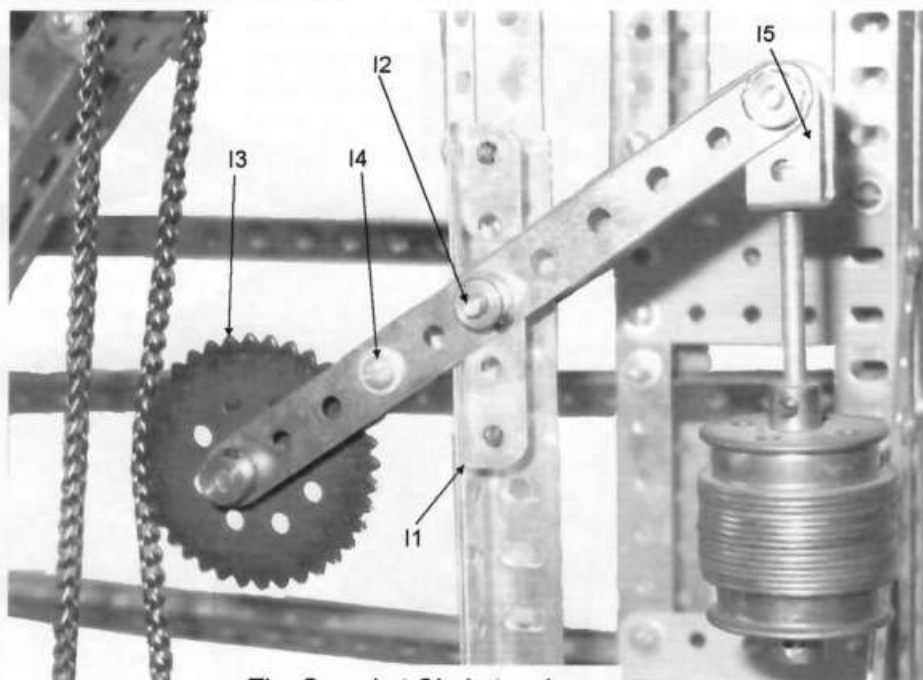
(G1). P/N 6, 2" Perforated Strip, Bolt to hole 8 of (C15). (G2). P/N 103g, 2" Flat Girder, bolt to (G1). This Bolt also carries Nut, (G2), (G3). P/N 9e, 2" Angle Girder, P/N 38, Standard Washer, three of, (G4). P/N 235g, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Narrow Strip, bent to guide marble flow, Bolt head.

The other end of (G2) is bolted to the back (H1). This bolt carries Nut, (G2), (H1), (G3), Bolt head. (G5). P/N 103g, 2" Flat Girder, bolted to (G3). (G6). P/N 103c, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Flat Girder, bolted to (G3) and (G5) and wedged between (F6) and (F4). (G7). P/N 9c, 3" Angle Girder, under and bolted to (G6). (G8). P/N 9c, 3" Angle Girder, above and bolted to (G6). The adjustable support is made up of (G9). P/N 63, Coupling, secured to (G8) by a Bolt and two Grub Screws and (G10). P/N 80c, 3" Threaded Rod, secured to (C1) and (G9).

(H) Sloping Marble Lift.

The (H2) at hole 8 also carries on each (H1) a (H3). P/N 9c, 3" Angle Girder, and (H4). P/N 90a, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " - 90° Curved Strip. (H3) are then used for a (H5). P/N 17, 2" Axle Rod, which carries P/N 59, Collar, (H3), P/N 59, Collar, P/N 63, Coupling, P/N P83, 20 tooth Sprocket Wheel Plastic, with P/N P78, Collet Nut Plastic, P/N 59, Collar, (H3), and P/N 59, Collar.

(H6). P/N 9a, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, two of, bolted to hole 29 of each (H1) and braced to (D5).



The Sprocket Chain tensioner

(H7). P/N 89, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " - 30' Curved Strip, two of, bolted to hole 37 of each (H1) and hole 7 of each (H6). In hole 5 of (H6) is (H8). P/N 17, 2" Axle Rod, which carries P/N 59, Collar, (H6), P/N 59, Collar, P/N 63, Coupling, P/N P84, 10 tooth Sprocket Wheel Plastic, with P/N P78, Collet Nut Plastic, P/N 59, Collar, (H3), and P/N 59, Collar.

In hole 9 of (H6) is (H9). P/N 17, 2" Axle Rod, which carries P/N 59, Collar, (H6), P/N 59, Collar, P/N 63, Coupling, P/N P84, 10 tooth Sprocket Wheel Plastic, with P/N P78, Collet Nut Plastic, P/N 59, Collar, (H3), and P/N 59, Collar.

(H10). P/N 9, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, two of, bolted to holes 49 of (H1)s using the bolts securing (H2). These bolts also hold (H12). P/N 12b, 1" x $\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Bracket, by the 1" lug.

(H11). P/N 48, $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strip, joins the (H10)s at hole 11.

(H13). P/N 90a, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " - 90° Curved Strip, braces (H10)s to (H1)s.

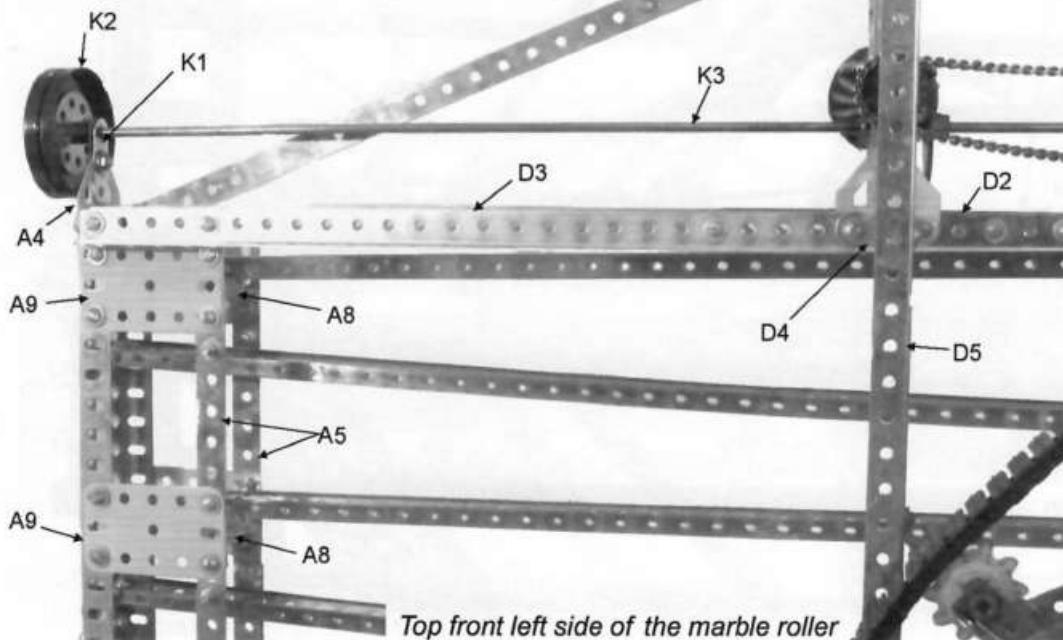
(H14). P/N 103h, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Flat Girder, guides the marbles.

The short lug of both (H12)s are bolted to holes 2 and 6 of (H15). P/N 9b, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder, Hole 7 of (H15) is bolted to (B16). (H16).

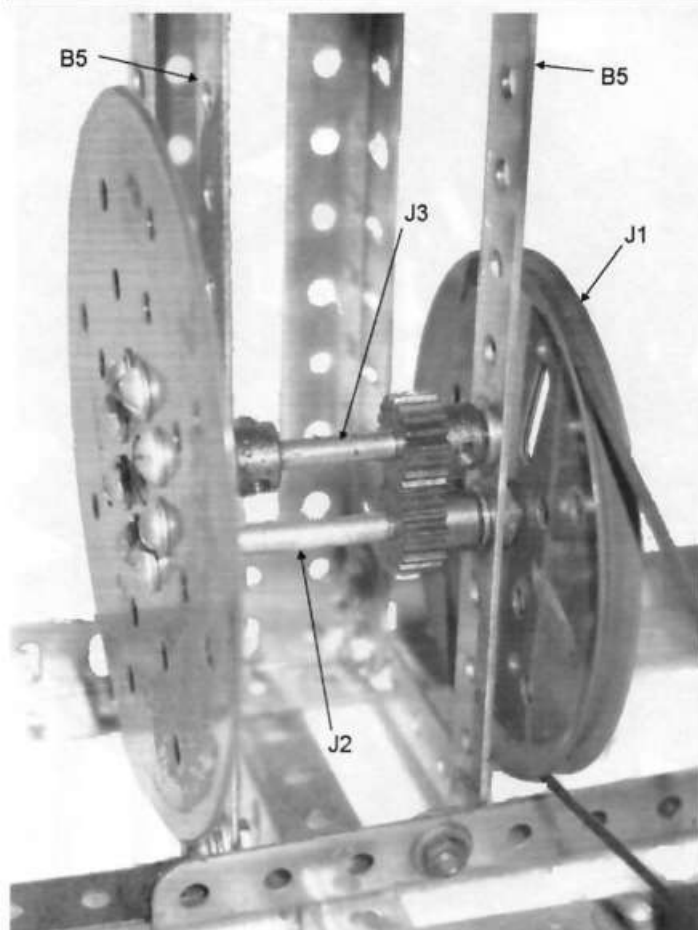
P/N 12, $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Bracket, is bolted to hole 1 of (H15) and hole 36 of (H17).

(H17). an 18" compound Angle Girder, made up of two P/N 8, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girders, overlapped fourteen holes. Hole 1 of (H17) is bolted to hole 4 of (C12). (H18A). P/N 15b, 4"

Axle Rod, carries P/N 95a, 28T Sprocket Wheel, P/N 62, Single Arm Crank, (bolted to (H10)), (H10), P/N 63, Coupling, P/N P83, 20 tooth Sprocket Wheel Plastic, P/N P78, Collet Nut

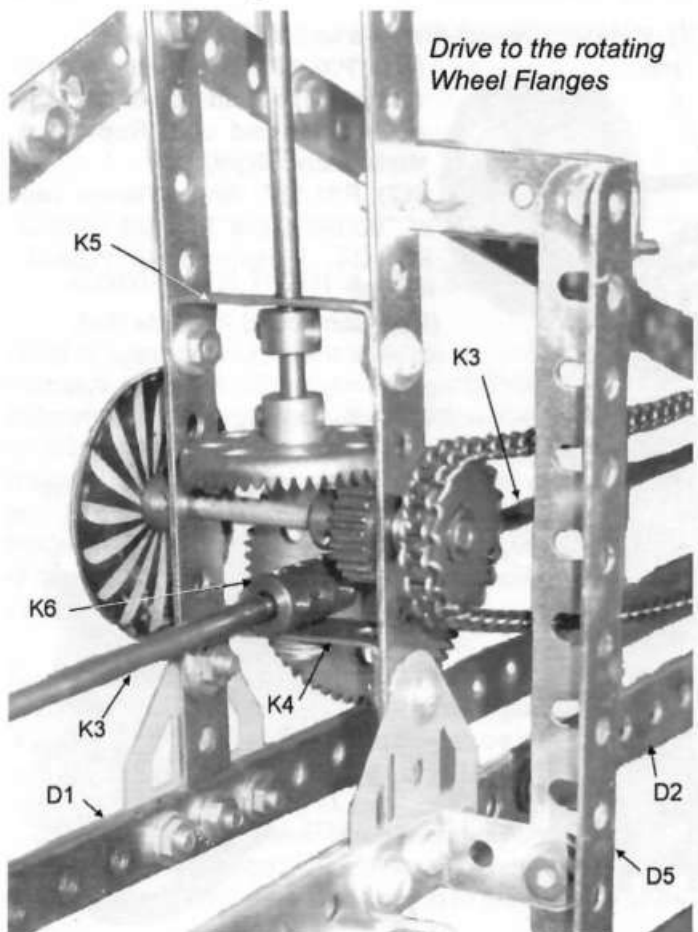


Top front left side of the marble roller



Contra-rotating Circular Plate

Plastic, P/N 38d, Large Washer, (H10), P/N 62, Single Arm Crank, (bolted to (H10)), P/N 95a, 28T Sprocket Wheel. (H18). P/N 103d, 3 1/2" Flat Girder, is bolted to (H19). P/N



9a, 4 1/2" Angle Girder, and to (H20). P/N 12, 1/2" x 1/2" Angle Bracket, which in turn is bolted to (H15).

(H21). P/N 111, 3/4" Bolt, connects (H18) and (B16) and adjusts the descent angle of (H18).

On (H19) the back catching wall is erected consisting of (H22). P/N 103h, 1 1/2" Flat Girder, (H23). P/N 103e, 3" Flat Girder, (H24). P/N 9c, 3" Angle Girder, (H25). P/N 10, 1" Fishplate, (H26). P/N 10, 1" Fishplate, and a couple of P/N 12, 1/2" x 1/2" Angle Brackets on the inside.

(H27). P/N 12c, 1/2" x 1/2" Obtuse Angle Bracket, holds (H28). P/N 6a, 1 1/2" Perforated Strip to guide the marbles onto (E1).

(H29). P/N P91, Caterpillar Track Link Plastic, 126 of. (H30). Drill two holes in each of links 1,33,64, and 96 and using a flat headed rivet or bolt attach (H31). P/N 9l, 1" Angle Girder, to which is bolted (H32). P/N 133a, 1" x 1" Corner Bracket. (H33). P/N 94, Sprocket Chain, connects to your motor. This completes the basic machine.

The following items can be added:

(I) Sprocket Chain Tensioner.

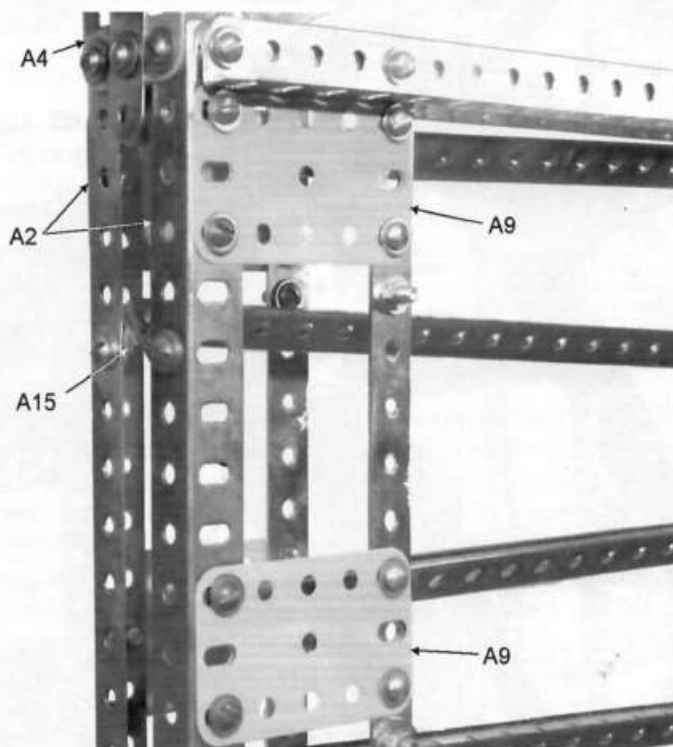
(J) Contra-rotating Circular Plate.

(K) Rotating Wheel Flanges and MECCANO sign.

(L) Marble Counter.

(I). **Sprocket Chain Tensioner.** My apologies for the incorrect position of the Tensioner in the earlier pictures. The weight should be above the Sprocket Wheel.

(I1). P/N 9d, 2 1/2" Angle Girder, bolted to (H17) to provide a bearing for (I2). P/N 18a, 1 1/2" Axle Rod, which carries P/N



Vertical end left side and front left

59, Collar, P/N 2, 5 1/2" Perforated Strip, (I1), (H17), P/N 2, 5 1/2" Perforated Strip, P/N 59, Collar.

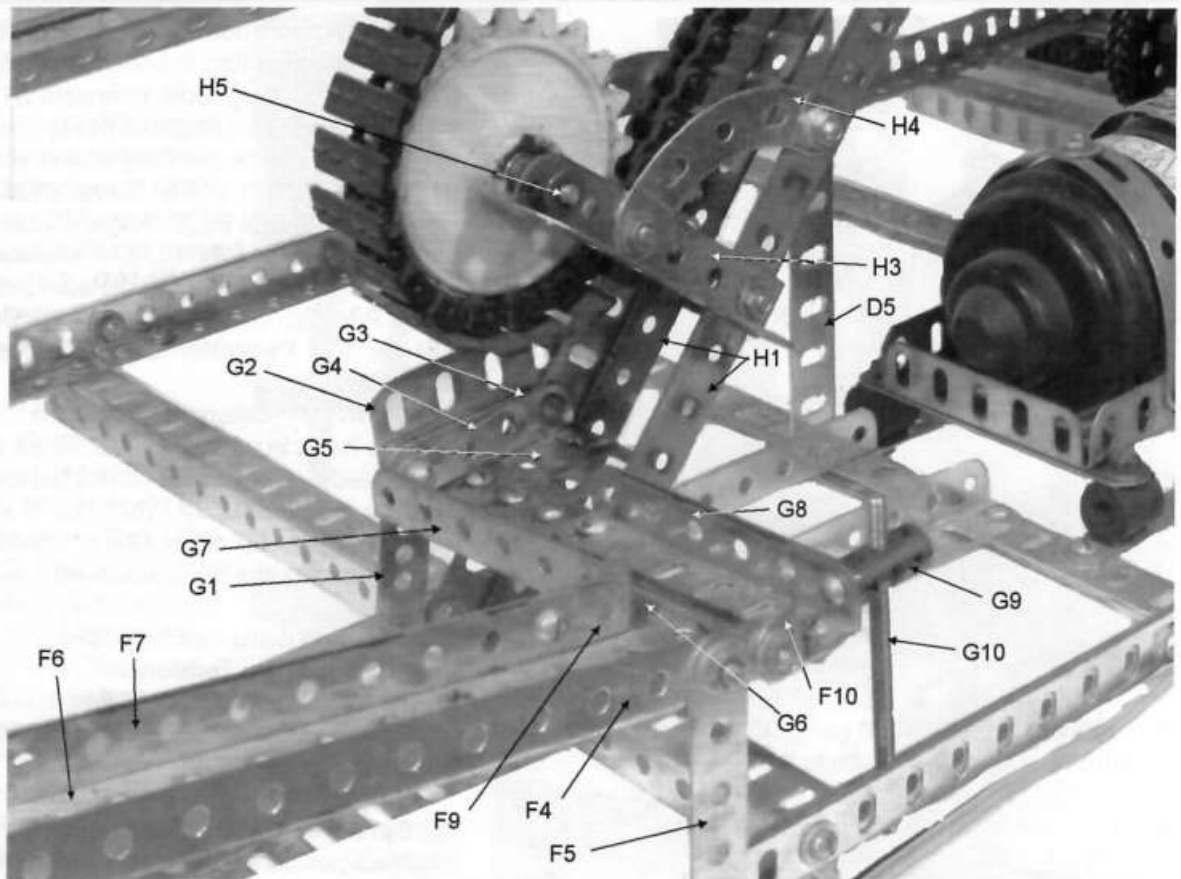
(I3). P/N 95, 36T Sprocket Wheel.

(I4). P/N 37b, Bolt, which secures P/N 11, 1/2" x 1/2" x 1/2" Double Bracket.

(I5). P/N 11a, 1" x 1/2" x 1" Double Bracket, which carries P/N 16, 3 1/2" Axle Rod, P/N 59, Collar, (I5), P/N 20, Die Cast 1 1/8" Flanged Wheel, P/N 24a, 8 Hole Wheel Disc, as required, P/N 20, Die Cast 1 1/8" Flanged Wheel.

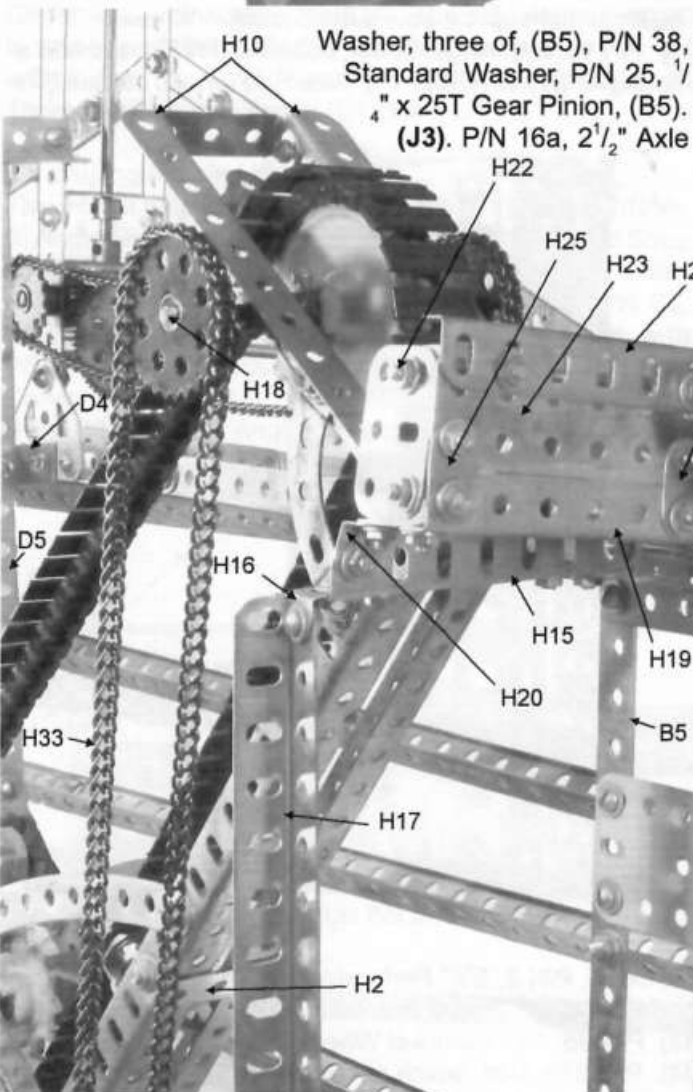
(J). Contra-Rotating Circular Plate.

Take a second pulley belt drive from your motor to (J1). P/N 19b, 3" Pulley with Boss, which is carried on (J2). P/N 16a, 2 1/2" Axle Rod, which carries (J1), P/N 38, Standard



The marble holding pen at the bottom of the marble lift

Rod, carries (B5), P/N 38, Standard Washer, P/N 25, 1/4" x 25T Gear Pinion, (B5). (J3). P/N 16a, 2 1/2" Axle



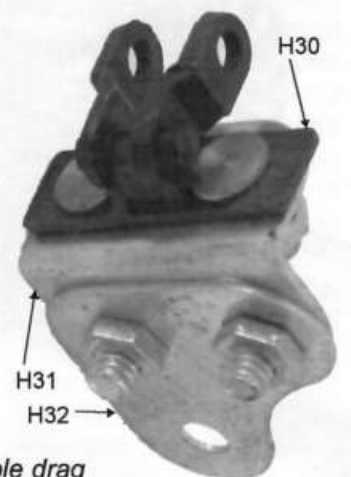
The top end of the sloping marble lift

(K). Rotating Wheel Flanges and 'Meccano' sign.

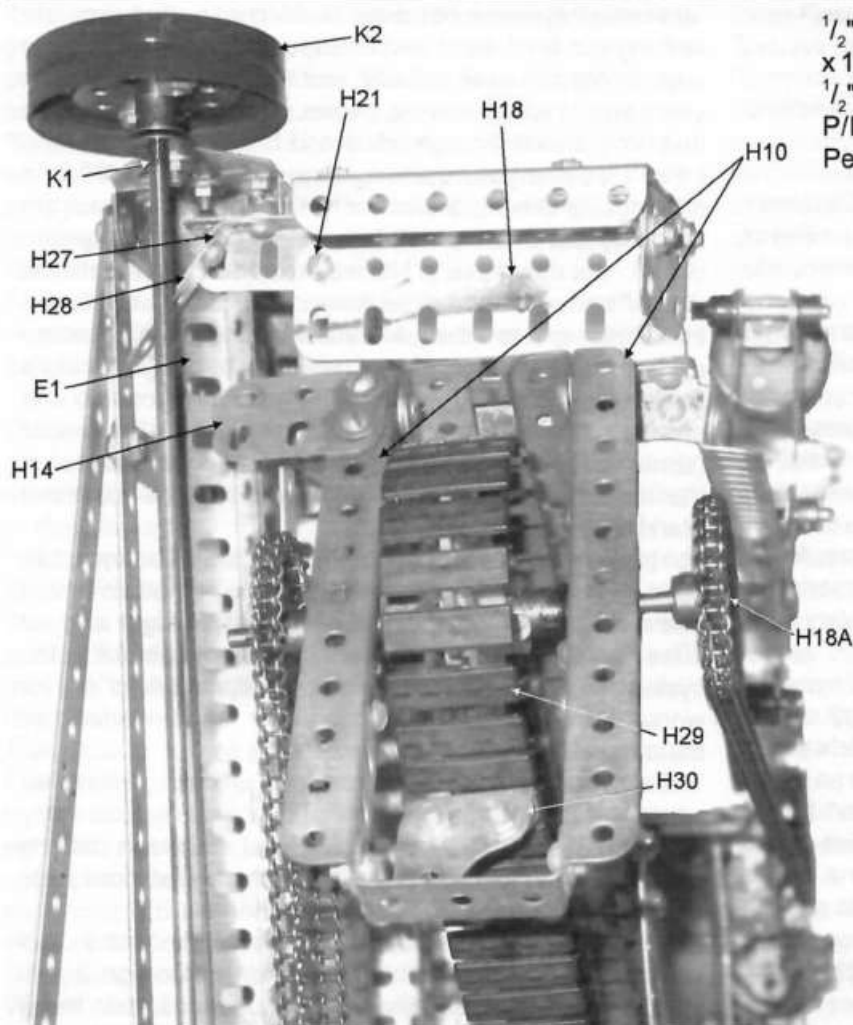
(K1). P/N 10, 1" Fishplate, two of, are bolted to each side of the (A4) at Vertical End Left. Repeat at Vertical End Right.

(K2). P/N 137, Wheel Flange, two of, bolted back to back with a P/N 24, 8 Hole Bush Wheel. Repeat.

(K3). Compound 26" Axle Rod. Refer to the picture on page 7. Bolt on P/N 126a, Flat Trunnion, P/N 1b, 7 1/2" Perforated Strips. (K4). P/N 48,

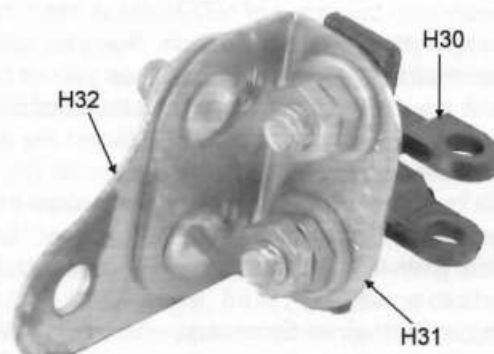


Marble drag



The marble lift from the top of the model

$\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strip. (K5). P/N 48, $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strip, and a further, P/N 48, $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strip, at the top of the P/N 1b, $7\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strip, with compound Perforated Strips for braces.



The marble drag

(K6). P/N 63, Coupling, is bolted with packing P/N 38, Standard Washers, to (K4) and used as a through bearing for (K3).

The sequence of the Gearwheels for (K) is: P/N 94, Sprocket Chain, from the back P/N 95a, 28T Sprocket Wheel, on (H18A) drives, P/N 96, 18T Sprocket Wheel, on a P/N 16a, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " Axle Rod, which turns P/N 25, $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 25T Gear Pinion, which drives P/N 28, 50T Gear Contrate, which drives both P/N 27d, 60T Gear, on (K3) and a revolving vertical 9" Axle Rod which carries a 'MECCANO' sign.

(L). Counting Device.

Although not present in this model, a counting device that counts the marbles that have ascended the Sloping Marble Lift is of interest to the public. The counter should have a minimum of six digits.

Comment from a UK Subscriber

Geoff Carter is a UK subscriber who has been corresponding with Wes Dalefield concerning the choice between subscribing to the NZFMM magazine or just seeing what is posted on the magazine web site. Here is his (final?) decision along with a photograph of some of his models which we have reproduced on the back page of this magazine. If you look closely you will see Geoff's version of the Bates Steel Mule tractor which was described in detail in the December 2004 magazine.:-

No doubt I shall renew! Though, as a pensioner, I do have to watch my pennies! I think that the idea to post 'appetizers' is a good and valid one. I find the mag to be interesting and well produced, I would miss it if I didn't get it!

I now have quite a number of models in my 'models' folder to consider - but I don't, 'cos I like to handle the manual/mag/plan, and I haven't yet got round to printing any of my

stored items so that is another reason to re-subscribe.

Attached is a piccy of my contribution to the recent SE London exhibition - not a very inspiring year's production, and three models are old (two you have seen on Spanner and the 'Walking Tractor' was built over 30 years ago and spent its 1st 15 years in my daughter's toybox!). Big Ben and the Empire State were carried in a large (and strong) plastic bag - the rest, plus my lunch box, went into the 2 bags you see under the table.

The modeller you can see behind my lot is Eddie Oatley, with his Paddle Steamer Engine and, in the background, you get a tantalising glimpse of a Pinyon Blocksetter! The 'big head' on the left is Brian Elvidge, admiring Alan Wenbourne's gear box, which you can't see. This is due to go into his Hummer, which you can see a back corner of.

Cheers,
Geoff Carter

(The picture may be found on page 24)

Meccano The Last Man Standing?

The use of Spanner emails is acknowledged. Minor editing has been done.

(NZFMMM Editor) :- While you are digesting your Christmas dinner with this issue of NZFMMM in hand, here is a line of thought (thread) from Spanner that you can contemplate and decide which side of the fence you sit on.)

John Westwood (UK) (a previous editor of the International Society of Meccanomen (ISM) started the ball rolling with this comment.

"Nikko models are too tricky for absolute beginners aged about 6 or 7. My own published leaflet, "Begin Building" (from MW Mailorder) still has no available-for-sale set of parts to go with it.

I hope that some Spanners will now join with me, to do something to make young people want to model in Meccano. (Otherwise, by 2035, we shall be very few, worldwide!).

At the meeting of the Henley Society of Meccano Engineers last Saturday, Eddie Oatley showed me a copy of the illustrated leaflet of charming little beginners' models which went with "Pocket Meccano" sets. Just a dozen or so parts. Kim Fisher photocopied that leaflet for me, enlarged double size. They agree my thoughts. To go with it, a list of the necessary parts is needed. At that point, I know a dealer who would be willing to make up bags of parts, to go with the leaflet, to firm orders. Cost, wild guess, 6 pounds UK. The future of Meccano as we know it cannot be left to Nikko, do we agree?"

Orion, which is the alias for an American who tours in his job as a stage hand, and extends his interest to all construction systems, lends a supporting hand.

"Hello John, You express a very large concern of mine. I believe that the principles one learns in Meccano (or Erector, Merkur, Marklin etc.) are extremely worthwhile to any person, and last a lifetime. I very much lament the way the "toy" has gone, and it seems to me that the owners don't really care (and ones like Metallus, Ashok, Taylor, are busy supplying the fixed adult hobby market...God bless them!). I do not believe that the "fun" and inventiveness of Meccano type toys should ever be outdated, if given the right promotions.

I'd very much like to see a copy of the leaflet, and possibly what's contained in the one from MW. I know that at least one person that has a US website echoes your feelings a lot, and promotes the hobby as much as possible. Would this be something that could be put together for his website and possibly made up to promote through his online store (as well as any others that would do the same elsewhere?). One thing does promote hope though. One of my other hobbies is "strategy gaming" or in some others terms "war gaming". This hobby was just about dead in the 90's, but we've seen a resurgence in it that is amazing. I especially hear a lot from Germany (which interestingly enough has also been very prominent in "Meccano" type systems/toys through out the years). My personal opinion is that it'd not take too much promotion, marketing and a bit of luck to take Meccano and it's ilk back to the forefront of the educational toy market. But sadly there are a lot of

"wannabe" systems out there, sold cheap, that promote nothing but frustration and cheapen the hobby. Systems such as Marklin used to have, and Meccano, even Erector years ago, created interest, desire, and dreams in children that have lasted through adulthood.

I can't see anyone getting overwhelmed by Nikko's offerings, or Eitech, or Merkur even (though it's about the best buy out there on the market, for a decent system cheap...but they have in NO way expanded to "create the dream" and continued expansion; or even truly established true beginner sets either). Metallus looks to be an awesome system (I'm waiting on my set now), but here again there's not really anything to promote the hobby to those up and coming. They only use the manuals from the old Temsi sets (somewhat poorly illustrated, and not much excitement in the models), not even (able?) reprinting the excellent Marklin manuals of old.

For beginners you need to have many models that you can build, starting simple and working up into complexities that one must puzzle out a bit. But not bury them right away in ones that take too much dexterity or knowledge/skill in the system; that just leads to frustration and a "shelved" toy (or worse yet, one that is just uncared for, and underfoot, so that the parents toss it after a while).

The other part of the "dream" creation is the huge monster set, that you can someday acquire if you're lucky. How many of us always drooled over the 10 set, between making models and (in our case in the US) trying to find more parts to add.

PS. I was just thinking about this some yesterday, as I started to build a small model from the Design 3 set. Warping the plates, and trying to line up holes while being "resisted" by several bits of spring steel, I remember thinking, "How the hell can a 8 year old be expected to build this model". It was all I could do to bend the things together with my fingers, and my hands are fairly stout, stage work will do that to you!"

Brian Willis, (USA) takes a view from the other side of the fence.

"Those who correspond here are some of the last remnants of a great hobby which like some of us, is past its prime! Not dissimilar to toy trains or any other childhood interest which has outstayed most of its adherents.

We appreciate Meccano because it was the 'thing' to have in our childhood and as it made such an impression, it has remained with us into another age. Later generations were raised on slot cars, Pong and other video games which are now more sophisticated, and so they have remained as the top teenage attraction.

It's the immediacy of the thing! Children in this day and age are accustomed to instant gratification whether it be zapping computer images, fast food at fast food outlets and music videos on TV. They lack the patience that it takes to build a Meccano model, listen to a symphony or sit down to a traditional family dinner.

Stories of youngsters being introduced to Meccano are heart warming but what of a few years from now? Again, same with trains! I have children over to see my trains and Meccano models; neat, cute, I want one, are some of the remarks, then it is back to the reality of MTV and video games. In spite of American model trains having all the bells and whistles, literally, they don't inspire kids although

they are noisy. Meccano is silent too, and the present generation must have noise, loud noise as an accompaniment. Remember Musak? Now we have rock and roll or worse, rap, in our shops and public places.

Sure I'm older now and I have achieved Meccano nirvana with a 10 set, an ambition which has stayed with me these long years, but what will be the crowning accomplishment of those we tried to introduce to Meccano with probably little success?

As Chris remarked, he may well be the ultimate beneficiary or others like him who are the last remaining Meccano 'boys'. He who dies with the most Meccano, wins!"

Caspar Mol (USA) takes a positive point of view as he comments on John Westwood's thoughts and adds a side topic as to whether the appeal of Meccano is in the Building or the Playing.

"Nikko models are too tricky for absolute beginners aged about 6 or 7..."

This is a worthy topic, and with our combined resources/brains, we should be able to come up with a "starter set" that one of the suppliers (perhaps even Nikko) would like to produce.

The issue is not the parts. It's coming up with simple and FUN models. Especially the latter, something that speaks to the imagination of a child. Those of you that have exhibited must have a sense of what types of simple models appeal to youngsters. Or perhaps we could do a little experiment! Build some of the small models (set 1 or 2, Pocket Meccano, MM or the likes), display them at Skegness, and actively ask children for their feed-back. Which one of these would you like to build? Better yet, then actually let them build it.

Perhaps include some simple free-lance models of Star Wars space ships. Or things "motorized" with a rubber band or a string (flywheel or dead weight). Anything that shoots would probably be high on the list (even if parents may not like it!). If three or four Spanners do that at Skegness, you'll have a pretty good idea what to continue with. With Isomec or VirtualMec, instructions could then be drawn of a dozen favourites, based on a small set of parts (similar in size to a set 1?). How about it gentlemen?!

Would a Spanner somewhere like to make similar copies of that leaflet available widely?

The Internet is a cheap and easy way to distribute instructions.

Brian Willis points out that kids nowadays want instant gratification. Man is lazy, but that was no different in the 1930's or 1950's. So why did we build with Meccano? Because there was nothing else to do? There was plenty else to do. We built because we enjoyed it!

Looking back, what percentage of children actually PLAYED with Meccano? I think it was a fairly small percentage. Many parents may have bought it for their children, but only a few had lasting interest. All we need to do, is get through to that small group of children, and the hobby will be safe for a while.

MAKING things is fun, and Meccano is a good tool. And if you can PLAY with it after you built it, it's even more (much more) fun. So the models must have a high "play value". That's why there should probably be a little Meccanoman/woman in the starter set!"

Evan Pass (Australia) adds these comments .

"Excuse my ignorance but do we know why the Meccano Company does not want to have some size 1,2, 10 sets. Maybe as an anniversary special or something. Also I do not believe that Meccano will die out. Not so long as someone is producing the parts. Also with eBay providing a worldwide market for old things this is an important catalyst as well.

As modern life seems to get more hectic and in some case boring there will I predict come a greater nostalgic emphasis on things like Meccano, old buildings, toys, shops etc."

Chris Bourne (UK) discusses the points already raised.

"You talk about play value, but I wonder how many of us *played* with our Meccano? I didn't. I built models and then I took them apart. I never did a great deal of playing with the models after they were built. Maybe a little, demonstrating the crane to my parents or a few friends or my kid brother. But the biggest pleasure came from building the models, not playing with them.

Games they can play, such as the series of fairground sideshow type games Ray Atkins has been building for the WLMS St Albans' exhibitions go down very well with children. But these are very much adult models that entertain, not something a child could build for himself.

Models I've exhibited which seemed to excite children the most were Meccanographs and Peter Matthews' Simple Robot Arm modelplan. That was a model children recognised immediately. The Meccanographs they find enthralling, especially if you let them take away the patterns and turn the handle. I remember as soon as I had a large enough set, I built a Meccanograph when I was a boy.

Nigel Pope built a Meccanograph with parts mainly from the Space Base set, which is available again at the Model Library site.

To be honest, I don't see why reinventing Pocket Meccano is necessary. That was a tiny set. You can surely make a range of models using the parts in the Special Edition Crane Set, or in Design 4, which would go beyond the very simple things in Pocket Meccano.

Ideal, I think, would be to put three or four modern sets together and see if that helps. Some time ago I suggested that the combination of, say, the Big Ben Set and one of the motorised sets ought to provide enough parts to produce much better models than any one of those sets by itself. Bert Love and Keith Cameron were both past masters at producing interesting new models within the confines of a middle ranking set. Who will take up their mantle?"

Andrew Wells (NZ) adds a view as a Meccano Wholesaler.

"The problem is, Nikko's view (and that of any toy manufacturer) is that reasonable volume is in the 10,000s of one set.

We must not flatter ourselves that we make much impression on Nikko's sales.

To answer earlier comments, Nikko have a clear view that they are in the toy market, and they do not plan for repeat sales - these are a bonus.

On the positive side, kids seem to respond very well to the new Design series.....There is less imagination around (not because kids are less bright, but because the bar is higher - how many of today's kids would make a cotton reel tank, but then why should they when the plastic toys

are so good), so today's kids want the result to look more realistic."

Caspar Mol (USA) replies to Chris Bourne re Making and Playing

I asked my son today what makes a good Meccano model. He said it shouldn't take too long to put together, and it must be fun to play with, which for him- means lots of moving parts. His analogy was Lego models that have trapdoors, hidden compartments, guns that can be aimed, turrets that can turn, wings that go up/down, wheels that can retract, etc. Lego has a nice part that facilitates much of that: it is a stiff hinge that snaps at 7.5 degree increments. A part Meccano should emulate?

So there are two types of Meccano builders: those that enjoy the construction per se (such as you Chris), and those that build as a means to an end-product with which to play (i.e. journey vs. destination). My guess would be that the latter group is larger, and the former group more lasting (into adulthood!) and patient.

But there is no reason why models couldn't cater to both groups.

and further comments on a set for beginners

I am now working on a set which builds different lorries: the chassis and cab is the same for each lorry but on the same chassis a tanker, a pick-up crane, a removal van, ... can be mounted. The idea behind this is that (grand)father builds the chassis/cab and the child can add the build-up's.

Great idea! A variation on the theme is to have a semi (tractor + trailer), where grandpa builds the tractor, and the kids build the trailers (flatbed, tanker, missile launcher, etc). Another variation is a locomotive with all kinds of wagons. Perhaps the gauge should match Brio rails, which most families already have. A self-propelling locomotive (wind-up or electric) is lots of fun.

I've been playing with a somewhat similar idea for a while, but for lack of time never followed through: create a set that allows you to build the best Starter/Collection series models. With Oscar's parts lists, it shouldn't be too hard to come up with a list that allows you to build them all, perhaps with a few modifications for optimization.

Prompted by the thread, and the earlier suggestion at coming up with a Starter set for younger modellers, I now decided to do it, (Clients be damned)!

Listed below are my favourite sets. Using Oscar's parts list spreadsheet, I found out that you need 715 parts to build all these models.

If you take out colour variations, the number drops to 651 (464 plus nuts, bolts and washers). This is roughly equivalent to an 1990's set No. 6, which is much larger than what I had in mind.

Question for experienced modellers: could the majority of these Starter/Collection models be built with minor modifications using approximately 200-250 parts? Individually, the models have around 100-150 parts. If so, would this be a good Starter set? Or are these models too fussy for 6-year olds? Probably...

Perhaps there should be two starter sets: one for 6-year olds, and one for 8/9-year olds. The above set would be for the older group. Should it include a motor with built-in reduction gearbox? I'd say so.

For the 6-year olds, the parts should probably be larger (no narrow strips?), and the models not too fidgety (no more

than two parts per screw). 200 parts sounds about right for such a set. What should those 200 parts be? Any suggestions for a parts list? Do any of the older or existing sets strike you as particularly well suited for this purpose?"

John Lacey (UK) believes that adults, rather than children, are the future of Meccano.

I would suggest that most of you are looking too far down the ladder. A few children do and will take an interest in Meccano - but they are the exception. Times have changed and also have the expectations and demands of children - but so have the lives and needs of adults.

In the modern world the adult has far more time to do whatever he wants to do - and frequently he (includes she) is turning to collecting or making. And what do they so often collect or make with? - toys. Who has not seen magnificent dolls' houses fully furnished in the finest furniture all for the price of a large Meccano set? Who buys these fabulous toys - grown women - who also collect dolls or teddy bears!

The message here is that the modern adult seems to want to enjoy the things that were previously enjoyed by children - but on a much grander scale. Do children build model aeroplanes for instance - not often; who plays with model railways the most - grown men; who are die cast toys made for and collected by - I would suggest men.

One of the standard questions that is constantly fired by punters at Meccano exhibitors is "Is it still made?" closely followed by "Where can you buy it from?" One of the biggest advantages of exhibiting at steam rallies and similar functions is that one is not 'preaching to the converted' and recruits are often persuaded to join the hobby. These recruits have of recent times been sufficient to replace those that have left the hobby at the other end - and I suggest that this will continue to be the case.

Perhaps I may have my head in the sand - but I honestly feel that there is something stronger than nostalgia or sentimentality attracting adults to play with toys."

Howard Somerville (UK) takes the 'apocalypse' point of view ☺.

"I think it's laudable but hopelessly unrealistic to imagine that there is any way of drawing modern children en masse to a hobby belonging to a bygone age, any more than spinning tops, hoops or rocking horses. Complex constructional toys cannot compete with the instant gratification of today's visual media and electronic games. Let us once and for all grasp and accept this. When we go, the Meccano hobby as we know it will die, will die, will die. (There are unavoidable signs that it has already peaked)."

Geoff (UK) supports Howard's point of view.

"I'm sorry but I think I'm with Howard on this. Evidence from 'the front' this last weekend - our show at the 'Best of British' event at Gaydon. I was lucky enough to have Rob and Wendy Miller on board. As usual, in addition to their own novelty models, they had set out a lovely large play table for kids to get hands on the stuff and had also put up an eye catching display of new sets for sale.

Despite their best endeavours and a host of adult visitors they had just one child show an interest and sold just two sets all day.

John and I watched from our layout of Hornby clockwork and Meccano and John and Joyce Sleaford had some success with their display of modern Meccano models both large and small - engaging at least the attention of several small girls. But the vast majority of little boys just ran past and only one lad all day showed any interest in the trains or models.

I was moved to consider that perhaps we need latter-day Jackie Coogans or even Eminem or Ali G look-alikes to run the show. The sad thing is you'd only need someone like Eminem to declare that Meccano was 'cool, 'bad' or whatever the word currently in vogue is for it to regain favour overnight! Such are the fickle ways of childhood fashion. Likewise, a year ago, I set up a small show in the foyer at the Look North studio in Hull as a trailer for SkegEx. The interviewer invited parents to bring their children along during the day to see what it was all about...but when the newsreel man came down in the afternoon to shoot some footage with children admiring and 'hands-on-ing the Meccano, he asked, 'Where are they?'. Where were they indeed! We had just one during the whole day and, dyslexic and hyperactive, his harassed mother had to hold him tight the whole time!

Thinks...I wonder what it would cost to get Ali to SkegEx and get him to pronounce the show 'Like, Cool! Man!'. On second thoughts, the mere consideration that the hobby attracts older fogies in the main would probably put him off for life!"

Dave Taylor (UK), a major supplier of second hand and replica parts, makes the point that Meccano today is a "minority" hobby and has to promote to survive.

"Hi Howard, I was probably one of the first to make this point some years back in CQ. However there is without doubt intrinsic interest and satisfaction in making mechanical devices and where children have been introduced to it in schools and similar environments, the less brain dead youngsters do seem to take to it. I don't necessarily think it is all gloom and doom. The future is in our hands, so let's get the kids into exhibitions, clubs and any wherever we possibly can to see the possibilities with Meccano. That is why any exhibition I organise lets children in free with accompanying adults. OK Meccano is always going to be a minority interest, but let's not assume all kids are just interested in instant fixes, sex drugs and rock and roll to the exclusion of all else.

I think its too soon to say for sure the hobby has peaked. I'm getting new buyers coming into the hobby all the time. They almost always come via the Internet. Maybe that is where we should be focusing. My son Ian and myself have been reworking the Meccano scene website with this in mind. It's a non-commercial site to put the hobby into the public domain."

John Stark (NZ) supports this point of view.

"I'm inclined to agree with Howard. I have enough Meccano now, that if I'd encountered it as a child it would have been like being in Heaven. You would not have been able to drag me away from it. My children (daughter Andrea 16, son Blair 12) have both had times where they have dabbled in Meccano but have spent countless hours with Lego, which they both found much easier to use. Now my son is writing his own computer games (using a programme called

The Games Factory) and has his own website and runs a private forum on it that his school friends can chat back and forth on. We have to ration his time on the computer otherwise he'd be on it all his waking hours. My Meccano is there - in the same room - he could spend all his time with that if he wanted to. One thing that might attract Blair back to Meccano could be the MotorVator computer interface - I've not really had any time get mine out of its box yet:-(I might be able to get him writing the programmes to make it do its stuff. It would be the computer side of it that would interest him most. My daughter also is much more interested in computers/graphics than mechanical things.

I do think it's worth *trying* to promote Meccano to younger generations, but I can't see any way that Meccano could recapture it's former position. It has peaked already for sure. Besides, isn't enjoying our chosen hobby the most important thing? Some might see this as a selfish attitude - I see it as being realistic. Here's an analogy that might make it clearer. Some years back, we had some elderly next-door neighbours who wanted to sell their house (we're 7 km from town on a hill) to buy a town house on the flat within walking distance of the shops etc. Their first offer was a good one but they refused it because the buyer planned to be an absentee landlord and rent the place out. Because our neighbours had lived for fifteen years in the house and really enjoyed their time there, they wanted to sell it to some nice couple/family who'd do the same. It took another ten months before they got another offer (\$10,000 less), which they had to accept because by then they really did need to move. Nice as it is to think that the next owners might love the house like you did, realistically, selling a house is a business decision. You remember the good times you had, take the money and move on. You have no control over what future owners might do with it.

To me, Meccano is similar, it is the pleasure and enjoyment that I get out of it that is most important. This includes sharing it with others while I can, just as our neighbours shared (entertained in) their house with friends. When it's time to "sell the house" (buy the farm, move to the great Meccanoland in the sky or whatever), I can't take it with me, I can't force my children to be as keen on it as I am, and there's no point tying myself in knots over it.

I think Meccano has done exceptionally well to survive as long as it has. It may survive a bit longer if Nikko can bring it further into the electronic/computer age. Andrew Wells' MotorVator is a great step in the right direction, but cost alone means that it will never have mass-market appeal. I don't want to put Andrew out of business, but what's needed are official Meccano sets containing that sort of gear at affordable prices. Let's face it, you've got to be pretty keen to spend NZ\$600 to get started in computer control - then there's geared motors, potentiometers, servo motors, synchronous motors etc. to add to it (Oh, and you need some Meccano too).

Then again, Lego tried it with Mindstorms and bearing in mind the discounted prices I have seen on some of those sets, I really do wonder how successful this was - not very I suspect.

Caspar Mol (USA) discusses the use of miniature figures in Meccano to enhance 'Play' value.

I think that Action Man/Barbie are a bit large for Meccano

models. But there are plenty of smaller figures such as Playmobil that could be used. Playmobil figures - we've got TONS of them around the house - are $2\frac{7}{8}$ " tall, which, at say 5'-8" is approximately 1:24 or $\frac{1}{2}$ " per foot. A matching 15'-long x 6'-wide car would be $7\frac{1}{2}$ " long x 3" wide, a nice size. A problem with Playmobil figures is that their knees and arms don't bend. But they're easy to get, and come with a wide variety of "clothing" accessories.

Lego's figures are much smaller, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ", which is 1:45 or roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ " per foot, too small for Meccano.

Then there are of course Meccano's own little men. They have knee, ankle and elbow joints. Unfortunately, I don't have any to measure. Spanners, how big are they?

Meccano should bring out a little set with just the figures. That way kids who play with metal Meccano also have access to them. Judging from the popularity of Playmobil in our household, I think such a set would go over well. Then you could tie it in with other sets that have models at the right scale. One such set should be a "motorization" set with a *small* motor with gearing, and two dozen gears, and perhaps even a remote with an on/off/forward/reverse switch. Or do a more advanced "motorization" set that includes a remote-controlled steering module and a differential module, in addition to the above motor and gears (i.e. the 4x4 chassis chopped in 3 pieces). Imagine the possibilities!"

(Editor note: See Meccano's 2005 smallest sets with new figures included)

Anthony Els (South Africa) has the last word.

"Of course it's possible to resurrect the household Meccano brand! If you throw enough money at something, then anything becomes possible. Look at F1 Ferrari over the past few years. I believe that Meccano does not advertise enough, and isn't being innovative enough at the moment. But seem to be making new moves in business style. Bizarrely the Meccano company hasn't embraced the Internet aspect of business. Crazy beyond belief.

I also get the distinct impression that many members here believe "real" Meccano stopped just after the war. It isn't a far leap of logic to say that the majority of those are probably those who believe Meccano will never again amount to anything. Why do those who still buy the new sets complain so rabidly about the company? If you don't like the new stuff, don't waste your money buying it.

There are all those whose commendable efforts to revive the Meccano name are often mentioned in press and print.

Meccano Apprentice Set

This collection of common parts will build all of John Westwood's 20 models (one at a time). Modelplan available

Parts List:

P/N	Description	Size	Qty	P/N	Description	Size	Qty	P/N	Description	Size	Qty
2	Perforated Strip	$5\frac{1}{2}$ "	8	35	Spring Clip	Metal	8	111c	Bolt	$\frac{3}{8}$ "	10
5	Perforated Strip	$2\frac{1}{2}$ "	8	36	Screwdriver	Plain	1	125	Reversed Angle Bracket	$\frac{1}{2}$ "x $\frac{1}{2}$ "x $\frac{1}{2}$ "	2
10	Fishplate	1"	4	37a	Nut		60	126	Trunnion		4
12	Angle Bracket	$\frac{1}{2}$ "x $\frac{1}{2}$ "	8	37b	Bolt		60	126a	Trunnion Flat		4
15a	Axle Rod	$4\frac{1}{2}$ "	2	38	Washer		70	142c	Tyre	1"	4
16	Axle Rod	$3\frac{1}{2}$ "	2	38a	Washer Spacer plastic Standard		8	188	Metal Flexible Plate	$2\frac{1}{2}$ "x $1\frac{1}{2}$ "	4
17	Axle Rod	2"	2	40	Cord	40"	1	189	Metal Flexible Plate	$5\frac{1}{2}$ "x $1\frac{1}{2}$ "	4
19s	Crank Handle	$3\frac{1}{2}$ "	1	48a	Double Angle Strip	$\frac{1}{2}$ "x $2\frac{1}{2}$ "x $\frac{1}{2}$ "	4	193	Transparent Plate	$2\frac{1}{2}$ "x $1\frac{1}{2}$ "	1
22	Pulley with Boss	1"	4	52	Flanged Plate	$5\frac{1}{2}$ "x $2\frac{1}{2}$ "	1	213	Rod Connector		1
24	Bush Wheel	8 Hole	2	57c	Loaded Hook	Large	1	331n	Push on Wheel (or similar)	$1\frac{3}{4}$ "	4
34	Spanner	Square Nut	2	90a	Curved Strip	$2\frac{1}{2}$ " stepped	4				

Kudos to those - you know who you are. Conversely, there are many elements who continually (either with or without thinking) grind the brand name into the dust and have no remaining respect for the company. It is a proven and practical fact that the more people express an opinion about something, the more that impression will become an entrenched belief in themselves and in others. As humanity, negative opinion is always prevalent (otherwise newspapers wouldn't sell). But one arena where this kind of mind-play is easily visible is in advertising, where millions have been made exploiting people's thinking. The point here is that negativity to the company will results in a self perpetuating reality where less enthusiasts promote the product. In the absence of the company actively doing something about it, current enthusiasts may actually be the downfall of Meccano.

As with everything in life, nothing is black and white. Meccano will never fade away. It will never become the world's biggest company and rules the toy world. It'll generally tick over, hopefully providing sufficient return of investment, having it's up and downs, and will innovate in a direction that the market approves of. Enthusiasts are a side-line that the company will never really listen to, only indirectly. Meccano cares more about the bottom line and the company's investor interests. They're practical, not stupid.

The light at the end of the tunnel is that those who insist on deluding themselves into believing Meccano will again take off are the same people who are will end up living the happiest Meccano existence, reliving some of their childhood experiences with the younger generation and perhaps dreaming of a day when the company will join that effort more actively. Delusional enthusiasts will continue collecting the new as well as the old stuff regardless, driving the average market position and will always end up with a good portion of everyone else's collection. The pessimist enthusiast will take their bitter and twisted feelings to the grave, knowing that Meccano has outpaced their pockets and never fulfilled their personal needs. The world moves on. Stop being dinosaurs. Accept that from necessity to survive, Meccano has currently had to diverge towards the toy arena, rather than catering for the needs of enthusiasts they created in the last peak of Meccano.

But I shouldn't be complaining and have nothing to lose (perhaps only the fence I'm sitting on): I'm looking forward to the world's biggest Meccano collection ever assembled." See "Meccano Apprentice Set" elsewhere in this issue.

from MW Mailorder. Additional modern models are sought to extend the range such as 4 wheel Farm Bike; 2 wheel Motor Cycle; TV set; Clock with hours and minutes hands; Animals, Birds, Fish, Insects, Dinosaurs, in 2 or 3

(continued next page)

F1 Race Car – Meccano Apprentice Set

designed and built by Bob Prescott.
drawn and described by Bruce Neilson

The parts list for this model is on the previous page under the title "Meccano Apprentice Set". Drawings which will enable you to build this model are on the next page.

Figure 1 shows the Chassis and Motor compartment.

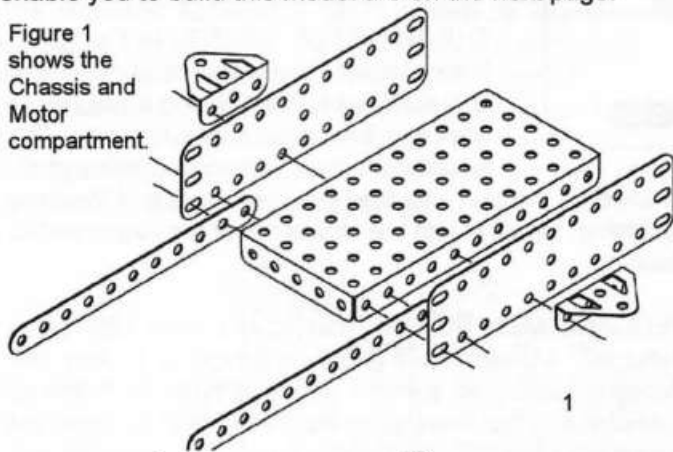
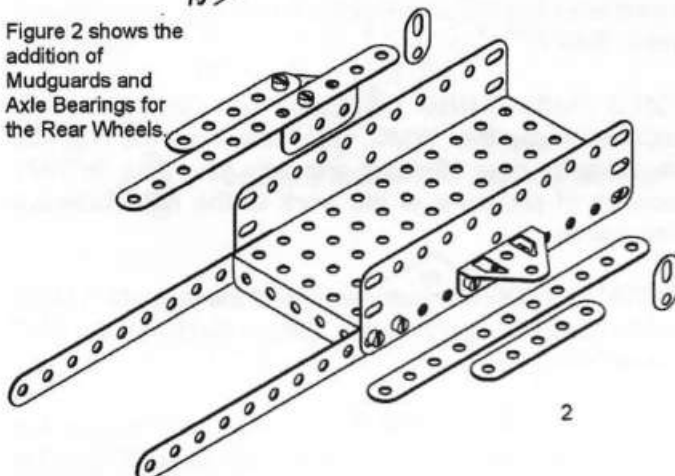


Figure 2 shows the addition of Mudguards and Axle Bearings for the Rear Wheels.



Push the Race Car backwards to wind the rubber band around the rear axle and then release the Race Car.

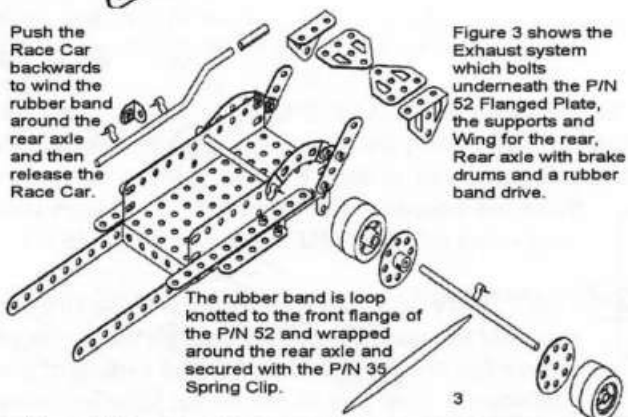


Figure 3 shows the Exhaust system which bolts underneath the P/N 52 Flanged Plate, the supports and Wing for the rear. Rear axle with brake drums and a rubber band drive.

The rubber band is loop knotted to the front flange of the P/N 52 and wrapped around the rear axle and secured with the P/N 35 Spring Clip.

Figure 4 shows the Engine Cover and Seat.

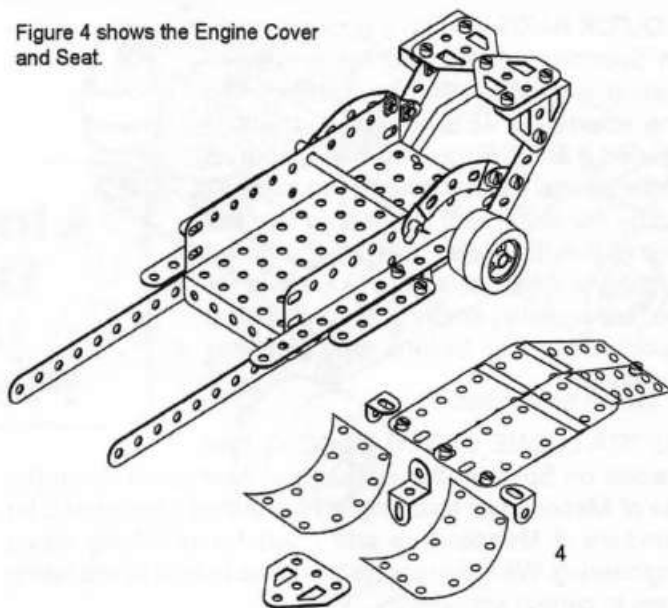


Figure 5 shows cross Chassis members and locknitted moveable Front Axle.

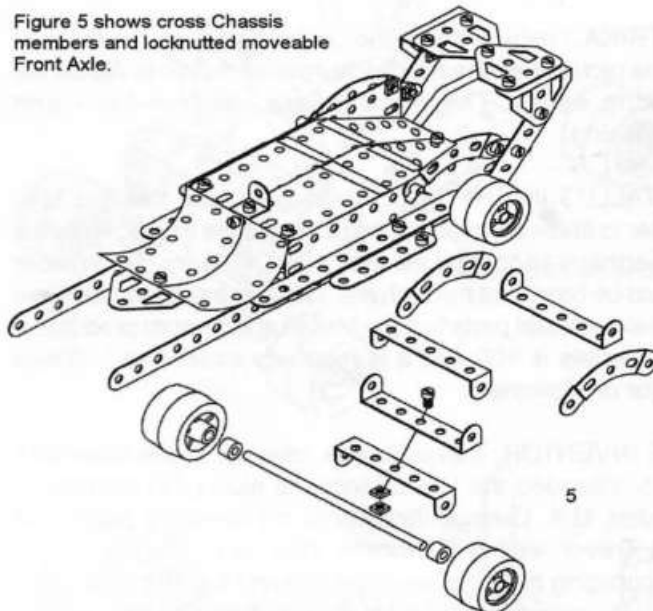
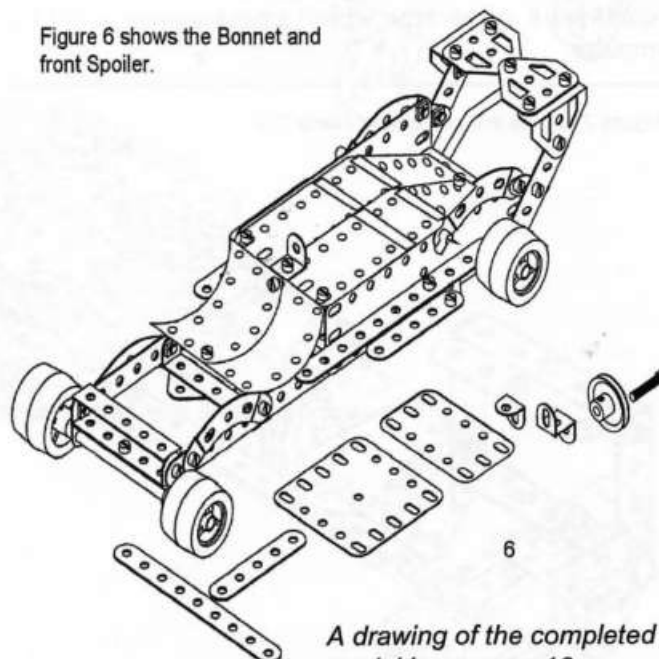


Figure 6 shows the Bonnet and front Spoiler.



(continued from previous page)

dimensions, of any sort; Standard Lamp; Furniture (Table; Chair; Bed; Cot); Tree (non conifer); Flowers; Harry Potter Flying Broom; All the capital Letters of the Alphabet; All the Numbers 0 to 9; Playground Equipment; Rotary Lawnmower; Pots and Pans; Microwave; Bridge; Diesel Train; Bus; Computer, etc.

Send details of your model/article to the Editor, NZFMM Magazine. Addresses on page 2.

You may add two other/extra parts (non-brass because of cost) to the list if they are absolutely essential.

You can use Cord lacing as a wall filler like the 1920s.

A drawing of the completed model is on page 16.

A QUICK BARGAIN: Tony Brown tells us on *Spanner* that he and his wife were visiting a second-hand bookshop when she spotted a 4EL box on a shelf. "I opened it and the top tray was empty as all the normal Meccano had been stripped out by someone. But the bottom tray still held all the 4EL parts. On asking, it turned out they wanted something like a fiver for the (supposedly) empty box. It was in the back of our car before they finished speaking".

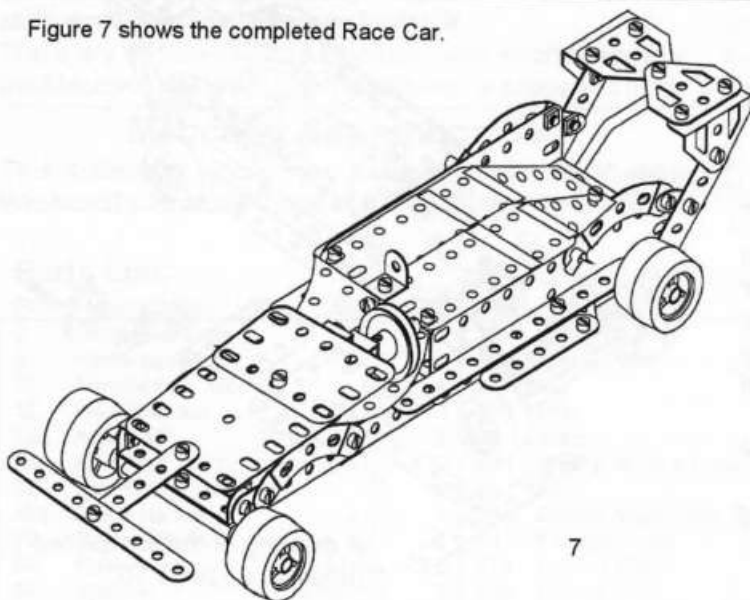
SIERRA LEONE STORY: Ellis Cory has praised on *Spanner* the story in our June issue about the use of Meccano for teaching in West Africa. Like others, he wonders if Meccano is still used for teaching basic engineering. We have reports from time to time of this being done in certain schools.

KATRINA: I received from the United States on the Internet some pictures of the Katrina hurricane, taken in Alabama, looking south. The pictures are spectacular - and frightening.

METALLUS IN THE U.K. "Because I was the first U.K. trader to show an interest, and to make life easier, Metallus of Germany appointed me their sole UK agent. So an order would be best sent through me. I'm very happy to ask them to make special parts but the Metallus minimum production for specials is 100 and it is relatively expensive". (*Dave Taylor on Spanner*).

THE INVENTOR: Trevor Bayliss, inventor of the clockwork radio, attended the Nikko-Meccano display at Harrods in London, U.K. George Illingworth, on *Spanner*, points out that Trevor was a "Meccano Boy" and credits it with encouraging his inventive mind. David Wall has confirmed this with an article about Mr. Bayliss from the 'NZ Herald of 22/10/05' which mentions Meccano. (Thanks, David). Trevor Bayliss has now been asked by MIT to help design a clockwork generator which could power a laptop computer.

Figure 7 shows the completed Race Car.



7



RED, RED and RED: After building the fire engine in two shades of red because the parts in the MF set were thus, George Illingworth remembered that he had visited a manufacturer of fire engines a couple of years previously. They were using 43 shades of red.

THE HAMSTER CRANE: In Canadian Meccanoman Newsletter of June, 1986, is the story of Peter Young's neighbour who had Meccano and a hamster. The neighbour built a large crane with a grab.

He lowered the grab into the hamster's cage and lifted the squirming, furry ball into the air whenever the cage needed cleaning.

MECCANO MEDITATION ? During the early 1980's the Maharishi Makesh Yogi announced plans to buy the Meccano factory as his first British "Centre for National Coherence". The Merseyside workforce would be expected to meditate daily. His offer was not successful. (*Christchurch Press, 6/4/87*).

DON'S PUBLISHING CAREER: Don Blakeborough produced firstly the "WMC. Rag" and then the NZFMM magazine for over 10 years and only gave it up in 1987 because of pressure of his work at the NZ. Railways Corporation.

QUOTATION: "Our magazine is 90% of the glue which binds our Meccano fraternity together." (*Bruce Neilson at the 1987 Convention*).

EARLY HISTORY: In 1912 the worm and collar were the first parts put out by Binns Road with a tapped hole in the boss and a grub screw. In 1913 this was adopted for all parts which were to be fixed on a rod. (*AMS Bulletin, 1989*).

RE-DRESSING THREADED RODS: These are often difficult to hold during the operation. One of the late Bill Watt's solutions was to lock the rod (with a nut) into a threaded coupling. For lubricant, Bill always used neat's-foot oil. (*NZFMM Magazine, Feb., 1991*).

FLAT DRIVING BANDS: While P/N 186 are excellent for use with grooved pulleys, some models require flat driving bands on flanged wheels to give authenticity. One way to obtain flat bands involves SWMBO for some of her knicker elastic. It comes in several widths and in provocative colours too. (*Brian Rowe in S.M.G. Magazine, June, 1988*).

SHORT SPOKEN: At the North Midlands Meccano Guild Annual Meeting in September, 1985, the President, Mike Cotterill, made the shortest Chairman's speech I have ever heard of: "Everything is going well and I'm very pleased. That's all".

Geange Truck using the Meccano Apprentice Set

Designed by Bruce Geange

Written up by Bruce Neilson

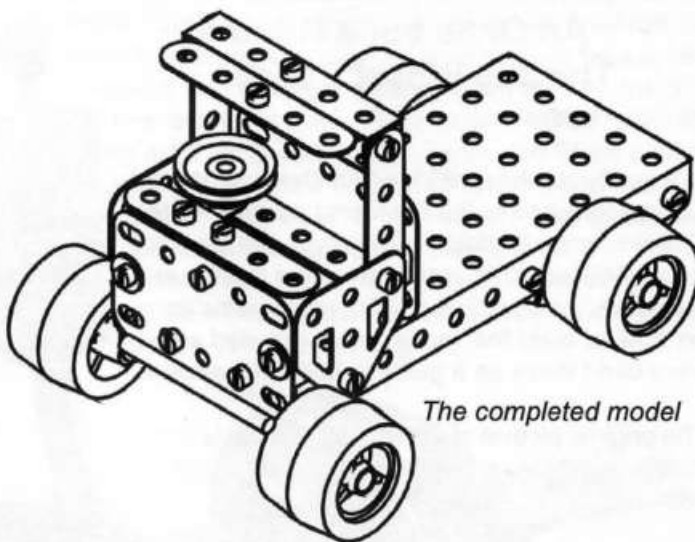
This truck is for the child who wants to go "Brooom, Brooom" on the carpet as an introduction to the versatility of Meccano.

The Meccano Apprentice Set is written up elsewhere in this issue and is a made up Set of very common parts.

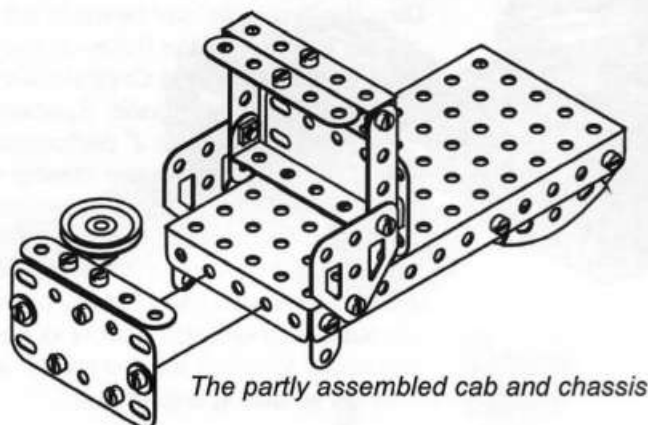
Two suggestions have been made for this model.

1 - Add another P/N 12 Angle Bracket $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the radiator to double up the holders of the P/N 5 Perforated Strip $2\frac{1}{2}$ ".

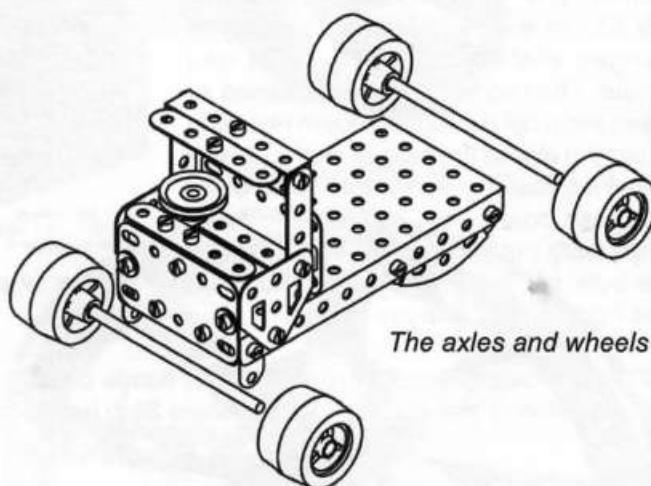
2 - Slope the P/N 10 Fishplate 1" towards the back of the chassis to improve the look of the front axle.



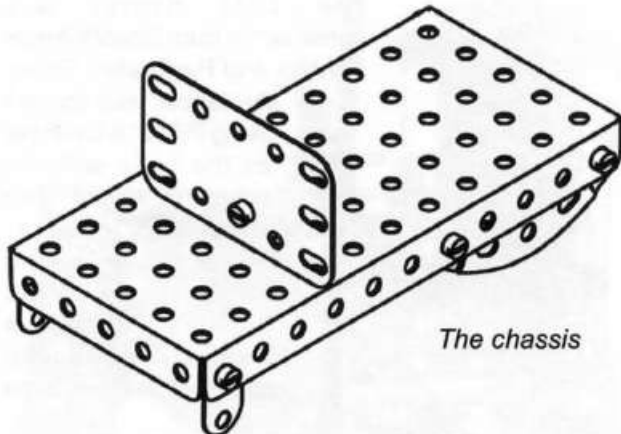
The completed model



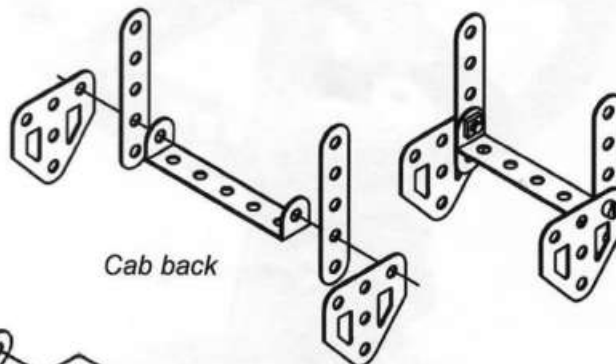
The partly assembled cab and chassis



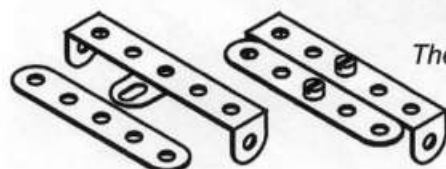
The axles and wheels



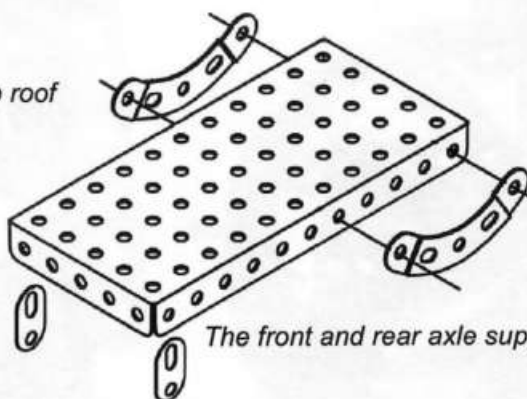
The chassis



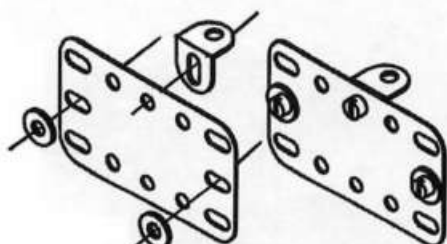
Cab back



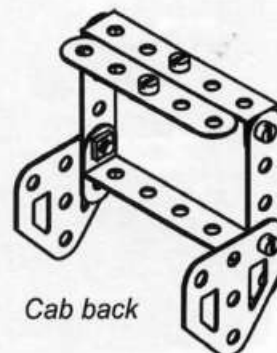
The cab roof



The front and rear axle supports



The radiator



Cab back

An Oldie but a Goodie The Joy Wheel Dancer

by Bob Prescott

It was December 1931 when the Joy Wheel Dancer featured in the "Amusing models for the Christmas festivities". Originally the work of James Wilson of Aberdeen who won a prize in a "simplicity" competition in 1930, basic instructions on how to build the model were included and I have used these as a guide to build my version.

The original picture of Joy Wheel Dancer is from the Meccano Magazine, December 1931, page 985.

Form a "box" with two P/N 52 and two P/N 53. In the 1931 model the old type Flanged Plate was used without end flanges. I had some although unpainted so I used them but the more modern ones can be used. I placed the flanges on the outside to make it easier to screw the model down to a base board. Two $3\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strips were put between the P/N 52 sides, one between the centre bottom holes and the other one hole from the top, flanges down.

A 2" Angle Girder is bolted standard hole flange down to the underside of the top $3\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strip between

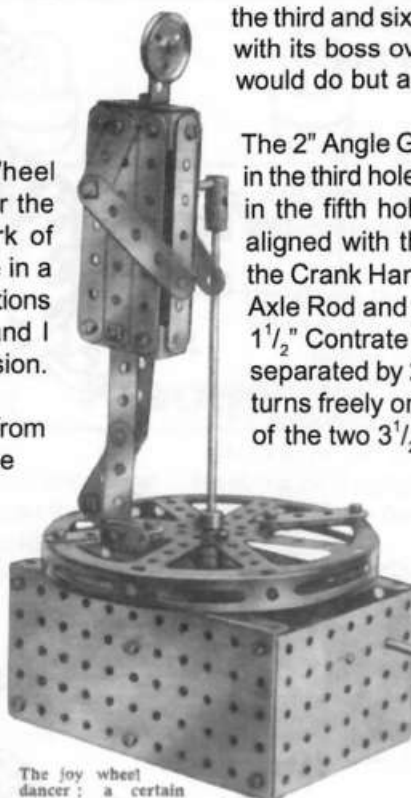
the third and sixth hole from the left, together with a crank with its boss over the centre hole. A $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Angle Girder would do but a 2" one holds the crank better.

The 2" Angle Girder forms a bearing for a $3\frac{1}{2}$ " Axle Rod in the third hole from the left and $3\frac{1}{2}$ " or 5" Crank Handle in the fifth hole of the front $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $2\frac{1}{2}$ " flanged plate aligned with the Angle Girder. A 57t Gear Wheel on the Crank Handle meshes with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " Pinion on the $3\frac{1}{2}$ " Axle Rod and a further 57t Gear Wheel meshes with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Contrate Wheel fixed below a P/N 118 Hub Disc, separated by 2 Plastic Spacers on each $\frac{1}{2}$ " Bolt. This turns freely on a $6\frac{1}{2}$ " Axle Rod fixed in the centre hole of the two $3\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strips.

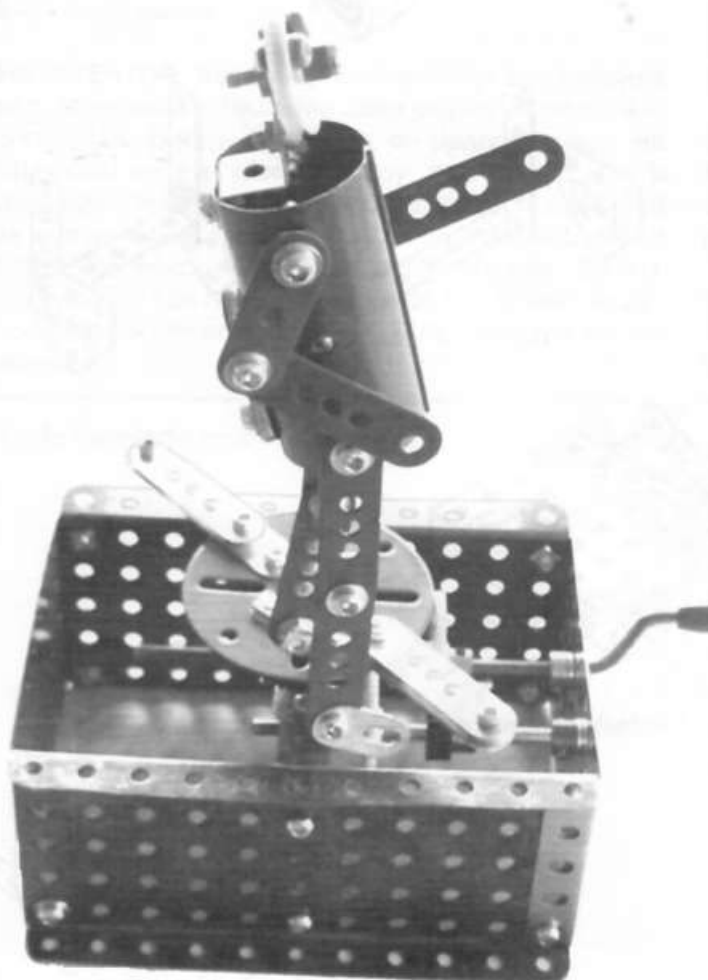
Don't worry if you do not own a Hub Disc; the "turntable" can be made with a Face Plate or a large Pulley as long as you can attach the Contrate with two P/N 38a Plastic Spacers under it and two 2" perforated strips spaced by two Washers placed diametrically opposite on the "turntable", which form "trips" for the dancer. Whatever you use I suggest you use old tatty parts because although the dancer is not supposed to touch the "turntable" it may do so during adjustment.

The 1931 dancer was constructed from Double Angle Girders and Perforated Strips.

My dancer was formed using P/N 216 Cylinder as the body with the seam to the front. The head is a loose 1" Plastic Pulley fixed to the back hole on the Cylinder with a Reversed Angle Bracket and Fishplate. The arms



The joy wheel dancer: a certain mirth-provoker!



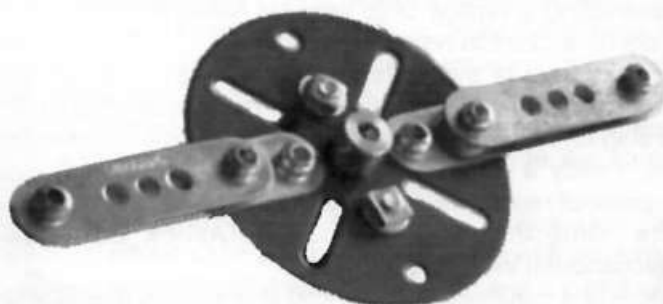
consist of joined $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and 2" Perforated Strips pivoted at the shoulder only, separated from the body by a P/N 38a Plastic Spacer and lock-nutted (or use a P/N 37h Locknut) at the top of the Cylinder. The legs are two 2" Perforated Strips each pivoted at both the hip and the knee. The feet are Fishplates.

The body is attached to the centre $6\frac{1}{2}$ " fixed Axle Rod via a $2\frac{1}{2}$ " Axle Rod passing through the centre holes of the body cylinder and held inside by two Collars, with a Coupling to mount it on the centre fixed axle rod. I used two old bosses inside the body because their rounded ends fitted more snugly into the Cylinder holes.

When the "turntable" is placed onto the centre fixed rod on the base washers/spacers will be necessary to take some of the weight and ensure it meshes correctly with the 57t Gear Wheel and turns freely. Adjustments will be required by adding extra weight using $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strips on the rear of the Cylinder or the odd extra nut here and there to get the correct balance. The feet should just touch the tripping perforated strips but not the "turntable". When properly adjusted and the Crank Handle is turned the dancer performs quite amusing actions and even the occasional half somersault - the kids will enjoy it.



Smaller turntable underside



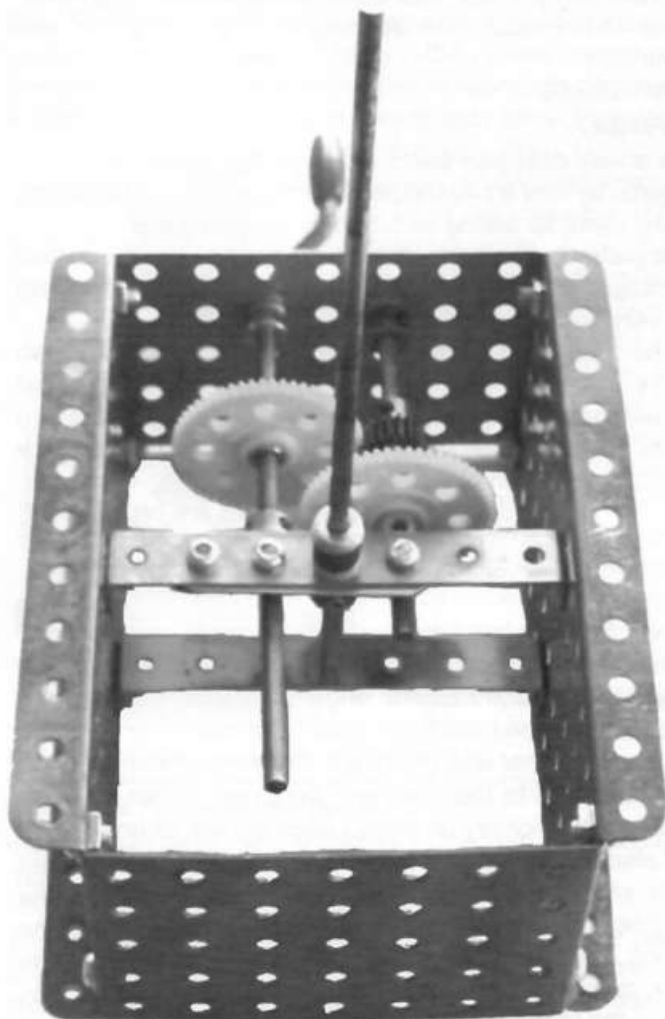
Smaller turntable topside



Larger turntable underside



Larger turntable topside



Joy wheel frame from back with turntable removed

ALL I want for Christmas is a GRB

by John Hansen

The Geared Roller Bearing (GRB) is to some, if not most of us, the holy grail of Meccano parts. Most of you will be familiar with this part and its introduction way back in 1928. Costing the equivalent of a week's wage then, this part has gone down in Meccano history.

Recently I had the pleasure of viewing one of these treasures, in fact I should say we, because the editor of this magazine and Bruce Geange also joined me in assembling a replica GRB sent by Ashok K Banerjee in India for a client in New Zealand.

The ordering of the parts had been done by me for my client and when these parts arrived on my door step ready to ship on to him, the idea of doing this article occurred to me. Firstly a little background information. Ashok is a supplier of replica Meccano parts (new) through his on line site <http://members.tripod.com/Ashok_Banerjee/Meccanoville/Welcome.htm>

There is a minimum order of £50 and various methods of payment - I use Paypal. If you visit his website you will find one of the best inventories of Meccano parts on the web. In this order that arrived were a Standard GRB and the Compact Geared Roller Bearing (The "Unissued Part of 1954") plus a number of other parts. What we esteemed model builders intended to do was review the quality of these two Meccano parts.

The Standard GRB:

Well to be truthful it looked wonderful wrapped in its individual pieces. Each major piece (2 of 167a, 1 of 167b) was sealed in its own plastic bag and the remaining pieces (1 of 1a, 1 of 17, 16 of 20b, 2 of 24, 10 of 37, 16 of 147b & 1 of 167c) in an other bag. Having not assembled one of these beasts for a while it took us a few minutes for us to get it to look how it should.

Our thoughts:

The pressing of the large parts - very good.

The brass parts had been made to a high standard.

The colours were a good match to the Meccano range.

The painting of the parts - overall very good but we could detect particles of dust under the paint and a very small area of over painted rust on the underside of the 167b.

ModelPlan 158 Addendum

by John Ince

Making the Tower traverse

In real life the Dock crane has to traverse along the dock to position itself opposite the holds on the ship. These details show how to add this feature to the MP 158 crane.

On the base of the each tower leg replace the two $7\frac{1}{2}$ " Strips with two $7\frac{1}{2}$ " Flat Girders spaced apart by four $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Double Angle Strips. The upper Double Angle Strips carry $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Flat Girders are connected to the tower legs by Fish Plates and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Strips. 2" Axle Rods carry $1\frac{1}{8}$ " Flanged Wheels. The rear axle has a Collar to hold it in place while the front axle carries a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Gear Wheel with Plastic Spacers. A Worm on an 8" Axle Rod transmits the drive from the motor via a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Pulley and driving band. Mount

Final Ranking:

Quality of construction 10 out of 10.

Painting 9.5 out of 10

Overall:

Being brand new certainly helps but this was VERY NICE. Make a wonderful Christmas present. It cost £150 which is cheaper than buying an original. For another £41 Ashok will supply a custom crafted veneered wooden case.

The Compact GRB.

This package consists of:

Geared Roller Bearing Disc $7\frac{1}{2}$ " 285 teeth; Sprocket Roller Bearing Disc $7\frac{1}{2}$ " 140 teeth; 1 Hub Disc (118); 2 $4\frac{1}{2}$ " Perforated Strips (2a); 2 8 hole Bush Wheels (24); 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " Flanged Wheels (20b); 8 Pivot Bolts (147b); 1 of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Axle Rod (18a); plus Nuts and Bolts.

We were a little unsure on the final assembly of the parts and we hope the final result is right. Ashok needs to enclose a assembly instruction leaflet to help us. The resulting bearing is very nice, this one being in red and black. We all agreed that this would be a very useful part where a bearing is required for say a crane or small merry-go-round etc.

Our ranking on this part was:

Quality of construction 10 out of 10.

Painting 9.5 out of 10.

The cutting of the 285 teeth on the Bearing Disc was exceptional and we wondered how it had been done. With this bearing you can use either a chain drive or a pinion drive - very neat. The bearing is very stable and self centring.

Cost : £89.95

Overall:

Yes a very desirable part made to a high standard.

It certainly was an interesting afternoon and our thanks go to my client for letting us play with his new parts.

The parts I have received this year have always been well packaged and they seem to arrive within a week of posting - a very good service.

If you wish to purchase parts you can go to Ashok's web page, mentioned above, or email me at <happypastimes@ihug.co.nz> and we will take it from there. As mentioned there is a £50 minimum which can be made up with combined orders.

(photographs of these items are on page 24)

the motor on 2" Slotted Strips to allow adjustment.

Power for the motors is taken from the multi-pin connector in the machine room via a commutator inside the Ball Thrust bearing. The commutator rings are made from 0.5mm copper sheet and are 5mm wide. The outer one is 44mm o/d and the inner one 24mm o/d. They are held in place by tabs soldered to the rings and bent over under the ABS plastic disk. For my brushes I used scraps of brass from old electrical terminal blocks. These already had a tapped hole and a small bolt. They are trimmed down to the thickness of a Meccano Nut and screwed to the disk. The spring brass brushes are of similar origin and are cut to size, bent and soldered onto the brass base. Once they are in the correct place and alignment, use a bit of double sided Sellotape to prevent them from moving. Another

(continued on next page)

Auckland Meccano Guild Report

by Peter Hancock

The spring quarterly meeting of the AMG was convened at the home of David and Elizabeth Wall at Orewa on Saturday 12 November with a good turn out of members and partners. Several apologies were accepted and it was noted that Eileen Carey had been recently hospitalised and Neil was visiting her while our meeting was proceeding. Members expressed their sympathy and sent their best wishes to Eileen for a speedy recovery.

Andrew Wells was in attendance and had a number of the latest sets being offered by Meccano available for viewing and sale along with a selection of parts. While all the sets on display were of interest the "Concorde", "Spitfire" and the "Space Centre" came in for a good deal of attention. Merv Mexted had his built up models of the Concorde (MO517) and Space Centre (MO521) on display.

There were a variety of other models presented for inspection and comment:

David Wall showed off his version of Corporal Jones (Dad's Army) butchers van based on a model from a 1950s number 6 set and a detailed model of the single cylinder marine steam engine that powered the famous 'African Queen'.

Mike Walmsley had travelled up from Paeroa to attend the meeting and to display his Avery (USA) steam tractor.

Garry Higgins had produced a yellow submarine, a model robot from one of the more recent sets while Rick Vine

demonstrated his Meccano Spiralograph, an Andreas Konkoly model from the January 1967

Meccano Magazine, A lorry built following the instructions from an article titled "Carry a load" by Spanner from the November 1966 Meccano magazine, "A South Pointing Chariot", based on a model built by several modellers and recently represented by Graham Jost (Australia) who most of us know. A fascinating model and more about its history and the mathematics involved can be found by referring to

the website <www.odts.de/southptr/meccano/tabois.htm>. Rick rounded out his presentation with an intermittent motion mechanism based on a model described in the 1970s Mechanisms instructions and a model incorporating "A Cheap and Cheerful Differential" originally built and demonstrated in an article by Chris Shute.

Anthony Caldwell had built a radio controlled car from one of the recent sets and a submarine from the parts contained in the Anniversary Train set. These were nicely finished models.

Les Megget had built a gearbox based on one from the "Everything Automotive" part three Gearboxes in Meccano published by the Meccanoman's Club Henley on Thames. As one would expect from Les, a four speed with two reverses soon became a six speed with two reverses all accommodated in the same original four speed box dimensions!

John Denton had been busy again building a special model which is in the form of an orb with two small aircraft revolving around its top and it cunningly lights up as various bulbs are powered up as things move around. It was very hard to photograph at the meeting and the model will be

reviewed again and photos provided to the editorial staff of this magazine for their critical review and possible inclusion with a write up in a later edition. (Ed. Yes please.)

William Irwin and George Ovenden had various items on display as well but regrettably the reporter was a little slow to record everything on the day. Sorry gentlemen.

The business of the day related to setting the meeting schedule for 2006 and approving the application for the guild to attend and participate in the 2006 MODEL "X" show in West Auckland at Queens Birthday weekend next year. After a sumptuous afternoon tea was enjoyed by all it was agreed that everyone should look forward to a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

As the Meccano year draws to a close for the AMG members, it is time to acknowledge that it has been a great year for Meccano in Auckland and we should look to determining at our first meeting in 2006 as to how we can best further the cause of Meccano in the region in the coming months.

From all the members of the Auckland Meccano Guild to our many friends and colleagues around the world go our very best wishes for a merry family Christmas and a happy New Year.

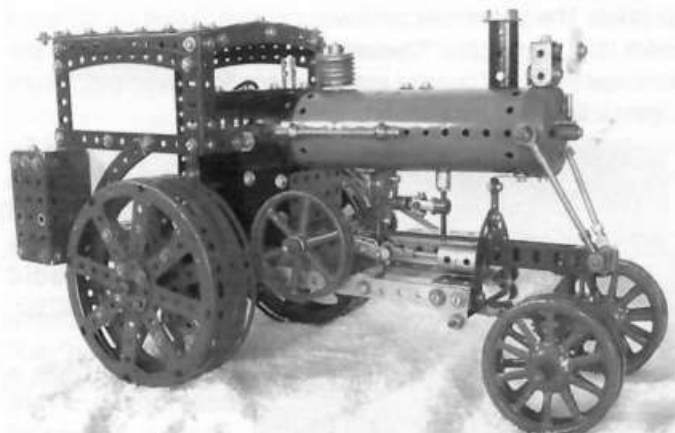
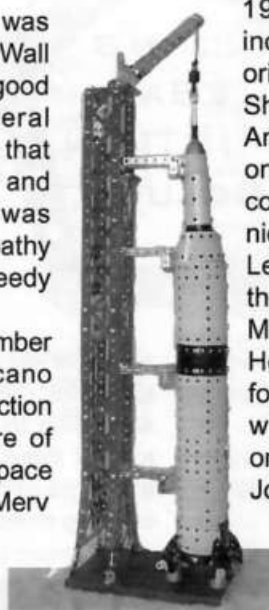


David Wall as large as life (membership)

(continued from previous page)

option would be to use the contact strips from a dismantled relay.

The connecting cable shown in the picture is has four pairs of wires. If you cannot find this type then a good alternative is ribbon cable as used in computers. Use a nine pin (double row) connector and cut a strip of cable nine wires wide. You will find it nice and flexible and of adequate capacity. A picture of the modified tower is on page 24.

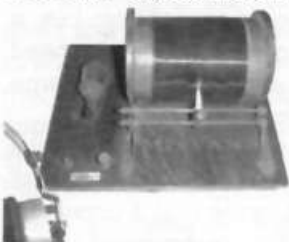


The Avery steam tractor built by Mike Walmsley

What a fascinating hobby we enjoy. It is a hobby you can start at any age, you can leave and come back to and still feel that somehow you never left it. Looking at the sales on eBay can be a little like this but in a more remote way. You can participate in the actual auctions or be a sideline watcher.

Let us look at a few sales plus some other toy sales which interested me.

1 - The first item sold recently and attracted much interest among Meccano bidders. With over 1000 viewers, this Meccano Crystal Radio set was always



going to bring big money. The set dated around early 1920s, came with its headphones and the set was mounted on an oak base. I guessed it would make about UK£2000 and the final sale was UK£2550 (NZ\$6500).

2 - The next item is also something not seen very often. It is a Dinky/Meccano 1957 Dealers Folder. This consists of "an illustrated folder with covers from the appropriate Meccano Magazine, Hornby clockwork / Dublo part-exchange leaflets, Dealer's Information Flyer and "Dealer's Copy for Retention" price lists for Dinky Toys and Meccano." The material is in near mint condition and the seller had three or four different months to sell. This one realised NZ\$650, January 1958 realised NZ\$130, and March 1958 NZ\$250

3 - Next a nice built up model. It is the Meccano Giant Block Setting Crane; this one has been built in gold and blue and looks really nice. Comes with a GRB and has been built by a master builder using Meccano and Exacto parts. the builder has improved and redesigned the operating mechanism. Freight was always going to be a consideration on such a large model. Sale price NZ\$5100 plus NZ\$450 postage.

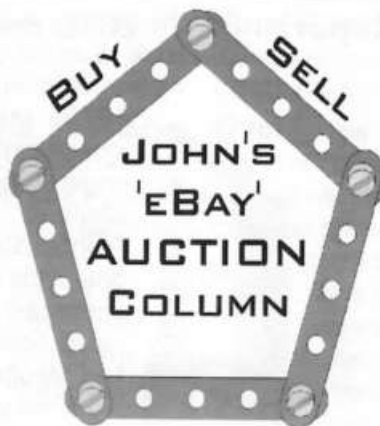
4 - Yet another interesting item was this one. Early 1930s Printing Block for Meccano Aeroplane set. As described by seller "These printing blocks were sent by toy manufacturers or distributors to the shop at the time for printing catalogues/flyers. Meccano Aeroplane Constructor No. 1. Plate only. NZ \$300 and it was yours.

5 - This dealer's cabinet was sold by a well known trader and although it did not attract a lot of bids it still sold for a fair price. The blue parts card was original, it had six drawers and it had it's original Meccano sign along the top. All the parts are from the correct era, no glass front and paintwork original. Sold for NZ\$2000 after two bids.



6 - In the 1970s Meccano brought out the Electronic Control Set and a nice one with manual sold recently for NZ\$200. A nice buy.

7 - Now we have a treat for you, a rare French Meccano Electriques Set



mint in box. I will let the seller describe it "Set in its original very rare near mint box. Everything is vintage original and in absolute pristine mint condition. The box has some minor shelf wear but is still near mint with some minor tape marks, the Meccano itself has never been removed from the box and has never been used. The rare French brochure / manual is also near mint." A very tempting item and sold for a very reasonable price of NZ\$405.

8 - Most of us are familiar with the Meccano Aeroplane sets of the 1930s but I did not know that Märklin put out a similar

set. This set which was sold recently, was put out in 1937 and was numbered 1152. The set was complete and according to seller in pristine condition. It could make a total of three different aircraft models they being:

a) Single-engine commercial airplane Junkers W 34 with wind-up motor 1159.



b) Twin-engine commercial airplane with wind-up motor 1159.

c) Triple-engine Junkers Ju 52/3 Standard commercial airplane with wind-up motor 1159.

Also included was the original instruction catalogue, a sheet with nationality markings and cockpit illustrations (two of the nationality markings are missing) and the educational leaflet No. 11 "Greater Germany Each airplane model is 22 inches (wingspan) x 14 1/2 inches (length). Sold for NZ\$6500.

9 - The next item is a fairly recent piece of Meccano Infrared Control Set. Set consists of Handset, Transmitter, receiver, two motors and battery pack. A useful item. NZ\$63

10 - A Mint Super Tool Set, still shrink wrapped, not much good to use but worthy of collecting. Sold well at NZ\$100

11 - The next set does not usually sell that well but this one did. Meccano Meccanoids, parts in new condition with manual and box a bit tatty. Sold well at NZ\$67.

12 - To close with, as I did last time, I will tell you about a nice locomotive that sold. It is not a Hornby but a Bassett Lowke "City of Bath". The loco. and tender appear to be in beautiful condition. This was made for Bassett Lowke by Gerbruder Bing and this one is in the GWR colours which are rarer. A lovely item for a train collector realised NZ\$1578. Well it is time to go and I want to wish you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas and a stimulating and constructive New Year.

John Hansen. <happypastimes@ihug.co.nz>

New Zealand Club Diary 2006

Auckland Meccano Club.

Contact - David Wall - Ph 09 426 1965.

Meetings at 2 pm on second Saturday every third month.

2006 - 11 February at the home of Merv & Bev Mexted, 32B Langton Road, Stanmore Bay Whangaparaoa. 13 May at the home of Peter and Jan Hancock, 1 Orangewood Drive, Northpark, Howick, Auckland. 12 August at the home of Neil and Eileen Carey, 23 Eaton Road, Hillsborough, Auckland., 11 November at the home of David and Elizabeth Wall, 45 Kath Hopper Drive, Maygrove, Orewa.

MWT Meccano Club.

Contact - John Hansen - Ph 06 325 8211.

Meetings at 2 pm on second Saturday every second month at St.

Luke's Church Hall, cnr. Cornfoot and Manuka Streets, Wanganui.

2006 - 11 February Tour to Hawkes Bay, 8 April, 10 June, 12 August. 14 October, December Xmas Dinner

Wellington Meccano Club.

Contact - Lou Nichols Ph 04 973 6177.

Meetings at 7.30 pm on first Friday every second month at ?? (contact Lou to get place of meeting).

2006 - 3 February, 7 April, 2 June, 4 August, 6 October, 1 December.

Christchurch Meccano Club.

Contact - Graeme O'Neill Ph 03 322 7456.

Meetings at 7.30 pm on first Friday every month (except January) at St John's Hall, cnr St John St. and Ferry Rd., Woolston, Christchurch.

2006 - 3 February, 3 March, 7 April, 5 May, 2 June, 7 July, 4 August, 1 September, 6 October, 3 November, 1 December.

Other Important Dates

11 March 2006. - March Madness at Turangi. email <moodys@ihug.co.nz>.

6-7-8 March 2007. - Convention 2007, Upper Hutt. email <moodys@ihug.co.nz>.

Additional Meccano Contacts

Hamilton - Don McClelland Ph 07 847 4503.

Hawera - Daryl Anderson Ph 06 278 7666.

Kapiti Coast - Bob Prescott Ph 04 905 2963.

Napier - Trevor Adam Ph 06 843 4837.

Palmerston Nth - Bruce Geange Ph 06 357 0566.

Wanganui - Tom Pittams Ph 06 345 9099.

Internet sites

International Society of Meccanomen (ISM)

<www.internationalmeccanomen.org.uk>.

Meccano Webring <www.meccanoweb.com/meccring>.

Articles etc. for the February 2006 2005 issue of NZFMM Magazine should be sent to the Editor well before 7 February 2006.

Back Numbers - NZFMM Magazines from April 2001 are available. These are printed to order and delivery will be up to six weeks after payment date. Contact the Editor.

Nikko's plans for Meccano

from Lloyd Spackman

The exhibition at Harrods department store was the result of several months work behind the scenes between Nikko U.K. and Geoff Brown, the Millers and Geoff Wilson of the North Midlands Meccano Guild (NMMG). Arising from this, Geoff Brown has published on Spanner details of his discussions with their U.K. representatives. This is an edited version of his findings.

"It is Nikko's avowed intention to put the name, Meccano, back at the top of the list of recognised manufacturers of construction and mechanical toys. The exhibition at Harrods served to demonstrate to children and more particularly their parents (the purse holders) the link between modern Meccano and its glorious past. I can tell you without fear of contradiction that Nikko were delighted with the outcome. So (some ask) why the push to market plastic and seemingly alien products? If you had been with us at Harrods you'd have seen the answer all over their toy department. That is what everyone else is doing and that is where Nikko have to make an impact to stay in the game at all —hence the T-Rex, Robot kits and other alien products.

They have no intention of giving up on metal Meccano. The other line of their business that concerns us is that they have recognised the buying power of major retailers—not just toy people—and are prepared to design and sell metal kits in bulk to anyone, be it Marks and Spencer, Tesco or any other large retailer. Nevertheless they claim they will not forget the small toy retailer.

We tried to come to an arrangement with them about providing material for the large numbers of people who see Meccano at our shows and want to know if they can buy it then and there. Nikko have promised greatly increased direct support for the Meccano Clubs.

John Stark in NZ. asked about developing a 'progressive' series of sets. A traditional progression is not planned simply because the market won't support the concept at the moment. No one does that sort of thing. But if the market changes, and it surely will (fickle and volatile as it is) their time may come again.

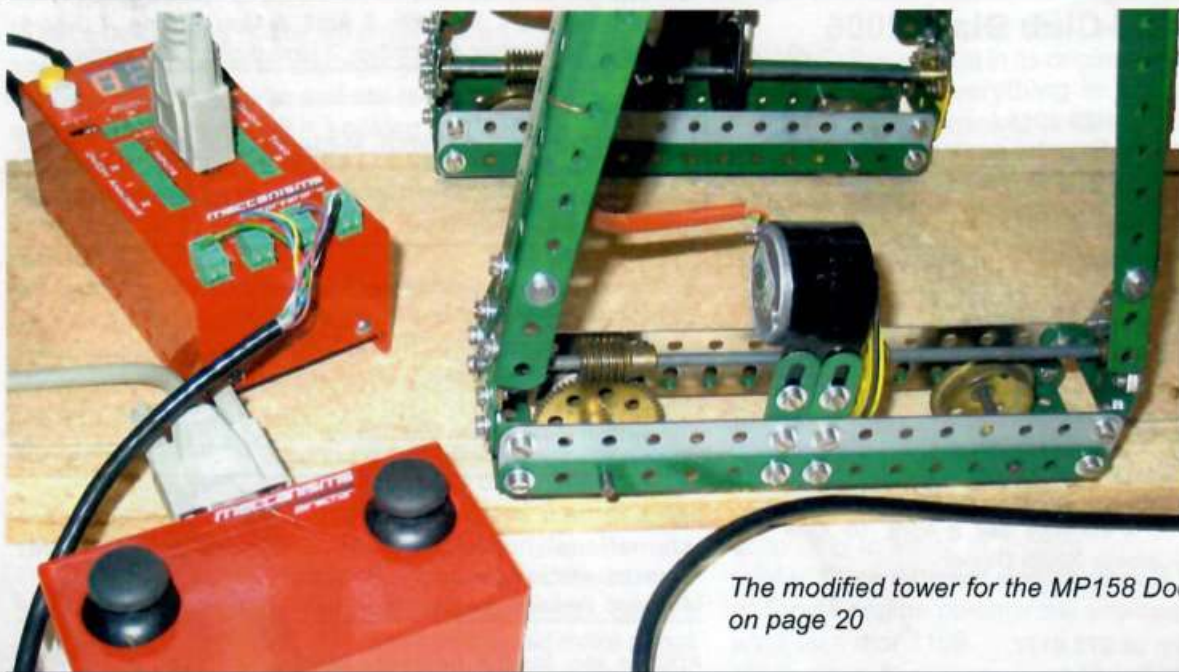
We will be seeing Nikko's representatives again in the New Year and look forward to continuing the dialogue with them and reporting back the adult hobby views. We few members of the NMMG have promised to support Nikko and their UK manager, Holli Ng, in any way they think fit. This means we share their ambition to put Meccano back on top of the list of household names in the toy business."

Bolts

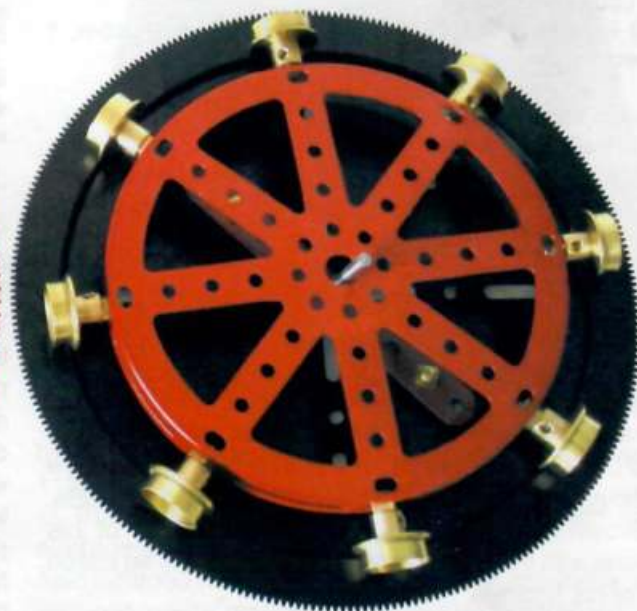
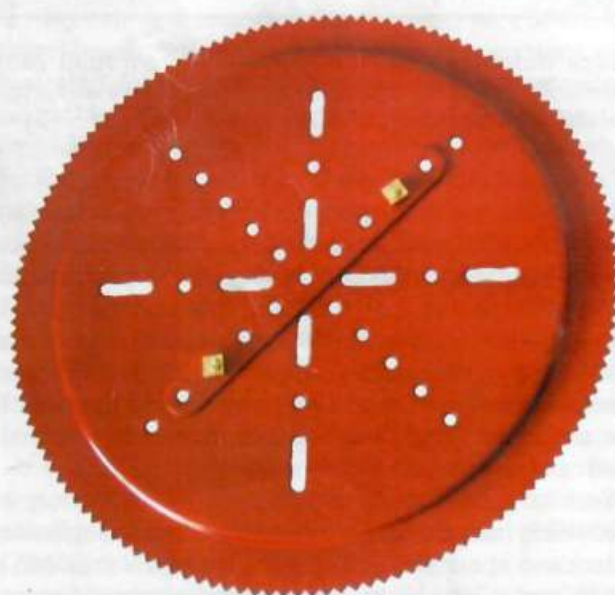
*I've just come from the Doctor where I had my cuts and scrapes repaired,
Using Cheesehead bolts and a screwdriver certainly has its scares.*

*What can I do to pursue our hobby without fear?
They now provide Allen bolts to improve our lot I see
No more cuts and scrapes for me I'll use the Allen key.*

Anon



The modified tower for the MP158 Dock Crane described on page 20



Ashok's Compact Geared Roller Bearing - an ideal Christmas present. Please refer to the article on page 20



This is the photograph of Geoff Carter's models referred to in his letter on page 9.

Here is the Bates Steel Mule Tractor.