

MECCANO MODELLERS ASSOCIATION

SYDNEY INCORPORATED

NEWSLETTER 2.17 :: MARCH 2017

Return Visit to Mt Colah for Second AGM much appreciated

When the news was disseminated that the second Annual General Meeting was to be held at Mount Colah Uniting Church on Saturday, 21 January 2017, members had pleasant memories of the previous year at the same place. It was no surprise then that twenty members arrived for the important election of officers as laid down in the Constitution.

The first of the guests, Max Crago and John Thompson, were greeted by Jo and Murray Tulett, who had arranged the afternoon with the church

The names listed in the attendance book were Warwick Lewis, Lee Squires, Peter Stuart, Max Crago, Garth Spurdle, Frances Spurdle, John White, Paul Volkart, Greg Johnston, David Taylor, Mike Holland, Murray Tulett, Jo Tullet, Laurence Langley, Nicholas Heinze, John Thompson, John Toohey, Michael Links, John Shervington and Max Burnett.

Apologies were received from Keith Burston, Raymond Choi, Tom Hughes, Chris S Johnson, Andrew Jackson, Ken Chant, June Booker, Ivon Rock, Keith Keohane, Jack Hextell, Ken Freeman and Rick Mitchell.

A warm welcome was extended to a new member John Toohey on his first visit.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At 2:00 pm, Lee Squires opened the meeting, and welcomed all to yet another enjoyable meeting.

Lee then asked for David Taylor to be the Returning Officer as laid down in the rules. Reading out the names of those nominated for each position, which were:

Lee Squires	President
Chris S Johnson	Vice President
Warwick Lewis	Secretary
Warwick Lewis	Treasurer
Max Crago	Committee Historian
Peter Stuart	Committee Newsletter
John Thompson	Ordinary Committee Member
Keith Burston	Ordinary Committee Member

Then a final call, which resulted in an unanimous acceptance by the meeting, when the meeting was handed over to the new president, Lee Squires.

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, 18 March

at

St Ives Village Library Meeting Room

Please note that the next social afternoon will be held on Saturday, 18 March at the above address, with the doors opening at **noon**.

A short Committee meeting will be held prior to the main meeting.

All members are invited to provide the usual:

- Model, mechanism or item of interest
- Notes relating to above, for Peter Stuart preferably by email beforehand to peterstuart.aus@gmail.com

No notes, no mention in newsletter

- \$5 donation for hiring costs

- Nibbles for afternoon tea

Tea and coffee is supplied

A phone call to Lee Squires on 9498 2460

for clarification if necessary.

Editor: Max Crago 9944 6260

Photographs of models may be sent to Max on max.crago@optusnet.com.au or on disc to

16 Lakeview Parade, Warriewood 2102

Meeting dates for 2017

The following dates include the exhibition at Castle Hill on Saturday and Sunday, 25 and 26 March.

The venues will be announced ahead of need.

18 March St Ives above

25 and 26 March Castle Hill

29 April (Annual Exhibition)

29 July

30 September

At this stage Lee Squires led the meeting as President.

The new President's Address including former President's report (the full copy follows) followed a welcome to the new office bearers and thanks to various members who have helped through 2016.

In Chris Johnson's absence, Lee presented an Outgoing President's report and Vice President's Report by Chris. Full copies are below. He endorsed the gratitude expressed by Chris to Committee members and acknowledged other members who had given assistance in club matters during the period when Chris was overseas and Malcolm was ill when he was Acting President. Members mentioned: June Booker, Dave Taylor, Greg Johnston, Peter Wilkinson, John Croke, Ivan Rock, Mike Holland, Jonathan Stuart, John White, Bob Moran, Max Burnet, the late Dave Thom and all members who exhibited.

To finalise the requirements of the constitution, the financial reports was presented by the President.

Meccano Modellers Association Sydney Inc.

President's Report by Chris Johnson

12 January 2017

It is my honour to write the second President's Report for our second year as an incorporated Club. While I and the rest of the members would have much preferred Malcolm Booker to have written this, it was not to be. As we all know, our esteemed President of 36 years service passed away in October this year, a great loss to us, his friends, the Club for his fine leadership, and to the Meccano fraternity worldwide for his communications, enthusiasm and tremendous knowledge.

While on this sad note I would like to mention the passing of Dave Thom in November this year, Dave's enthusiasm for Meccano inspired me. In fact I wouldn't be writing this report but for Malcolm's encouragement and belief in me, and Dave's encouraging me to run as many external events as possible. Rest in Peace, Malcolm and David.

Due to my absence for half the year and Malcolm's illness, Lee Squires was appointed Acting President, a job he did admirably and I would like to thank him both publicly and personally for his efforts in organising the Annual Exhibition and most of the meetings this year. He has been nominated for President for 2017 and I heartily recommend him for the position.

I would also like to thank Warwick Lewis for his superb role as Secretary/Treasurer and Max Crago for his continuing efforts for the Newsletter. Also Murray Tulett for his efforts on the newsletter and I thank Peter Stuart for picking up the reins from Murray. I think we can all agree through their combined efforts

of these three, there has been a marked improvement for the Newsletter and it is now in colour!!

The Annual Exhibition was again a great event, especially for us Meccanomen. I would like to thank Doug and Jo Trounce, Graham and Mary (wow, what Meccano jewellery) Jost, Max and Shirley Whitten and Mario Moszczynski for their journeys and their models. Crowd numbers were not too good, even with a new sign placement and myself writing to the local primary schools (unfortunately they were only back one week from school holidays). This year I hope to put up the sign two weeks earlier (the church permitting) and give parents more planning time to bring their children. I would like to offer the Club's condolences to John White for the passing of Margaret White who was our liaison person with the Baptist Church. Thanks to John Thompson for picking the future liaison role with the Baptist Church. No mention of the Annual Exhibition would be complete without thanking Marianne Lewis, Mary Thom and Winnie Southcott (my wife) for running the children's building session.

While Malcolm was too ill to attend the Exhibition dinner, it was good to see not only June Booker but all the other wives/partners.

At this point I would like to formally thank all the wives/partners for their indulgence in letting their husbands/partners play with Meccano and disappear for four/five Saturdays a year. Your patience is very much appreciated.

We had two out-of-Sydney meetings this year and thanks to Jonathan Stuart (Peter's son) for bussing us there. The first trip was to Garth and Frances Spurdle (he of the neenish tart fame ... and other cakes as well, I am still waiting for the aeroplane cake!) at Lake Haven. Thanks guys. The second trip was for Rick Mitchell's (he of the Garden Island block setter fame) at Glenbrook. Thanks Rick. While I unfortunately missed those trips, all the feedback I heard was positive. So I hope we do it again. I should also thank Paul Volkart for having meetings at his place, a place where there is no OH&S so more riskier?

Models can be run, e.g. using the Meccano steam engine.

While I always enjoy all the presentations at the meeting, I would like to thank Peter Stuart for the effort he put into explaining how Pulse Modulation motors work, I found it incredibly informative and will certainly help me with my building. Thanks Peter.

In closing I would like to thank all the Club's members for their enthusiasm, their friendship and their continuing efforts building Meccano. You have all made my retirement more convivial and challenging than my working life. Let's keep it going.

Thank you

Meccano Modellers Association Sydney Inc.**Vice President's Report by Chris Johnson**

12 January 2017

In this report I will cover those activities that I undertook as Vice President of our Club. In essence I see the role is in helping the president, organising external events (apart from the Annual Exhibition) and promoting our Club interstate and overseas.

As you all know, the big event was taking 'The Transported Transporter Bridge' to Skegness, UK. I would like to thank Keith Burston for stepping in at the last moment (Team member No 11, my age, so the average age was 74 years old) to design and build the control unit so the transport section went backwards and forwards and waited 30 seconds at each end. The Transporter Bridge was a great success and while we did not qualify in the top three (I believe it was tenth) it certainly put our Club on the map for three things. The first was the team effort in eleven of us building the model (a first, I think) and the 'audacity' of Australians taking Meccano to the UK and the last ... 'the sheer bloody size of it'! Of course Frank Hornby would have seen the bridge, if not travelled across it, as it was less than thirty miles from Binns Road.

We blew them away, and they responded by asking me to give the After-dinner Speech at the Skegex Dinner (which I believe Malcolm has given before) and also to present the final prizes. (At that point I realised we had not won.)

The good news was that I was able to tell Malcolm about the success (I saw him about a week before he passed away while visiting Ivon Rock), I was also able to visit and see Dave Thom and tell him about the success of the Bridge.

On the way back from the UK, I attended the British Columbia Meccano Club meeting (they moved it a week so I could attend) and stayed with their de facto President Jim Picton, a really great guy. I built the gyroscope walking man at Jim's place and "blew the socks off" the club members as well as blowing three of Jim's motors in the building. They had a walking man contest. If you are going to Canada, do drop in on Jim (and some of the other Club members) a very informal casual but great club. I have paid for Jim to be a member of our Club for a year. Jim is an enthusiast always looking for new models and designs his own so please Email: jimpicton305@gmail.com.

I was unable to help Dave Thom with the Willoughby Museum exhibition as I was away

but Lee Squires helped with that and organised the Powerhouse Castle Hill display. Thanks again, Lee.

During the year I was able to organise the odd lunch and plan to do more this year (I will only be away for a short time) so please let me know if you wish to attend any of these casual events. I always need drivers to pick up members. Yet again I have to thank Lee for his sterling efforts in providing transport. This is a growing issue with the ageing of members, so please help and volunteer where you can.

The visit to Bob Moran's so-called *The Precision Dynamics Discovery Shed* the day after the Annual Exhibition was a great success and even attended by Graham Jost. I am trying to organise a visit to Max Burnet's Computer Museum in the next month, so if interested please contact me.

Unfortunately the Club's website fell by the wayside (getting the Bridge ready was pretty intense) but Keith Burston has agreed (blackmailed and/or threatened) to pursue this task to fruition. Thanks Keith.

As final note about The Transporter Bridge, it will be assembled in the village hall at St Tudys in Cornwall, got working really well, dissembled and taken to the French Exhibition in May and then returned home. Its last journey will be to New Zealand in 2019, so organise to go, and I can ship your models across with the Bridge for not a lot of money, so start planning now.

Our most recent external event is helping the Abbotsleigh Senior School girls with building robots, we are sort of mentors and technical advisors. The team for that is Lee Squires (of course), Warwick Lewis, Keith Burston, Tom Hughes, Raymond Choi and myself. We will keep you up to date on progress.

Finally if any of you want to be part of any of our external events, join us for casual lunches, or events, please let me know either by email, phone or at a meeting. I am always looking for members who want to do a bit extra and have some fun. If you wish to suggest something, please talk to me.

One last thing, my (our) next project may well be Gargantua, the 1938 robot-controlled crane. I have documentation and Keith Burston and I will be building a prototype. If you wish to be involved, again contact me. I work on the principle "the more the merrier" and we do really have a good time and it is very enjoyable getting to know other members better.

Thanks

Financial Report

Lee elaborated on the Financial Report for Year ending 31 December 2016. It can be summarised thus:

	\$
Total Income for 2016	3,139
Total Expenses for 2016	2,931
Net Income	208
Total Assets	5,515
Liabilities	1,645
Net Assets	3,870

Number of members 75

Detailed copies are available from the Treasurer.

ORDINARY MEETING

Lee Squires resumed his place on the podium, thanked the members and invited the meeting to proceed with the next item on the agenda.

SHOW AND TELL

Most members would have seen the models on display, as there were plenty of models on show and fortunately plenty of trestles, all white. Members are anticipating the next segment, some with a coffee in hand, awaiting the call for silence and inviting Mike Holland to get the waiting over.

- **Mike Holland**
- Aeroplane Constructor Model



A few months ago Mike bought a can of White Knight Super Chrome spray paint, just out of curiosity. Last week he decided to try it out on some Aeroplane Constructor parts. The result is this simple model of a racing single-seater monoplane. The parts look like new, the model is beautiful and Mike is delighted with the results.

- Wallis and Stevens 3-ton Tractor

Mike showed this model at the August 2015 meeting. It is based on one published in June 2011 *Constructor Quarterly*, made by Darren Bonner. Like Darren's model, Mike's is made almost entirely of refurbished and repainted parts.

Mike has made several improvements to his model, redesigning the wheels and adding the speed regulator. He plans to add several more of the details that Darren included, and any further ones he can find.

- Eiffel Tower

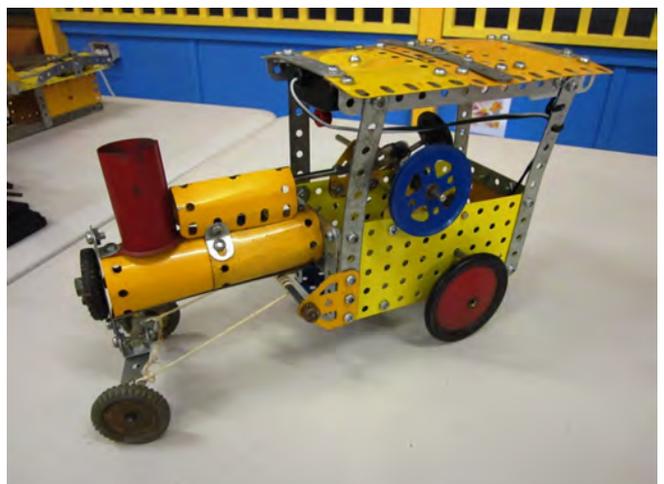


Members have all seen this model in its original incarnation, but now it has been very much improved. June Booker asked Mike to build a base for her (one which Mike built for her) and he liked this idea, and built an identical one for his own model. Then the rot set in, and he ended up rebuilding the whole top section and the two viewing levels, widening the bottom arches, and

adding the floors on the two lower viewing platforms. To widen the arches Mike had to replace the bottom strips with four-hole ones (1¼"), which are very non-standard.

Mike commented that this is one of the most beautiful models he has built.

- **John White** had five models to show:
- Steam Tractor from No 4 set, plus extra bits and pieces from Malcolm Booker's collection, with small electric motor worm drive to two 2:1 to drive the wheels, and one the steam shaft.



As he worked on the model (some would say *played with*), he discovered the motor could slowly turn over the steam engine as well. Saves very messy running on live steam! This was a real bonus. It was at this stage that he noticed some spare space existed on the model's base on which he might be able to place another *steam*-operated 'something'.

Looking through an old 1920s *Meccano Manual of Models* he came across a Vertical Steam Engine designed in the days when flexible and strip plates were non-existent. It fitted the space available so he decided to build the engine and has restored the necessary parts.

Building it will wait until the latter part of March this year.

- **Garth P Spurdle**
- Kiddy-Car Carousel

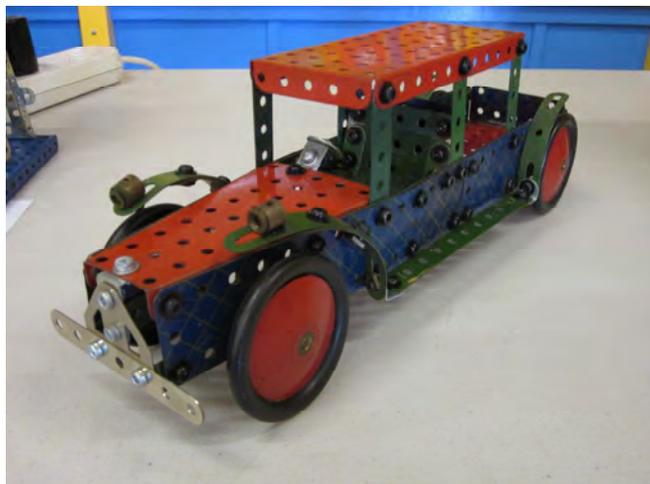


To air the latest addition to the Meccano parts Garth is restoring, today is the turn of PN54, the much set-upon Flanged Sector Plate. So how better to demonstrate this item than the full twenty-four piece circle. In passing, Max Crago confided in Garth "Oh, I love the Kiddy Car Model 6, Outfit No 1, 1950". So this model is for you, Max.

Garth made this model in memory his late sister Gabriel and in thanks to Laurence his fellow Meccano Mate and compatriot — thanks! But guess what? It works. In Garth's twenty-six years with the Association, he's only achieved this Shangri-La about six times. In fact, this model works so well Garth remarked that you'd think it was engineered and built by Peter Stuart. It will be running at our Easter Exhibition along with the other models of restored parts, all of 1930s vintage.

Garth concluded by congratulating Lee and Chris in their taking of the reigns of the Association, for a bright and pleasant future.

- **Max Crago** today brought along a model, item four in a project of eleven similar models featuring the development of the Meccano colours, starting with nickel. This project was stimulated when he saw a picture of ten such models built by Donald McKenzie in the August 2016 *International Meccanoman*.



- A limousine in the prewar colours as marketed by E G Page, which were different from the gold strips and blue/gold plates sold in the UK at the same time.

The green strips and cross-hatched plates of this limousine would not have caused comment, because the black and white illustrations in the manuals did not hint that the strips were anything other than green.

Having read that the utility was an Australian innovation developed by farmers who wanted a vehicle to be able to take the pigs to market on Friday, and the family to church on Sunday, was achieved by removing the rear boot part of the vehicle and replacing it with a platform and tailgate.

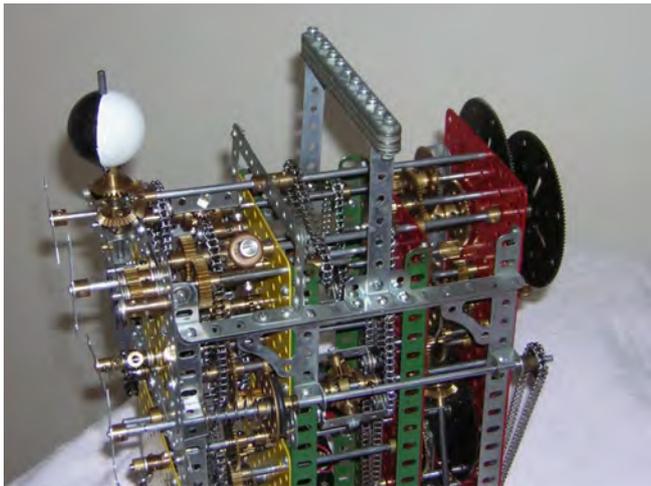
The tailgate of the model is a trimmed-down version of the Hinged Plate.

The rear number plate, **36 PA 63**, is a word play on alpha/numeric transpositions, where **3 = E**, **5 = S** and **6 = G**, and vice-versa.

- **John Shervington**
- McCall Astronomical Clock Mk II

John brought us up to date with his latest report: "Since my report on 29/10/16 I've reached another milestone towards achieving my goal of the satisfactory working of the internal mechanism of the Clock, at times jokingly called the "Beast". Again with the aid of my Flow Chart and, this time in particular, with my Lunar Gear Train Check List I have the Basic Lunar Gears working together so as to operate the Moon Globe and the Pointer for the Age of the Moon.

Continued Page 7



“Not only is the “24-Hour Rod” at “H19” driving the 26 gears and sprockets of the Tidal Gear Train but now also concurrently it is activating the Basic Pathway of the Lunar Gear Train, which consists of 19 gears and sprockets. Fifteen gears turn the Pointer of the Age of the Moon at “K25” and the remaining two gears and two sprockets turn the Moon Globe at “H29”. In this Basic Pathway is situated the Lunar Correcting Differential (affectionately called by me as “Malcolm’s Compact Differential” in memory of the practical help I received with it from our late Association President, Malcolm Booker).

“Unfortunately, I’ve noted that both this Pointer and the Moon Globe are presently rotating in an anti-clockwise direction instead of a clockwise direction. I anticipate that this situation will be corrected when I have the Extended Pathway of the Lunar Gear Train with its additional 20 gears and sprockets functioning. Like the Tidal Gear Train, the Lunar Gear Train has two different differentials: one that trims the initial rate of rotation and the other that corrects the final rate of rotation.

“In ModelPlan 212 for his Astronomical Clock Mk II (2015) McCall from a primary source reference (Standard Mechanisms, 1935, Meccano, on page 9) describes a Differential as basically consisting of “a Crown Wheel fixed to one half shaft which in turn is connected to a second half shaft by ... Contrates and Pinions”. McCall then continues: “Differentials are used in two different configurations for both Tidal and Lunar Gear Trains within this *ModelPlan* [author’s italics]”. In the first configuration, called a *Correcting Differential*, one input shaft through Contrates and Pinions is fixed to the Crown Wheel with two output shafts - one with two Expanded Pathways in the Tidal Gear Train and another with one Expanded Pathway in the Lunar Gear Train. However, in the second configuration, called a *Trimming Differential*, two input shafts from two Expanded Pathways in the Tidal Gear Train and

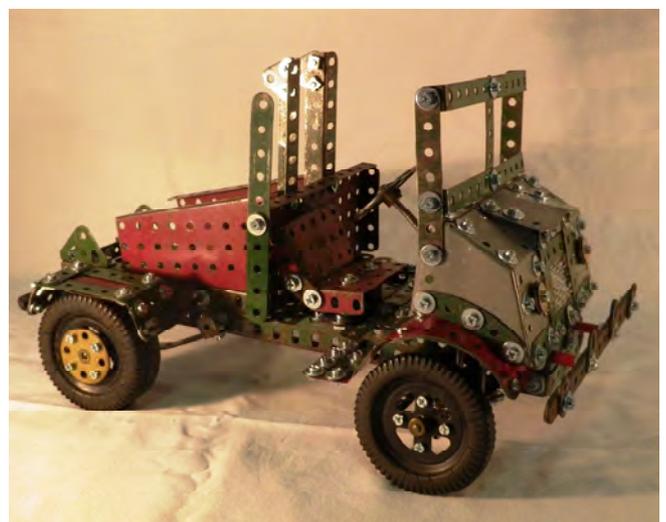
one Expanded Pathway in the Lunar Gear Train eventually through Contrates and Pinions connect to a Crown Wheel with an output shaft.

“As I have indicated previously, the mathematics and engineering behind McCall’s Astronomical Clock is most complex, and yet claimed most accurate. However, it is the Meccano Constructor’s skill that I’ve been developing over the last two years that is slowly bearing fruit. The latter is honed with patience and much observation of energy being transmitted from gear to gear, sprocket to sprocket along different pathways within the Internal Mechanism of this Clock.

“The latest product I have found that has helped me with the accelerated “running in” of gears and sprockets through my Meccano PowerDrive Unit (3-12 volt and 6-Ratio Gear Box) is a universal battery charger that has individual Control Indicators showing a slow and ‘red’ flash when discharging before topping up rechargeable batteries, a steady and ‘red’ light when actually charging these batteries and a fast and ‘red’ flash when the charger detects a wrong type or incorrectly inserted battery. As well, the charger has a Liquid Crystal Display indicating the percentage charge state in increments of 10 for each battery. This product has speeded up the charging of my set of 16 rechargeable batteries from 3 days to less than 6 hours. Such a set of batteries can easily last the 6 hours of our Exhibition Days”.

• John Toohey

John is a new member of the MMA and he presented a work-in-progress of a 1940’s era Ford Blitz Army truck chassis which is to have a back-ender crane mounted on it eventually. The model is based on photographs from the Web as well as a visit to the Annual Truck and Transport Exhibition at the Fire Museum at Penrith, NSW. John found this day a great source for photographing ideas for future models of trucks, cranes and associated paraphernalia.



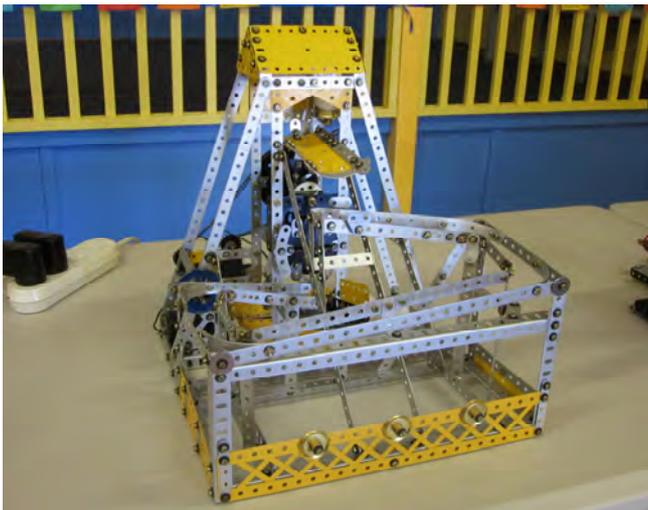
The scale of this model was limited by the use of 2" diameter (PN 20a) wheels and road tyres. This created an interesting problem in how to create realistic front cowlings of the truck cabin/engine bay. This was solved by custom making new panels from 24# Zinc anneal sheet which was hand folded and perforated to match Meccano look-alike components. Similarly the engine bonnet and radiator cowlings were hand-made to match. These parts will be painted to match Meccano 'red' for the finished model.

The overall model will be finished using restored "red/green" Meccano parts.

The crane, with lift and luff functions, will initially be manually operated, but John is on the lookout for suitable small low voltage electric motors, to complete the crane part of the job.

Any suggestions on motors please?? Email: pktoohey @ ozeil.com.au

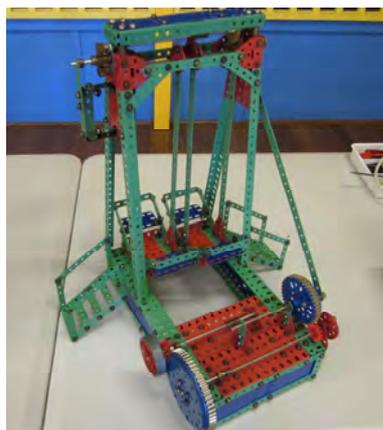
- Murray Tulett
- Ball Roller:



A simple ball roller copied from one featured in a Constructor Quarterly magazine about 15 months ago, built from a late 1960s Set 8 in yellow, black and aluminium.

- Swing Boats:

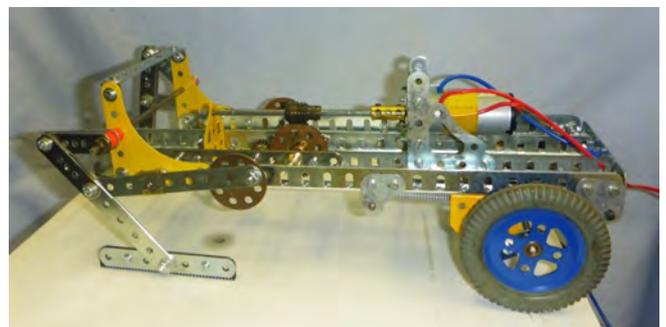
Constructed from a recently purchased set of Märklin, and featuring gears which utilise a rippled toothed ring fitted onto a flanged disc. Complete with ticket booth and access stairs.



- Dutch Windmill: Not so much a model as an exercise to try out Murray's newly painted structural parts in metallic aluminium plus the rotor running on Dave Taylor's Large Axle System. A success on both counts he reckons.
- Pram: A small model in Märklin from one of their manuals.
- Pedestal: Constructed in replica medium red and green Meccano purchased from Ashok Banerjee, and presented by Murray to his wife at Christmas. "I put my wife on a pedestal, and this is it", he remarked.

• Lee Squires brought along for the day a trio of models demonstrating the type of Meccano mechanisms popular with readers of the Meccano Magazines in the thirties. Building a working model of a mechanism helps one to understand the physics involved, something which could not realistically be achieved by reading how it worked.

- Walking Tractor

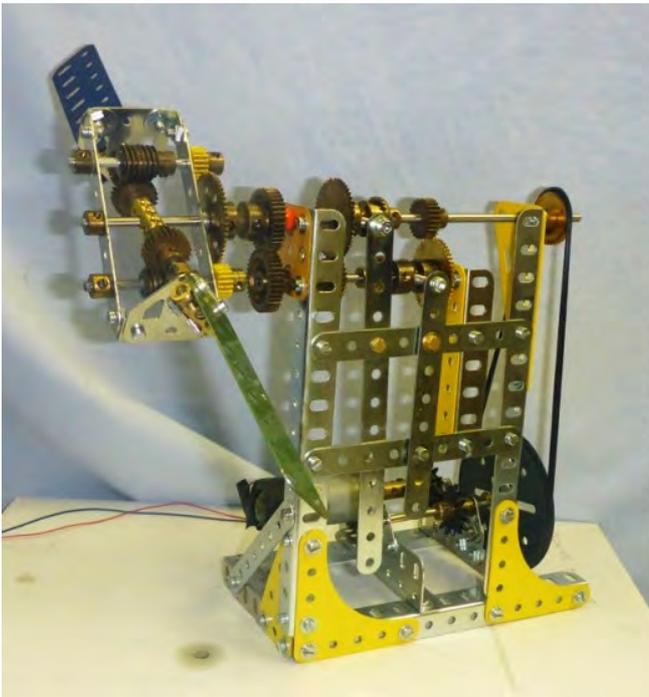


This is a model of a machine invented in the late 1920s for farmers to traverse very rough country where normal vehicles of the day could not pass over.

The model includes a sprung rear wheel axle.

Reference: Model No 6.4 1931-57 Manual p.28

• Demonstration Model of Variable Pitch Propeller



This model shows the mechanisms involved in varying the pitch of a rotating propeller. It was presented as an interesting machine in a Meccano Manual of 1931 when aircraft began varying the pitch of their propellers as an alternate way of maintaining a constant speed in varying atmospheric conditions.

Reference: Special Models: Meccano Book of New Models 1931, p.28 No .

100 years ago . . . 1917

March-April 1917, second issue of free four-page Meccano Magazine.

MECCANO MAGAZINE

75 years ago . . . March 1942

Small size format.

Mechanisms by 'Spanner': Simple Bell, Epicyclic Transmission Gear, Steering Gear for Tractors and a Constant Engagement Intermittent Motion.

New Models: Screw Press, Mouse Trap and Locomotive.

50 years ago . . . March 1967

Sewing Machine with treadle, Gearbox with Emedo motor and three speeds, Meccano Electric (Mantle) Clock and a Travelling Gantry Crane.

25 years ago . . . 1992

John Wapshott, a Canadian Meccanoman and guest of Malcolm Booker, visits Association meeting with 29 members present.

• Vertical Marine Steam Engine



The representation in this model of the main elements in a single-cylinder marine steam engines is quite good. The elements include a reversible Stephenson's Link, a thrust block, condenser and bilge pump driven by links to the crosshead slide.

The design is illustrated in Meccano Manual of 1930 when this type of steam engine was very common in ships.

Model No 5.30 can be made very economically from a Set No 5.

• **Warwick Lewis** brought two models to the meeting.

• Meccasaur was the first in light green, dark and light grey. This model, released by Spin Master in 2016, is nearly one metre in length from head to tail and comprises mainly plastic parts but also some metal perforated strips, brackets and tension springs.

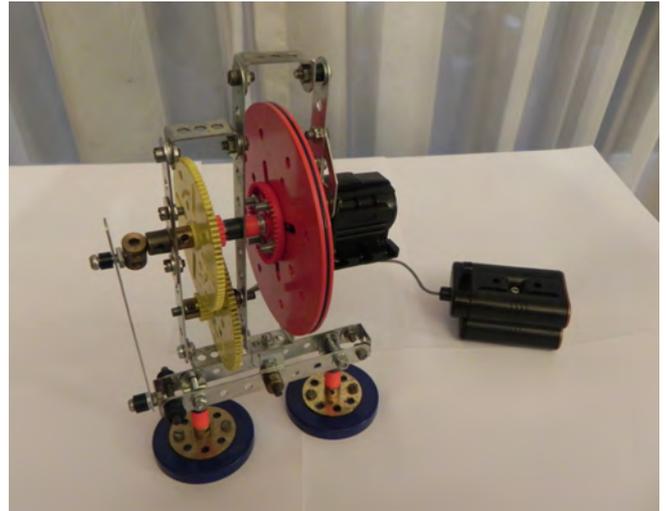
There are over 200 Meccano nuts and bolts as well as very long pivot bolts and 55 lock nuts for providing the flexible movements in the model.



The hip section has a sealed motor and gears powered by four C batteries with a control unit fixed on top. The control unit has a light sensor, microphone and speaker with buttons for directional movements, attack, room guard, question and answer, recording and playback. The model is not remote-controlled.

- Walking Gyroscope MKII was next in red, yellow and zinc. (Right.)

This is a modified version of a previously exhibited walking gyroscope but now slightly lighter in weight mainly due to three instead of four 4" circular plates used for the rotor. The latest version was designed by Jim Picton of the British Columbia Meccano Club who kindly provided photos via Chris Johnson.



Garth Spurdle's reply to Roy Bottomley's *Ode to the Sector Plate*

Scruffer's Critique

– a Sonnet by Squire Spurdle of "Lantana".

A pox on those who ever swore, lambasting part 54.
 How intolerant is the swine who dareth curse and doth malign.
 Upspake upholder of the faith, I'll not abandon the Phantom Wraith.
 For I alone will hoist yon pennant and time recalls Garth as defendant.
 History etches whilst those abusers, the sector plate doth have its uses.
 Whilst penning my sonnet anon, my quill be dipped in blood.
 Reminds me of "Left Foot Sock Finder" indelibly like mud.
 Hark. Recollect a bygone day when there were written odes,
 And laughter rang at Frank's expense, how sad this episode.
 I'll nairy hush nor still the tongue, while peasants do lampoon,
 But alone will stand, with spanner in hand, until I clear the room.
 Quothe he the bard with Majesty, around all do protest,
 Part 54 "Aint the worst Guv, I fink it is da best!"

So you see it's up to me to remonstrate Roy Bottomley.

Memories of early Meccano

Rob Renfrew

My earliest recollection of a long association with Meccano involves a Christmas tree, myself sitting on a 'dinky', and a No 2 Meccano set visible on the floor. It was Christmas 1941 and I was three and a half years old. How can I be sure of that. Well, my Meccano Guild certificate is dated 25.11.1942.

The first Meccano Magazine in my original collection was May 1942, purchased from Walther and Stevenson of 395 George Street, Sydney. The magazine remained on a permanent order with Walther and Stevenson until they closed their doors about 1970. So Christmas, this year, 2016, marks my 75 years association with Meccano.

In the UK, wartime laws saw the cessation on 1 January 1942 of the manufacture of all metal toys. The only Meccano left in Australia was what was in the shops, and in E. G. Page's warehouse.

The second photo, taken in a tent, shows four boxes of Meccano, it was either Christmas 1942 or 1943. They were 2a, 3a and 4a Accessory sets together with an X2 outfit.

The newsagent near Canterbury Station, before WWII, sold both Meccano and Hornby trains. Near the back of the shop, he had a Meccano dealer's cabinet, in which there were still all sorts of goodies remaining. Over a number of weeks the contents of the cabinet diminished. I obtained many of the parts, some of which were never to be manufactured again, particularly those parts which were not included in any set. Over the next few years my collection built up to the stage of being almost a Set 8. To power the models a *Magic Motor* and an E120 non-reversing motor were used. The E120 was modified to reverse from an external switch. All these sets had been packaged in England in 1940/1941.

The basement area of Walther and Stevensons was truly an Aladdins cave for children. Above the shelving was a display of large models. Most were of Set 10, or Supermodels. The Baltic Tank, the Ocean Liner, a Steam Roller, and I think a Blocksetter, were some that I recall.

When in 4th class at Earlwood Primary School (1946) the school had a hobbies display to raise funds. I built Model 8.18 from the pre-war series, the Gantry Crane and carried it the mile uphill to school. It came in second place (at a penny a vote) behind the only other

Meccano model, an Eiffel tower, entered by Stan, a good friend, who was in 6th class and lived in the same street.

Looking at the manuals now, they are certainly well used. The Set 8 manual has ticks down the number required columns. My favourite models were those of vehicles. I was always experimenting with steering and suspensions!

Cranes, the bigger the better, were another favourite. And so it continued until other interests took all available spare time.

Time passed. I rescued my collection from the garage to see if any of our children showed any interest. They didn't. But I caught the bug! In Hobbyco I found the first of the MMQ's and an advert for MW Models. I also had a good piece of luck. In a Saturday Sydney Moring Herald there was a No 10 Meccano set, with extras for sale. (Before eBay). The extras included a motor, a 4EL, a Gears Set and some other pieces. It had been in Searles' window. The buyer had always wanted to build a blocksetter! So he bought it, built it, was disappointed with the result of the Set 10 block setter, and sold his collection. It was at a very good price. I also built the No 10 blocksetter first, and was very disappointed with the model. I then set about collecting enough pieces to construct the SML 4 Blocking Setting Crane. I was much happier with this result.

About this time I ran into Max Crago for the first time. I attended the inaugural Meccano dinner in 1981, and have been a member ever since.

Distance and health make it difficult to attend meetings now-a-days.

While teaching, I put a wanted sign on the chalkboard for Meccano. This attracted some interesting results, including a unique Meccano motor, found at a rubbish dump, in Hornsby.

Some time ago I started filling in the gaps of my Meccano Magazine collection. It took some twenty years to obtain the missing copies, either originals, photocopies or reprints. They are now complete and together with an extensive Meccano library, and the internet, enables some original research to be undertaken.

A photograph accompanying this article appears on the Historical Photograph section.

Lapel Badges

For the forthcoming exhibitions, any person needing a paper lapel badge for their holder, should email to Max Crago with their preferred name.

max.crago@optusnet.com.au

Spare holders are also available.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Peter Stuart for writing up the meeting notes, and supplying photographs from the day. Thanks to our country member Rob Renfrew on his nostalgia article,

Colophon:

Editorial matter typeset in 11 on 12½ pt Times New Roman, and historical articles in 10 pt Plantin. Headings in Windsor Antique Bold.

Historic Photographs section

The photograph below is that of Robert Renfrew and was taken *circa* 1943.



To remove a hard tyre from Pulley

— by Malcolm Booker

1. Fit a 1" axle to the boss of the pulley
2. Fit an old 1" pulley to the other end of the axle
3. Put a tray with the old 1" pulley resting on the tray and the tyre NOT touching the tray
4. Set oven to 105 degrees C.
When 105 degrees C is reached leave for ten minutes
5. Use a cloth to take out of oven and quickly and carefully remove the now soft tyre from the pulley.

The tyre will quickly cool and become hard again.

Coming Events

The North Shore Railway Modellers Association™ is holding an annual two-day exhibition on Saturday and Sunday, 4 and 5 March 2017 at the corner of Warringah Road and Starkey Street, Forestville, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Saturday, and 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Sunday.

Our club has manned a table at this exhibition for many years. This year Dave Taylor will be there. Other members are invited to attend during the exhibition and show Meccano models with a railway theme (but not too big).

Power House Collection Open Weekend — 25, 26 March 2017

The Museum curators are eager to have Meccano at the Open Weekend and they are hoping we can tie in with their theme of exploring. They would be pleased if members could show pieces associated with trains, planes, or other aspects of exploring.

I think space telescopes, theodolites, bicycles, cars, any mechanical means of getting around Australia in the earlier days would impress.

Country Members and their Models

Country Members who can not attend meetings, are invited to send photos and descriptions of their models to the Editor for inclusion in our Newsletters.

The items can be submitted by mail, typewritten, with prints 4" × 6", on CD, or electronically (the preferred method).

The addresses are:

Max Crago
16 Lakeview Parade
WARRIEWOOD NSW 2102

or

max.crago@optusnet.com.au

Members might also like to submit nostalgic photographs or slides (transparencies) for the back page of the Newsletter.

Meeting dates for 2018:

20 January
31 March
28 April
30 June
29 September

The venues for the above dates will be promulgated as necessary, and 2018 exhibition date will be announced as soon as possible, to allow people to make any bookings.