

North East London Meccano Club

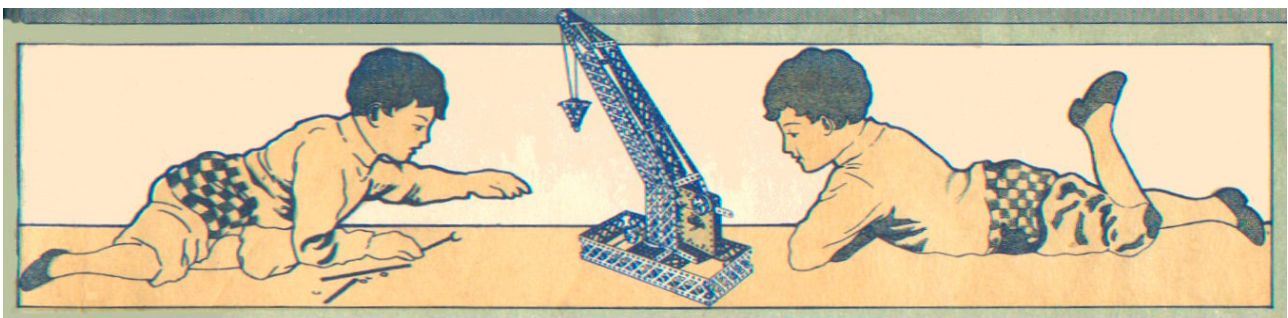
Newsletter - May 2006

**The 70th meeting of the North East London Meccano Club will take place on
Saturday 13th May 2006 at Hainault Baptist Church Hall,
Franklyn Gardens, Hainault, Essex**

The doors will open at 11 a.m. for setting up the meeting. Help is needed with moving the tables, and also with clearing away at the end of the meeting. All members and their guests will be very welcome.

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CLUB NEWS

Please pay your subscription promptly if you haven't already done so, otherwise this will be your last *Newsletter!*

The Annual Exhibition is on!

Ian Harrison has confirmed that the Annual Exhibition will take place on Sunday 10th September at the Dunmow Day Centre. Further details will appear in the July newsletter, but meanwhile Ian will be glad of any offers to help with the organisation of the event. Volunteers will be needed to sell tickets, help with catering, take photos and so on. So please contact Ian with any offers of assistance (tel _____ or any ideas for the event, for example could we have a bring-and-buy table ? Organising this event is a large undertaking, and Ian deserves our support in making it a success.

Newsletter Editor required

Because of increasingly onerous work commitments I shall reluctantly have to give up being Newsletter Editor by the end of this year. By then I will have done the job for five years and I believe it is one of the most rewarding and enjoyable tasks in the club. It provides an excellent opportunity to get to know everyone really well, and to make a tangible and lasting contribution to the running of NELMC. If anyone thinks they might be interested, please get in touch and we can discuss what the job entails. Although most of the work is done electronically, the technical requirements are not very demanding: it's the personal commitment and enthusiasm of the editor that are most important. So if you like the idea of inheriting the green eyeshade - or simply want to find out a little more about it - get in touch, or corner me at the next meeting.

Peter Barnar

Other news

Some of you will already know that because of ill-health Geoff Wright has handed over the MW Mail Order business to Howard Somerville. Howard will be concentrating on Meccano literature, including the production of new ModelPlans and the continuing digitisation of *Meccano Magazine*.

The West London Meccano Society model exhibition in collaboration with St Albans & District Model Engineering Society will be held on Saturday 30th September and Sunday 1st October 2006 at Francis Bacon School, St Albans, Herts from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm each day.

Concorde “plus”, by *Mike Tebbutt*.

From the first time that I saw this model I wanted to build one for myself. However, as in many of the modern Meccano kits, I could see a few shortcomings in the way the so-called designers had put the thing together. In short, with a little more forethought and little extra expense (it makes me wonder whether they ever construct these things before selling them to us punters), a much more pleasing product could be achieved.

The first thing that I noticed was the fixing of the tailplane by two ugly angle brackets which actually offset it to one side on the fuselage. I had seen another modeler's improved effort by inverting that fuselage section and fixing the tail from within, dead centrally. I achieved this by using two 1"x1/2" angle brackets, bending the 1/2" ends in a semicircular shape to fit the cabin and bolting

them on to a 1.5"x2.5" flexible plate placed in the longitudinal plane, with the top edge of the plate sandwiched into the bottom edge of the tailplane.

The fuselage sections I joined at the sides using two long narrow strips courtesy of Mr Taylor. This gave it a more rigid finish over the Meccano version which is joined by one long strip along the top only. Unlike the original, which used fish plates, the nose and tail cones (both exactly the same) were fixed onto the extended ends of the narrow strips which protruded beyond the fuselage sections by one hole. Again, this produces a more rigid finish. Whilst on the cones, I did not like the idea of two great gaping holes left underneath them. All right for getting fingers etc in to fix things, but not very aesthetically pleasing. Pondering on this one and experimenting a bit, I found



Mike Tebbutt shows the finer points of his Concorde model to Brian Maunder

that 2.5"x 2.5" white, plastic, flexible plates rolled up and stuffed down the cones fitted just right. How to get the screws in, more of later.

The undercarriage was improved by cutting down aluminium tube purchased from B&Q in a bore that just took a threaded rod, which I used to fix the nose wheel. B&Q also stock a nice white plastic tube if the fancy takes one. This has a smaller diameter with none of the ugly joints of the official versions which are made up from several plastic spacers. Threaded spacers from an Elektrikit could be used also. I also trimmed off part of the plastic projections carrying the nose wheel axle and have yet to do the same for the other wheels. There are all manner of ways to improve the undercarriage and make it look more realistic, it's just a matter of thought and the time to do it. One anomaly in the kit was the navigation lights - Meccano supply two red plastic pegs! I am not even going to try to imagine the thinking behind that one. I took a green peg off another model but Dave Taylor has plenty.

Lastly, the fasteners. I have long thought that those knobby BSW bolts, whilst fine on things like model cranes and traction engines or on chassis or hidden areas, are a bit incongruous on models such as aircraft and modern automobiles, e.g. F1 Renault Kit, which have smooth and flowing lines. Again, looking around at various shows, including Skegness, I have noticed more people using alternative fasteners. In particular, the use of M3 bolts seems to be favoured. I first noticed the steel tyres on the wheels of a Fowler Ploughing traction engine at Skegness where the modeler had used stainless steel countersunk machine screws to great effect. As you can see on my Concorde, they fit almost flush to the surface in Meccano holes and, if you tighten them right up on flexible plates, you

will get a flush countersunk effect. The heads are that much smaller in diameter than BSW and therefore more "in keeping". These M3 bolts come in various sizes, or can be cut, and nylock or standard nuts are readily available. Also, real spanners and sockets can be used - luxury! M3, whatever length cost no more than BSW either, if you buy in the right place. To fix screws into difficult places, I was given the tip of using Rivet-nuts which, for the more expert amongst us, can easily be manufactured, or so they inform me. Don't worry though, they are available in M3 but in aluminium so you can't give them too much "wellie". If the thing is not coming apart too often, I use a bit of Lock-Tite to make sure (we used to use this on screw-in pistol barrels which meant they never moved until you wanted them to).

Recently, rooting around in my old tins of "handy things", I have also discovered that 6BA, being that bit smaller than M3, fits as though Meccano holes were countersunk purposefully for them and without pulling through. The shanks of the screws are only about half the diameter of Meccano holes but the head, by virtue of being countersunk, will centralise itself in the hole when tightened. It is the other end you have to worry about and careful alignment of plates is necessary but the final finish is worth the extra little effort. For sections of a model that have no movement involved such as fixed plates on aircraft wings, 6BA would be ideal. The only drawback with BA is that it is only available in ordinary steel or brass and not always in both for each individual size. So, unless one is painting over the finished item, there could be a clash of materials if using more than one bolt size. Different sized nuts and bolts on the same model? Is there no end to this heresy? For those who worry about using alternative fasteners, it is interesting to see that Meccano are experimenting with a type of Rawlbolt in their new Speedplay kits and have been using plastic pins fixed with an elastic spacer for some while now.

Also shown at the December 2005 meeting was the Renault F1 now with wire control from a hand-held, pistol-gripped, battery pack comfortably operated by the thumb (ambidextrous) on a large DPDT rocker switch. I also had a heavy-duty strip and flat girder bending machine mounted on a large, heavy base. The plans I had found on the Internet from South Africa. I have made some obvious improvements and can actually bend a long strip into an almost perfect figure of eight! The thing actually does what it says it does without any protest and produces a smooth finish on even the thickest of perforated strips.

MODEL REPORT - 11th February 2006

Eddie Oatley

The 30 ton Dry Dock Crane has been modified so that it can now be set up in about 15 minutes; this was done so that it could be displayed at the Meccano exhibition in Harrods' store in October 2005.

Peter Clay

Rail-mounted Excavator from MM December 1935 with automatic digging motion plus slewing and opening digger bucket. Also an orrery with rotating Earth/Moon globes giving an accurate lunar period.

Ron Mumford

Railway breakdown crane and railway shunting tractor, both from the 1961 No. 5 manual.

Bryn Jones

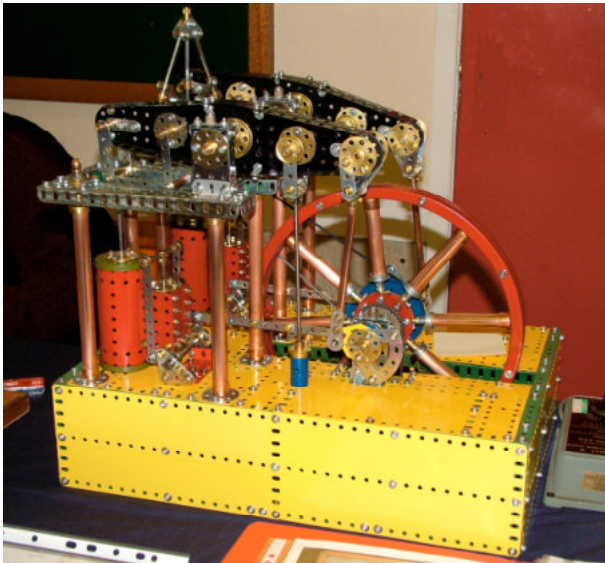
Double acting parallel jaw mechanism (still under development) designed to pick up loads at the end of a robot arm. Spring-loaded jaws operate limit switches to indicate that the load is secure for lifting. The device will be operated by a servo via individual rack and pinion arrangements for each jaw.

Geoff Carter

Radio-controlled 6-wheel truck, from the Marks & Spencer set. Geoff says that it is a good model but with the usual set model problems: nothing that an experienced builder can't easily overcome but frustrating for the novice. Performance is better than with the previous 4-wheel model (with which it shares the same r/c chassis) because of the increased weight.

Colin Davies

Dancers End Twin Beam Engine built to 1:12 scale from photographs and measurements of the engine at Kew Bridge Museum. The prototype was



built in 1867 and originally installed at Chiltern Hill Waterworks at Dancers End (hence the name) to pump water supply from a well. Unusually the twin cranks are set at 180° to give a more uniform delivery of water.

Brian Elvidge

Bates Mule Tractor, rebuilt from the New Zealand modelplan and powered by a French 700 type motor. Also SML 19A Steam Navy, powered by an E15R which drives the slewing, bucket racking and hoisting the bucket arm; and a Tower Crane from the 1970s Crane Multikit.

Geoff Hall

1:12 scale model of Zillertalbahn 2' 6" gauge 0-6-



2 tank loco. The centre driving wheels are powered by a Decaperm motor via reduction gears, sprockets and chain. The model is almost completed, with just the cab roof to be finished.

Roger Little

The Ball-roller Clock, seen at previous meetings.

Stan Leech

Anti-tank Gun and Carrier, from MMQ October 1974, built from Army Multikit parts, powered by a 760/770 motor with gearbox.

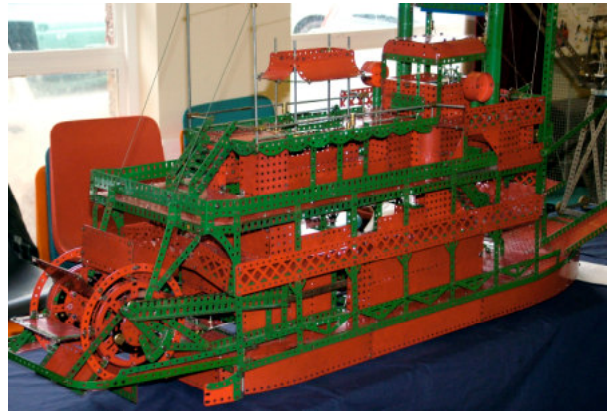
John Gay

American Packard open-top car from the 1950s, based on the 1970s no. 9 outfit model, with detailed engine, opening boot and hood cover.



Tony Parmee

Mississippi Steam Boat, mounted on wheels and with the wheel in the wheelhouse operating the



rudders and castor steering. The model has yet to be embellished with lights and model people, and will be accompanied by appropriate music for this year's exhibition!

Dennis Backler

"Caroline" steam engine now powered by a PDU and featuring a working governor.

Dave & Marilyn Taylor had their usual stall of Meccano and related goodies.