



Canadian MeccaNotes

--- Issue #31 ---

Sept. 2003

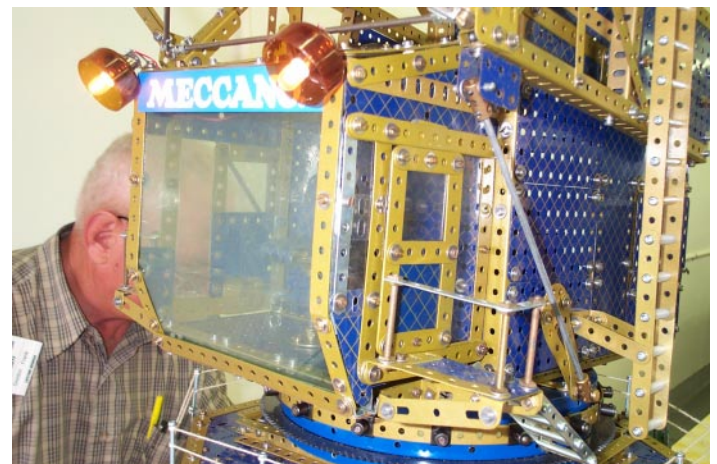
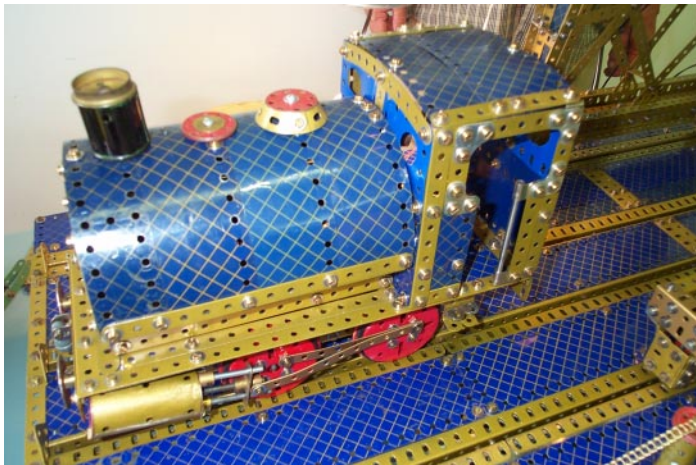


Judith & John Overeem

Leduc West Antique Society

See page 24.

Gordon Frank
with George
Rogers, Mayor
of Leduc.



Editor's Notes

This issue contains a good variety of features. Many thanks to Colin Hoare, Ivor Setten, Don Redmond, Madhav ("Manu") Bhalerao, Don Morton and others for supplying items for this issue.

Starting with March 2002, one contributor to each Canadian MeccaNotes issue gets a prize in appreciation of their efforts. The June 2003 winner was Larry Yates. Perhaps you'll win for the next issue?

Nominations for "Meccanoman of the Year" are now open. Please notify Colin Hoare or any executive member.



Meccano Ltd. is re-releasing the Erector Ferris Wheel Set in the USA. This set was first issued in 1994 and it included building plans for 8 models.



Part of the CMAMAS website is now password protected. For example to see the meetings of minutes you now need this id/password: cmember/Sprocket2.

... continued on page 3

Subscriptions

(4 Issues Per Calendar Year)

o *within North America:* Canada - \$30; U.S.A. - US\$28. Make cheque or money order payable to CMAMAS, mail to Treasurer, address above.

o *elsewhere:* £23, US\$35 or C\$60; also available from MW Models, address on page 27.

© Copyright 2003 C.M.A.M.A.S.
and/or Individual Contributors.

Meccano and Erector are registered trade names and are used throughout Canadian MeccaNotes by kind permission of Meccano Ltd..

North American subscribers to Canadian MeccaNotes are automatically members of the Canadian Modeling Association for Meccano and Allied Systems (CMAMAS).

Canadian MeccaNotes

The "Canadian MeccaNotes" newsletter (ISSN 1207-2249) is published 4 times per year (March, June, September and December) by the Canadian Modeling Association for Meccano & Allied Systems (CMAMAS).

"Written and produced by Meccano enthusiasts for Meccano enthusiasts."

Canadian Modeling Association for Meccano & Allied Systems (CMAMAS)
130 Neptune Drive, Suite 1109
Toronto, Ontario
CANADA M6A 1X5

<http://www.memeshadow.net/cmamas/>

cmamas@memeshadow.net



CMAMAS Executive

President ... Colin Hoare, 18 Tweedle St., Glen Williams, Ontario, Canada L7G 3S5, tweedle@aztec-net.com, (905)873-8261

Vice President ... Attila Szakonyi, 10 Fendley Crt, Brampton, Ontario, Canada, L6Z 3H9, attila.szakonyi@sympatico.ca, (905)846-5287

Treasurer ... Marsha Brandston, 130 Neptune Drive, Suite 1109, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6A 1X5, purplefront@sympatico.ca

Secretary ... Colin Hinz, 148 Howland Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 3B5, asfi@eol.ca, (416)516-8686

Newsletter Editor/Webmaster ... David Williams, 3017 - 111A Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6J 3Y5, meccano@ecn.ab.ca, (780)438-1197

Parts & Sets Manager (interim) ... Lynn Krause, Canada, cmsales@memeshadow.net

Table of Contents

Leduc West Antique Society	1
Editor's Notes	2
Canadian MeccaNotes Now in Full Colour	3
Presidential Perusings	4
The Hobby Show November 7th-9th 2003	5
CMAMAS Sales Update	6
The New Design 2 Meccano Set	8
Disposal of Don Pearson's Collection at The Hobby Show	8
Part 19b, 3" Pulley - The Liverpool Years	9
Peg and Lantern Gears	17
Obituary - Andreas Konkoly	17
Modern Meccano in the US	18
Meccano Chain & The Mellotron Story	20
Obituary - Jerry Dubois	23
Rebrassing Nuts & Bolts	23
Leduc West Antique Society	24
Threaded Rods — And Not Quite	26
Stokys Update	26
The Peddler	27
Assortment of American Erector Sets	28

Last Saturday, my son and I had a wonderful visit with Dr. Eric Sinton and his wife Helga in Red Deer. He's recovering well from his surgery. We travelled there to visit a Reptile and Amphibian show; we added one new frog to our menagerie. Our White's Tree Frog is named "Girder", our Thai floating frog is "Washer" and another frog is named "Sprocket".

Earlier this year, Martin Atkinson wrote: Last Christmas I bought a #10 from Ontario; many of the zinc pieces were quite badly tarnished (probably stored in the oak box in a damp climate). I had them re-plated — over 50 pieces for \$35. The place is called All Brite and they have a branch in Edmonton, allbritecalgary@telusplanet.net.

As always, the newsletter is only as good as the contributors. Your articles, photos, model plans, short news items, want, sales and swap ads are wanted. Items in machine readable form (e-mail, diskette) are preferred but everything is acceptable. If desired, your material can also be posted on our website. If you'd like any part of your submissions returned, please say so; otherwise I will keep everything.

Please note that we plan to publish the December 2003 issue around December 6, 2003 so the final deadline is November 27, 2003.

David Williams

Canadian MeccaNotes Now in Full Colour

The CMAMAS has purchased a HP Color Laserjet 5500 Printer so that we can print future "Canadian MeccaNotes" issues in full colour. This was made possible due to the income received from sales of Meccano parts and sets.

CMAMAS sales started off somewhat unexpectedly with our acquisition of Irwin Toy's Meccano parts stock for resale to members after Irwin Toy lost its distributorship. Then we started selling new Meccano sets because they were so hard to come by otherwise. On top of this we have organized annual sales of Exacto parts imported from Argentina and Ashok's parts from India.

Prices were kept as low as possible, but nevertheless we slowly saved enough money to make this printer purchase possible.

The cost of printing each issue will increase due to the cost of colour toner but our overall costs will go down as we won't have to print "spare" issues to handle future demand. Instead of stockpiling extra copies, we'll simply reprint older issues as required. Membership dues are not expected to increase.

FYI, Canadian MeccaNotes is 100% digital. I produce printer ready output at my PC and send it to the printer over the Internet. Instead of directing this output to a local Edmonton printing company, I'll be sending it to Toronto for printing starting this month.

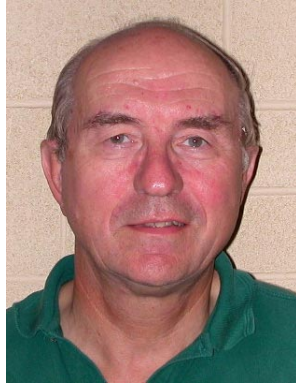
Club members are encouraged to let us know how they like the new look. As well, Toronto area members may be asked to assist with envelope stuffing, stamping & other tasks from time to time. Contact any executive member with your comments.

David Williams



Presidential Perusings

By now, most subscribers to "Canadian MeccaNotes" will have learned that one of the stalwarts of the Canadian Meccano community, Jerry Dubois, passed away in July. A tribute to Jerry appears elsewhere in this issue. He will be missed by all of us, particularly those who have attended "The Hobby Show" in Toronto, and "Rail-o-Rama" in Kingston every year. A donation in Jerry's memory has been made to the RCAF Memorial Museum. Any Meccanoman wishing to make a donation can send it to the Museum at P.O. Box 1000, Astra, ON K0K 3W0.



The Museum has two major funds the donation could go to: the Operating Fund for daily functioning of the Museum; and the Building Fund for the Museum Expansion. Please specify to which of the two funds the donation should be directed. A tax receipt will be issued.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will read of the efforts undertaken by the Executive that have culminated in the acquisition of our own laser printer. A trial run of copies of the June 2003 was printed before the decision was made to purchase the equipment, and we were delighted with the results. We are, therefore, confident that the 'new' magazine will be well received. Having said that, we invite subscribers to send us feedback, be it positive or negative. My hope is that the majority of subscribers will welcome the change.

As the fall approaches here in North America - which seems still a long way away, since this missive is being written when it is 29°C (85°F) outside - it is time to remind everyone that there will be an election in November at "The Hobby Show," which will be an integral part of the Annual Meeting. Of course, there could be some political elections as well, but the one to which I am referring is for the two members of the C. M. A. M. A. S. Executive whose terms of office expire, and the official election of someone to take on the position of Sets and Parts Manager (in accordance with the change to the Constitution that was approved in May). The positions of President and Treasurer become vacant in 2003, but both incumbents have stated that they are willing to continue to serve. In addition, Lynn Krause was appointed (on an interim basis) by the Executive to the

position of Sets & Parts Manager. She, too, has indicated her willingness to continue in the position. Nominations are, however, welcome for any of these positions, either from the floor at the Annual Meeting, or in writing (to the Secretary) before the election takes place. Hopefully, we will be able to use the Seminar Room as we did in 2002.

Thanks to the co-operation of one of our U. S. subscribers, Bob Galler, we plan to publish the instructions of a model by the late Dr. Keith Cameron that were originally sent to England to be published in the "Meccano Magazine" in 1977, but never actually made it into print. As many Meccano historians will recall, the editors at the time, Mike Nicholls and Paul Smith, did not survive for long, and the plans were - presumably - set aside. Keith had a love affair, or so it seems, with models of railway locomotives that required geared tracks to go up steep slopes, as he published plans for at least two other such models. These were the Mount Washington Cog Railway that was published in "The Meccanoman's Newsmag," and GMM SML No. 56 Rack & Pinion Locomotive. This one, in my view, is equal to, if not better than, the others. One caveat, however: the model requires around 40 24½" Angle Girders (see remarks about e-Bay prices below) and an equal number of 18½" Angle Girders, plus around 24 6½" Rack Strips.

Over the past few months, I have come to the conclusion, albeit reluctantly, that trying to buy Meccano at local auctions is almost as futile as trying to acquire quality material on e-Bay - unless you have deep pockets, of course. Just this week, I saw that eight medium green 24½" Angle Girders were sold on e-Bay for £82.00, or just over \$180.00 Canadian. No wonder prices are generally realised are out of the range of most modelers (but our regular suppliers, Exacto in Argentina, and Ashok Banerjee in India, can fill the gap for you at more reasonable prices).

In the ten years that I have been living in Glen Williams, I must have attended well over one hundred local auctions. Very few have ever had any Meccano on offer, and what one usually sees can best be described as scrap metal. With the Internet, one can now search for auctions in Ontario to find where Meccano is listed in the sale. Perhaps the best auction in which Meccano was on offer locally occurred in August in Milton, close to where I live. It was, however, promoted as an antique toy sale, so it generated plenty of interest. Around six hundred lots in total were on offer, and included such items that I remember from my youth as Boys Own Annuals, and Cigarette Cards. The Meccano was the best I have ever seen locally,

Colin Hoare

Colin Hoare, C. M. A. M. A. S. President

CMAMAS Sales Update

This column has steadily increased in length since its first appearance in the December 2002 issue, and it is time to counteract that trend before it creeps onto a third page. For this reason, since club membership is by calendar year, I will avoid repeating information within a calendar year. All undated information in this column remains valid until superseded.

In the last issue I thanked all those who send us words of appreciation for the volunteer work we perform. This time I'd like to thank those who read and heed the information we provide in this column and on the club website, and contribute significantly to the smooth running of CMAMAS Sales by following the instructions for ordering and related procedures.

Who is Behind "CMAMAS Sales"?

Based on some of the enquiries we get, it seems that clarification is in order. Although my name appears at the bottom of this column, the column is written on behalf of the entire CMAMAS Sales Team. CMAMAS Sales is *not* my personal enterprise, and I neither personally offer the items for sale nor receive funds from the sales. CMAMAS Sales *is* a club effort, where funds collected from one round of sales are used to finance further bulk purchases, with surpluses going towards other club activities, and where the work is performed on a volunteer basis by some members of the club executive and occasionally other club members.

This column is not meant to be an advertisement or an infomercial. It is meant to keep all of you informed about what is happening with CMAMAS Sales by supplementing and

complimenting the information provided in the "For Sale Through CMAMAS" section of the club website, which is always the best source for the most up-to-date information.

Further information about the intent and purpose of CMAMAS Sales and of this column can be found in the first appearance of this column in the December 2002 issue of the newsletter.

Contacting the CMAMAS Sales Team

We can be contacted either by e-mail at the CMAMAS Sales e-mail address:

cmsales@memeshadow.net

or by letter at the club mailing address in the masthead. Under normal circumstances, we reply promptly i.e. within 24 hours for e-mail and within 1-2 days for letter mail. However, if you, for example, read in the news that a major power failure has caused a blackout affecting 50 million people in the northeastern USA and Ontario, you can expect that it will take us a bit longer than normal to reply, and that sleuthing out private addresses, phone and fax numbers will do nothing to speed up the process.

Christmas Ordering Deadline

It feels odd to think about Christmas while we're still sweltering under the late summer sun, but this issue is the last chance to make a timely announcement of the ordering deadline. To ensure

arrival before Christmas, orders with correct payment must be received by the Treasurer at the club mailing address in the masthead by Wed. 10 December 2003. Orders received after that date will be processed in the new year. Also, orders posted on or after 1 December must be paid by



money order to be processed before Christmas, because there won't be sufficient time for cheques to clear otherwise.

Backorders and Spring 2003 Bulk Order

Backorders and the current Bulk Order are now being processed in parallel. Those Bulk'03 purchasers for whom we have an e-mail address on file have been receiving updates by e-mail as news unfolds, so I'll summarize briefly for those purchasers without e-mail. We have received and processed a number of consignments from our repro suppliers throughout July and August, and have begun shipping individual parcels. At the time of this writing a further consignment has just been received, and most likely by the time you read this further individual parcels will have been shipped.

Meccano Sets

The shipment of "Design" sets which had been promised us in June still has not arrived at the time of this writing, so we'll have to ask those of you who have placed pre-orders to be patient. I am just as eager as anyone else to see and build with these new sets, so I share your frustration!

Due to the same shipping delay, we are also still waiting for sets #9550 (50 Model) and #0507 (Train), but we were in the meantime able to stock a quantity of #7080 sets (100th Anniversary).

We continue to accept pre-orders for the "Design", #9550, and #0507 sets, and regular orders for sets in stock (see previous issue or the club website for further info about sets in stock). Like regular orders, pre-orders must be accompanied by correct payment. The difference between pre-orders and regular orders is that processing time for pre-orders is longer than the usual 4-6 weeks because you are ordering items which we do not yet have.

Meccano Spares and Books and CMAMAS Merchandise

Please see the previous issue and/or the club website.

Ordering Info

Complete ordering information is always available on the club website under the heading "For Sale through CMAMAS". Those without web access can request paper copies of the various price lists and ordering information by indicating their requirements on their membership renewal forms.

The basic guidelines provided in the previous newsletter still hold, but I'd like to add some further S&H guidelines. For Canadian addresses outside ON and QC, an order of even one largish set requires an S&H allowance of at least \$20, and an increase of \$10 per set for further sets. In this context, "largish" refers above all to the dimensions of the box, and only secondarily to the weight, and specifically includes the #6520 20-Model set onwards. Please keep in mind that you lose nothing if you remit large S&H sums because only the amount actually required will be charged, and the

surplus remains on your account. Remitting insufficient S&H funds causes processing of your order to be suspended until we can contact you and request and receive further funds.

Lynn Krause (cmsales@memeshadow.net)



The New Design 2 Meccano Set

While attending an astronomy conference in Sydney Australia, I checked the local shops for Meccano. I was pleased to find sets available at Dick Smith Electronics, the Australian equivalent of Radio Shack, and at HobbyCo, which also sells separate parts from the mid 1990's. Thus I was able to purchase the Design 2 set numbered 5700, the first of the introductions for 2003. I paid \$41.50 Aus = \$39.45 Cdn. With new sets appearing every year, Meccano under the Nikko ownership clearly is alive and well.

Furthermore, this latest series of 5700, 6700 and 7700 sets has some new metal parts. One is a triangular plate, 1 1/2" on each side, with a modest curvature corresponding to a radius of about 2". The other new parts represent a major innovation for Meccano. They are perforated strips of the standard 1/2" width and 1/2" hole spacing, but made of spring steel described as "molecular memory steel". The 3 1/2" strips are 0.4 mm thick and the 2 1/2" ones are only 0.3 mm compared with 0.8 mm for the normal strips.

Like any spring they must be secured at both ends, but once released they immediately become flat again. Meccano flexible plates will return to their original shape after mild bending, but these new strips will not take a permanent bend unless the radius of curvature is less than about 1/2". Although the 5100 set has only 3 of the triangular plates and 2 each of the 2 1/2" and 3 1/2" flexible strips, it convincingly demonstrates how well these parts can produce realistic curved surfaces on a helicopter and sports car.

These parts in the 5700 set bring new colours of sand and maroon to the Meccano system, though other strips in that set are zinc plated and the plastic parts are orange. The maroon is close to the dark red of 1927 to 1934. The set includes 4 standard triangular flexible plates 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" also in maroon, and made of steel rather than plastic. The common 7/32" Allan bolt is now zinc plated instead of black and hence matches the nuts and longer bolts.

I had one problem constructing the models in the manual. In the helicopter, I was unable to stretch the 6 1/2" circumference driving band between the 1/2" and 1/4" pulleys separated by 6" to connect the rotor and the propeller on the boom.

Don Morton

Disposal of Don Pearson's Collection at The Hobby Show

We have been asked to dispose of the late Don Pearson's collection at "The Hobby Show" this year. What we propose to do is sell it off in units of to a maximum of \$100.00, in a similar fashion to that which we used when we sold Terry Stewart's collection, until it has all gone (or until there are no more buyers). The collection has a reasonable number of rarer pieces, notably some large circular parts from Exacto, and quite a few obsolete items, notably Loaded Sacks (the pricing of which will be based on recent e-Bay realisations). For anyone whose collection of copies of "Constructor Quarterly" lacks the early issues, the complete run of the first twenty-five issues will be available for purchase as one unit – the price of this, however, which has not yet been set, will be considerably higher than \$100.00. As regards the cost of the regular parts, we will use the current Canadian prices of Exacto parts as the base, and charge a fixed percentage of those prices.

There will be one significant difference, however, in that we will recognize those who have regularly exhibited at "The Hobby Show," or at other shows, by giving them priority when it comes to selection. Anyone who wishes to participate in the sale is asked to register his/her interest with the President in advance by e-mail, telephone, or mail by November 7th. There will be two pools of buyers: Pool A will consist of those participants who are (a) subscribers to "Canadian MeccaNotes," and (b) who have exhibited in a minimum of three shows anywhere in the world (two shows for anyone under sixteen years of age). Pool B will consist of anyone who does not meet the second of these requirements. The names will go into separate hats, and they will be drawn by lot. Pool A participants will get first choice, followed by Pool B. If there is still Meccano left, Pool A will get a second chance, but in reverse order, followed by Pool B the same way.

Part 19b, 3" Pulley - The Liverpool Years or - How to Date Parts

Over the years I have built a deep interest in establishing exact dates for the introduction, or modification, of specific parts within the Meccano system. Why I find this interesting I can't say, but then can the barbed wire collector or the authority Amazonian Fruit Bats say why they are drawn to their particular interest? Mountaineers climb mountains because they are there and potholers delve into the deepest holes to see how far they can get. We all have something of interest, mine happens to be dating little pre-formed pieces of metal.

I am just starting on a project to document the history of Part 19b, the 3" Pulley so I thought that I would compose this article at the same time detailing all the steps I go through to reach the final product. To set the scene. First and foremost you must not start with a preconceived idea regarding a date. You can have a rough idea but the final outcome must be confirmed by research. There are very few things that you can rely upon. For Parliamentary research you can rely upon Hansard; for word definitions the Oxford Dictionary. I find that any historical work by Pierre Burton to be researched to the finest detail and reliable. In the Meccano field we have the work of Bert Love and Jim Gamble in the New Cavendish Book, Vol.6. But even when using any reference it is always best to double check as all of these sources are human compiled and are, therefore, subject to error remote though it may be.

If you want to perform any kind of dating you need plenty of ammunition, that is to say a bulging file of original literature and, of course, the inevitable New Cavendish Book and a stack of Meccano Magazines. Other material produced by Meccano groups is also very useful and I find that a set of the Midlands Guild Newsmags is one of the best sources of odd miscellaneous and very interesting material. Then there are the G. Maurice Morris publications from the old Meccanoman's club. Especially interesting is the Meccanoman's Journal and the Development of the Meccano System by Bob Hauton and Alf Hindmarsh. One has to be very wary of GMM publications as he does include speculation and guesses without warning the reader. Take all his dates with suspicion until proven, but by all means use them as a

starting point.

So there is the pile of literature, various books and magazines to work with. There are a few golden rules to go by:

1. The Meccano Magazine is notoriously late in making announcements. Don't rely on MM dates as starting points.
2. If a modified part appears in an MM model this can only be considered the latest date of introduction, not the first. The same applies to price lists etc.
3. Don't rely on any illustration as a last date for a certain part. Old printing blocks are frequently used, sometimes for years after a change of design or finish.
4. Two changes rarely happen at the same time. If you see this in your research, check again.
5. A dated guarantee sticker in a set box only gives the earliest date the set could have been packed. It is no guarantee for the date of the parts.
6. You can divide the Meccano history into several convenient periods.
 - o Nickel plate 1901-1926
 - o Red/Green 1926-1935
 - o Blue/Gold 1934-1942
 - o Red/Green 1945-1964
 - o Black/Yellow/Aluminum 1964-1970
 - o Blue/Yellow/Zinc 1970-1978
 - o Blue/Yellow/Dark Blue 1978-1979

This is just a very simplified overview as periods overlap and there are subtle colour changes within periods. It is simply a good starting point.

7. Beware of refinished parts. Some home refinishers can do an almost factory perfect job.

The narrative will now be in the present tense as I am going to describe each step of the research process as it happens. As a result I have no idea how this article will progress, we'll just have to see.

Step 1

I have set up a small card table and will now go to my parts drawer and pull out one of each type of 3" Pulley I can find. I now have 11 different types which I am lining up in what I believe to be chronological order.

Step 2

Examination of the parts reveals two glaring

discrepancies. I have a nickel plate version with a 1/2" diameter boss while the next in line is dark red with a normal boss. If this is so then it means that the change to red came at the same time as the boss change. Again I am looking at a Black Deep Grooved pulley next to a Blue Shallow Grooved pulley indicating that the change in groove came at the same time as a change to blue. Both of these situations are a Rule 4 violation. Back down to the parts drawer and sure enough I have found a red version with a 1/2" diameter boss and a Narrow Groove Black pulley (how did I miss this one in the first place!).

I now have 13 pulleys lined up but here is the first anomaly. I have a green one and three different shades of red. The red ones fit into the 1926-1935 period but the green one must remain on its own for the time being.

Step 3

I now make a table and put provisional dates to each type - see "Table 1 First Draft".

Now that I have the first listing I need to examine all my remaining pulleys to ensure that there are none missing. Remember that the date in this table is still only an educated guess and needs to be refined. Two more examples found so I'll identify these on my table with an "A" suffix. Next to examine other lists to see if anyone else has turned up a variety. I have seen red with black rims from a 1949 set and DMS lists a red with green rims. Tom McCallum reports in Newsmag 57 of July 1990 that there was a black version in the Inventor's Outfit from 1919 to 1923. I'll add these three to the list with a "B" suffix. Glancing at the table there is one glaring anomaly. No. 6 has the post WWII narrow groove, yet it is in the 1926-32 dark red colour. Closer examination reveals that the width of the groove actually falls between the pre-war wide and the post-war narrow. Is it a manufacturing defect in which the two plates have been incorrectly formed creating a narrow groove. If this is so then the overall diameter of the wheel should be slightly larger. Measurement reveals that it is actually slightly smaller which means that it is

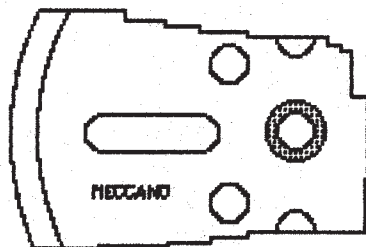
Table 1 First Draft

	Wheel	Boss Type	Approx. Date
Sample 1	Nickel Plate, cut out quadrants	Standard, single tapped 3/8" long	1915
Sample 2	Black Painted, cut out quadrants	Standard, single tapped, 5/16" long	
Sample 2B	Black Painted, slots	Standard, single tapped, 5/16" long	1919
Sample 3	Nickel Plate, slots	Standard, single tapped 3/8" long	1920
Sample 4	Nickel Plate, slots	1/2", single tapped 3/8" long	1924
Sample 5	Dark Red, wide groove	1/2", single tapped 3/8" long	1926
Sample 6	Dark Red, narrow groove	Standard, single tapped, 3/8" long	1927
Sample 6A	Dark Red, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1928
Sample 7	Light Red, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1933
Sample 7A	Light Red, wide groove	Standard, mazac, double tapped, 5/16" long	1933
Sample 7B	Light Red, Green Rim wd. grve.	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1933
Sample 8	Dark Blue, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1934
Sample 8B	Light Red, Black Rim wd. grve.	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1940
Sample 9	Black, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1945
Sample 10	Black, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1948
Sample 11	Light Blue, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1958
Sample 12	Yellow, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1978
Sample 13	Green, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	?

definitely a variety. It also has that extra long boss. Close scrutiny of the colour reveals that this is a slightly different shade, it lacks the lustre of the other dark red wheels. Also the propriety markings are different. While the samples both before and after this odd-ball are marked "Fabrique en Angleterre" sample 6 is simply marked Meccano, and in a different place to all the other samples. The odd-ball is marked as shown below.

Now here's a rule to remember. Don't forget where all your parts are stored. I have transgressed this rule as I do have some 3" Pulleys with tires still on them

- you just can't get the old tires off without breaking them as they get so hard and brittle over time. These particular pulleys are stored with the tires; another trip down to the parts



storage cabinet. I do have two more identical pulleys complete with cement hard tires and the mystery is solved. The tires are marked "Dunlop Balloon Meccano made in U.S.A." This type of wheel came from the Meccano factory in Elizabeth, New Jersey so it shouldn't be in an article titled "The Liverpool Years" - I'll now delete it from the list. Now while I was looking at the markings on the wheels I found another glaring anomaly. Sample 7 which I had tentatively dated as 1933 is marked "Meccano Made in England". This is a post war marking! Back to the literature. The unfortunate thing here is that immediate post-war colour brochures are very rare, if they exist at all. I don't have one, nor have I ever seen one. I do have a Canadian list of November 1947 which very clearly illustrates a set 3A in, naturally enough, black and white. The clarity of the illustration shows that the 3" Pulley is the same shade as the small flanged plate, part 51, and is clearly lighter than the Double Angle Strips. Next to the 3" Pulley is the familiar tinplate roadwheel, part 187. The black rim is very clearly shown and contrasts with the red centre - a centre which is the same shade as

Table 2 Second Draft

	Wheel	Boss Type	Approx. Date
Sample 1	Nickel Plate, cut out quadrants	Standard, single tapped 3/8" long	1915
Sample 2	Black Painted, cut out quadrants	Standard, single tapped, 5/16" long	1915
Sample 3	Black Painted, slots	Standard, single tapped, 5/16" long	1919
Sample 4	Nickel Plate, slots	Standard, single tapped 3/8" long	1920
Sample 5	Nickel Plate, slots	1/2", single tapped 3/8" long	1924
Sample 6	Dark Red, wide groove	1/2", single tapped 3/8" long	1926
Sample 7	Dark Red, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1928
Sample 8	Light Red, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1933
Sample 9	Light Red, wide groove	Standard, mazac, double tapped, 5/16" long	1933
Sample 10	Light Red, Green Rim wd. grve.	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1933
Sample 11	Dark Blue, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1934
Sample 12	Light Red, Black Rim wd. grve.	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1940
Sample 13	Light Red, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1945-47
Sample 14	Black, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1945
Sample 15	Black, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1948
Sample 16	Light Blue, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1958
Sample 17	Yellow, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1978
Sample 18	Green, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	?

our 3" Pulley. To fit all of these criteria the 3" Pulley must be in red. There is also a model dump truck and the 3" Pulley shown on this model is clearly a black one. This would date sample 7 as 1945-1947. I'll amend the list now. A quick check in the parts storage cabinet reveals that I do have a light red, wide groove, brass boss version simply marked Meccano to fill the 1933 spot.

Step 4 Reorganizing

Time to reorganize the table into proper chronological order and reassign the sample numbers. From this point on in the narrative I will be referring to Table 2 - see "Table 2 Second Draft".

This is a much clearer list, therefore, easier to work from. Now if you have been following this narrative closely and have observed my few simple rules you will have noticed that between varieties 6 and 7 there is a clear transgression of rule 4. Sample 6 has a 1/2" single tapped boss, while sample 7 has a standard double tapped boss. Rule 4 indicates that there should be a sample with either a double tapped 1/2" boss, or one with a standard single tapped boss. There is a possible explanation here. When double tapping became standard Meccano Ltd. may have found it inconvenient to double tap a wide boss and so decided to fit standard bosses to 3" Pulleys at the same time. Nevertheless we must keep the possibility of an intermediate variety in mind.

Step 5 Fine Tuning the Dates

This is the most difficult stage of all. I'll take each sample, or samples in turn.

Samples 1 and 2 - Nickel Plate / Black Paint, Cut Out Quadrants, Standard Boss

If the CMN Editor has published my article on the introduction of part 19b you will be aware that it took 6 pages of text and many hours of research to show that this part had its origins in 1915. I don't intend to repeat all that text here. So when were these finishes applied. This is almost impossible to accurately research. First of all illustrations of this part are non-existent prior to 1918, after which they are line drawings. Just because the artist draws the part without any shading doesn't necessarily mean that it is in nickel finish. I have an Inventor's Outfit from 1919 which has this variety painted black. My Inventor's Outfit of 1915 has the Spoked Wheels, also painted black. The only conclusion I can make is that when the Spoked

Wheel was replaced by 19b in the Inventor's Outfit the finish was changed to black paint. Tom McCallum states that this occurred in late 1919 but personally I feel that the date should be early 1918. If this is so the initial batches of 19b were in nickel plate and later versions in black. As I mentioned in my article on the introduction of part 19b it seems that there were supply problems for this part between 1915 and 1917 which would account for the comparative rarity of sample 1 in nickel plate finish. From the known facts we can surmise:

Nickel Plate finish spanned 1915 to 1918

Black Painted spanned 1918 to 1919

It could be argued that the black painted version was only packed in the Inventor's Outfits and that the nickel plate version was available as a spare part. The only problem with this Dargument is that the nickel version is too scarce for this scenario.

Sample 3 - Black Paint, Slots, Standard Single Tapped Boss

This is the version reported by Tom McCallum in Newsmag no. 57 of July 1990, as being packed in the Inventor's Outfits from 1919 to 1923. I now dig out this copy for detailed reference. I have never seen this part but I assume that Tom has so the only question is the introduction date, it's either 1919 or 1920. My library of literature is very sparse between the years 1918 and 1920 which is just the period in question. I'll leave this date open for the moment as sometimes the pieces fall into place as other dates are determined.

Sample 4 - Nickel Plated, Slots, Standard Single Tapped Boss

I have a solitary specimen in my collection and it is worth careful examination. It is marked "Meccano" but missing is the phrase "Fabrique en Angleterre". From late 1919 a great many Meccano parts, but not all, were so marked. As this part does not have this marking it could well be from the period up to late 1919. This, then ties in the slotted version to 1919 and confirms Tom's dating of 1919 for sample 3.

Sample 5 - Nickel Plated, Slots, 1/2" Single Tapped Boss

This sample is much more plentiful than sample 4 with a standard boss. Leafing slowly through all the literature at hand the first instance I can find of the large boss is in a 1922 manual. Model 307, Oscillating Steam Engine clearly shows the 3" Pulley with a 1/2" boss. Given that it takes time

to produce a manual it would date sample 5 to early 1922. By establishing a start date it also gives us an end date for sample 4 which would be early 1922.

Sample 6 - Dark Red, Slots, 1/2" Single Tapped Boss

This is a much rarer variety than sample 5 so I expect the time span to be correspondingly shorter. Coloured parts were announced in September 1926 but it wasn't until 1927 that wheels began to receive an enamel finish. By mid-1927 Meccano's advertising clearly indicated that 3" Pulleys were in an enamel finish so, presumably, this would date sample 6 to early 1927. The next task is to discover when the 1/2" boss was superseded by the standard boss. The table indicates that this was at the same time as double tapping so this is an excellent starting point. I am starting to carefully examine the pages of the Meccano Magazine starting with the January 1927 issue. I have just spent the better part of an hour carefully examining the MM pages and the most definitive answer comes in the January 1928 issue. On page 51 the rear wheel of the Motor Chassis model clearly displays the small boss. The wheel is fixed boss outwards as there is a brake assembly on the inside (the February 1928 MM shows this) and an inner facing boss would interfere with the mechanism. Also in the January MM the boiler is announced and a small model shows the small boss 3" Pulley as a flywheel. As it takes time to set up the MM it would be safe to say that the small boss appeared in late 1927.

Sample 7 Dark Red, Standard Double Tapped Boss

Spotting the double tapping in wheels is extremely difficult as the tappings are on opposite sides of the wheel. I'll first continue through the MM for 1928, then if I have no luck will tackle the manuals. Another hour or so later I have found in my manual of 1928 model 2.42, Fire Escape which shows a close up of the rear wheels. The set screw is facing down and forward leaving the open tapped hole of the wheel facing the camera. This gives early 1928 as a definite date for double tapping in wheels. There is a short period here between late 1927 and early 1928 when a single tapped standard boss version could have exist but it seems unlikely.

Sample 8 Light Red, Standard Double Tapped Boss

This is easier to date as in 1933 there was a

definite change of colours, the reds and greens becoming much brighter. Red and Green Meccano was phased out by 1936 but for some reason certain circular parts retained a red finish right up to the end of production on 1st January 1942. I'll check the Cavendish book just to confirm my memory.

Sample 9 Light Red, Standard Double Tapped Boss in Mazac

I use the word Mazac as this was a material Meccano used during the 1930's. The bosses of these wheel are a light grey alloy which seems quite soft. The dating is a major puzzle. The red is the same shade as that of the 1933-42 period and the two I have are clearly marked "Meccano". This could be the same material which causes so much metal fatigue in some Dinky Toys and the Princess Elizabeth locomotive introduced in 1937. I check the indexes of all the literature I have but there is no reference to this part or to mazac. All I can do here is assign a mid 1930's date with a ? alongside.

Sample 10 Light Red, Green Rims Standard Double Tapped Boss

This must be the most elusive of all the variations. I have never seen one, nor ever heard of anyone actually seeing one. It was reported in the 1972 Bob Hutton / Alf Hindmarsh publication, The Development of the Meccano System. At the time this work was being compiled I corresponded with Bob Hutton and he assured me that no part entered the work unless it could be confirmed by at least two independent sources. So there it ends, at Bob's date of 1933.

Sample 11 Dark Blue, Standard Boss

This one is easy. The dark blue was announced in the December 1934 Meccano Magazine but for some strange reason Meccano Ltd. packed the dark blue wheels in the Red/Green sets and the red wheels in the Blue/Gold sets. The Red/Green sets were last advertised in 1936 so we can assume that the blue 3" Pulley faded with them.

Sample 12 Light Red, Black Rims, Standard Boss

Another rather elusive variation but I have actually seen this type. It was packed in a 1940 set 10. The colour scheme had a very short life as a price list dated August 1940 lists part 19b, among many others, as temporarily out of production.

Sample 13 Light Red, Wide Groove,

Standard Boss

As I related earlier in this text I discovered this variation while researching other red varieties. It clearly dates from the immediate post-war era and was changed to the familiar black probably in mid 1947. In the New Cavendish Book, Vol. 6 there is a colour plate showing a 1947 Set 7 which includes the black 3" Pulley. I check the book to confirm. My list of November 1947 would take a little time to prepare so the change to black would seem to be in mid-1947. The red pulley would then have a time span of 2 years, from 1945 to 1947.

Sample 14 Black, Wide Groove, Standard Boss

The change to black is fairly easy to trace, but the design change to a narrow groove is much more difficult to ascertain. I have to rely upon memory here. For my 21st Birthday my father presented me with a Meccano Set 10; I still have this set and the manuals. The Set 10 manual is dated 1949, while the others are 1950 issues. This

would mean that the set was packed in 1950 and it certainly did not contain the wide rim 3" Pulleys. From the evidence of a still existing mid 1950 set 10 we can safely say that the design change took place prior to mid 1950.

Sample 15 Black, Narrow Groove, Standard Boss

The narrow grooved black version was the current design from 1950 until 1958 when the colour was changed to a light blue. I turn to my collection of 1950's colour price lists for confirmation.

Sample 16 Blue, Narrow Groove, Standard Boss

Blue 3" Pulleys had a long life. While the Meccano system underwent several different colour schemes the 3" Pulley maintained its blue coat. Finally in 1977, after a run of 21 years the blue period came to an end. No need to check this one as I clearly remember the date.

Sample 17 Yellow, Narrow Groove,

Table 3 The Final Listing

Wheel	Boss Type	Date
Nickel Plate, cut out quadrants	Standard, single tapped 3/8" long	1915-1918
Black Painted, cut out quadrants	Standard, single tapped, 5/16" long	1918-1919
Black Painted, slots	Standard, single tapped, 5/16" long	1919-1920
Nickel Plate, slots	Standard, single tapped 3/8" long	1919-1922
Nickel Plate, slots	1/2", single tapped 3/8" long	1922-1927
Dark Red, wide groove	1/2", single tapped 3/8" long	1927
Dark Red, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1928-1933
Light Red, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1933-1940
Light Red, Green Rim wd. grve.	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1933
Dark Blue, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1934-1936
Light Red, wide groove	Standard, mazac, double tapped, 5/16" long	1937 ?
Nickel Plate, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1926-late 1930's
Light Red, Black Rim wd. grve.	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1940
Light Red, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1945-1947
Black, wide groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1947-1950
Black, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1950-1958
Light Blue, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1958-1977
Yellow, narrow groove	Standard, double tapped, 5/16" long	1977-1979

Standard Boss

In 1976 Meccano Ltd. introduced the Crane Multikit which contained the 3" Pulley in yellow. The following year the entire range of Meccano sets was revised and a final colour scheme arrived. The zinc plating gave way to blue enamel and the yellow jacketed 3" Pulley became standard fare until the factory closed in 1979.

Sample 18 Green, Narrow Groove, Standard Boss

This only leaves this odd-ball to slot into its respective place, but where? First of all I need to verify that it is a genuine Meccano part which has not been home refinished. I have five examples in green and four of the five are marked "Meccano" in the position of the mid to late 1930's. The finish looks to be factory applied yet it lacks the crispness of a Liverpool product. There are numerous scratches on the surface which go down to the bare metal so there is no under layer in a different colour. Being double tapped they are not nickel versions overpainted. The non-Liverpool look may be a clue; they could be from the U.S. factory - more research is required. An hour later. There are articles regarding the American Meccano operations in both the Meccanoman's Journal and DMS but neither sees fit to mention colour schemes. The more I look at the rough finish the more I feel that this is an American product from the New Haven, Connecticut factory. I have seen a great deal of the Elizabeth, New Jersey produced parts and the finish is of a high quality and up to 1928 the 3" Pulley was red. For these reasons I am going to say that this is an American product of the early 1930's. As a non-Liverpool part it won't feature in the final list in this article.

1926-1930

This section is out of order in the text, but as I am writing this as a current ongoing research project it must stay here. During this period Meccano Ltd., upon request, would supply parts in a nickel plate finish. There is, therefore, one more possible example - a 3" Pulley with wide groove standard double tapped boss in nickel plate finish. This type does exist as I've seen it. The final list will include this item.

Step 6 The final Listing of Varieties

See "Table 3 The Final Listing".

? The actual date for the mazac boss is unknown. 1937 is probably a mid-point.

Step 7 Part 19b in the Sets

Finally it is a fairly simple task to sift through the manuals to establish the contents in each set. Each change is represented with a separate table. Any gaps in my collection can be filled by referring to the New Cavendish Book Vol. 6.

See "Table 4 In The Sets".

Conclusion

So there it is. A history of the 3" Pulley with all the steps I took to compile it. There are still a couple of loose ends to tie up. Is the green pulley really an American product? What is the true date for the mazac boss? And is there a variety with a small single tapped boss from 1927? Probably somewhere in a collectors parts drawer is yet another variety waiting to be slotted into its rightful place. Finally, I must clear up and put away all the material. Lying around I have a drawer full of 3" Pulleys, a card table with about 30 of them, 4 with tires, sitting on it. A stack of Meccano Magazines, mostly 1927 and 1928; three file boxes of manuals dating between 1920 and 1950; a stack of Newsmags and CMN's; Three volumes of the New Cavendish Books; Three large binders of advertising material; DMS, the Meccanoman's Guide and Supplements and several binders of the MJ; Two Inventor's Outfits and my trusty Oxford Concise Dictionary. All have to find their way back to their proper place.

Addendum

As I decided to write this article exactly in order of my research it stands to reason that any additional information must come as a form of addendum. Under the normal chain of events I would go back to the text and insert the new information and/or correct the text as necessary.

So what is the new information. I was scanning the New Cavendish Books Vol. 6 for any reference to the Gears Outfit of 1949 when I came across a small snippet regarding Mazac bosses. The reference is in regard to one of Meccano's war time advertisements but the text reads "By 'scraping the barrel', some sets were issued for sale in U.K. during 1943, with hybrid outfits' of gold strips and girders, mixtures of blue and red plates, red/black tin roadwheels and most wheel bosses in MAZAC, showing bad 'splitting' in the peening over process." That would confirm my suspicion regarding the dating of my red wheel with the Mazac boss. I tentatively dated it as 1937 but a more realistic date perhaps would a bit later, possibly 1939 - 1940.

Now why wasn't Mazac listed in the book's index? If I have one complaint about the New Cavendish Book, Vo. 6 it is the hopelessly inadequate index. So many times I have wanted to look up a particular part, which I know is in the book because I've seen it on previous occasions, only to be frustrated due to no reference in the index.

Two other notes to add the the outfit contents list. The Elektrikit of 1963 - 1970 included one 3" Pulley. In 1970 the Elektrikit parts were added to the standard set 4 to become set 4EL. The Power Drive Outfit of 1965 - 1970 included two 3" Pulleys. This set was actually a regular Set 4 with a motor/6 speed gearbox included.

Ivor Setten

Table 4 In The Sets

Year	Inventor's Outfit (A)											
1918-1923	4											
Note: The Inventor's Outfit received the suffix A in 1919.												
Year	Set 000	Set 00	Set 0	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Set 6	Set 7		
1922-1927	*	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	4		
1928-1935	-	-	-	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		
Note: Outfit 000 available 1931-1936												
	Set 0	Set A	Set B	Set C	Set D	Set E	Set F	Set G	Set H	Set K	Set L	
1934-1936	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	
	Set 00	Set 0	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Set 6	Set 7	Set 8	Set 9	Set 10
1937-1942	*	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	6
1945	*	-	-	-	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1946	*	-	-	-	-	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1947	*	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	N/A	N/A
1948-1949	*	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	N/A
1950-1954	*	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	6
1954-1962	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	6
1962-1970	*	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	6
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Set 6	Set 7	Set 8	Set 9	Set 10		
1970-1977	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2	6		
	Set A	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4	Set 5	Set S	Set I	Set 9	Set 10		
1978-1980	-	-	-	-	2	2	0	2	2	6		
MULTIKITS CRANE												
1976-1979	1											
* Set did not exist in this time period.												

Peg and Lantern Gears Catchy Contrivances: Not-So-Standard Mechanisms

contrivance n. act of contriving; deceitful practice; invention; mechanical device (Concise Oxford Dictionary)

From the time of Leonardo da Vinci, gears had been made of wood, with peg teeth. Small gears (pinions) often had teeth of rod shape, held in discs at each end — hence resembling an old-fashioned lantern. This model shows such gearing made as a right-angled drive in Meccano.

The two gears are carried on crank handles supported on trunnions, one lengthwise and one across a baseplate. The smaller gear is made of six long threaded pins (115), the threaded ends fastened to a 1-inch 6-hole bush wheel (518) using hex nuts. (Note that the clearance is too tight for square nuts.) Pins in the six holes must be tightened as far apart as possible, so that a Meccano rod can slide between them. The second 1-inch 6-hole wheel is slid onto the tips of the pins. The mating gear is an 8-hole bush wheel (24) with eight 3/8-inch bolts projecting on the face. Washers on the crank handles should be added to put the "outer end" 1-inch wheel (at the tips of the long threaded pins) just opposite the shaft carrying the larger bush wheel, with the bolt "teeth" on the larger wheel projecting into the lantern pinion just the thickness of a rod (about 4mm). The larger gear will drive the pinion; but the pinion will jam against the square ends of the "peg" teeth if one tries to drive the large gear by turning the pinion.

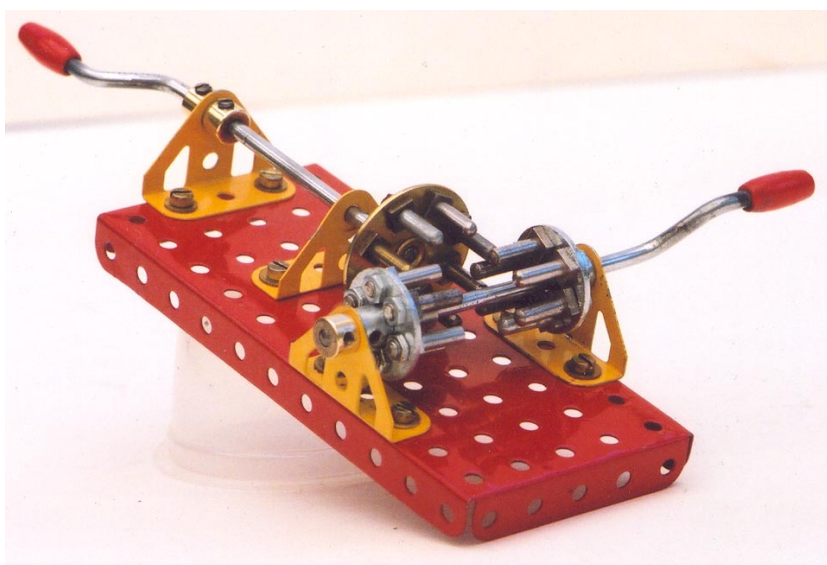
If short threaded pins (115) are used in both the large and small bush wheels, preferably pins with round (hemispherical) ends, the drive can be made reversible. Pins should not project into the lantern farther than the thickness of a rod, or

the pin would snag on the next pin as it approaches. Two open-faced 6-tooth "peg" gears can be placed on one shaft, facing each other, one loose on the shaft and held in place by a small (Aeroplane) collar (MW 59a), the pegs on both engaging those on the larger gear. The smaller gears will then rotate in opposite directions, and the assembly can be driven from either crank handle.

Parts required: 19g x 2; 24 x 1; 51 x 1; 59 x 2; 111c x 8; 115a x 6; 126 x 4; 518 x 2

Don Redmond

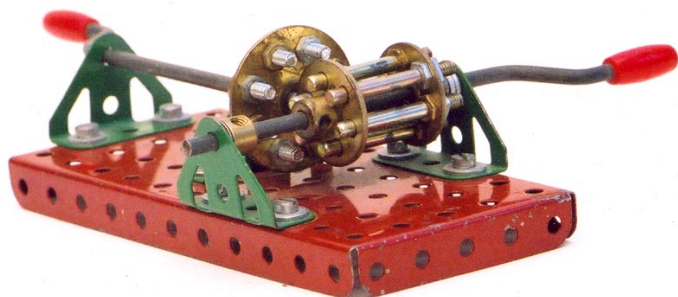
Mechanism by Hubert Hogle



Obituary – Andreas Konkoly

One of the most prolific modelbuilders in the Meccano fraternity, Andreas Konkoly, who lived in Hungary, passed away on June 18th 2003. Andreas built, and subsequently photographed and wrote up - in his own unique version of English - over 200 different models. Several of these models were featured in the Canadian Meccano literature, all with rewritten instructions, specifically the Hungarian Steam Engine, Rotating Pendulum Clock, Maudsley's Paddle Engine and Universal Design Maker. Many other models were featured in the Meccano literature published in England, with the Runnymede Meccano Guild Newsletter providing the bulk of the models - and all printed with Andreas' original instructions.

Colin Hoare



Modern Meccano in the US

The history of Meccano in the US dates back to the days of Frank Hornby. It has been researched by many, recorded in print or on the Internet, and discussed via the cyber Meccano 'club' known as Spanner. One more chapter

the rights to the name Erector, and their products and catalogs for the US market bore the name 'Meccano Erector'. The 1991 US catalog announces on its cover 'Erector set is back'. In 1995, 'Meccano' was dropped as a prefix, and the moniker 'Erector' has continued to this date. It is to be noted that the product sold in the US since the 1990s has been purely Meccano in character and form, and only Erector in name. This is very fortunate for Meccano enthusiasts such as me in this Meccano outpost, while perhaps a disappointment for the classic Erector fan.

The names of famous Erector sets of yesteryear have been used by Meccano to introduce special sets for the US market; I suppose to create a sense of nostalgia as a marketing tool. For example, the 1995 Erector catalog lists the "Ferris Wheel" set 8256. (It seems this set will make its appearance again later this year as set 8258 in what looks like a metal storage case with handle and the original Erector logo.) Similarly the term "Master Builder Set" was used by classic Erector. Meccano listed such a set in the same 1995 catalog as set 7064, but it has no resemblance to its classic namesake. It was packaged in the plastic storage case 5215. This set was not restricted to the US market; however, it was described as "US Fire Truck" in the 1998 Meccano dealer catalog. (Please note that my references to catalogs in this article are based on Erector and Meccano catalogs in my possession. Since I have a few gaps in my collection, it is likely that a particular item I have attributed to a particular dated catalog may have actually appeared for the first time in an earlier catalog.)

I have also noted some differences in the names used for the same sets in the US and non-US

about this history needs to be written – about Meccano in the US in more recent times since the French unit of Meccano took over the reign of this esteemed brand. The following is a small beginning via an abridged version of such a 'chapter', the focus being on the sets introduced specifically for the US market.

Meccano has not been a well known brand name in the US as it has been elsewhere in the world; that honor went to Erector, its clone and competitor. By the time the French Meccano company re-introduced Meccano to the US market in 1991 (or thereabout), Erector was not in production in the US anymore. Meccano then bought





markets. The serially sequential sets 1 through 4 were called "Basic" in the 1991 Meccano catalog, while sets 5 and 6 were named "Techno". Of these, the latter sets in the US market were called "Advanced". The futuristic space-age sets introduced in the 1997 catalog were known by the name "Mission: XR" in the US market, whereas the name elsewhere was "Mission: The Universe". During the short life of this series, the various sets available under the Meccano name were XR Shuttle (4800), Energy Station (4805), Observation Unit (4806), Defender Unit (4810), Meta-Cruiser (4820), Detector Unit (4830), Interstellar Cargo (4831), Space X-Plorer (4840) and Space Base (4850). To my knowledge, of this series only the sets 4810, 4820, 4830, 4840 and 4850 were marketed in the US, and with the same names. I also have in my possession the Power Probe set packaged (for a particular US store as told to me by the US dealer Louis Boselli) in a plastic storage case of the junior variety. It does not have a number on the case, which I haven't yet opened. But based on the parts count, I don't think it is any different content-wise from set 4830.

The practice of selling the same set in a slightly different package for a specific store or purpose is not uncommon in the current US Erector market. For example, in 2000 the Internet store KBKids.com sold set 5402 under the name “Adventure”. It was the same as the Basic set 2 mentioned above with the same manu-

als, except it came in the plastic storage case 5215. In 1998, the famed Toys R Us stores in the US sold a '50 Year Special Edition' set 8504 with the original Erector logo on the box. The manuals in this set were the same as for set 4 of the then-current "Evolution" series. (Could the matter of using the original Erector logo be another ploy to capture the attention of adults in the US who would relate to it better than any other logo?) The last US example I can cite in this matter was brought to my attention by the Portuguese Spanner Oscar Felgueiras. This is set 5905 of 1995 timeframe, and is essentially set 4065, listed in the 1993 Erector catalog as the "All Terrain Vehicles" set of the "Dynamic" series. This is again packaged with case 5215 in a cardboard container.

The one exception I know of where it was not a matter of slightly different packaging is the set 3* (8403) sold by the Kmart stores. As the number suggests, this set was derived from its contemporary set 3 (0403). I compared my sets 3 and 3* of 1993 and 1994 respectively, both of which were bought by me opened and mostly unused. The containers for both the sets show some of the same models; 3* shows a few with shock absorbers, which set 3 did not contain. The 3* box came without a flap, and its bottom shows its manual, shock absorbers as well as advertises the power tool and storage case. The inner Styrofoam trays of the two sets differ as well—that of set 3* is ‘general purpose’, whereas set 3 had one specific for containing its parts and carried a transparent plastic lid. My set 3* did not have the small parts transparent plastic



box, while set 3 did. Another difference is in the manuals. Set 3 had the usual introduction manual accompanied by one each for models for sets 1 to 3. On the other hand, set 3* had one thick manual containing introduction, un-numbered but labeled parts illustrations on the back, and a numbered parts list on the inside front cover.

Besides there being a quantity of 4 3-part shock absorber part no. 120d in set 3*, there were other differences in their contents. To be able to use the shocks, set 3* contained 8 of part no. 147d (14.7mm, 9/16" stud bolts). Similarly, 3* had 13 of part 38a (spacer) compared to 5 in 3, the difference due again to the shocks. The other parts in set 3* not found in set 3 were 1 of 28p (contrate gear) and 1 of 26n (pinion). Some other variations were that set 3* had 4 of 6a (3-hole strip) as opposed to 2 in set 3, 2 of 133a (corner bracket) in 3* versus 1 in 3. Moreover, the electrical wire was numbered as part 904 in set 3*, but was listed without a number in set 3. Parts that seemed to be the same but were numbered differently were the pinion 26 in 3* versus 26p in 3, worm 32 in 3* versus 32p in 3 and gear 27 in 3* versus 27ap in 3. But the most curious feature was that the manual for set 3* listed part 111 (19mm, 3/4" bolt) at a quantity of 0!

The manual for set 3* had English explanations. Both manuals had some basic and some not-so-basic models, some common to both the sets. Some are fully illustrated, others are not. Of the fully illustrated models, set 3* had an overlap of 5 models with set 1, another 5 with set 2 and 4 with set 3, followed by 5 models using the shock absorbers.

In closing, as suggested by the Canadian Spanner Colin Hinz, I shall be contacting Oscar soon for inclusion in his excellent spreadsheet of parts lists any of these special sets that may not be listed there already. This will allow for a more comprehensive reference to the set contents of this time period.

Madhav ("Manu") M. Bhalerao

Meccano Chain & The Mellotron Story

In 1962, the three Bradley brothers of Birmingham, England (Les, Frank, Norman) were approached by an American named Bill Fransen. Mr. Fransen worked for Harry Chamberlin in Calif. building keyboard instruments, named the "Chamberlin".

The Bradleys were asked to supply a matched



set of 70 tape heads. Intrigued by this request, Les inquired further and discovered their end use in a tape replay musical instrument. With financial backing, the Bradleys designed and built their own model, called the "Mellotron" (Melody Electronics).

The Mark-I Mellotron commenced manufacture in 1963. It was an elegant piece of cabinetry, designed for home use. Its weight was a hefty 375 lb. with equally hefty price-tag then (1000 pounds sterling). Within it resided a total of 1260 sound samples on proprietary 3/8" wide tape. The Mark-I could produce a multitude of rhythms, accompaniments and instruments ranging from flutes, violins, mandolins, brass, church organ, sax and many more.

Internally, the tapes were stored on 4" diameter drums. Three sounds resided on adjacent tracks. And additional sounds could be enabled by shuttling the drums forward/reverse to one of

six "stations" or tape-banks. This was accomplished by the use of Meccano chain and sprockets fitted to the drums and stepping motors.

Not only was Meccano chain utilized, but Meccano sprockets (on tape drums, sync switch, station select motor, tone wheel), and Meccano gears (on volume pedal, sync switch). Unusual applications were as motor clutch, torque multiplier, idler pulley, etc. Meccano parts exist in EVERY Mellotron to this day (2500 produced from 1963-1986, all models) in varying amounts and applications.

A total of 55 Mark-I Mellotrons were produced until 1965. The Mellotrons were an instant success, used by many early British bands of the 60's. Several notable owners were Peter Sellers, John Lennon, Princess Margaret, and even L. Ron Hubbard!

When the improved Mark-II Mellotron debuted that same year, many Mark-I's were returned to the factory for electronic and mechanical upgrades. All but 10 Mark-I's had the changes made. Of these 10, only three orig. MK-I's have survived to this day. Two are still in Birmingham UK area, and only one in the entire USA (S/N 124).

No. 124's revival began in 1998 and took almost five full years to complete cosmetic and functional restoration. Many parts had to be replicated, and others were shipped from Canada/UK. The high-tensile improved Meccano chain as supplied by Lou Boselli saved the entire project from a potential dead-end. The original Meccano chain from early 1960's was case-hardened. For the first time in 25+ years, this Mellotron MK-I is again shuttling tape banks w/o any problems whatsoever!

Back to Meccano. Here's a more detailed description of the misc. assemblies/parts used in the Mark-One.

Tape Storage Drums (qty. 4) - Meccano sprocket on each drum

Tape Transport System (qty. 2) - 1) Approx. 122mm of

sprocket ladder chain on each side of instr. 2) Two sprockets machined and milled to form a motor clutch. Fibre washer fitted between sprockets.

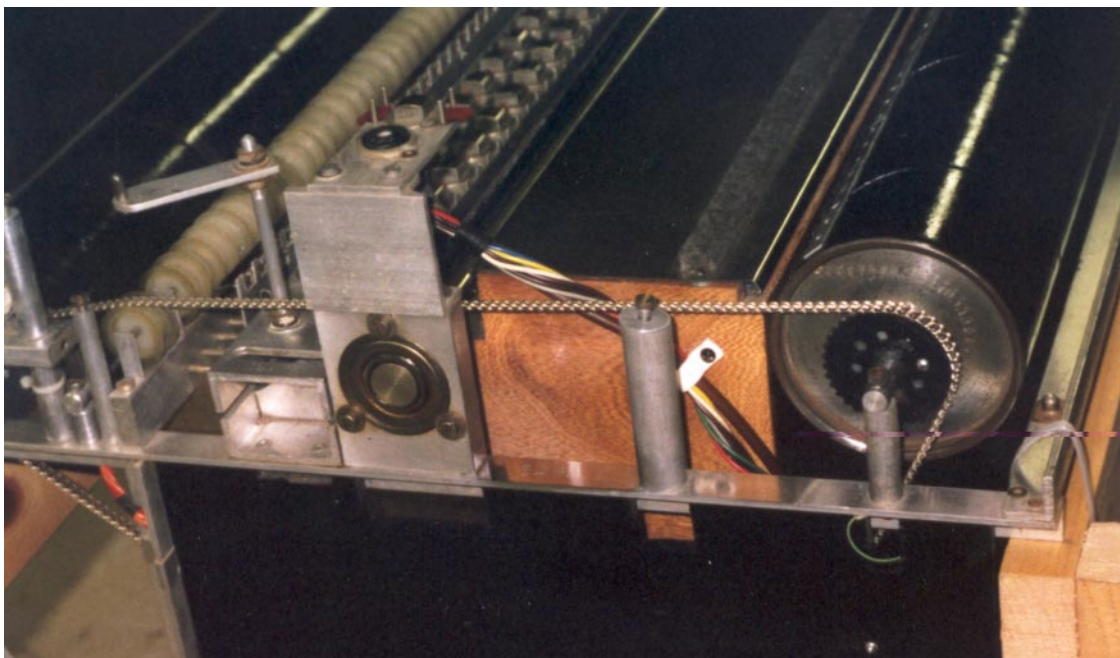
Synchronised Tape Switch (qty. 2) - Meccano sprocket and Meccano bevel/worm gear used for timing. A critical component in transport sys.

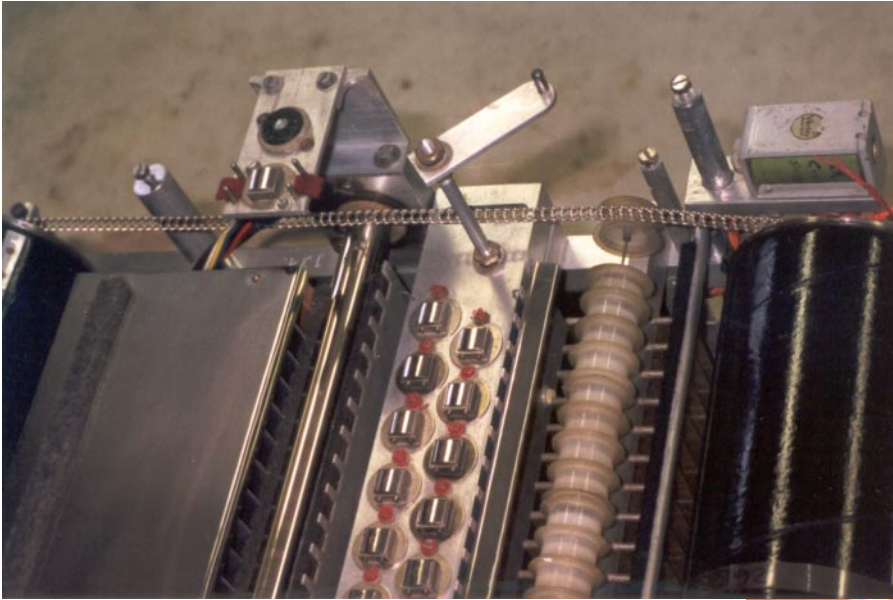
Volume Foot Pedal Assy (qty. 1) - Combination of misc. Meccano gears designed as 8:1 ratio to change control rheostat for lead keyboard.

As mentioned previously, the Meccano sprocket served another unusual function in subsequent Mellotron models. The teeth were slightly rounded-off, and it was attached to shaft of capstan motor. These teeth provided a pulse-signal to a tape-head situated about 2mm distance. Was part of feedback in motor speed control circuit. The pitch of the capstan had to remain spot-on under all environmental and playing conditions. The Meccano sprocket/tone-wheel was used until 1986 when the Mellotron factory closed their doors.

The Mellotron was used on over 1000 albums/CD's to this day. And Meccano was there in its small way, providing the Mellotron with a stable means of reproducing sounds.

The machine I own/restored was built in Oct/Nov. 1963. It is a Mellotron Mark-One, serial number 124. There were 55 Mark-I's built, in 1963-1964. All but ten were returned to the factory for Mark-Two upgrades. Of these theoretical ten still out-there, only three have been actually located. They are:





MK-I/103 - owner, Martin Smith of Staffordshire, UK

MK-I/124 - owner, Jerry Korb of Vermont, USA

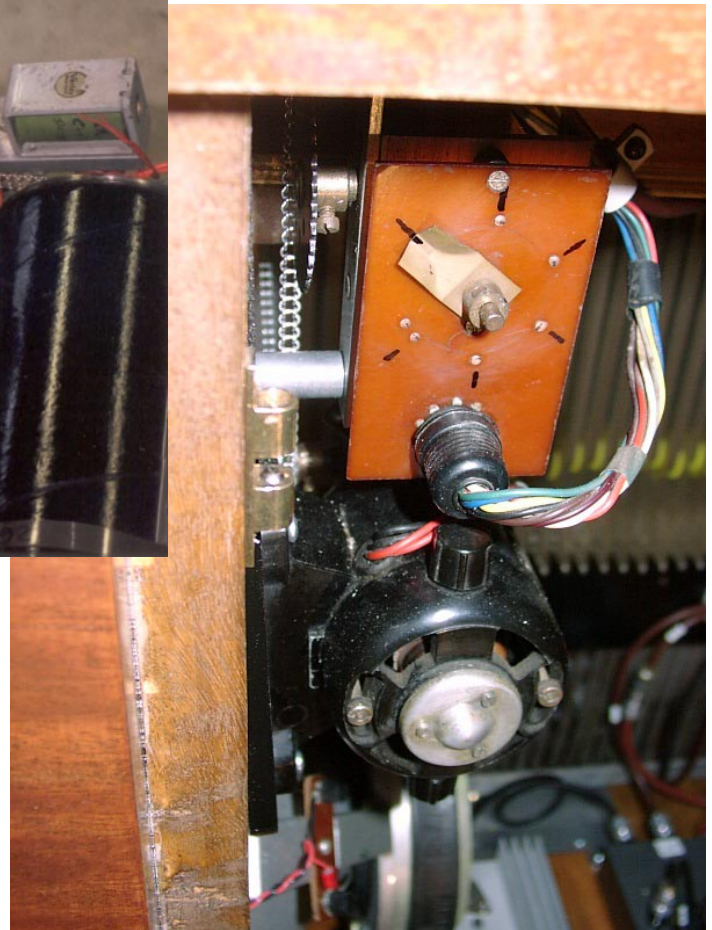
MK-I/132 - owner, John Bradley of Birmingham, UK

John Bradley is the son of Mellotron's inventor/developer, Les Bradley and Les's two brothers, Frank and Norman. The three Bradley brothers improved upon a design which originated in the USA by Harry Chamberlin.

This year of 2003 is the 40th birthday of S/N 124. This rare Mellotron can be seen on the Internet at the following webpage (<http://www.tronsounds.com/JKMKICAS.htm>). Another website is in process enabling viewers to actually see/hear the completed instrument. My special thanks to Streetly Electronics of Birmingham, UK who supplied many OEM parts/tapes needed. And again to Louis Boselli of New York who supplied the "super" Meccano chain for this special project.

Jerry Korb (jkorb@ix.netcom.com)

Editor's note: last year Lou Boselli contracted a production run with Hale Bros., who produce ladder chain. This new chain is considerably stronger than the genuine Meccano article as it's made of high tensile steel to minimize stretching. Also the pitch and width have been "tweaked" so that it "hugs" the sprockets more closely. A side benefit of the latter improvement is that



it also sits on late Erector sprockets. Best of all, this chain is cheaper than the original. (Lou's chain is \$3.00US per foot, cut to any length, plus shipping.)



Obituary – Jerry Dubois

Jerry Dubois, without a doubt one of the most popular Canadian Meccanomen, and certainly one of the best known (not just in his home country, but around the world), passed away on July 5th at the age of 81. Jerry first became a member of the Canadian Meccanoman's Club in 1983, just a couple of years after its inception. Jerry quickly made a strong impact on the Meccano scene in central Canada, and regularly built and displayed not only a selection of Supermodels, but also a variety of smaller models designed to entertain younger visitors to Shows. Jerry supported the local shows right up to the end, and attended both the Ottawa Meeting on March 1st, 2003, where he displayed the GMM SML No. 22, the French Pacific Locomotive, and also the Kingston Rail-O-Rama two weeks later.

Jerry made use of his contacts in the Meccano fraternity to travel widely, particularly to England, where he had close friendships with Midlands Meccano Guild President Ernest Chandler, and also Mike and Pat Edkins. He also traveled to Australia and New Zealand, and enjoyed the



company of Meccanomen in that part of the world as well. Articles describing his travels were published in "The Canadian Meccanoman's Newsletter," and also "The Midlands Meccano Guild Gazette." Two of Jerry's models also made it in to print, a Jeep, and Canadian Model Plan Number 15, the Old Tyme Ferris Wheel.

Jerry was a World War II veteran, and justifiably proud of it. He regularly attended the Remembrance Day services on Parliament Hill, and was interviewed on television about his thoughts on the importance of keeping alive the memory of what the Veterans had achieved, on more than one occasion. Following his discharge, he became a Railwayman for CN and VIA. Jerry had other interests as well, being involved in the local speed skating community, and was also known as an amateur bridge player

(which makes me suspect that he was a pretty strong player).

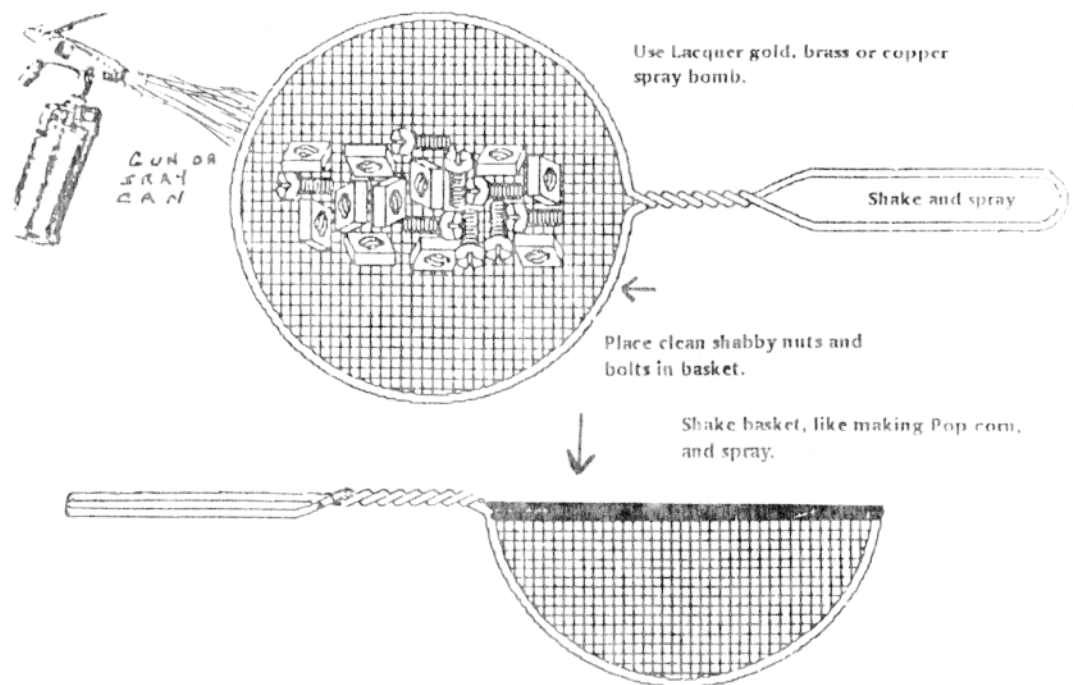
I know that I am just one of many Meccanomen who were deeply saddened at the news of Jerry's passing. He will be missed.

Colin Hoare

Rebrassing Nuts & Bolts

This is a tried and tested tip by Richard Symonds, Surrey, BC.

Drawing by DGB, Wanganui, New Zealand.



Leduc West Antique Society

Saturday-Sunday,
July 26-27, 2003

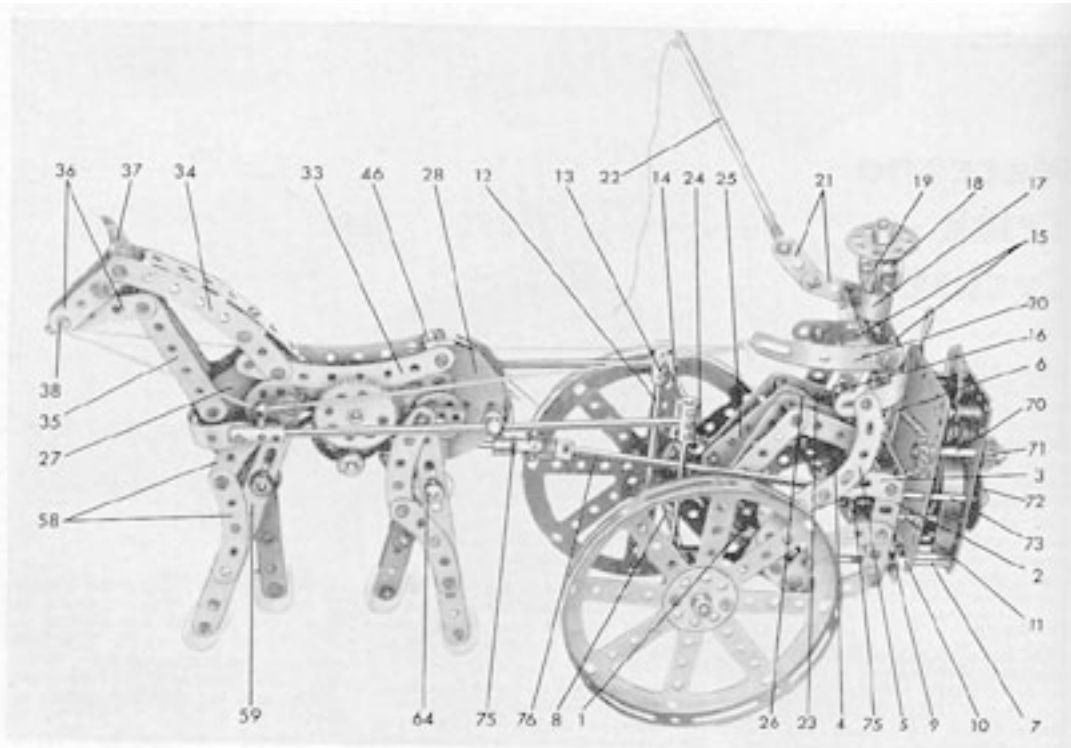
The Leduc West Antique Society's show was held recently and a great time was had by all. The Mayor of Leduc, George Rogers, officially opened the show and dropped by the modeller's building soon after.

Gordon & Norma Frank presented a great exhibit, featuring a huge MP72 Level Luffing Crane, Loco & Dock built out of new and refurbished blue-gold parts. Also present were a Road Grader, Fork Lift Truck and several models designed by Andreas Konkoly

I also attended with some of my models on Saturday only.

John & Judith Overeem unexpectedly drove up from Picture Butte for a visit as it was such a nice sunny weekend.

David Williams



The unique model of a Horse and Chariot. For full building instructions read this article.

BUILD A HORSE AND CHARIOT

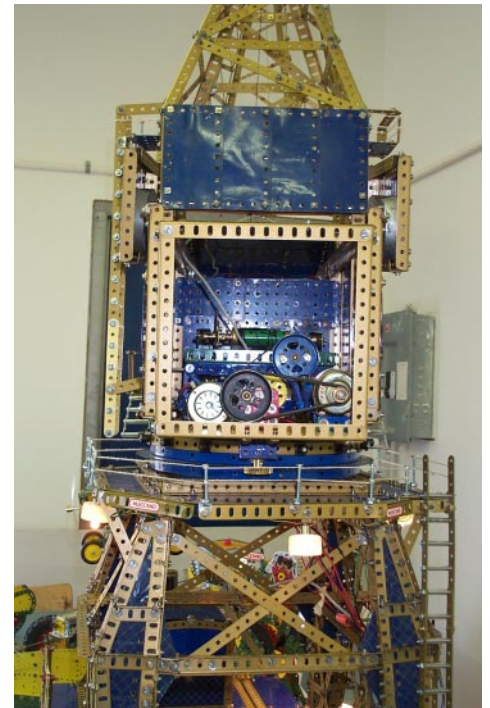
Left: one of
Andreas
Konkoly's
model
plans.



Gordon Frank



Norma Frank



More views
of the Blue-
Gold Level
Luffing
Crane



Threaded Rods — And Not Quite

Threaded rods are useful parts nearly unique to Meccano. They are not used as much as they could be — a prime use is as tension members in structures — or even in machinery. Steam boilers for instance contain many staybolts, usually hidden and forgotten in Meccano models. Erector modellers could be enthralled by the number of with holes at actually per-tension in els. Erector builders can find threaded rods in hardware stores (Canadian Tire, for instance), rods of 8-32 thread (Erector size) and 12-inch length. So far, no Erector-size nuts (quarter-inch-square ones) have turned up. Nuts in hardware stores all seem to be large hex or square ones.

There won't be a supply of Meccano-size (BSW) threaded rod in local hardware stores. So use the available ones, and use Erector nuts with them. (Every Meccano fan finds Erector bits in secondhand lots.) No one will notice. The whole thing can be hidden using slim brass or plastic tubing from hobby shops.

The June 2003 Constructor Quarterly has an item by Jack Hextell on "Slender construction of crane jibs" — which demonstrates the use of axle rods and screwed rods! Notice the Hornby term "screwed rods" while I have used "threaded rods" —presumably North American versus Liverpool usage. One or two "other" constructional systems, such as Tecnic from Belgium, include rods threaded at the ends only, and threaded connectors resembling Meccano threaded bosses (p/n 64) to join them. The only problem is, as usual, that the rods at hand are seldom the right length. There's another source of almost-threaded-rod parts. Many household and shop devices contain long 8-32 bolts, anything from four to eight inches long. These are usually threaded only for a couple of inches, and the heads seem mostly to be Phillips pattern and a bit larger even than Erector "large-head" bolts from the old Duplex Standard sets. When a household gadget (mixer, drill, sander) dies, save the long bolts that held it together.

Don Redmond

Stokys Update

I've just got the news from Paul Lienhard, the chairman of AMS club, that STOKYS is back to market.

They have launched an internet website with the adress <http://www.stokys.ch> where orders can be made. The new company produces the same range of sets and spare parts as before. The products will be available end of September 2003.

The company:

STOKYS AG
Metallbaukastensysteme
Wihelstrasse 9
CH - 6318 Walchwil
Tel +41 41 758 06 43
Fax +41 41 758 06 44
info@stokys.ch

Distributor:

Marcel Csuka Zürich
P. Csuka
Industriestrasse 7
CH - 8117 Faellanden
Tel +41 1 825 29 39
Fax +41 1 825 28 47

Andre Welti



Above: a blue-gold era Set 10.

Below: one of the less common colour combinations of Airplane Propellers.



The Peddler

WANTED: A #10 Meccano "Cabinet" only. Circa 1964-65. Light Oak 4 drawer with White drawer pulls & #10 Decal centre top. Al Bedford, 134 St. Lawrence Blvd, London, ON N6J 2X1 Ph 519-685-1714 E-Mail ahbedford@on.aibn.com

WANTED: Aeroplane Constructor parts for fuselage and tail: P7, 8, 10-11, 13-20. 32, 38-39, 41. Original or replica parts, in any condition. Don Redmond, 9 St. Catherine Street, Kingston ON K7K 3R9; rredmond8@cogeco.ca

WANTED :
Stabil and
Stokys parts.
Samuel F.
Chow, 7466 -
13th Avenue,
Burnaby, BC
V3N 4K4, 1-
604-525-
7855, snakeman90@hotmail.com.



FOR SALE: Meccano parts: yellow/blue, Red/green, gears, motors and windups, manuals and complete sets 1973 vintage, sets 3 to 6. Send for price lists or your wants. Earl Pitts, 26 Dyer Court, Cambridge, ON N3C 4B8. (519) 658-2086 or e-mail 102260.2432@compuserve.com



MECCANO & ERECTOR

Parts, Sets & Literature
Old, New, Used, Restored
Send \$2.00 (U.S. or CDN)
New Parts List w/Prices

*** SPECIAL TO MEMBERS ***

Remote Control Units
with 2 Motors: US \$50.00

ALSO

Master Builder Sets: US \$100.00
(Shipping Extra)

Discounts on 1990's sets;
Call or e-mail for details.

LOU BOSELLI

19 Payson Rd.
Cornwall-on-Hudson
N.Y. 12520 U.S.A.
(845) 534-2863

loujoboselli@msn.com

http://www.memeshadow.net/cmamas/meccano/Lou_Boselli/



Model Plans and Canadian MeccaNotes Back Issues

Can be obtained from:

- o Colin Hoare (address on page 2), via Money Order or Cheque.
- o *outside North America*: MW Models (address below) sells 2002 and earlier issues.



MW Models

Mail Order: PO Box 4650, Henley-on-Thames, Oxton, England RG9 1YP, phone: 0491 572436, FAX: 0491 571175, mwmodels.meccano@btinternet.com

<http://www.mwmodels.co.uk/>

Credit cards are accepted!



Assortment of American Erector Sets

See page 18 for more details.

