



TELFORD AND IRONBRIDGE MECCANO SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2009 MODEL REPORT

By Chris Shute & Dave Harvey

February, not usually the best month for travelling, but still a great turnout for our meeting, with members from far and wide bringing their latest Meccano creations to Coalbrookdale.

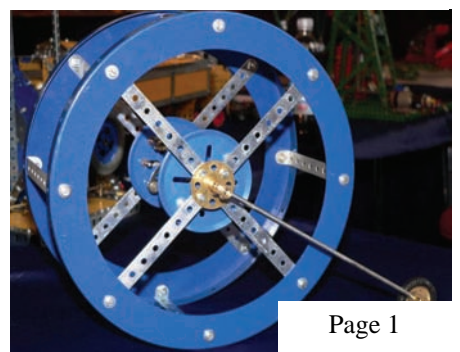
Martin Bailey arrived with one of the oldest models, the original Meccanograph, built mainly from pre-1926 nickel-plated Meccano. This would have been one of the earliest complex machines described in Meccano manuals.



Bob Chater had downloaded a number of useful plans from the Internet. A couple of Schmidt offset couplings demonstrated how a drive may be transferred to another shaft which may rise and fall, for example, as in a printing machine roller. Other models included a stone cutting machine built from a No.6 outfit, and a beam engine.

Tony Clapperton has increased the height of his tower crane, looking ahead to Meccanuity 2009. Now 8 foot 6 inches tall, the tower is half the maximum scale height of the prototype. The whole structure seemed remarkably stable, standing upon a small plinth, with no heavy ballast to help it. When the tower sections are dismantled for travelling, DIN connectors can easily split the multiple wires.

Tony and Holly Evanson had a number of models, the largest being Tony's JCB 712 Articulated Dump Truck, from Modelplan 117 by Tony James. Nearby stood a 4-4-0 steam locomotive and tender with 4-axle wagon. There was a rubber band driven vehicle – a drum built from a pair of 9 1/2" Flanged Rings, below, and a sneak preview of Tony's Dalek entry for the 2009 Meccanuity challenge. Holly proudly showed her diesel shunter loco and quad bike models.

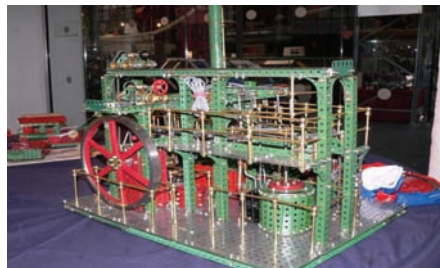


Dave Bradley has almost completed his Action Man Land Rover. Built to a scale of 1:6, the vehicle will accommodate a 12" figure and companions comfortably, unlike the 'official' Action Man vehicles, which were undersized. Now that the 4 x 4 mechanism has been installed, all that remains to be done is to fit the electrics and minor cosmetic features.



Geoff Brown fondly remembers 1962. This was when that Meccano introduced the Narrow Strip, so at last he could produce decent-looking Walschaerts valve gear on a locomotive. Geoff built an LMS 'Princess' Loco, with details like inside cylinders, a cranked front axle and tender drive. The model had spent most of its life on the bedroom windowsill, a little faded by the sunlight. Geoff's 'O' gauge display included a clockwork No.4 loco *Eton*, rescued from a toy box a month ago and given a lick of paint for its first outing in half a century.

Colin Bull has completed the MP77 Railway Breakdown crane, with his own modifications. The whole crane and matching trucks sit on a 9-foot length of track. To show the lifting capabilities of this monster, Colin had also built a 0-6-0 saddle tank loco of the same scale.



Terry Bullingham showed a remarkable beam engine and pumping station, with numerous special features. Built on a stainless steel plinth (available from David Fellowes), the machinery, complete with maintenance hoist, is topped by a walkway with 4mm brass rails.

Roger Burton had a smaller beam engine, described in Bert Love's "Model Building In Meccano" book. In place of the Magic motor, a small electric Faulhaber motor and gearbox drove the flywheel via a small rubber wheel. Roger had also produced a Ferris wheel based upon a spoked bicycle wheel design. Inspired by the London Eye, the bearings sit upon a cantilevered shaft. At present, the model runs continuously, but Roger is exploring ways of occasionally stopping the gondolas for boarding.

Mike Fallowes operated his own highly modified version of the Konkoly/Nightingale Meccanograph. There was also a Sky Rider, Mike's copy of a dealer board model. Another fascinating dealer display was the collection of Meccano mechanisms mounted on a vertical board, with a pushbutton to start the many drives. Finally, an executive toy, in the form of a set of vertical rods, bizarrely bent, yet rotating and appearing to mesh with each other.



Bill Gardiner ran his Transporter Bridge, complete with automatic reversing mechanism, so that the suspended cradle will pause at each side of the bridge before crossing back. Also running, a 1920's model Joy Wheel, Gas Engine and Bagatelle Table. There was a dragster and a Wim-Wom (err... ask Bill!).

Bruce Gilson has acquired a large number of part no.61, the Windmill Sail. He'd wanted to build a row of four windmills, but a lack of other parts prevented him. Instead, taking his inspiration from a Delft style china musical windmill, Bruce has come up with a building, topped by a pair of windmills, which are hand-driven through bevel gears. Bruce admits that the whole thing really ought to be in Delft blue....

Dave Harvey's latest model, right, is a steam Steeple Engine, so called because of the vertical crosshead slide, sited after the crankshaft instead of before it. American, steam engines of this type were used in riverboats and paddle steamers, where it could be fitted below decks horizontally. This novel design would also circumvent patent issues with rival machines. A heavy-duty flywheel aids smooth running. Dave's model includes a counterbalancing spring to assist gravity pulling the vertical movement.



Tony Homden brought both his Thames forts. The Army Fort is built using mainly 1939 Mechanised Army parts, but the crane and gun have been motorised using the latest infra red kit. The Naval Fort has a yellow and zinc base, with Army Combat kit gun platform.



Paul Hubbard has built a local Diesel two-car train, almost 7 feet long, but plans to build yet another carriage, to give a three-car train. He hopes to be able to build track and possibly a station in time for Meccanuity.



George Illingworth showed his Horse Drawn Manual Fire Engine. Based upon an 1820 manual fire pump in the Helmsshore Museum, Lancashire, George's model is built at a scale of 1:12, to compliment his vast fleet of fire engines through the ages. Also on display, Walter the Water Tender, mounted on the modern small radio control chassis. Work in progress includes a 1:12 scale high-volume pumping unit.



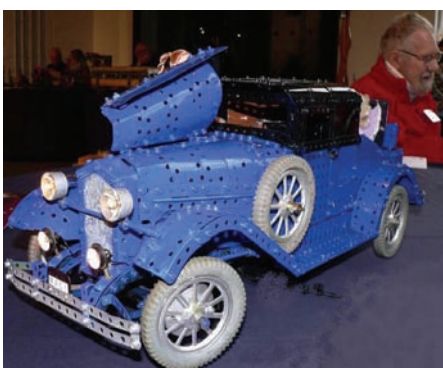
David Lacy's 1951 Leyland Tiger now has its Harrington 'Dorsal Fin' completely rebuilt, with the sliding roof in place. Now all that remains is to design, construct and install the fifteen seats. David has also begun a second Midland Red Bus, from 1959, with the floor pan and front wheels almost complete. Readers of the Shropshire Star that afternoon were treated to a picture of David, his Leyland Tiger and the TIMS chairman.

Ralph Laughton showed his Special edition crane set, below, which works well. Alongside it, a much-enlarged version, believed to have been built to promote the smaller one, perhaps for a trade fair. Unlike Binns Road promotional models, this one used many non-current parts, some painted to match the modern black and orange. The model runs continuously, raising and lowering its load. Although still being refurbished (the crane was destined for a skip!) Ralph's model nevertheless caught the eye of the Shropshire Star photographer.





Sue Laughton has refurbished a genuine 1970s dealer display windmill, acquired over 20 years ago, and now completely restored. Painted parts were cleaned with T-cut and zinc parts rubbed with 0000 grade wire wool. To compliment the windmill, Sue has re-created the 1960's replica dealer display Ferris wheel, after failing to win one on Ebay. That model calls for a good few 5½" Narrow Strips and 4½" Girders, plus a Crouzet motor. Sue tracked down all these but not the insulating shouldered washers needed to isolate the lamp holders from the chassis. A visit to the local Maplin store solved the problem: thin nuts and bolts can trap clear neoprene spacers, forcing them between chassis and bolt shank, keeping them insulated from each other.



John MacDonald displayed a shining blue Hudson saloon car from the 1930s, complete with stunning blonde accessories. The car is fitted with correct suspension, steering, clutch, 3-speed and reverse gearbox, back axle differential and working lights. John's WW1 tank was also on show. It too had several interesting features: steering left and right by tail wheels that lift up when not required.

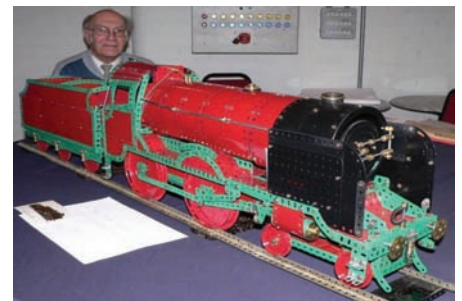
Hugh Nicolson had three models on the theme of space exploration: The Ascent Stage Lunar Module from the Apollo programme, its Lunar Roving Vehicle in stowed condition, (its hard to believe the designs are over forty years old) and the X-plorer from the 1990s French Meccano range. Hugh's display also included photographs of the Lunar Module and Mars Rover.



The Nightingale Family's colourful display included a busy Konkoly-based pair of Meccanographs, modified to produce both oval or direct line patterns, which they did faultlessly. Then, an optical illusion model: two rings appeared to revolve in opposite directions, though really they circled in the same direction. Inspired by the TV series *California Highway Patrol (CHIPS)*, a Kawasaki 1000P motorcycle, still under construction, had flashing lights and a police siren.

John Palmer had built the Railway Crane from the 1950s No.7 Outfit manual, in the period red and green. From the Trucker Fleet Set, John had also produced a 6-axle trailer with load.

Pete Pyefinch brought the most massive model, his Scammell Samson 8x4 tractor unit, hauling a Goldhofer 6-axle semi-low-loading trailer, in all, about three metres long. Both have been built from official drawings. The models contain many working features, the more unusual being landing legs and a steering mechanism fitted to all trailer axles. A further massive machine complimented the display, in the shape of a Foden S80 Tipper chassis, based upon the popular vehicle of the 1970s. Even the correct 8-speed range change gearbox has been included.



Dennis Remnant reproduced the 4-4-0 Passenger Locomotive and tender from the 1954-1962 No.10 Set leaflet. Painted in the appropriate light red and green, the model had black smoke box and deflectors.

Trevor and Tom Shackleton showed a large collection of models, including a crane based on a No.4 set, a car, a digger, rocket, bridge, walking robot and canal barge. Some of these were adapted from plans, but many were Tom's own designs. Who knows what these youngsters will come up with in a year or two?

Chris Shute is developing a Meccano train set on a board 23" x 39". Running on it is a modified Keith Cameron Little Joe 0-4-0 loco. Meccano tracks at a gauge of 2" allow fixing holes to coincide at intervals of 30° on the curved oval ends. The loco only runs clockwise; otherwise the Flanged Wheels will derail at the overlapping track joints! At present, the train stops at a loading station, where a ping-pong ball is put aboard; the train departs and unloads the ball further around the track, before reloading at the station. For Meccanuity there should be a signalling system. Other ideas, suggested by younger modellers include a dinosaur to catch the ball....





Peter Sleaford had modified his Meccano gear-cutting machine and constructed an estate car of 1960s appearance, mounted on a radio-controlled chassis. **Tina Sleaford** had the No.1 Clock Kit running smoothly upon its own wooden plinth, while on the next table stood a No.2 Clock Kit. Rarely indeed have these two items been seen performing together at an exhibition. **Stephaine Sleaford's** display included two Crazy Inventor's models, below, an Argos VW Beetle with surfboard, a radio controlled truck and 10 smaller models.



Joyce Sleaford had built two radio-controlled cars, the MP3 vehicle from Set 9950 and the M&S Set 366950, together with the Red Robot 0860. Meanwhile **John Sleaford** had been building many tractors: the red tractor from Multi-Model Set 7531 and the M&S 2008 tractor. This last tractor, seen above, also had John's improved version alongside. As well as a better radiator, this model had hub reduction and a 19:1 reduction for the rear rotors.

Tony Wakefield has almost completed the GMM49 Automatic Loom, described by Keith Cameron. One of Tony's most useful improvements has been to mount the loom on a plinth with a frontal pivot. This allows the whole machine to be tipped up for easy access to the underside. Although Keith Cameron suggested a shuttle built-up from standard Meccano parts, Tony has found it better to use the heavier traditional, obsolete and highly prized Meccano Shuttle.

Ken Senar's latest project is the Steel Horse, a curious light tractor with a single central crawler track, steered by conventional front wheels. Dating from 1916, the original was built by A.H. McDonald of Melbourne, and was the first tracked vehicle to be built in the Southern Hemisphere. Ken's model is between one sixth and one seventh full size, giving an overall length of 31". Each of the 55 track plates is a 3 1/2" Strip, strengthened by a Narrow Strip and backed by a 1 1/2" x 1/2" Double Angle Strip. Weighing 29 lbs, the model contains a suspension system using standard Meccano springs. Shock Absorber Springs have longer French Compression Springs cleverly fitted inside and spaced with Small Plastic Spacers. Not content with reproducing the engine and other details, Ken has devised what is probably a brand new Meccano clutch mechanism, relying upon three Hinges fixed to a small Elektrikit Bush Wheel. When pushed into a Wheel Flange, the outer lugs grip the inner corner of the Wheel Flange. This is easily admired in its position over the power take-off pulley. Ken has also produced a fine booklet explaining the history of the prototype and the key features of the model.



Bob Thompson brought his Meccano Spykee Robot, called Ro-Bert. This machine is now much cheaper to acquire. It's a wireless controlled gadget that can perform many tasks, which can also be programmed via a computer. **Len Ford**, by coincidence, brought his own Spykee robot. Both Len and Bob agreed that some reinforcement of the screwed connections was needed, like normal Meccano nuts and bolts. The two robots worked well together, with no interference with other remote controlled models, but look out for more at the next meeting, they'll be breeding before long!

Janet Way's growing collection of small models filled half a large table, providing plenty of inspiration to new owners of Meccano, and showing the wide range of useful new parts.

Keith Way has been producing locomotives in anticipation of the Meccanuity project. Today we saw his BR 4-6-0 Standard Class loco. The track gauge is 3 1/2", which equates to a scale of 1:16. Keith's model was accompanied by some smaller locomotives, including some of the neat 'O' gauge designs of Frenchman Bernard Perier, well known to readers of Constructor Quarterly.

