

MSSS

**MECCANO SOCIETY
of
SCOTLAND**

NEWSLETTER



No.92

AUGUST 2013

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DATES FOR YOUR 2013 DIARY

Meccano Society of Scotland

Scone - Annual exhibition	7 th /8 th September
Greenock Model Railway Club Show	19 th /20 th October
NEMS Annual Exhibition	26 th October
Society Meeting (Stirling)	17 th November

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Sheffield Meccano Guild

SMG club meeting, annual awards, auction and AGM, Laughton-en-le-Morthen village hall, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S25 1YD 19th October

MENSTRIE DECLINE

The idea of a “Constructor’s Day” was first mooted in 1999 and the first such meeting was held in the scout hall at Menstrie in May 2000. The idea was that members of the society would bring along partially completed models on which they were working and discuss at leisure problems that were arising during the construction. Refreshments and lunch were to be provided and the opportunity for more informal meetings and social intercourse than is available at our more normal quarterly society meetings. At first the idea proved to be very successful and the record of the first meeting contains references to a number of partially completed models brought to Menstrie by members in an incomplete state and which later appearing at our annual exhibition. This, and some of the subsequent meetings at Menstrie, also attracted attendance from members who are not able to attend the Sunday meetings at Stirling.

By 2002 a competition had been introduced with members asked to bring along a model to perform a pre-assigned task. The first one was a hill climb. The vehicle, powered by a No.1 Clockwork motor had to climb for a distance of one metre up an MDF board. The inclination of the board was changed after each run making both power and grip essential features of the design. Another meeting featured a 25th Anniversary competition when members were asked to bring along a model consisting of 25 parts. One of these competitions, which became known as “The Menstrie Challenge”, featured an entry that was sent from America and operated by a proxy mechanic from the society on the day. In 2010 there were 12 entries to a challenge that consisted of producing a Magic Motor powered vehicle. The entries were raced against each other over a fixed course. A further hill climb powered by M0 motor has also featured.

The 2011 report on Menstrie (Newsletter No.86) started by saying “Attendance was poor with only about a dozen or so of our members turning up.” Regrettably the decline has continued and this year only nine members were present with only five entries to the challenge, one of which never even got to the starting line.

It seems the Society may need to re-think the whole concept of Constructor’s Day, if less than a third of the membership is attending. At the meeting at the end of this year’s event those present voted to continue the event for another year. Well they would, wouldn’t they? But what about the majority of the members who were not there? Would another type of event be more attractive, or would they prefer to revert to the position before 2000 when the May meeting was a normal Society meeting at Stirling?

Perhaps this might form an agenda item for the November meeting.

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Society Meeting, 18 May 2013

The meeting was held at the Menstrie Scout Hall at 15:00 hours. Members present were Douglas Carson (Secretary), Alan Macdonald (Treasurer), Alistair Nicoll (Newsletter Editor), Philip Hore, Bert Hutchings, Bill Jack, George Roy, Desmond Smith & Gordon Stewart. Apologies were received from Tim Edwards, Andy Knox, Gordon Macmillan & Angus Plumb.

1. Secretary

- a) The Newsletter Editor had undertaken to evaluate MS Publisher against MS Word software. It transpired that MS Publisher cost £109 to activate and therefore the Editor had taken the matter no further.
- b) The Treasurer had looked into the cost of printed T-shirts and estimated the cost of these to be around £7 or £8. It was thought unlikely that members of the public would want to buy Meccano themed T-shirts for around £10. The idea of producing such garments as a fund raising measure was therefore dropped. There was discussion about the possibility that members might want to pay for MSS polo shirts for wear at exhibitions. Although some members were keen, it was clear that there was no widespread support for this idea.
- c) Mr Eric Deane had visited the Constructors' Day and generously donated his Meccano collection to the Society in the hope that we could make use of it. The collection comprises a good selection of pre war parts. It was agreed that Bert Hutchings would sort it out into lots that would be offered for sale to members at the August meeting, proceeds going to Society fund. The pricing for members will be discounted from market rates. Items not sold to members will go for sale on eBay.
- d) The Secretary reported that he had been in communication with the Southern Federation of Model Engineering Societies and the question of if we had paid our subscription had been satisfactorily resolved.

2. Treasurer: The Treasurer had nothing to report in addition to the above.

3. Newsletter: The Editor reported that the next edition of the Newsletter is due in August.

4. Exhibitions (Past)*

- a) Scottish Traction Engine Society, Errol, 11/12 May. Bert Hutchings, Andy Knox, Gordon Stewart, Jim Berry, Ken McDonald, Alan Blair & Angus Plumb exhibited models. Bert reported that due to flooding, our marquee had been sited somewhat off the beaten track, but that a reasonable flow of visitors had nonetheless been able to find us. Table provision was excellent and it was agreed that the Secretary should thank the Rally Co-ordinator for her efforts.
- b) Lyne of Skene 18/19 May. Angus Plumb was exhibiting models today and would be joined by Gordon Stewart on the following day.

5. Exhibitions (Future)

- a) Shildon, 26/27 May. Bert Hutchings, George Roy and North East Meccano Society members will be at this exhibition.
- b) Bon Accord Steam Rally, Castle Fraser, 15/16 June. Angus Plumb and Gordon Stewart will be exhibiting and Bert Hutchings is considering joining them.
- c) Skegness, 5/6/7 July. Ken McDonald, Alan Blair and Angus Plumb expect to represent the Society this year.

- d) Scone, Farming Yesteryear and MSoS Annual Exhibition, 7/8 September. The Treasurer will check with Alan Blair that the usual arrangements will be put in hand.
- e) Greenock MRC, 19/20 October, Lyle Kirk (Union St.) Bert Hutchings and Alistair Nicoll plan to attend. It is hoped that Tim Edwards and Andy Knox might also be interested. In view of last year's problems the Secretary undertook to contact the organisers well in advance to confirm arrangements.
- f) The NEMS Annual Exhibition at Darlington is on 26 October.

6. Dates of Future Meetings: These are 18 August (AGM), 17 November 2013, 19 January 2014 & 23 March.

The Treasurer asked if he should book the Scout Hall for next year's Constructors' Day. It was agreed that arrangements should be made, but in view of the disappointing numbers attending this year, members should be reminded that there was little point in going to this expense if the event was not going to be supported. Those who attended all enjoyed the day and it was regretted that more members had not been able to join us even if only for part of the day.

Bill Jack thought that we should be careful not to make the Challenge too difficult in case this might deter people from attending and competing. It was not generally thought the challenges had been too difficult, although it was recognised that this was a potential danger. Bill suggested that next year's challenge should involve a machine to climb over a brick or similar obstacle. This was thought to be a good idea and Bill will provide draft rules for discussion at the next meeting.

7. Other Business

- a) Desmond Smith asked about model railway shows/clubs in Edinburgh. The Treasurer will email him with details.
- b) Douglas Carson informed members that his series on Meccano Steam Engines, which had been reprinted by the Sheffield Meccano Guild Journal, had resulted in some feedback from SMG readers. A follow up piece will shortly appear containing these comments and Douglas's reply. The editor of the SMG Journal has kindly made this available to our own Newsletter Editor for his use.
- c) Bert Hutchings asked the Secretary if there was any news on his continued assignment in Ireland. Douglas said that although the current assignment was due to finish in November, there was a good chance that it might be extended for a further year.

The Secretary proposed a vote of thanks to the Treasurer for arranging the Constructors' Day and providing the excellent lunch. Members agreed in the usual fashion.

Douglas Carson, Secretary

*After the meeting, Andy Knox informed the Secretary that he had been at the NEMS exhibition at Beamish in April.

* * * * *

MENSTRIE 2013

Attendance at this year's event was very poor, only nine members turning up. Of these, only a minority brought models to display.

George Roy had a very nice model of a single cylinder steam engine, described as a "Bray side rod engine".



Bray side rod engine

The name arises from the fact that the piston rod is at the opposite end of the cylinder from the crankshaft thus necessitating the use of the two side connecting rods, one on each side of the cylinder. The model made use of square couplings produced by Stuart Borrill giving an authentic look to some of the connections.



Bert Hutchings with his 99p Ferris Wheel

Bert Hutchings brought along a collection of spare parts (for sale) and a working model of a Ferris wheel in Plastic Meccano. This latter was probably meant for a dealer's display and Bert was the highest bidder on an e-bay sale, eventually succeeding with a bid of 99p. He also had a constructed version of the modern model 'Rocket' kit.

Alistair Nicoll brought along his model of the Steam Shovel which has been converted to electric power. It was his intention to complete the conversion to a battery powered version on the day.

Desmond Smith had two models. One was the small electrically powered saw that he had at the March Stirling meeting and the other was a well proportioned single span bridge.

Douglas Carson had his steam powered car with which he gave a demonstration run on the day



*Steam issues from the car as Douglas prays for the miracle of motion
(A prayer that was granted on the day)*

Gordon Stuart had a Wileco model steam plant, recently purchased at auction. It has its own boiler plant complete with a pressure gauge, a single cylinder engine with eccentrics and side valves and a generating plant to power a floodlight that was also fitted. This very finely detailed model is going to take a fair amount of restoration but will certainly repay any work expended on it.

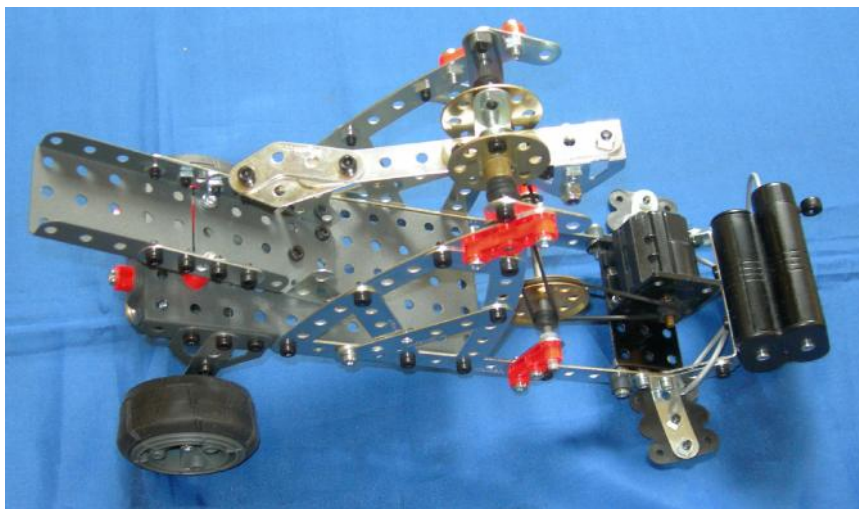
In addition five members, Alistair Nicoll, George Roy, Douglas Carson, Gordon Stewart and Bill Jack brought entries for the 2013 Menstrie Challenge. The competition involved producing a mechanism to project ping pong balls into a bucket. The bucket was placed six feet from the projection point. Up to twenty balls had to be fired in a three minute period. After each round the bucket was moved back 3ft and so seven rounds were played in all at distances of 6,9,12,15,18,21 and 24 ft.

Three major approaches to projection were taken by the entrants

- acceleration produced by a rapidly moving conveyor belt (Alistair Nicoll)
- an automated bat (Douglas Carson, Bill Jack)
- a spring loaded firing mechanism (George Roy, Gordon Stewart)

Of these, the first never even got started. The ball was gripped by four driving bands (two upper and two lower) which were actuated by rapidly rotating 2" Pulley Wheels. The bands ran over a flat surface made of Flexible Plates. Obviously for such a device to work properly the distance between the plates is crucial and has to be accurately set. As it turned out the competition balls were of the order of 2mm larger than the one used in the development of the model. They would therefore not fit between the plates and the entry was withdrawn before the first round started.

The automated bat entries used a rapidly rotating strip or plate to impart motion to the balls.



Douglas Carson's ball projector

One example of this genre is shown above. It worked quite well as far as range was concerned but accuracy was poor and a wicket keeper and several fielders were required to field errant balls. Bill Jack's entry was also of this type although on Bill's case provision was made for automatic feeding of the balls. This machine was also inaccurate and managed to destroy at least one ball in the feed mechanism. Technically this should have meant disqualification but as another destroyed ball was found, the origin of which was uncertain, this was not enforced, and Bill went on although he came last in the overall ranking.

The two most successful entries were from Gordon Stuart and George Roy. Both were basically guns which fired the ball from some form of barrel/channel and were actuated by either Tension Springs or Driving Band. In Gordon's case the tensioning was done by a motorised mechanism but in George's model the springs had to be manually tensioned before each "shot". The George Roy entry was a clear winner in spite of the fact that it imparted considerable and random spin to the balls which meant that, if they bounced before reaching the bucket, their subsequent path was somewhat random.

Results are shown below. The figures in the main body of the table are for the number of balls entering the bucket in a 3 minute period at each range. Final results are calculated by multiplying the number of balls by the range multiplier and adding.

Range (ft)	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	TOTAL
Multiplier	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	SCORE
George Roy	16	1	17	9	6	4	0	212
Gordon Stuart	9	6	12	7	3	5	3	196
Doug. Carson	3	0	3	3	2	0	0	45
Bill Jack	8	4	0	0	0	0	2	44

Some dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the clarity of the rules and whether all the entries were within the spirit of the rules. The following letter from Bill Jack makes the point.

Menstrie 2013 Ping Pong Competition

The event held on Saturday 18th May in the Scout Hall was most enjoyable and at times hilarious. However I would like to make one or two comments.

My own showing was somewhat pathetic in that my machine broke one ball and generally sprayed balls all over the place. One of the mistakes I made was in not using enough locknuts, so bits fell off and the machine did not perform as I had hoped. I was rightly disqualified for one known ball breaking. However later on it was discovered another four were broken by machines unknown, but no one else was disqualified.

Only three machines were built with no human intervention. Others were either bow and arrow or crossbow or bagatelle types which used human intervention to apply the loading tension. I am sure this was not Andy Knoxs' original intention when drawing up the rules but he was not present to clarify. At two previous Stirling meetings I raised the matter but could not get real assurance that human intervention was not to be allowed. Eventually a paragraph appeared at the end of the rules saying humans could apply the tension. So the need to build a complicated tensioning mechanism using electric or mechanical motors evaporated. I did spend many hours building my machine but could have made a bagatelle type in a half hour. I could also have brought along a Meccano made table tennis bat, stood on the line and batted the balls using my own body to apply the tension, and argued my body was a machine?

So all this is not sour grapes but rather a plea for unambiguous rules fairly applied, and rather less complicated future models for competition. I am sure this would encourage more members to participate.

Bill Jack - 19 May 2013.

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THE MECCANO STEAM ENGINES - EXTRA

A compilation of additional information and comment

Readers will recall three well researched and extensive articles on Meccano steam engines by our Secretary, Douglas Carson which were published in issues 84, 85 and 86 of the Newsletter. Subsequently, these same articles were published in the Sheffield Meccano Guild magazine and the editor (Rob Mitchell) received a collection of illustrated comments which he has generously given us leave to reproduce here.

Not surprisingly, Douglas Carson's work had the collectors thinking, attracted some observations, and even some corrections. In particular, it transpires that some of the referenced sources in the first instalment for the 1914 & 1921 engines may not have been as solid as their provenance would suggest!

Part 1: the 1914 & 1921 Engines, MSS Newsletter No.84 Comments by Geoff brown

I will need to consult with Owen Roberts who is a steam buff and who is sure he has traced the original 1914 engine manufacturer. I can't recall the name accurately but its trademark was 'Veitchi' or 'Vetch' and it ran the picture of the engine as an ad with 'M.L.L.' clearly visible at the bottom left-hand corner. The company was local to Meccano; we think it went bust at the beginning of the Great War and Meccano ac

I have also seen Jim Gamble's 1920 engine drawings and what is of interest to me is that my own boilerless steamer has an earlier version of the flywheel with a thinner rim than the one in the 1920 drawing. What I think actually happened is similar to the No. 1 Clockwork Motor, where in 1915 Meccano began making their own drawings from the Märklin originals and incorporating their own improvement along the way. (The No. 1 Motor, by the way, was by no means perfect despite being German - no sir!) In other words, I am sure that Meccano copied the 1920 drawings from the maker's originals.

*The Veitchi Advert
(Note: 1/3 = 6.25 pence)*

Finally, Owen and I believe there is no question about the engine being made in Germany. At Henley we had the opportunity to compare three 1914 steamers side-by-side with Bing and Märklin contemporaries and, while there are similarities like the octagonal base and the method of fixing the boiler to the firebox, none is identical. Moreover, the Meccano engine has English fasteners.

[SMG Ed. 'English fasteners' presumably means BSW, BA etc whereas continental firms may have been using metric threads. Whitworth (BSW) became widely adopted in the 1840s and metric during the 1860s, the latter considerably earlier than most of us would suspect. Despite it having its roots in the 16th Century and being formalised during the French Revolution, many in the UK think it was an unwelcome 1970s intrusion!]

After further evidence, examination, sleuthing and reasoning, **Geoff** fleshed out his theories. In early 2010 I successfully bid for what I thought I recognised as the bottom half of a 1914 steamer coupled to a different boiler and got it for thirty quid! I bimbled over to the ancient quarters of Bridlington to pick it up from a lovely old antique shop. All they knew about it was what the previous owner had said - it had belonged to his father and as it wouldn't steam with its original boiler he connected it to a different one! My own suspicions are that he may not have had the chimney - so necessary for draught. My own 1914 steamer goes like a train as can be witnessed by many who have seen it run twice at Henley.



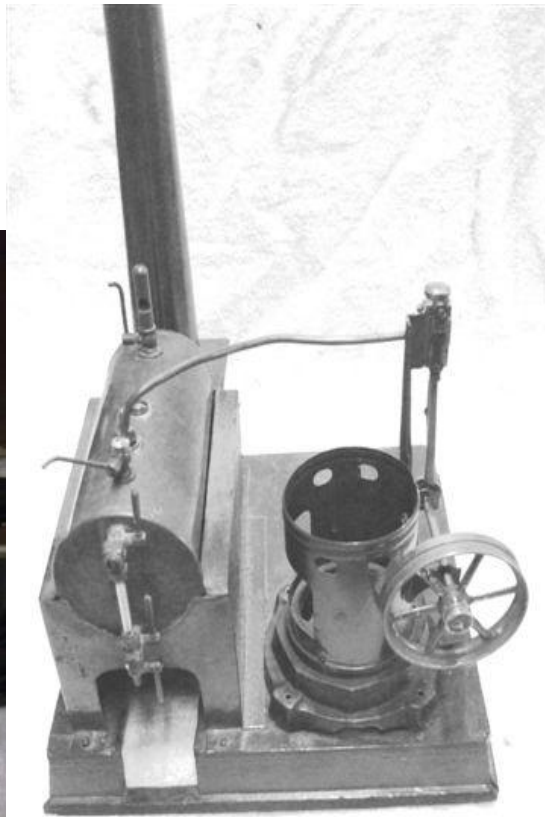
1914 engines with and without boiler

I got it home in some anxiety but as soon as I removed the 'engine' from the base the 'M.L.L.' transfer was revealed in all its glory! Comparing this priceless item with my own steamer reveals it has a fixed flywheel of slightly smaller diameter than the detachable type but still has the critical 'Made in England' stamp on the motion bracket. Additionally, the screws that hold that to the firebox are of unmistakable Meccano parentage with square Nuts.

Two things have happened since. Firstly, I took it to the next Henley meeting and conferred with Owen Roberts. We compared three of the 1914 steamers (Jim Gamble's, Malcolm Hanson's and mine) with an assortment of contemporary Märklin and Bing engines. Although there were similarities in the octagonal base (but not size) and the method of rolling the boiler skirt into a pair of grooves in the firebox top edge, none of the other details corresponded at all - not at all - with any of those of the other engines



Flywheels compared



1914 engine with replacement boiler

In this latter connection, I also examined the 1906 Bing facsimile catalogue in which a huge range of separate engine parts were offered for would-be builders. Again, no visual detail correspondence at all was found, contrary to expectations.

The second thing that happened was that I persuaded Jim to copy me some of the 1914 engine drawings. As he has stated elsewhere, they are dated 1920. However, the flywheel shown is the later removable type whereas the one on my 'half engine' is indisputably fixed as indeed appears to be the one in the early pictures of the engine - the first of which appears in the 1915 Book of Prize Models. It also appears that in both cases the inner dimensions of the wheels are the same but the later type has a rim twice as thick which could be borne out by the need for more inertia in this component. (Think - I wonder if that was why the original owner of my 'half engine' couldn't get it to go.) What's more, the modification notes to the flywheel drawing make no mention of an earlier version as they would have done if they had been the original drawings.

Now, that 1915 book illustration shows the mark 'M.L.L.' in tiny letters next to the base - Meccano's earliest known trademark. But - and I am now relying on Owen's evidence - I believe that the Veitchi illustration he has that appears to be identical to the 1915 book is identical - not only in the part detail but also in the reproduction of that vital 'M.L.L.'

It was I who discovered the origin of the 76t Gear of the 1929 engine and I wrote it up on both 'Spanner' and in Newsmag. 50 DP gears were in widespread use in other Meccano products including the cars, planes and trains and the Gear is the identical blank to the No. 1 gear from the pre-1928 Hornby No. 1 clockwork mechanism which was made obsolete in 1928 by a general update of the design with a larger Gear.

As far as I am aware the 1914 engines were sourced from 'Technical Engineering' who produced the Veitchi range of engines. They were based a few hundred yards from Meccano at Old Swan and disappeared during WWI - perhaps Meccano absorbed them. The engine was then redrawn in 1920 by Meccano and produced for a short period of time. This requires confirmation but is the best explanation available.

In this regard, **Owen Roberts** confirms Geoff's analysis. Comparison of the octagonal-based engines of continental manufacture reveals differences in the dimensions of the base and threads of the boiler fittings. It is unlikely that the 1914 engines were made abroad.

There is a book called 'British Tin Toys Including an A - Z of British Metal Toy Makers' (Marguerite Fawdry) which contains a picture in an advert of the Veitchi engine. As far as can be deduced, it is identical to the Meccano engine. Some of the information in the book is very suspect but the advert must be taken from an original. Some time ago there was an article in 'The Hornby Railway Collector' by Nicholas Oddy that discounted any connection between Bing and Hornby with logically-argued reasoning. This article has not been challenged in the intervening period.

Certainly the threads on the boiler of the 1914-1920 engine do not match any Bing or Märklin threads; I did test this at Henley.

Back to **Geoff Brown**: The other thing worth noting is that there is nothing oddball about the 1/2" diameter crankshaft of the 1929 engine. If you look at the Hornby range alone, Meccano made widespread use of fraction-sized rods and wire: 1/16" and 3/32" was widely used for handrails and loco and wagon axles and every loco bogie axle ever made were 1/2"! My favourite large Hornby electric motors use 3/16" with 1/16" quartering pins. As you've probably suspected by now, I can bore for England on this one - "Your specialised subject, Geoff?" "Meccano wire sizes!" I do concede, however, that later on, Meccano used SWG sizes apart from Axle Rods.

Part 2: the 1929 Engine, SMGJ115

An eagle-eyed **Russ Carr** commented: Page 5, point 3, 76t Gear and 12t Pinion. At 1"centres, $(76+12)/2 = 88/2 = 44$ DP so they're either not the stated 50 DP or not at 1" centres. At 50 DP the centres would be 1/2". Would someone confirm the axle-to-axle centre distance?
[MSS Ed. At Douglas' request, I have since done so. They are indeed on 1/2" centres.]

Part 3: the Mamod-made Engines, SMGJ116

Nobody has commented therefore it must be free of eyebrow-raisers; take a bow, Mr Carson!

* * * * *

SKEGEX 2013

by

Angus Plumb

The 32nd annual Exhibition organized by the North Midlands Meccano Guild of England was held, once again, in the Embassy Theatre in Skegness, on 5th, 6th & 7th July 2013.

It has to be observed that the weather was a little better than last year. Certainly there were no problems with the number of umbrellas at the dinner on Saturday evening. Fine weather cuts both ways, it brings the punters to the resort but it does not encourage them to go inside to see the show. There was, never-the-less, for us at least, a satisfying flow of visitors and a good level of interest in the display. I would heartily recommend my fellow Meccanopeople to keep 4th, 5th & 6th July free in their diaries for next year. It may be quite a long journey, but don't forget Beamish, the Transporter Bridge and the Teesside Newport Bridge, the giant Meccano Bridge at Bolton and the Tramway Museum at Crich are all more-or-less on the way.

Geoff Brown and Marion Cotterell and their assistants must be congratulated on such a good organization of the show. We know how much effort goes in to getting the marquee at Scone organized. Skegex is of an order of magnitude more complex and yet everything went smoothly. The staff of the Embassy must also be mentioned as the arrangements for unloading on Thursday and loading up again on Sunday require a level of traffic management to which they can hardly be accustomed, but they must satisfy the requirements essential to keep emergency access open.

The town continues to belie the rumours of recession with only one vacant unit and one closing down sale (a chain store) in the main streets, even the charity shops had an air of prosperity and Beales have opened new premises. The weather had brought the visitors out and the town was thronged, with the car parks at the beach filling up at 9am. The Lion can still offer a plate of pasta and a decent pint at lunchtime for about £7. Why Wetherspoons have added the Red to the Lion remains an enigma.

Those who did seek the shade of the Theatre were rewarded by one of the best collections of models I can remember. The show is truly international with visitors from France, Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg and Holland. From further afield there were visitors from Canada, America, Australia and New Zealand.

The Giant Windmill remained outside for the whole show this year. The Trefoil Guild (Girl Guides) Tombola was doing splendid business alongside Geoff Brown and his assistants Steward's Enclosure. On Friday pupils from the local Frithville Primary School were invited to try their efforts, with assistance from Rob and Wendy Miller. The kids appeared to find plenty to interest them when they were released to look round the hall. It is to be hoped that this has sown a few seeds for the Meccano people of the future.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Frank Hornby. I had run off a small display based on the use of Meccano to build a Differential Calculator which I had taken to the small shows we had attended in the north-east, but I didn't take my humble display to the Mecca of Meccano, someone else would be bound to have done a more professional job.

Except that they hadn't. There was not a mention on Meccano UK's table and only Douglas Windibank, the man who travels from south London by public transport with as much as he can fit into a suitcase, had a small display paying homage to the man who invented it all.

This year also marks the efforts of the Dam Busters in World War 2. In the Foyer was a diorama representing a corner of an airfield with George Illingworth's Lancaster Bomber as its centre piece, surrounded by a Bedford Fire Tender, a Crossley CO2 Foam Tender, an Austin K2 Auxiliary Towing Vehicle and a Tiger Moth. Adding additional atmosphere was a Control Tower assembled by Rob Mitchell. The scales were a little wayward but the effect was good. In the main hall another diorama had been assembled by John Reid representing a RAF/RFC aerodrome.



The airfield display

There were not many aircraft this year. Julie Cameron presented a Bi-plane from the Aircraft Constructor parts together with the Spitfire, Tintin Seaplane, Red Arrow and Harrier from recent sets and a monoplane in French colours. Peter Wood was demonstrating some of the smaller elements of his Tornado. I had my quartet of Aircraft Constructor models in their accustomed position and received some gratifying compliments.

George Illingworth also had a display in the main hall. Those familiar with George's efforts will not be surprised to know that he had Morris 8 and Dennis Ace Fire Engines. George has no direct connection with the fire service; he just appreciates the challenge and the suitability of Meccano colours.

Ian Mordue, from NEMS, continued the theme of military airfields with a tour-de-force in the shape of a Willeme CG 8x4 Auto Grue, a French design originally produced to lift military aircraft back onto the runway when they had overshot. The vehicle combines an eight wheel heavy duty chassis with Ian's favourite, a crane. The 1930's design did not have all-wheel drive and so the machine was at a disadvantage if the plane had gone into soft ground, as often happened. Ian had taken great trouble to model all the features of the original, including the small cranes running along the edge of the frame to lift the heavy additional wheels and position them on the rear axles. The wheels were normally carried like spares both to reduce tyre wear and to minimise the width of the machine for ease of storage.



The Mordue Auto Grue



Big Mog

Neil Bedford's Big Mog is a design of vehicle for use in soft and rough terrain. Neil's model was remote controlled and gave great delight as it was put through its paces in the aisles. Whether it could tow Ian's vehicle out of a tight spot was not put to the test. John Ozyer-Key presented a JCB 712 Articulated Dump Truck, an example of the sort of machine that ought to be much more in evidence if we would persuade our political leaders would put money where their mouths are in protecting and developing the country's infrastructure.

More conventional road vehicles saw Peter Pyefinch mounting an impressive Beast Carrier, complete with loading ramp. Peter is a master at the art of designing large trucks around chassis comprising large numbers of ashtray tyres, although in this year model the yellow plates would show the dirt.

Nick Rogers had risen to the challenge of modelling curves in three dimensions with his Bulk Cement Carrier, in uncompromising red plates. The Mercedes prototype is a common sight, but would usually be seen in colours that do not lend themselves to Meccano unless one is in to repaints.



The Nick Rogers Cement Carrier

Kelvin Freeman wasn't worrying about being true to prototype colours with his fine blue/gold Forward Control Wagon.

An impressive array of large road vehicles was provided by Philip Webb's assortment of models inspired by the song 'Convoy', with which I have to admit to not being familiar. Among his collection was that cult vehicle the VW Camper Van, done up in psychedelic livery reminiscent of the vehicle from the Faslane Peace Camp that can be seen at the Riverside Museum in Glasgow.

Philip's vehicles were depicted lining up to use a gas station, the inspiration being of American origin.

John Herdman's Skip Lorry was making another visit to Skegness.

George Roy likes to rise to the challenge of building to scale. He had built a Coles Mobile Crane based on the Dinky Supertoy. George's model was derived from a design by Bruce Geange of the New Zealand Federation.

Michel Breal, a regular visitor from France, has come in for a bit of criticism in the past for very large machines. This year he followed George's example with a mini-digger.

John Sharp's Coventry Climax Fork Lift may have been inspired by the Dinky model but he had put fully operational detail in to his version that was not really feasible at the scale even of Supertoys.

Matthew McCallum had assembled the Outfit 10 Mobile Crane in classic red/green.

Peter Evans Burrell Steam Crane was impressive. The challenge here is to get the scale and proportions satisfactorily close that the machine looks right. Wheels, boiler, cylinder and chimney require careful consideration. Peter had done a fine job.

There were no really big cranes this year, but Norman Brown, the NEMS member from across the Pennines in Carlisle, home of Cowans and Sheldon, was displaying an 'Electric Travelling Crane', from the 1932 Book of Prize Models, something of a hybrid between a Blocksetter and a Dragline and which he put through its paces to the satisfaction of an interested crowd.

Jan Bressinck from Belgium was displaying the Improved 15Ton Block Setting Crane, a version of the icon of Meccano manuals.

He was also advertising a meeting the Netherlands Meccano Group at the Town Hall Temse, Belgium on 2nd November from 9am to 5pm, should anyone happen to be in the area at that time.

Peter Goddard from the Solent group was absent this year and so it was left to another Belgian, Henri Goonvaerts, to hold the fort with his Blue/gold Steam Railway Service Crane. Henri's scale was a little smaller than Peter's but he rises well to the challenge of packing a great deal of detail into a small space.



The railway service crane

Railway Locomotives, on the other hand, were very much in evidence. I suppose you could say there was a shed full of them.

Richard Smith had produced a streamlined version of the LMS 4-6-2 he had displayed last year. This was in the shape of 'Duchess of Hamilton'. It has to be said that the bending of triangular plates to form the front end looked better from a distance, but the mere fact that he had achieved curves in three dimensions was worthy of commendation.

Richard had again opted to repaint rather than present non-prototypical livery.



Duchess of Hamilton

John Bader had his excellent nickel 4-2-2 that repays further outings and Eddie Oatley had the neat pair of Saddle Tanks that have also been seen before, running on their mixed gauge Meccano track.

Mike Hooper was displaying a very well detailed model of the GWR King George V with a very good attempt at the Swindon taper boiler, it might have been amongst the prize winners had it not been seen before.



Ron Gee displayed a zinc/yellow version of the SML15 Baltic Tank

It must however be admitted that our old friend Bob Seaton had completed a masterpiece with his SR Baltic (4-6-4) Tank 'Remembrance'. We have seen his 'City of Sheffield' and Beyer Garratt at Scone, although it seems he will not be with us this year. We must look forward to seeing this fine model gracing our tables next year.



Remembrance

John Martin, recently returned to the hobby, had built a model of Nigel Gresley's streamlined pacific 'Mallard' which was appropriate as this year marks 75 years since the engine established the record for the maximum speed reached by a steam locomotive.

A model that just scrapes into the category of railway vehicles was Kelvin Freeman's Cliff Railway which is not based on any particular prototype, although I found it similar to the lift that links Low Town and High Town in Bridgnorth, northern terminus of the Severn Valley railway. Unfortunately Kelvin has had to truncate his model to fit his storage and the cars no longer run properly up to the termini.

Other models that demonstrated Meccano's ability to model architecture included Michael Whiting's Seven Wonders of the (Ancient) World.

We had some discussion about this collection of models, but I would tend to claim that anyone who was prepared to bolt so many gold perforated strips together to represent one of the great Pyramids deserves recognition of some sort.



Seven wonders of the world in Meccano

I heard it said that all you need was enough parts, but the use of plastic axles to represent Greek columns was, I felt, inspired.

Michael cannot be faulted for following up his last year's success with Noah's Ark

Malcolm Hanson produced Blackpool Tower and a Dutch Windmill as examples of the use of blue/gold parts to build large models.

Tony Homden, the man from just across the Wash, had built an 18th Century Blast Furnace based on the Abraham Darby design that was employed at Ironbridge at the dawn of industrialization. Tony had included a couple of the plastic figures from some recent sets to shovel for all they were worth to keep the furnace fed.

This demonstrates the versatility of Meccano parts from different eras.

Another model with a historical theme was James Watt's Rotary Beam Engine demonstrating how the problem of translating the vertical motion of the piston into the arc of the end of the beam was solved.



Ken McDonald's Rocking Cylinder engine

Ken McDonald was displaying an Oscillating Cylinder Engine which is another, but somewhat more cumbersome, method of solving the same problem and allowed engines to be built without the need to pay royalties to Watt. There was a troublesome squeak coming from this model and Alan Blair disengaged each drive in turn to identify the bearing responsible for the noise and resolve the trouble.

George Roy's Bray Side Rod Engine (as displayed at Menstrie) was inspired by an article in the Oct. '86 edition of Model Engineer.

John Gray had a fine Beam Engine in Dark blue/yellow which I am sure would have impressed Bobby Middlemass

Matthew McCallum's Twin Cylinder Marine Engine was a Display Model intended to sit in shop windows to encourage boys to tease their fathers into buying Meccano.

Alan Blair had gone one better with his Triple Expansion Marine Engine which uses the steam three times in cylinders of increasing bore, one of the aims being to even out the forces on the crankshaft and reduce wear on the bearings..



Part of the Angus Plumb Display

The model represents the power plant used in the Liberty Ships built in great numbers at minimum cost to maintain the merchant fleet during World War II

There were only two actual ships of note, if I may make so bold, Ivor Ellard's Yacht and my own HMS Rodney. I really must build a new vessel, but Rodney still gets plenty of admiring glances.

Mention of ships leads on to bridges and in particular lifting bridges. Robin Schoolar's Dutch Bascule Bridge is now complete with both railway tracks crossing the canal by their own lifting spans. Bridges are an obvious target for military operations and Russ Carr's 6" Howitzer with its Limber and Tractor looked as though it could do a bit of damage, the model is from SML37. John Reid had a horse drawn version of a similar weapon that could probably match the damage it could do but might take a little longer to get to the theatre of war. John, who seems to have a taste for things military, also displayed a 7" RMC Gun on a Moncrieff carriage. John claims it is not the military associations so much as the scope for imaginative use of parts that attracts him to these subjects.

Cathy Claydon, who still describes herself as the tea lady, had a very attractive GMC DUKW353 very carefully constructed from Army Multikit parts.

More peaceful vehicles were exemplified by Paul Robertshaw with his version of the Outfit 10 Double Deck Bus and John Herdman's Optare Bus. Paul has made the obvious improvement on the book model; he has put more realistic seats in to it. It is sometimes suggested that Outfit 10 was stuffed with flexible plates, and yet there are not enough to make a satisfactory interior for the bus model.

The London Meccano Club also displayed the Optare Bus, a common vehicle particularly in view of its alternative body sizes, suiting many different types of operator. There is a ModelPlan of one of these vehicles which I may get round to one day, the examples used locally are liveried for the Airport 'Jet' service which, being blue and grey, should just about be feasible choosing parts carefully from various different colour periods..



The Optare Bus

Jim Gamble always has a fine display of old Meccano and this year he was showing six Shop Display Car Chassis. I am sure he and Roger Marriott must have had an interesting discussion as one of Roger's achievements is to modify one of these models so that it actually works reliably, the gear box from the model room's efforts tending to bind.

Matthew McCallum had a fine example of the Constructor Cars with a 2-seat Sports Car. I would love to add one of these models to my collection, alongside the Aeroplanes, but the prices are well beyond my means.

Tony Wakefield had built a Mini 1275S at a scale of 1:4.4, but he had not plated the body, instead his skeletal model displayed clearly the structure and mechanics of the vehicle. The original BMC Mini is a natural choice for a Meccano model as Alec Issigonis used Meccano to rough out his design for the prototype.

Chris Fry took a more modest line, presenting Bernard Perier's MGT and Triumph TR3A. I just love Bernard's designs, my version of the TR3A was on display on our tables.

Agricultural vehicles and machinery was in short supply this year. Maybe I have become so accustomed to Gordon Stewart's displays at our north-east venues that I think everyone builds tractors. John Bader's model was the only one that caught my eye. Terry Allan had assembled a Steam Powered Lawn Mower; probably not the most useful implement in the British climate, by the time it had got steam up the rain would have come on.

It is a short step from agriculture to earthmoving. Matthew McCallum presented the Outfit 10 Excavator in red/green. This is a model that was an icon of Meccano publicity in the period. Ivor Ellard had an Excavator, Loader and Bulldozer in a diorama representing the corner of a muck shifting job. His display was quite neat but perhaps he should come to the Farming and Construction show in Aberdeen and see just how much effort some lads put into their models.

Joe Etheridge had a somewhat smaller model this year than last, but his Bucket Wheel Excavator was well up to his usual standard. This type of machine is rarely seen at work in Britain nowadays but would once have been commonplace in Joe's native County Durham when every available natural resource was being exploited to meet the demands of industries that led the world.

Roger Marriott's Automatic Coal Loader/Unloader is a machine that has inspired many a ball roller.

On the subject of ball rollers, Guy Kind, from Luxemburg, had stepped out of character this year. He builds one model each year and this year it was a marble roller. In one major respect Guy had not forsaken his traditional values. His ball roller rolled about 1700 balls an hour and did so hour after hour throughout the show. When Guy builds a model he builds a good one, he does not want to have to spend all day at his table picking up stray balls.

Rob Mitchell once again displayed his Twin Rotor Ball Roller.

Amongst the other novelties Meccanographs were present in several guises. Anne Nightingale was patiently turning out an apparently infinite number of patterns from her machine. Peter Clay and Ivor Ellard had their versions of this classic, Ivor's using several different colours at once, and Chris Bourne was once again baffling us all with his machine that uses differentials and turns out patterns that seem to be impossible.

Tony Rednall's All Working Meccano Thingamabob needs no further comment!

Tim Surtell was challenging visitors with his Lightning Loop, a version of a classic in which the ring has to pass over the tortuous wire without making contact. Mock flames spurted from the towers if you failed. His Spanish Knight, Maracas and Sunflowers were fine examples of just how versatile Meccano can be with a little imagination.

Ken McDonald presented an Acrobat, turning somersaults around a bar, while a judge raised his arms with the score in his hands.

Josh Clay's Beasty, a sort of two dimensional Nessie, shows how to use a large collection of Flat Trunnions. One would not want to encounter one of these on a dark night.



Beasty –or how to impress with Flat Trunnions

A third visitor from Belgium was Geert Van Hove with a trio of Golfers.

Our ever inventive friend from the north-east (of England) Ian Mordue had produced a 3D version of a Meccano Magazine cover. Perhaps he will manage to combine another cycling holiday with a trip to our show at Scone one day in the not too far distant future.

Maybe he will emulate Harry Harker's Happy Wanderer, a clever use of plastic Meccano parts to produce a representation of a walker striding across the countryside, no doubt making his way from one Meccano show to the next. Did Harry have a younger version of Douglas Windibank in mind, hiking from venue to venue with his suitcase of models?

Reference to the passage of time brings me to Clocks.

As can be expected, there were several timepieces in this year's show.

Roger Thorpe had the Arnfield Clock, which I do not pretend to understand but which is a classic Meccano model and appears regularly at Skegex and other shows. Roger also had a Self Winding Clock, which has undertones of perpetual motion but must need an external power source from time to time. Dutchman Burco Landsmann displayed a Skeleton Clock and a Nautical Skeleton Clock, this latter being a version of one of Harrison's Chronometers which he designed to enable mariners to determine longitude but which, despite their success, gave him little reward. The admiralty preferred the cheaper option of complex astronomical tables. Burco's model included high and low tide times, moon phase and chimes. His terrestrial version also chimed, gave the date and moon phase.

Frenchman Bernard Garrigues had a novelty in the shape of a clock driven by square gears. I'm afraid you'll have to sponsor Andy Knox, or someone better versed in mechanics than I am, to explain this sort of thing. I presume it is a matter of getting the geometry right, but it defeats me.

Bernard's brother is a mathematics professor, which probably goes a long way to explain things.

John Sharp showed Michael Adler's Grignion Clock. Another fine clock was displayed by New Zealander David Couch, the man who started the craze for French Knitting which has taken the Meccano world by storm.

While some may pour scorn on a device which is basically a cotton reel and four nails, the challenge is to build a mechanism that is both fast and reliable. To this end it hardly matters what it does so long as it does it well. Several distinguished meccanomen were not above being invited on to the platform draped in lengths of their respective model's product to acknowledge the success of their machines.

Using Meccano for pure amusement has an honourable tradition and was exemplified this year by the Irish Corlust Club with a Big Wheel made almost entirely out of 2½" Stepped Curved Strips (Part No.90a). No doubt they had at least one eye on attracting an audience to come up to the area at the back of the stage where they were selling their expanding range of replica parts in a range of colours very close to the original from several periods.



Anyone for a game? The Brian Ashton display

Other models inspired by the fairground included Brian Ashton with his range of Arcade Games. We may have seen them before but they keep youngsters amused. Poor Brian was the sole guest in the only hotel he could find that would accept the dog he travels with as he has no-one else now to look after it.

Nigel Lynn had models of the Waltzer and Cakewalk that he remembered from Fairgrounds of his youth. These were large models, the size set by the need to build in full detail and accommodate the necessary mechanisms.

David Hobson had built a model of a Parachute Jump installed at the Coney Island Amusement Park in Brooklyn in America from 1941 to 1968. This was a delightful model, although the parachutes were not from Meccano parts. Not that that should be allowed to detract from a display that also included models in the Primus system, which has some features Meccano did not successfully emulate. The wooden parts forming carriage and wagon bodies are particularly effective. The Primus sets for building a Motor Car Chassis and a Big Wheel are hard to come by. The motor Chassis with Van Body, Railway Carriage with wooden body and Luffing Crane displayed the capabilities of this system marketed by the camera makers Butcher in the days when cameras had wooden bodies and spring driven mechanisms.

Georg Eiermann, from Germany, displayed a couple of sets marketed by Märklin, the German model railway builders who built under licence from Hornby until World War One forced them to go their own way and whose system is now being marketed by Metallus.

Matthew McCallum displayed an Outfit 7 from the dark red/green period when it was the largest set in the series (1926-34) and a fine blue/gold Outfit 9 from 1934-41. Malcolm Hanson is also a collector of blue/gold sets and had a fine display on his tables. Anne Seaton,

not to be outdone, had assembled the models from the recent Tintin sets. They are fine models but I am not convinced they are worth the price that is being asked.

As ever the stage was busy with the regular dealers, Mike Rhoades with his strictly Binns Road, Peter Blundon with a bit of a miscellany, John Thorpe with so much stuff that his wife Lynda was in the Green Room with fair part of it. And last but by no means least Dave Taylor with everything from his £1 bundles of well used parts to pristine Metallus and repros from divers sources. Behind the stage Alan Scargill and Lesley Mitchell held the fort with their range of used parts and badinage to match.

The prizes this year were presented by Canadian Jim Bobyn, his worship the mayor, it is rumoured, was otherwise engaged watching Andy Murray win at Wimbledon. Jim had given us a very entertaining account of his life with Meccano at the Dinner on Saturday night.

The Winners were:

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Bob Seaton | Remembrance (SR Baltic Tank) |
| 2 | Michael Whiting | Seven Wonders of the (Ancient) World |
| 3 | Richard Smith | Duchess of Hamilton (LMS Streamlined 4-6-2) |
| 4 | Ian Mordue | Willem Airfield Rescue Truck |
| 5 | Nick Rogers | Bulk Cement Carrier |

The show next year runs from 4th to 6th July with setting up on the 3rd.

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MECCANO IN THE NORTH EAST – SPRING & SUMMER 2013

by

Angus Plumb

Reports of Gordon Stewart's successful trip to Dingwall and my own exploits at Mill of Benholm in March will have already been seen in the April Newsletter.

Sunday 31st March saw me mounting a couple of tables at a Grampian Miniature Transport Collectors' Swapmeet in Aberdeen. These model Swapmeets are a dying breed. We thought ours had died a couple of years ago when falling receipts on the door barely covered the rent of the room, but the dealers in Corgi and Tekno Trucks, who don't sell through the retail trade, got to hear about us and were keen that we should go on. They come to Aberdeen from Coventry and go away smiling so there is hope for us yet. Apart from the Corgi and Tekno truck dealers there are several regulars offering old Dinky, Corgi, Matchbox, Lledo and Vanguard and also current Oxford, EFE and other die cast models. To expand interest we now include several model displays. Dale Smith is a regular, Robert Wilson of the HRCA normally joins us with his 'O' gauge stock and a local lad who does military dioramas takes a table or two.

I had my usual display of vehicles (reflecting the theme of the Meet) showing the various colour schemes of Meccano production. There was a satisfying level of interest and discussion with the visitors. There are not many young kids at these meets and the Meccanograph did not see much action.

On 5th May Gordon, his wife Sheila, and I, were once again at the Model Farm and Construction Show in Aberdeen. This was the third time the show had been held and visitor numbers did not disappoint. Once again the show filled all the space available and the standard of modelling of farm layouts was very high. There were some impressive displays. The effort one lad had taken to sift soil to represent real parks and run his models over them to mimic actual tractor and machine tracks shows real knowledge and dedication.

We had tried to tune our display to the tenor of the show. In addition to the 'Wheel of Treats', crane and a typical selection of his range of sets, motors and models Gordon had his Fordson tractors with their well modelled implements. I had the Highway Multikit construction plant, freelance Gritter and a 1960's Outfit 8 Bulldozer in addition to the aircraft constructor planes and a selection of models representing the various Meccano colour schemes. The day passed quickly with a steady stream of interested and informed visitors.

The week-end of 18th/19th May presented a potential triple booking with an invitation from a Model Railway Group in Ayrshire, the society's Constructors Day at Menstrie and the BA Stores Vintage Farming Week-end at Lyne of Skene. In the end the Society was compelled reluctantly to gracefully decline the Kyle MRC, Gordon attended Menstrie on Saturday and Lyne of Skene on Sunday while, as I barely understood the rules of the competition to be held at Menstrie, I opted for Lyne of Skene on Saturday. (It is convenient to have two separate displays as the tent has to be cleared on Saturday evening to serve as the marquee for the

night's entertainment.) Saturday dawned somewhat unpromisingly with overcast skies of the kind described as lowering, lowering in fact almost to field level. The rain held off until after midday, but by 2pm it obviously was not going to ease and the show was closed early. Nevertheless there was a steady flow of visitors and some rewarding discussion.

I had about three tables of a representative selection of my models displaying Meccano through its ages with something to attract comment from all age groups. The Meccanograph was making another appearance and one family group confounded one of my fond notions, two young lads of primary school age, the younger gave the crank handle six turns and lost interest, his brother finished the ring that was started, did another full circle after I had changed the pen and settings, selected a third pen and was almost finished a third ring when his mother appeared and almost dragged him away.

Sunday was a much better day with less wind, hazy sunshine and no rain. The field was thronged and the tent was well filled. Gordon had filled four tables with a similar display to that staged at the Treetops and Sheila added a spread of model stationary steam engines and Mamod model steam powered vehicles. There was an extended discussion with one visitor who would have been displaying a tractor on the field except that it is in bits on his garage floor and who is keen on Meccano and was asking for details of how to extend his collection, His son is also keen and knowledgeable. It is to be hoped that we can look forward to more participation in the hobby from this family.

The BA Stores show, which has now completed 10 years, is aiming to be a 'Scone of the North' with a ploughing display as Scone has its harvesting display and a field of agricultural machinery, vehicles and trade stands. It has some way to go yet to rival Scone but would be recommended to anyone with an interest in traditional farming methods. It is very much a venue into which Meccano fits and where it is well received. The five model displays were conveniently grouped together with Andy Penman, Harry Forrest and Andy Soutar displaying steam models on our right and Albert Irvine with a large display of model lorry mounted cranes and heavy haulage on our left.

Four weeks later, 15th/16th June, we reconvened about four miles away in the grounds of Castle Fraser, a National Trust property, one of the well preserved fortified houses in the north-east and well worth a visit in its own right. The buildings show the development from a medieval defensive position to a comfortable gentleman's residence. Its walled garden has been well restored and a substantial part of it is laid out to fruit and vegetables which would have been the primary use of these sheltered growing areas when remote estates had of necessity to be self sufficient in perishable produce. The event on this occasion was the Bon-accord Steam Rally. 'Bon-accord' is the motto of the City of Aberdeen and the Bon-accord Steam Engine Club, which organizes the show, is Aberdeen based. For many years the event was held in Hazlehead Park on the western edge of the City, but the field was used during the winter as rugby football pitches and one wet year so much damage was done by the engines that the Council felt it could not afford a recurrence of the cost of restoring the pitches. The show relocated to a site at what is now the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre at Bridge of Don but the haar rolled in, the spectators departed and driving conditions became hazardous.

The National Trust for Scotland, mindful that it needed revenue, was eager to encourage a range of events at suitable properties and the Steam Rally has developed at the site to the point where space is now at a premium. There has always been a small tent for model displays attracting exhibitors showing cranes, dinky toys and live steam models. Meccano is an

obvious addition and this year, with the prospect of a larger display area, we were fortunate to secure six tables.

On Saturday Gordon and Sheila and I were joined by Bert Hutchings, who had family commitments which prevented his attending for the full two days. Bert brought has eight low loaders illustrating the principal colour schemes of Meccano from the earliest days to 1977, the Hammerhead Crane which he encourages visitors to try out and which demonstrates several basic mechanical principles, Concorde and the colourful plastic shop display Big Wheel which was seen at Errol. Although Bert's display may be somewhat 'old-hat' to regular attenders of events in more southern parts it was the first time it had been seen in the north-east. Visitors were suitably impressed and Bert found the day passed most satisfactorily. I hope this proves to be the first of many visits to our shows by our colleagues from the south. Bert was certainly impressed by the enthusiasm and knowledge of the visitors.

Sheila was presiding over an extensive display of model stationary steam engines from a wide variety of manufacturers including Mamod (who provided engines to Meccano), WileSCO and the German firms of Bing and Doll. Gordon and Sheila regularly attend Taylor's auctions at Montrose where a good selection of steam engines have turned up recently.

Gordon had his two Fordson Tractors, loosely based on a 1930's Outfit 8 model, one repainted in dark green and pulling a two furrow plough the other repainted in dark blue and pulling his excellently observed rendering of a Reaper and Binder which is a vast improvement on the Outfit 8 model both in its realistic representation and its scale relative to the tractor. Both tractor models are built from parts that were too badly play-worn to be used without refurbishment and Gordon's colours resemble the actual shades of production machines. These models aroused much comment from the members of the farming community who visited the show. Gordon also displayed a horizontal steam engine, a Showman's engine and a collection of small models mostly with an agricultural theme, but also including some Multi-kit models using both Highway and Army versions.

On Sunday, to make up for Bert's absence, he produced a red/green Big Wheel and dark blue/yellow Crane. My tables featured 'Rodney' which continues to receive approving remarks, a selection of construction equipment based on Highway Multi-kit models, a group of vehicles illustrating blue/gold, red/green and silver/Zinc/yellow parts and the Nickel Tramcar which a Welsh visitor reckoned to be very much like the old Swansea and Mumbles vehicles. On Sunday, I staged my version of the 1960's Outfit 8 Meccanograph, much to the entertainment of many of the visitors and again found boys did not have the attention span to complete whole patterns whereas several girls had to be almost dragged away by impatient mothers. I quipped with one visitor that it was doing the ironing that taught patience, she did not demur.

Out on the field a substantial collection of both full sized and ride-on scale model traction engines, Showman's engines and road rollers were put through their paces together with a range of tractors and vintage and classic cars. The weather smiled on the show, although Saturday began damp it cleared up before setting up time and did not deter the crowd. The setting, surrounded by parkland and mature woodland and with the castle as a back-drop, is close to idyllic. It is certainly my intention to display again at this venue and I would commend it to anyone with an interest in steam traction.

Saturday 10th August saw Gordon and Sheila taking four tables at Tarland Show. I was a bit apprehensive about a rural agricultural show and truck fest and pleaded too many

commitments, but managed to call in to find an excellent marquee, mainly with truck models on show and for sale, and a good crowd with plenty of interesting discussion. It certainly is a classic Agricultural Show with the main interest concentrated on the judging ring and cattle, sheep, horses and dogs in profusion. The trucks were mostly modern, with some fantastic paint jobs, but a few old stagers were lined up. If we get an invitation next year I will certainly consider it, especially if the weather smiles again. The trip out to the Howe O' Cromar alone is worth it, particularly with the crops ripening, the hay making in full swing and the hairst just getting under way.

We are receiving invitations to shows that are stretching our local resources. Many of the shows are held in the long days of May and June. One visitor at Castle Fraser had come from Ayrshire to the event and commented that despite the early start the journey was entirely in daylight and it was a pleasure to pass through the countryside in its spring and early summer glory. There is a keen audience in the north-east of people with a farming background who appreciate our efforts and put on a grand show of machines and implements that would be well worth a visit from anyone who can find the time. Venues such as Castle Fraser and Crathes, (at which we have not yet staged a show) are ideal for a family day out.

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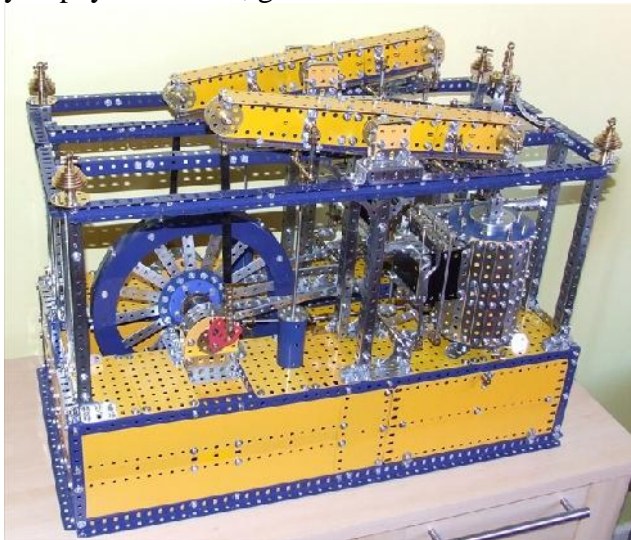
MECCANO ON THE INTERNET

One of our closest neighbours in the Meccano world is the Corlust club of Northern Ireland. Only formed comparatively recently (in 2008) they have very few members but their web site (<http://www.corlustmeccanoclub.co.uk>) indicates a lively organisation with quite a few exhibitions already as well as their contributions (like us) to model railway shows.



*Some of the Corlust members with their models at the Clare Vintage Ploughing Day
(sounds a bit like Scone!!)*

What is unusual, indeed probably unique, about the Corlust club is that they offer a sales service for replica Meccano parts. Not unique, surely, you may say. Ah, but, the Corlust people make the parts themselves. The web site contains a large selection of parts mostly girders and circular plate/girders which they make themselves. Apparently they recently bought one ton of metal as raw material. They use sophisticated engineering machine tools – some are pictured on the site - and will produce on demand non standard parts (a 48" long flat plate is mentioned on the web site!). Parts can be finished in zinc, green or dark blue and, if you pay a bit extra, gold.



Twin Beam Engine

A model built using some of the locally made parts is shown on the left. While they do not exactly specify which parts are made by them it is likely to be the blue girders.

The list given on the web site shows that their replica parts are very reasonably priced.

ELECTRONIC CONTACT ADDRESSES

The Society's web site address is:-

[**http://www.meccanoscotland.org.uk**](http://www.meccanoscotland.org.uk)

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