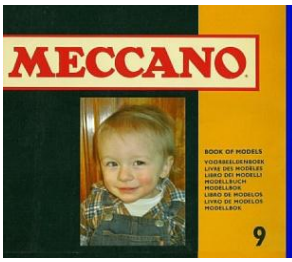


# JOHNNY'S MECCANO MAGAZINE

**June 2021**

## In this issue

**This month's Meccanoboy is Douglas Hedgley from the UK.** Page 13


Page 7

**Buy me a coffee**

This is entirely up to you but if you think this magazine was worth the price of a cup of coffee and you would like to contribute, click on the yellow 'Buy me a coffee' button above and it will take you to the website that gives you options.

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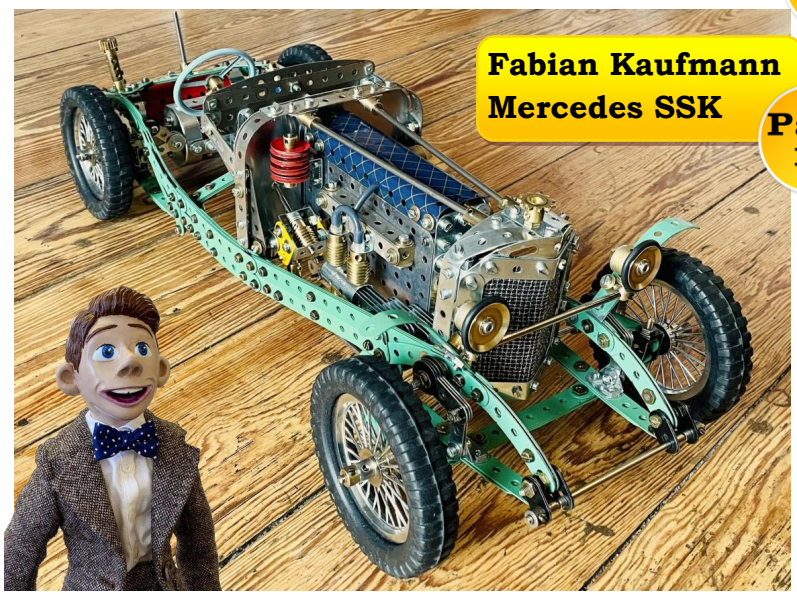
**GOOD IDEAS DEPT.** Page 12

**Graham Jost builds the Hexcalator** Page 2



**Fabian Kaufmann Mercedes SSK** Page 10

**The Meccano Society of Scotland Zoom Meeting**


**Rob Beeken battery box** Page 4


A note of appreciation for Johnny's Meccano Magazine from the Meccano Society of Scotland. The Meccano Society of Scotland circulates Johnny's Meccano Magazine to all its members and we like your style and approach – serious fun!


At yesterday's Zoom meeting, I drew members' attention to articles in the February and April issues. We thought you might like a picture, not of our workspaces, but our members busy on the Zoom Call yesterday!


Page 16

# HEXCALATOR

**Graham Jost - Aust**

I was immediately taken by Keith Edwards' Meccano Hexcalator when I first saw it on Rustbucket on the NZ site, Fig. 1. Counter-rotating hexagons collect and raise the balls on a staircase to the top where they exit to descend via a ramp to the bottom into a catcher, to roll down a chute and into the lowermost hexagon again. It was a case of no sooner seen than built, Fig. 2.

Fig. 1 Keith's Hexcalator

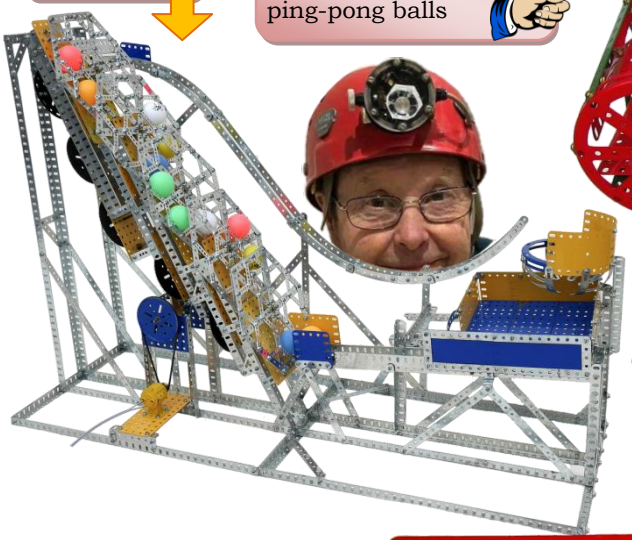
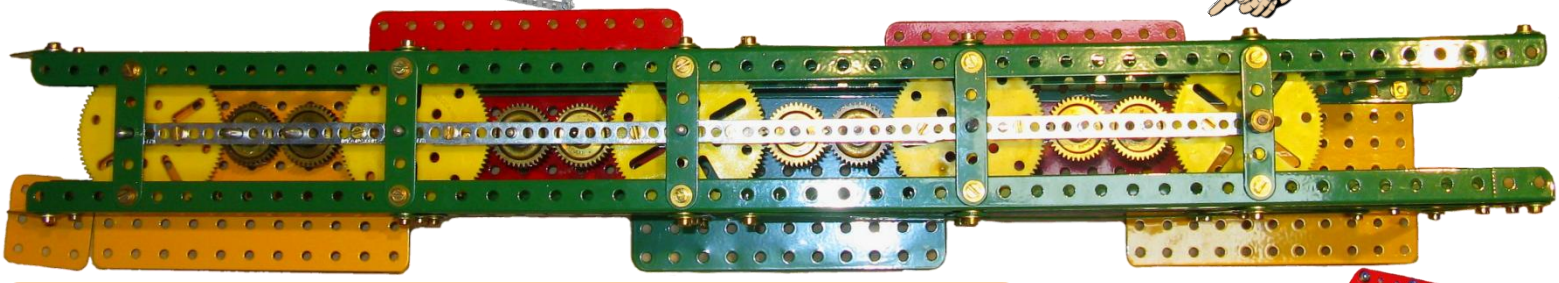
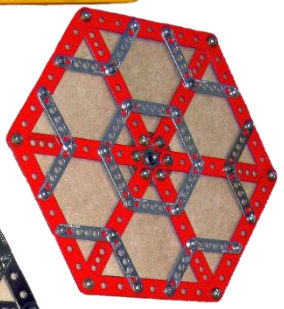


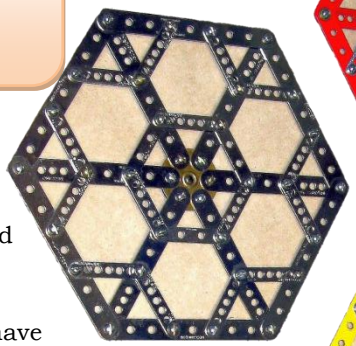
Fig. 2 My Twin-Ramp Hexcalator uses 38mm ping-pong balls

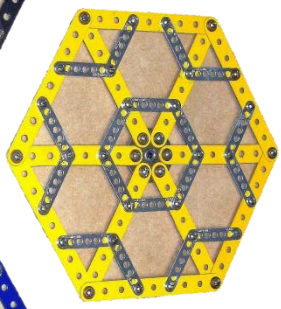
Fig. 3. Hexagon Staircase Gearing

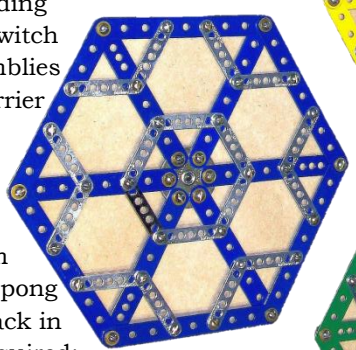


I did run into a problem straight away though, in that as I had insufficient 3 ½" Gears available to drive the five hexagons I used 2 ½" Gears instead, with 1" idler Gears in-between instead of the ½" Pinions Keith had used. I placed all gearing within the staircase framework rather than below it, and used ¼"-spaced Narrow Strips to mount the idler Gears, Fig. 3. My hexagons, Fig. 4, are a slavish copy of his.









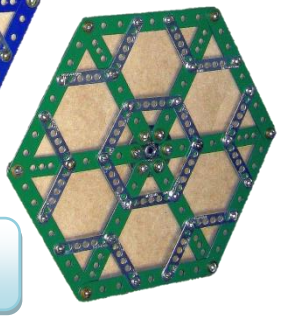
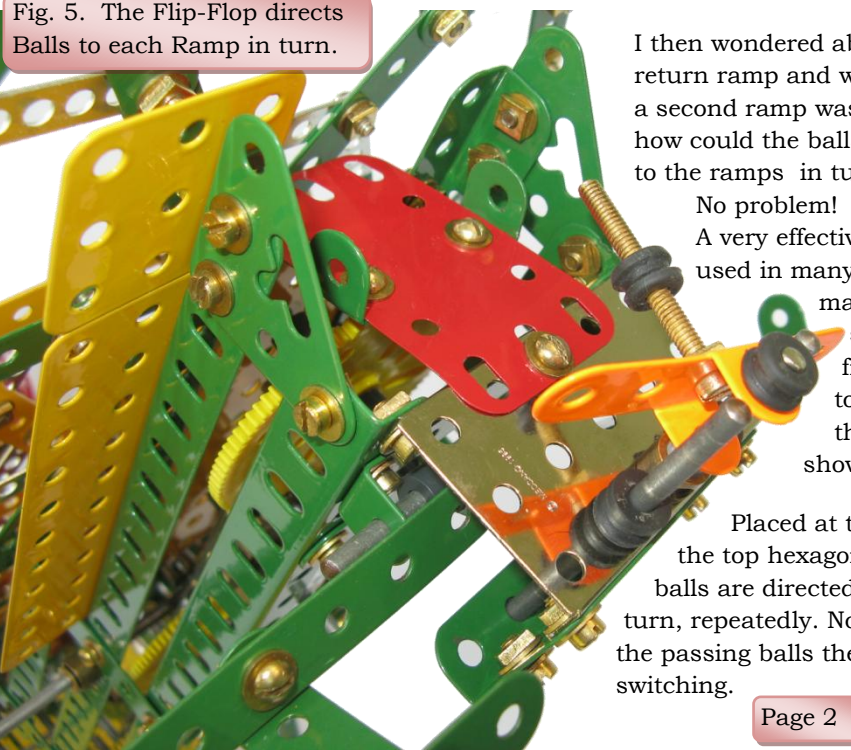


Fig. 4. My copies of Keith's hexagons

Fig. 5. The Flip-Flop directs Balls to each Ramp in turn.



I then wondered about the return ramp and whether, if a second ramp was provided, how could the balls be directed to the ramps in turn?

No problem!

A very effective device I have used in many of my braiding machines to switch spool assemblies from one carrier to the next is the flip-flop shown in Fig 5.

Placed at the exit from the top hexagon, the ping-pong balls are directed to each track in turn, repeatedly. No drive is required: the passing balls themselves do the switching.

The ramps, Figs 2 & 6, are a little different to Keith's, but do the same job of delivering the balls, in this case, to their respective catchers at the bottom. These form each end of a single unit, Fig. 7. As the speeding balls can bounce right out of their catchers again if unchecked, flexibly-mounted Curved Plate dampers are provided, Fig. 8. These extract most of the kinetic energy from the incoming balls, which then drop harmlessly to the bottoms of their catchers to roll down to the centre and into the entry chute again, Fig. 9.

Fig. 6. Overhead view of Hexcalator

After the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, the ITTF instituted several rule changes that were aimed at making table tennis more viable as a televised sport. The older 38 mm balls were officially replaced by 40 mm balls in October 2000. This increased the ball's air resistance and effectively slowed down the game.


38mm


40mm

In order to be sure that every passing space in the lowermost hexagon receives a ball as it passes the entry point, and at the speed I am running the machine, some 23 balls are required. As 40mm balls are the norm these days, why have I used 38mm balls? The reason is very straightforward: I have oodles of them from ball roller times past! These days you can only find the newer regulation sized 40mm balls on eBay but every now and then you can get lucky with a seller who is off-loading old non-regulation stock. My version of the Hexcalator is designed to use 38mm balls. If you try to use 40mm balls with this version, it won't work! I managed to get the larger balls through the hexagons but no amount of fiddling would stop them from jamming in the catcher.



Fig. 7. Catcher complete

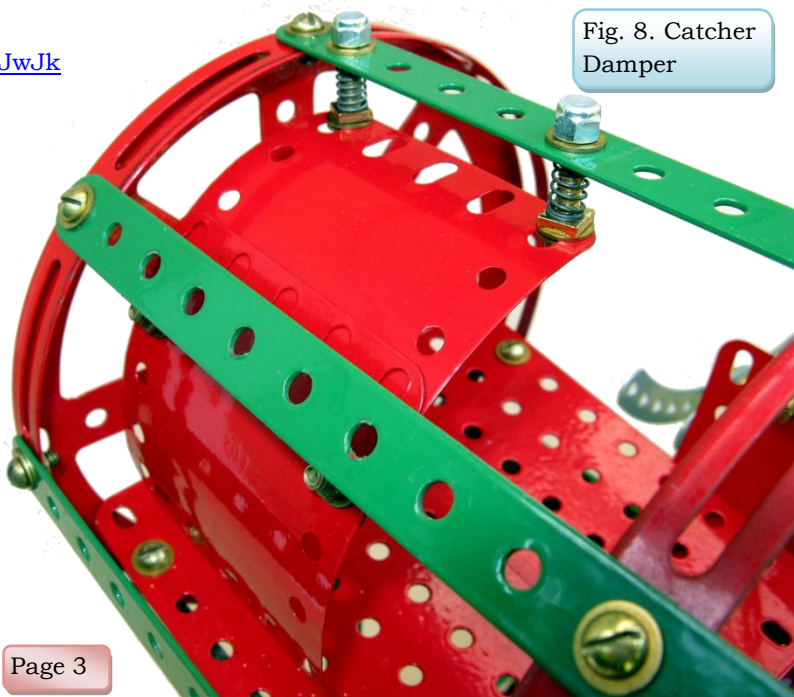
My Hexcalator is detailed on the NZ site at:

nzmeccano.com http://www.nzmeccano.com/image-157069

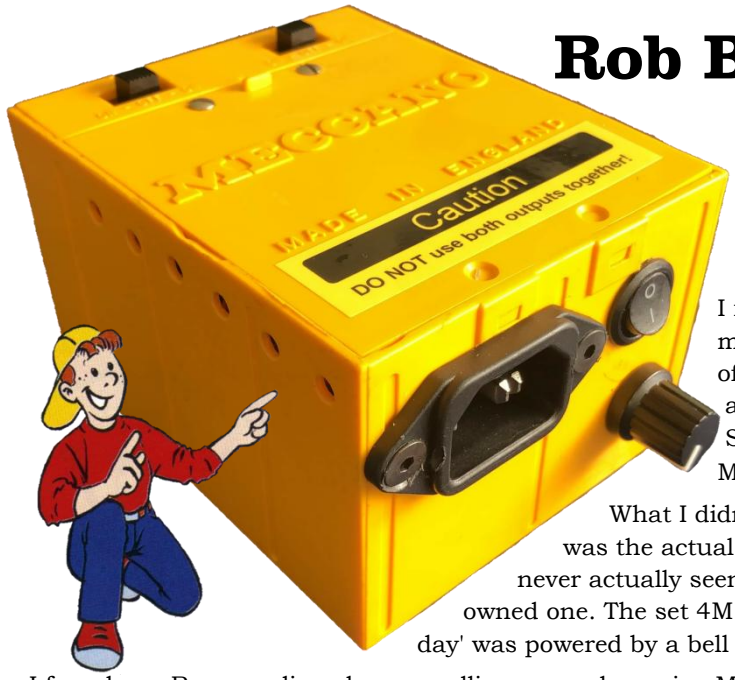
Fig. 9. Balls' eye-view of Entry Chute

YouTube https://youtu.be/aeAiQK5JwJk

Fig. 8. Catcher Damper



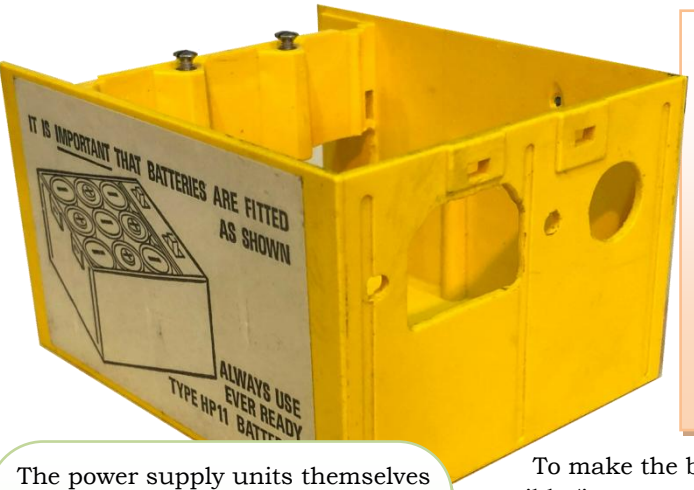
# Rob Beeken - UK squeezes Power Supply Units into Meccano battery boxes.




I first had the idea of making up a mains adaptor within the confines of a Meccano Battery Box not long after getting my hands on a Ten Set (minus the cabinet) in May of 2020.

What I didn't know at the time was the actual size of the box. I'd never actually seen one, never mind owned one. The set 4M I owned 'back in the day' was powered by a bell battery!

I found an eBay supplier who was selling unused genuine Meccano battery boxes for £5 each so I promptly ordered some! My logic told me that the box housed 9x 'D' cell batteries and therefore there would be plenty of room for housing power supply units and anything else my predominantly mechanical mind could come up with. On this assumption I bought a 12V power supply before taking delivery of the battery box. Imagine my reaction when I opened the package containing the battery box and realised that it housed 9x 'C' cell batteries, consequently with far less room to house the necessary electronics, including the (quite large) PSU I'd just bought.





Once I knew what I had to work with, the rest was just a matter of finding stuff that would fit in the box. I knew that the box would need to be adapted (some might say 'butchered') to get the electronics to fit. Also in my mind was the very real fact that the first attempt may well end badly if I cut the wrong bits of the box. But apparently you can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs!

The power supply units themselves are from RS (www.rs-online.com) and cost around £12-£15. I bought 2 variants, 230vAC to 12vDC @ 2.2A (RS No. 621-0578) and 230vAC to 24vDC @ 1.1A (RS No.621-0584). These are sized perfectly for fitting in the battery boxes.

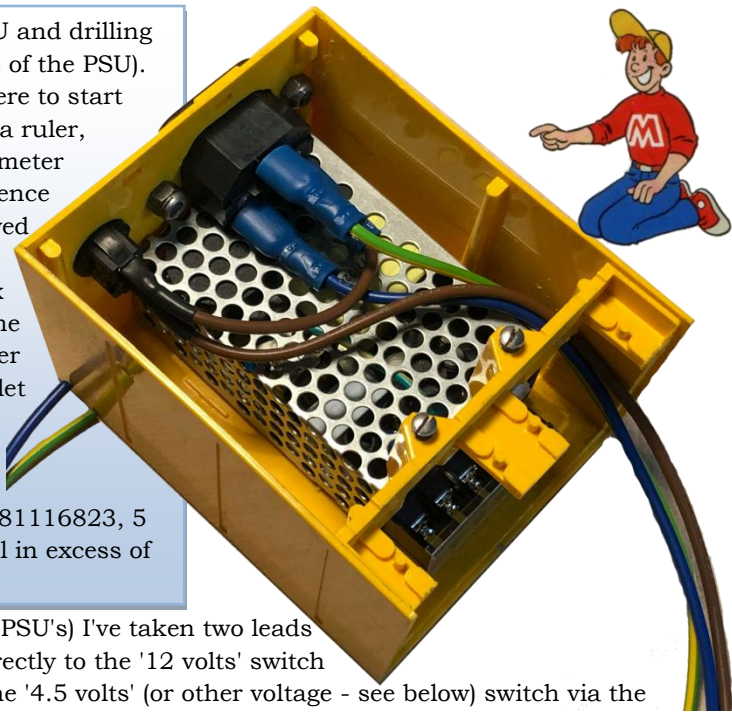
To make the battery boxes as 'original' as possible (i.e. to output two different voltages) I also had to squeeze a DC Buck Converter into the box. These I sourced from Amazon (UK), details as follows;
[2 Pack] DC-DC 5A Buck Converter 4-38V to 1.25-36" Branded 'Valefod', Part No. VA-1-89, EAN 0722453982251. There are cheaper Buck Converters out there, but these ones come with all the mounting parts and a heat sink.

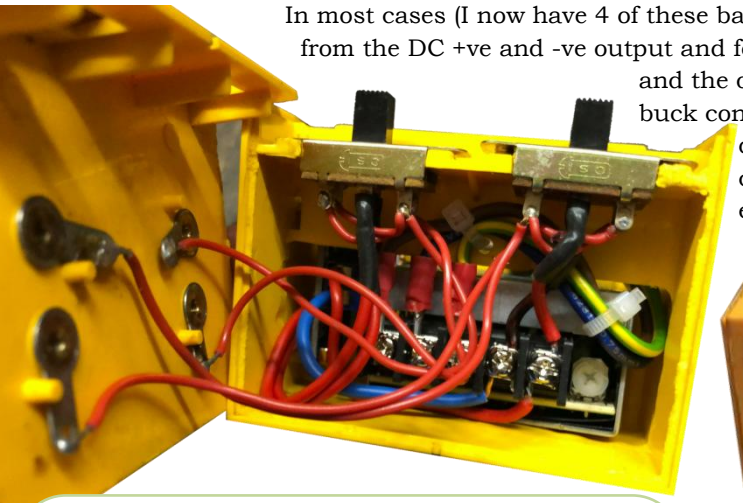
And so the butchery began. You can see from the photos that all of the brass battery contacts need to be removed along with a good bit of the internal plastic to allow the PSU to be fitted. However, the most awkward part of the process is removing the bonded end cover where the DC outputs are, without breaking it!


Rob has used mains power. Mains power kills.
Do not try this unless you are qualified and comply with all the relevant laws in your country.

For plastic cutting/removal I used a 'Dremel' type tool (albeit pneumatic) with a 3mm 'burr' fitted. It took me a while to work out the switch wiring. And a while longer to work out how I could maintain the functionality of the reversing switches along with the new internal parts of the box.
To cut a long story short, the black and blue wires feeding the switches require de-soldering and it is to these terminals that the 'new' feeds need soldering. Unless damaged, do not de-solder the red wiring..... it's fit for purpose as it is!

Once all the cutting is complete it's just a matter of positioning the PSU and drilling holes in the base to mount it (there are 2x M3 tapped holes in the base of the PSU). It was a little tricky working out where the PSU would come to and where to start the hole for the mains inlet, but nothing that can't be worked out with a ruler, pencil and a bit of basic maths! The hole for the switch is 14mm in diameter and it's a little tricky to drill a hole this size into such thin plastic. Patience is the key here, (a commodity I'm not, according to my wife, well endowed with!), but it all ended well. Once everything was sited, I could position the DC Buck Converter in the remaining space, drill the side of the box for the mounting screws and drill vent-holes in the base and sides of the box. There's nowhere near enough room to fit an internal fan! The power inlet I got from the electrician at work but it's a basic PC type power inlet socket (with an earth/ground connection), available from eBay. The switches I sourced from eBay. Be careful when ordering as most of them are for a 19mm hole and are physically too big to wire into the box without creating a short-circuit! I bought eBay item number; 122181116823, 5 switches for £5 and although small, these switches will handle 5A. Well in excess of what I needed.

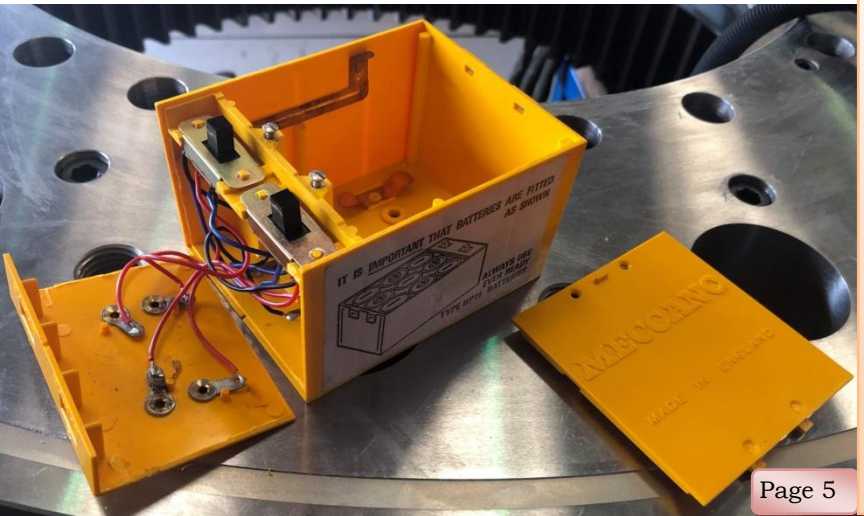




In most cases (I now have 4 of these battery box PSU's) I've taken two leads from the DC +ve and -ve output and fed one directly to the '12 volts' switch and the other to the '4.5 volts' (or other voltage - see below) switch via the buck converter (The buck converter has a screw potentiometer and a digital display for its output voltage). Once wired and tested, the end plate can be glued back into position. This is a little awkward, but everything DOES fit!


The four units I've made up to date are as follows;
1 with 'standard' outputs of '12vDC' and '4.5vDC'
1 with outputs of '20vDC' and '12vDC' (using a 24v PSU adjusted down to 20v and the 12v output via the buck converter)
1 with a single '20vDC' output (again using a 24v PSU adjusted down to 20v - for E20R motors)
and 1 with outputs of '12vDC' and '12vDC variable'.

The latter (and latest) version incorporating a variable speed output houses a PWM Controller instead of a buck converter inside the box. The fit is even more of a challenge given the size of the heatsinks on the PWM Controller, and given the location of the switch on the rear of the box I needed to source a PWM Controller with a remote potentiometer rather than an onboard one which would foul the switch. Consequently a little more plastic needs to be removed from the box to get all the internals to fit (notably the ribs on the PSU side of the box).




The PWM Controller was from Amazon (UK) and is an ARCELI 12V 24V 30V 5A DC Motor Speed Controller Model No.00575, ASIN; B07RJHSXKV. There are several available, but I now know this one fits (Well, it fits with a couple of mils taken off the large heatsink!!). The UK power supply being what it is, the lead which connects to the battery box inlet (a standard PC mains cable) has a fuse incorporated into it, in this case I've used a 3A fuse at the plug. Also the leads to the motor have a 1.6A 20mm glass [quick blow] fuse incorporated into BOTH leads (as both can be positive depending on the reversing switch position). I've made up several modular leads of varying lengths to feed the motors but if I build a model that utilises more than one motor I will need to use multiple boxes as, given the low amperage output of the PSU, both outputs on a single box cannot be used together without blowing a fuse (or worse!). Electrically speaking, I would say this project is well within the capabilities of the average DIYer, I consider myself this, but the electrician at work came in handy for some of the finer electrical points - which I've hopefully relayed clearly here! P.S. No battery boxes were 'killed' during this project although 4 have undergone irreversible life-changing surgery! – Rob Beeken.

# New Zealand National Convention at Waikanae

**On the road**

Paul Roberts tells us about the NZ National Covention.
Photos by Daryl Anderson and Rick Vine.

Click on any photo to see the video of this expo.

David Couch's Arduino controlled Connect 4

Waikanae is a sleepy little town on the outer reaches of Wellington's suburban train network. For me, Waikanae and Meccano go hand in hand because in the early 1970's, it was here that I was captivated by Meccano at my grandparents house, the first Meccano I ever saw in New Zealand. Old traditions die hard and almost half a century later I was more than captivated by a huge deluge of Meccano models descending on this town. I arrived on the Thursday night to help set up the hall where there was a huge army of helpers already inside. I thought this is enormous! We will never be able to fill it. How wrong could I be. There were over 150 models!

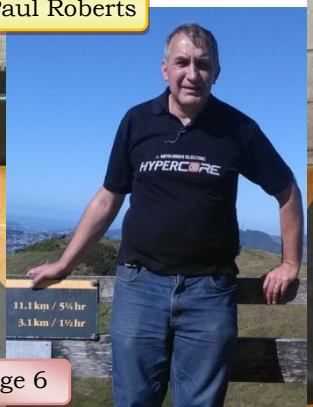
Dr Meccano

I bought along my Penny-in-the-slot Podiatrist, the model was of a doctor sitting in a booth (Dr Meccano - of course), who would look at your foot, if you put a wheel disc in the slot. This was reasonably popular particularly with the children, who giggled at a Meccano model massaging their foot. One old man took his shoe off and put his foot in the machine, exposing some badly bruised toes. Hmmm, I don't think this machine is a replacement for a professional podiatrist! I told him politely this may not be the best for him. With 50 entrants from all around New Zealand, and over 1000 members of the public visiting the Convention this really was a successful event. I thoroughly enjoyed the conversations about Meccano, whether it be the heyday of the Meccano Magazine, the best colour scheme or making a wheel flange from a jam jar lid. The conversations at Meccano didn't quite stop after I left the hall. I was quizzed by the train driver on the train home wanting to know what was going on at the hall, as many of the drivers had been discussing this amongst themselves after parking their trains within sight of a Meccano banner. Credit to Reg Barlow, the committee and those who took timeout to travel nationwide in these uncertain times. The diversity and number of models was incredible.
- Paul Roberts.

Simon Moody

Roland Jaspers

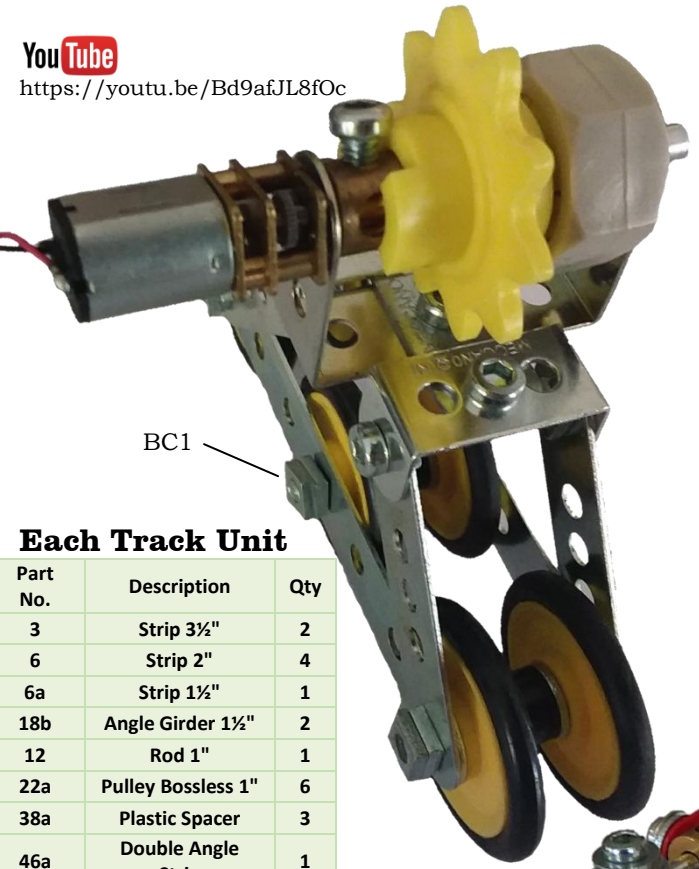
Alan Bensley



Paul Roberts

https://youtu.be/Bd9afJL8fOc

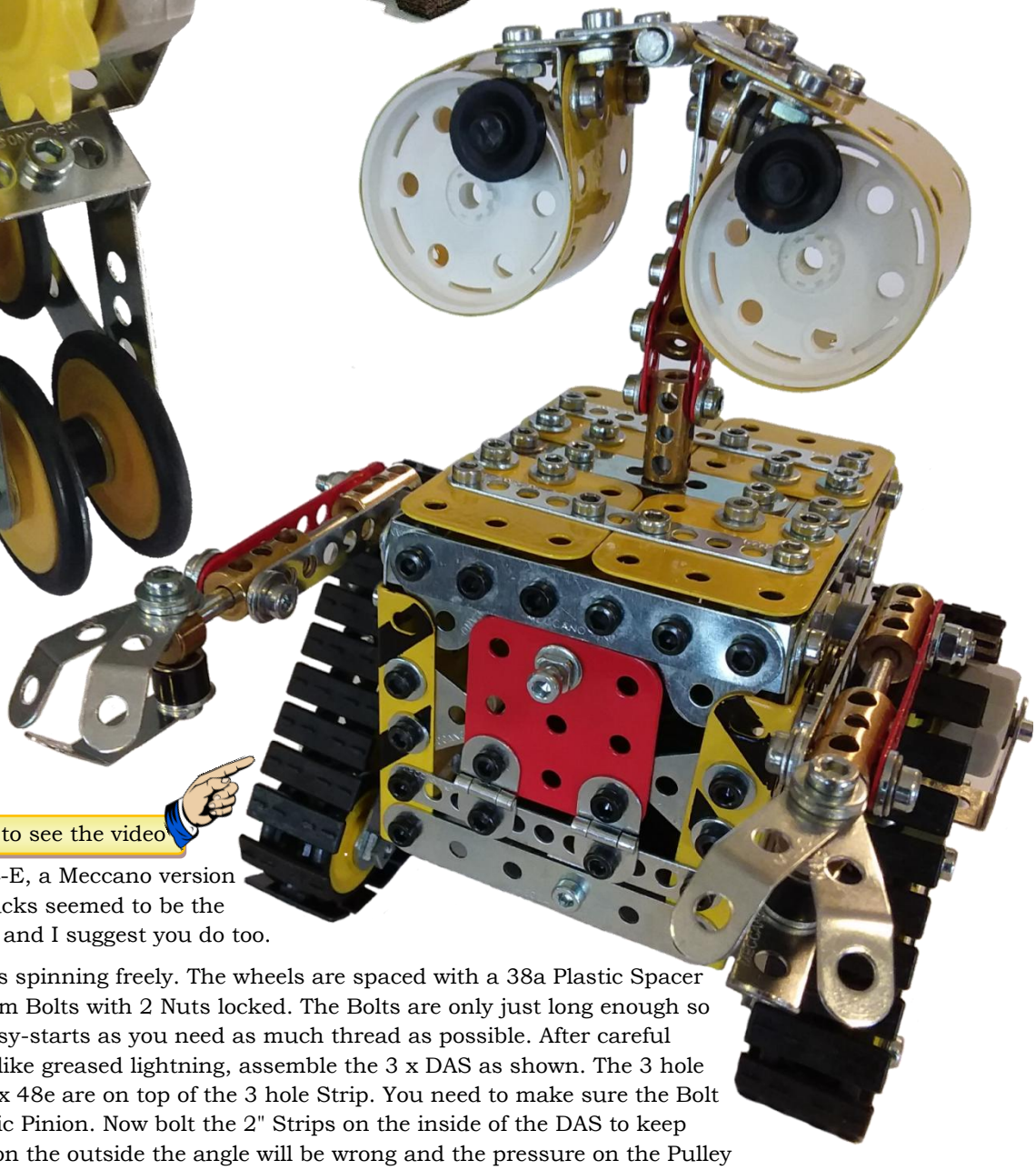
# BUILD WALL·E



BC1

## Each Track Unit

| Part No. | Description | Qty |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | Strip 3½" | 2 |
| 6 | Strip 2" | 4 |
| 6a | Strip 1½" | 1 |
| 18b | Angle Girder 1½" | 2 |
| 12 | Rod 1" | 1 |
| 22a | Pulley Bossless 1" | 6 |
| 38a | Plastic Spacer | 3 |
| 46a | Double Angle Strip | 1 |
| 48e | Double Angle Strip | 2 |
| 63 | Coupling | 1 |
| 69c | Short Grub Screw | 1 |
| P84 | Plastic Sprocket | 1 |
| P91 | Plastic Track Link | 31 |
| | Nuts, Bolts as req. | |



Click on Wall-E to see the video

After building the Steel World WALL-E, a Meccano version started brewing in my mind. The tracks seemed to be the most difficult part so I started there and I suggest you do too.

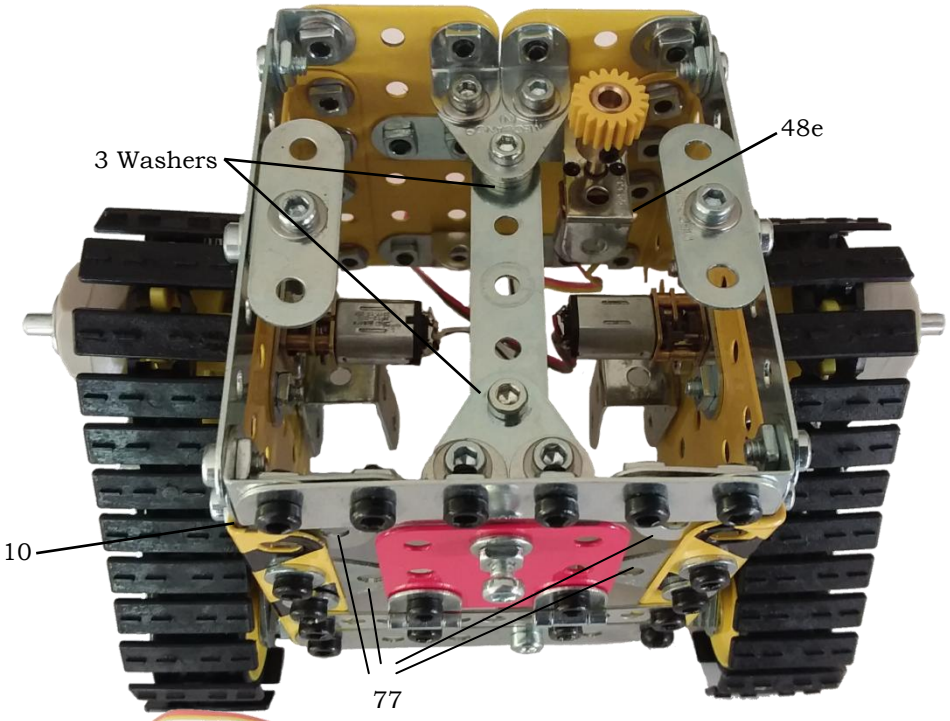
The critical part is to get all 6 wheels spinning freely. The wheels are spaced with a 38a Plastic Spacer and 2 Washers mounted using 28mm Bolts with 2 Nuts locked. The Bolts are only just long enough so make sure you use flat Nuts, not easy-starts as you need as much thread as possible. After careful adjustment to make sure they spin like greased lightning, assemble the 3 x DAS as shown. The 3 hole Strip is on top of the 46a and the 2 x 48e are on top of the 3 hole Strip. You need to make sure the Bolt in the centre does not foul the Plastic Pinion. Now bolt the 2" Strips on the inside of the DAS to keep things lined up. If you bolted them on the outside the angle will be wrong and the pressure on the Pulley bolts will cause friction preventing them spinning freely. The Plastic Pinion has a 63 Coupling with a 69c short Grub Screw to lock the 1" Rod. In some photos you can see I've got the N20 motor in place but you must use a Rod for testing purposes. You can also see I've used a Bolt instead of a Grub Screw but in operation the large Plastic Nut is enough to lock the Plastic Pinion to the Coupling. There are 31 links which are nice and loose.

**IMPORTANT**

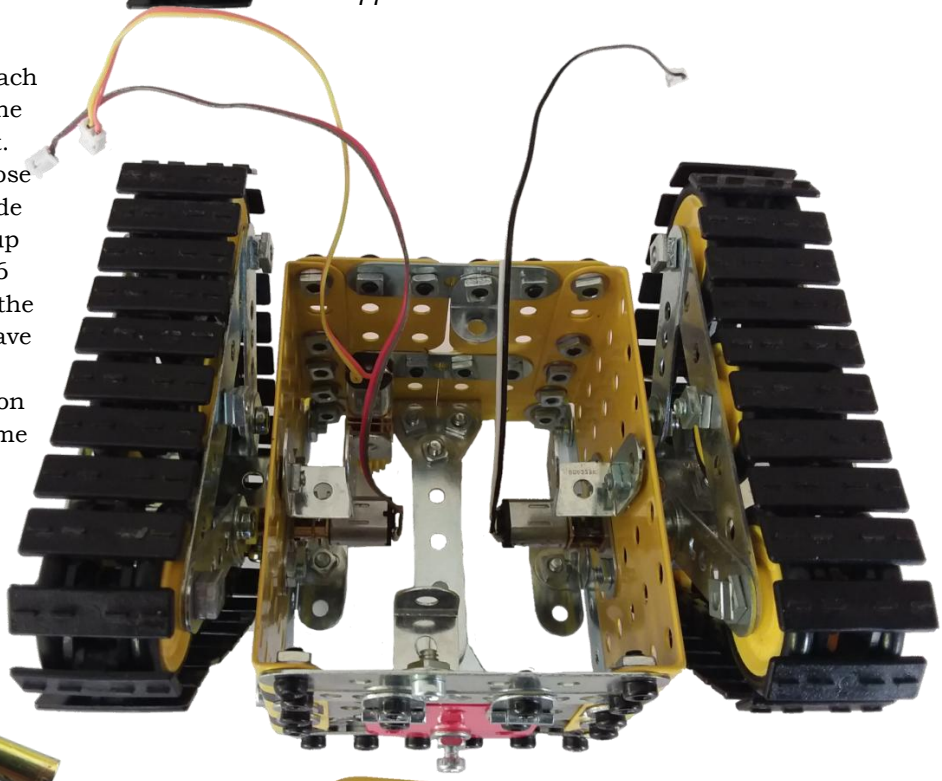
It is absolutely imperative that the tracks run freely when using your finger and thumb to turn the Rod. If not, fix it. We don't have the luxury of overcoming friction with a more powerful motor or gear ratio in this model.

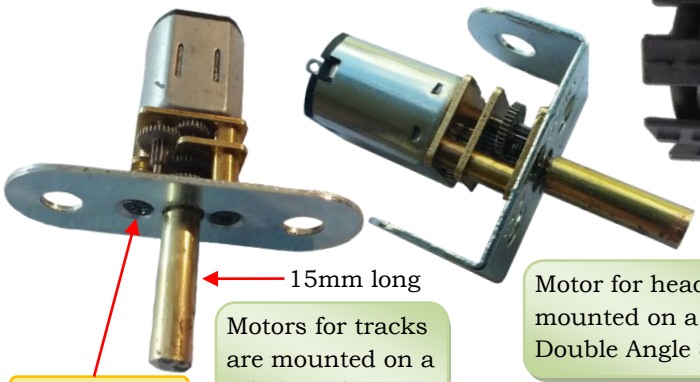
# Body

| Part No. | Description | Qty |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | Strip 7 hole | 2 |
| 4 | Strip 6 hole | 2 |
| 5 | Strip 5 hole | 1 |
| 6 | Strip 2" centre hole | 3 |
| 6a | Strip 3 hole | 6 |
| 10 | Fishplate | 2 |
| 11 | Double Bracket | 1 |
| 11a | Double Bracket | 2 |
| 12 | Angle Bracket | 11 |
| 17 | Rod 2" | 1 |
| 26 | Pinion 19t | 1 |
| 27 | Gear 95t | 1 |
| 48e | Double Angle Strip | 1 |
| 53 | Flanged Plate 3½" x2½" | 2 |
| 74 | Flat Plate 1½" x 1½" | 9 |
| 77 | Triangular Plate | 6 |
| 114 | Hinge | 2 |
| C772 | Narrow Strip 11 hole | 3 |
| | N20 motor 3V 30-50RPM | 3 |




Start the body by bolting two part 74 Flat Plates to each part 53 Flanged Plate. Use two part 6 Strips to join the Flat Plates at the back and a 6 hole Strip at the front. Now you have your cube shape of 3" x 3" x 3½". I chose this shape to allow for the tracks and arms on the side trying to keep the overall appearance square. Build up the sides to match the rear with 7 hole Strips and a 6 hole Strip across the front. Use Fishplates to secure the Strips to the Flanged Plates at the front. Once you have the body assembled the track units can be bolted on using the free hole under the Rod for the plastic Pinion on the 48e DAS. Keep the test Rod in place for the time being and make sure you can easily turn the tracks using your fingers on the test Rod. Don't bolt the lid on yet. That comes after the motors are all working.





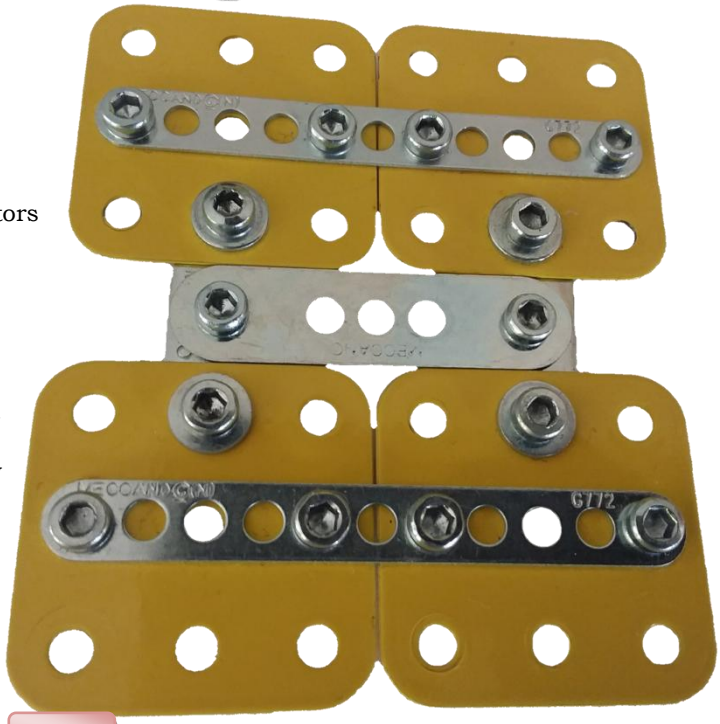

Motor for head is mounted on a 48e Double Angle Strip.

Motors for tracks are mounted on a 3 hole Strip.

**IMPORTANT!**

M1.6 bolts must be countersunk and flush.

Set up up your N20 motors as shown above.



The 4mm brass sleeves on the N20s must be long enough to allow the Grub Screw on the Coupling inside the plastic Pinion to grip. All 3 motors should be roughly 30-50RPM at 3V. They must run nicely at 3V if you want to use the Steel World Remote Control Unit. Click on either motor to see a short video of mine running at 32RPM. I've bought about 50 of these N20 motors from eBay and I think the sellers specifications need to be taken with a grain of salt. They all run anywhere between 3V and 12V but they all seem 'happy' between 3V and 6V. By happy, I mean the sound they make and the heat they generate. At 12V they all sound strained to my ear and they get hot. After you bolt the track motors in, apply 3V and note the direction. Mark the wires accordingly. Remember the polarity for forward on the LH motor will be opposite to the RH motor. Now mount the head motor 1 hole in and 3 holes down on the rear. The 95t Gear slides under the 3 hole mounting Strips. Now add the 2" Rod and bolt the lid on. (After the arm Bolts. See next page.)

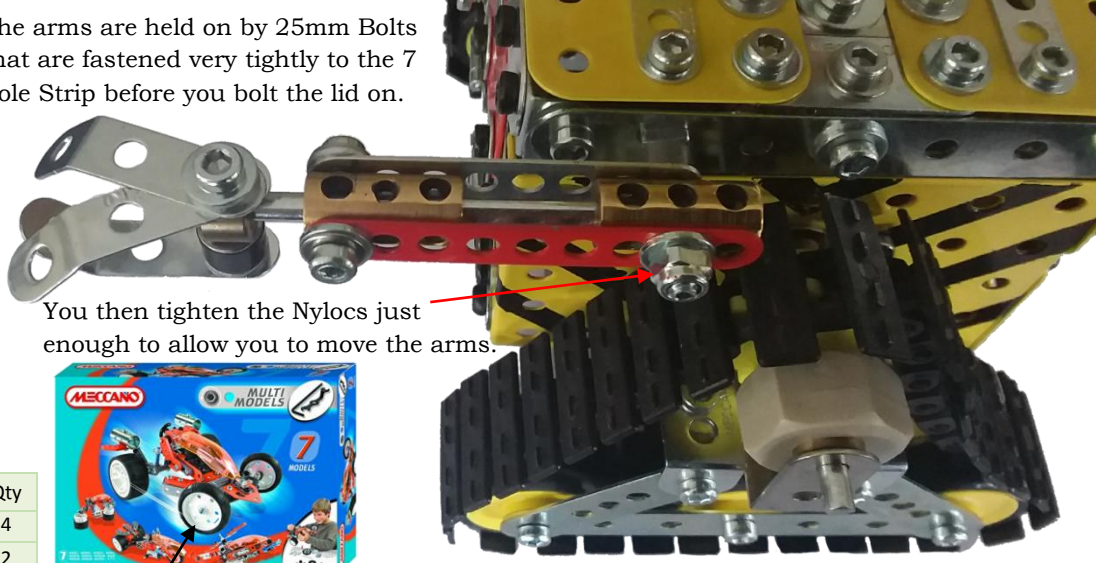
## Each Arm

| Part No. | Description | Qty |
|---|---|---|
| 16a | Rod 2½" | 1 |
| 38a | Plastic Spacer | 1 |
| 59 | Collar | 1 |
| 63 | Coupling | 2 |
| 812d | Narrow Obtuse Bracket | 1 |
| C770 | 8 hole Narrow Strip | 1 |
| C771 | 9 hole Narrow Strip | 1 |
| | Nuts, Bolts as req | |

## Head

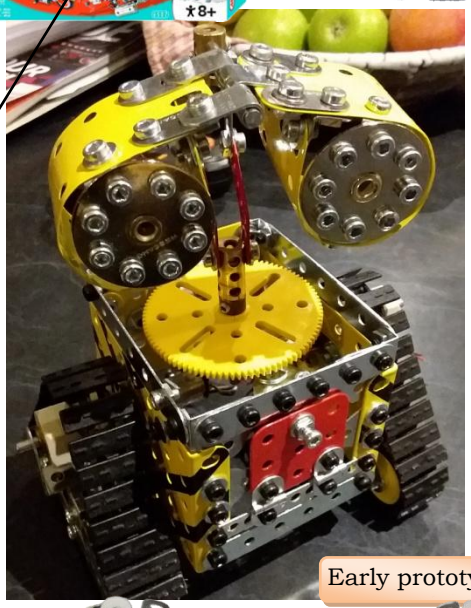
| Part No. | Description | Qty |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | Fishplate | 4 |
| 12 | Angle Bracket | 2 |
| 16a | Rod 2½" | 1 |
| 63 | Coupling | 3 |
| 189 | Flexible Plate 5½" x 1½" | 2 |
| 212a | Rod Strip Connector Right Angle | 3 |
| 260d | Track Rod End Pin | 2 |
| A523 | Bossless Pulley ½" Black | 2 |
| A587 | Wheel 1½" White | 2 |
| C768 | Narrow Strip 5 hole | 2 |
| C775 | Narrow Obtuse Corner Bracket | 2 |

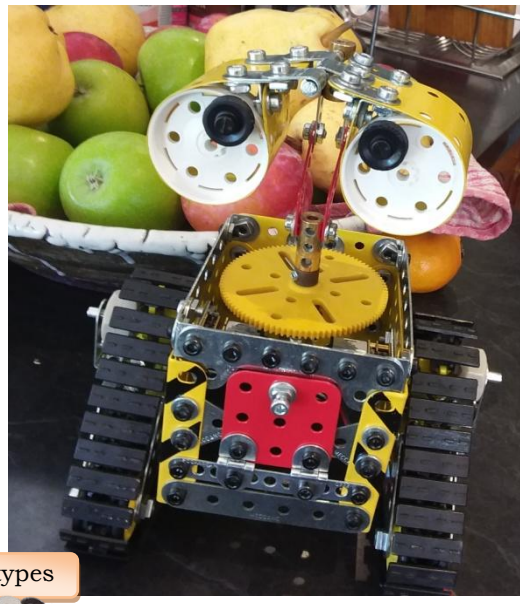
The arms are held on by 25mm Bolts that are fastened very tightly to the 7 hole Strip before you bolt the lid on.



You then tighten the Nylocs just enough to allow you to move the arms.

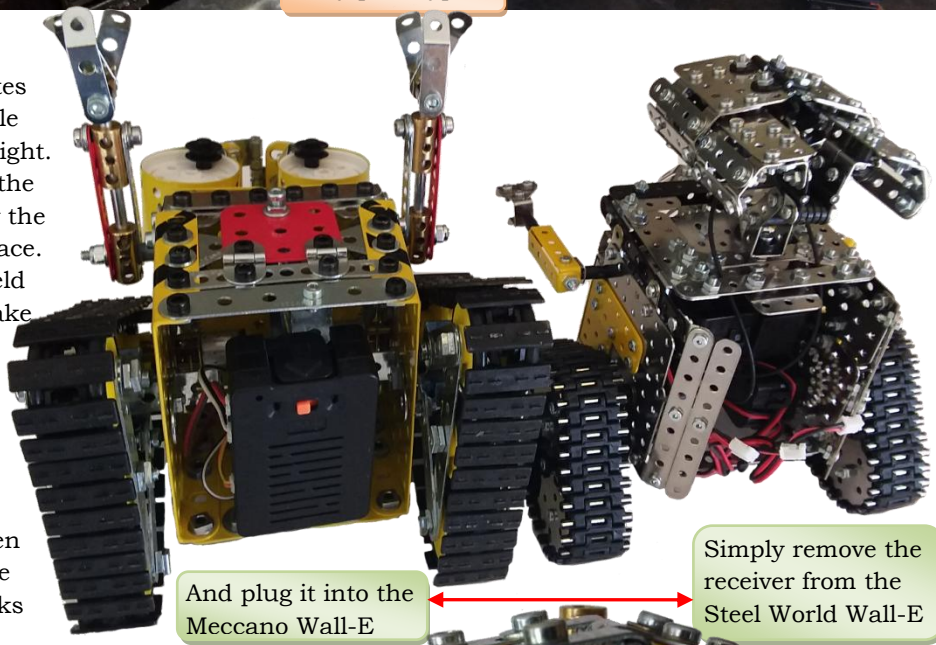




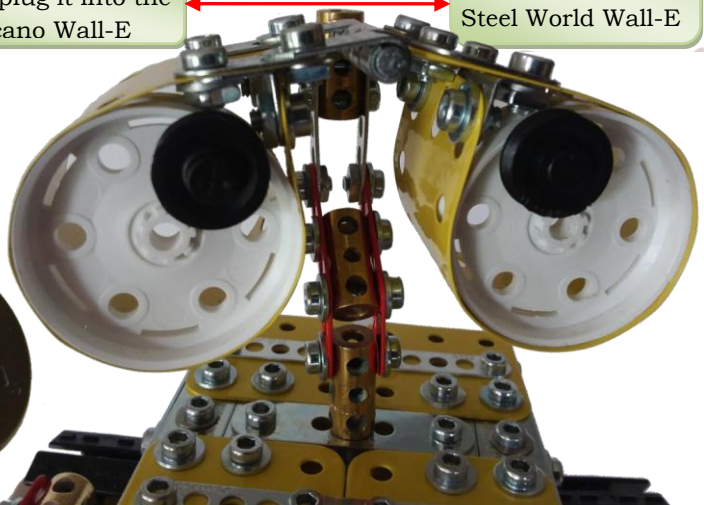
Early prototypes

The eyes are the most important feature of this model as they give Wall-E the character, the personality. My first prototype used Bush Wheels then Steve Butterworth suggested the white road wheels from the MultiModels outfit with black plastic Pulleys for eyes. The black plastic Pins were also his suggestion as the zinc Bolts looked out of place. The Pins didn't want to stay in place so I used a tiny wood screw in the hole at the end of the Pin. (Purists can persevere trying to flare the Pin enough for a tight fit). Use a plate roller to shape the Flexible Plates then use Angle Brackets to secure them with a 1 hole overlap on top. The Fishplates keep the overlap straight. Bolt 2 Rod Strip connectors on one side and one in the centre of the other side. Carefully adjust them allow the eyes to turn with enough friction to keep them in place. The white Wheels simply push into place and are held quite tightly by the Flexible Plate. I have ideas to make them change angle using an N20 motor with a threaded rod shaft but that will be another day. Now you can either continue on with the Remote Control or use a 6 conductor cable to your own power supply and switches. I'd suggest DPDT toggle switches with momentary centre off. If you are fortunate enough to have the Steel World Wall-E then it's a simple matter of unplugging the receiver. There are 4 ports but we only use 3. The 4th port still works however and can be used. Perhaps to tilt the head? Maybe next issue.



And plug it into the Meccano Wall-E

Simply remove the receiver from the Steel World Wall-E

# Fabian Kaufmann Germany

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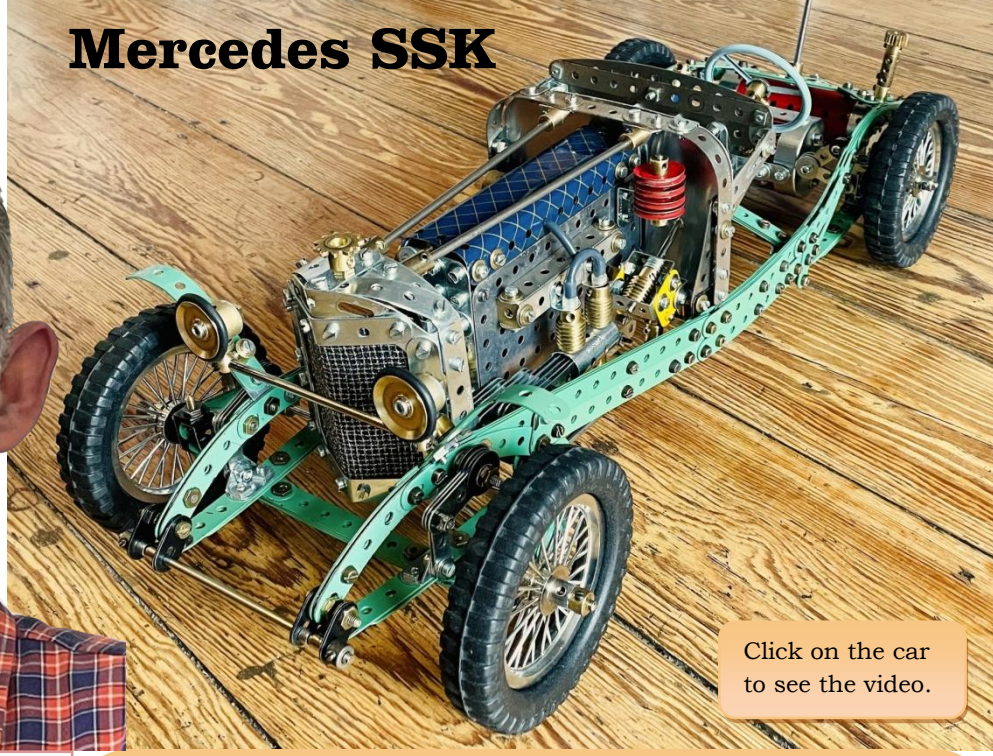
# Mercedes SSK



Click on the car to see the video.

This is a replica of the legendary Mercedes SSK from 1929. I have placed less emphasis on technical finesse and more on looking as true to the original, and scale, as possible. Anyone who has ever built a framework for such a car from Meccano probably knows how difficult it is to get a slim and beautifully curved, and at the same time stable, frame. I wanted to try something new here and instead of screwing the flat strips together with angles to form beams as usual, I bolted up to five layers of them together. This way I was able to create a stable, ¼" narrow and nicely curved chassis.

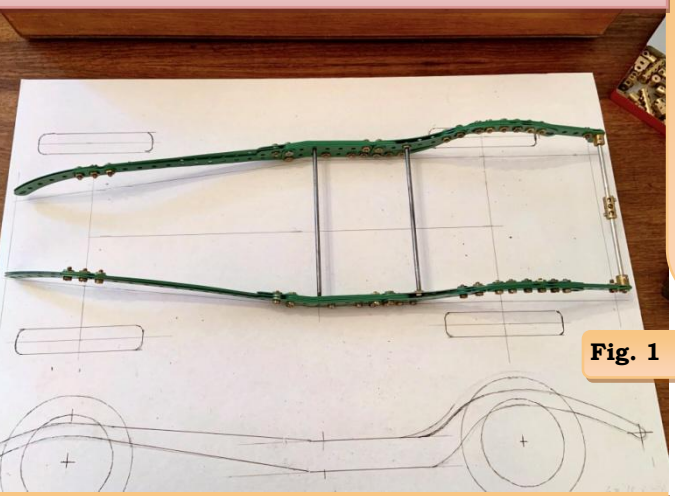


Fig. 1

Another advantage is that there is now ½" more space between the struts for the engine block and the steering as well as the two seats. Fig. 1. When building the gearbox I also went a little different way as there would not have been enough space for a 4-speed gearbox. I took the 3-speed gearbox from the Meccano Magazine of February 1933 as a starting point and shortened it by ½", thus eliminating the reverse gear. Fig. 2.

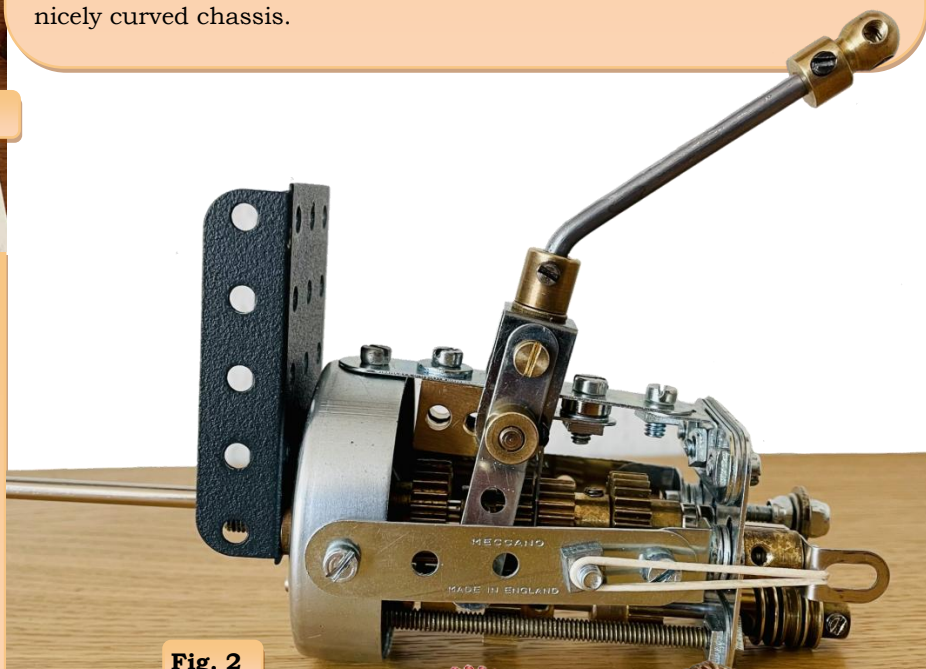



Fig. 2

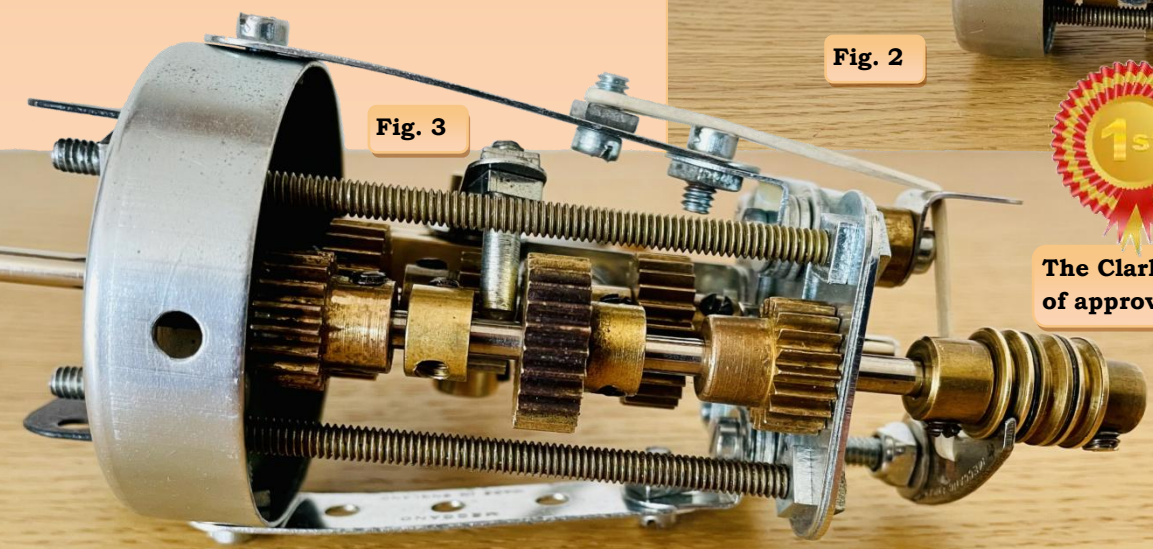


Fig. 3




**The Clark seal of approval.**

The gearbox is based on a non-standard pairing of 19t and 25t Pinions. Therefore it is difficult to connect it to other assemblies such as an engine block. To solve this problem, I moved the lay-shaft from its original position next to the main shaft downwards, so that the main shaft could sit centrally. Fig. 3. This way I could keep the original scale together with the engine block including the flanged steering gear. Fig. 4.

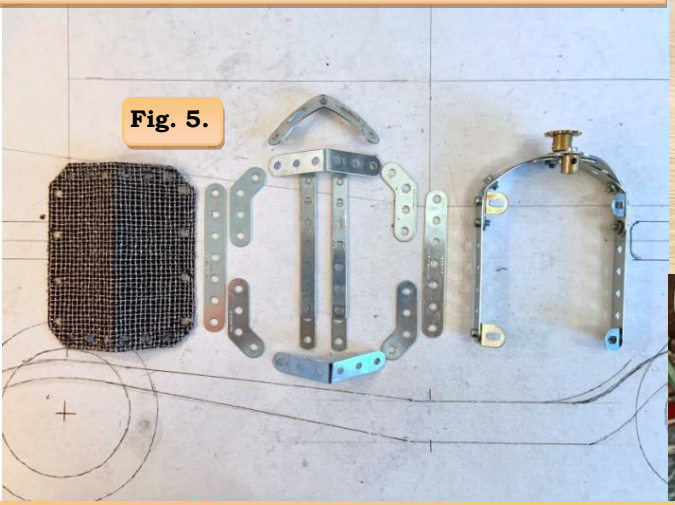


Fig. 5.

For the radiator grille I made a fabric out of metal threads and polyester that looks as similar as possible to the original. The 133c obtuse Corner Brackets were just right for shaping the radiator. Fig. 5.

Fig. 6 shows the fuel tank, for which I simply used the boiler. Because of the oval shape I had made different versions out of Flexible Plates, but I was not satisfied with them. In the end I found this version best.

Fig. 7 is a bird's eye view and shows the final state of my work. I cut a firewall out of sheet metal and provided it with cut-outs for the steering wheel and gearbox.

It was still necessarily a big conversion because I only noticed when installing the headlights that the radiator was a bit too far forward. So the engine and gearbox, the firewall and parts of the steering and front axle had to be removed in order to move the radiator one hole to the rear. Now the visual appearance is more in line with the original.

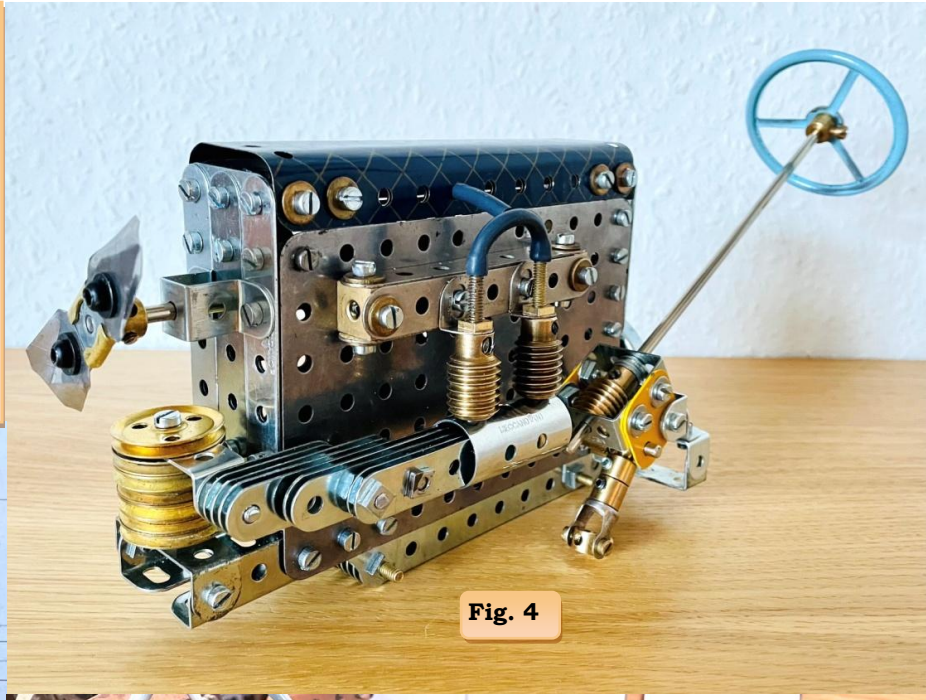


Fig. 4

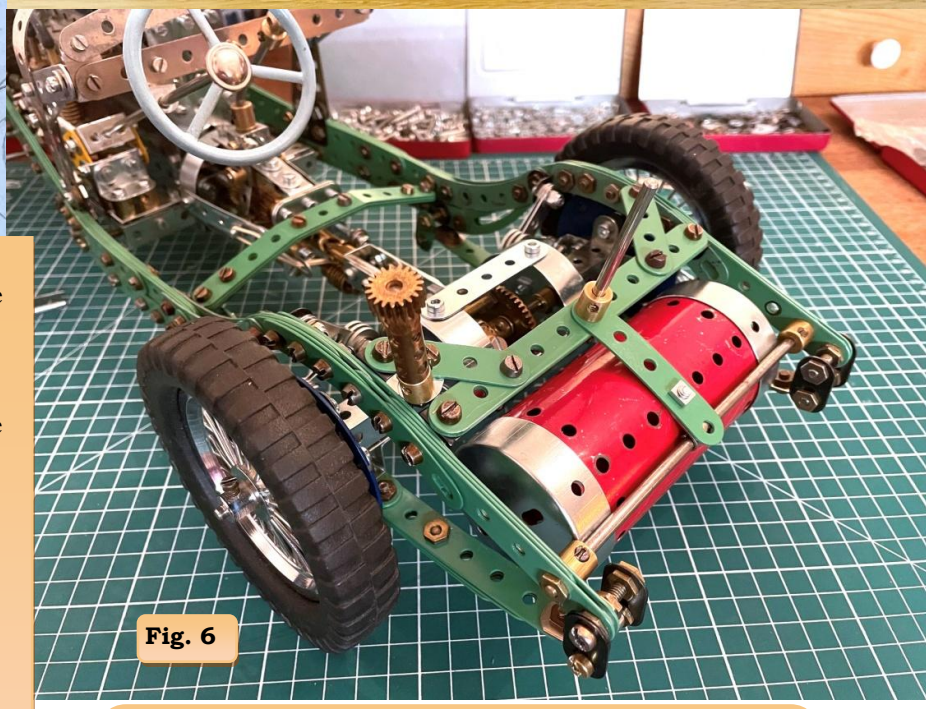


Fig. 6

The car is not quite finished yet. The seats and the exhaust are still missing. I am also thinking about whether to leave the car as a raw chassis like on the old factory photos from Mercedes or whether to add a body.

CLICK HERE YouTube https://youtu.be/cJ5_WqwjgsY

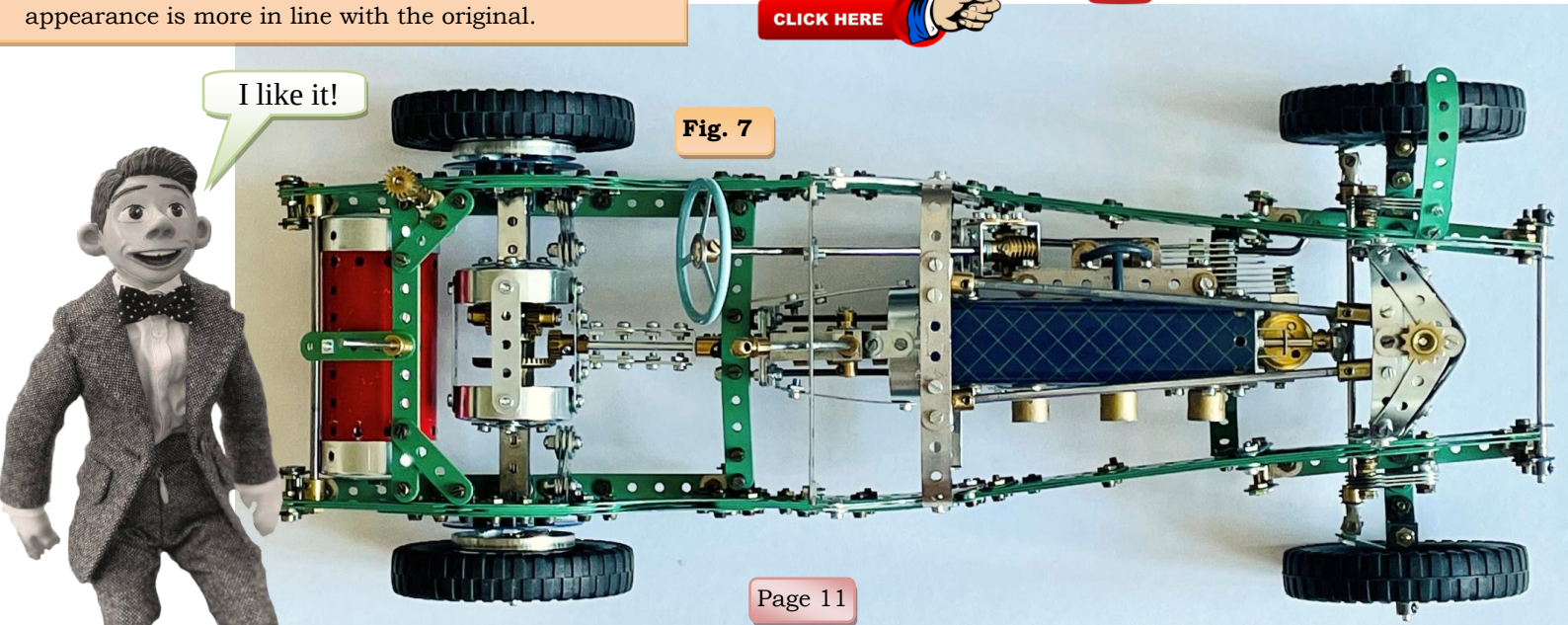
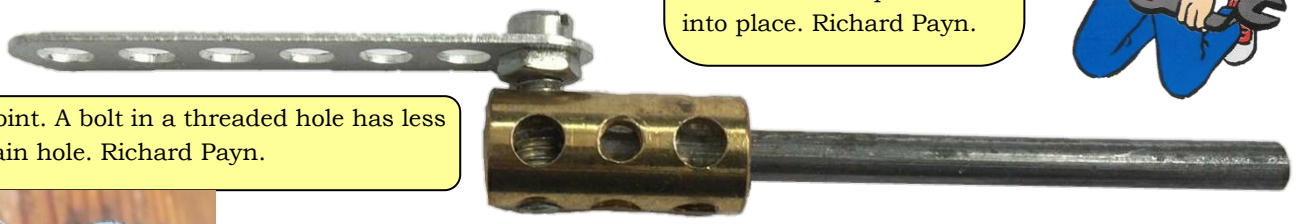



Fig. 7

# FROM OUR GOOD IDEAS DEPARTMENT



No slop pivot joint based on an original design by Bert Halliday. The 3/16" ball sits between the 7 hole Narrow Strips and the 2 hole Narrow Strip locks it into place. Richard Payn.

My own no slop pivot joint. A bolt in a threaded hole has less slop than a rod in a plain hole. Richard Payn.

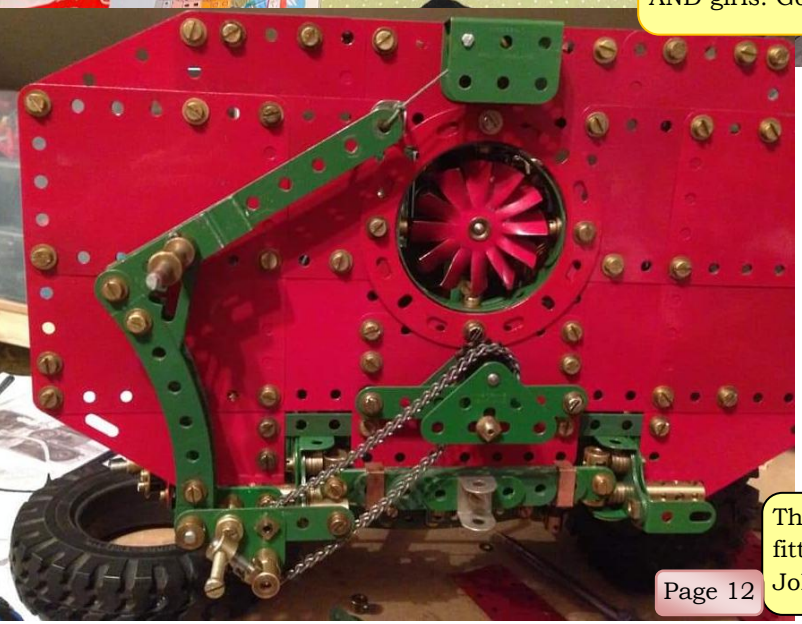

Another easy way of doing a play-free joint. Make the hole smaller by clamping a fishplate over the hole then slide it do the bolt just goes through. Then locknut a strip below. Richard Payn.

Chris Goodwin – UK has come up with a very clever idea to use Meccano parts for tap handles.

Tip: Use tapered 5/32" BSW taps to clean out threads in bosses.

Young Fei reminds us all that Meccano is for boys AND girls. Go girl!

John Ozyer-Key – UK is building an AEC Roadtrain similar to the real thing pictured below.



The fan is positioned inside 4 rolled Formed Strips (part 215) and fitted to match the inside diameter of a bespoke 3.5" Circular Strip. John says 4 Stepped Curved Strips (part 90a) could also be used.

# This Month's Meccanoboy

## Douglas Hedgley - UK

*When and where were you born?*
I was born in 1948 at Southend in Essex, UK.
*Where did you go to school?*
I went to the local infants/juniors school and being lucky enough to pass the 'Eleven Plus' exam, was able to go on to the local 'Grammar' school which emphasised the academic aspects of education over the practical. I enjoyed my time at the school which is an excellent example of its type. Being more or less fully grown by the time I was fifteen, I enjoyed weightlifting and boxing, which was done in order to get out of gym lessons which I found ineffably boring. When I told the school that I wanted to be involved in the engineering world in some way, they were a bit 'sniffy' because the usual route was either further education at University, the Humanities, Classics etc, or a 'City' career in Insurance or Stockbroking and that sort of thing. (London being just an hour's commuter train ride away). On reflection I would have been better off at a technical school but they were few and far between in the mid 1960s. Having said all that, strangely enough, I belong to the 'Old Boys Association' which hold great reunion dinners at which I usually have one too many glasses.

*Did you have Meccano as a boy?*
Is the Pope catholic? I had Meccano for Christmas and birthday presents every year from age 5 through to age 15 when, like with so many Meccano boys, girls put in an appearance and the Meccano went over the hedge, or to the local second-hand shop which was essentially the same thing! As I recall, I received the princely sum of 5 shillings (25p) for a couple of ammunition chests full of it. You should remember that in the mid '60s Meccano wasn't particularly valuable and the average wage was only about £15 a week! God that makes me feel old!
*Did you have any childhood friends who shared your passion for Meccano?*
I believe I was the only one who had the love of Meccano as my younger brother was more into Airfix and toy guns. He eventually joined the Army as an apprentice serving 27 years and ending up as a WO1 having turned down an officers cadre twice! None of my friends were particularly interested.

*What did you do for a living?*
On leaving school I joined the Ekco radar laboratories where radar was developed for helicopters and the Concorde, and early versions of automatic machine tool control were investigated along with crane overload control systems. How appropriate is that for a Meccano boy! I spent several happy years there whilst gaining ARB and AID approval certificates. Having got engaged to Christina who was a hairstylist, we wanted to save for two years and move into our own bungalow but I was told by the company that you didn't get full money until you were 26 which didn't suit at all, so I left and went to Fords at Dagenham, 35 miles away where you could earn the big penny.

Southend, where I lived, being essentially a seaside town with some office and light industrial companies, was a poor paying area. After spending 3 years there and hating every minute, we eventually got our mortgage for the bungalow and I got out and back into electronics with a small local company. I bought in over £100,000 worth of business (early '70s prices) and didn't even get mentioned in despatches let alone a little something in the pay packet! So I and another fellow, who was also less than impressed, left and started our own little company which was so successful that it took the whole of that part of the business away from our ungrateful previous employer. Working for yourself is no doddle what with the paperwork in the evenings etc and so after 10 years or so, we voluntarily wound up the company and I spent the next 30 years working for a small family company 30 miles away in Romford designing and making control panels for the machine tools that they had been making since 1949 plus still building control systems for some of my old clients. I officially retired at age 65 but carried on with shorter weeks until last year when at age 72 I decided I had better things to do.

*Wife and kids?*
I have been happily married to Christina since 1970 and have one daughter Ruth who became a teacher. She married three years ago, left teaching and is now an 'Area Commander' at Bodyshop or whatever the title is, with 200 plus people working for her.

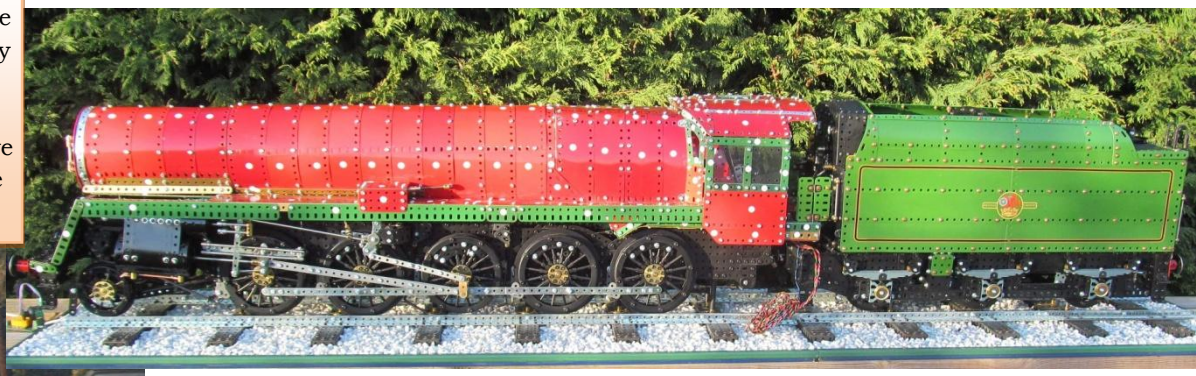
The lovely Christina

ABOVE: Mr. Douglas John Hedgley, of Stromness Place, Southchurch, married Miss Christine Frances Barnes, of Garden Way, Rochford, on Saturday at Ashingdon Parish Church.

Uncle Pat with Prince Charles

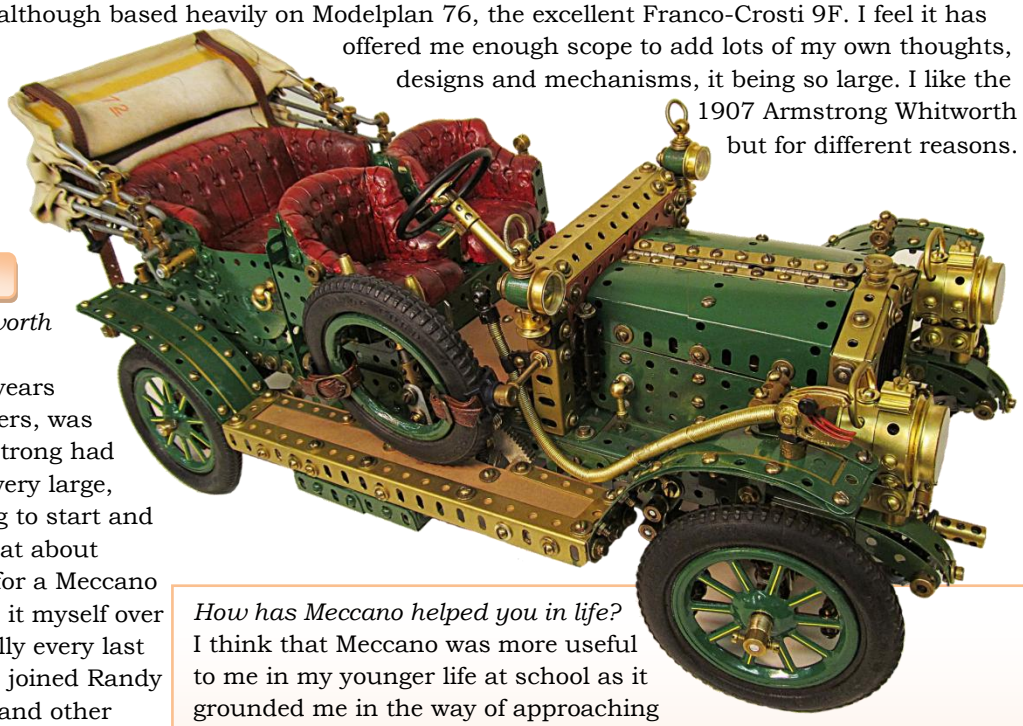
*Did you always build with Meccano or was there the usual cars, girls, party hiatus in your teenage years?*
As previously stated, I have had Meccano until aged 15 but I picked it up again about 15 years ago when unloading a van full of old veteran car spares down at the Beaulieu Autojumble where friend Harry had a couple of stalls every year. In amongst the old parts was a large box of old nickel Meccano. I kept it, then started to build with it and was re-hooked! In the intervening years I have also been a keen motorcyclist, being an RAC instructor in my spare time and a member of the Harley Davidson club. With friend Harry (an engineering director himself) owning 20+ vintage and veteran cars, I have also been heavily involved in restoration, taking them to rallies, auto-meets, weddings and also for 30 years, the afore-mentioned Beaulieu Autojumble (2000+ stalls). I was also very involved in looking after Uncle Pat who was on glider three on Operation Deadstick, the operation in the extremely early hours of 'D Day' when 6 gliders took the two bridges, one of which is more commonly known as Pegasus Bridge. I organised his trip to Buckingham Palace for the unveiling of his portrait along with eleven other veterans painted for the Prince of Wales and chased down his missing medals.
*Did your interest in Meccano influence your job?*
I do believe that my work has influenced my Meccano hobby rather than the other way about. When I build a large model I am organised the same way as a project at work. I get the basic idea, design it with sketches, get the parts together, prepare the parts to suit then build, followed by testing. An example of this would be my painting last summer of the hundreds of parts I would need for building the large 5" gauge Evening Star 9F loco. I used the summer sun to dry the parts knowing full well that I wouldn't be putting them together until the winter months. I am never in a hurry to get a model done except in just one particular case.

*What Meccano clubs are you in?*
Over most of my working life with having to travel abroad from time to time, time has always been my enemy. I have not joined any clubs as I never felt I could attend enough meetings. Now I've retired I might join one, once the pandemic / lockdown is over.




The original Armstrong

*What was your best model?* When it comes to best model, well that's difficult as I always think the latest creation is the best one, especially that Evening Star 9F which although based heavily on Modelplan 76, the excellent Franco-Crosti 9F. I feel it has offered me enough scope to add lots of my own thoughts, designs and mechanisms, it being so large. I like the 1907 Armstrong Whitworth but for different reasons.



*Tell me about that wonderful Armstrong Whitworth car that you modelled.*
This came about because my friend of many years Harry, who owned the car amongst many others, was very ill and reaching the end of life. The Armstrong had been one of his (and mine) favourites. It was very large, reliable, comfortable, wasn't too much of a pig to start and motored at a sensible speed on today's roads at about 40mph. I thought it would be a great project for a Meccano model, having helped maintain it, plus driven it myself over 30 years and 20,000 odd miles! I knew virtually every last nut and bolt on it. I started my build just as I joined Randy Sauder's website for Gilbert Erector Heritage and other construction systems and after clearing it with Randy I wrote an item with photographs every fortnight or so and posted it. I was keeping the pressure on myself to get it built as I wanted Harry to see it before he passed away. It took about eleven months to build and Harry did see it and recognised it, passing away just a month later. I left a photographic record in one of those printed 'Photobooks' with his widow Mary who we still keep an eye on and take out occasionally.

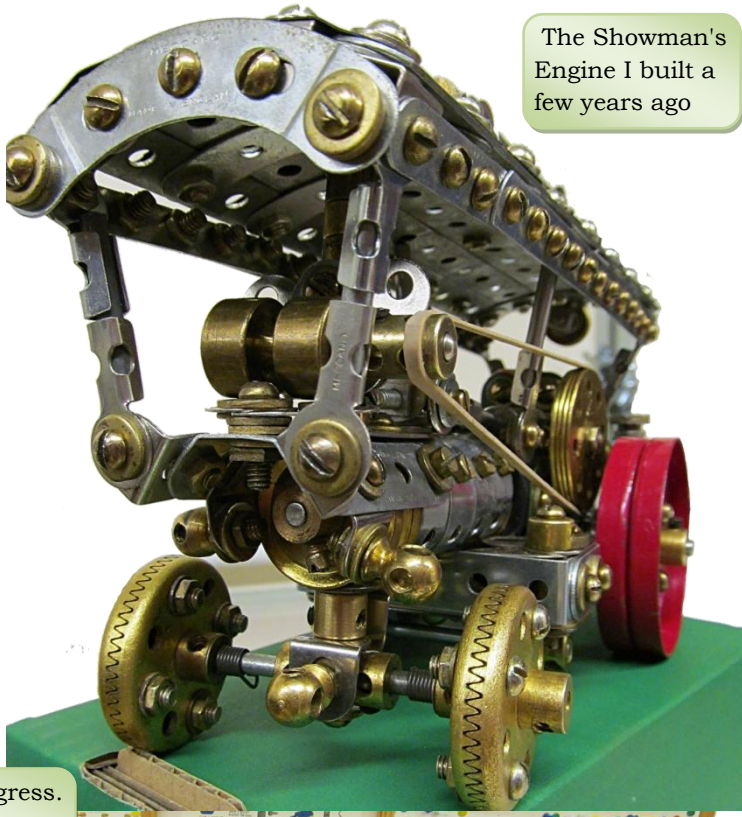
*How has Meccano helped you in life?*
I think that Meccano was more useful to me in my younger life at school as it grounded me in the way of approaching problems and solving them if that doesn't sound too pretentious. Thinking about it, if you've ever read the origami-like Meccano manual instructions from the mid 50's or earlier, it did help train you to read complex technical manuals later on.
*What are your plans for the future, Is SkegEx on the horizon?*
I would like to go to SkegEx when it re-opens and indeed have bought a nice large, comfy car that will enable me to cart my models there, if I can exhibit, which will be a novelty as I have never exhibited before.

*What other interests do you have? I see you have built wooden boats.*

Since you ask, I was deeply into making a plank on plank model of HMS Victory for five years which I finally finished in 2010. I had long admired the superb technology that went into these ships of the sailing navy. When you think that, with no modern facilities like engines, radar, wireless, decent food preservation etc, 2,500 men could up-anchor and sail to wherever they wanted in the world using a ship of 3000 tons which although large by their standards, put against something like a modern warship is absolutely puny! I enjoyed all the rigging as it taught me how everything worked and was organised. Think of it, the bower anchors alone weighed well over 4 tons! The fore sail was 10 tons when wet. All done with tackles and manpower. Anyway, I'm getting carried away with myself! lol.

*What was your crowning achievement?*

Well that's a difficult one, leaving the more obvious ones aside like happiness, full employment etc, I think it would have to be the sheer amount of Meccano I've accumulated over the years with the emphasis on my favourite Meccano period, the mid 1930's. I have two 'L' sets, a 10 set, a 9 set, etc. Also more good blue/gold parts than you can shake a stick at. I have learnt a lot about Meccano history (hopefully most of it accurate) by osmosis and met some damn nice chaps on the websites. I have been startled in my old-fashioned way at some of the ladies connected with the hobby which tends to be male orientated. I saw a model Armoured Car from the time of WW1 (Basically an armoured Rolls Royce Ghost) when I went to Skegness a couple of years ago and it was superb! I would have been happy to claim ownership and build myself. And I shamefacedly admit to being surprised when I found out it was built by a lady! Unfortunately I don't have her name. I don't know why I was surprised as over the years I've worked with some excellent lady engineers who were quite capable of giving any man serious competition. There is also another contender for crowning achievement and that is getting a small Meccano model into the 'Father of the Bride' speech at my daughter's wedding when I was able with a captive audience, to rubbish her and her new husband's love of 'Lego' and prove what a load of junk it is. I have it on film!



The Showman's Engine I built a few years ago

*Have you travelled much?*

I have travelled to several countries with my work, either engineering meetings with clients or commissioning trips to get the new control systems up and running. These have included several parts of the USA, Saudi, Greece, various countries in Europe and a good few trips to Scotland and Eire.

*What about Meccano expos?*

I have only been to one major Meccano meet and that was Skegness a couple of years ago. I have been to the Hainault meeting a couple of times (NE London Meccano Club).

Work in progress. Tender for the Evening Star.

My garden in Hawkwell where I have lived for 36 years. Enjoy life. Smell the roses.
Build Meccano and be happy.

*How do you look back on life, any regrets?*

Looking back I have no more regrets than the average person I would guess. I've had a happy and peaceful life with an excellent wife with a great daughter. I've been able to indulge myself in great motorcycles: Goldwings, Electraglides, Suzuki 750 2 strokes. I've had and driven interesting motors and ended up with a hobby that will keep me contented until I 'pop my clogs'. What's not to like or regret?

*What's your advice for young people today?*

Well don't listen to me for a start! Seriously, as a more general point, I would say that if you know the basics of how to work out a problem, you will be able to do it in any circumstances regardless of whether you have a calculator with you or any other modern tool, helpful as they are.

# A few of my favourite things.

We are John & Johnny. A father and son team who like Meccano. We're nothing to do with Spin Master who own the brand. Contact us at MeccanoNews@gmail.com Follow Johnny Meccano on



LEGO TECHNIC

## TECHNIC. WALL-E AND EVE'S LOVECHILD

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http://www.meerlu.com.au/
https://tinyurl.com/AshokBanerjee
Meccgear Jeff Clark New Zealand sales@meccgear.co.nz No website yet but a pricelist with photos can be downloaded here http://www.nzmeccano.com/image-151916


A lawyer, who had a wife and 12 children, needed to move because his rental agreement was terminated by the owner who wanted to reoccupy the home. But he was having a lot of difficulty finding a new house. When he said he had 12 children, no one would rent a home to him because they felt that the children would destroy the place. He couldn't say he had no children, because he couldn't lie -- we all know lawyers cannot and do not lie. So, he sent his wife for a walk to the cemetery with 11 of their kids. He took the remaining one with him to see rental homes with the real estate agent. He loved one of the homes and the price was right -- the agent asked: "How many children do you have? He answered: "Twelve." The agent asked "Where are the others?" The lawyer, with his best courtroom sad look answered "They're in the cemetery with their mother."
MORAL: It's not necessary to lie, one only needs to choose the right words… and don't forget, most politicians are lawyers.

Doctor! Doctor! Can I have a second opinion? Certainly - come and see me again tomorrow!
Riot Machine Mk4

A Teacher asks her class if anyone knows a story from the Bible.
Little Johnny raises his hand and says, Yes Miss, I can tell you about David and Goliath.
OK, carry on Johnny, says the teacher.
Well, to cut a long story short, David killed Goliath, and then he got on his motorbike and took off, said Johnny.
The teacher says, You're right to an extent, David did kill Goliath, but back then they never had motorbikes.
Yes they did, and I can prove it, replies Johnny, then he opens up his Bible, turns to page 354 and says, It says in here that when David killed Goliath all you could hear was the roar of his Triumph!!

Johnny calls an ambulance for a man who has been hit by a car. The operator asks for his location.
Johnny says "Outside 28 Eucalyptus Road".
The operator asks, "How do you spell that?"
There's shuffling and sounds of straining at the other end of the phone. "Johnny?" says the operator, concerned. More shuffling & grunting.
"Sorry about that" says Johnny. "I just dragged him to 1 Oak Street, that's O.A.K.

A shark could swim faster than me, but I could probably run faster than a shark. So in a triathlon, it would all come down to who is the better cyclist.