

August 2023

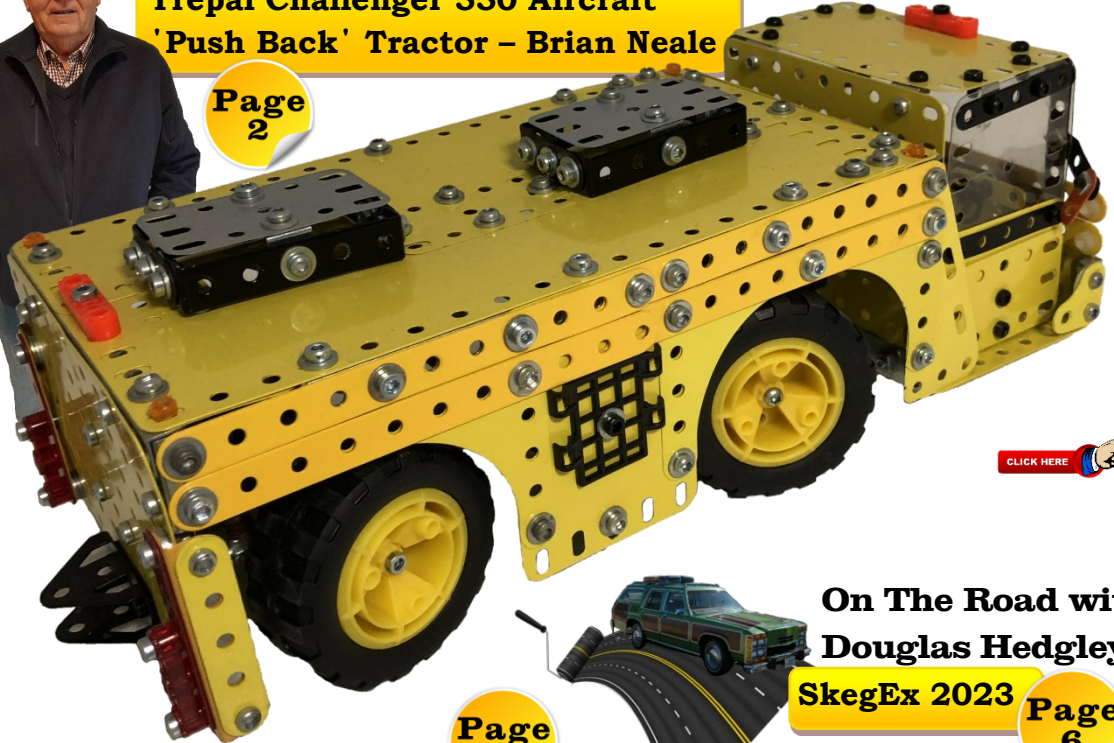
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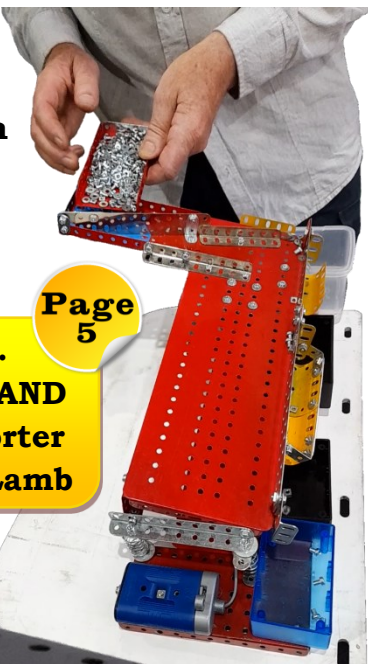
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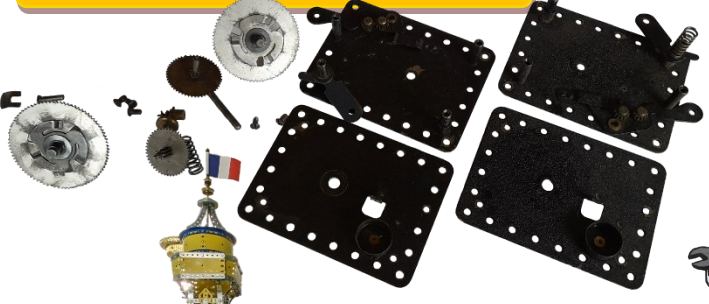
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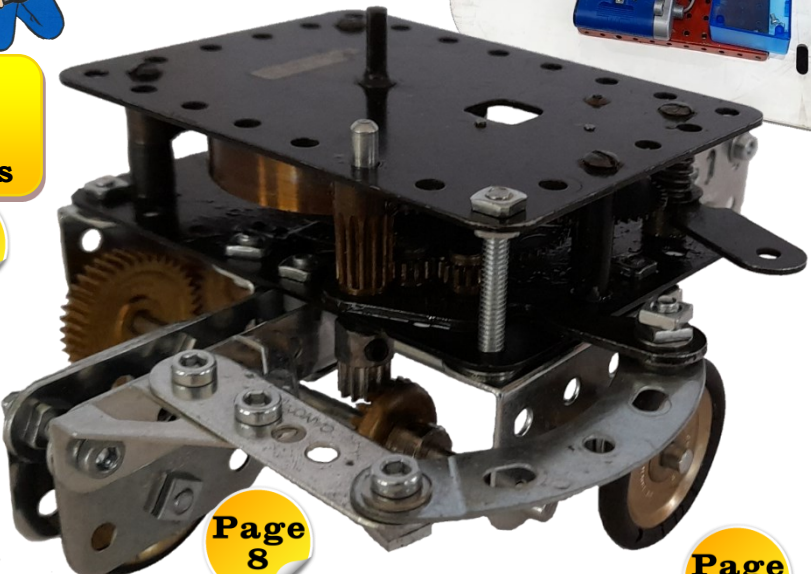
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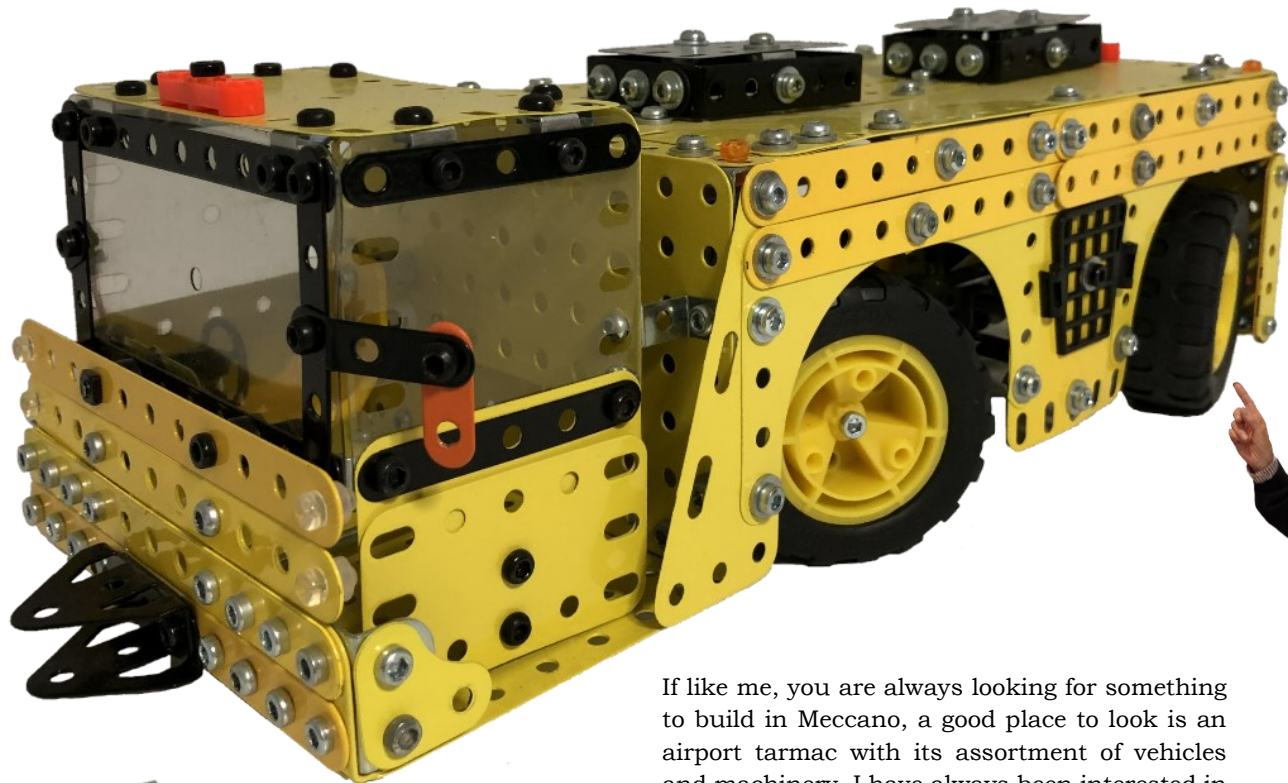
Build this.
Clockwork Reverser

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Page 1

Trepal Challenger 550 Aircraft 'Push Back' Tractor - Brian Neale



If like me, you are always looking for something to build in Meccano, a good place to look is an airport tarmac with its assortment of vehicles and machinery. I have always been interested in the powerful "push back" tractors which come in various sizes. The tractors are also used during aircraft maintenance. The specifications of the Challenger that I decided to build are:

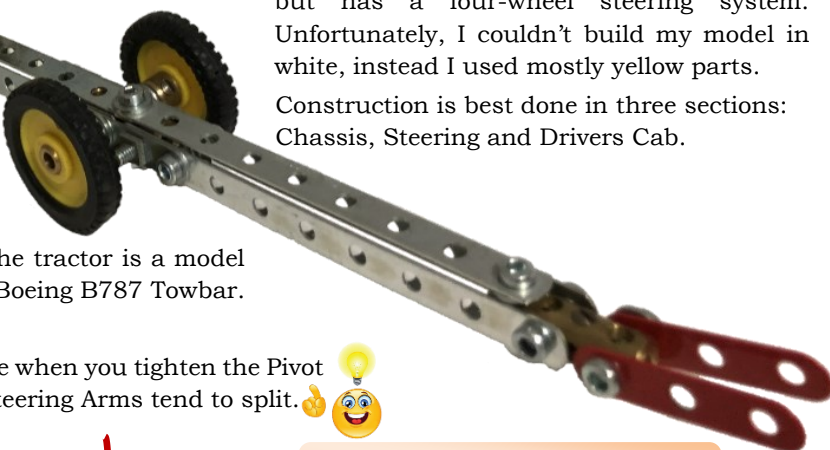
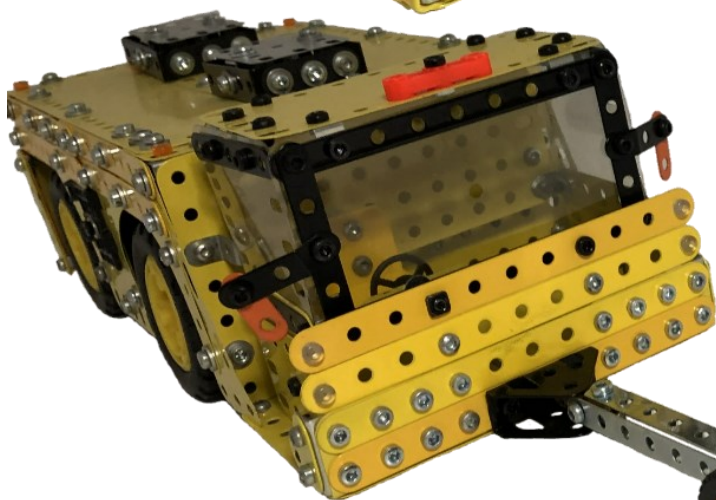
Towing Capacity - Aircraft weight up to 450 tons.

Dimensions (L x W x H) - 7.760 x 3.000 x 2.060 mm.

Driving Speed - 30 km/h, Turning Radius - 6.900mm, Weight - 50 tons.

Please Note: The model isn't built to scale but as close as I could to photos on the web. Being a static style model, it doesn't include a motor but has a four-wheel steering system. Unfortunately, I couldn't build my model in white, instead I used mostly yellow parts.

Construction is best done in three sections: Chassis, Steering and Drivers Cab.



Attached to the tractor is a model of the AERO Boeing B787 Towbar.

Note: Take care when you tighten the Pivot Bolts as the Steering Arms tend to split. 💡 😊

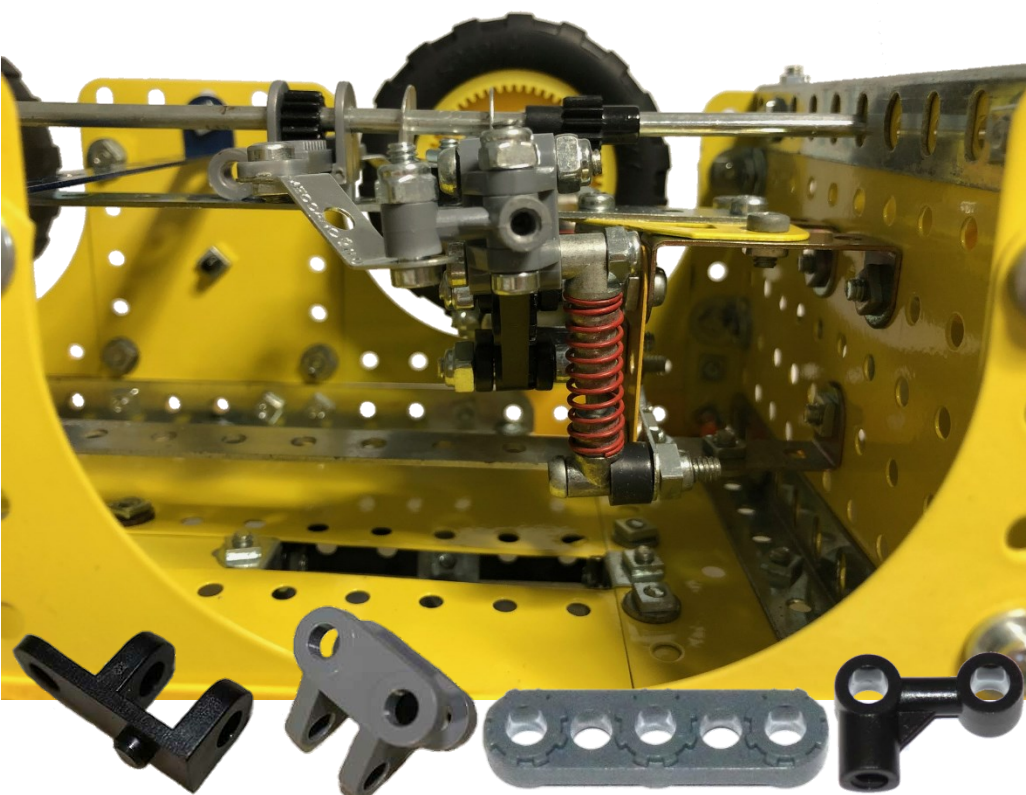


The original Trepal Challenger that I designed my model around.



Chassis Parts List

Part No.	Description	Qty
2	Strip 5½"	8
6	Strip 1½" (Black)	4
8b	Angle Girder 7½"	2
9	Angle Girder 5½"	3
9d	Angle Girder 2½"	2
12	Angle Bracket	10
48a	Double Angle Strip Black 2½" x ½"	4
48d	Double Angle Strip 5½" x ½"	1
52a	Flat Plate 5½" x 3½"	3
126	Trunnion Black	2
184g	Plastic Pin Yellow	4
188	Flexible Plate 2½" x 1½"	1
188	Flexible Plate Silver 2½" x 1½"	2
189	Flexible Plate 5½" x 1½"	2
190a	Flexible Plate 1½" x 2½"	2
196	Strip Plate 9½" x 2½"	2
201	Flexible Gusset Plate 5x5 hole	6
224	Triangular Flexible Plate 7x3 hole	2
260c	Narrow Plastic Spacer Red	2
260c	Narrow Plastic Spacer Orange	1
A027	Grid Black Plastic	2
A309	Angle Girder 1"	2



Steering Parts List

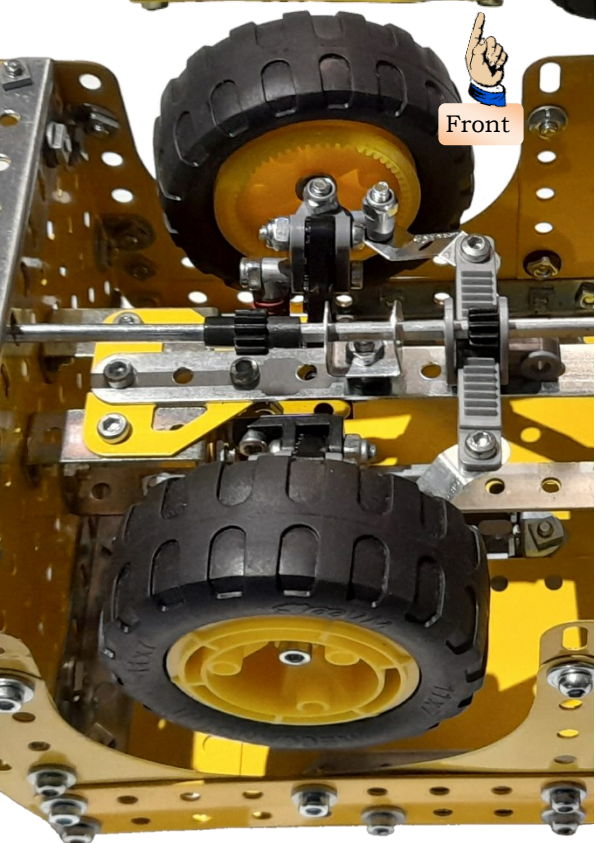
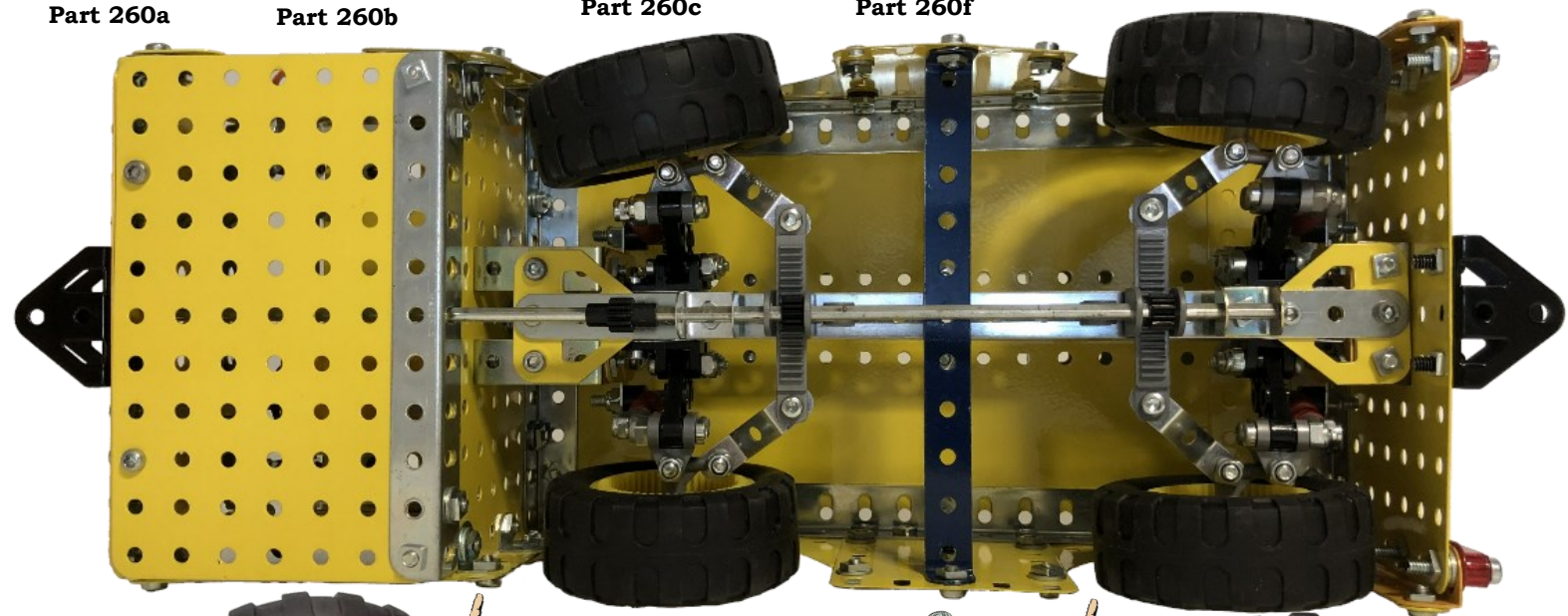
Part No.	Description	Qty
1a	Strip 9½"	2
11	Double Bracket	5
38a	Plastic Spacer Large	6
48	Double Angle Strip 1½" x ½"	3
74	Plate 1½" x 1½"	2
126a	Flat Trunnion	2
A025	Pinion 12t Tri-Flat	2
A045	Tyre (J45)	4
A187	Plastic Wheel (187c)	4
A235	Narrow Strip 5 hole	2
A313	Tri-Flat Rod Connector	1
A315	Rod Tri-Flat 5"	1
A334	Plastic Rack Strip	2
A355	Female Half Shock Absorber	4
A356	Male Half Shock Absorber	4
A357	Shock Absorber Spring	4
260a	Suspension Mounting Bracket	8
260b	Suspension Outer Bracket	4
260c	Narrow Plastic Spacer Black	8
260f	Steering Arm	4
A425	Steering Wheel Mounting Bracket	2
A436	Narrow Double Bracket 1" x ½"	4
A737	Lock Nut	28
A825	Narrow Obtuse Angle Bracket	4
B634	Rod Tri-Flat 6½"	1

Part 260a

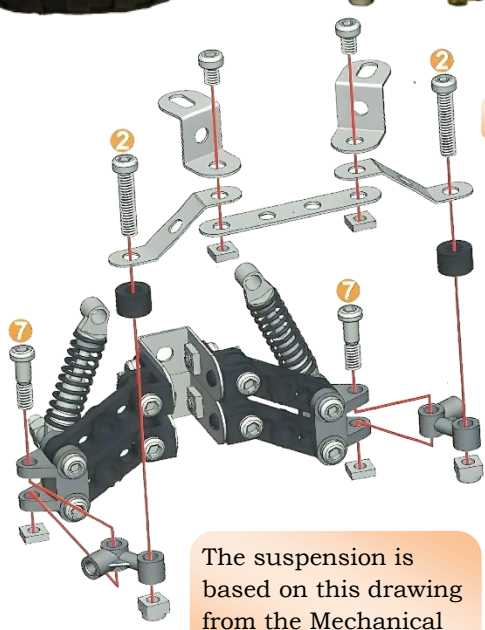
Part 260b

Part 260c

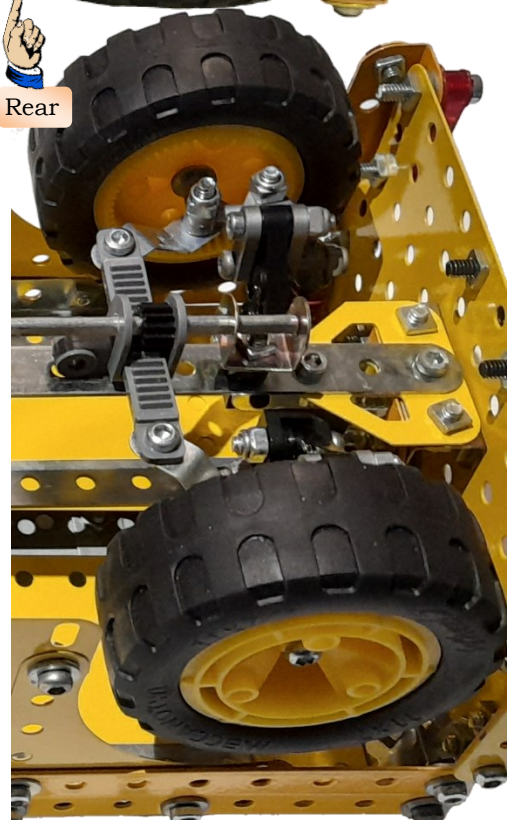
Part 260f



Front



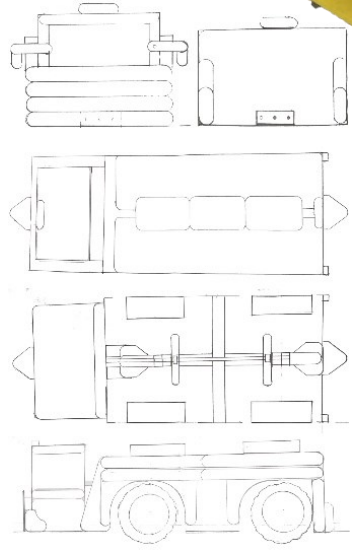
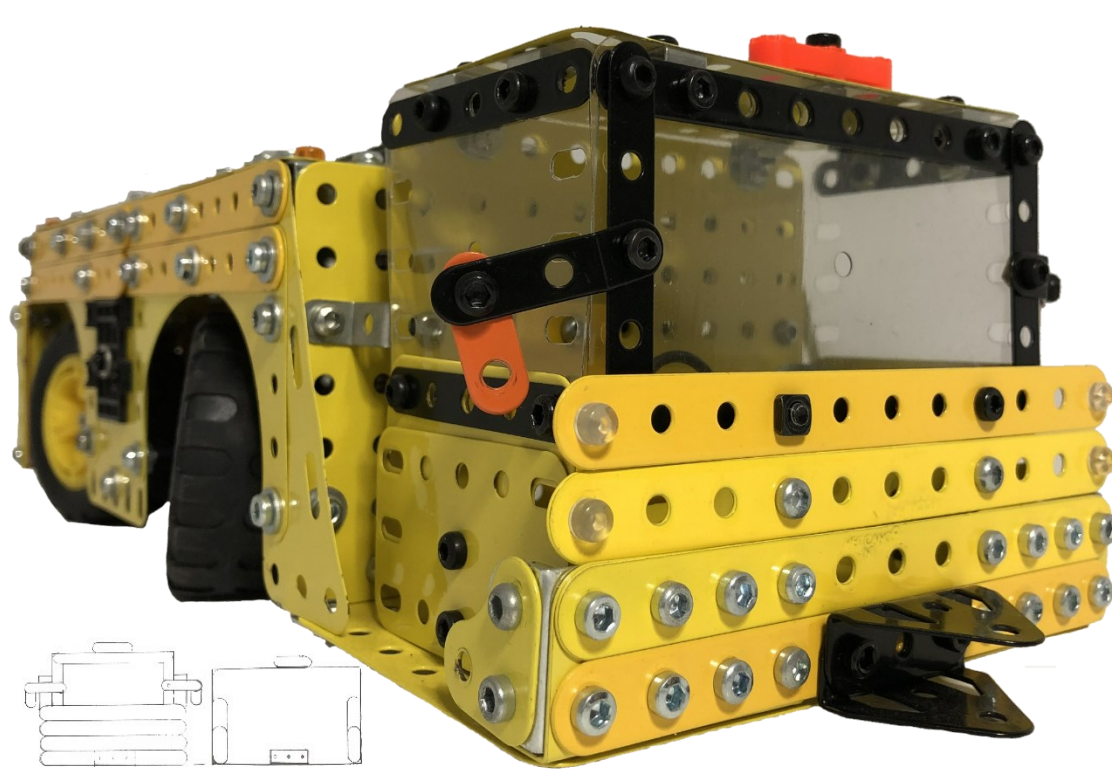
Rear



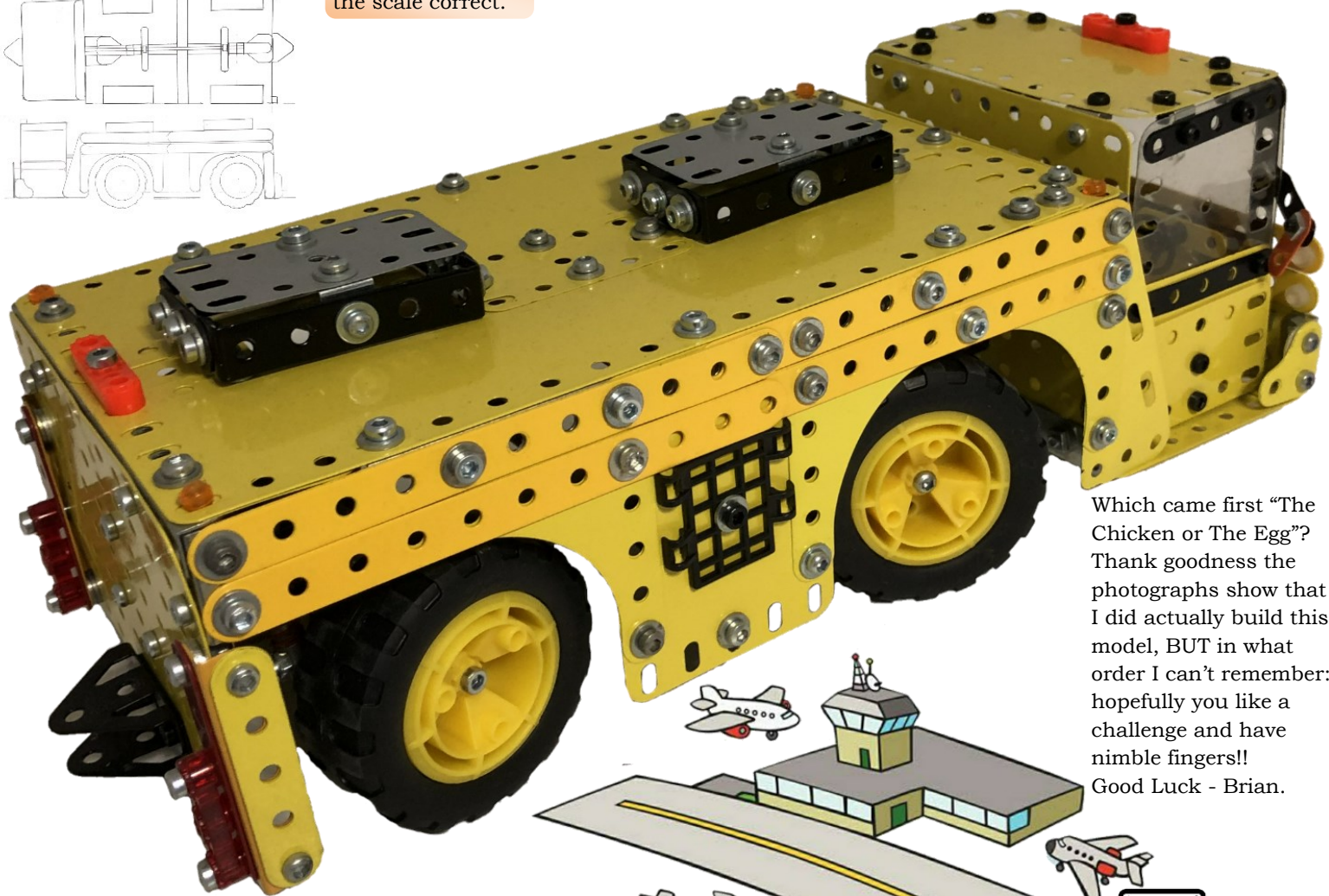
The suspension is based on this drawing from the Mechanical Workshop outfit 0532.

Driver's Cab Parts List

Part No.	Description	Qty
2	Strip 5½"	4
6	Strip 2"	2
9L	Angle Girder 1"	2
53a	Flat Plate 4½" x 2½"	1
126	Trunion Black	2
133a	Corner Bracket	2
161	Girder Bracket	2
191	Flexible Plate 2½" x 4½"	1
188	Flexible Plate 2½" x 4½"	4
193c	Transparent Plate 2½" x 4½"	1
193a	Transparent Plate 2½" x 2½"	2
C330	Narrow Angle Bracket	12
A235	Narrow Strip Black 2½"	6
A415	Narrow Strip Black 4½"	2
A438	Narrow Reversed Bracket	2
A324	Seat	1
38a	Plastic Spacer	2
A437	Narrow Obtuse Bracket	3
A806	Narrow Strip Orange 1"	2
260c	Narrow Plastic Spacer Black	1
321	Small Steering Wheel	1
A416	Narrow Strip 1½"	1
A184	Plastic Pin Clear	4



My sketches to get the scale correct.



Which came first "The Chicken or The Egg"? Thank goodness the photographs show that I did actually build this model, BUT in what order I can't remember: hopefully you like a challenge and have nimble fingers!! Good Luck - Brian.



Follow Brian on Instagram.
<https://www.instagram.com/meccanofan/>

Watch out for the speed humps!

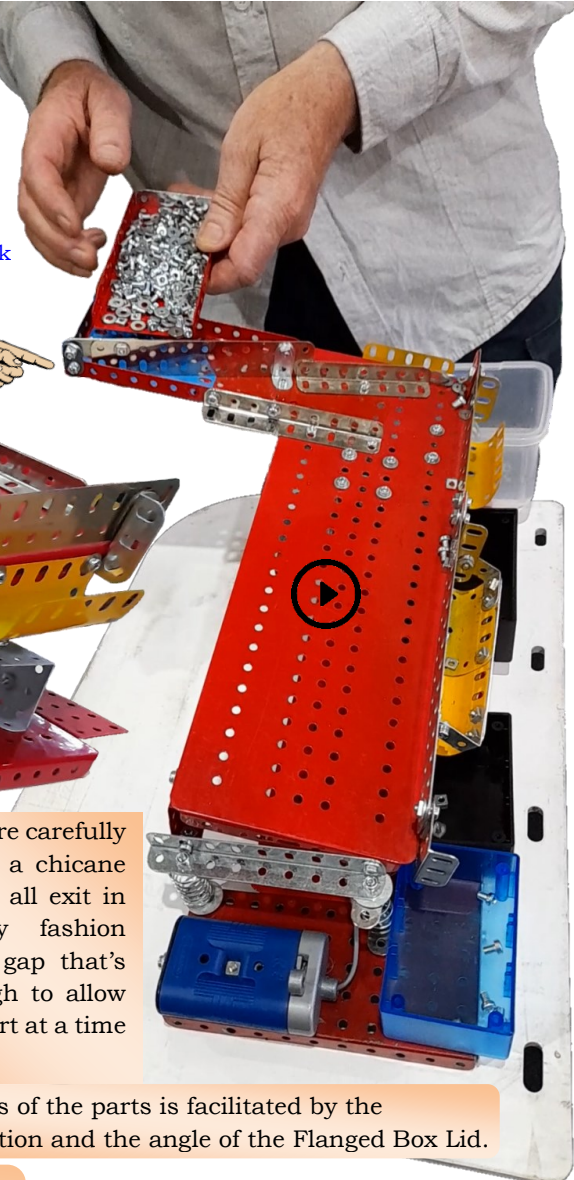
Nut, Bolt AND Washer

Sorter by Ashley Lamb - Oz

There are a few different designs for Nut and Bolt Sorters, but Ashley Lamb has gone one step further and successfully designed a Nut, Bolt AND washer Sorter.



<https://youtube.com/shorts/SVUIZP3hsRk>

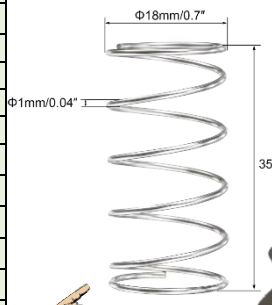


The parts are carefully tipped into a chicane where they all exit in an orderly fashion through a gap that's wide enough to allow only one part at a time to pass.

The progress of the parts is facilitated by the wobbling action and the angle of the Flanged Box Lid.

The key to separating the parts is careful adjustment of the gap between the Flat Girder and the Flanged Box Lid. At the top, the small gap only allows Washers to fit through. Then as it increases the Nuts can fit and finally the Bolts drop out the end.

Part No.	Description	Qty
2	Strip 5½"	2
5	Strip 2½"	1
6a	Strip 1½"	7
9a	Angle Girder 4½"	2
9b	Angle Girder 3½"	1
9d	Angle Girder 2½"	1
9f	Angle Girder ½"	1
10	Fishplate	7
12	Angle Bracket ½" x ½"	1
12a	Angle Bracket 1" x 1"	2
12b	Angle Bracket 1" x ½"	1
24	Bushwheel 8 hole	1
51a	Flanged Plate 1½" x 1"	1
51b	Flanged Plate 1½" x 1½"	1
51f	Flanged Plate 1½" x 2½"	2
52	Flanged Plate 2 sides	2
59	Collar	1
103	Flat Girder 5½"	1
103k	Flat Girder 7½"	1
103L	Flat Girder 1"	2
160g	Cube	3
161	Girder Bracket 2"	2
189	Flexible Plate 5½" x 1½"	1
199	Curved U Plate	4
236	Flanged Box Lid	2
A651	French Motor	1
B583	Flexible Plate 5½" x 1½"	



Suitable compression springs can be scrounged or purchased from eBay.

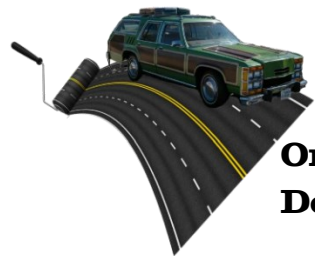
I've used 16mm x 38mm x 1mm but the above from eBay will do.



An 'off-balance' Bushwheel on the motor provides the wobbling action. Ashley has found that resonance makes a difference, so he's now using a Pulse Width Modulator to control the speed.

[YouTube https://youtube.com/shorts/SVUIZP3hsRk](https://youtube.com/shorts/SVUIZP3hsRk)

Note: This parts list is only a guide. I'm sure there are a multitude of ways to achieve the same result using different parts.



SkegEx 2023

On The Road with Douglas Hedgley

Being the 40th anniversary of SkegEx and a 200 mile journey to Skegness, I was away by 5am. The car was fully loaded with my Evening Star loco in three pieces, and all the other 'essentials'.

Arriving at the Embassy Theatre's car park and grabbing a quick coffee, I was in time to help unload and set up the tables. I was able to assist Gregg Worwood (who took 4th place with his beautiful Flip Flap fairground model). After the 5th trip out to the car park with the trolley, I decided that next year's effort would definitely be lighter, as the Evening Star is a cross between a hernia and a heart attack!

It fitted together well and in about 15 mins it was up and running and it continued to do so throughout the exhibition. It certainly got the chance to break down, as the cab roof and sides were opening and shutting like a revolving door throughout the expo. The sound effects were permanently switched on with one of the sounds being gurgling water draining out of the stop cocks onto the track gravel, which sounded like someone being violently sick up an alley! The smoke unit worked well and impressed the public. It lost battery power, just as we finished. Whether by design or accident, I was positioned just down from another lovely fellow, Bob Seaton, whose train builds inspired me on my only other previous visit to SkegEx in 2017 and I was happy to tell him so. I had a bracing half hour walk against the Northerly wind from the Vine Hotel to the club where the buffet and drink get together was being held. After a couple of drinks and some superb singing from the bar in the next room I left by 9pm as I was exhausted. I'm not the best one to judge, but the public attendance seemed to be very good on the Wednesday and the theatre seemed quite crowded. I also graced BBC radio with words of garbled wisdom. The kids seemed to like the cab roof and sides opening. One child was getting his fingers into the drive rods so I pressed a button on the remote control and the loud announcement sounded "DING DONG, ... KEEP WELL AWAY FROM THE PLATFORM EDGE AS THE NEXT TRAIN WILL NOT BE STOPPING!" That did the trick with a startled little face looking up. The smoke suddenly coiling out of the funnel caught their attention, and then the chuffs and braking sounds following etc, gave a little of a performance air about it. On Wednesday evening I went to the SkegEx Dinner. Steve Briancourt, the builder of that terrific model of USS Missouri, was on one side of me and John Ozyer-Key on the other. On Thursday afternoon the prize winners were announced, and I was genuinely surprised and very pleased to get a 2nd place and I must stress here, if I look slightly disgruntled on the stage, I can assure you I'm not! It's my habitual thug

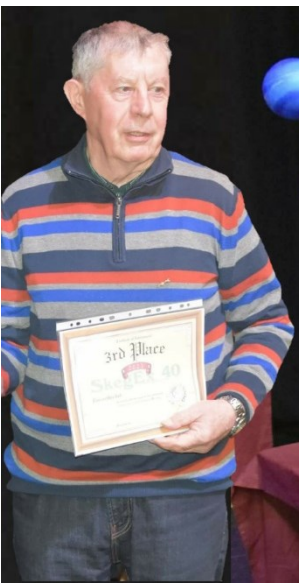


**John Wilson
Railway
Breakdown Crane**

Douglas Hedgley - Evening Star



And sides opening. One child was getting his fingers into the drive rods so I pressed a button on the remote control and the loud announcement sounded "DING DONG, ... KEEP WELL AWAY FROM THE PLATFORM EDGE AS THE NEXT TRAIN WILL NOT BE STOPPING!" That did the trick with a startled little face looking up. The smoke suddenly coiling out of the funnel caught their attention, and then the chuffs and braking sounds following etc, gave a little of a performance air about it. On Wednesday evening I went to the SkegEx Dinner. Steve Briancourt, the builder of that terrific model of USS Missouri, was on one side of me and John Ozyer-Key on the other. On Thursday afternoon the prize winners were announced, and I was genuinely surprised and very pleased to get a 2nd place and I must stress here, if I look slightly disgruntled on the stage, I can assure you I'm not! It's my habitual thug



**Michel Breal
Orrery**



look. Think of a semi-deflated leather football and you have the picture! Lol. I decided to stay an extra night at the hotel as I didn't fancy a long drive home after a day on my feet and got home at 1pm on the Friday.

In summary, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and look forward to next year. - Douglas Hedgley.



5

Terry Allen
Traction Engine

4

Gregg Worwood
Flip Flap



Skegness mayor

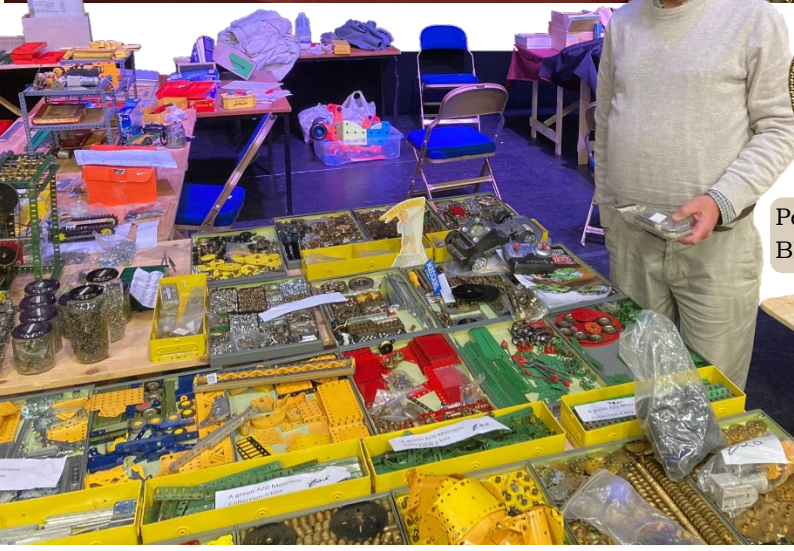


Tim Gant and
Clive Weston



Mike Rhoades
seemed happy
with his sales
table.

Chris Bates
explaining his
Stalwart to
Georg Eiermann



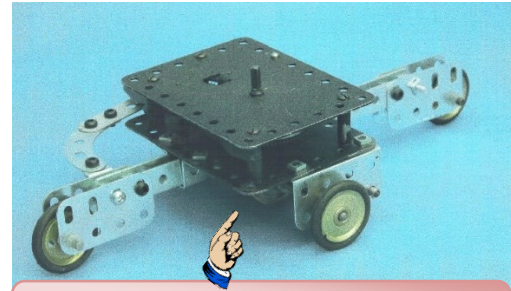
Peter
Blunden



CAMARADERIE: noun: a feeling of friendliness, goodwill, and familiarity among the people in a group.

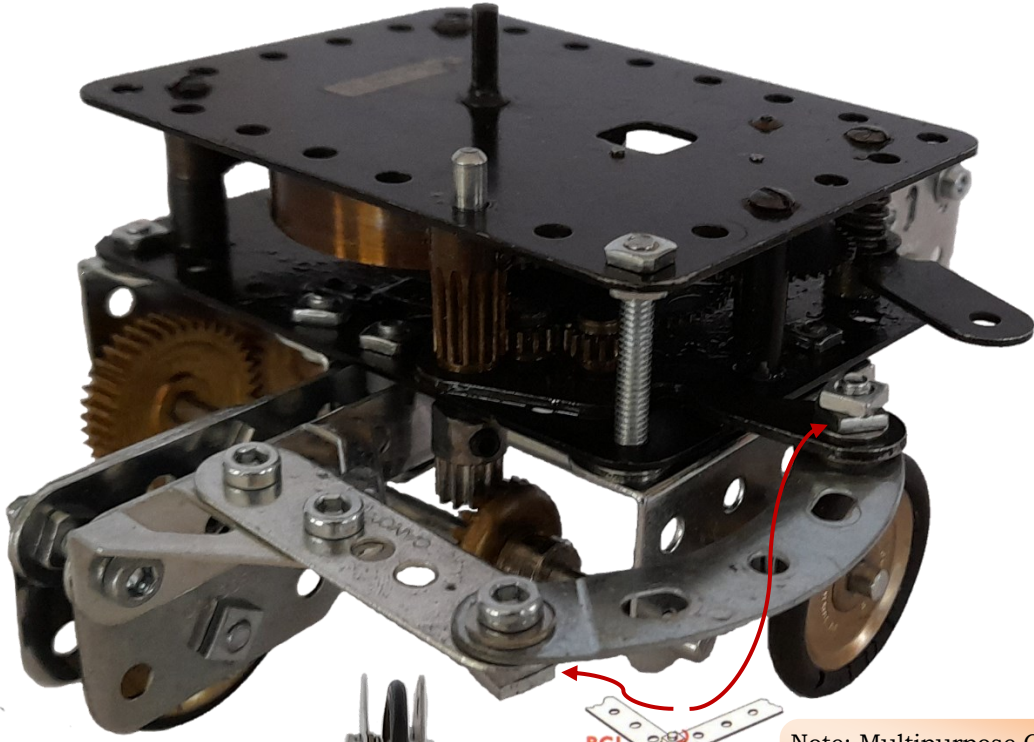


Auto-Reverse Clockwork Vehicle

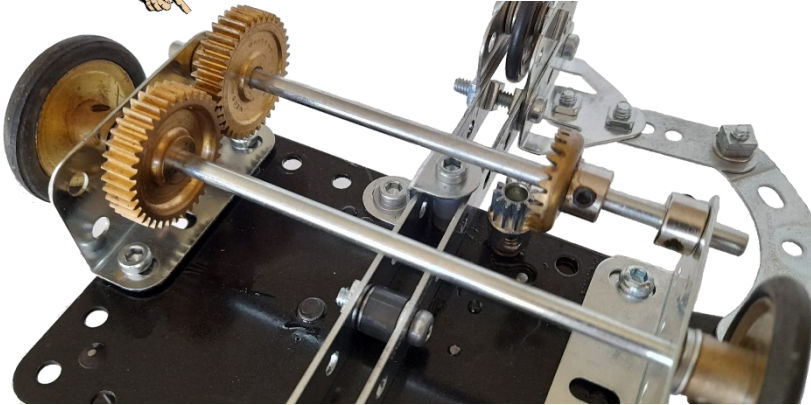
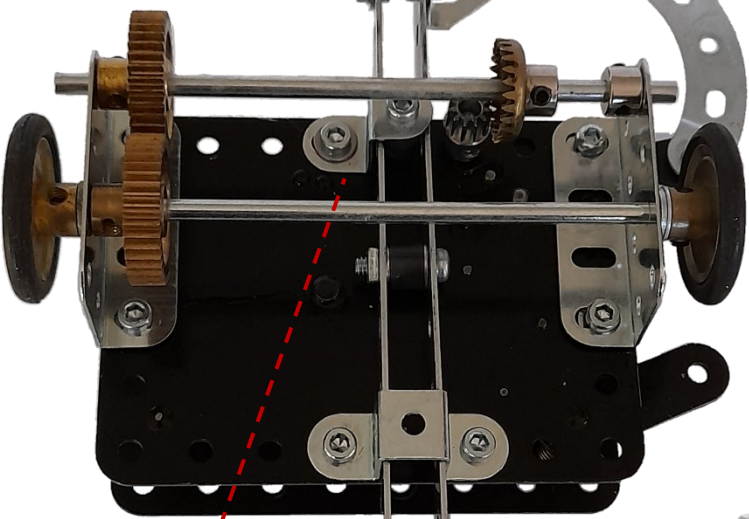


Based on this model by Stefan Tokarski.
Original design by Robin Lake.

Part No.	Description	Qty
1b	Strip 7½"	2
6	Strip 2"	1
22	Pulley 1"	2
22a	Pulley 1" No boss	2
26n	Pinion 11t diecast	1
29	Contrate 25t	1
31	Gear Wheel 38t 1"	2
45	Double Bent Strip	1
59	Collar	1
90a	Curved Strip 2½"	1
103h	Flat Girder 1½"	4
125	Reverse Angle Bracket	1
126	Trunnion	1
161	Girder Bracket 2"	2
No.1	Clockwork Motor	1



Note: Multipurpose Gears can be substituted for the Part 31 Gears.



Watch it go!

How to Repair a No. 1 Clockwork Motor

Broken piece arrowed.



Fig. 1

I've recently built a few models using clockwork motors and the first one I found already had a broken mainspring, then the second one snapped when I wound it up. It's always in the same spot, where the spring attaches to the winding shaft, Fig. 2.

After clamping the spring to a bit of wood, I tried drilling a new hole, but the drill bit just wouldn't bite and eventually the end of the spring shattered. Chris Goodwin - UK, told me about annealing which is something I wasn't aware of. He said to heat the end of the spring then let it cool slowly

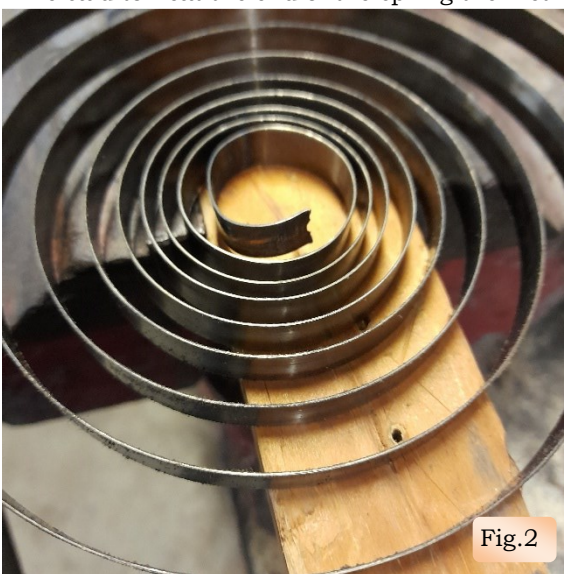


Fig. 2

as this will soften the metal and indeed it did!

In Figs. 3 and 4 you can see the G clamp it acting as a heatsink so only the last half inch of the spring is getting hot. The pin can be removed from the winding shaft however this is not necessary. After annealing the mainspring, drill a 4mm hole and file it into a rectangular shape to allow the head of the pin to fit through. Fig. 7.



Fig. 5



3.7mm
5.5mm



Fig. 3

If the pin is not removed, you need to align the hole in the spring with the pin then turn it 90 degrees. This will require rounding the end of the spring so that it can be turned without hitting the winding shaft. Look at Fig. 8 and you will see that the rectangular hole is maybe 10mm from the square end of the spring. I could simply push the pin through if I used the winding shaft shown on the right in Fig. 6, but to fit it to the shaft on the left in Fig. 6 it would have to be trimmed back a bit more than what you see on Fig. 4 and rounded off to allow it to turn. There is no need to reharden the spring after drilling and filing as it's only the last half inch that has been softened.



Fig. 4



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig.8

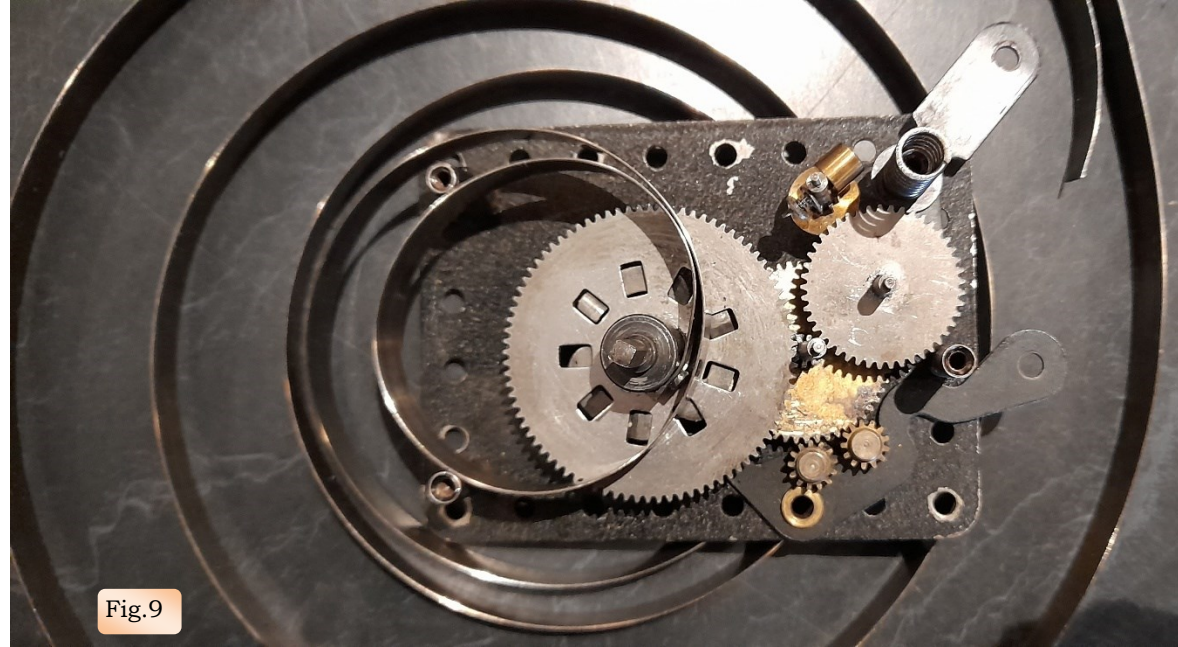


Fig.9

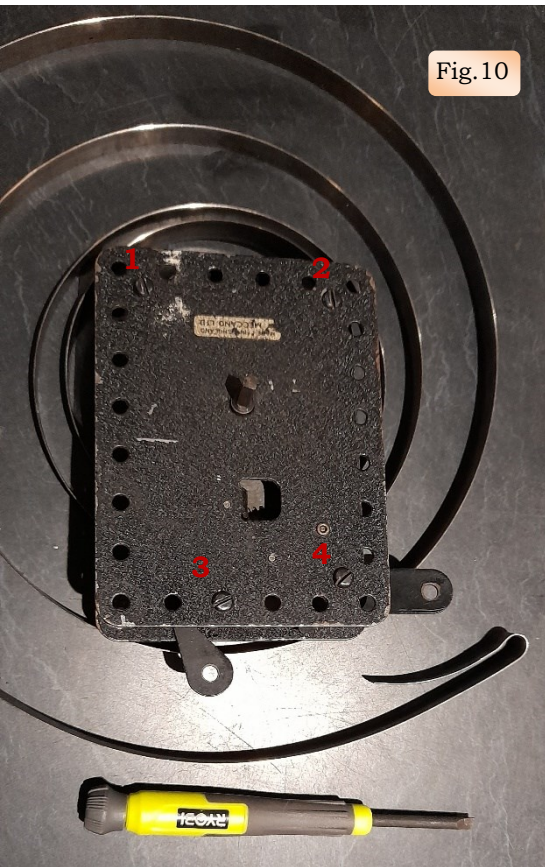


Fig.10

Getting it all back together is going to test your patience but I have a procedure that should make it easier. Trying to wind the spring first is fraught with danger. Don't try it. I did and I wish I hadn't! Place the winding drum with the spring attached as shown in Fig. 9 leaving most of the spring outside the top left pillar. Get the 3 spindles with gears roughly aligned as shown and then carefully place the top plate on and put the 4 bolts in. Do up bolts 1 and 2 but not tightly. Now do up bolts 3 and 4 just half a turn and hold the motor horizontally so that the 3 spindles are balanced upright. Use a torch and poke the spindles with a small screwdriver shown in Fig. 10. You will notice that one of the spindles will be touching the top plate so use the screwdriver to get this one into the hole first. Now tighten bolts 3 and 4 a tiny bit more until the next spindle is touching the side plate and then get this second spindle in and repeat the process until you hear a very satisfying pop when all 3 are aligned and in place. Now tighten all 4 bolts and do a little dance around the table singing "I'm so clever, I'm so clever, I'm so clever and witty and smart."

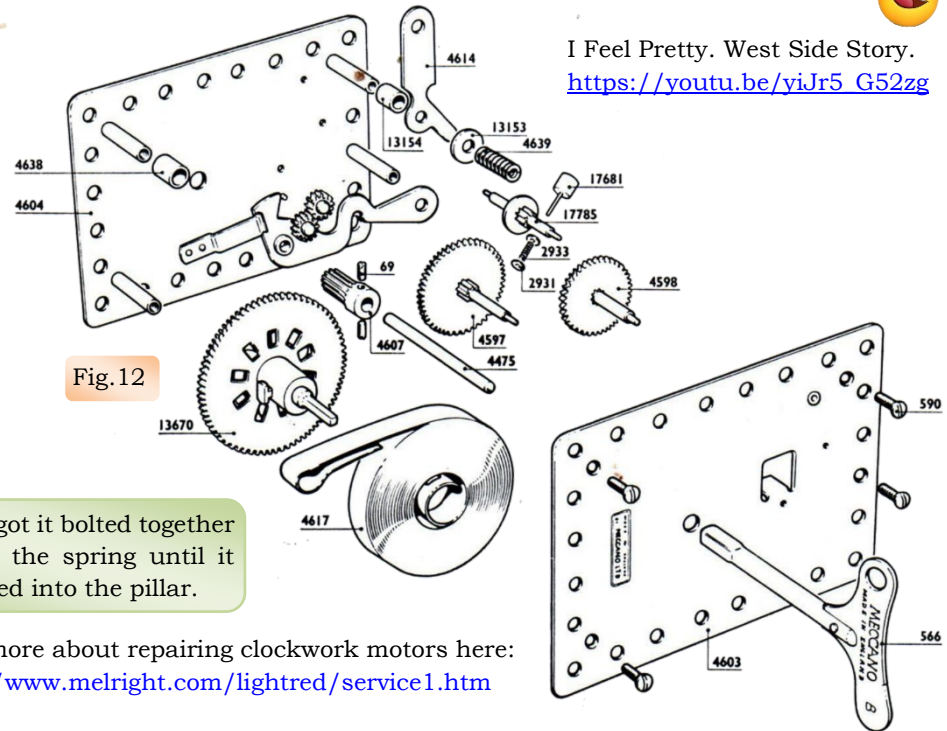


Fig.12

I Feel Pretty. West Side Story.
https://youtu.be/yiJr5_G52zg

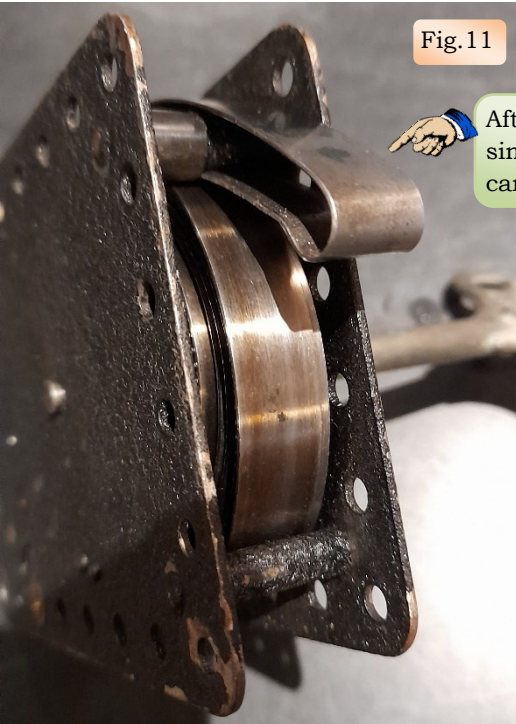


Fig.11

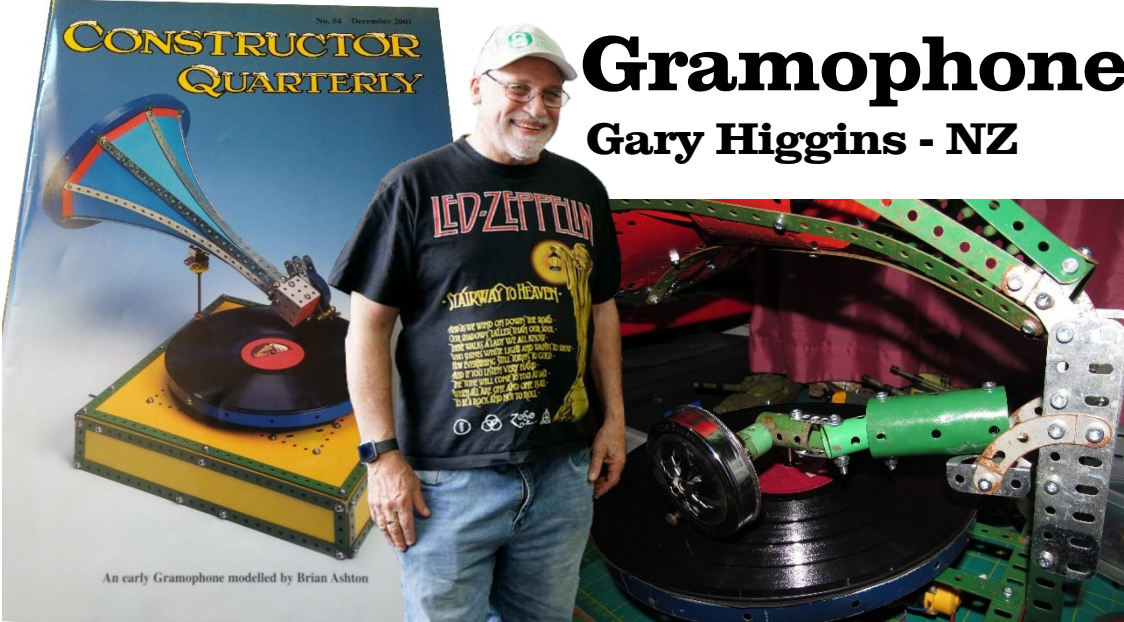
After you've got it bolted together simply wind the spring until it can be pushed into the pillar.

Read more about repairing clockwork motors here:
<http://www.melright.com/lightred/service1.htm>

4600 Front Plate	}	4603 Front Plate Assembly	4601 Back Plate	}	17784 Back Plate and Pin Assembly	17783 Backplate Spring and Pin Assembly	}	17263 Backplate Assembly	}	4604 Backplate and Reverse Lever Assembly													
1120 Governor Box			13671 Winding Shaft								4567 Stop Pin	4644 Spring	594 Rivet	591 Pillar	4565 Reverse Lever	4625 Reverse Pinion	4626 Stud	4627 Idler Pinion	4634 Stud	4566 Reverse Lever Bush	4617 Mainspring	4614 Brake Lever	13154 Sleeve
13672 No. 1 Gear	}	13670 No. 1 Gear Assembly	4597 No. 2 Gear Assembly	}	4618 Reverse Lever Assembly	}	}	}	}	}													
13673 Ratchet			13674 Washer								4599 No. 3 Gear Assembly	566 Winding Key Assembly	17681 Pin and Weight Assembly	17785 Pinion Shaft and Disc Assembly	553 Handle	556 Barrel	557 Rivet	1806 Weight	1808 Pin	4610 Pinion Shaft	4616 Brake Disc	2931 Washer	2933 Spring
4605 No. 2 Gear			4608 No. 2 Pinion Shaft								4606 No. 3 Gear	4609 No. 3 Pinion Shaft	553 Handle	556 Barrel	557 Rivet	1806 Weight	1808 Pin	4610 Pinion Shaft	4616 Brake Disc	2931 Washer	2933 Spring		

Gramophone

Gary Higgins - NZ



An early Gramophone modelled by Brian Ashton



I saw the original concept on a Facebook Meccano display where a horn phonograph had been created to play 78RPM records. There were wires from the pickup area head, and I asked the person posting the pictures if it worked. He replied that it used a small amplifier to relay the sound from the needle.

Some research on Prof Google revealed that the original phonographs used a vibrating membrane inside a closed circular container (sound box) out of which was a screw connector to which a stylus or metal pin could be attached by a thumbscrew. These were available on eBay and accordingly I purchased one from India for NZ\$30.00.

I made up a basic square frame using 12½" x 2½" strip plates with a girder frame, and I used a large flanged ring as a turntable, the central area filled with a 6" circular plate.

I centred the table using a double arm crank with an axle passing through a face plate onto two strips which crossed the centre of the base.

I used two small plastic spacers to fill the hole space in the record, the axle being too small.

A PDU electric motor under the table provided a drive to the turntable by means of bevel gears 30a and 30c.

The leads to the motor had a small speed controller attached to allow the motor speed to be adjusted to 78RPM.

The horn was made from a circle of 5½" curved strips and the interior filled using various flexible plates.

The horn is attached to the rear of the base which also provides support for the pickup arm made from a cylinder, sleeve pieces and chimney adaptors. This is fitted to the sound box supported by screws fixed with non-slip nuts to allow the whole pickup arm to swivel across the records and to allow up and down movement. The sound box can be rotated to adjust the angle of the needle on the record. Once the record is played the sound is quite loud and the speed can be adjusted by the speed controller to give the best sound. The gramophone needles and a supply of 78 records were sourced from Trade Me.

A very satisfying project.



FROM OUR GOOD IDEAS DEPARTMENT

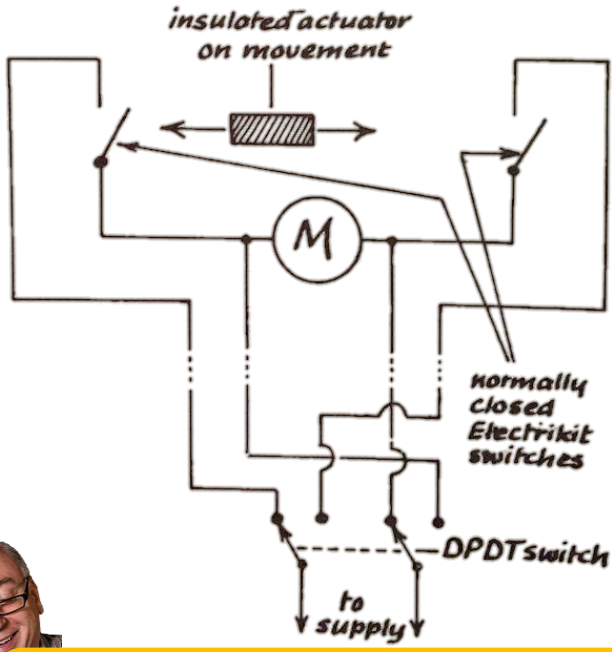


Matthew Goodman's Electrical Column

This short series of articles will describe several electrical circuits that I have successfully utilised in my models. Later circuits will use umpteen diodes and electronic components. However, they will certainly give some food for thought and add visual interest for those exhibition models.

The first item to be described in the series is for the purist, as all the parts used are in the elektrikit series.

It has applications in limiting the movement in clock rewind mechanisms, all crane movements; travel, swivel, movement of the jib or hook, and the trolley on block-setters; or the steering on vehicles.



OPERATION

The motor drives the appropriate movement, such that when it reaches the end of its travel, the limit switch is opened and switches the motor off.

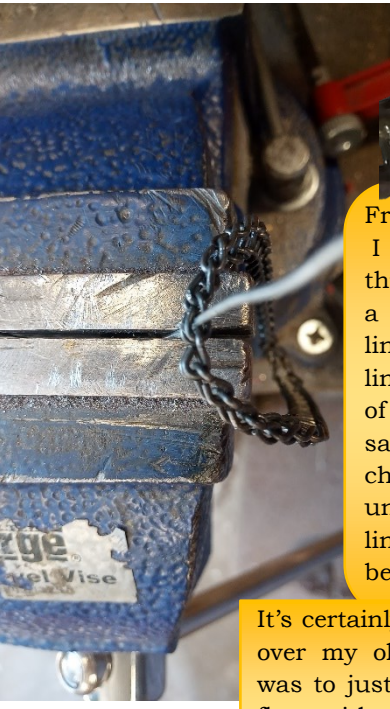
When the reversing switch is thrown, the movement goes to the other end of its travel and stops again. By using a centre off switch, one can activate the movement between the limits, but if it hits the end, it stops itself automatically, without doing any damage.

If it does not work first time, it is probable that the switch on the motor is in the wrong position.



From Matt Goodman - UK.
 Reproduced from Midlands Meccano Guild Bulletin with permission from Matt.
 Limit Switches using a single power supply and no diodes.

Further reading on Electrical Circuits on Matt's website:
<http://mattgoodmanuk.com/links/UsefulCircuits.html>
 And further reading on Matt's Meccano section:
<http://mattgoodmanuk.com/links/Meccano.html>



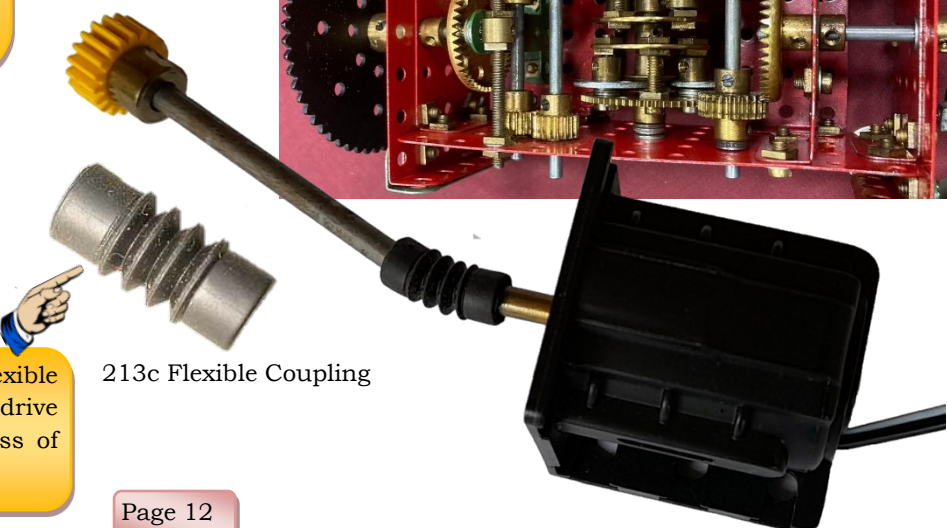
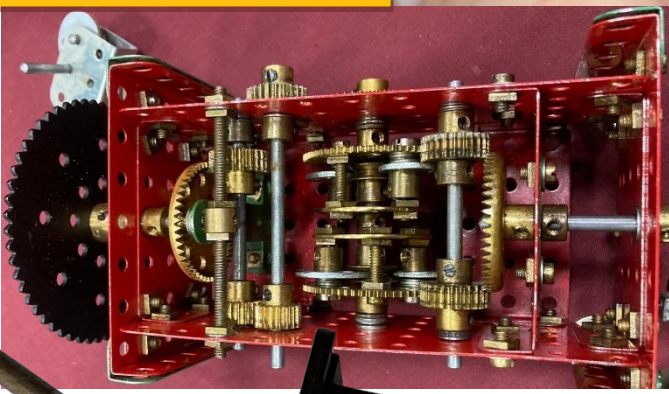
From Mick Berg- USA.
 I recently discovered this method of getting a better shape to the link when joining links of chain. A piece of wire of about the same thickness as the chain wire is placed under the ends of the link before bending them over.

It's certainly an improvement over my old method, which was to just squash the links flat with the needle-nose pliers. Maybe it has been suggested before, but I didn't find any mention of it.



CLICK ON THE IMAGE

Hubert van Wijngaarden had a free-wheel drive mechanism on display at SkegEx. The heart of the solution to its mysterious action was demonstrated in this video.
<https://youtube.com/shorts/u9gWjFkQiK4>



From John Bader - UK. These part 213c Flexible Couplings are possibly suitable to transmit a light drive for long periods at exhibitions. I'm in the process of testing them to destruction! Lol.

213c Flexible Coupling

This Month's Meccanoboy Warwick Lewis - Australia



Warwick's favourite model

When and where were you born? I was born on 27 September 1942 in Burwood, Sydney. I was in a hurry as I was more than two months premature.

What did your parents do for a living?

My mother was a commercial artist at David Jones until I arrived on the scene. She was also an accomplished dancing instructor and pianist. I didn't inherit her talents. My father was a bootmaker and made army boots during the Second World War. I had a younger sister and brother and we all lived with my maternal grandfather in a house at the site of the AGL pipe depot on Parramatta Rd, Croydon. My grandfather was the resident manager, and the house came with the job. Following my brother's asthma diagnosis in 1952, my father had a complete career change and was employed by the state public service as a payroll officer at the Dam Site, 8kms from (Old) Adaminaby (now underwater in Lake Eucumbene). The contrast in living on Parramatta Rd and the serenity of the Dam Site was unbelievable. In 1953 we moved to another site called Eaglehawk which was closer to the Eucumbene Dam under construction. Also under construction were various tunnels linking dams from which eventually would flow water to generate hydroelectricity in the Snowy River Scheme. My father was part of the payroll crew that travelled into the tunnels to pay workers' wages, all cash in those days. I was allowed in the van on one occasion during school holidays to experience travelling in the tunnels. I noticed all the crew including Dad carried pistols. My mother became ill with pancreatic cancer in early 1955, so we all returned to Sydney, staying with my aunt and uncle with their children in Drummoyne - all in all, 4 adults and 7 children! When my mother died that year in August, we moved to a new house in Granville. That house was built by my uncle's brother, a carpenter, who was very generous with his fee.



Warwick's parents in the early 40s

What schools did you go to?

My first school was at Five Dock Public School until year 4. I can remember being called out at general assembly to appear at the front to be congratulated by the local police constable for noticing that I never jaywalked to and from school. I always was a nerd but good at geometry, understanding right angles! My second school was at Adaminaby Public School in years 4 and 5. A special bus service provided free transport from the Dam Site to the Adaminaby schools.



Grade 2 at Five Dock Primary School in 1950

Unfortunately, when it snowed heavily, the bus could not travel, and we sadly had to amuse ourselves building snowmen until the roads became passable the next day or later. I briefly attended year 7 at Monaro High School in 1955 before our family moved back to Sydney. I then attended Drummoyne Boys High before we later moved to Granville in the same year. I then attended Fairfield Boys High from 1955 to 1957.

What subjects did you study?

English, mathematics I and II, physics and chemistry, commerce, geography, French, and in earlier years, woodwork, metalwork and tech drawing.

How did you meet your wife?

I met Marianne in 1967 when she applied for a cost clerk's position at a pharmaceutical company. I was the assistant company secretary and despite interviewing other candidates, I had no hesitation in selecting her. Marianne didn't report directly to me and after a couple of weeks I called her into my office. She later told me she thought she was in trouble but was surprised when I asked her out to the pictures, to see *You Only Live Twice*. Marianne said yes and our secret romance blossomed from there. Secret until we were spotted at a picnic at Mt Victoria in the Blue Mountains a few months later by a company manager. We agreed that Marianne would resign from her position during my forthcoming 5-day conference in Melbourne, so I didn't participate in her farewell. Who wants to see a grown man cry?

Ironically, Marianne and I used to work next door to each other in O'Connell St, Sydney, a few years earlier, but never saw or noticed each other.



Warwick and Marianne on their wedding day in 1970.

How many children do you have?

We have three children. The eldest, Stephanie, has a degree in welfare studies but prefers to be a housewife looking after her husband and four children, three of whom are still at school. The second eldest, Yvonne, is a clinical psychologist and has five children with three still at school and one at university. Our youngest, William is still at university despite having degrees in advanced medical science, and in vision care. He still lives with us and is currently studying mining engineering and is also the president of the UNSW Running Club.



Warwick at the Sydney Expo June 2023



Warwick won 1st prize for this Conehead outfit at his long service dinner.



William, Marianne, Stephanie, Warwick and Yvonne

What did you do for a living?

My great-uncle owned an industrial soap factory in Balmain, and he advised me, as a ten-year-old, to be an accountant. I had never heard of one, I wanted to be a cowboy like Roy Rogers! Fast forward to the end of year 9 when my father told me that I had to leave school and work full time to help pay the bills. Whilst I got a job as a clerk, I also enrolled in an accounting course at TAFE followed by a cost accounting and a company secretarial course. Their completion enabled me to become an FCPA (Fellow Certified Practising Accountant) and a CIS (Chartered Institute of Secretaries) subsequently renamed the Governance Institute of Australia. I happened to fluke first prize in NSW for economics in the final secretarial exams. I later completed a 5-year diploma in management at the University of Technology (UTS). I worked for two years in finance at the NSW Department of Agriculture. I remember sitting for a state-wide public service exam in the Great Hall of Sydney University and later being contacted by the personnel manager. He told me that I had put the department on the map – never before had anyone come first in the state that did not work in the Treasury Department. Despite the praise, I ultimately wanted to work in manufacturing enterprises and left after two years. During my career, I have worked mostly in manufacturing and a finance company in various capacities such as cost accountant, management accountant, chief financial officer and retired as company secretary and administration manager of a large international pharmaceutical company.

Have you travelled much?

Marianne fears flying and cruising, so we don't do a lot of recreational travel. However, we did tour the North and South Islands of New Zealand by coach and train in 2000, a one-off. My work has taken me to Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Thailand and New Zealand and I was a guest auditor based in Memphis, Tennessee for some weeks when I worked in an international pharmaceutical company. There at weekends, I was able to sightsee a few US cities including New York, Washington DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco. I also visited Disney World's EPCOT in Florida.

When did you get your 1st Meccano set?

I received various small Buz and Ezy-Bilt sets from my 6th birthday onwards. Santa also participated! When we lived down the Snowy, my father converted an empty wooden gelnite box by adding a tray and internal partitions for storing my parts. I still have that 70-year old box.

My first Meccano set was a second hand No 4 in red and green. My cousin who owned it was more interested in my boxed Hornby clockwork 0-gauge passenger set. As devious young teenagers, I tucked the train set under one arm and cycled one-handed from Granville to Drummoyne including along busy Parramatta Rd, swapped sets, and immediately cycled back to Granville. Did we ever later get into trouble from our parents!



It's rumoured that Warwick has 80 Ten Sets but he will neither confirm nor deny this!



How much Meccano do you have?

I have a large number of No.10 sets from different eras. Some were new but most are second hand. I also have smaller sets including more recent theme sets. However, most of my collection has come from other Meccano members who have had to part with their Meccano. In particular, I acquired a large collection from the late Jack Hextell including many of his cabinets and mechanisms. I have around 180 Meccano models and half of them were constructed by Jack. I am reluctant to dismantle models and have not done so this century.

Wow! Do you have enough room for it all?

I have a dedicated Meccano room upstairs with workbenches. However, it has gradually become a storage room as more Meccano models have been acquired or constructed. We also have an attic which has Meccano and some of our daughter's family possessions in it. We have nine people living in our home including our son, daughter, son-in-law and four grandchildren.

Have you picked up any great bargains collecting Meccano?

I was pleasantly surprised last year when my sister-in-law's brother gave me his Meccano collection. He needed to downsize and wanted it to go to a good home. The collection included a crane set in zinc and yellow and many basic and conversion sets in similar colours with electric and clockwork motors, all in very good condition.

How long have you been in the Meccano Modellers Association of Sydney Inc?

I joined the club in 1994 after my daughter saw a Meccano Exhibition flyer on the community notice board at North Rocks shopping centre and told me about it. I was amazed to see such a variety of models at the exhibition and immediately signed up.

What type of models do you prefer to build?

I like to build all kinds of models: vehicles, cranes, bridges and fairground models but so far I have not built any clocks or locomotives (other than my Little Joe Tricky Track tank loco).

Any preference for Meccano colour schemes or periods?

Whilst red and green colours are nostalgic for me (and I have built many models in those colours), I also like the zinc and yellow-coloured models which seem more realistic in modern times.

What's your best model?

I like my Eiffel Tower which is based on the No. 10 set model but modified with many narrow strips, an automatic reversing mechanism for its three lifts, embellished structural features and a large French flag at the top for when I exhibit the tower at a French market day. It is 2.5m tall so I redesigned the tower column sections for separating during its transportation. I also added Elekrikitt lights on one side of the tower for effect.

What other hobbies and interests do you have?

I do puzzles in newspapers, before reading the news. Sudoku is my favourite puzzle. I have collected several encyclopaedias including four editions of the Britannica. I play the piano (terribly) for my own ears and like attempting modern jazz pieces.

How's your health these days?

Better now than it was a few months ago. Recent scans have encouraged specialists to rule out cancer and they want to confirm this with more scans in three months.

Have you been to many Meccano expos?

Of course, I have been to and exhibited at many Sydney expos since 1994, but only visited one other, and that was in Melbourne in 1996 when I also visited Ken Gordon and Walter Ashburn (in Bendigo) during our return to Sydney by road.

What's your advice for young people today?

There is more to life than clicking on electronic devices for hours on end. Go outdoors and enjoy nature, whether walking, running, playing sport, talking to people face to face. We know many traditional jobs are going to change or even disappear with evolving technologies in automation and computerisation, but humans always have the capacity to overcome adversity.

How has Meccano helped you in life?


Meccano demonstrates a way of solving engineering problems in miniature scale whether structural, mechanical or even electrical, but you don't need to be a qualified engineer to appreciate that. Our Meccano club's members come from a variety of occupations, but all have a common interest in Meccano. One final thought: Marianne and I arranged a visit to our son's class when he was in year 3 at school. We brought along 8 small Meccano models which we demonstrated to the class. The teacher then divided the class into 8 groups of four and they were each asked to draw the respective Meccano model on their table. I was impressed by their enthusiasm and that the girls had a better idea of depicting the models on paper, at least in their age group.

Any regrets?

I have not been successful in encouraging our younger generations, including those in my extended family, to enjoy our Meccano hobby. Many of them have a short attention span and their electronic devices give them instant gratification. However, I still enjoy Meccano into old age.

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

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<https://runnymedemeccanoguild.org.uk>
<http://www.midlandsmeccanoguild.com>

Other Countries

<http://club-amis-meccano.org/>
<http://www.meccaninfos.com.ar/>
<http://www.meccanogilde.nl>
<http://meccano.free-bb.fr/>
<https://www.aceam.org/es/>
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USA and Canada

<https://www.usmeccano.com>
<http://www.meccano.com>
<http://www.cmamas.ca>
<http://www.bcmeccanomodellers.com/meccano-in-canada.html>
<http://www.meccanoquebec.org/index2ang.html>
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Australia & New Zealand
<http://www.nzmeccano.com>
<http://www.nzfm.co.nz>
<http://www.mmci.com.au>
<http://www.sydneymeccanomodellers.org.au>
<http://www.webjournalist.com.au/maylands/index.html>
<https://www.facebook.com/MWT-Meccano-Club-1476153515979522/>

South Africa

<https://www.facebook.com/Meccano-Club-of-South-Africa-464753870326296>
<http://www.mecworld.co.za/emrp/>

Personal pages

<https://neilsmeccanoandstuff.jimdofree.com/neil-s-meccano-models>
<http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/dms/meccano>
<http://www.dalefield.com/meccano/index.html>
<https://www.alansmeccano.org>
<https://www.meccanoindex.co.uk>
<http://www.meccanokinematics.net>
<https://meccanocreations.in>
<http://www.meccano.us>
<https://mecca-clocks.fr/>
<http://mattgoodmanuk.com/links/Meccano.html>

Meccgear Jeff Clark New Zealand
sales@meccgear.co.nz

<http://www.nzmeccano.com/image-151916>

Bespoke parts from Corlust Meccano Club

Ian Wilson bespokecraftshack@gmail.com

Mike Rhoades. Link to price list below.

<https://www.nzmeccano.com/image-165106>



Meccano suppliers

<http://www.meccanohobby.co.uk>
<https://www.meccanoshop.co.uk>
<http://meccanoman.co.uk/catalog>
<https://www.meccanospare.com>
<https://ralphsshop.com>
<http://www.meerlu.com.au/>
<https://tinyurl.com/AshokBanerjee>
<http://www.hsomerville.com/mwmailorder>
<http://www.metalconstructiontoys.com>

Why do elephants have big ears?
Because Noddy wouldn't pay the ransom.

Have you heard of Murphy's law?
Yes.
What is it?
If something can go wrong it will.
Correct. Have you heard of Cole's law?
No? What is it?
Thinly sliced cabbage and carrot with mayonnaise.

Well? Was it worth the price of a cup of coffee?

 Buy me a coffee



A woman went to the market to buy some cod. She approaches the fishmonger for assistance.

Woman: Do you have any cod? I'd like a piece of cod.

Fishmonger: We've got no cod, madam. We have haddock, would you like some haddock?

Woman: No, I'd like some cod.

Fishmonger: We don't have any cod. Can I offer you some salmon?

Woman: No, I would like cod.

Fishmonger: We have no cod, madam.

Woman: Give me a piece of cod please.

Fishmonger: Madam, I'm not sure how I can make this any plainer to you, but we have no cod.

Woman: But I want a piece of cod

Fishmonger: Well I'm sorry but we have no cod

Woman: But I insist I want a piece of cod

Fishmonger: Madam, let me spell it out for you "N-O-C-F-D"

Woman: But there's no F in cod

Fishmonger: That's what I've been trying to tell you!

An old man is running a fruit stand and displays a sign that reads 1 melon for \$3, 3 melons for \$10. A young man approaches and asks for one melon, for which he pays \$3. He proceeds to purchase a second, and then a third, each for \$3. As the young man walks away, he calls out, "Hey old man, I just bought 3 melons for \$9. Maybe you're not so good at this business thing." The old man mutters to himself, "Almost everyone who comes to my stand buys 3 melons instead of 1, but they all want to teach me how to do business".

A man enters a barbershop for a shave. While the barber is foaming him up, he mentions the problems he has getting a close shave around the cheeks.

"I have just the thing," says the barber taking a small wooden ball from a nearby drawer. "Just place this between your cheek and gum."

The client places the ball in his mouth and the barber proceeds with the closest shave the man has ever experienced.

After a few strokes, the client asks in garbled speech: "And what if I swallow it?"

"No problem," says the barber. "Just bring it back tomorrow like everyone else does."

