



Canadian MeccaNotes

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Gurudayal



Clark



Zachary



Sam &
Jacob

Summer Art Classes

Tom Thomson
Art Gallery,
Owen Sound



Summer Art Classes 2004

Every year the Tom Thomson Art Gallery, which is located in Owen Sound, Ontario, conducts a series of week long Summer Art Classes for children. These classes consist of five half-day



sessions, and cover such diverse topics as cooking, drawing and painting, clay modeling, astronomy, Meccano and a host of other activities. Each year, the selection of classes differs, but one or two perennial favourites remain on the agenda year after year. I am told that the Meccano Workshop is one of the top favourites, and becomes fully booked very quickly - which is where I come into the picture. At first

the Meccano Workshop was just a half-day affair, and was part of a larger "Structure and Buildings" class - but as it proved so popular, the Meccano feature was extended to a full class. Over the years, I have developed the Workshop so that the children can either build upon their experience gained in my school programme, or start from the very beginning of Meccano modeling.

In order to cover this very wide range of skills, the models for Sets 2 to 7 from the 1950's manuals are used. I have a dozen or so models constructed which the children can copy, and then there are another dozen manual models photocopied and laminated for those who like building from plans. The children do, of course, have the option of inventing their own models if any of them so desire. The 1950's manuals are used for several reasons, the main ones being that these models go



together fairly easily, plus they use larger, easy-to-manage parts. Most importantly, even if they are not quite properly constructed or the bolts are not tightened, the models WORK. Children don't mind a bit if parts fall off while a model is working - they simply fit them back on again, but the key thing is - they can see the thing working. That's the main problem with today's models. They are very fiddly, and if they are not very meticulously constructed, they just don't work - but I digress, that's fodder for other articles.

I have assembled nine 1955 Set 6's and five Set 7's, and the children each have a kit of parts (the Set 7's are reserved for those building a Set 7 model, others use a Set 6). They then choose a model or plan, and have the week to complete their model. Some children elect to build several small models while other choose larger, more ambitious, projects.



This year's class was all boys, unusual as there are often some girls signed up. One of this year's youngest participants was Kyle, who had just turned 8 years old. He loves trucks, so chose the Set 7 Builder's Lorry - a very ambitious project for one so young. As he didn't have experience with Meccano (his school is one of the very few in the area I have yet visit), I was very dubious of letting him attempt this model. I started him with the simple part, the tipper body, to see how he got on. - it was no problem at all to him. This little 8-year-old completed the model in 9 hours, and only needed help with locating a few parts and with the steering mechanism, but all the construction was entirely his own work.

The others in the group chose less ambitious projects. There were a couple of inventors, while the rest chose models of varying complexity. MacKenzie, who was back for a second year, (having enjoyed himself so much last year), started out by inventing, then progressed to copying models, in this case a Lifting Bridge and an Acrobat. Next to him was Gurudayal, who built several models and never stopped: in fact, he was still putting the finishing touches on a Windmill in

the very last moments of the class. All in all, everyone had a very enjoyable time, and at the conclusion, I gave each child an 8x10 picture of his model, the Art Gallery presented them with signed certificates, and the local toy store gave them each a discount coupon for future Meccano purchases.


Now all that is left to do is for me to resort the sets once again. Even though the children are told to keep the sets together they slowly spread out and kits get mixed up. Well, you can't expect everything to go smoothly!

Ed Barclay



One Inch Pulley, Plus or Minus

At the Hamilton display in June was an exquisite model of a 1910 era farm tractor. Part of the visible valve gear on the engine was a set of cams actuating the valve pushrods. The cams were made of cut-down 1 in. pulleys (p/n 22) This idea is worth exploring, using a few of your hundreds of pulleys. Hammer the pulley discs flat; then whatever shape desired rise-tion of the tappets. with an instant-Meccano cam (p/cams have



mer the pulley grind them to will produce the dwell-and-fall ac- This need not be drop like the n 131) —many gradual motion both up and down. The cam follower, on either level or pushrod, should have a roller — not a Meccano collar, as the setscrew holes interfere with the roller action.

Another use for p/n 22 is as a 1 inch bush wheel. A flattened 1 in. pulley is the same size as the 1 in. 6-hole bush wheel (part of the 2 in. road wheel, p/n 187c) The 6-hole wheel can be used as a guide for drilling any pattern of holes in the flattened pulley. (Unfortunately, not at standard hole spacing!) Notches can be filed in a flattened pulley at standard spacing from the centre, using a chainsaw file, to produce a bearing reinforcement which can be clamped where a bush wheel might be slightly too large. A flattened pulley can also be filed or ground down leaving one projection with a drilled hole, making a short-arm crank. Note again that the radius of this crank will be less than that of a standard short crank (p/n 62d), and the operating angle of the resulting crank may be less than that of a standard crank, depending on the width of the connecting arm or part.

Bosses from old pulleys can be converted into collars, or even short couplings; but what about salvaging the pulley discs? The boss is most easily removed by placing it in a wheel nut from a car, which has a clear bore just larger than the Meccano boss, and removing it with a flat-ended punch. The discs can be flattened stacked on a piece of 5/16 in. metal tubing. The brass boss from a damaged plastic pulley or gear has a splined end 9/32 in. (about 7mm) in diameter and 7/32 in long (6mm), just right for the purpose; two such bosses would make a pulley or drum with nearly a half-inch face — useful as a belt pulley or even a small flywheel.

The Old Mutilator, Don Redmond

