

Looking up the lift shaft of the Blackpool Tower. Hydraulic power is used to run the elevators.

a complete coat than the job is started again. Constant supervision and repair work keep the structure safe. The engineers and painters require steady nerves and often have to do their job in a stiff wind.

This British skyscraper—it is nearly half as high as the Empire State Building, New York, and as high as some of the other skyscrapers there—is outstanding not only for its dimensions, but for the extensive views it affords as well. Objects and places more than 50 miles away can be seen from the crow's nest, 480 ft. above the ground. From this eyrie, which is covered with white and coloured glass, beacons on the Lakeland mountains and Pennine heights have been seen. Incidentally, the Tower itself became a beacon one day while it was being built, the top catching fire!

Hydraulic elevators run from the central hall to a point 100 ft. below the crow's nest. Above the latter viewpoint the visitor may climb to platforms at 400 ft. and 420 ft. by stairs and ladders. Superb panoramas are obtained from these points, the prospect including a long stretch of the Lancashire Coast, the peaks of the Lake District, the villages of the Fylde area, and the Pennine Range.

A radio broadcast took place from this elevated spot in August 1946, when the Tower was re-opened to the public after being closed during the war. There was good reason for that closure. In the late conflict the Tower was used as a radar base. It had the further unique distinction of being illuminated during the black-

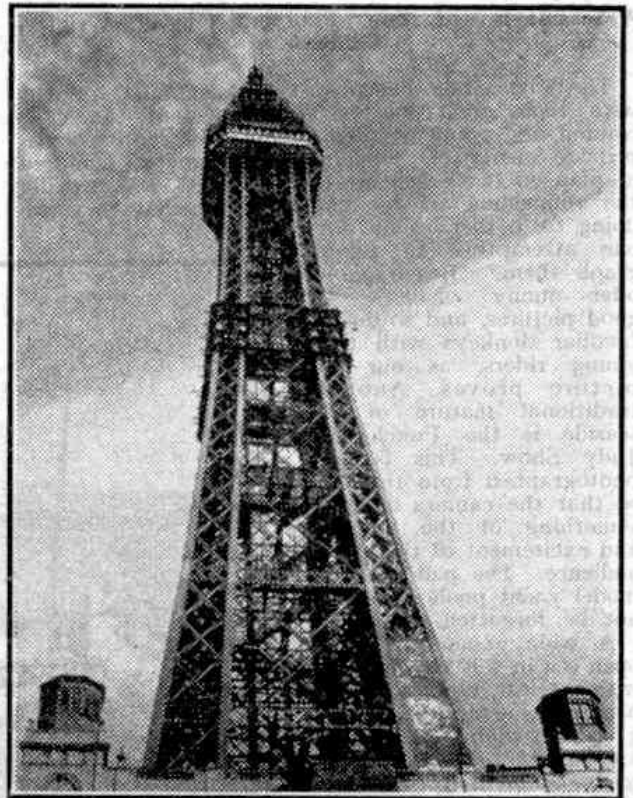
days, a light being kept burning at the top for the safety of aircraft. During World War I, submarine "spotters" manned the crow's nest, keeping watch for any enemy underwater craft that might venture towards the Lancashire Coast.

Though this giant structure is not as high as the skyscrapers of New York, in one way it does score over them. On Blackpool Tower you are on top of a single spire, with the next highest buildings far below; at New York the scene is obscured by other skyscrapers.

The circus for which the tower is famous is built between the four supports of the structure. This entertainment

centre, which can accommodate 3,000 people, was opened on the same day as the Tower itself.

A novelty of the arena is that the ring can be flooded, thus forming a pool for water spectacles. This centre for "spangles and sawdust" entertainment, indeed, has often led the way for such shows throughout the world.



A close-up of the Blackpool Tower, showing the intricate construction. The platforms half-way up are for the use of the maintenance staff.

# Britain's Tallest Tower

By Arthur Nettleton, F.R.G.S.

THE tallest tower in Britain has now passed its 55th birthday, for the gigantic structure that rears itself above Blackpool, Lancashire, was first opened to the public on Whit-Monday, 1894. It is, in fact, Britain's own "Eiffel Tower"—and not merely by reason of its height and the similarity of its construction; this colossus of the Lancashire Coast, which has come to be regarded as Blackpool's "trade mark," owes its origin partly to its French counterpart.

The idea of building such a tower at Blackpool first came to a Blackpool visitor to the Paris Exhibition in 1889. He observed that the Eiffel Tower was an enormous attraction, and the notion of providing his home town with a similar magnet arose in his mind. Two years later a company to carry out the project had been formed, and the foundation stone of the Blackpool Tower had been laid. £65,000 was spent on acquiring the necessary land, together with the property standing there, and Lord Mayors and Mayors from various Lancashire and Yorkshire cities and towns attended the stone-laying ceremony.

The erection of the structure then went forward rapidly, though it was an enterprise of a kind never before tackled in this country. First a thick layer of boulder clay was provided, and a huge concrete block, 35 ft. square and 12 ft. thick, was placed in each

of the positions on which

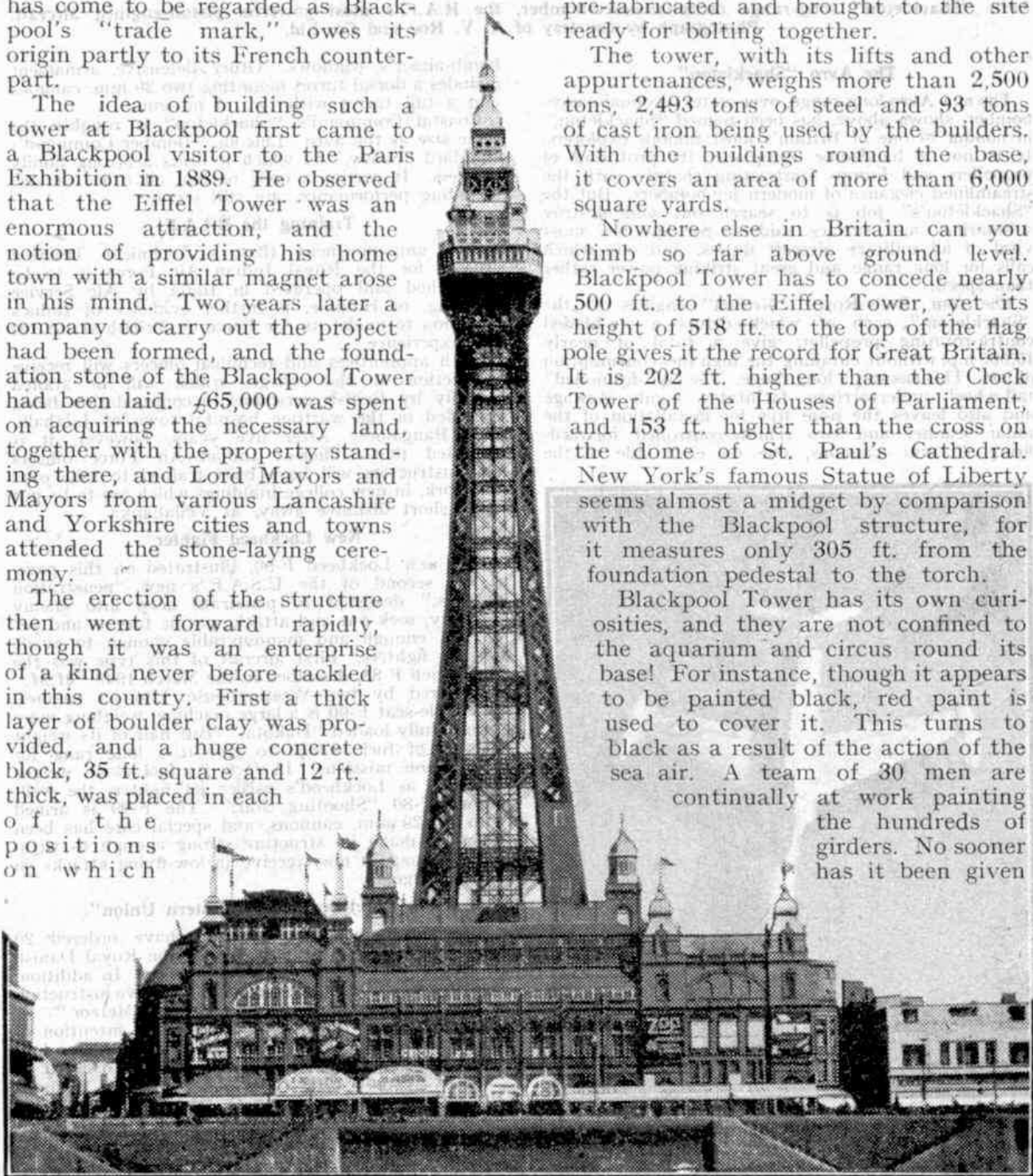
the four monster legs were to rest. To distribute the immense weight evenly, rolled joists were embedded in these blocks, which carry the steel plates upon which the base girders rest.

Not the least astonishing fact about this giant of Lancashire is that it took less than three years to build. This was partly because the sections were largely pre-fabricated and brought to the site ready for bolting together.

The tower, with its lifts and other appurtenances, weighs more than 2,500 tons, 2,493 tons of steel and 93 tons of cast iron being used by the builders. With the buildings round the base, it covers an area of more than 6,000 square yards.

Nowhere else in Britain can you climb so far above ground level. Blackpool Tower has to concede nearly 500 ft. to the Eiffel Tower, yet its height of 518 ft. to the top of the flag pole gives it the record for Great Britain. It is 202 ft. higher than the Clock Tower of the Houses of Parliament, and 153 ft. higher than the cross on the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. New York's famous Statue of Liberty seems almost a midget by comparison with the Blackpool structure, for it measures only 305 ft. from the foundation pedestal to the torch.

Blackpool Tower has its own curiosities, and they are not confined to the aquarium and circus round its base! For instance, though it appears to be painted black, red paint is used to cover it. This turns to black as a result of the action of the sea air. A team of 30 men are continually at work painting the hundreds of girders. No sooner has it been given



### Stamp Gossip (Continued from page 270)

to spend it on, collectors and, of course, dealers bought heavily any special issues of their favourite countries — Victory stamps, etc. It is only now that the big stocks thus acquired are being cleared out, and prices are beginning to harden in consequence. So if, you have not got these stamps, now is the time to buy, for they will never be as cheap again.



All this has had the effect of preventing dealers, etc., stocking up on subsequent issues, and I am sure that a year or two hence stamps of special issues, still available today at not much above face value, will by then cost a whole lot more. One set I particularly like is the Tanganyika "Republic" issue which appeared as late as December last year and went off sale within a couple of months. Mark my word, such sets are going to more than pay for their keep.

### Old-Time Cabriolet—

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the ears. The tail is a number of strands of cord tied to an Angle Bracket bolted to the Curved Plate and the reins which the driver is holding also are lengths of cord arranged as shown.

Finally, the horse is held in the cab shafts by a 2½" Rod passed through the centre elongated holes of the Curved Plate and fixed in position by Spring Clips.

*Parts required to build the Horse-Drawn Cab:* 4 of No. 2a; 17 of No. 5; 8 of No. 6; 8 of No. 6a; 2 of No. 10; 2 of No. 11; 1 of No. 11a; 7 of No. 12; 2 of No. 12b; 1 of No. 15b; 1 of No. 16a; 2 of No. 19a; 1 of No. 22a; 2 of No. 35; 81 of No. 37a; 81 of No. 37b; 10 of No. 38; 1 of No. 40; 1 of No. 48; 8 of No. 48a; 1 of No. 51; 8 of No. 90; 2 of No. 90a; 2 of No. 188; 1 of No. 190; 3 of No. 193; 1 of No. 194b; 1 of No. 199.



### Calling All Bus Spotters—

(Continued from page 249)

particularly interested in a steep concrete ramp in the open which has been specially designed for M.O.T. inspections and for chassis cleaning, which is done by spraying. A sign of the times is that brush painting has returned in place of paint spraying, since the modern coaches are too long to fit into the old paint shop.

A final note: The once omnipresent Bell Punch tickets are still in use with this operator, but so, too, is the cheap return fare of 1/- for the Ryde-Seaview journey which is the same as on the first journey over 40 years ago! My thanks are due to Mr. Higgins for the frank and kindly way in which he answered all my questions on a very busy morning.

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The registration mark of Safeguard's new Bedford coach, left blank in the tabulated list in my March article, has now been confirmed as 1920 PJ, and that of Delaine's coach No. 57—another Bedford—listed in my April article is WCT 901.

### Meccano Creeper Track Unit—

(Continued from page 259)

is bolted in the centre hole of the Double Angle Strip 13. A Coupling 24 locked in place by nuts provides a means of turning the Screwed Rod 23.

Two 3" Pulley Wheels 25 are mounted on a 2½" Rod passed through the 3" Strips and the Semi-circular Plates 19 and 20, and through the slots of the 2" Slotted Strips 9.

The track is placed around the 3" Pulley Wheels, and the Screwed Rod 23 adjusted so that the track moves freely when driven from the Rod 16.

### Meccano—and Me:

(Continued from page 261)

me to borrow it and I was very happy indeed to see it. In fact, that night I dreamed about it.

In 1958 I had built a good Hornby Railway layout and by then I owned a fine Meccano Outfit. During the following year I purchased a large quantity of Hornby material and operated a railway with Hornby rolling stock and clockwork locomotives. In October, during school holidays, I went back to my native village, taking with me my Meccano Set and Hornby Trains, but on Saturday, October 20, our village was destroyed by insurgents and my Meccano Set and Hornby Trains were also burned. I was very sorry about that, and later left my village for Rangoon. In 1961 I bought a new Meccano Outfit and another Hornby Train Set and was able to build again very happily. In that year I became a member of the Meccano Guild and was able to wear the Guild Badge. Early in 1962 the first Hornby-Dublo 2-Rail items arrived in Burma and I was able to obtain some of them,

In conclusion, let me add that in my view the *Meccano Magazine* is the finest model publication on the market. Now that I am eighteen years of age I find it just as interesting as when I read it for the first time.

May the future generation enjoy Hornby and Meccano products as much as I have done and hope to do for a long time to come.—C. Mya Thaug, Pegu, Burma.

### Meccano Tender for 4-6-0 Locomotive—

(Continued from page 260)

No. 90a; 2 of No. 103g; 6 of No. 109; 3 of No. 111; 2 of No. 116a; 6 of No. 137; 1 of No. 179; 6 of No. 189; 2 of No. 190a; 2 of No. 191; 6 of No. 192; 12 of No. 196; 3 of No. 197; 6 of No. 215; 4 of No. 221.

### Northbound Night Mail—

(Continued from page 264)

Changing the load of mail bags is done with the lineside equipment when the train is on the move, and is carried out as required, one in and one out; one in only or one out only.

Having reached its destination, the train is drawn into a carriage siding where the vans are detached and shunted away for unloading. The locomotive departs for its depot, and the three coaches which make up the standard rake are left together to await the next southbound run.

By each set of lineside equipment, staff are stationed to handle the mail bags which are brought from the local G.P.O. sorting office in one or more of the Dublo Dinky Toys No. 068 Royal Mail Vans.

From such running it will be appreciated that any station siding on a layout can house vans used for the transport of mail, and that these can be shunted on to the rear of the Royal Mail Van during its running period on the layout. This makes for very interesting working on any railway scheme, no matter how small it is.

