

Pocket Meccano Competition

"Staggering Success"

says 'Spanner'

IN my years with Meccano I have seen many things that have surprised me, but never have I been so amazed as by the response to the Pocket Meccano Competition which closed at the end of September—and by response I not only mean the number of entrants, but also the unbelievable variety of models submitted. It was, in short, a staggering success!

Before going into detail, it should be borne in mind just how "miniature" Pocket Meccano really is. Excluding the Instructions Leaflet, the Set contains a grand total of only 68 parts and, of these, Nuts and Bolts account for 47 of them, with a length of Cord serving as another. This leaves 20 "buildable" parts and yet competition entrants used these parts to produce more than 750 different models. Yes, different models! No two models were identical, although there were, of course, many similar types of models in the sense that there were several helicopters, several cranes, several cars, etc., but no two models of a particular type were identical in design.

Obviously, then, we were first of all amazed that so many models could be built with such a small Set, but we were also greatly surprised by the excellent quality of very many of the models submitted and the ingenuity that had been used to build them. Considering the size of the Set, there were no end of models that really looked very much like the objects they represented and there were numerous others which "worked", i.e., models that performed the actions of the originals. There were plenty more that both looked right and worked right.

The lucky winners receive their prizes from Mr. J. D. McHard, Marketing Manager of Meccano (1971) Ltd. From left to right, Mark Knowles, Mr. McHard, Jonathan Thompson and Dixon Upcott. Below, the 11 finalists in the 8-years and under section.



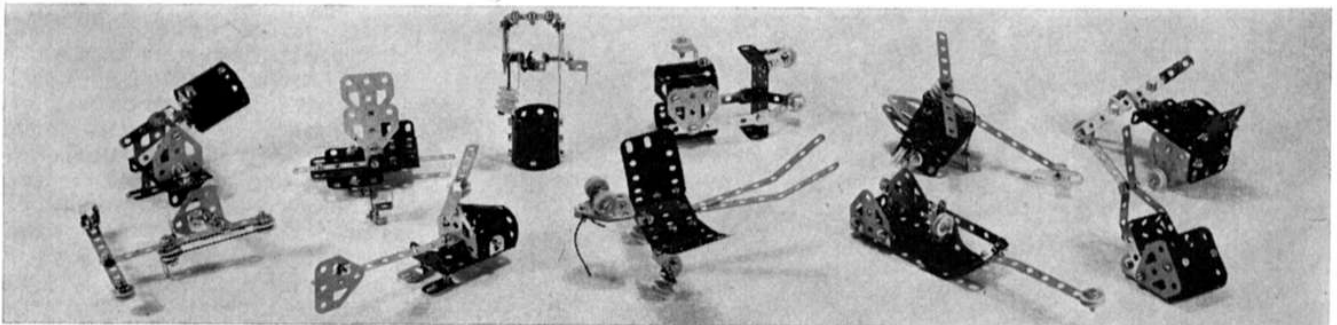
Understandably, a lot of the models entered in the competition were based on the popular Meccano subjects such as cranes, road vehicles, aircraft, etc., but it was surprising how many totally unusual and unexpected creations turned up. There were, for example, a number of birds and other animals—including people—as well as various "fictional" creations drawn from the fertile imaginations of the children who took part. A weird "Meccano Insect", for instance, comes to mind as an example of the last type.

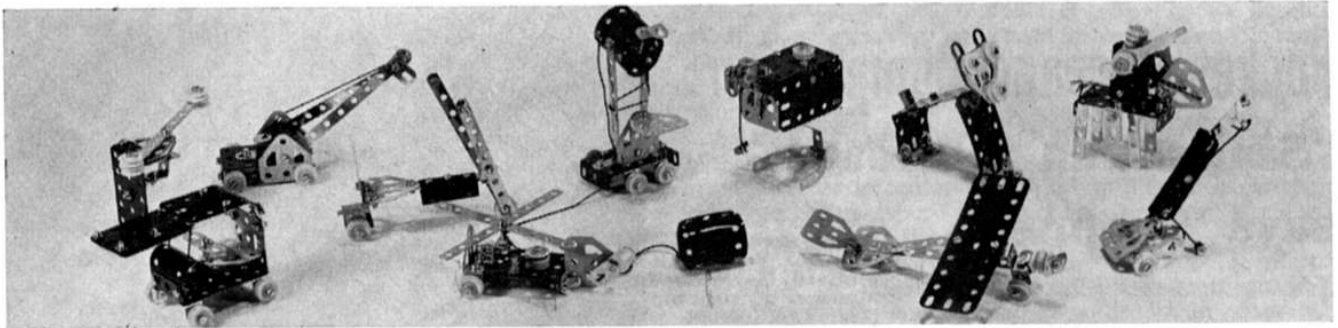
In many cases, the ordinary standard parts contained in the Pocket Meccano Set were put to some unusual and extremely clever uses to achieve successful results. In several models, for example, a Plastic Plate, normally used for cladding purposes, was used as a spring. In others, the Cord was carefully interwoven between parts to secure them together, thus leaving Nuts and Bolts free for other uses. In one model, the Spanner itself was even used as an integral part of the construction! Ingenuity, in fact, was frequently in evidence, so much so that I am prompted to say that, if this competition did nothing else, it proved that the modern youngster is not the television-engrossed "moron" that many people claim, these days!

Judging

In entering the competition, a number of contestants seemed a little worried that the drawing of their model on their entry form was not very good and might therefore prejudice their chances of success. I can put their minds at rest as Meccano in Liverpool used an excellent system to ensure that every entry worthy of consideration received an equal chance of success. When each entry was received, the model-building experts at Meccano were able to tell from even the worst drawing whether or not the illustrated model would stand even the ghost of a chance in the final judging. If it did stand a chance, then the model was re-built at Meccano, exactly as depicted in the drawing, and it was the model which the judges considered—not the drawing. Thus nobody had an unfair advantage.

When the competition closed, all the models for judging were separated into the three competition Sections: 8 years and under, 9-12 years and 13-15 years, then the difficult task of judging began, this being split into two parts. In each Section, a first prize of a bicycle was being offered, with ten runners-up each receiving a No. 5 Meccano Set. This meant that 33 finalists (11 in each Section) had to be chosen and





this choice was accordingly made by a primary panel of judges in Liverpool. This primary panel was concerned only with selecting the 33 finalists, however, and was in no way concerned with choosing the overall winners in three Sections

The final winning selections were made at the Glendower Hotel in London by a distinguished panel of judges made up of Mr. N. Hauser, Director of "Toys International" magazine, Mr. E. Simmons, Editor of "Games and Toys", Mr. V. E. Smeed, Editor of "Meccano Magazine" and Mr. T. V. Thomas, Editor of "British Toys". Keeping originality and ingenuity strongly in mind, the judges had an extremely difficult job choosing the winners, but they finally awarded the prizes to the following:

Section 1 (8 years and under), Jonathan Thompson of Lymington, Hants. for his "Prehistoric Bird".

Section 2 (9-12 years), Mark Knowles of Salisbury, Wilts. for his "Small Dog".

Section 3 (13-15 years), Dixon R. S. Upcott of South Harrow, Middlesex for his "Dock Crane".

The ten runners-up in each Section were as follows:

Section 1

Lawrence Broom of Ipswich, Suffolk; John Aidan Byrne of Stockport, Cheshire; Andrew Hill of Boston, Lincs; Matthew Loivis of Godalming, Surrey; Ian Palmer of Horsham; Sussex; Mark Powell of Thurmaston, Leicester; Kenneth Murray of St. Annes-on-Sea, Lincs; Cheryl

Rhodes of Pudsey, Yorks; David Stern of Sutton, Surrey; Richard Taylor of Liversedge, Yorks.

Section 2

Michael Belcher of Reading, Berks; Colin Carruthers of Muirhouse Grove, Edinburgh; Philip Chapman of Askam-in-Furness, Lancs; David Ferrisey of Liverpool, Lancs; Timothy Haylett of Poole, Dorset; Gary Reuben Kitchen of Newcastle-on-Tyne, Northumberland; Andrew Norton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire; Gary Middleweek of Sudbury, Suffolk; Anthony Pople of Cheddar, Somerset; David Russel of Mansfield, Notts.

Section 3

Jonathan Green of Scunthorpe, Lincs; Martin Price of Sheffield, Yorkshire; C. J. Barling of Bromley, Kent; Raymond Anderson of Morpeth, Northumberland; Stephen Manthorp of Keighley, Yorkshire; Frances Matthews of Hurstpierpoint, Sussex; Nigel Parsons of Hawkhurst, Kent; Andrew Bell of Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs; James Nelson of Nevilles Cross, Co. Durham; J. C. Steventon, of Upminster, Essex.

Having myself seen all the models which were built up for the competition judging, I can readily understand just how difficult a task the judges had in choosing both the finalists and the Section winners. In fact, I can honestly say that this is one occasion when I was glad I was not among the judges! I would, however, like to offer my hearty

The final selection of 11 in Section 2 of the competition.

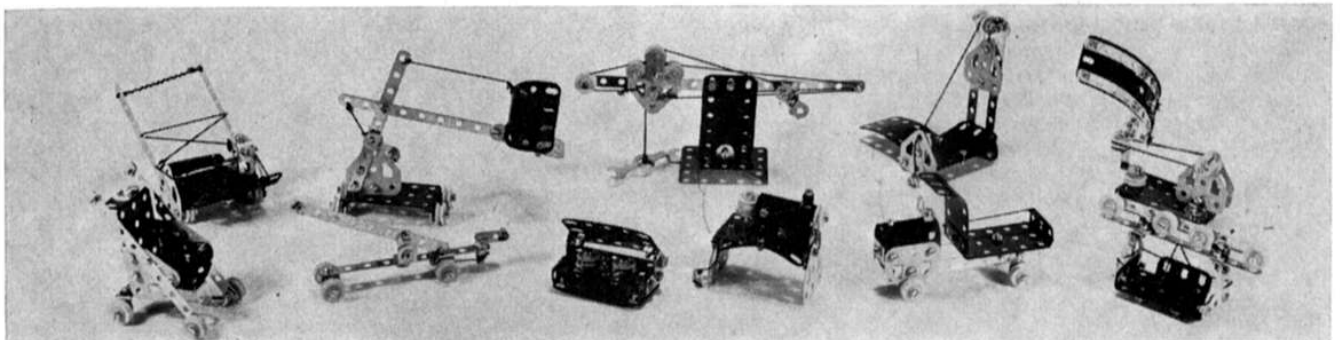
congratulations to all the successful entrants and I am sure they will agree that Pocket Meccano has a great future.

Models to Build

In the coming months we propose to feature quite a few of the models entered in the Competition in the M.M. and it is only right that we should begin here with the three winners. Looking first at Section 1, therefore, we have the Prehistoric Bird designed by 8-year old Jonathan Thompson of Lymington, Hants. The main body is supplied by a $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ in. Flanged Plate 1, to which two $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ in. Plastic Plates 2 are bolted to serve as the wings. The Plates are curved upwards slightly to increase realism and full advantage is taken of their slotted holes to allow a "sweep back" effect. The tail is supplied quite simply by two $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Narrow Strips 3, bent to shape, and fixed by one bolt through the centre rear hole of the Flanged Plate.

In the case of the head, two Flat Trunnions 4 are bolted to a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Reversed Angle Bracket fixed through the centre front hole of the Flanged Plate. Note, however, that a Bolt, without a Nut, is carried free in the apex hole of the lower Trunnion, being held in place by the pressure of the upper Trunnion on

Below, the 11 finalists in the oldest age group, 13-15 years.



the bolthead. A short length of Cord is threaded through the slot in the bolthead, this Cord representing a worm! The Bird's eyes are $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pulleys 5 on $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Bolts, held in the lugs of two Angle Brackets bolted to the Flat Trunnions.

Two further $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pulleys serve as the feet, each of these being fixed on a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Bolt held by Nuts in one lug of an Angle Bracket 6. The other lug of this Angle Bracket is bolted, at the angle shown, to a Fishplate which is in turn secured to one or other flange of the Flanges Plate. When the angle of the legs is correctly adjusted, the bird will balance rather nicely on its feet.

PARTS REQUIRED

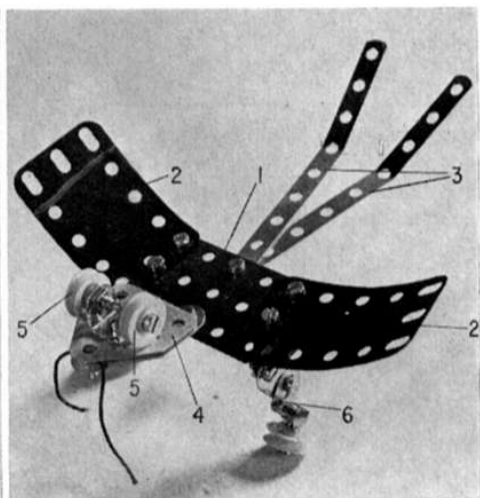
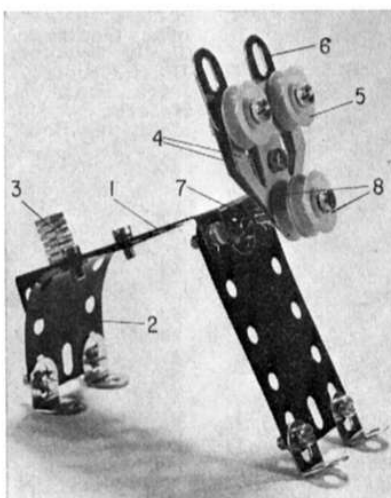
2-10	13-37b	1-125
4-12	1-40	2-126a
4-23	1-51	2-194
22-37a	4-111a	2-235d

Meccano Dog

"Meccano Woof" is the delightful name which 10 year-old Mark Knowles of Salisbury gave to the Dog which won him first prize in Section 2. I must say that this is a particularly novel model because, as Mark said on his Entry Form, "If you prod the middle of its back, it jumps along." It does, too!

Its back consists quite simply of a $2\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$ in. Flanged Plate 1, with the front and rear legs being provided by two $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ in. Plastic Plates. Note that the front Plate is bolted to one flange of Plate 1, with the full length of the Plate serving as the legs, while the rear Plate 2 is bolted to the underside of the Plate 1 and is curved round so that only half the Plate serves as the rear legs. It will be noticed that the Bolts securing the Plastic Plate to the Flanged Plate pass through the second row of holes from the rear end of the Flanged Plate, but through the end holes of the Plastic Plate. Before fitting the Plastic Plate, however, it is advisable to first fit the tail 3, this being supplied by a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Bolt fixed, shank upwards, in the centre end hole in Flanged Plate 1 and fitted with six Nuts.

Woof's head is built up from two Flat Trunnions 4, bases upwards and placed one in front of the other. Two $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Bolts are passed through the base corner holes of the Trunnions, each of these Bolts fixing a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pulley 5 to the front Trunnion and a Fishplate 6 to the rear Trunnion, a Nut being used to space the front Trunnion from the Fishplate. The Pulleys, of course, serve as eyes and the Fishplates as ears.



At their apexes, the Flat Trunnions are connected together by a $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Bolt which also fixes in place a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Reversed Angle Bracket 7 and two $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pulleys 8, the latter one on top of the other to represent the snout. The spare lug of the Reversed Angle Bracket is bolted to the body of the dog to secure the head in place, then the "paws" are finally supplied by four Angle Brackets bolted to the lower corners of the Plastic Plates.

As Mark said, if Flanged Plate 1 is prodded, the model will jump along, this movement resulting from the flexibility of the Plastic Plates forming the legs. It's great fun!

PARTS REQUIRED

2-10	21-37a	1-111	2-126a
4-12	10-37b	3-111a	2-194
4-23	1-51	1-125	

Dock Crane

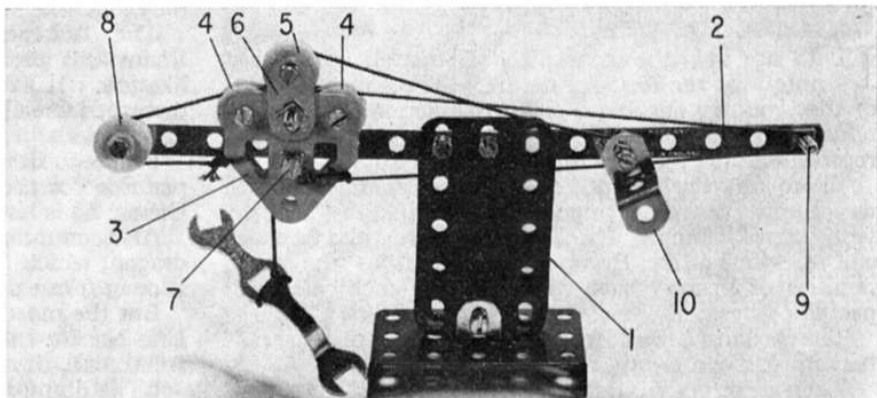
Last, but not least, we have the Dockside Crane which gained first prize in Section 3 for 14 year-old Dixon Upcott of South Harrow, Middlesex. This is particularly interesting for its working features, achieved by a very clever use of Cord. The body of the Crane is

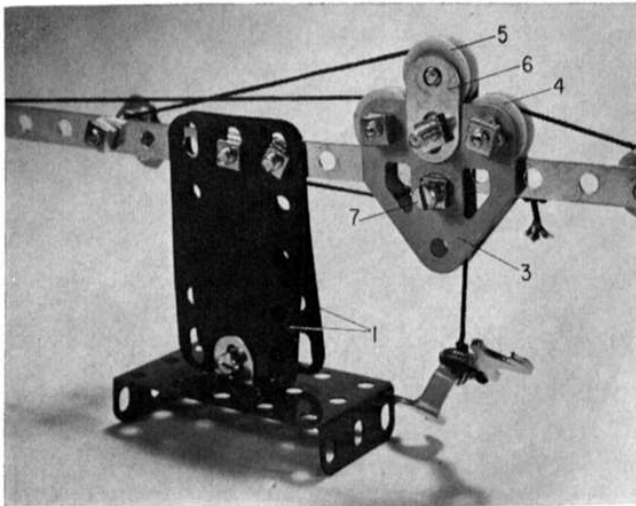
Left, "Meccano Woof", the jumping dog which gained 1st Prize in Section 2 for Mark Knowles, aged 10, of Salisbury, Wilts., and right, the "Prehistoric Bird" which won 1st Prize in Section 1 for 8-year-old Jonathan Thompson of Lymington, Hants.

supplied by two $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ in. Plastic Plates 1 which are attached by Angle Brackets to a $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ in. Flanged Plate, forming the base. An 8 in. compound narrow strip 2, built up from two $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Narrow Strips, serves as the jib, this being bolted between the upper ends of Plates 1 to project seven holes one way and six holes the other.

Running on the longer arm of the jib is the gantry trolley which is built up from two Flat Trunnions 3 connected through their base corner holes by two $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Bolts, on each of which a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pulley 4 is mounted, the Pulley being sandwiched between the Trunnions. Another $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pulley 5 is mounted above the first Pulleys on another $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Bolt held in two Fishplates 6, bolted to the Trunnions. A rather clever stabilising system to ensure that the

A general view of the Dock Crane with which 14-year-old Dixon Upcott, of South Harrow, Middlesex gained 1st Prize in Section 3.





A close-up view of the Gantry Trolley fitted to Dixon Upcott's Dock Crane. Note the stabilising Bolt 7.

on a length of Cord running from the winding handle, over upper Pulley 5 and down through the centre of the gantry trolley. Trolley movement is controlled by another length of Cord which is tied to one side of the gantry trolley, passed around Pulley 8, over Pulleys 4, but under Pulley 5, along and around Bolt 9, to be finally brought back and tied to the remaining side of the gantry trolley. The limitations of the Set prevented a control handle being incorporated, and so the trolley is moved by holding the upper length of Cord, running between Bolt 9 and the Trolley, and by moving the Cord by hand. With load hoisting and gantry movement, therefore, this little model is packed with "play-value".

trolley remains upright is supplied by two Bolts 7 each screwed into two Nuts, placed one each side of each Trunnion. The shanks of the Bolts, while not gripping the jib, are screwed sufficiently close to prevent the trolley tipping over.

A fourth Pulley 8 is mounted at one end of the jib, while a $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Bolt 9 is fixed at the other end, then a winding handle for control of the load is provided by another $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Bolt, lock-nutted to the jib in the position shown. A $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Reversed Angle Bracket 10 is fixed to the end of the Bolt.

Finally, we come to the Cord arrangement. The load is hoisted

PARTS REQUIRED		
2—10	10—37b	2—126a
2—12	1—111	2—194
4—23	4—111a	2—235d
22—37a	1—125	



The Amazing Lizards of Australia

By
Frank Madigan

The Goanna (left) grows to at least six feet. Opposite, the Cape-necked Lizard of the Northern Territory and another goanna, valuable for destroying snakes, mice, and rats.

IT IS not only the marsupials of Australia which are unique in the realm of nature. The Lizard Family of that country, also, can claim distinction, for it contains among its species some of the most amazing reptiles found anywhere in the world.

There are over 300 species in the five distinct families ranging in size from a tiny inch long Skink, to the seven foot Giant Goanna. The Dragon-Lizards, the Geckoes and the snake-like Pygopodes, as well as the other families of lizards, have many strange members with peculiar ways.

The Barking Lizard, for instance, is aptly named, as it barks just like a puppy when disturbed.

Then there is the Australian Frilled Lizard, so named

because of the collar around its neck, which is used for storing food, mainly insects, until required.

Another of its peculiarities is that it is able to run on its hind legs at a terrific speed, carrying its body almost erect.

The running feat of the Crested Dragon 'Bicycle' Lizard is even stranger, as it races along moving its hind legs just like a cyclist.

The Mountain Devil Lizard is a frightening looking creature completely covered with spikes, and having two horns, which protect its head. Like its relative, the Chameleon, it eludes its enemies by its ability to change colour to harmonise with its surroundings.

The most colourful lizard is undoubtedly the Painted Dragon Lizard with its coat of many colours. These colours vary from red, yellow and brown to blue.

Dragon Lizards are rather terrifying creatures to look at. One large variety of Bearded Lizards found in the Eastern states have whiskers framing their faces, and for this reason they are sometimes known as Jew Lizards, as they look like shrewd, be-whiskered old Jews.

The Water-Dragon Lizard found in Gippsland, Victoria, is about 30 inches long and has a long, whip-like tail. It lives in rocky places near water, and when disturbed usually makes for the water, dives in, and then disappears.

People in different parts of Gippsland have their own pet title for this creature, as he appears to them. At Orbost he is known as the "Snowy River Crocodile".

Also common in Victoria is to be found the little tree-dragon, which is about a foot long. Its natural habitat is open forest places.

But the most amazing Dragon Lizard is described in Life Nature Library book, "The Land and Wildlife of Australia", thus:

"The diminutive white salt dragon pursues tiny black