Dear Members and Friends,

It is with deep regret and a saddened heart I am writing these additional pages to Jim Finlayson’s newsletter. Jim died in the early hours of Monday morning, 23rd September after taking ill during our display at the Model Rail Exhibition in the Dam Park Hall, Ayr. Although rushed by ambulance to the Coronary Unit, Heathfield Hospital, Ayr, doctors and nurses were unable to stabilize his condition and he later died of a massive heart attack at 2.30 a.m. Jim is survived by his wife Barbara, son Jamie and daughter Patricia, both married with families of their own.

The family wish to donate a trophy in Jim’s name to be awarded during our own exhibition, the basis of awarding this trophy to be discussed at our next meeting.

Jim’s own models are to be made available to the society to be used at any of our displays, exhibitions, etc. The Meccano collection which Jim has built up over the years is to be kept in the family and Jamie, who is himself a Meccano enthusiast and member of the society, will be putting it to good use.

There are two changes to be made to the newsletter in that the Christmas Party will not now take place. The get together is being held over until the evening of the 19th April 1986, this being the first night of our own 2 day Meccano exhibition to be held in the Guide Hall, Glebe Avenue, Stirling on Saturday and Sunday, 19th and 20th April. The booking for the hall has been made and accepted. Further details will appear as time goes on.
The next meeting will be held in the home of Douglas and Maureen Cooper, 17 Pine Court, Doune on Sunday 20th October.

Jim being one of the founder members and the most enthusiastic, his place will be hard to fill and I call on all of you for added support in taking the Society on to bigger and even greater things. At this moment there are now 45 members. A further list of the latest members will be included in the next issue of the newsletter.

Also we have accepted an invitation to display models during an exhibition of the Scottish Ambulance Preservation Society in the Adam Smith Centre, Kirkcaldy on Saturday, 26th October. Open to the public from 1pm to 5pm. Can anyone attend and bring along a model?

Hoping to see as many as can make it on the 20th.

Yours sincerely

Jim

Jim Benn
The meeting held on Sunday, 25th August at the home of Secretary, Jim Berrie, 7a Claremont Drive, Bridge of Allan was attended by 14 members and in this respect we must make special mention of member Derek Strickland who made the long journey down from Inverurie, Aberdeenshire to attend and return home again the same night.

The Secretary gave a report of past events and the current position of funds which are now in the region of £230, most of this will be used as capital for our Exhibition in April.

The possibility of using the Committee Rooms at Stirling Baths for future meetings was discussed with all the pros and cons debated but in the end the idea was shelved since the meetings would have had to be on a Friday evening which was not convenient for most members present.

Our attendance at the two weekends at Mini Rail 1985 held at George Heriots School, Edinburgh was unfortunately marred by most atrocious weather on both occasions, but we were pleasantly surprised at the amount of people who turned up and the organisers later informed us that they had a record attendance despite the downpours.

The first weekend we were allocated tables in the Modern Examination Hall and after we had obtained further space than originally planned for us we were able to mount our usual interesting display which pleased both the organisers and the General Public.

The second weekend we were asked to augment the other half of the Mini Rail Exhibition which was being held in the old Assembly Hall of the school which was rather old and gloomy.

Fortunately Bert Love was able to attend the second weekend and brought many of his own models, which along with a re-distribution of other models, enabled us to have two excellent displays which were very much appreciated.

We are also indebted to Bert Love since he very kindly loaned us two special models for incorporating in our Semi Static Exhibition held in Stirling.
Swimming Baths, one was his Helicopter and the other was a special display board of Meccano Mechanisms.

The "Engineering in Miniature" as the show was titled ran from July 30th until August 16th under the auspices of Stirling Festival.

During the week our display of working models were contained in two large illuminated glass showcases in the Foyer of the Baths.

At the weekends we descended with a further load of models and put on a splendid show which surprised and delighted the people who came in for a swim.

Our thanks are due to Ron Frith of Dunfermline who was instrumental in obtaining an invitation for the C.G.M.S. to attend a Model Exhibition being held at the Glen Pavilion, Pittencrieff Park, Dunfermline on Saturday and Sunday 5th and 6th October, set up on Friday night.

The North Eastern Meccano Society of Darlington will be holding their 9th Annual Exhibition on Saturday, November 9th from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. This is the nearest all Meccano Exhibition to ourselves and since the N.E.M.S. has supported our own show members will be travelling South to attend, either taking models to display or just to enjoy what is usually a very interesting and satisfying event with many very original items on display.

Members who would like to attend either to assist or display and require further details please contact Jim Berrie or Jim Finlayson.

An invitation has been received from the Falkirk Model Railway Society to display our models at their Exhibition being held this year in Falkirk College of Technology, Grangemouth Road, Falkirk on Saturday and Sunday December 7th and 8th with set up on Friday night the 6th.

Our membership is now at 39 and a full list of members is attached to this Newsletter, should any details be inaccurate please contact Newsletter Editor to enable the entry to be rectified.

Secretary Jim Berrie wishes to announce he will be holding a pre Christmas Party Open House for all members with family and friends on Saturday night 21st December starting around 8 o’clock.

Please advise Jim if you can attend since members would be helpful, you are requested to bring your own bottle and any contributions towards the catering would be appreciated.

Newsletter 2 contained a map to Jim’s home in Bridge of Allan and parking should be confined to the pavement side of Claremont Drive.
Included with this Newsletter a copy of potted History of Meccano which was put together for our "Engineering in Miniature" Show.

Latest report from North Midlands Meccano Guild meeting held on Saturday, September 14th "A purchaser has taken over Meccano, Calais lock, stock and barrel for £3,000,000!"

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, 20th October at 7 o'clock, home of Jim Finlayson, 24 Middleton, Menstrue, Clackmannanshire when it is hoped as many as possible will attend.

**Meccano Market**

*Angus Annan* has acquired a Meccano Sawbench Circa 1929 which has the bench top missing. Does any member have a complete Sawbench which he could examine in order to make a replica bench top? Please bring to next meeting if available or contact Angus Annan.

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*David Stokes* of 33 Silverknowes Drive, Edinburgh supplier of new and secondhand Meccano parts or sets.

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*Douglas Cooper* has various Meccano Magazines for sale at 20p per copy.

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MECCANO was invented by Frank Hornby - better known for the famous HORNBY TRAINS - when he was a cashier for a Liverpool importer, back in 1901.

His original system was a very crude one, made from tinplate by a number of outside contractors while Hornby pursued his normal work of earning a living and bringing up his two sons, Roland and Douglas.

He had great difficulty at first in persuading any shops to sell his metal constructional system which he had named "MECHANICS MADE EASY" AND which was very expensive at the beginning of the century at seven shillings and sixpence for a tin box of strips and crude brass wheels.

It took him six years to establish satisfactory sales, during which time his system was hardly developed beyond his original metal strips with punched holes, axle rods and grooved wheels. However, by 1907, he decided to give up his cashiers job and to go into full time production in his own small factory. This was financed by his own employer for a while and, in the same year, the name MECCANO was born. Better control over his product made MECCANO very popular and Hornby had to enlarge his output at a bigger factory in Liverpool - an abandoned carriage works in West Derby Road.

By 1914, Meccano sales had expanded so rapidly on the continent and in U.S.A., that Frank Hornby had a huge brand new factory built at a site in Binns Road, Liverpool and this became the famous home of MECCANO for more than fifty years. Even during the Great War of 1914 - 1918 the factory carried on making and developing new Meccano parts as well as war munitions. Every part of the system was covered by patents in the U.K. and in many other countries, including the U.S.A. Some toy firms over there 'pirated' Hornby's Meccano system in very detail, undercutting his prices in America but Hornby eventually stopped this rival production after many years of litigation in the American courts.

His superb Hornby Trains were manufactured at the Meccano factory in Liverpool from 1920 onwards and they were developed along with the Meccano system to a high degree of sophistication by 1930. During this decade, Meccano parts, which had previously been nickel-plated since 1908, were enamelled in red & green. This colour scheme remained until 1934 when outfits and parts were presented in blue & gold livery. The highest number set, at the time, was No.7, but the new outfits were lettered A, B, C, etc.

Towards the end of the 1930s, cheaper Meccano outfits (with lesser parts) were marketed as the interest in Meccano began to wane. Frank Hornby died in 1936 and his son Roland took over as Chairman of the Meccano Company. By the outbreak of the second World War, in 1939, Meccano fortunes were beginning to slide but were saved, to a large extent, by large munition contracts carried out by the Binns Road factory throughout the duration of the war.

Because of an acute metal shortage after the war, Meccano was slow to recover and, during the late 1950s, it was losing ground heavily in the toy markets with competition from cheap plastic toys, more suited to children's tastes and pocket money.

Rescue attempts were carried out by Tri-ang Toys in the 1960s, who bought up Meccano Liverpool but eventually the factory closed for ever in 1979. However, adult interest in Meccano model-building now flourishes on a world-wide scale!
Central Region

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