Making a Meccano Zoo

Novel Subjects for Model-Building

IT is a pleasant change to turn sometimes from serious model-building and try what can be done in Meccano with lighter subjects. The possibilities of the Meccano System in the construction of humorous or quaint models are not generally realised, and indeed many model-builders never seem to make any attempts in this direction. This is a pity, because the building of such models is not only extremely amusing, but also it provides unlimited scope for ingenuity. In models of this type it is just as important to select the most suitable part for each special purpose as it is in building models of engineering prototypes. Still another point is that the completed models provide a great deal of amusement for one's friends.

On this page we reproduce three examples of quaint models from animal prototypes. Many other creatures could be portrayed in a similar manner, and a glance through any illustrated book of animals will provide plenty of suggestions. As a general rule no attempt should be made to reproduce the bodily shape of the creature, a flat form, such as is shown in the models illustrated here, being more effective. Generally speaking the model should represent a direct side view or a direct front view, three-quarter views being difficult to reproduce, and apt to be disappointing when completed.

The stork shown in Fig. 1 is a typical example of a side-view model, and a moment's consideration will show that it would be impossible to build it in any other manner to produce a better effect.

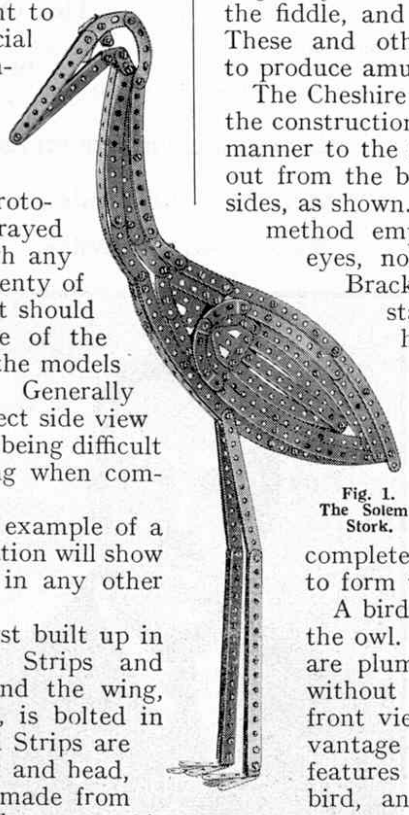

Fig. 1. The Solemn Stork.

The body is first built up in flat form from Strips and Curved Strips, and the wing, also in flat form, is bolted in position. Curved Strips are used for the neck and head, and the beak is made from four $4\frac{1}{2}''$ Strips, the upper pair being placed edge to edge to form an inverted V section. Strength is given to the body, neck and head by curving Strips to the shape of the outline, and fixing them in position by Angle Brackets. The legs are made from pairs of $5\frac{1}{2}''$ and $7\frac{1}{2}''$ Strips attached at the lower ends to Single Bent Strips, to which the feet are bolted. Wood Screws may be passed through the Single Bent Strips and the short Strips forming the feet, and screwed into a baseboard to hold the model erect. This should be done before the legs are bolted to the Single Bent Strips.

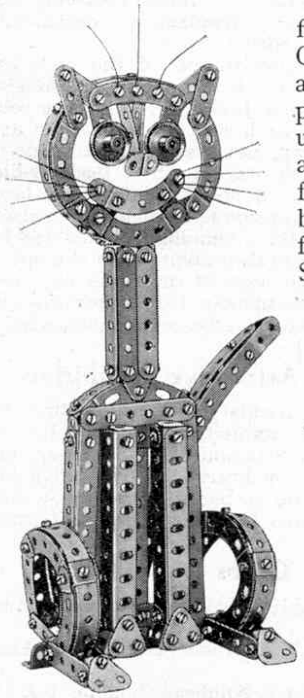

Fig. 2. The Cheshire Cat.

The subject represented in Fig. 2 will not be found in any books on zoology, but we think all who have read "*Alice in Wonderland*" will recognise it immediately. This example shows that the constructor need not confine his activities to actual animals, for many suitable and amusing subjects are to be found in fables, nursery rhymes, numerous books, and elsewhere. Model-builders might try their hands, for instance, at the cat that played the fiddle, and the cow that jumped over the Moon! These and other similar subjects would be certain to produce amusing models.

The Cheshire cat in Fig. 2 requires little description, the construction being carried out generally in a similar manner to the stork. The fore legs are made to stand out from the body, and the hind legs are fixed at the sides, as shown. Particular note should be made of the method employed for reproducing the face. The eyes, nose and mouth are fixed by means of Brackets and Strips at the back, so that they stand out prominently. The Set Screws have been removed from the 1″ Pulleys forming the eyes, and replaced by Grub Screws that grip $\frac{3}{8}''$ Bolts that are passed through $1\frac{1}{2}''$ Strips. Two Angle Brackets form the nose, and a Curved Strip, representing the mouth, produces the grin without which no Cheshire cat could be considered complete. Stiff wire is arranged as shown to form the whiskers.

A bird that contrasts strongly with the stork is the owl. In this case the distinguishing features are plump body, short legs, large head, almost without neck, and large round eyes. A direct front view shows to advantage the quaint features of this peculiar bird, and Fig. 3 illustrates a realistic model that has all the chief owl characteristics. The body, head and wings are all in the same plane, and are built up from Curved Strips. The body is filled in with Strips, and three $1\frac{1}{2}''$ Strips are used for each foot, which is fixed in position by means of an Angle Bracket. A novel use has been found for Dunlop Tyres, which are fitted to the 1″ Pulleys forming the eyes. The Pulleys are held in place by 1″ Screwed Rods threaded into the tapped bores, and fixed to Angle Brackets bolted behind the head. The beak is fixed in place by a $\frac{1}{2}''$ Bolt.

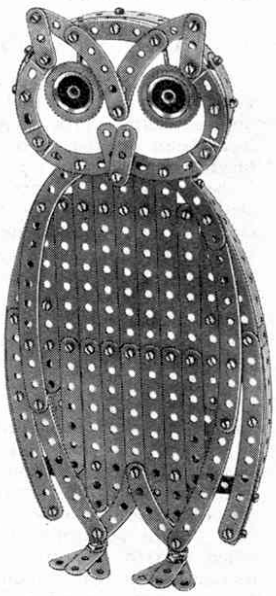

Fig. 3. A Wise Old Owl.