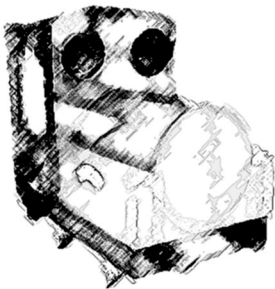
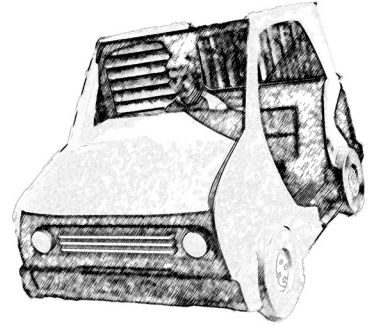
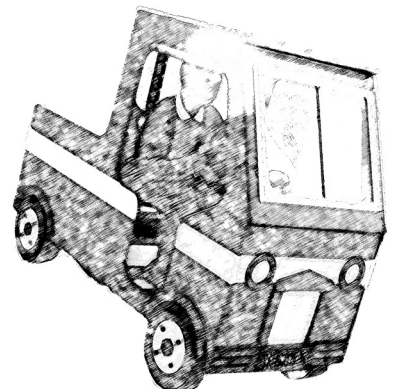
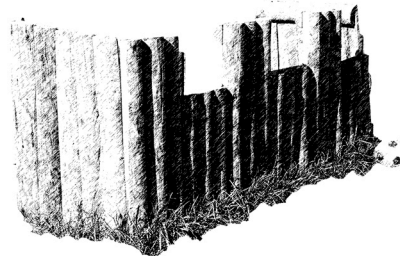
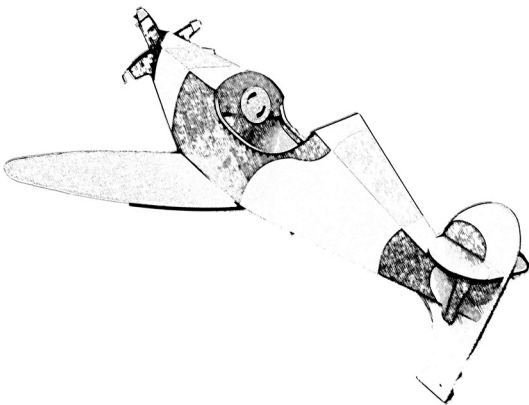


A GARDEN



TOY STORY



Gloucester REMAP's School Garden Toy project.

2014/2015

The request

In June 2014, David Walker, a teacher at Milestone school Gloucester, made a referral to the Gloucester branch of R.E.M.A.P. requesting our help in making a garden toy to go in the grass area adjacent to Key stage 3 classroom.

Milestone School, situated just outside the City of Gloucester, is a special school where children with learning difficulties, aged from two to sixteen are taught. The school has over three hundred pupils accommodated in thirty three classes.

Severe learning, profound multiple learning difficulties and severe autistic spectrum are just some of the conditions the school staff meet in their daily work. Increasing numbers also have more complex needs.

Eighty mini buses and people carriers are required daily to take the children to and from school.

The Response

David Walker's referral was received and discussed by the branch members at our July 2014 meeting. I was pleased to be allocated this task, it being on my geographical patch. I, together with Charles Crittall – one of our newer members, duly met David at the school; taking with us my coloured sketches of what I thought might suit the bill. We met some of the pupils, and viewed the grassed garden area. I immediately suggested that there was room for more than one toy, and showed David my ideas of a Locomotive, Lorry, Car, Stockade and Aeroplane. David was delighted to know that these things would be possible. (I did think that I might be stuck for volunteers, then I would have to make them all myself)

I need not have worried; at the next months meeting, having aired my suggestions, the response was immediate, Andy Slade took on the Aeroplane, Ron Ashton the Lorry, John Birkett and Bryan Ellis the Locomotive and Charles Crittall the Car. That left me with the Stockade.

The Designs

Over the course of the next few weeks, the individual designs came to fruition. Andy, Charles C and Ron did their own designs, whilst one of the senior members, Alan Darke did the design for John and Bryan. The designs dictated what was needed in the way of materials; mainly plywood and paint. The project engineers made known their individual requirements, and a total of ten sheets of 8'x4'x12mm plywood would be required, plus numerous smaller items. Another consideration was the width of the gateway into the site, some thirty six inches wide, dictating the maximum width of the model toys. The site also has a five foot fence around it.

Sourcing of materials

Located just down the road from the school is one of the largest importers of plywood in the country, International Plywood. This was my first port of call, only to be informed that they only dealt with the trade. Oh dear !!, Asking to see the top man, and explaining what REMAP were proposing to do, and who it was for, the company relented, and were most helpful in advising me that the very best plywood for outdoors was Russian birch ply. A very good price was agreed, (though still many hundreds of pounds). Subsequently this price was improved upon by our treasurer Mike Davies who knew someone at the company, and arrangements made for payment and collection. The initial cost for making the toys I estimated at around six to seven hundred pounds, a sum never spent by the branch on a single client before. At the following group meeting, we all agreed to go ahead with the project, and that we would find the finances to cover the expenditure somehow. Informing the school of the likely cost, they agreed to try and do part of the funding, hoping to meet half of our material costs. They also said that they had some paint that might be of use to us – this gesture was most welcome.

The build starts...

I was expecting to have to transport the ten sheets of 8'x4'x12mm on my trailer, but Bryan came up trumps and secured the use of a Transit flat bed. These sheets of ply had to be taken to the four corners of the County where our participating members lived. Ron, Bryan and I spent the best part of a day delivering the ply sheets. The next requirement was to source more paint. Have you any idea of how expensive paint is? especially in the quantities we needed. Getting estimates from local sources took some time, and the prices made my eyes water. One of our members, Ron Aston had heard of a charity in Cheltenham that is given unwanted paint by local firms, this turned out to be a good source of top quality paint. Only the best paint, particularly the primers, was to be used on the toys. What we could not source there, we had to pay the commercial price for (with some discount obtained).

The build

Over the course of the next few months, Andy, Ron, Charles C, John and Brian started their projects. In the meantime I made the Stockade, perhaps the easiest of the toys to make. Steering wheels would be required for two of the toys, and I just happened to have some from my grandchildren projects.

Site preparation

Ron and I laid down some twelve flagstones, to wheel centre dimensions etc. Ron also helped me install the Stockade. Oh how our backs ached after this activity!

By now winter was upon us, and it was agreed by branch members that installation of the other toys should be delayed until the spring of 2015. We did not want the toys to deteriorate during the winter before they could be used.

Collection and delivery

Now the real fun started! If the toys had been made to go through the site gate, then they would go in my trailer. Having been made from more than one sheets of ply each, the toys were quite weighty. So a HEAVY gang was required. Other members of our group willingly came to assist with the loading and carrying on to the site. The first to be moved was Ron's model lorry - a nice fit on the trailer, and not too difficult to carry on site. Next was Andy's aeroplane, minus its wings (which went by car). The next weekend was the turn of the locomotive, quite the heaviest of the toys. It hung over the end of the trailer, so the tailgate had to be used as part of the support. On site some other branch members arrived to assist, and their help was definitely needed. Arriving shortly afterwards was Charles Crittall and friend with his model car on a four wheel trailer. Charles had told us his model was wider than the gate, a little misunderstanding on the gate size; so it appeared our only option was to lift it over the five foot fence. As luck would have it, nearby was a large wheeled waste disposal bin, about the same height as the fence. Someone suggested putting the model car on top of the bin and wheeling it round on to site. A brilliant idea! All the toys were hidden under sheets, awaiting the official handover.

The handover

A meeting with David and other school staff members took place in early March, when a date for the official handover was agreed, to take place on April 22nd at 11am. The local TV and media were informed of the forthcoming event in the hope of getting good publicity for the school and Gloucester REMAP. (In the event none turned up). We understand that the project will be given local press coverage later. On the day, the covering sheets were removed, to show the pupils just what they were getting, (although I know a few had been peeking under the covers beforehand). We invited interested parties to the event, including the local ROAB, they being one of our branches sponsors. They turned up in force; together with the wives of our model builders and other REMAP members. Our branch chairman, John Fox did the honours, giving a speech of appreciation to all concerned with this project. An acceptance speech followed made by a school principle. Then it was time to let the children out. Shrieks of joy were heard as the children rushed from one toy to the other, trying them for size. The school provided light refreshment, and a party atmosphere developed, wonderful.

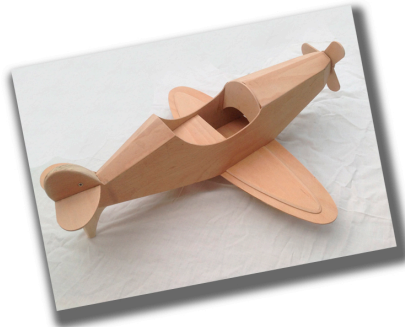
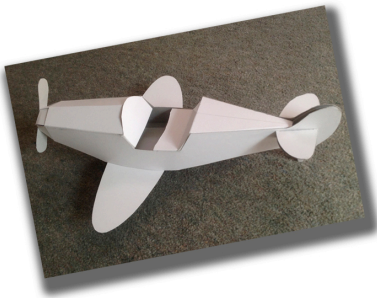
Conclusion

In its thirty year history, this school project has been the biggest task undertaken by the Gloucester branch of REMAP. In my twenty plus years of membership there has been nothing like it, not only from a physical and financial point of view, but also in the number of engineers involved in the project. Branch engineers have worked in pairs on previous projects many times beforehand, but never before have so many people worked together with but one common aim. For months on end our garages and workshops have been occupied with this work, I for one welcome having space again for other projects, I am sure Andy, Ron, John and Charles C feel the same. Our wives and partners have had to put up with a lot of hassle over the months - using the bathroom to bend plywood in a hot water bath, being only one of the inconveniences. This team project has taken many hundreds of hours work, a lot of clever design thinking, and nearly a thousand pounds in cost. Was it worth it? YOU BET it was.

It has been my pleasure to be allowed to coordinate and participate in this project, from its conception to completion. Lots of telephone calls, many miles of travel, plenty of negotiations, it has all been a lot of fun. May I thank all our branch members for their friendship and camaraderie during this project? Gloucester REMAP has a great team.

Alexis-Charles Dobbin, Gloucester REMAP member.

The making of a Spitfire



A rough cardboard model followed by a 1/4 scale plywood model to check bending



Initial forming of the fuselage



Fuselage form completed

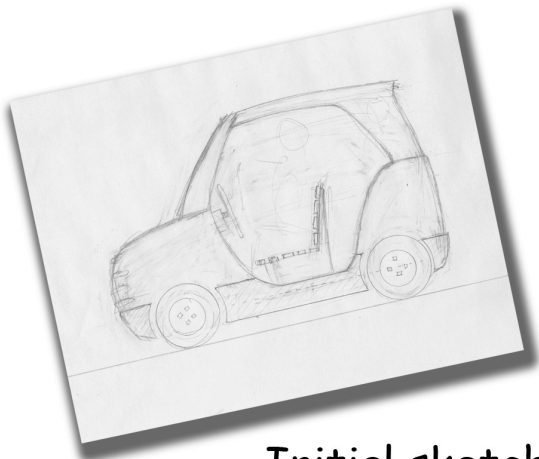


Adding the operational details - propeller and control column with sprung drive to prop



Finished!

A super mini in the making



Initial sketch



Halfway there!



Seat done



Wheels and lights



Finished!
Room for four.

Thomas is born



Cutting to size

No room in the workshop

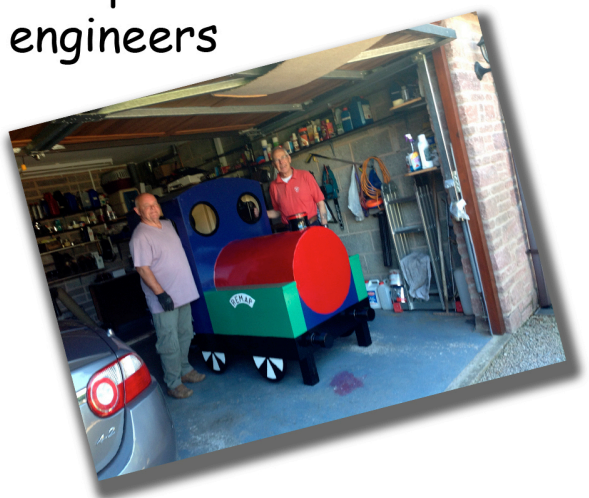


Trial assembly

Almost finished



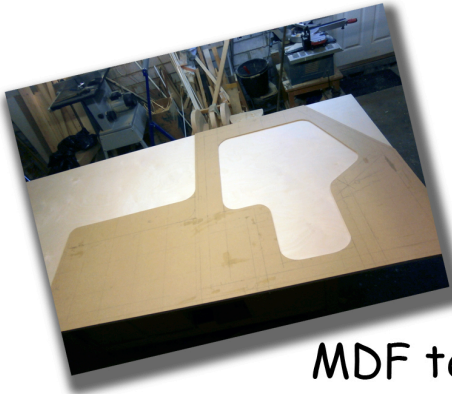
The proud engineers



Finished -
ready for delivery



Next day delivery



MDF template

Side chassis



Windscreen
in place



Shell complete

Dashboard
ready



Finished -
Deliver one
child





Peter, Tom, Martin and Ron load Ron's lorry

Andy, Mike and Ron load Andy's aeroplane



Martin, Peter and Mike help Ron put the lorry in place



John and Bryan's locomotive just fits on the trailer. Terry and Ron join in.



Charles Crittall's car is a tight squeeze



Bryan, Ron, John and Terry find the loco a struggle





Three of the models in situ

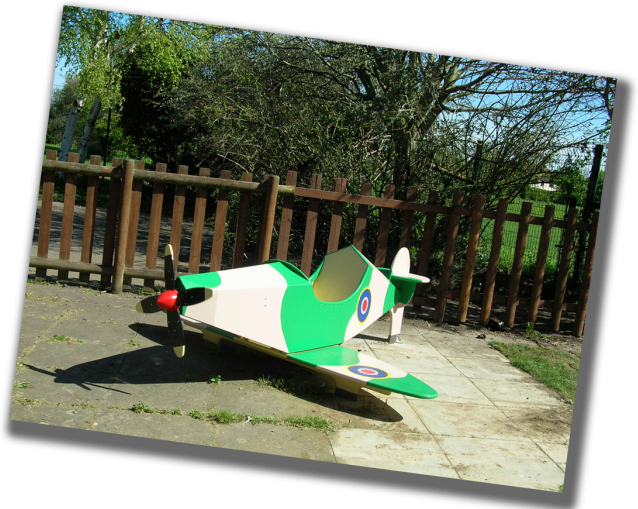
Well, we got it up there
Now we need to get it down!
David Walker helps



Andy's aeroplane has landed



I see no indians!



Someone is getting a
sneak preview!



What's going on out there?
Pupils awaiting the OFF





Charles gives driving instructions



Ron's lorry flies the flag



Andy gives flying instruction

Loco drivers wait for the GO signal



Our branch chairman, John Fox does the honours at the official handover

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