

# Meccano

by Jim Gamble

7:30 pm Thursday 20 February  
(7:05 – 7:20 for tea and biscuits)

School of Music,  
University of Leeds,  
next to the red brick church  
with the gilded dome.



When Frank Hornby, a clerk from Liverpool, invented and patented a new toy called "Mechanics Made Easy" in 1901, even in his wildest dreams he could not have envisaged the impact it would have. At one level, it was simply a model construction kit consisting of perforated metal strips, plates and girders, with wheels, pulleys, gears, shaft collars and axles for mechanisms and motion, and nuts and bolts to connect the pieces. But it was more than just a toy. It taught basic mechanical principles like levers and gearing and it could be used to build more or less anything. Over the years, kits grew larger and more complex. Electric motors and steam engines appeared - and in the latter days, electronic controls, Hornby trains and Dinky Toys. It has been said, with considerable justification, that British engineering has owed more to Meccano than to any formal teaching in school syllabuses.

**Jim Gamble spent almost his entire career in the School of Chemistry at Nottingham University, starting as a 'Lab Boy' in 1960 and ending up as the Manager of Technical Services for Research and Teaching. Although he is now retired, he is a guest lecturer and continues to deliver a special demonstration lecture on the subject of explosives.**

This lecture is free and you do not need a ticket – but if you are coming with a group of friends and would like seats reserving, please contact :- Dr J E Lydon: Secretary, Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society,  
Faculty of Biological Sciences, The University, Leeds, LS2 9JT  
j.e.lydon@leeds.ac.uk 0113 2785596 (evenings)