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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

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Ecoso Exchange Newsletter

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News from the Crow Collection

The Spring Picnic by the River. Bleak weather deterred quite a few people from enjoying the picnic at the Living Museum of the West. Thanks to our friends at the Museum a very enjoyable day was spent indoors with a few brave souls venturing out to follow the "Meat Trail and the "Pipe Trail". Those who missed out may have another chance next spring.

Poster Display at Women's Circus Thanks to Julie Statkus the Crow Collection was able to present a poster display at the Women's Circus.

Housing for Elderly People A bibliography of Crow Collection documents on elderly people, local government and housing has been prepared. The Collection has acquired a number of new documents on these issues. Ruth Crow has recently been the guest speaker at two seminars and her reports on the needs of elderly people are available. Thanks to Bernie Duff who has arranged for the Collection to receive newsletters and other publications from Housing for the Aged Action Group.

The Henry Lawson Society has donated some newsletters and other documents to the Collection. Thanks to Bryan Kelleher (see page 4 of this Ecoso).

Family Life and Australian Studies Ruth Crow has spoken at several seminars at secondary colleges. One of the teaching aids she has been using is included in this Ecoso as an "Ecoso Supplement".

Gloaming in the Gardens will be held on Friday January 15th from 5.30 pm.

Planning History Seminar Robert Freestone visited the Footscray Campus to discuss a seminar to be held early in 1993 (see page 8 of this Ecoso).

Two Examples of the Determined West

The city (of Melbourne) was centred where forty miles of basalt and delta plain met forty miles of valleyed hills and sandy beaches. As the poor spread thickly over the plain and the rich thinly over the hills and coast, neither love nor justice had much chance. Realism won without trying. To its topography Melbourne may owe a great deal of its past and present unkindness to its poor" (Hugh Stretton in "Ideas for Australian Cities", 1970.. Ecoso emphasis)

Twenty years have passed since the Deprived West Seminar drew attention to Melbourne's "unkindness to its poor". In the 1970s and 1980s the Western Region became the "Determined West", turning its disadvantages to assets. A new feature in the politics of the west emerged as action groups formed around health, welfare and education needs with councillors, teachers, social workers and community activists sharing responsibilities for the policies which were pursued with considerable vigour.

"Qualitatively more Appropriate Services"

In 1972, in "Plan for Melbourne, Part 3" Ruth and Maurie Crow described the innovative policies which resulted from the Deprived West Seminar :-

No doubt some gain will be won to improve some of the anomalies. "More-of-the-same" is needed and can be won. But as shown by the example of the Preschool Submission, an improvement of existing services, even positive discrimination to ensure that the west has health, education and welfare services as adequate as the east, will not provide for the west the facilities which are wanted not only to overcome the obvious deprivation, but to make a qualitatively more appropriate contribution to life of the citizens. For example the Sunshine Child Care Committee want not only more Infant Welfare Sisters, who work in the traditional way, but a different type of service so that the Infant Welfare Centres are much better integrated into the community.

Example 1. Children's Services

In the early 1970s the Western Region had 233 children in commercial "minding centres" and 64 at the Footscray Creche. The Creche was the only centre subsidised by the State Government. The Minister for Health, stated in parliament that :-

"It is considered that few, if any, of the child minding centres (in the Western Region) are up to the standard required for the payment of a subsidy for a day nursery." (Hansard, April 18, 1972)

In the early 1990 the Children's Service Co-ordinator of Sunshine Council, Susan Parsons stated :-

Sunshine Council has more subsidised children's services than any other municipality in Victoria and these include a whole range of family needs.

Example 2, Secondary Education

The Footscray City Secondary College is a few hundred meters west of the Footscray Campus of the Victoria University of Technology. This school is one of several in the west to encourage students to use the Crow Collection. (Ecoso Newsletter 2/19).

This article from the Melbourne Age, 11/11/92 is reprinted to show the determination of the west to pioneer ways of providing secondary education.

**Viva la difference,
say we at Footscray**

from B. McMahon, principal,
Footscray City Secondary
College.

The feature article, Private Schools — Are They Worth The Money? (Saturday Extra, 7/11) quotes the principal of Mount Waverley Secondary College declaring that his school has more in common with Wesley College than Footscray City Secondary College.

This unilateral declaration of affinity may, I suspect, seriously concern the principal of Wesley College. But as principal of Footscray City Secondary College, I am happy to point out for readers the salient, non-geographical differences between Mount Waverley and Footscray City Secondary Colleges.

● Footscray City offers a more comprehensive subject choice for its 680 VCE students (all 44 VCE studies). In fact, the college boasts the widest range of VCE in Victoria.

● Hundreds of Footscray City students are truly bilingual; the college treasures the vitality and cultural richness of its community.

● Unlike Mount Waverley students, Footscray City students are considered mature enough to make the important decision about what clothes they will wear to school each day.

● Footscray City does not ape the model of the 19th-Century English private school. We pursue contemporary excellence and we

are somewhat dismissive (not in a snobbish way!) of schools who seek to demonstrate their worth via such semiotic confidence tricks as uniforms, academic gowns and prefects.

● Footscray City's achievements in curriculum and student achievement are publicly acknowledged viz, Age curriculum innovation awards, Garden State horticultural awards, renaissance technology award, ABC/IBM environmental education awards and numerous ATOM awards.

This year, a Footscray City Secondary College VCE film and TV student made history gaining an AFI award nomination. On the basis of the above, I say proudly, "Viva la difference".

Age 11/11/92 Bernie McMahon,
Footscray.

The Sunshine Children's Services and the Footscray City Secondary College are but two examples of determination in the west which enabled the community movement to overcome the dead centre of inertia of entrenched practices which resulted in the "deprived west". There are many more.

The 1990s are bringing different challenges. The lesson from the 1970s need to be heeded, especially, the linking of the campaign to ensure adequate finance with creative community initiatives to ensure that services are continually innovative.

(Documents in the Crow Collection on the Western Region include "Plan for Melbourne Part 3", and the working papers used in the preparation of this book. The Sunshine Council's submission to the 1972 Consultation on Children's Services and a number of other documents from 1970s. These have useful facts, but more importantly they are useful because they capture some of the enthusiasms of the community movements.)

Local Employment Trading Systems (LETS)
A Money Free Economy

Stony Creek LETS

Stony Creek is a tributary of the Lower Yarra River. Once its pebbly stones sparkled in the stream, now it is a drain through Yarraville. But this is not an article about the destruction of our waterways, it is an article about the construction of new economic relationships.

LETS stands for Local Exchange Trading System. It can be described as a community bank. Each member can open an account and use a mutual credit system to trade locally with others...you cut my hair and I acknowledge that I owe the system 10 units. I pay this by offering my services to any member of the group... not just the person who cut my hair in the first place.

LETS does not charge interest, and if your account goes into the "red", that does not matter, it just shows your commitment to the community.

LETS is a bit like the barter of time in baby sitting clubs but members have a much wider range of goods and services. The range is continually increasing as new members result in a greater diversity of skills being available for exchange.

The LETS system began in Canada in 1983. In Australia the a fledging scheme was started in Queensland at Maleny in the Couliandra Municipality. Now state governments are getting interested. In June this year the Western Australian government decided that rather than spend non-existent millions on rural assistance to depressed areas, it would front up with \$50,000 to help existing LETS schemes with computers support and other resources

A LETS National conference was held in Macksville (NSW) in October. Some of the main aims of the gathering were to thrash out a unified national policy to present to the Department of Social Security, taxation and other government agencies.

A recent article in Broadside Weekly described LETS in these words :-

Members find LETS an economy of the heart. It brings retired people back into value for skills they can offer, and builds self esteem in tentative artisans. Through LETS, people can and do recognise the value of the vast amount of unpaid work women do, work that underpins the entire global economy.....LETS enables people to value the really important things in life, non-material wealth.

If you want to know more about LETS write to the Stony Creek LETS, 16 Adeney Street Yarraville 3013 or phone (05) 314.7713 or (05) 315, 2698.

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Have you checked you address slip to see if your subscription is now due ?

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Energy Efficient Housing
The Laverton Plan

Can energy saving be achieved by the way we design our suburbs ?

Some answers to this question are being found through a project in Laverton in Melbourne's Western Region. Kati Westlake and design students at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology have prepared a series of possible layouts for a hypothetical development site - the RAAF Williams Base. This site has been chosen for three reasons

- * It is located within one of Melbourne's Growth Corridors;
- * It is adjacent to a major rail network and
- * The existing buildings could be recycled for mixed uses.

There is a report on this project in the November issue of "Environment Victoria" (newsletter of the Conservation Council of Victoria). Here are a few quotes (emphasis added by Ecoso) :-

Currently, the pattern of urban development in Victoria is low density suburban sprawl dominated by the single family home and the car as the main mode of transport. This pattern is wasteful of land and unrenewable energy resources. It also caused services and amenities to be less accessible. We need to rethink the way we build our suburbs.

In general, the layouts we have designed promote compact, self contained subdivisions. Residential, commercial, retail and public places are within a pedestrian orientated environment and reinforce the use of public transport. The design provides a range of housing densities to cater for a variety of housing styles. They ensure that there is a sufficient population to support an efficient and reliable public transport system. The street networks also mean that houses and buildings can be sited to maximise solar access.

The project has provided the basis for formulating a series of design criteria and principles which can be applied to any development in Victoria. A report on the project and its findings is available from the Conservation Council of Victoria, 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne 3000, (05) 654. 4833 or Fax (050 650.5684).

The Henry Lawson Society

I was born to write of the things that are !
And the strength was given to me;
I was born to strike at the things that mar
The world as the world should be !

These words from Lawson's "Writer's Dream" are inscribed on the Lawson statue in the Footscray Gardens.

The first of the societies formed to honour this Australian poet met in 1923 in Footscray. Every year since then the Henry Lawson society has held a memorial gathering in the Footscray Gardens. In 1993 this will be held on February ~~25~~ at 2 pm.

"City of Quartz"

History, Sociology, Urban Theory

"City of Quartz" by Mike Davis, sub-titled "Excavating the Future in Los Angeles" reveals an urban history of political and economic power struggles which need to be heeded in Australia.

It is surprising that despite the descriptions of crime, corruption, gangs, class exploitation, security and urban degeneration the book is not depressing. This is because Mike Davis is on the side of the oppressed and thus a feeling of solidarity is built up between him and the reader. It is a fascinating book which can be turned to again and again.

The first chapter describes a little known period in the history of one part of Los Angeles, Llano Del Rio, which was established as a socialist city in 1914 :-

Unionists, hundreds of landless farmers, unemployed labourers, blacklisted machinists, adventurous clerks, persecuted IWW soapbox orators, restless shopkeepers and bright-eyed bohemians followed the Young People's Socialist League to where the snow-fed Rio Dei Llano (now Big Rock Creek) met the edge of the desert.

Although they were "democracy with the lid off, democracy rampant, belligerent, unrestricted", their enthusiastic labor transformed several thousand acres into a small Socialist civilisation. By 1916 their alfalfa fields and modern dairy, their pear orchards and vegetable gardens - all watered by a complex and efficient system - supplied the colony with 90% of its own food (and fresh flowers as well). Meanwhile, dozens of small workshops cobbled shoes, canned fruit, laundered clothes, cut hair, repaired autos and published the "Western Comrade". There was even a Llano motion picture company.

The colony set up a library, the first Montessorri school in California and one of the earliest ragtime bands in America.

But, why did it collapse? Mike Davis describes how in 1918 they lost their water rights and :-

The colony was assailed by creditors, draft boards, jealous neighbours and the "Los Angeles Times". (Ecoso emphasis)

An absorbedly interesting chapter is called "True Confessions". This is a description of :-

"the struggle for the soul of the contemporary church ... between the liberationists and the restorationist.

This struggle is described through explaining the role played by some church "leaders" on issues such as birth control, AIDS, abortion, unionism and the role of the Vatican.

For example, Davis describes how, in 1986, Archbishop Mahoney was at first welcomed as a friend of labour but that his fervour for abortion and his rigidity and intolerance outraged the public including liberals in the religious orders, Catholic academics and parish laity, who feared that the archdiocese is heading backward.

In a section called "Fortress L.A." Davis describes how the city's architecture and its reconstructed public spaces are specifically designed to brutalise the poor, to keep them out of sight. Here are some quotes :-

"One of the most common, but mind-numbing, of these deterrents is the Rapid Transit new barrel shaped bus bench that offers a minimal surface for uncomfortable sitting, while making sleeping utterly impossibleAnother invention is the aggressive deployment of sprinklers to ensure that the park was not used for sleeping.

Public toilets, however, are the real Eastern Front of the Downtown war on the poor. Los Angeles, as a matter of deliberate policy, has fewer public lavatories than any major North American city.

"City of Quartz" won the American Social Science Association's best book award in 1990. Here is the London Review of Books description :-

In lurid engrossing style Davis recounts a lurid tale of greed, manipulation, power and prejudice that has made Los Angeles at once the most cosmopolitan and the most class divided city in the States.

"City of Quartz" has nearly 500 pages. It is well indexed, all sections have several pages of footnotes and there are several dozen photographs (including one of the barrel bench described above). If you can't afford to pay nearly \$30 for a copy why not borrow it from your local library ?

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A Melbourne Overview

Urban Growth and Its Implication for the Churches

A booklet published by the Victorian Council, of Churches and the Victorian Council for Christian Education, in July 1992, raises a number of important issues. Here are a few quotes :-

We are confronted with deep economic and value shifts that would see the burden of urban development and its costs shifted away from government and its taxation revenues and towards service consumers.

The ultimate result (of a system of work place bargaining) will be dramatic decreases in real wages and a growing disparities between wage earners. The resultant impact on the standard of living of unskilled and semi-skilled workers will be devastating.

This 55 page report includes some useful diagrams and maps and a chart listing 24 community facilities, the population service ratio, the space required and the responsible authority.

For more information contact Hal Bisset at the Ecumenical Housing Unit, 2 A Chapel Street St Kilda, 3182 or phone (03) 819.8782.

The Crow Collection could make a useful contribution to this seminar. Your help is needed to prepare documents about resources in the Collection. If you can help during January please phone Ruth Crow (home) 380.1876.

School of Town Planning
University of New South Wales



CALL FOR PAPERS

PLANNING HISTORY SEMINAR

SYDNEY
SATURDAY, 13 MARCH 1993

THE AUSTRALIAN PLANNER

Critical perspectives on the contributions of individuals to the development of urban, regional and environmental planning theory and practice

**Keynote address by Professor Gordon Cherry
University of Birmingham**

In early March 1993 the School of Town Planning at the University of NSW will host the first Australian conference devoted exclusively to planning history. The general theme will be 'The Australian Planner'. The aim is to explore the roles of influential theorists and practitioners on the Australian planning landscape from the colonial to the postmodern eras. The seminar will provide a forum to explore influences and impacts, ideas and institutions, concepts and contexts, success and failure. Special guest will be Gordon Cherry from England, chairperson of the International Planning History Society.

Papers are now invited from academics, practitioners and research students. Presentations of approximately 20 minutes are envisaged. Contributors will be asked to contribute a short paper for post-conference publication.

Conference fees will be modestly priced to cover lunch, morning and afternoon teas, printing, and distribution of the proceedings.

Commitments, expressions of interest, preliminary registrations and enquiries by **30 December 1992** to:

Rob Freestone
Town Planning, University of New South Wales, PO Box 1, Kensington, NSW 2033.
Ph: (02) 697 4837; 697 4836. Fax: (02) 663 4278.

A second circular will be distributed in February 1993.

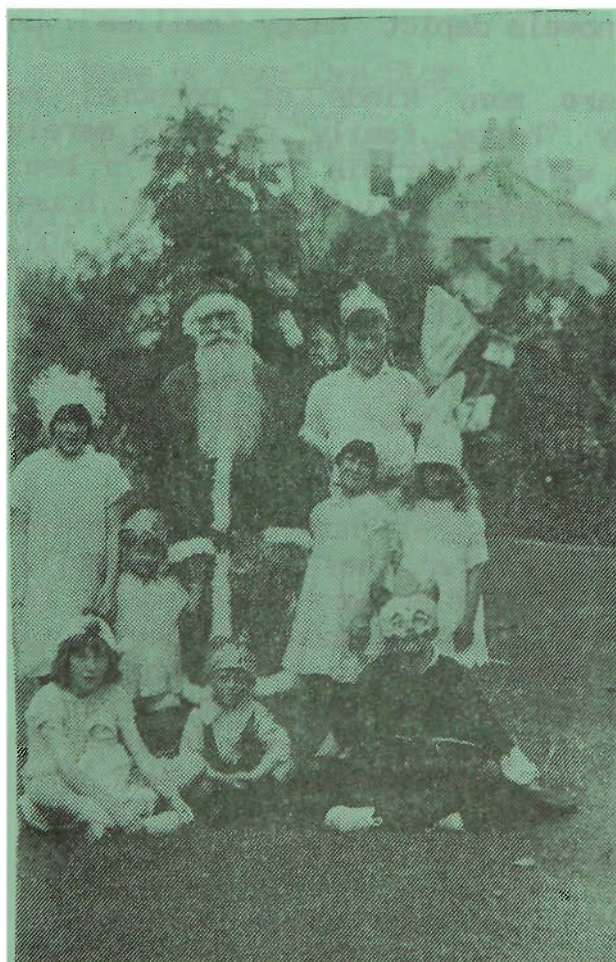


The Crow Collection Association (Incorp.)

A Living Library to Plan for the 21st Century

C/- Ms. Sheila Byard, Lecturer, Urban Studies Unit, Victoria University of Technology (Footscray)
PO Box 14428, MMC, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3000. Telephone: (03) 688 4754. Fax: (03) 688 4805

Family Albums as Teaching Aids



**Photos and Notes for VCE Students
1992**

Family Albums as Teaching Aids

by Ruth Crow

Although most photos appeal only to the members of the immediate family, there are photos in some family albums of a more general interest.

During the past couple of years I have helped secondary schools students with projects on the history of home life, but it was only recently that I realised that some family photos could be used as teaching aids especially for students who are studying Australian Studies.

"The Anguish and Sweetness of Family Life"

But first a few words about some of the limits of using photo albums as teaching aid.

It is an obvious fact that nearly all photographs of children have been taken on happy occasions.... "on days to remember". So when you look at the reproductions please heed what Kathleen Mansfield wrote about the way conventional novels depict "happy families". Here is the quote :-

There are many kinds of personal relations which exist in an everyday "happy family", who are merely going on living their daily lives, with no crisis or shocks or bewildering complications to try them. Yet every individual in that households (even the children) is clinging passionately to his/her individual soul, is in terror of losing it in the general family flavour...One realises that even in harmonious families there is this double life; the group life, which is the one we can observe, in our neighbours' households, and underneath, another - secret and passionate and intense - which is the real life that stamps the faces and gives character to the voices of our friends.

One realises that human relationships are a tragic necessity of human life; that they cannot be wholly satisfactory, that every ego is half the time greedily seeking them, and half the time pulling away from them. In those simple relationships of loving husband and wife, affectionate sisters, children and grandparents there are innumerable shades of sweetness and anguish which make up the pattern of our lives day by day, though they are not down on the list of subjects from which conventional novelists work.

"I've Only Got My Memories"

And secondly, a few words about the life-style of the people who are most likely to have photos. Photography in the first decades of this century was an expensive hobby. I was reminded of this when I showed the albums to an eighty year old neighbour who spent her childhood in a small cottage in Port Melbourne. So please heed her words. She said :-

"I've only got my memories, and these are not that happy. We couldn't afford food let alone photographs. We couldn't even afford to buy the school photos. I felt that ashamed and jealous."

Photography in the Third Decade of the Century

"Watch the Birdy!"

"Watch the birdy!" meant :- "Be alert! Look this way! and FREEZE your pose!"

The photographer had to pose the group (or the individual), making sure they were facing in the "right direction", humour them to smile and insist on all of them sitting perfectly still for several seconds.

He (or she, but mostly he) had to load the camera with a glass plate (fiddling with the camera under a black cape), work out the distance and the exposure, click the camera, take out the glass plate, making sure the plate was kept completely in the dark.

The developing and printing of the photo was usually done in a home dark room. Photography was quite a skilful, expensive, time consuming hobby.

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Make Up your Own Story About These Children's Lives

In this 1918 studio photo the boys are wearing sailor suits. Such clothing was a popular way of showing patriotism during the Great War.

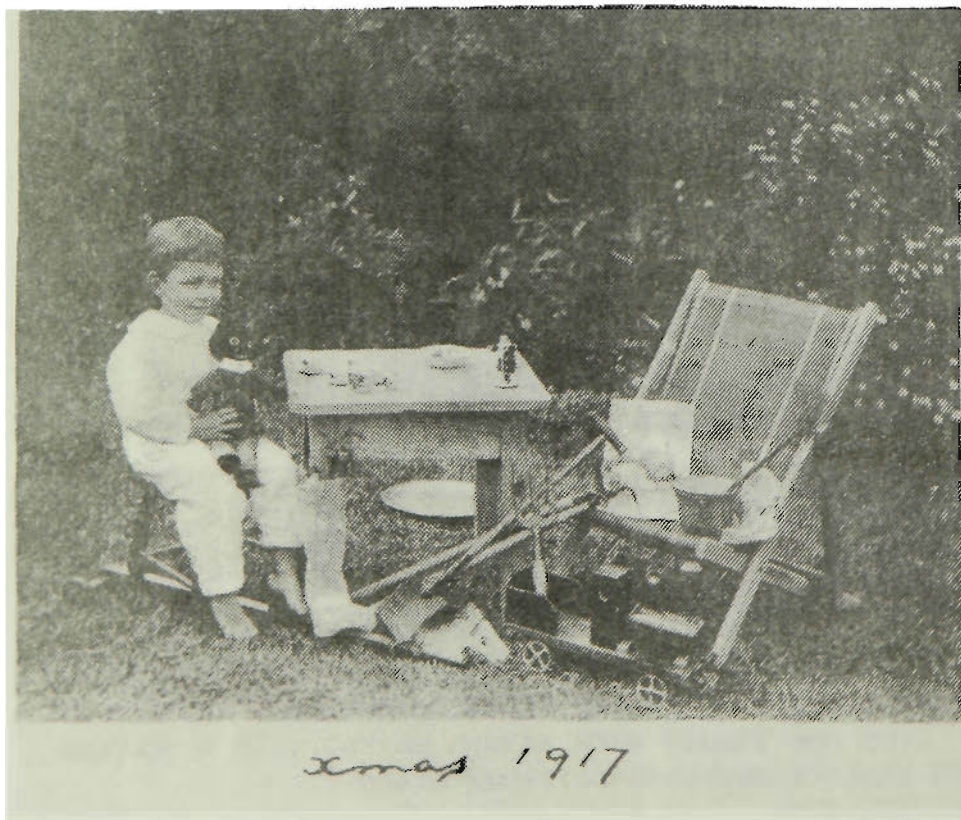


Front Cover photo. Children from neighbouring homes celebrate Christmas in 1925. The older girls from one family were always paired with a younger child from next door. This photo shows this pairing/caring.

These photos are now in the Museum of Victoria. The curators of the Museum regard them as being useful to show the toys and clothing of this period, and the technology of home photography.

The little boy with his teddy was born in January 1915, so he is nearly two years old in this photo.

Teddies are still a favourite toy for toddlers.



The golliwog seems to be the favourite toy for this youngster when he was nearly three.

Golliwogs were home-made from old woollen black stockings. Their clothes were made from odd scraps of brightly coloured material.

Today some people think golliwogs are "racist" and gollies are out of fashion.



"I've got laces
And grown up braces
I'm already to run
some races!
Who's coming out with
me?"

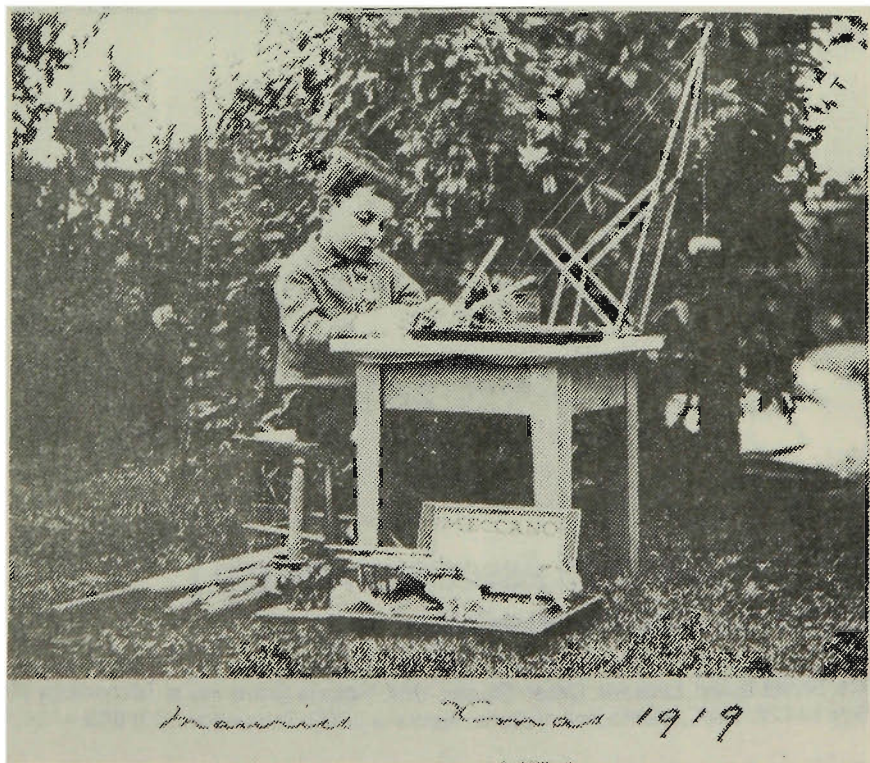
A. A. Milne

Nearly four, and judging by his
knees he has already been
using his bucket and spade.

In 1919 when Maurice
was nearly 5, meccano
was the "in toy",
like computer games
are today.

Meccano was
developed from the
industrial sciences
of the time and aimed
at teaching children
mechanical skills
which were useful in
the industrial
society of that
period.

Now meccano is
"off the market".





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