

# MODEL ENGINEERS' WORKSHOP

## Contributor Guidelines

As editor of *Model Engineers' Workshop* I depend on the goodwill and industry of hobby engineers across the UK, the Commonwealth and beyond for a constant supply of interesting and engaging contributions to the magazine.

If you are reading this, you are probably considering joining the ranks of our contributors. As a past contributor to *MEW* and *Model Engineer*, I can tell you that there is a real thrill and satisfaction in seeing your work in print. Many writers also find the payment for their contributions helps them to sustain their hobby, or find other worthy uses for it. Typically, we pay a page rate of up to £50 for articles. Full details of payments and the terms and conditions attached to making a contribution are set out in the attached agreement.

Writing for *MEW* is not an exclusive club, there are no qualifications needed and new writers are always welcome. I seek to achieve a balance between familiar writers and new ones.

If you want to submit a contribution for consideration, please read through these guidelines first. The first section tells you what you really need to know. The second part goes into more detail and answers many of the questions that keep coming up. They could save you time and effort, and also ensure that what you send me is straightforward to prepare for publishing.

If you have any questions, you can contact me by:

Email: [neil.wyatt@mytimemedia.com](mailto:neil.wyatt@mytimemedia.com)  
Telephone: 01283 711 367 (before 8pm please)  
Letter: 54 Lichfield Road, Branston, Staffordshire, DE14 3HD

I look forward to hearing from you,



**Neil Wyatt**



**Editor  
Model Engineers' Workshop**

## What You REALLY Need to Know

First, if you are going to submit an article, please fill in and return the contributors agreement.

MyTimeMedia Ltd will pay direct to a bank account so please fill in the bank account form as well.

Ideally, please scan the forms and email them to me, otherwise send paper copies. I need you to scan **all** the pages of the agreement, not just the signed ones. My contact details are on page 1.

***You only need to return the 2 pages of the agreement and the bank details page.***

If you would like to donate any payment to charity we can do this on your behalf to REMAP which is an engineering for the disabled charity. REMAP will be informed who (you) made the donation and your contact details will be supplied to REMAP unless specifically requested by you not to do this. Please let me know if you would like this option, which is entirely voluntary on your part.

***At the start of the article, please supply your full contact address and phone number if possible.*** An email address is very useful and if you have a mobile that may be useful. Phone numbers and addresses will not be published. Your email will only be published if you ask for it to be used. Along with the article, please supply a head and shoulders photo of yourself. This may be used alongside the article.

### **Payment for contributions to Model Engineer and Model Engineers' Workshop**

Payment is paid direct into your bank roughly 30 days after publication.  
Payment is £40 - £50 for a page, depending on the nature of the content.  
Pages will be calculated to nearest 1/4 page and paid for pro-rata.

The main cover photo will normally be £25. Small photos used on the cover, contents page and the next issue page will not be paid for when used on these pages but will be paid for on the article page.

The Editor's decision on payment is final.

Submissions should be sent to Neil Wyatt at the address or email on page 1. Please don't use signed for or special delivery unless sending items of value – it means a seven mile round trip if I am not in to sign for them. I cannot guarantee that anything sent to the MyTimeMedia office will reach me. **Callers are strictly by appointment only.**

**I maintain a database of all contributions received, with a rough idea of when they are likely to be used. If you want to check I have received your contributions or where they are in the system, check on payments or have any other queries, please get in touch.**

Please phone at a reasonable time, ideally during office hours. If you leave a message on my answerphone, give me an idea of when it's best to call you back. The best way to contact me is email: [neil.wyatt@mytimemedia.com](mailto:neil.wyatt@mytimemedia.com)

## The Full Guidelines

### Topics

*Model Engineers' Workshop* magazine covers all the processes, activities and tools used by hobby engineers. This includes almost all aspects of metalworking, but also the use of any other engineering material. We don't generally cover the making of models, furniture (other than workshop items), kit cars and other such activities, but articles about the techniques and tools involved in these wider hobbies are welcome.

From time to time a 'build series' in *Model Engineer* may also refer to some specialist tooling or processes that would be better covered by *Model Engineers' Workshop*. Linked articles can be carried across both magazines but it is essential that they can stand alone so readers of only one magazine are not 'short changed'.

We want to keep a balance between new technology and traditional skills, so contributions on all aspects of home engineering are welcome. Articles about laser cutting, CNC, CAD, 3-D printing and related subjects should bear in mind that these are still beyond the experience of most readers. Generic information about the capabilities of new technologies are preferable, rather than example programs or detailed guides.

Do bear in mind our focus is tools and techniques, wider stories about engineers and engineering are usually more suited to *Model Engineer* magazine.

You may often come across debate about the pros and cons of British versus Far-Eastern machinery, or new versus second hand. This is a sterile debate, as our readers have equipment of all shapes, sizes and origins, and there is very little that can be covered that is truly specific to just one machine and can't be adapted to another. Use the machinery you are familiar with for examples, but try to include as much generic advice as you can.

Finally, refer to your back issues for ideas. Some topics (e.g. fitting DROs to a Milling Machine) come up again and again, but may still be of interest if you have a new angle on the story. To be on the safe side, it's always worth contacting me to check before starting to write an article.

### Style

A wide range of people read *Model Engineers' Workshop*, they have vastly different backgrounds, ages and different levels of skill and knowledge. Many of our readers would not call themselves 'model engineers', but what they have in common is an interest in 'hobby engineering'. We aim to publish a range of articles in each issue that run from introductory articles for the beginner to those aimed at the very technical or specialist.

Whatever level you pitch your writing at, aim to produce something that could be read, and the fundamental points understood, by the 'intelligent layman' with little or no specialist knowledge of engineering. This doesn't mean don't tackle advanced subjects but don't write something only a handful of readers can follow. Acronyms, slang and archaic expressions can have their place, but usually need to be explained.

Try to avoid long digressions or introducing unexpected or irrelevant topics as an article or series progresses. Anecdotes or words of advice are fine but such additional material should relate to the main subject and not dominate the article. I'm sure I don't have to mention this but obviously you should avoid anything defamatory or offensive.

The ideal article has something to interest every reader, while still being focused on its core subject.

### ***How Long Should My Article Be?***

Many readers are keen to see plenty of short articles but some longer series allow us to develop complex ideas or tackle more challenging projects. The best advice is to avoid 'padding out' your contribution with an excess of images or irrelevant information, but to aim to cover the subject fully and fairly.

In the medium term it's my aim not to run more than one series of more than three or four parts at a time, in order to keep the magazine fresh and varied. If you are considering writing in depth on a subject please talk it through with me first. My preference is to break what could be a lengthy series into a number of shorter stand-alone topics wherever possible.

### ***Is My Writing Good Enough?***

I'm continually surprised how many people make excellent contributions to the online forum but don't think they could write an article. Everyone who has a workshop has something of interest to tell their fellows. If you aren't sure submit something short and to the point, tackling a subject that really interests or rewards you (the best short articles are tips for solving problems, getting better results or saving time) and I'll take a look. Part of my task as an editor is to help new writers 'find their voice'.

### ***Trade Connections***

From time to time articles are written that have some connection with the trade, from advertisers encouraging satisfied users to write about their product, to actually being written by people in the trade. I have no problem with this, as long as I understand the situation. So, please be open about any trade connections, in particular anything purporting to be a review should be a genuinely independent perspective.

I'm happy to receive trade reports and news from suppliers – many readers find this information useful – but we do not pay for such contributions.

### ***The Lighter Side***

Not everything in the magazine has to be a technical article. I'm willing to look at other short items that relate to the theme of hobby engineering. Crosswords and cartoons, for example, could be used but need to be of a high standard.

### ***What Happens When You Submit a Contribution***

I will try to let you know as soon as possible when I have received your contribution. It may take me a while longer to decide whether or not it may suit the magazine.

For obvious reasons I can't commit to publish any particular article. If I feel an article is unlikely to be published in MEW, better suited to another magazine or needs revision, I will let you know as soon as I can.

If I think your contribution might be used I will need you to sign a contributor agreement. If you sign this you must not publish your contribution elsewhere without first formally withdrawing the contribution. This is to stop the embarrassment for all of the same article appearing in two magazines at about the same time (yes, it has happened!) Formal withdrawal is as simple as sending me an email, but it must be before the magazine goes to press!

All articles are edited before appearing. This may be as simple as correcting typos but sometimes an article may need to be shortened, re-ordered or otherwise modified to make it suitable for publication.

I shall try to give you an idea of how soon your contribution may appear but it is impossible to give exact dates long in advance of publication. I may get in touch with you again before publication to clarify things or check details.

I keep a spreadsheet of all the contributions I have received, so if you want to know the status of any or all of the articles just drop me an email and I'll let you know.

Once your article has appeared, in full or part, you will be paid by the publisher in accordance with the contributor agreement.

### ***Text formats***

The ideal format for me is a word document (.doc or .docx) with the **absolute minimum of formatting**. This is because I have to send the designer text in as plain a format as possible. I can also open files in other formats such as plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf) and Open Office Documents (.odt)

If you don't have a word processor (or spreadsheet programme) Open Office and Libre Office are both free-to-use and able to save in all the above formats.

Don't worry about trying to give an indication of page layout, or splitting a long article into instalments, that's our designer's job and very specific to the magazine's overall design. If you would like to give an indication of how you would like pictures and figures to be used with the text, feel free to supply a separate low-resolution pdf, which we will use as a guide, in addition to the plain text version.

### **The dos and don'ts**

Please try to:

- Put your name and contact details at the top of the document
- Give it a meaningful title
- Start off with a paragraph that introduces the subject to the reader
- Leave an extra blank line between paragraphs
- Break up longer articles with subheadings

- Number photographs and figures separately, with references in the text starting at number 1.
- Rename digital photographs and figures with numbers that match the text.
- Put suggested photograph captions at the **end** of the text

Please try not to:

- Include photographs in word documents
- break text into columns
- manually add hyphens or multiple spaces to adjust the page layout
- apply any special formatting, especially non-breaking spaces and the like.

### **Special Characters and formulas**

Unfortunately we can't get away from the need to use special symbols and formulas in engineering (e.g. 55° or Ø55mm), but they often get corrupted when changing fonts or file formats. To minimise this try only to use special characters from standard fonts. In Word it is best to use the 'insert symbol dialogue' and choose symbols from one of the standard fonts (e.g. Times New Roman or Arial). This give the best chance that the symbol I see is the one you used!

For formulas, please put them on a single line, separated from other text by blank lines.

$$E = mc^2$$

Just like that!

### ***Photographs***

Please supply photographic images as JPEGs (.jpg). Use long filenames to number your pictures (starting at 1) to match the references in your text and to give me an idea of the content. List the captions for your photographs at the end of your text.

If you leave photos with the random filenames from the digital camera it often results in them being mis-captioned or out of order.

Try to make sure there is one really good picture that sums up the whole topic, especially for builds there should be a picture of the finished object. This can be published at the beginning, perhaps with a general arrangement, so readers can be clear about exactly what a series is about.

Ideally pictures should be taken on a camera of 3 megapixels or better. Pictures that could be used on the cover are ideally 6 megapixels or more.

Standard JPEG compression produces images that are entirely suitable for publication. JPEGs are much smaller and therefore make things much easier and faster. For the technically minded, setting of 10 for compression and smoothing have no material impact

on picture quality for our needs. Please do not adjust, manipulate or crop images as our designers need the maximum flexibility to fit them within our page layouts. If you want to highlight or mark up an image, please do this on a second copy and make sure the file name explains this.

Please try to keep backgrounds to photos reasonably clear. I know workshops can be untidy but try to avoid beer cans, food or pets running around the workshop! We need to set a good example to beginners, even if we lapse when the camera isn't looking.

Be aware of electrical safety. Bare wires or similar leads lying around the workshop may make a picture unusable. Bare wires etc. in a photo of an item under construction or with the case removed are of course fine. As a general rule, don't show any set-ups or situations that could cause problems for a beginner who copies your example.

I can scan in photographs from prints only, but please do not send me any photographs that cannot be replaced. It is much better if you can get them scanned and send me a digital copy. **DO NOT WRITE ON THE BACK OF PHOTOS** - if you need to identify photos, write on a sticky label and then stick the label to the back of the photo

Please put a list of photo captions on the bottom of your manuscript. Photos should be numbered as they appear in the text. They should be numbered in sequence from photo 1 upwards. Please, no photos numbered 'a' or 'b' etc. Photo 1, photo 2, photo 3 is fine. Photo 1, photo 1a, photo 1b, photo 2 is not. Please start the article with a photo of the finished article numbered photo 1.

**Please supply one of each photo, no alternatives, just pick the best.**

### **Third party photographs and images**

If you supply third party photographs and images, it is your responsibility to make sure that you have the permission of the copyright holder. For images which are not your own, include copyright information in the filename. For example:

Photo 1 Frogstar Milling Machine copyright Fred Fertang.jpg

If you supply an image under any special licence please make this clear in the accompanying information. This is particularly important for images off the internet.

### ***Engineering Drawings***

We have a house style for engineering drawings. See a copy of the magazine and try to lay out your drawings in a similar way. A general arrangement drawing is always welcome for any complex project and if one is not supplied I may request one. If you use first or third angle projections, please make it clear which is used on the drawing.

There are many different CAD programs and though I am able to open most of the common formats, I have noticed corruption issues even with fairly simple images. This means that the preferred format for engineering drawings and diagrams of all kinds is as a pdf. This is because it is the one format where everyone can be absolutely sure that what we are seeing on the screen, or in print, is what you see. Our designers can edit pdf

files so if you, or we, identify an error it can still be changed. For the record I use TurboCAD 21 and a very old version of Corel suite.

Many contributors do not use CAD programs for engineering drawing. Many drawing programs can be used. The important thing is that drawings are clear, uncluttered and well labelled and are saved in a form (ideally pdf) that I can open easily.

Many very good CAD programmes are poor at producing accurate pdf output. In these situations a 'pdf printer utility' can produce the best output. I use *doPDF*.

If you draw your drawings by hand you have a number of choices; ideally get them scanned into a computer and send me an electronic copy. Alternatively, send me a good photocopy but please don't send me the originals in case they get lost or damaged in the post.

### **Figures, Sketches or Items**

Ideally an article just has figures and photographs, as cross-referencing too many types of illustration confuses both readers and the editor! More complex devices may require each part to be drawn and numbered as an item to simplify cross-references (especially if over more than one instalment). Do not assume drawings will be printed at the size you supply them – they will almost always have to be resized. If you use first or third angle projection, it helps if you can indicate this with the bucket symbol (and always try to avoid mixing projections within an article!)

Figures – are drawings or illustrations of any kind. Where they are of a specific part they should normally have all the dimensions and details to allow the part to be made, although dimensions for cosmetic features (such as fillets) can be omitted. Drawings need not show tolerances and surface finishes unless these are critical and not covered in the text. General arrangements need not be fully dimensioned but enough information to give an impression of overall size is useful. Figures can also include screenshots and rendered images.

Items –should always follow the rules for specific parts above.

Sketches – can be used to illustrate a setup or a detail. They need not be to scale or fully dimensioned and just contain enough information to illustrate a particular point.

Like photographs, please put a list of figure captions on the bottom of your manuscript. Figures should be numbered in the order they appear in the text. They should be numbered in sequence from photo 1 upwards. If you use Fig 1a, Fig 1b (for example) these should be part of a single main figure, not separate drawings. If you are able, please try to supply a general arrangement as figure 1.

### **Metric or Imperial**

People write best and produce the best drawings when they use the units they are most comfortable with. Despite forty years of warnings that the imperial system is dead,



imperial size stock and tools are still readily available and most, if not all, will have examples of each in their workshops. As a matter of good practice, try not to mix measurement systems as this can cause confusion. Producing usable drawings dimensioned for both systems requires great skill and it is easy for any redrafting to introduce errors - stick to one system.

### **Precision**

A constant source of irritation to readers is the use of dimensions with spurious accuracy. CAD programs are notorious for dimensioning something drawn as 1/8" long to, say, 0.126". Try to match the precision of dimensions in your drawings to the accuracy required. We don't normally require drawings to show fits, surface finishes and tolerances – where these matter and are not obvious (e.g. that a shaft needs to be a force fit in a hole) they can be mentioned in a note or in the text of the article.

### **Screenshots and Rendered Images**

Many readers find the excessive use of screenshots tiring, especially as they are normally difficult to read unless reproduced quite large. I won't normally use more than one or two in an article.

Screenshots are generally lower resolution than photographs so jpeg compression can make writing or thin lines hard to read. Images that could become blurry if they are compressed can be supplied as TIFF (.tif) or bitmap (.bmp) files.

The quality of rendered images continues to get better, but beware using them gratuitously. A good picture of the real thing is almost always more useful but sometimes a rendering can make a specific point or look 'inside' an object to reveal key details of construction. For rendered images, it has to be a matter of judgement what format to use. Generally larger images or those without much fine detail are best supplied as jpegs, others as TIFF or bitmaps.

These sorts of image should be numbered as figures, not photographs.

### **Spreadsheets and Tables**

If you are supplying information in table form it is better to do this as a separate spreadsheet, rather than as a table in word. I can open Excel (.xls, .xlsx) and Open Office (.ods) files.

### **Software and Program Listings**

As we cover more and more new technology, an increasing number of articles include program listings. Such listings can make text very hard going to read. Try to avoid using them and, if you have to, please keep them as short as possible.

Today, we can assume that anyone tackling computer-focused topics seriously has access to the Internet. Ideally, example programs could be placed on the website <http://model-engineer.co.uk/> and I am trying to arrange for this to be possible.

### **Online Discussion of Articles**

Many articles get discussed online. Sometimes discussion is critical but more usually it is a constructive development of the published article. There is no obligation on authors to

join in such discussion, but all authors are welcome to do so, or even solicit further discussion on the website.

***Getting your files to me***

The ideal format for submitting a contribution is via email, as I get all your files and covering letter in one place and as I can make a quick acknowledgement you know if I have received them safely.

My mailbox can cope with attachments of up to 15Mb on one email, but will reject any email with a .exe file (even with the extension changed) attached. If your files are too large for email then you can use Dropbox or send me a CD or DVD.

My email and postal addresses are in this document. If you would like to send me files using Dropbox and you have a Dropbox account, please place them in a folder on their own and send me a link. If not, ask and I will create a folder and send you a link.

***And Finally...***

I hope you find the above guidelines useful. If you have any questions, please get in touch with me using the contact details above.

**Neil Wyatt**

June 2015