

Richard Blizzard



TODAY parents, grandparents and family friends are sometimes just a little anxious how toys they have made will be received. Will they be acceptable to the child in an age of computers and Super-Teds? But have no worries – when someone they love has made a toy specially for them, it is far more precious than any shop-bought substitute ever could be.

Wooden toys are good toys, they rarely break and last for years. In this supplement I have tried to put together a range of quite simple toys to suit youngsters of different ages and interests, all of them made with the aid of the latest Makita Pro range of electric power tools.

I am also grateful to the Swedish Finnish Timber Council for their assistance. All the toys were made from Nordic redwood components other than where specified. This timber is readily available from all good timber merchants. This is an easy wood to get a good finish with. I use polyurethane applied with a cloth (not a brush) and rubbed well into the grain, sanding down with fine paper between coats. Be sure that any varnish or paints used are non-toxic. If in doubt check the instructions on the tin or ask in the store for advice.

Wheel sets and other parts

One problem about making toys is finding the right wheels or other bits and pieces that you need for a particular project. So to make it easier, I have put together a number of accessory 'packages' for the toys featured in this supplement. Note that a wheel set in this case also includes the steel axles and spring caps which are used for fixing the wheels in place. The packages are as follows:

Roundabout wheel set £5.50.

Scouta trike wheel set £12.50.

Tank engine (only) wheel set £4.50.

Railway carriages (per coach) £3.50.

Combined set for tank engine and three coaches £11.

Teddy's buggy wheel set £12.50.

Fire engine wheel set £11.50.

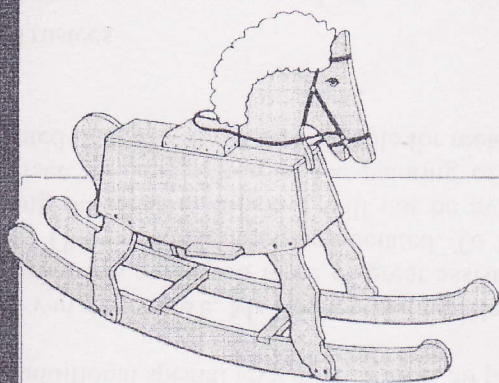
Fire engine hose set (pump, valve and hose but not container) £12.

Fire engine combined set of wheels and hoses £21.50.

All prices include VAT as well as packaging and posting. Please state your requirements clearly and send this together with payment to: Richard Blizzard (Wheels), PO Box 5, Gloucester GL3 4RJ.

I wish you happy hours in the workshop, and hope that you and your family will get great pleasure from these toys. Happy Christmas.

Richard Blizzard



ROCKING HORSE

OF all Victorian toys, the rocking horse must surely be one of the most treasured items to be handed down. Victorian rocking horses with their carved bodies and beautifully curved rockers are a thing of beauty, displaying the skill and artistry of the craftsman.

This little rocking horse, or perhaps Shetland pony, comes from a much humbler stable. However, its simplicity and strength will endear it to many children who have a great love for these four-footed friends.

Power tools

Makita power tools will enable the home woodworker to do a 'rapid build' of this little horse. Of particular help here is the router for the plywood rebates, the jigsaw for all the curves and the orbital sander for all the large flat surfaces. Also required for this little fellow are: black plastic or leather strip for harness, fur fabric, screws, panel pins, upholstery nails, wood glue, varnish.

Making a start

The two sides are held together with four formers – two fit inside the body to give rigidity and two make up the back and front.

All formers are the same shape but dimensions vary so careful attention should be paid to the dimension chart.

Cut out the formers.

Cut out and shape the two body side members. Place both in the vice, plane the edges to remove all saw marks. Make sure both side members are identical.

Clamp both side members to the table or workbench.

Rebates (cut-outs) at front and back must be made to take the front and rear formers. The router, fitted with the correct bit, is the ideal tool for cutting a rebate in plywood.

Assemble the body 'dry' to check that all pieces fit well.

Glue the sides to the formers and panel pin them to give extra strength. Remember that an extra pair of hands is always welcome when holding the various pieces for gluing.

From the grid given, draw onto the card the shapes of the back and front legs. Cut out the card and transfer the shapes onto the wood.

Now cut the legs to shape with a jigsaw and smooth all the edges. The joint (cut-out) at the top of the outside of each leg (see diagram) is cut with a tenon saw and allows the legs to fit neatly and firmly onto horse's sides. The legs are now glued and screwed onto the body sides. The screws should be countersunk.

The rider's footrests are made from pine and secured to body by screwing (two screws to each rest) from inside. Use fairly long screws (e.g. 45mm – 1 3/4in.)

Drill small pilot holes into the

footrests before inserting the main screws.

Prepare the horse's back by cutting out the slot for neck; the jigsaw is ideal for this job.

Glue and screw the horse's back into place.

Following the shapes on the grid, prepare card templates for the head and tail. Transfer the shapes onto plywood and cut them out. The use of a metal cutting blade in the jigsaw will greatly reduce the number of plywood splinters.

Smooth all the edges of head and tail using glasspaper. The palm sander is ideal for this job.

Glue the horse's tail into position in the rear and third former slots.

The reins are made from leather or black plastic strip as used for edging worktops and the like, available from Do-It-Yourself shops. Cut the reins and fix them with small nuts and bolts. Don't use upholstery nails as there is a danger that these will pull out – creating a real danger to the child.

Make the mane from fur fabric and glue to the wood with contact adhesive.

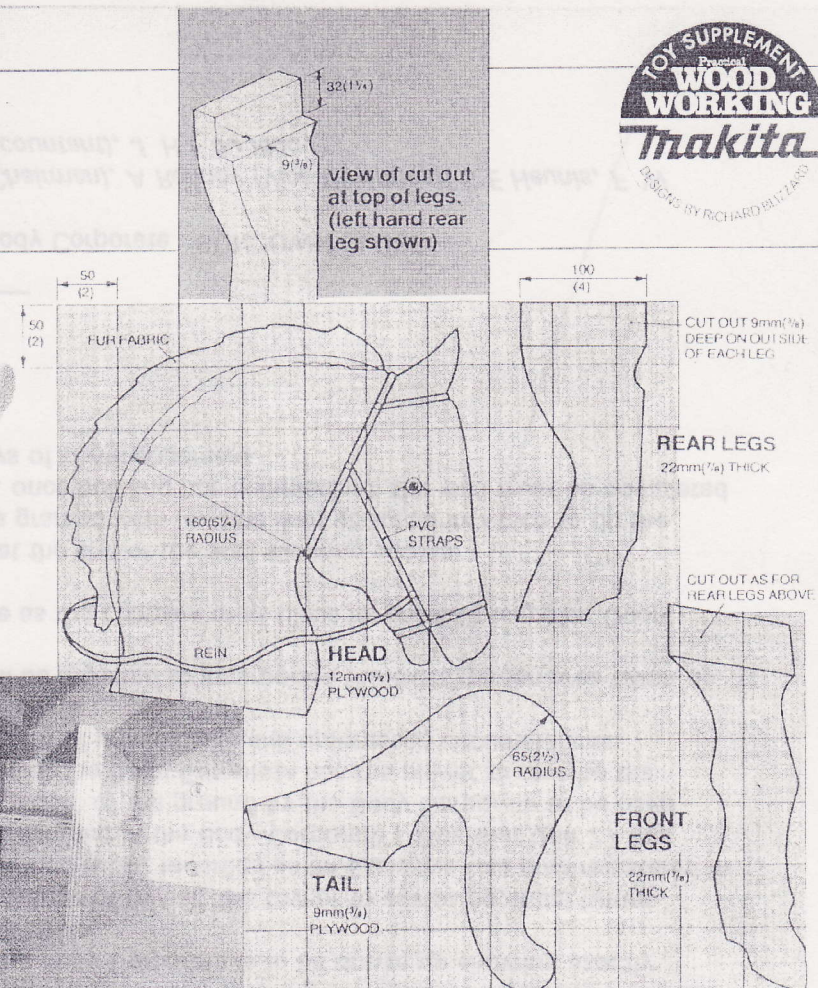
Now glue the horse's head into place, but check the fit before gluing.

The seat is made from



ROCKING HORSE

Body side members	2 off	515 by 200 by 9mm (18 3/8 by 7 7/8 by 3/8in.)	plywood
Body formers	4 off	172 by 165 by 9mm (6 3/4 by 6 1/2 by 3/8in.)	plywood
Head	1 off	350 by 350 by 12mm (14 by 14 by 1/2in.)	plywood
Tail	1 off	275 by 250 by 9mm (11 by 10 by 3/8in.)	plywood
Legs	4 off	310 by 115 by 22mm (12 1/2 by 4 1/2 by 7/8in.)	
Back	1 off	455 by 108 by 9mm (17 7/8 by 4 1/4 by 3/8in.)	plywood
Rockers	2 off	1120 by 165 by 22mm (44 by 6 1/2 by 7/8in.)	
Stretchers	2 off	270 by 50 by 22mm (10 5/8 by 2 by 7/8in.)	
Footrests	2 off	130 by 65 by 22mm (5 1/8 by 2 1/2 by 7/8in.)	
Seat	1 off	190 by 140 by 19mm (7 1/2 by 5 1/2 by 3/4in.)	chipboard



chipboard. Cut a piece of foam rubber to fit the chipboard. Stretch a piece of chair covering material over this and secure to the underside of seat with upholstery nails.

Screw the seat from underneath onto horse's back.

The rockers

Cut out the rockers (pine) with a jigsaw. Alternatively a coping saw will do but be sure to have spare blades available!

After cutting out the rockers, place them together in the vice and using a Surform plane remove all saw cuts and high spots that will spoil the rocking action. Both rockers must be identical.

Cut the slots to take the stretchers, but note that these are cut at an angle.

Temporarily fit the stretchers into the slots in the rockers.

You will now find that it is necessary to round off the bottom inside edges of the rockers. Use a belt sander. The belt sander removes large quantities of 'stock' quickly. Be careful to maintain the gentle curve of the rocker to avoid 'flat spots' and thus uneven rocking. Use the Makita sander to finish off.

Drill the necessary small pilot holes in the stretchers to take the main screws.

With the help of an extra pair of hands, position the horse on the rockers. Mark where the stretchers hold the rockers tightly against horse's legs. Now remove the horse, and screw the stretchers to the rockers. You can then reposition the horse and screw the legs to the rockers.

Varnish or paint the horse, and it will then be rearing to go.

