

60-Bottom Plow Sets New World Record

Bill Jansen, Dieterich, Ill., realized a whimsical ambition of his last August at Rantoul, Ill., when he put together three old-time Case 110 steam engines and had them pull a world record 60-bottom plow. The previous record had been a 50-bottom hitch.

He's not going to argue that it's practical, but it certainly turned out to be a popular spectator sport. It was the top attraction at the Half Century of Progress show held at the National Aviation Center near Rantoul.

Plowmen stood on the platforms of the John Deere gang plows to operate levers which lowered the plows into the ground.

Getting the hitch together was no small task. Bill was smitten by the steam engine bug back when he was three years old and started going to shows with his grandfather, a steam engine operator. Even so, it took several years for Bill to line up the necessary steam horsepower to pull off last summer's feat.

Ron Holland of Forest City, Iowa, owner of the middle steam engine in the hitch, had been invited several times but he said no until he was satisfied that enough insurance was provided.

Holland became interested enough that he took hundreds of photos, including those illustrating this story. He took the bird's eye view from the basket of a cherry picker bucket.

The Case steam engines were all built early in the last century. There are only 25 of them left in the world, yet 15 of them are still operational.

The Case engines in the photo are owned by Carl Tuttle of Howell, Mich.; Graham Sellers of Coldwater, Mich.; and Ron Holland.

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World record event was a popular attraction at the Half Century of Progress show at the National Aviation Center near Rantoul, Ill. Plowmen stood on the platforms of the John Deere gang plows to operate levers which lowered the plows into the ground. Previous record had been a 50-bottom hitch.

He Used Quonset Sections To Build Foot Bridge

When his mother needed a footbridge to cross a creek near her home, Miles Aronson found a solution. He had just finished helping a friend put up a Quonset building, and he realized the left over sections would do the trick.

"My mother wanted an arched deck and the Quonset sections had just the right shape and weren't too steep," says Aronson. "I took three sections, bolted two end to end, cut one down the center and bolted half to each side of the other two."

Working with Quonset sections was simpler than working with raw corrugated metal. The predrilled holes made it easy to bolt the sections end to end and to add the half sections to the sides to make the bridge wider. The predrilled holes also came in handy when it came to adding a wood deck.

"I just pre drilled holes on 5-ft. long, 2 by 6-in. treated planks so they matched the holes in the Quonset sections," recalls Aronson. "We ended up with a 1/2 to 3/4-in. space between each board. The bridge itself is 17 ft. long and five feet wide."

After building his mother's bridge, Aronson had a request from the local community for a similar footbridge. They needed railings on their bridge, which he made with 1-in. steel pipe.

"The railings took almost as long to make as the bridge," recalls Aronson. "I bolted steel plates to each side of the bridge, about two feet in from both ends, and welded pipe uprights to them."

He then bent two lengths of pipe until they matched the arch of the bridge before welding them to the uprights.

"The bridge is about five feet wide and is



Miles Aronson says working with Quonset sections is easier than working with raw corrugated metal. Predrilled holes make it easy to bolt sections together and add half sections to the sides to make the bridge wider.

really strong," says Aronson. "I think it could hold 20 people with no problem."

Mounting the bridge in place was even easier than building it. Because it's built with galvanized metal and the deck boards are treated, Aronson simply dug a hole to set each end in. The holes are deep enough that the first deck boards are at ground level. Not only was it easy to build and install, but it can also be removed just as easily.

"Two people can pick it up, and four could easily pack it away," says Aronson.

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"The bridge is about 5 ft. wide and really strong," says Aronson. "I think it could hold 20 people with no problem."

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