**Camper has hot and cold running water, a luxurious wooden interior, numerous electronically actuated devices, and an exterior safety beacon that folds down to reveal a showerhead.**

# Rotary Spreader Converted Into A Luxury Camper

**By Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor**

Steve Nolan of Yorkshire, England, has been passionate about creating and building useful equipment since he was young. Many of those projects have taken just a few months, but recently he turned an outlandish engineering vision into reality over four years and several thousand hours of tedious work. What began as a Major Muck-Out 560 rotary spreader eventually emerged from Nolan's shop as a one-of-a-kind luxury caravan camper. He pulls it behind a 1972 IH 454 tractor he restored in 2011.

As an outdoorsman, machinery enthusiast and skilled engineer, Nolan says he originally considered converting a retired combine into a camper. He wanted a strong, sturdy framework to build out and use for spending leisure time with his family at his 3 1/2-acre weekend escape woodlot. His plans changed when he saw the old Major on Facebook Marketplace for only £450 (around $600 USD). With minimal rust, a strong running gear, and a sturdy hitch, he trailered it home.

Nolan says his wife and friends thought he was out of his mind. How could he even consider turning a barrel-shaped manure spreader into a luxury weekend hangout? But he was undeterred. The end result shows he was up to the challenge from the start.

Using his single-car garage and front driveway as a workshop, he spent many hours at his lathe, making unique parts he says couldn't be bought.

"I really didn't do any drawings either, as all I had was a vision in my mind, along with the knowledge and skill to problem-solve," he says.

Over four and a half years and about 4,000 hrs., he crafted features and amenities that only a gifted engineer could imagine, including: a power lift on the main door operated by a 24V wheelchair motor; five side windows with solid oak frames; solid oak interior paneling over and around the radius roof interior; a fold-down leatherette bench/sleeping area raised and lowered by powered actuators; a micro kitchen with a sliding countertop; a battery-powered hot and cold water system; actuators that raise and lower the water faucets; a remote-controlled TV; 192 fiber-optic lights in the ceiling that synchronize to music from the sound system; retractable window blinds; a rear safety beacon that folds down and opens to a working shower head; a laptop docking station; solar panels to recharge the 110-amp leisure batteries; and a log burner with a flue pipe over the drawbar, fabricated in the shape of a manure spreader on wheels. Heat from the flue warms water for use in the trailer.

Nolan says he's always enjoyed challenging projects, and his vision for this one turned out exactly as he planned. He spent about £9,000 (around $12,150 USD) on materials, but says it was worth the time and money. He says the unit is sturdy, comfortable and safe, with modern amenities usually reserved for high-end luxury campers.

**Seating inside the camper folds down into a large, comfortable bed. The camper also has a built-in TV and stereo system, along with a micro kitchen.**

With the hinged windows open, the awning attaches to a metal track, providing outdoor shade and space for exterior seating. The metal supports are sturdy enough to hold his hammock for restful afternoons in the woods. The main door opens with a power lift. A thick fold-down table is actually a light box containing a chromed chain and paddle from the original spreader apparatus. Painted bright red with white wheels, the camper matches his restored IH tractor.

He and his family have trailered the camper to his woodlot and enjoy spending time with their boys.

"It's awesome, full of gadgets, so the boys never get bored," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Muck Spreader Man, Steven Nolan, Leeds, England (nolans12@yahoo.com; YouTube: @stevennolan8052).

**Jefson uses standard letter size paper to build his models.**

# His Tractors Are Made From Paper

**By Cindy Ladage**

Matthew Jefson of Warrenton, Va., displayed paper farm toys at the Gathering of the Green in Davenport, Iowa, in March. Although he now lives in Virginia after retiring from the U.S. Air Force in 2024, Matthew still feels connected to his roots in Iowa. He grew up in Forest City, which is just two hours north of Des Moines. This was his home until he joined the Air Force.

Matthew began making his model farm toys in 1994. It all started as a dare.

"My wife's friend said, 'I bet you can't build a 3D tractor out of paper.'"

That was all it took to start his hobby. He displayed the first farm toy he made, a Farmall, at the Gathering. That tractor used to have a cab.

"A cat took it off," he lamented about the structural change he didn't initiate.

Matthew is skilled in CAD, which helps with his builds.

"I was an engineer in the Air Force, and doing this helped keep my skills sharp."

He uses standard 8 1/2 by 11-in. paper for his projects. He builds his models step by step.

"I draw patterns, then I have to figure out what it looks like flat. Then I use sales literature, books or some drawings and geometry references to help."

After these steps, he prints the parts using a basic Epson printer and uses self-healing cutting boards along with an X-ACTO knife to get clean edges. Then he folds and assembles. He calls his art "Jefson Agri-gami," and it sounds much simpler than it actually is.

Looking at the wide array of models on display, when asked which one was the most challenging, Matthew said, "I wanted to replicate my grandpa's Fox forage harvester. It was hard to find information to frame and build a pattern. It took me a year and a half."

Over the years, he's found that working with paper at 1/32 scale works best. He initially used 1/16 and 1/64, but they didn't hold up as well.

"I settled on the 1/32; it's my niche and shows the detail I want. I found it's structurally better."

Regarding brands, he says, "I build all colors, although lots are green. I left a third of my collection at home."

The work is captivating, and it's hard to believe this architectural art is made from paper. You can enjoy Matthew's farm toys on display, but they're not for sale.

"I build for myself," he says.

His work has been recognized in Toy Farmer magazine and at several conferences.

# Farm-Built Doodlebug Is Small Yet Fast

New tractors were scarce in the 1930s and 1940s because of the Great Depression and World War II. During the winter of 1942-43, Albert Larson built a tractor using whatever parts he could find.

He used a Ford Model A radiator, engine, clutch and 3-speed transmission, followed by an REO Speedwagon truck transmission. A Timken bearing worm-drive rear end from the late teens to early twenties came from a truck with hard-rubber tires and wooden spoke rims. It was built by the Timken Bearing Axle Company of Detroit, Mich.

The hood was made from the skin of a Fordson tractor's gas tank. The front hand-crank winch raised and lowered a snowplow. It was also equipped with a belt-driven governor.

"During the '50s and '60s, we chopped all our feed for our dairy farm. Our chopper boxes were rear-unloading hook-off boxes that were unloaded into a long hopper belt blower. All our hay and corn silage and straw bedding was transported to our barn and silo with this tractor. We used it in the winters to plow snow and haul manure daily," says Nathan Larson, Albert's son.

The two transmissions provide a number of gear speeds. Putting both in reverse puts the tractor into a slow, forward-creeping speed. Putting both transmissions into high gear makes the homemade tractor capable of speeds of 45 mph.

Albert called the tractor the "Mosquito Bomber" after the WWII British Air Force plane, small yet very fast, just like his tractor.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nathan Larson, Shiocton, Wis.

**Homemade tractor built from various parts is capable of speeds up to 45 mph.**