

A CONSTRUCTO Set This is not the MECCANO lookalike CONSTRUCTO (see 32/941) but another, more unusual, early post-WW2 English system, with 3.9mm holes at 27.0mm pitch. Its only mention in OSN to date was the possibility of there being an electrical set in 8/202. Since then only a few parts have been seen on Ebay until the present near complete set appeared. It has no set number and though the lid label (right) has 'ELECTRIFIED MODEL BUILDER' on it, the only electrical parts in the set are 2 Bulb Holders and a Switch. CONSTRUCTO was made by T.A.Butler & Co., Southbourne, Bournemouth, and was a **Pleasure Beach** Production'.

The box, 34*19¼*2cm, has a pale yellow lid with a 192*128mm label, and 4 card trays subdivide the inside, as below. The A/Gs & Wheels are individually clipped to thin white cards, and the small parts are in the blue & white box.



Some of the parts are shown above and all are listed below, with quantities (from the manual) & some notes about them. They are accurately made and the small amount of burr on the edges of a few of the Strips isn't sharp. The paint comes off rather easily though, especially from the aluminium pieces. All holes are round & all corners fully radiused. Except as stated the parts are aluminium. Only one Strip & the Flanged Plate have the gold CONSTRUCTO transfer on them.

- 10x 7h Strips, 16½mm wide & 1.0mm thick.
- 4x 1* 3*1h DAS.
- 4x 7h A/G.
- 6x A/B.
- A 4*3h Flanged Plate.
- 4x 3*3h Perforated Plates, steel.
- 6x 2h side Triangular Plates with 1 hole 6.2mm Ø for the Axle {6}.
- 2 Axles & a Crank Handle, steel, 5.56mm Ø. The Axle is 12.9mm long, with a 2mm cross hole for a Split Pin 7mm in from each end; the Crank Handle is 14.1cm long o/a with cross holes 9 & 49mm from the shaft end.
- 4 Wheels, Bakelite, 51mm Ø which run on the Axles.
- A brass Loose Pulley, 4.0mm bore, 9.1mm o.d. & 6.3mm thick.
- An Axle for the Pulley, missing from the Set, but said in the manual to be 2" long. It would need to be slightly smaller than 5/32"/4mm Ø to fit the 3.9mm holes and is shown with Split Pins through its ends.
- A Hook, made from a hook & an eye (both of 1.7mm nicked wire)



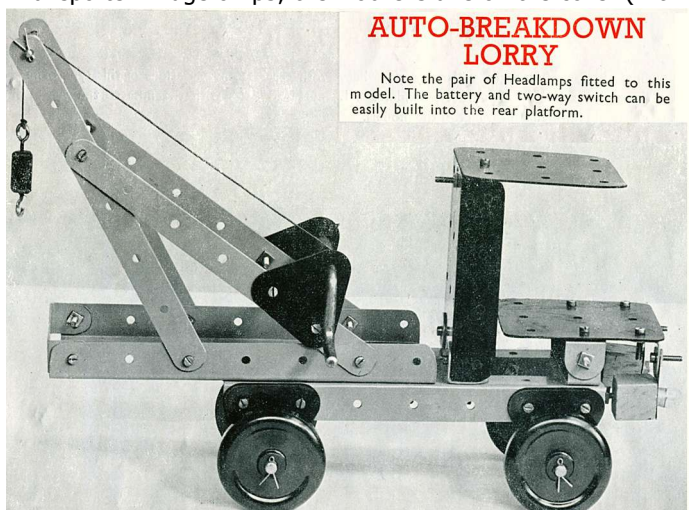
screwed into the ends of a wooden dowel, 6.5mm Ø & 21mm long. • A flat steel **Spanner**, 52mm long, 1.2mm thick, with stepped jaws 4.8, 5.4 & 6.5mm wide. • A 3.2mm Ø wire **Screwdriver**, 133mm long o/a. • 2 **Bulb Holders**. This part consists of a piece of tinplate pierced for a bulb to screw into it, and fastened to a wooden block (18*16*20mm high) by 4 tacks. The block is bored to accept the threaded part of the bulb and this bore is continued as a small diameter hole through to the opposite face for a 6 BA brass N&B. The

Bolt (4.9mm Ø RH, ¾" u/h) has a short spring under its head inside the block, and a hex Nut (4.7mm A/F) secures it on the outside. From the manual bulbs & a battery are not included in the Set. • A **Switch** (under the Small Parts Box in the photo) is a ½" paxolin board, 50*40mm, with a mounting hole at the top, one for the contact arm pivot in the centre, and 2 for contact screws at the bottom. The contact arm is aluminium with a steel handle and is pivoted on a steel 3/32" BSW N&B (½" RH bolt & square nut, ¼" A/F) with a steel washer next to the plate on each side. • 2 **Battery Clips** (the bright 'strip' under the Spanner in the parts photo). It is thin steel, 2" long o/a, and would have to be doubled over the battery tag and tightened with a N&B through the holes. • A hank of thin green **Cord**. • A hank of stiff white **Cable** to connect the electrics. • 32 **N&B** (but '60 each' in an otherwise identical PL in another manual, and more than 32 would be needed for one of the manual models). These were missing from the Set but ⅛" BSW, 5/8" long N&B are specified in the Manual. Small, square Nuts & CH Bolts are shown in the models, many of the latter long but others of normal length. • 8 **Split Pins**. Again missing. In the Manual it is said that because of shortages brass split rings may be supplied instead.

The manual has 12 unnumbered landscape pages, 227*150mm, including covers. The front is shown below, and



despite the 'Britain's Finest Constructional Outfits', plural, along the bottom, no other sets are mentioned. p2 has an Intro in which more parts are promised shortly, p10 has a diagram showing how to wire the lights to the Switch & battery, p11 offers help over any difficulties in making the models and gives the Morse alphabet for use if the parts are used to make a Morse Key, and p12 lists the parts and their quantities. The 6 models shown are, in order, a (very simple) Transporter Bridge on p3, the Mobile Crane on the cover (with



its slewing jib, probably the best model), a Cattle Lorry, the Auto-Breakdown Lorry in the previous column (60% f-s), a Pull-along Truck, and a Railway Bridge with signal lights (really a Signal Gantry) on p9. Each has a page to itself with a good photo (2 of each for the Mobile Crane) and very brief constructional notes.

Other Parts, etc. In one lot to hand the parts include a 4h A/G, a 3h & a 4h Strip which look original, and 2x 2h Strips which have probably been cut from longer parts. Also the metal of the main parts is different with steel Strips, A/Gs, & Flanged Plate, and aluminium Perforated Plates. Other differences are the blue parts in a lighter shade than those in the present set, and the holes in a few of the parts are only 3.5mm Ø. The Flanged Plate has a **Pleasure Beach** transfer on it (left), and it was this transfer that caused the system to originally have been called **Pleasure Beach** in MCS.



But so far there is no evidence of any sets with that name.

Valerie Young's set (see 8/202) was similar to the present one except that all the main parts were aluminium. The Bolts were steel with 4.5mm Ø round heads and the Nuts brass, & hexagonal (5.3mm A/F).

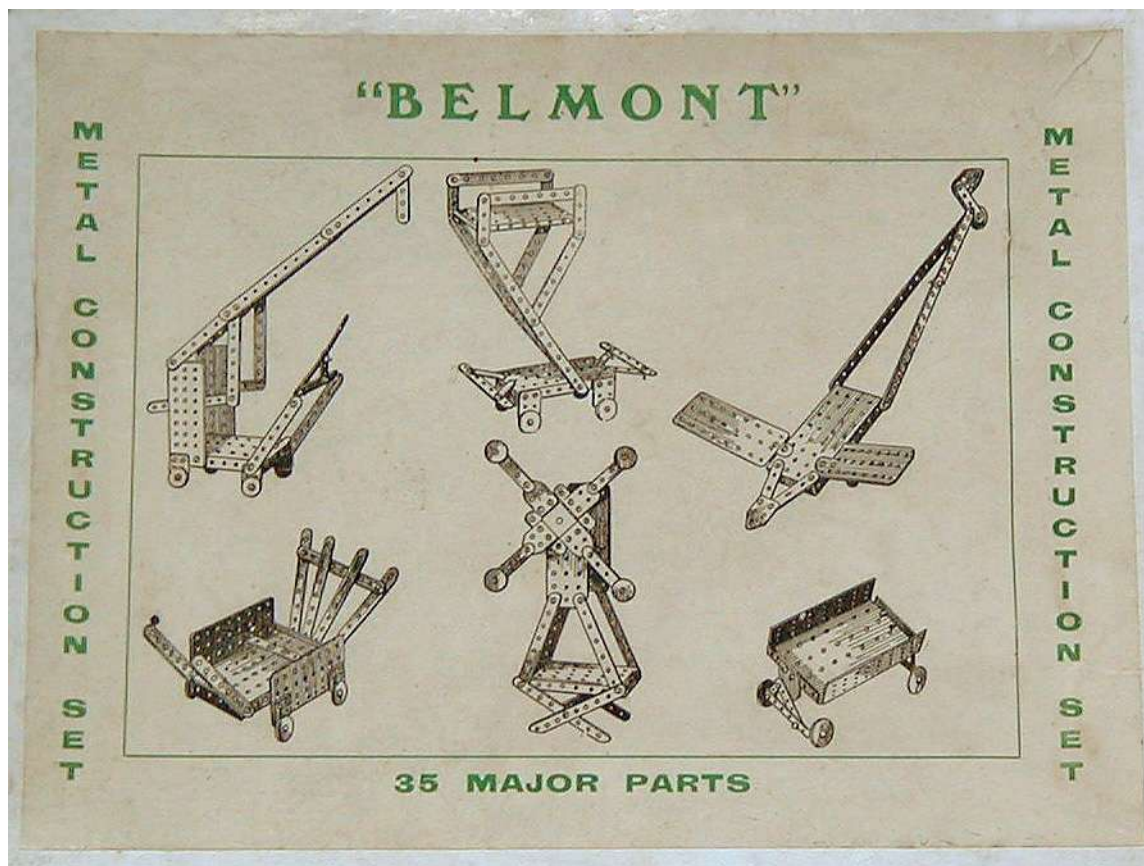
A lot on Ebay included 4h A/Gs, and the A/Gs, Strips, DAS, & Triangular Plates looked green. The other Plates were the usual red.

The manual with the '60 each' N&B is otherwise identical to the present one except that the name on the cover is red rather than white on red. Another Ebay lot contained one manual with such a '60 each' cover and also the one right. The model on its cover is more elaborate than any in the present manual, another pointer to the existence of other sets.



CONSTRUCTO [4]: S2

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top) are 1*6*1h and not the ARWILL 2*4*2h (clearly shown in one of the ARWILL manual models). The models on the lid are often inaccurately drawn but a 1*6*1h DAS looks to be needed in the top left model and in others A/Bs or a 2*4*2h DAS would be necessary. Excluding the Spanner there are 33 parts in the Set as found, against the 35 major parts claimed on the lid - at a guess the two missing parts are A/Bs.

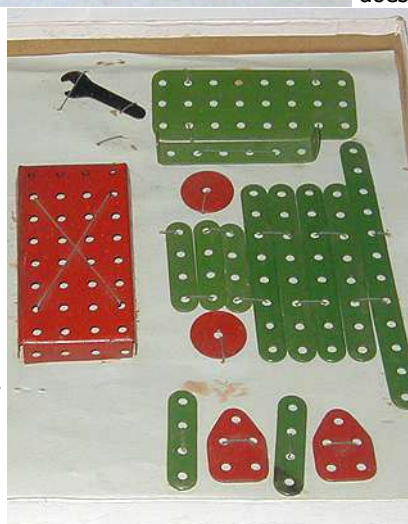
Like the ARWILL parts all the present ones are slightly dished, and except for the ARWILL A/B, all holes are 3.9mm. The differences between the parts are as follows. At 13.1-13.3mm the BELMONT Strip parts are up to .3mm wider; the ARWILL 4h Strips are painted red; the BELMONT Spanner is black and a different shape - it is 47¾mm long o/a with hexagonal jaws 6.4mm A/F (the ARWILL part does not have an angled head and has square jaws 8.0mm wide). Judging from the Spanner the BELMONT Nuts are probably ¼" A/F. The ARWILL DAS was blue and in passing a matching blue 3*8h Plate has since been found.

None of the models on the lid are at all similar to any of those in the ARWILL manual. And I can't work out what part is used for the centre of the hub for the sails on the Windmill.

'New' System: BELMONT One set with the Mystery Parts 34 (see 17/475 & 18/507) was ARWILL, described in 29/856, but now David Hobson has found another set, near complete, called BELMONT, with very similar parts, and he kindly lent it to me for these notes. The contents of the two sets are also similar but the models (on the box lid label above for BELMONT, there was no manual with the Set) are quite different.

The box is white, 10½*12½*1", and most of the lid is covered by the label, 8¾*11½". The parts are individually strung by green cord to a thin pale green card, see right - those on the left side match the parts to the right of the Flanged Plate & Spanner. A packet of N&B may have been stapled under the Flanged Plate, and above it an empty loop of cord indicates that there was originally at least one more part.

Apart from the N&B all the parts listed in the ARWILL manual are present except the Screwdriver & the 4x 2*2h A/Bs. However the BELMONT DAS (under the 8h Strips at the



BELMONT: S1

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