

- The Trunnion has a flat top, and all slotted holes, except those in the 3" Pulley, are BRAL pattern, 7mm long. Bosses are deeply recessed at the peened end and have a definite chamfer at the other.
- The Strip, Trunnion and Bush Wheel are BZP; the 3" Pulley and 3*11h Plate are light red; the Flanged Plate is white; and the Flexible Plate is dark blue on one side and yellow on the other. The parts may not all have come from the same period of course: for instance the comparatively thick modern powder type of paint has been used on the red and white Plates. All the parts are very well made except that the bore of the aluminium Pulley is rather oversize. The paint finish is excellent - the Flexible Plate has obviously been sharply bent across its middle and straightened again without any flaking. Two of the zinc parts have corroded a little but probably looked smart when new.

On dates, Meccano announced the M0 motor late in 1983 so the new KITSPOCK sets must have been after that.

CONSTRUCTA This system, for which only a manual is available, looks as if it was influenced by STABIL, with touches of MÄRKLIN, rather than by MECCANO. Threaded Rods are used as axles, exclusively in the 2 smallest sets, and as far as can be seen only the Road Wheel has a boss. The hole spacing can't be given positively but is probably either 12.7mm or the STABIL 12.5mm. The size of MECCANO parts were described in inches; KITSPOCK used the number of holes; CONSTRUCTA used both, plus millimetres. It was made in Brazil by a company called EFTA but no address is given.

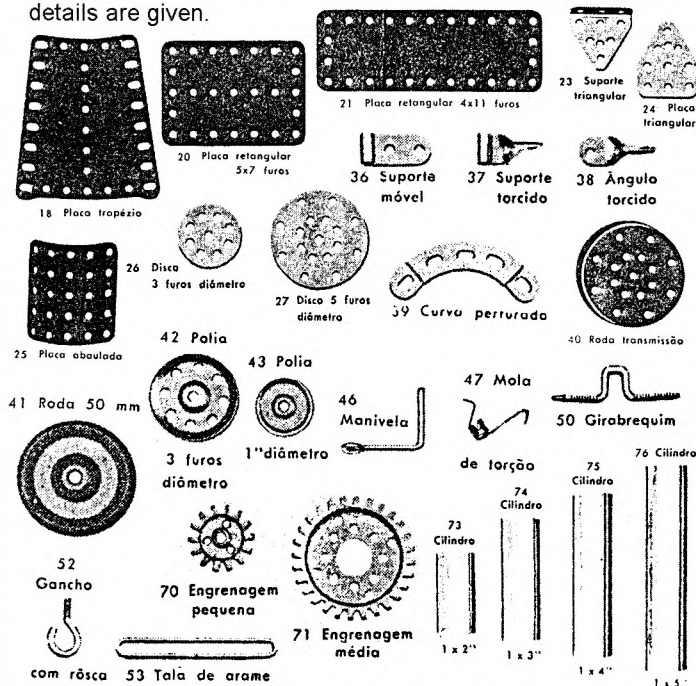
The cover of the manual has No.1 on it, on what may be a sticker. On the first introductory page it is said that there are 4 basic sets; on the second a No.V is mentioned and also V-a, VI-a, and VII-a, to give Nos.VI to VIII. Elsewhere in the Manual arabic numbers are generally used, and I will use them too. The Set Contents are given for Sets 1-5 only and all the parts listed are included in Set No.5 (the 2 Gears that are illustrated aren't in the Set Contents list), but there are gaps in the PNs, so there may be other parts in the system that are used in larger outfits.

The parts shown or listed in the Manual are described below. Unless otherwise stated they look like MECCANO parts - the PNs of the unusual ones are given in brackets and are illustrated at the end of this section. MECCANO PNs are indicated by an 'M' before them.

- Strips with 3,4,5,6,7,9,11,17,25 holes. A Curved Strip like M90a but with all slotted holes (39). DAS: 1*3*1,1*5*1,1*7*1,1*9*1,2*5*2,2*7*2,3*11*3,3*1*3. Double Bent Strip. Formed Strips with 5,7,9 holes (no illustration). A short Strip twisted through 90° with a hole at each end (38) - a useful part sometimes.
- Angle, Flat, and Double Brackets. Reversed Angle Bracket with no slotted hole. Trunnion and Flat Trunnion rather like the MÄRKLIN parts simplified (23,24).
- A/G 5,7,9,11,17,25 holes long with square corners. Also parts of the same length which aren't illustrated: they may be 5h wide Plates but are more likely to be Flat Girders.
- Flanged Plates: 5*11h MÄRKLIN-style with slotted holes along the 2 flanges and lengthways outer edges; 5*7h; Sector Plate with a single centre row of 8 holes.
- Flattened versions of the three Flanged Plates (the Sector Plate is PN18). Other Flat Plates: 5*5h, fully perforated, and a formed version curved through some 60° (25); 5*7h with the outside holes and a centre row (20); 4*11h (21) and 4*25h with only the outer holes - and none slotted.
- The parts that resemble STABIL are: Bearing Brackets (36, 37); Threaded Hook (52); 5h dia Flanged Disc with pul-

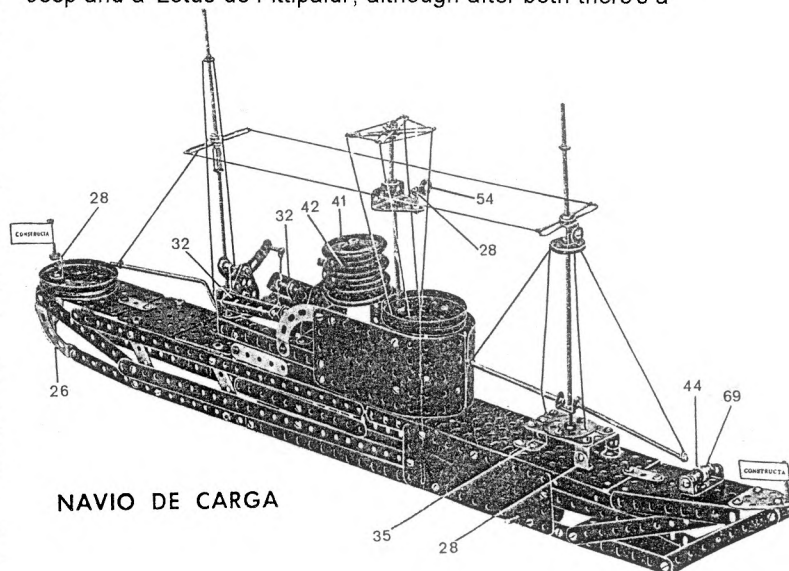
ley groove, but without the large centre hole (40); 3 & 5h dia Wheel Discs (26,27); 1" and 3h dia Pulleys but with 0 and 8 holes (43,42); Wire Crank (46); Crankshaft with threaded ends (50); Wire Stay (53); Gear Wheels with 14 & 28 teeth that look like the STABIL '1926' type (70,71), see 13/349.

- Hex Nuts; roundheaded Bolts, $\frac{3}{16}$ ", $\frac{3}{4}$ ", $1\frac{1}{4}$ " long; Washers. 7 Threaded Rods from 30 to 300mm; 6 smooth Axles from 30 to 200mm; a Crank Handle; a Rod Connector and a Threaded Rod Coupling (M63e); a Collar.
- A 50mm Road Wheel which appears to be a pressing with a 'half' tyre (41). A 1" Flanged Disc which looks like one half of the Pulley. A $1\frac{1}{4}$ " Tyre for the 1" Pulley. 1" dia Cylinders, 2,3,4,5" long, with no holes showing (73-76). A flat S wire Hook. A Torsion Spring (47).
- An Electric Motor is mentioned in the introduction but no details are given.



The sets are above average in size. Apart from 92 Nuts, Bolts and Washers, the No.1 contains 49 parts including 4 off 1" Pulleys, but only 2 tyres. There are 4 in the No.2 plus 2 Road Wheels, and by the No.5 there are 8 of each. Said No.5 has 530 parts (plus 794 N,B&W), including 28 A/Gs, 40 Plates, and 8 of those Cylinders.

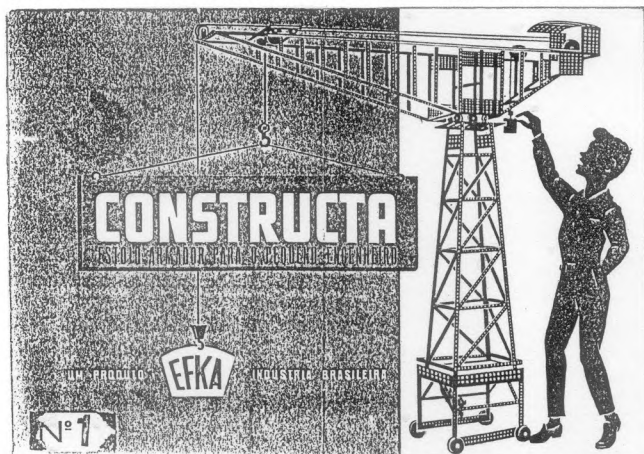
Although the Manual has '1' on its cover, models for Sets 1,2 & 3 are included, and the 10 for Set 1 differ in presentation to the others, and are on pages within the sequence of No.2 models. Some of them look more modern too with a Jeep and a 'Lotus de Fittipaldi', although after both there's a



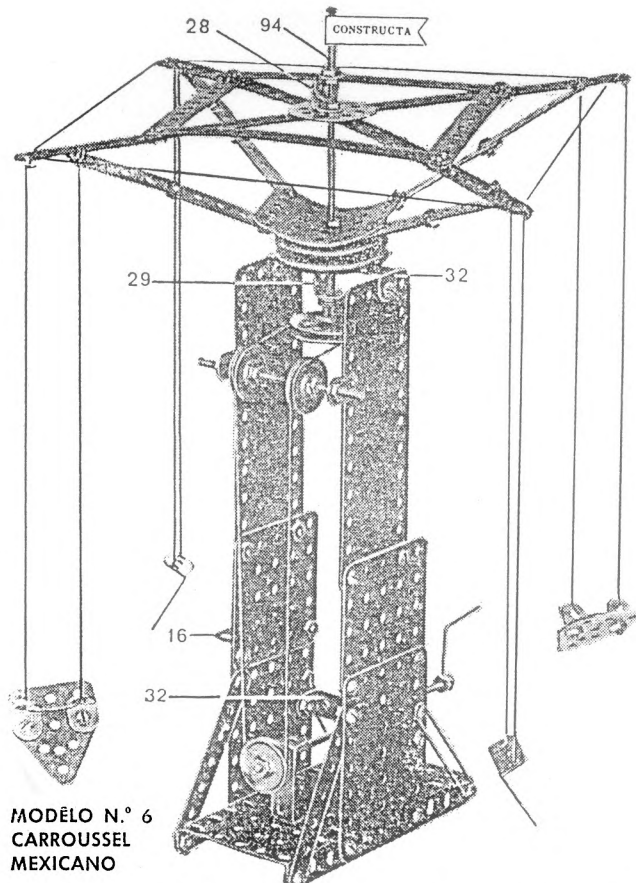
Note saying that 2 extra Tyres, not in the No.1 Set, are needed. What a turn-off, Fittipaldi's Lotus running on 2 tyres and 2 bare Pulleys. All the models are reasonable and two of the better ones are shown here, the Roundabout from Set No.2 and the No.3 Ship. Each of the models in the Manual has a list of the parts needed for it, and they are generally grouped into those needed for the different parts of the models, another STABIL-like feature.

The only clues to when the system was produced are (i) the boy on the manual cover who doesn't look prewar to me, (ii) Fittipaldi won numerous races in a Lotus in 1972-73, and (iii) the Gears, if they are really the STABIL formed metal type, might indicate a much earlier date. No information on colours is available but in the Illustrated Parts in the Manual, the Plates, A/Gs, Strips over 5 holes long, and the Flanged Disc No.40, appear much darker than the other parts.

SUMMARY OF MANUAL •Name: CONSTRUCTA No.1. •Details of maker: EFKA. •Dates &/or Ref Nos: none. •Page size: 292*206mm



deep. •No. of pages: 20 inc covers, unnumbered. •Language: Portuguese. •Printing: all but 2 models are halftones. •Page No. of Illustrated



MODÉLO N.º 6
CARROUSSEL
MEXICANO

Parts & highest PN: 19,99. •Page No. of Set Contents & highest PN: 20,338 (the last 8 indicates the 8th variation of PN 33, basic parts go to PN 100). •Sets covered: 1,2,3. •No. of models for each set: 10,13,3. •Name, Model No., Page No. of first & last model of each set: 1: MESA COM POLTRONA,1,2,5; GUINDASTA DE TORRE,1,11,7. 2: CARRINHO DE CARGA,1,4; GUINDASTA GIRATÓRIO,13, 15. 3: TALHA DE CARGA,1,15; GUINDASTA SÔBRE PONTE,3,17. •Other notes: Models 2 & 3 appear on both pages 8 & 9; details from photocopy.

SMALL ADS

• To assist in the research of the **Trix Construction system** and its production I would be grateful to hear of pre and post-war French produced sets and literature including catalogues. The latter would be most welcome as they give an idea of what was produced. Dutch language products are also wanted, and early German. And has anybody seen a Experitrix, Scientrix or Chemietrix set?

It is hoped that if I can obtain enough factual information of the system as produced in Germany, France and Britain, a definitive book on the subject can be produced. I have already written a book on the Trix model railway system which includes a comprehensive early history of the German origins of the Trix companies.

If you can help with any of the above please telephone or write to me - Tony Matthewman, 12 Ballagarey Road, Glen Vine, Isle-of-Man, IM4 4EA, G.B. Tel: 01624 851 693 (country code from European mainland 0044).

• **PRIMUS ENGINEERING.** I am writing a history of this system and would be interested in the loan or purchase of original/copies of literature/advertising material, and also sets or parts. Particularly interested in information on the PRIMUS electric motor/accumulator and steam engine, W.Butcher & Sons CHEMICAL MAGIC CABINETS, and their wooden constructional systems called POLYTECHNIC, THE YOUNG BUILDER, and PRIMUS BUILDING BLOCKS.

I am also developing a PRIMUS Gauge 1 railway layout for exhibition purposes, and would like to purchase PRIMUS parts for this project, particularly parts which would benefit from repair and restoration; especially seeking BIG WHEEL segments in any condition.

Please contact David Hobson, 'Woodington', Edford Green, Holcombe, Bath, BA3 5DB. Tel. (01761) 232741.

• **OTHER SYSTEMS ARTWORK.** Would like to exchange high quality colour photocopies or colour photographs of interesting artwork from OS set boxes, manuals and advertising material. Please contact David Hobson, address and telephone as above.

EISENZEIT - Geschichte des Metallbaukastens

This book by Helmut Schwarz, Ansgar Henze and Marion Faber has been published by the Nürnberg Toy Museum, to coincide with the large exhibition of OS that was held during last winter. My thanks to Werner Sticht who kindly bought me a copy and sent it over. The title means Iron Age (as opposed to Richter's 'stone age') - The Story of Metal Construction Sets. It has 190 pages, about 220mm square, including some 90 colour plates, mostly in a one section of 60 pages.

The rest of the book has good B&W photos and the two main parts are first about real engineering masterpieces and some models of them; and then the main part, a chronological survey of some 80+ systems with their history and main features. Well over half are German and most of the rest are French and other European, including MECCANO. I think, though I'm not sure, that the systems covered are those that were on show at the Exhibition. Many are new to me or are ones about which I know very little, and the colour photos of the sets, many from the early years and through the 1950s, are a delight. My German isn't good enough to comment on the text but one can get at some of the facts and figures with the help of a dictionary.

The last chapter is about girls and MCS, and after that, brief notes on some of the firms who made metal systems, and an Index.

The price is DM58. Werner has offered, as time allows, to translate certain parts of the book about systems of particular interest, and I shall include these in forthcoming Issues. He also wrote that (inevitably) some errors have crept in and again I hope to mention these in due course.

Snippet. 'New' System: ARMCILO This is about a set called ARMCILO seen on Brazilian Ebay. Apart from 2 extra parts and some very minor differences, the Set is identical to CASTCO's Make-A-Bike outfit described in 39/1167, but with all the text rendered into Spanish. Given the language it probably didn't originate in Brazil, more likely one of the Spanish-speaking South American countries, with Argentina as the most probable.

The Set's box was said to measure 42*26cm and the lid is shown right (ignore the name of the toyshop in white and part of its logo at the top). The only addition to it is 'Establecimiento ROD-MET S.R.L.' along the bottom, perhaps the maker or agent. A date of Dec. 1950 was mentioned in the Ebay ad but without saying what it represented.

Fig.1



The CASTCO's parts were numbered 1 to 12: the new parts are #13 & 14 and occupy previously empty spaces under the red panel at the top of the tray, right. The new parts are shown larger below and are most likely formed rods. The other change is a wire Screwdriver (if original) instead of the previous one with a yellow plastic handle.



Fig.3



Fig.2

The purpose of the new parts isn't known but I suppose they were to be used in new or improved models. I wonder if CASTCO ever added them to the Make-A-Bike set, and if so

whether the model sheet was changed to include them. Or perhaps they were shown in an additional leaflet. There was no mention of instructions in the ARMCILO Ebay ad.

ARMCILO: S1

OSN 49/1486

Snippet: a CONSTRUCTA Outfit

An account of this 100-part Brazilian system, based on a B&W photocopied manual, was given in 14/376. Some details of a No.1 set, the smallest of the 5 basic sets, seen on the Brazilian Ebay follow.

Fig.1a



The outside of the box is whitish and the top of the lid is nearly covered by a label identical in design to the manual cover right. Both their top left corners are printed, or possibly stamped, with the Fig.1a logo. It has some text to its right and its gist, it isn't legible when reproduced, is that Epotec is a company dealing in synthetic resins based in the Brazilian state of Paraná. It has an office at 1740 Avenida João in a town called Gualberto, a head office in Guarayuba, & a factory in Piraquara. It's not clear how, or indeed if, it's connected to CONSTRUCTA. Neither the logo nor the text were on the OSN 14 manual.

Most of the major different parts in the Set can be seen in the open box right. They look like the parts in the OSN 14 Manual, and as would be expected some resemble MÄRKLIN, the Flanged Plate, & the Trunnions (in the bottom right bay); some MECCANO, the DAS, & Curved Strip; and one STABIL, the Wire Stay in the top right bay. The Set looks to be largely complete (the contents were given in an MCS Extra Sheet) and there are actually a few more of some parts than would be expected – the extras include at least 2 of the (yellow) 1" Pulleys, a Curved Strip, & possibly a second Flanged Plate. 'Foreign' parts are the green strips on the Flanged Plate; the silvery formed strip, the padlock, the longer of the two Screwed Rods in the second centre bay up from the bottom, and perhaps the part in the bay above – it possibly has an electrical coil but doesn't really look like a motor (one was mentioned in the Manual but not illustrated). The 2 Tyres

Fig.2



Fig.1



which should be in the Set could be those in the bay above the light blue Plate but it's odd that one seems to be mounted on a black Pulley, and the other is on, or underneath, a probable foreigner. Said part is almost certainly not a Wheel Disc (there is meant to be one in the Set) – it doesn't match the part shown in OSN 14 (a normal 8h Wheel Disc of 3h' diameter, with normal size holes & radial hole pitch).

CONSTRUCTA [1]: S1

OSN 49/1486