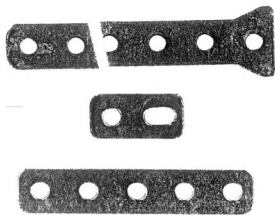


ITEMS FROM LETTERS

1. Roger Baker confirmed that the Patent date on his **U.S. ©1913 MECCANO Manual** is 16TH JANUARY 1906 (see 13/346).

2. From Don Redmond. Referring to **MEK-STRUCT** (OSN 14/392), there is another series of 9 sets (bubble packed on card), each making a model smaller than the 3201-8 outfits. All are vehicles except #32301, a Mini Plane, and 32302, a Mini Helicopter. All have 5-digit numbers and names prefixed with Mini: 323903, Fire Engine; -4, Fork Lift; 5, Racer; 6, Buggy; 7, Loader; 8, Off-roader; 9, Car. The Fire Engine has 89 parts, in the standard colours rather than the red used for the Emergency Vehicles (3213-5).

• On **HANDY CRAFT**, it's not clear in the MCS illustrations that the 15h Strip has both ends splayed, whereas the 11h, as can be seen, is so shaped at only one end. All the Strips and the Fishplate have corners of very small radius (about 3mm), and this gives the DAS a decidedly odd appearance. The 3*3h triangular 'Trunnion' is similar to the VOGUE one but again has small radius corners. [Don kindly sent a Fishplate and 2 Strips, a 5h and an 11h. They are nickel plated, 12.1mm wide, and their holes are 4.4mm Ø, against 4.2mm given in MCS.]



3. On **CONSTRUCTION TRUCK** (14/373), Richard Symonds passed on some more details that he'd had from Don Blakeborough. The Flanged Plate in Don's set had a normal centre hole and not the enlarged one shown in OSN 14, the Axles are 80mm overall with 10mm of thread at each end, and the length and width of the Triangular Plate are both 35mm. The latter is red like the Flanged Plate, and the other parts are blue, except the black Spanner and nickel Screwdriver. The 5mm Ø RH Bolts are 5mm u/h, and the hex Nuts are 6mm A/F.

Richard also sent a photo of what appears to be a **BILD-A-SET** manual cover. The wording on it is in English, including 'Made in U.S.A.'. And there's what may be a copyright date but I can't read it. The models shown are much like those in MCS with holes that look as if they might be at least an inch apart. It is stated that no tools are needed, and there's a sentence in small print that I think reads '170 pieces complete with wooden pegs and dowels'. The latter can be seen in the models and it's possible that all the parts are wooden and the pegs and dowels are a push fit in them.



Another item was the March issue of another U.S. advertising paper called **Toy Trader**, rather similar to *Toy Shop* mentioned in 13/360. The main difference is that it doesn't contain any classified ads, all were from dealers, and I didn't, in a quick run through, spot any for OS in its 108 pages.

4. Points from David Hobson. • The London Toy Co., 0181 864 2186, say that they stock **STEEL TEC** sets, but have no lists. • **Eisenzeit** (ISBN 3-921590-39-6), the book reviewed in 14/377, can be obtained from the UK European

Book Shop, German Dept., tel: 0171 7345259. It costs about £37 plus UK postage, and delivery takes about 3 weeks. [Richard Symonds obtained a copy from Canada by writing directly to the bookstore mentioned in EZ - W. Tümmels Buchdruckerei und Verlag GmbH, Gundelfinger Straße 20, 90451 Nürnberg. Tel: (0911) 64197-0, Fax: (0911) 6419750. The total cost was around £34 including £4 postage and tax. That would have been by surface mail I expect. Richard added "Sure is a winner of a book".]

• When starting to restore some (Belgian) **TECNIC** parts, the paint on a proportion of them was in a particularly poor state and it was found that they had been stamped from sheet zinc instead of the usual mild steel. The Nuts too were solid zinc, 10mm square by 2½mm thick.

5. On **TRIX**, Peter Page asks what surface treatment was given to UK parts, and wonders if it could have been cyanide case hardening, which he adds, was a very cheap mass production method.

6. Some notes from Jeannot Buteux. • **CONSTRUCT-ORAMA (CO')** have discovered the following 'new' systems: **MÉCAMOTEUR**, **MULTIMÉCOS**, **INGÉNIO** [2], **BYG OG LES**, **CONSTRUCTA**, **STRUCTEX**, **KOSTRUKTØR**, **MÉTALLO** [1], **MÉTALLO** [2], **INGÉNIOR**, **NAVIGO**, **DEN LILLE ELEKTROINGENIØR**, **LEONARDO**, **SCHUMANN**, **MATADOR-ELEKTRO**, **PRIMEX**, **TEKNO-ELEKTRO**, **METALLO-MOTOR**, **METALLO-BILER**, **ACQUAVIVA**, **APENES**, **TECNICAVIA**, **LE MÉCANO**, **MÉCANAUTO**, **MASSTER KOWIES** (Polish), **CONSTRUCTOR** (Russian, 4 different types), **MAL'YCH** (Russia), **ARTIMÉTAL**, **MULTI-CONSTRUCTIONS**, **CONSTRUITOUT**, **FALCO** [2] (alias **ASSEMBLO** - this sounds like the **FALCO** mentioned in 5/83 but if so what is **FALCO** [1]?), **FALCO ELET** (alias the 1933 German **ELECTRIC**), **MEC-AÉRO**.

• Of these 3 seem of particular interest, although as yet the only information on them comes from documents - manuals, brochures, etc. **STRUCTEX** is Belgian and has about 112 different parts including a Ball Bearing and 11 A/Gs. The parts are apparently aluminium, like **STOKYS**. **LEONARDO** (Italian, 1947) is generally like **MECCANO** but with some individual parts. Again there is a good range of pieces, and the 'Epsilon' Set contains 1691 parts plus 1333 N/B. Another good size system is **MULTIMÉCOS**, c1950, and the parts include Curved Rods and many pieces with tapped holes.

• The existence of **MULTIMOTORE** has also been confirmed. It was an Italian version of **MULTIMOTEUR** (see 12/304 & 13/360), made under license by G.E.M.M.A. around 1947. It is likely that only 12 Outfits were available, from 3 of the 'groupes'. • Also confirmation that **EFEL** (the version made by Gédé, see 5/91) was produced with coloured parts: red A/Gs, green Strips, and blue Triangles.

• Some years ago CO' discovered a 1921 **ERECTOR** Manual in Dutch.

• On **WENEBRIK** (13/334), Jeannot wrote that he used to have a French Set No.5 with a Manual in French which was different to the British version.

• In answer to Don Redmond (OSN 13/337), the name **ÉCÉPÉ** corresponds to the pronunciation in French of the initials E.C.P., which stand for the École Centrale de Paris, the school for engineers at which Gustave Eiffel was a student in 1852/53. Another thing, a large steel Plate, 19*28h with 2 flanges, and painted black, formed the bottom of **ÉCÉPÉ** boxes.

• CO' have a **TECHMASTER #50 Set** and extra/different details from those in 13/391 are: • The con-

to force a Bolt through if the vertical Strip was the wrong way round. Turning it over solved the problem in most cases but then it wasn't always possible to have the slots in the vertical Strips facing a particular way. That didn't matter in this model but it might well be a problem in a larger structure. This underlines how accurately the parts had to be made to make the system of half-joints work - everything would have been easier if the holes in the parts had been slightly larger, but that would have meant more play in those 90° corner joints. The next thing was that there was only one Nut available for each Bolt that held a Wheel Disc and so if it was tightened the Discs wouldn't turn. This was true of several of the models with wheels. The Threaded Rod which joined the handles at the top wasn't really needed, and removing it released the 4 Nuts needed as locknuts for the wheels. It also made the model look a bit less like a pram. It would have looked better still if the handles could have been at a slightly lower angle but the side of each Curved Strip had to lie against the side of the cross Strip, or alternatively each Curved Strip had to be rotated so one of the angled flats at the end of it was against the cross Strip - but then the minimum turn of 45° made the handles too low.

Everything was a lot easier with the TRIX, and a similar sized model was made, with much the same layout, although the front and back cross members at the top were just Threaded Rods because there were no Strips to spare, or N&B. Probably the MEX model was slightly the better looking even with the ends of the cross Strips sticking out, but where MEX really won was in the appearance of the shiny nickel parts against the dull, patchy looking TRIX.

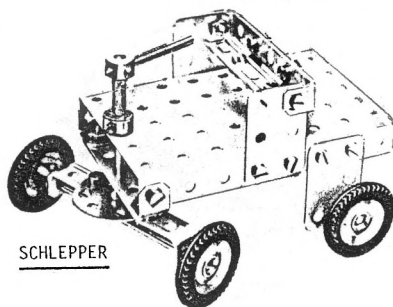
Among the 7 claims made for MEX in the G&T ads is 'Pliable steel strips easily bent to any shape'. The Strips I have are made of fairly soft steel and can be curved, but the slots have to be gripped in pliers to avoid bending at that point. A sharp bend at the end slots did produce some useful DAS and such bends could be straightened out, although to do so more than once would risk the metal breaking.

THANKS are offered to Roger Baker, Richard Gilbert, Malcolm Hanson, David Hobson, and Tony Matthewman for contributing the material used in this account.

STOKYS UPDATE Tony Matthewman kindly sent some leaflets that he picked up at a trade fair early in 1996, and others from January of this year. Mostly nothing has changed since 1994, see 13/335. A 2*A4 colour brochure is identical, except for NEU on the '96 cover, and 96/97 on this year's; a 1996 export price list shows the same items at the same prices except that the small KP 11 set is slightly cheaper.

But one addition to the 1997 range is a Bridge Set, BK 01, at 98 French Francs. No details are given but its price suggests that it might be about the same size as the K1 set that was dropped some years ago. Also a number of packs of parts are shown on a separate sheet, but it isn't clear whether they are a new line. There are 23 in all, (perhaps 24 because one has a price but no other details) from item ET 01-1 to ET 54-1. Most are devoted to a particular type of part - thus packs of Strips, Plates, Tyres, Sprockets, etc, etc. All are 10FR. (Swiss I should think), except 2 at 20 (Sprockets and the mystery one), and 2 large packs - ET 1000 at 220FR, with 1 each of all the 10 & 20FR packs), and ET 2000 at 200FR, with 3 each of the 8 packs that contain structural parts.

A couple of new points in both years. On a separate sheet about the motors, the speed range of the GM 01 & GM 10 motor/gearbox units is given as 100-200 and 20-40rpm respectively. On another sheet is an ad for the KP 11 outfit: it has enough parts to make either a 2-Wheel Luggage Barrow or the Tractor opposite.



HANDY CRAFT I mentioned the Strips from this small 1920s American system in 15/426, and now Richard Symonds has kindly sent photos and some details of a small set that came his way recently, and a few of the parts too for me to measure up. It is in a buff card box 10*6*3½" high with the name of the set - **HANDY CRAFT Windmill** - on the sides in green (below). The lid is printed in red and green, and shows a boy looking at a simple Windmill model (below) which seems to have just been created by a magician (or fiend). The wording says that as well as the featured model there are enough parts to make over 50 others. At the bottom is COPYRIGHT 1926, and the maker: The Hart & Cooley Co., New Britain, Conn., U.S.A. The manual is missing but the set itself is probably fairly complete and the most of the main parts are shown below, followed by some general notes. All parts unless otherwise stated are nickel plated, and all are well made although the Strips are of rather soft steel.



- A 5*11h Flanged Plate is painted a lightish red and flanged on the 11h sides. Some of the centre 3*7 holes are joined to make the initials H C.
- A pea green 8h Wheel Disc which scales at 37mm o.d. 4x1" Wheels, the centres of which appear to be pressed through with one face concave, and with rims formed into a thin 'tyre' shape.
- 2x3½" Axles, 4.00mm Ø, with neat ends finished with a small radius, and a Crank Handle 5" o/a with a 3¼" shank. Cup-shaped Axle Stops of ½" Ø, upset at the centre with a square hole leaving 4 small tabs on the convex face which grip the Axle tightly. They are made of springy steel and have a blue look to them. In the Windmill they are used either side of the Wheel Disc to lock it to the Axle, and pairs back-to-back form small pulleys.
- A flat Wire Hook about 7/8" long. 8-32 N&B with square Nuts 8mm A/F and 2.6mm thick, and Bolts with 7.7mm Ø round heads, and ¼" u/h. A slightly unusually shaped Span'driver, about 27/8" overall.

The illustrations above include a 3*3h Triangular Plate which may not have been part of the Set. The only other parts known are the 1*5*1h DAS, a 7h Strip, and what looks like an Angle Bracket in the illustration of the largest No.4 set in MCS.

'New' System - E.Z. Pronounced 'Easy' of course, given that it's American. Another find by Kendrick Bisset who kindly sent notes, photos, & photocopies. It's one of those small sets with aluminium parts, packed in a card cylinder (below), with marked similarities to the ALUMINUM CONSTRUCTION SET (ACS) & (see 17/467) GIRDER BILT (G B). The full name on the tube and model leaflet is Selfast's E.Z. "Little Mechanic", from Selfast Mfg & Distrib. Corp., New York 11, N.Y. There's no indication of date but no doubt it was from the immediate post-WW2 period.



The tube is about the same size as the G B one and is yellow, with a black diagonal stripe running around it, and with red bands top and bottom. Models in black are shown on the yellow parts.

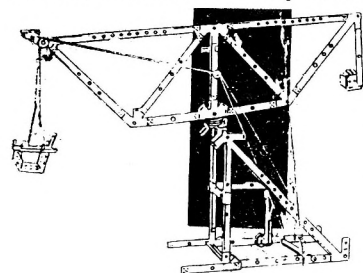
The main similarities with G B are: • 4, 8 & 16h Strips, called Girders in both systems. • Angle Brackets with 2 round holes, called Angle Bends in both. • The same black rubber 1½" Ø Wheels. • The same unusual Spanner (which is a proper fit on the Nuts in this Set). • Mostly identical models, see later.

The main differences are: • The E.Z. Strips though quite similar, have slightly larger holes and more rounded ends. • As well as the Wheels above, 1½" Ø Half Wheels are included, which are said to be 'for gear use'. They are .010" steel discs, painted cream, with a centre hole, and formed around the outer edge so that a pair back to back look as if they would form a pulley. • A 4*7h Perforated Plate is supplied. It is 1.27mm thick with square corners, and is incorrectly described in the Leaflet as a '2"x4" plate'. • The N&B have a larger diameter thread.

• **DATA** (in mm) STRIP: •hole pitch/dia, 12.7/3.7; •width, 12.9; thickness, 1.63 (16h), 1.32 (4 & 8h); •ends near fully radiused. **BOSS**: none. **THREAD**: 5-40 ANC. **AXLE DIA**: no axles. **DP (Mod)**: N/A. **NUT**: hex 7.8 A/F; **BOLT**: round-head 5.6 Ø; both steel.

A few parts were obviously missing from the Set but it is thought that the main ones should be 6, 16, 16 of 16, 8, 4h Strips, and 4 each of the Wheels and Half Wheels. The other parts found were 1 Plate, 13 Angle Bends, 1 Wrench, 7, 11, 6 of 1", ½", ¾" Screws, and 26 Nuts.

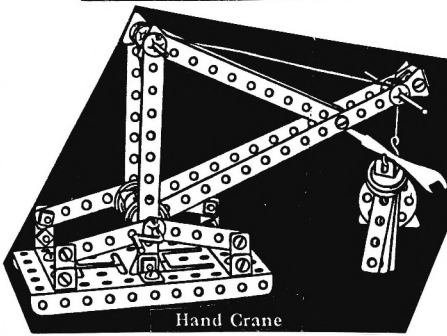
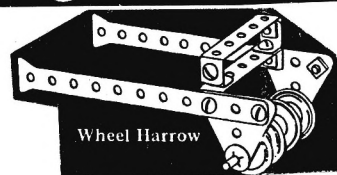
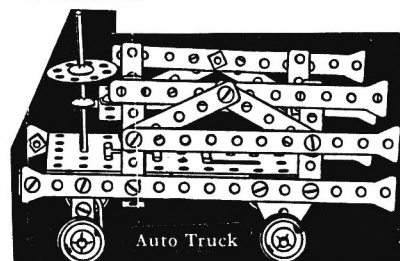
The Model Leaflet is a single sheet 142*218mm, printed on both sides in black on white paper. Part of the front is shown above. 17 models are illustrated (plus A, B, 2 & 3) and there are 4 more, plus 2 repeats, on the tube. Most are in the ACS entry in MCS, including all the three



shown in 17/467, but 2 on the Leaflet are actually MORECRAFT (see 16/432) models which couldn't be made with the E.Z. set. Very odd. One is shown opposite. The Plate and Half Wheel are not used in any of the models.

Another HANDY CRAFT Outfit

David Hobson has discovered an AUTO TRUCK outfit which is packed in a similar box to the WINDMILL set described in 16/453. The only difference is the name and model on the lid. With it was a manual which has 'Made from Handy Craft Set Nos. 1 and 2' at the top of each of the pages that show models. The front cover and the first pages are missing but all the models are present and include the OSN 16 Windmill, and the Auto Truck (above) that is featured on the top of the box. Also opposite, one of the simpler models and a more 'complicated' one. The more attractive looking Railroad Lift Bridge, shown in MCS, is on the inside back cover as an example of a Set 3 model.

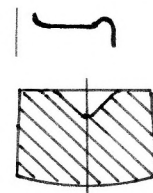


It was mentioned in OSN 16 that the Strips were made of soft steel and in the Introduction it is suggested that parts be bent & straightened as required. It is also explained that the foot of the Strips 'keep the bars from leaning'. This feature is only used in 3 of the 50 manual models, usually with Strips bolted inside the Flanged Plate, as in the Windmill in OSN 16. In practice many of the feet are too short to properly lock against the Plate, so considerable 'lean' is still possible.

SUMMARY OF MANUAL [front cover & 1st leaf missing] •Name: missing. •No details of maker but W.A.A.-7-26-15M on back cover. •Page size: 205*142mm deep. •No. of pages: 16 inc covers, unnumbered. •Language: English. •Printing: models white line drgs on black ground. •No Illustrated Parts/Set Contents. •Sets covered: 1, 2. •No. of models: 50 (all marked for Sets 1 & 2). •Name, Page No. of first/last model [no Model Nos.]: Pitchfork, 6; Auto Truck, 14. •Other notes: the front cover may be as in MCS; a No. 3 model is shown on the inside back cover.

There are many more parts in the box than are needed to make any of the No. 1/2 models in the manual. For example there are 2 Flanged Plates and 8x1" Wheels but no model needs more than half these quantities. So either the Auto Truck outfit contained a generous inventory (it is quite a large box remember), or extra parts/sets have found their way into David's box. As found it contained 4, 8, 20 of 15, 11, 5h Strips; 4 DAS; 8 Flat & 11 Angle Brackets; 2 Flanged Plates; 4 3*3h Triangular Plates; 8x1" Wheels; 2 Wheel Discs, 3, 2 of 3½", 1½" Axles; 2 Crank Handles; 25 Axle Stops; 2 Span'drivers; 45 N&B. The parts are as described in OSN 16 except:

• The Flanged Plates are a dark red, rather like the late 1920s Meccano shade, & the Wheel Discs are nickel. • The DAS and Angle Bracket are formed versions of the 7h Strips and Flat Bracket. • The 1½" Axles have square, sheared ends. Crank Handles have 3½" long shanks and are 4⅝" o/a. Like the Windmill Set ones they are pierced with a 2mm hole 1½" from the shank end. • A cross-section through the Wheel is shown opposite. • Also in the set is the cylindrical cast iron something, shaped as in the section opposite, that I'll call a Dolly. It allows an Axle Stop, placed in the hollow centre, to be easily pushed onto the end of an Axle; otherwise a hard straight push is needed. So it may have been a HANDY CRAFT part but it isn't mentioned in some notes in the manual on the uses of the Axle Stops.



More on HANDY CRAFT These notes are based on:

- Some parts, probably most of a No.3 or a No.4 outfit, and the manual for Sets 1-4 with them (identical to a copy of one kindly sent earlier by Kendrick Bisset).
- Two hitherto unknown outfits from Ebay snippets, one described as a 'Sail Scooter Set' and the other as an 'Airplane Set'.

THE PARTS Most were described in 15/426, 16/453 & 18/506, but variations, and 2 'new' parts are noted below.

- The **Flanged Plate** has 4.2mm Ø holes, against 4.4mm in the other parts.
- The **Wheel Disc** is 36.6mm o.d., likewise the 8h **Bush Wheel**, a part not seen before. The other new part is a 24.8mm o.d. **Bossed Pulley**, about 4.8mm wide across its vee. The **bosses** on both parts are brass, with recessed peening; they are 8.0mm ($\frac{5}{16}$ ") Ø, single-tapped 6-32, and the bore is about 4.1mm.
- The $\frac{3}{2}$ " **Axles** are 3.96mm Ø; the $\frac{1}{2}$ " and the **Crank Handle** are 4.00mm. The latter is the $\frac{4}{8}$ " long type described in OSN 18.
- The parts contained one **Span'driver** & a wire (3.8mm Ø) **Screwdriver**, $\frac{4}{16}$ " o/a. The latter is the only part in the lot which may not be genuine.
- **Coloured parts.** The Flanged Plates in the lot are dark red; all the other parts except the blued Axle Stop, are nickel. A No.4 set is shown in colour on the back cover of the manual (it is on p7 of MCS in B&W), & the coloured parts are the Flanged Plate & 1" Pulley in red, and the Triangular Plate & Wheel Disc in green. The propeller of the Airplane model shown, a 5h Strip, is also red.

THE No.4 SET The picture mentioned above shows a black box with a label similar to the manual cover below, except that it has 'SET No.4' in both bottom corners, and 3 models in the centre orange circle. Two layers of parts clipped to green cards occupy one end, and at the other about one third the area is a compartment with 'Bolts, Nuts and Small Parts' on its black lid. The other two-thirds is empty but a simple No.1 set Monoplane, the one with the red prop, is shown above it, and looks as if it might fit into it. So did the Set include this model ready built?

The difference between Sets 3 & 4 isn't clear as all the relevant models in the manual can apparently be made with either outfit. So perhaps the No.4 had different packaging, additional parts not needed for the manual models, and/or the made-up model.

It isn't clear from the picture of the No.4 set how many of most of the parts were in it, but 3 Flanged Plates are shown, a Bush Wheel, and 4 each of Wheels & Pulleys.

THE No.4 MANUAL is similar in style to the one for Sets 1 & 2 described in 18/506, but covers Sets 1-4, and judging from the PR on p2, 'E.R.H.Co. 4-27-7500', it is a year later. The front & back covers are as in MCS – the front one is shown left, & as with the OSN 18 manual, it has nothing on it to indicate which sets are covered. (All manual covers seen are identical except one offered on its own on Ebay. Its only difference is that the centre circle is white with orange lettering in it. Two pages of No.1 models from it were also shown and they match those in known

manuals.) The 28 unnumbered pages (including covers) of this manual are the same size as the '1-2', and apart from a few very minor layout changes, the first 14 pages are identical except that all the model pages have 'Made from Handy Craft Set Nos. 1' at the top (note the 'Nos.') instead of 'Made from Handy Craft Set Nos. 1 and 2'. Then on pages 15-19, headed 'Made from Handy Craft Set No. 2' are 11 Set 2 models that are not in the OSN 18 manual, from Swivel Crane to Traveling

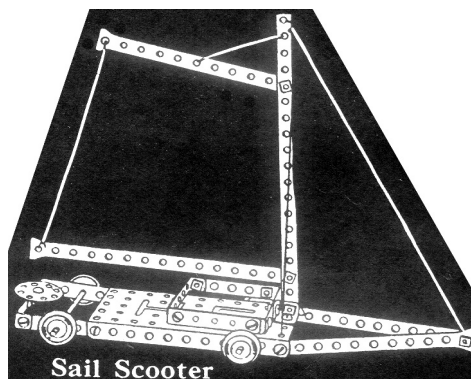
Derrick. Pages 20-27 are all headed 'Made from Handy Craft Set No. 3 & 4', and the 16 models on them go from Traveling Crane to Railroad Lift Bridge (the model in MCS).

The new models are nothing special – the 3/4 ones include the Air-plane right, and the Automobile left with its slightly novel steering linkage.

THE SAIL SCOOTER SET was said to be © 1926. The lid, below, is similar in

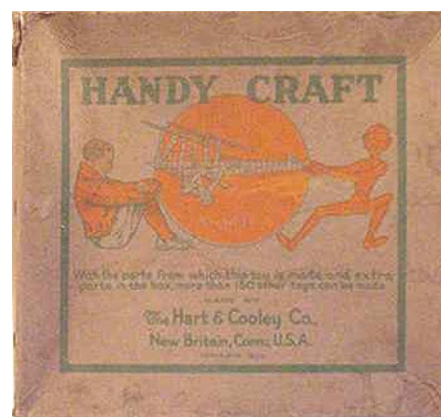


style to those of the Windmill & Auto Truck outfits described in 16/453 & 18/506, but is longer & narrower. The picture of the model in the centre is not very clear but it is undoubtedly the No.1 set model below.

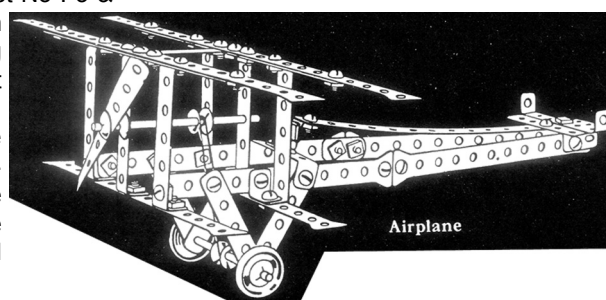


The main items that can be seen in the Set are a manual with 'standard' cover, a red Flanged Plate, and in nickel: 2,4,10 of 15,11,5h Strips (though some of the latter are DAS), 2 Triangular Plates, a Wheel Disc, & 4 Wheels.

THE AIRPLANE SET is in a box, perhaps 11 or 12" square, with the lid



above. In the centre is the No.3/4 model below. All that can be seen clearly in the box is a manual with standard cover, 2 red Flanged Plates, & a nickel Wheel Disc.



presentation of the models is used: instead of just a line drawing for each there is, with one exception, a (rather blurry) photo, a diagram showing the layout of the Triangles in the model, a list of the parts required, and some explanatory notes. In the Set Contents the parts have letter designations as well as a PNs, and the former are used in the Parts Required. As an example the Triangles (Dreiecken in German) are D1 to D6.

SUMMARY OF MANUAL •Name: METALLO TRIGON •No details of Maker, Dates, or Ref Nos: •Page size: 243*155mm. •No. of pages: 40+covers. •Language: German. •Printing: line drg of 1 model; photos of the rest. •Page Nos. of Illustrated Parts/Set Contents & highest PN: C3,30. •Sets covered: 1,2,3. •No. of models for each set: 16,16,16. •Name, Model No., Page No. of first & last model of each set: 1: Leiter,1,5; Hallenkonstruktion, 16,12. 2: Muldenkipper,31,13; Pavillon mit Türe,46,25. 3: Doppelkran,71,26; Brücke,86,40. •Other notes: •C2,4 are blank. •The model illustrated by a line drg is Nr.5, Lastwagen, on p7.

The models include a good selection of Bridges, Structures, Swings, & Cranes, most of which are credible looking. Most of the Vehicles though are rather clumsy looking, witness the No.3 Van on the previous page, full size. As in many of the models the Pulleys, used as wheels in this case, do not seem to have spokes, whereas most do in the line drawings in the 00-0 manual. But no set seen has any solid Pulleys.

One Leaflet with the No.3 has already been mentioned and it also shows 8 models from the 000 outfit, from Leiter to Durchgang, all of which are included as 00 models in the 00-0 manual. Another Sheet with the Set is headed 'Zum Schulgebrauch!' (For School Use!), It has the geometric properties of the 6 Triangles on one side, and a mass of maths formulae on the reverse. Among them are multiplication tables from 11x11 to 19x19, trig functions such as $\text{ctg}(\alpha \pm \beta)$, & the binomial expansion of $(1+x)^n$ – ah, carefree days of youth!

METALLO TRIGON: S2

OSN 30/966

HANDY CRAFT - Still More The piece in 31/935 included mention of the **Airplane Set** and subsequently Kendrick Bisset kindly sent details of a Set he has, and its manual.

The **box** measures $12\frac{1}{4} \times 11\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ " & 150 models are claimed on the lid. The parts broadly correspond to those given on a label, loose now but apparently pasted inside the box at one time. The heading on it is 'HANDY CRAFT Built-up Toys and Sets', and over a list of the parts 'THIS NO. 3 SET OR NO. 3B TOY CONTAINS:' It may be supposed that the No.3 was a straight constructional set, and No.3B, with the same parts, had some of them made into a model. It would be the featured Airplane in this case and the box would be just the right size for it.

The 252 **parts** listed on the label are, with the H C names in brackets, where different: 3 Flanged (Base) Plates; 6,12,7,5x 15,11,7,5h Strips (Plates); 10 DAS (7h Plates Bent); 12 A/Bs (2h Plates Bent); 10 Flat Brackets (2h Plates Straight); 6 Triangular Plates; 4 Pulley (Grooved) Wheels; 4 (Single) Wheels; 2 Wheel Discs (Plain Circles); 1 Bush Wheel (Circle with Hub); 4,1x $3\frac{1}{2}$,1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Axles; 2 Crank Handles (Cranks); 64 Screws; 64 Nuts; 22 Axle Stops (Spring Washers); 1 Hook; 1 Screw Driver – Wrench; 1 Wire Screw Driver.

The **manual** with the Set is the 3rd H C one known and to avoid confusion I'll call:

- the one with the Auto Truck outfit, described in 18/506, the '**1/2**', because all the models can be made from 'Set Nos. 1 and 2' (PR: W.A.A.-7-26-15M) – no doubt that means Set No.1 or No.2;
- this Airplane one, the '**1/2,3**', because as well as the models in the '1/2' it has models for Set 3 (PR: W.A.A.-7-26-5M);
- the one in 31/935, '**1,2,3/4**', because it has models for Set 1, Set 2, & 'Set No.3 & 4' (PR: E.R.H.Co. 4-27-7500).

The '1/2,3' has 24 pages plus covers, sized as the other manuals, and with the usual front cover. The model pages for the 1/2 models are as in the '1/2'; the remaining 12 pages have 24 models for Set 3, from Automobile to Railroad Lift Bridge. The

HISTORY If I've understood *Bk* correctly the system was patented in Germany (No.258829) by Frau Dr. Frieda Lehner of Kelsterbach am Main (near Frankfurt), in April 1913, from an application dated June 1912. A U.S. patent 1103781 was granted to Alfred Lehner of the same town in July 1914, from an application filed in March 1913. The dates in *Bk* for the various firms involved with M-T differ slightly from those given in 15/416, but the end points are the same. Also mentioned in *Bk* is a 'Kriegsbaukasten (war set), as well as the 000-3 range, but I'm not sure if this was devoted to warlike models, or just a wartime expedient in terms of packaging etc. A German trade ad in Nov. 1913 (*Bk*, p155) lists agents in Amsterdam, Hamburg, London, Paris (Maerklin Frères & Cie, 410 Rue St. Honoré), New York, & Vienna.

The London agent was William Seelig & Co. and they first advertised M-T in the April 1913 *Toy & Fancy Goods Trader*. No details were given but sets could be inspected at 19 Fore Street, London, E.C. The next mention was in an article in the Oct. 1913 number when Seelig & Co. were given as the agent, and the parts were said to be 'plated' – could that mean nickel? Boxes No.1, 2, & 3 were available, at 6, 12, & 20/-, plus linking sets 1a & 2a at 6 & 8/-. The article included line drawings of 2 sets, probably a No.1 & a No.2. In both the parts are in 2 rows of 3 compartments each at one side of the box, and on a card filling the rest of it. The lid labels are as the No.0 in OSN 5, but the No.2 does not cover the whole lid. An article in the July 1914 issue mentions sets at 2, 4, 6, 12, & 20/-, with supplementary sets at 2, 4, 6, 12/-. So that would no doubt not include the 000. Samples could be seen at the sole agent for the UK & the Colonies: Lewis Wild, 12-14 Barbican, London, E.C. - no longer Seelig. No ads from after WW1 are known.

inside covers are blank and C4 just has the PR & Printed in U.S.A.

The '1,2,3/4' has all the '1/2' models but they are now for Set 1. The 11 models for Set 2 include 8 of the No.3 models from the '1/2,3', and the 3/4 models are the remaining 16 from the '1/2,3'.

Questions arising (assuming that the 2 manuals with '26' in their PR came before the '1,2,3/4' with '27').

- The models in the '1/2' manual are all for either set, so what was the difference between the 2 sets? The possibilities are the same as those for the 3 & 4 discussed in 31/935.
- Second, why were the No.2 models separated in the '1,2,3/4' manual? Perhaps customers felt cheated if having bought a No.2 there were no specific models for it.
- A few of the No.2 models in the '1,2,3/4' manual need more parts than those in the No.1 models. In particular the 3 new models that are not ex-No.3 ones need 2 Flanged Plates, so did the contents of the No.2 change with the advent of the '1,2,3/4' manual?
- What were the contents of the 3 smaller named sets? Each claims over 50 other models on the box lid, and there are 50 models in the '1/2' manual, so perhaps the sets contained at least the contents of the No.1.
- None of the manuals has more than 77 models, so where are the rest of the 150 claimed for the Airplane set?
- Was the Airplane model included ready made in the Airplane set? And did the other named sets include a built-up model? The Windmill & Auto Truck boxes would be large enough for their featured models, but the Sail Scooter box scales at $12\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ " in plan and is probably no more than 2" deep - so it would only take the model if its mast & rigging were removed.
- Bearing in mind the built-up Airplane shown with the No.4 set in the '1,2,3/4' manual, was a built-up model included in any of the other numbered sets?
- Did Sets 1-4 actually exist? They are mentioned in the manuals but the 6 outfits known to me all are named sets. Early days though because H C sets are uncommon.

HANDY CRAFT: S2

OSN 32/966