

Bands (Light) and have the following for Sets 000/00/00/1: Hanks of Cord, 1/2/2/2; Bolt & Nut, 22/25/50/100 of each.

The other parts in Sets 000/1 are: 0,2,0,4/6,12,10,6 of 3,5,7,11h Strips; 2/6 DAS; 2/4 Curved Strip; 4/8 Flat Brkt; 4/15 A/B; 0/4 Rev A/B; 2/6 each of Flat/Trunnions; 1/1 Flgd Plate; 0/2 Flgd Sector Plate; 0/19 Flex Plates; 2/4 Pulley & Rubber Ring; 0/1 each Small Pulley, w & w/o Boss; 1/1 Bush Wheel; 0/1 Wheel Disc; 2/4 Axles; 1/1 Crank Handle; 0/1 Hook; 4/8 Spring Clip; 1 each Spanner & Screwdriver.

**MANUAL SUMMARY** •Name: ALPHA •Details of maker: ALPHA CONSTRUCTION TOYS FACTORY, SHANGHAI, CHINA. •Dates &/or Ref Nos: none. •Page size: 227\*153mm. •No. of pages: 42+covers. •Language: English. •Printing: dark blue with ½-tones of 'Meccano' models & line drgs of others. •Page Nos. of Illustrated Parts & highest PN: 2,72a. •Page Nos. of Set Contents & highest PN: 3,74. •Sets covered: 000,00,0,1. •No. of models for each set: 29,38,9,33. •Name, Model No., Page No. of first & last model of each set: 000: GARDEN SEAT,15; BOXTER TRAINING,29,13. 00: INVALED CHAIR,30,14; CRANE,67, 23. 0: CHEVALIER,68,24; PEDICAB,76,25. 1: SWIVEL CHAIR,77, 26; HWA-PIAO (CHINA PALACE PILLAR),109,42. •Other notes: C2-4 blank; Intro on p1. Some, but not all, of the incorrect model names have had new names pasted over them (and some of those have been torn off).

So, quite a thick manual with a page size a little larger than A5. All the text is English and in the Intro it is said that 'ALPHA runs a special service department to satisfy the desires of the young engineer as to the manner of construction and purchase of extra parts. All letters will be given special attention.' But the only address given is the Shanghai one on the front cover.

The 67 **models** for Sets 000 & 00 are all MECCANO models from the H W manual, with the same presentation of a halftone plus a parts list for each. After that there are a few MECCANO models but most are a fair range of original, simple designs with a clear line drawing of each. Four No.1 models were shown on the previous page, the Boat is full-size, the Jet 75%, & the others 50%. No list of parts is given for any

of the 0 & 1 models.

**REMARKS** There are several links between ALPHA & H W. Both were made in Shanghai. Their Illustrated Parts pages are identical, with the same PNs except that the former has '72a' under the Bolt. Also the 00 Set Contents match except that a Spanner & 2 more Rubber Rings have been added to the ALPHA outfit. And as has already been noted the H W models are used in ALPHA. Perhaps ALPHA came a little later than H W, or perhaps it was improved a little for export.

The original MCS ALPHA with its sets up to No.3, is no doubt a later phase. The cover is completely different and has 'ALPHA CONSTRUCTION MODEL 1' in the centre with a boy and 6 models around it. One of the models is the Lorry on the present cover, and two are larger models of a Gantry Crane & a Railway Breakdown Crane. The range of parts has been doubled and new 3- & 4-figure PNs have been introduced, but the illustrations of the parts common to the present ALPHA are identical except that the MÄRKLIN-type Hook found in David's set is shown. 2 unusual spellings have survived: Flate Trunnion & Screw-Driver. The contents of Sets 000-1 are unchanged except that 2 of Driving Band (Light) are added to Sets 0 & 1; 2,4,4,4 Hanks of Cord replace 1,2,2,2 in the 4 sets; 3 extra Bolts have been added to Set 000, and 5 extra N&B to Set 00. Finally, the page (20) of 4 models in MCS has identical model photos to those on a page (19) of the present manual (the Model Nos. differ & the PLs have been changed somewhat).

A different manual cover is shown in the /FB MCS and it is identical to the present one except that it has no text on it, just '00' in the top right corner. It isn't known if the 000-3 Set Contents also relate to this manual, but most likely not.

Very few WISDOM etc models look similar to the ALPHA designs and it's probably fair to say that they are generally not as attractive.

OSN 32/943

ALPHA [1]: S2

**Snippet – A MECANIC Set** This Ebay item was a set said to be Belgian. The lid, right, scales at 5¼\*6¾" and there is probably an '0' is the cream circle. The models on it seem to be made of green Strips. Like the lid, the bottom of the box has red sides, and in the Ebay photo it is full of MECCANO & TECNIC parts, plus a red Pulley Disc that looks like the 39mm MERCATOR one described in 29/851, and a red 3\*3h Plate, possibly flanged, and possibly also MERCATOR. Below some model sheets, each with a front like the lid picture but in B&W. Not much else of interest can be seen except that the few legible words are in French.



There are brief details of a Belgian MECANIC in MCS. It is said to be from the same family as MERCATOR and to have polished steel parts with 5mm holes at 12.4mm pitch. The MCS manual



cover shows a typical MERCATOR scene with a boiler-suited boy waving a spanner and flying through the skies astride a floatplane. So it remains to be seen, I think, whether these two MECANIC's are one and the same.

OSN 32/943

MECANIC [6]: S1