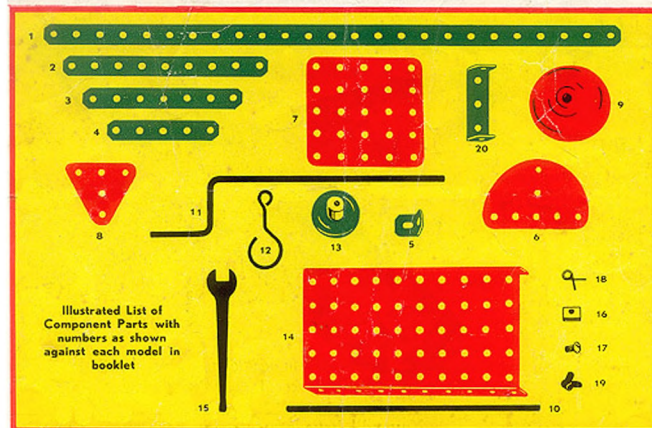


New System - METALCRAFT Chas Shrubsole came across the back page of a manual in Canada and kindly send a copy (opposite) via Don Redmond. That is all that's known of this system, but apart from there being no A/G, the page is virtually identical to the back cover of the PIONEER manual, as shown in MCS. The pages are the same size, and the layout of the parts and the PNs are the same; there are the same strips on either side of *MODELS* under the name, and the same 'Designed and printed in Great Britain' underneath. The PIONEER heading is shown opposite above the METALCRAFT page. So it must be likely that the two systems were made by the same manufacturer. It isn't known for sure who made PIONEER but because of the obvious resemblance of the parts to VOGUE, it may have been Vogue Playthings Ltd. of Melton Mowbray. Whether METALCRAFT was intended for the Canadian market isn't of course known. Looking at the PIONEER and METALCRAFT back covers it does look as if the latter came first and the 11h A/G was squeezed in afterwards. Of the 25 models in the PIONEER Manual, this part is used in 8 of the last 11. A new MCS Sheet will be prepared for METALCRAFT later, in case in the meantime anyone comes up with anything else on it. Metalcraft Corp. was the

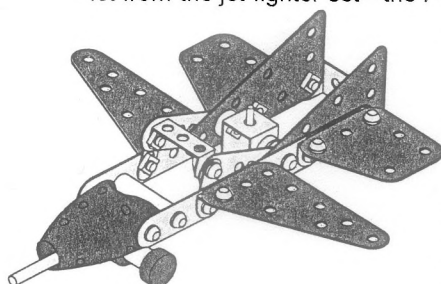
PIONEER MODELS METALCRAFT MODELS



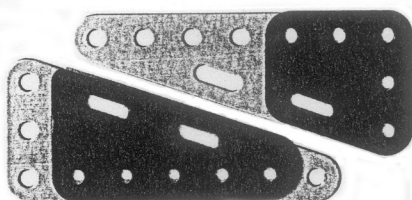
Designed and printed in Great Britain.

name of the American company that made METALCRAFT aircraft and train constructional sets, and so the new system will be listed as METALCRAFT [1].

THE STEEL TEC F-18 FIGHTER 'SK' SET In OSN 12/323 I mention the various SK sets shown on the Leaflet for the Motorcycle. Chas Shrubsole has now kindly sent the Leaflet from the jet fighter set - the *F-18 FIGHTER WITH SPRING SUSPENSION* - and again it's labelled item #7080, © 1993. It contains 78 parts and there are one or two points of interest.



F-18 FIGHTER WITH SPRING SUSPENSION



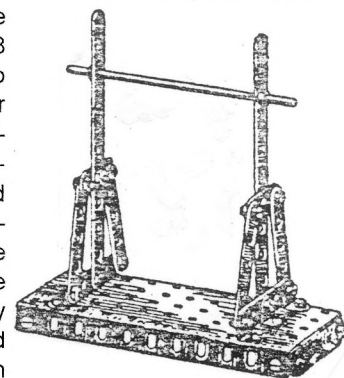
The nose is a 5*3 hole blue Plastic Plate curved around and fastened underneath by a N&B. The latter also carries a Rod and Strip Connector which holds the Rod that comes out of the nose. The Triangular Plates, all red, are shown with different hole configurations in the different illustrations in the Leaflet, but the actual ones are as shown opposite, superimposed on the 3*7h MECCANO part. Pairs of black Wheels, CR and GP, push onto axles that pass through the yellow front and rear undercarriage members, CT and CA. The rear unit is shown with a Spring, AS, but it seems not to do anything because the Axle HD passes through the bottom (round) holes in the Double Bracket, M. But that's odd too because the other parts M are 1*2*1h DAS (plus a centre hole) and there's no Double Bracket shown in the Set Contents. One of the DAS, M, can be seen over the cockpit and it looks as if it ought to be the NS style, but in the set it's of normal width.

QUERIES 1 and 13. On the TRIX thread, from 9/224, and the hole spacing, from 7/166. Tony Matthewman kindly sent copies of postwar UK official workshop drawings for a Strip and an A/G, and the pitch of the holes is shown as .307", both lengthways and crossways. That works out at 7.798mm and so probably the original German dimension was 7.8mm. Why 7.8? Tony suggested that it might be the minimum value to ensure that the Nuts in the different holes didn't interfere with one another, and in fact if all the holes in the outside rows have N&B in them there is just room for the Nuts to turn. The centre holes are all free but with no room for a Nut or Bolt in any of them.

So if the idea was to have the Strips as small as possible given the size of the Nuts, why that size of Nut? Perhaps because it was the standard for whatever thread was originally used. But we don't know exactly what thread that was; its diameter was probably 3.5mm or .138", and the pitch was .8mm or, almost the same, 32tpi. The Belgian No.19 thread (OSN 8/203) might fit the bill but would a German firm have used a Belgian thread? Can anyone suggest an equivalent German or Continental thread, now obsolete.

Another point from the drawings, the hole size is .145", very close to 3.7mm, the probable German diameter.

22. Richard Symonds kindly sent a copy of the 2 panel model leaflet for Australian CONSTRUCTO, with illustrations that look just like the MCS entry. Most of its 18 simple models appear to be direct copies of prewar MECCANO manual models, and include all 4 patterns of 5½*2½" Flanged Plate. But I don't recognise two or three of the models and they have Flanged Plates with only the two long flanges, and with elongated holes in them. For example in the Horizontal Bar opposite.



HORIZONTAL BAR

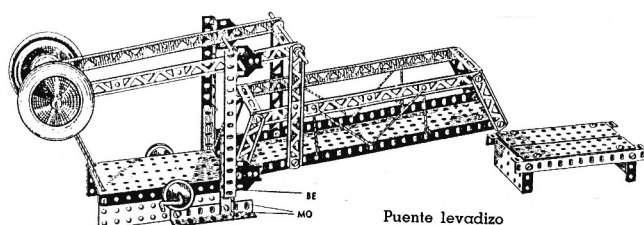
So I'd like to know what the CONSTRUCTO Flanged Plate, and the other parts, were really like.

Notes on EL NUEVO INGENIERO ARGENTINO

After WW2 a number of new systems appeared in Argentina, most of them based on MECCANO, but one or two drew inspiration from elsewhere. EL NUEVO INGENIERO ARGENTINO (ENA henceforward) was clearly a copy of ERECTOR, and most of what is known of it is included in MCS/FB. This adds a few details to the /NZ entry, such as the manufacturer: C.C.I.A., Concepcion Arenal 4855, T.E. 54-0664, Buenos Aires; and dates of ? to 1960, against the original 1945-55.

But more details are now available thanks to Richard Symonds who recently came across the remains of a No.2 outfit. He kindly sent me a photo and a Curved Girder, and also lent me the Manual.

Modelos para construir con los N° 5 y 6



The full colour cover of the Manual is similar to the box lid, and has a man and boy starting work on a model of the suspension bridge in the background. Inside, apart from the Spanish text, it could easily be mistaken for a genuine ERECTOR manual. The illustrations of the models are all identical to those in a 1949 ERECTOR manual I happened to have, with the layout of some pages being exactly the same. ENA models are shown for Sets 1 & 2, 3 & 4, and 5 & 6 - the first come from the ERECTOR models for Sets 1 & 1½, the 3 & 4 from the ERECTOR 2½ & 3, and some of the 5 & 6 are from the ERECTOR 3½, and some from the #4½. A page of Standard Constructions is also identical, and so are the 2 pages of Illustrated Parts, except for the motors. For ENA the P55 and A47 motors are shown, together with a No.1 transformer. In fact of all the parts shown, the A47 was the last to be included in the ERECTOR range, in 1950. So this particular manual must have been after that. The manual cover in MCS doesn't have the 'ES UN PRODUCTO C.C.I.A.' in the bottom right corner, and so must have been a different edition. In passing though the name C.C.I.A. is there, the only address is that of the Buenos Aires printer.

Of the 115 or so parts shown in the Illustrated Parts many, including all the gears, Braced Girders, motors, boiler, chassis, fairground and electrical parts, weren't needed to make any of the models shown for sets up to #5/6. At the time these may not have actually been avail-

able because a page of larger ERECTOR models is headed 'in preparation', and in the Introduction a #7 Set and a motor are promised for the future.

The different parts in Richard's Set are 2½", 5" and 2½" Curved Girders, which look darker than normal nickel ERECTOR parts and may be polished steel; a bright (or grey) looking 2½*5" Flanged Plate, and a yellow one 1*2½"; red Trunnions and Flat Trunnions; brass finished Bush Wheel and 1" Pulleys; a bright Wrench, MM; and a 4" Axle and Crank Handle. From the models in the Manual there ought to be 10" Girders and DAS in the #1/2 Outfit - additional parts in the #3/4 would be large MH Road Wheels, 5*3h Perforated Plates, and 5" Curved Girders; and in the #5/6, 25h, 13h and 7h A/Gs, 6h*6h #MY and 25*6h MN Baseplates, (narrow) Strips, and the little House, MX.

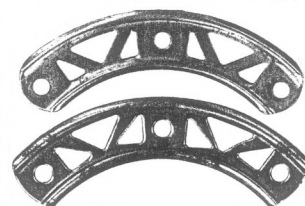
From the photo all the parts look just like the ERECTOR pattern except the Curved Girder (below) which has tapered cross bracing instead of the normal parallel type shown underneath. The straight line pitch of the outer holes of the ENA version at 2.46" is slightly less than the standard 2.50", and their diameter is slightly larger at 4.4mm. Richard wrote that some of the parts have rather ragged back edges but that the Spanner is superior to the ERECTOR part.

SUMMARY OF MANUAL •Name: EL NUEVO INGENIERO ARGENTINO •Details of maker: C.C.I.A. •Dates &/or Ref Nos: printer's name on IBC. •Page size: 275*174mm deep. •No. of pages: 24 inc covers, un-numbered. •Language: Spanish. •Printing: b&w line drawings, multi-coloured covers. •Page Nos. of Illustrated Parts List & highest PN: 22-23, OF (ERECTOR notation). [No Set Contents] •Sets covered: 1-6.

•No. of models for each set: 1&2, 46; 3&4, 26; 5&6, 22. •Name, Page No. of first/last model of each set [No Model Nos.]: 1&2: Criba de arena, 3; Poste telefónico, 6. 3&4: Vagón de sube y baja, 8; Grúa

de viga giratoria, 14. 5&6: Vagón cerrado, 15; Puente levadizo, 20.

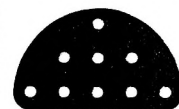
•Other notes: 1) The names of the models above in a 1949 ERECTOR manual are: Gravel Screen, Telephone Pole, (sets 1&1½); See Saw Wagon, Revolving Crane, (2½&3); Box Truck, (4½), Liftbridge (3½). 2) Larger ERECTOR models are shown on p21 and the back cover.



More on METALCRAFT This was the small system with parts just like PIONEER (14/393), but with no 11h A/G. Soon after OSN 14 appeared a plastic bag of parts was found in a mixed lot from a dealer, and folded up inside the bag was the back page from the METALCRAFT manual, identical to the one that was the source of the earlier information. The parts are shown in colour on its outside face and on the other side (p15) is the Aeroplane model that is shown for PIONEER in MCS, and that has 'Page 15' on it too. 2 of the A/Gs (PN 21) are called up in the Parts List for the PIONEER model (and there are 2 less 9h Strips), but none are actually shown in it. However in a different PIONEER manual belonging to Malcolm Hanson, the same model is shown on the same page but shows the A/Gs used in the rear fuselage. So it's likely that the illustrations weren't changed in the manual for the early PIONEER sets, and this reinforces the notion that METALCRAFT came before PIONEER. All the PIONEER models that use A/Gs could easily be made by substituting Strips for them.

All the different METALCRAFT parts were in the plastic bag except the Spring Clips, the Spanner, the Road Wheel, the Hook, the Semi-circular Plate, and the 25h Strip, and no 'foreigners' were present. All the parts were just like VOGUE except that the red parts were a lighter shade, but not quite as bright as the PALIKIT red. VOGUE-style parts vary in detail and the boss of the Pulley found was the longer type, the Axles and Crank Handle had the painted black finish, and the Nuts were square.

Along with the bag of parts were some loose VOGUE-like parts, most of which certainly weren't METALCRAFT. There were though 4 Semi-circular Plates which just might be - 2 were in matching red, and the others were very slightly darker and had 2 extra holes, as shown opposite. Similar ones with the extra holes were found in Malcolm's PIONEER set but again there were too many 'extra' parts to be sure that they were original.

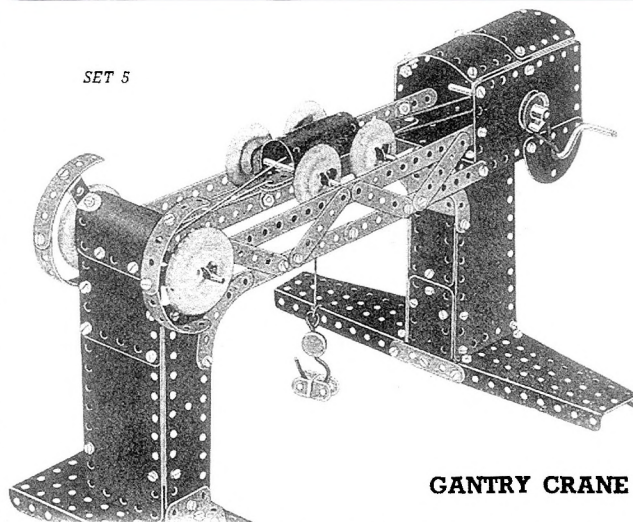


CONSTRUCTO That's the UK one, and some notes on probable parts from it were given in 19/539. Now 2 sets have been found, nearly identical, which for reasons to be explained, were likely to have been factory experiments. However the parts in them can be assumed genuine. My thanks to Malcolm Hanson who discovered the sets, & to David Hobson who lent me one, and provided a photo & notes on the other.

The boxes are 16¼" x 11¼" x 1½", green, with the whole top (above) printed to show a river scene with the name on a red panel, and 2 models in B&W. One is exactly as, and one is similar to, manual models. Above the bridge is an aeroplane which looks very like a Comet IV, and that first flew in 1958. The parts are attached to a fawn backing board which is about 3 times as big as the box. It has 2 wings which fold over with the parts upside down, first one, and then the second, so there are 3 layers of parts in all.

There is no indication of the outfit number. The set looks unused but contains no Brackets, N&B, Axles/Crank Handle, or Tools. There are 2 cutouts which could house boxes for small parts, and there would be room for the other missing items, but no holes have been punched for them. So that is one reason for the 'experimental' supposition. As well, whilst 1" long shaped metal clips are used to hold some of the parts, the others are secured by lengths of paper covered wire. The contents of the two aren't quite the same either, with 2 extra 5h Strips in one & different Road Wheels - one has 8x the 40mm grey balloon type, while the other has 4 similar but 51mm Ø, plus 4x 1" bossed Pulleys with black Tyres. 2 sizes of Wheel are included in the Parts List in the CONSTRUCTO manual (see MCS), and the model in MCS, and others in the Manual, show up to 8 balloon type Wheels, with some always looking larger than others. This can be seen in the No.5 model above, and also visible is the Hook, not yet seen in the flesh.

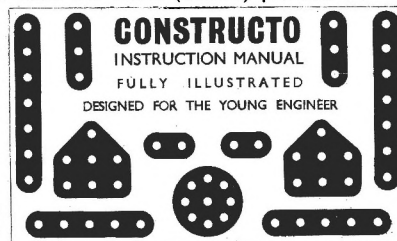
Notes on **parts** not described in OSN 19 follow, together with differences from the previous account. Holes are 4.0-4.1mm Ø unless otherwise stated. • The 25 & 15h **Strips** match the 11h with 4.6-4.7mm holes. The 7h is like the 5h. • The hole pitch in the 11h **A/G** is 12.7mm. • The 1*5*1h **DAS** has 4.7mm holes; the 1*3*1h is nickel, and one has 4.7mm holes, against 4.0mm in the other 3. • The 40mm **Road Wheel** matches the UMAKIT part (13/339) and the



GANTRY CRANE

The Sets had identical **manuals**, both enclosed in a light brown paper wrapper with the front (below) printed in green. The manual includes the MCS pages, & has the Petrol Tanker on the cover. It contains 12 pages including covers, 191*114mm deep, all in B&W, with 14 models inside, unnumbered. Those for Set 3 go from Delivery Van on C2 to Light Drawbridge on p2; for Set 4: Hammer-head Crane on p2 to Aerial Conveyor on p5; and for Set 5: Light Army Tank on p6 to Suspension Bridge on C3. There is one good photo of each model and all are slightly modified versions of MECCANO 1937-61 period models, usually from the same numbered set, though the No.5 'improved' Gantry Crane above was for the No.4 MECCANO Outfit. The Spare Parts Price List is on C4.

The similarity between CONSTRUCTO & UMAKIT is heightened by 2 points - first the 1" metal clips used to hold the parts are identical in both, and they are unusual, with ends that are reduced in width from 5.2 to 3.5mm - secondly, the backing boards are made from similar, textured card, & the cutouts in them for small parts boxes have the same type of fold-down wings.



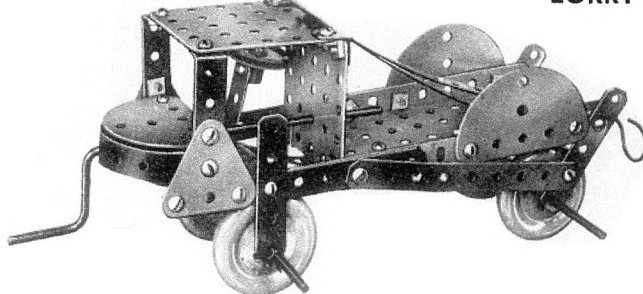
METALCRAFT This is the METALCRAFT that is closely related to PIONEER & VOGUE, and some details of it were given in 14/393 & 15/421. The only part of the manual available at the time was the back cover, but now thanks to Don Redmond & Clive Weston, particulars of the whole manual are to hand.

SUMMARY OF MANUAL •Name: METALCRAFT •Details of maker/dates/Ref Nos: none. •Page size: 223*141mm deep. •No. of pages: 16 inc covers. •Language: English. •Printing: ½-tone models; colour covers. •Page No. of Illustrated Parts List & highest PN: 16,20. [no Parts List or Set Contents] •Sets covered: one unnumbered. •No. of models: 25. •Name, Page No. of first & last model: BOARD & EASLE,3; AEROPLANE,15. [no Model Nos.] •Other notes: very similar to the PIONEER manual.

OSN 25/740

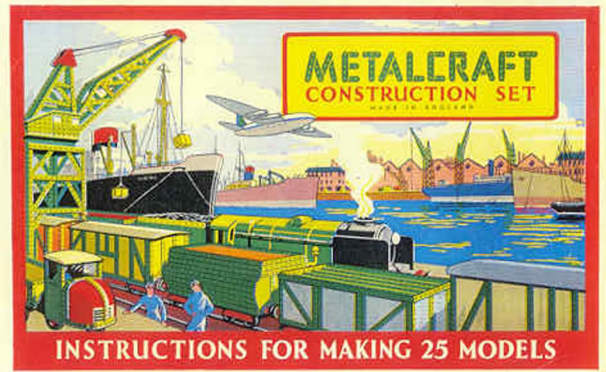
METALCRAFT
MODELS

BREAKDOWN LORRY



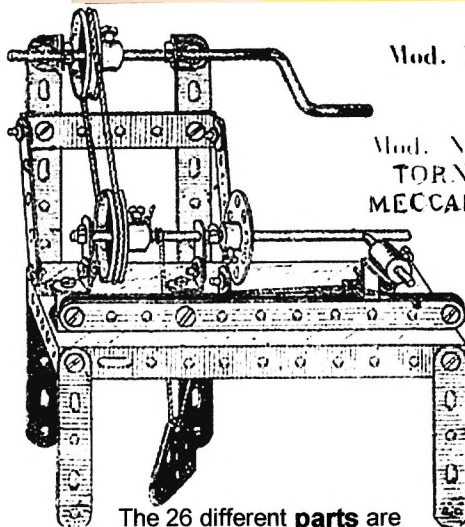
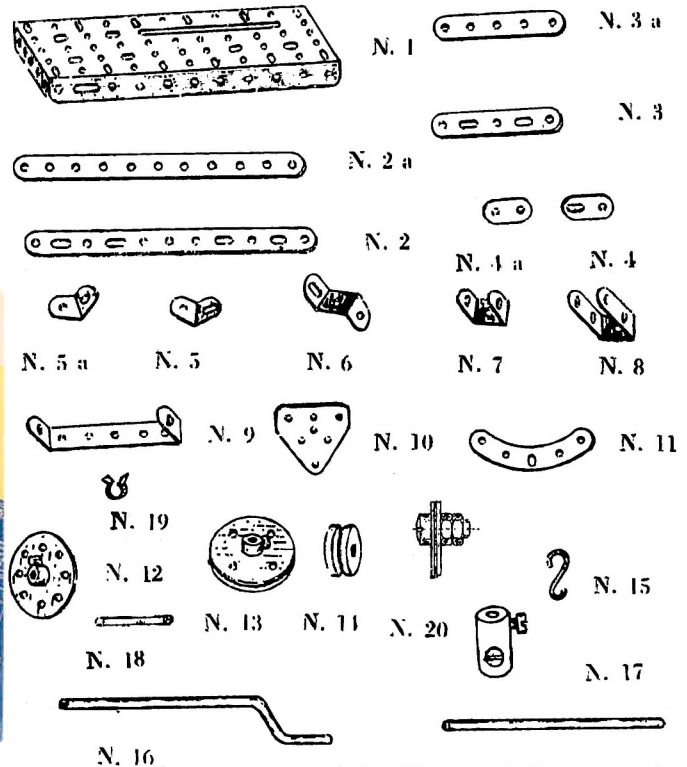
Compared with my PIONEER manual, in which 2x 9h A/Gs are used in some of the models, 16 of the METALCRAFT models are exactly the same, while the other 9 (the Swing Boat on p7, the Swing on p10, and the last 7) are very similar but with 9h Strips used instead of the A/Gs, and a few other changes, notably to the Windmill & Breakdown Lorry on p13. The latter is shown on the previous page.

The METALCRAFT cover, right, is similar in style to the PIONEER, and to the coloured VOGUE pattern, shown in 17/466-7. Its typeface and the wording on the inside front cover, are identical to the PIONEER version.



'New' System IL METALTECNICO

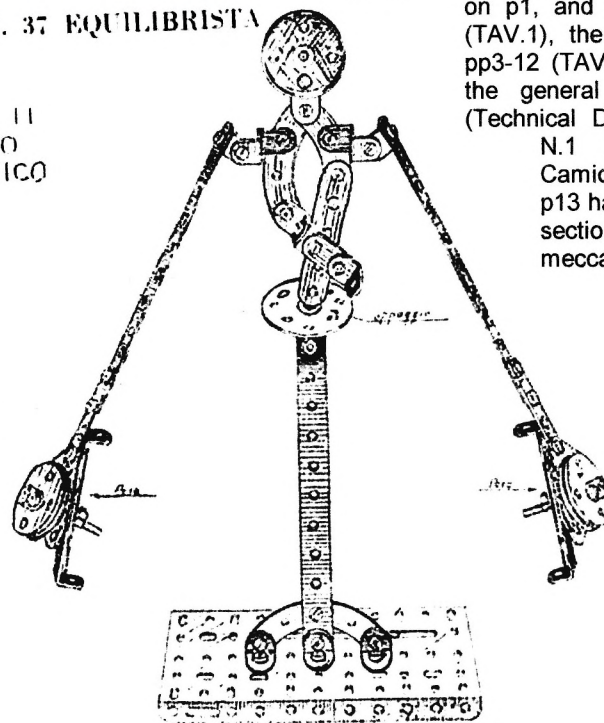
Jacques Pitrat kindly sent copies of some pages from the manual of this small Italian system. No actual parts are known. The manual cover is shown below – the name is orange and the blueprints, & an orange boy holding a set square, are in a yellow panel. At bottom left is Scuola Tipografica Istituto Artigianelli (perhaps Craft Dept., School of Printing), 2 via Magenta, Monza, presumably the manufacturer. The words under IL METALTECNICO mean 'Design – Physics – Construction'.



Mod. N. 11
TORNIO
MECCANICO

The 26 different parts are shown top right, and the unusual features are the hole pattern in the Flat Trunnion, the slotted versions of the 5 & 11h Strips, the slot in the Curved Strip, and those in the Flanged Plate, especially the long slotted hole towards one end of the side flange. No indication of the size of any of the parts is given.

The manual has 24 pages about 25*17cm, plus covers, all plain except the front. The pages aren't numbered but most have a 'TAV' (Table) number. After an Introduction



Mod. N. 37 EQUILIBRISTA

on p1, and the Illustrated Parts on p2 (TAV.1), the manual is in 2 parts. On pp3-12 (TAV.2-11) are 20 models under the general heading Disegno tecnico (Technical Design), and they run from N.1 Ponte (Bridge) to N.20 Camioncino (Light Lorry). Then p13 has an Introduction to the next section, Elementi di fisica e meccanica (Elements of physics & mechanics), p14 is blank, and pp15-24 (TAV.12-21) show 20 models from N.21 Bilancia a piatti (Pair of Scales), to N.40 Ginnasta (Gymnast).

Models. The 2 pages of models which Jacques sent give an idea of the scope of the system. The first from the Disegno tecnico section shows two models and an explanation of a 3-view drawing of a pulley. The models are a Deck Chair and the Lathe left. A page from

the second section has some notes on mechanical stability and two models which demonstrate two aspects of it, a Spinning Top and the High-wire Walker left.

of Rods pushed into Clips.]

7. From Philip Woodcock. "• On **METALCRAFT** (24/689), provided there is very little actual rusting of the steel underneath, the tarnish causing the 'dull patchy grey finish' can be easily removed with metal polish, especially using wadding-based polishes such as Duroglit or Silvo. With sufficient elbow-grease the results are really splendid and give an almost chrome-like appearance.

• On **CONSTRUMENTS** (see 5/79), a Set 200 recently acquired is described on the box lid (via a stuck-on overlabel) as 'Cinematograph and Optical set'. Its manual, which runs to 112 pages and 111 models, refers to British patents 289574 of 2/2/1927, 305780 of 3/1/1928, & 345013 of 23/1/1930.

• On the end date of **MANUFAX** (see OSN 7/155), my manual has the printer's reference 'D.G.H. 8/46' and the Manufax address is still Cressy Road, NW3. So even if the sets were old stock, the manuals were being printed post-war.

• My 3 sets of **LES JOUETS "AUTO-CYCLE"**, with one manual, build up into a realistic 1920s Sports Car; some very attractive Bicycles of all shapes & sizes; and lastly a very peculiar Aeroplane. They date I assume, from the 1920s, and are made from aluminium with brass N&B." [This system is in MCS as AUTOCYCLE and though a selection of parts are shown, there's nothing on the sets. Nor are dates given but David Hobson tells me that it was patented in France in 1919 – the UK patent is 156061 of 1920. Philip would like to exchange information with anyone who has knowledge of this system.]

8. From Don Redmond. • On the **ERECTOR Trunnions** (24/714), the S E type shown in 23/666 will be called Fig.5. The problem with this part was that a 34mm Ø P8 Small Wheel (Pulley, S E PN X7A), journalled in the top hole (½" above the row of 3 holes) would foul Bolt heads in the bottom centre & side holes. It seems from the '1920' Set in Greenberg (p62) that it was the first ERECTOR pattern (dated by Sternagle as 1923 – the '1920' Set has a 1922 patent date on its lid). Note it was the Fig.5 part without slots in this Set, not the Fig.3 part stated in OSN 24. [Correct, a mistake.] It is thought that by 1924 the design was changed to that of Fig.1, for the reason given above. Probably this design was short-lived because the No.4 on p74 of *Greenberg*, labelled 1924, has the Fig.2 design (with the slotted side holes), and these are commonly found. Then in 1935 the Fig.4 pattern, painted red, was introduced, with the lower position apex hole reinstated. As far as is known the Fig.3

type has never been found.

• On the **ERECTOR 24t Gear**, my 1920 No.6 Set includes a 2-hole one without boss (see 24/714), and one can just be seen in the top right corner of furthest right compartment of the right-hand tray of the 1915 No.8 on p56 of *Greenberg*.

• One or two more details on **KONSTRUKTOR [3]**, see 22/648. The M4 Bolts are roundheaded and 8mm u/h; the M3 Set Screws provided for the 29mm Pulleys & Collars are also 8mm u/h, far out of scale even for the sturdy 12mm bosses. The hex Nuts are 6mm A/F, but the Spanner has 7.5mm wide jaws.

9. Jeannot Buteux sent a copy of a magazine page, courtesy



M. Bertin, about the East German Tractor Set **UNSERE TAKTSTRASSE**, mentioned in 17/477. The box lid and one of the two models that could be made are shown above. The photo is from eBay and 40cm was mentioned, so quite large models if that is their length. The Set was produced by VEB Traktorenwerk Schönebeck, an agricultural machinery manufacturer, and was introduced in 1958. 'Kasten 1' can be seen on the lid, so there may have been more than one Set. On the manual cover, inset, the 2 models are called Geräteträger RS 09, & Hopfenschlepper RS 56. Both are red with yellow wheels, and black seat & tyres. They are fitted with a motor (I think) and have Ackermann steering.

EXTRA MCS SHEETS Each Sheet costs 15p + postage if the whole batch as listed in each Issue of OSN is ordered at the same time. That makes £5.25 for the 35 below, plus postage. For all other purchases each Sheet costs 20p + postage if copied double-sided like the originals, but 7½p per side + postage if copied single-sided. All back Sheets can be supplied.

BSL METALLBAUKASTEN: X1.1,2/6,4,5 [2 Sheets]
CONSTRUCCIONES METÁLICAS: X1.1,2,4,5,5a,6 [3 Sheets]
INGENIERO [2]: X1.1,2/5,4/5a [2 Sheets]
IL METALTECNICO: X1.1,2,4,5 [2 Sheets]
KONSTRUKTOR BOENNAYA TEKHNIKA: X1.1,2,3/4/6,5 [2 Sheets]

KONSTRUKTOR SHKOL'NYÍ : X1,2/5,3/4/6,5a [2 Sheets]
LECTROKIT: X1.1,2,5,5a [2 Sheets]
MA TOUR CONSTRUIT: X1.1,2/6,5,5a [2 Sheets]
METALCRAFT [2]: X2.2,5 [1 Sheet]
METALLO [2]: X1.1,2,4,4a,4b,5,6,7 [4 Sheets]
MLADOST: X1.4a/6a,5a,5b,7 [2 Sheets]
MONT' VITE: X1.1,2,5,6 [2 Sheets]
PIN-IT: X1.1,2,5,7 [2 Sheets]
RECORD: X1.1,2,4,5,5a,5b,6,6a [4 Sheets]
SCHUCO: X1.1,7 [1 Sheet]
UNISTRUT: X1.1,2,5,5a [2 Sheets]

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PAYMENT Please make cheques etc payable to P.A.Knowles. Remittances should be in Pounds Sterling, or U.S. Dollar bills (at an exchange rate of £1=\$1.50). Other currencies are acceptable in principle but bank charges in converting them to Sterling are usually prohibitive. Payment from overseas may also be made using PayPal. Overseas subscribers need not send sums of less than £5 for Back Numbers, purchases from the Editor, etc, until it is time for subscription renewal.

(see 17/464). The photos of sets 1-3 are essentially the same as those in MCS; the No.5 has 3 layers of parts, two of which look as if they may be like those in the No.3. Also listed are the previously unrecorded linking sets 1A & 2A, and the Catalogue Nos. for all these sets are 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3, & 5.

The Catalogue No.4 is the **METALCRAFT** set (see 14/393), and No.6 is the **PIONEER** set (17/466). So these two sets were definitely from the VOGUE stable, and they were on general sale, and not, at least at that point, special sets created for a particular customer. Also though very similar to one another, they existed at the same time. From the Cat. Nos., METALCRAFT may have come first. As might be expected the wholesale prices of the two sets were very similar, 96/- per dozen for METALCRAFT, & 100/- for PIONEER. Thus they fell between the No.1 set at 64/6 & the No.2 at 136/-. Nos. 3 & 5 were 185/- & 257/-.

The Supplementary Spare Parts Sets 1-5 mentioned in OSN 17 are listed; their contents are given and are as in MCS.

The maker is given on the Catalogue as Cascelloid, Abbey Lane, Leicester, Division of The British Xylonite Company Limited. Their offices & showrooms were at 9 Conduit Street, Mayfair, London, W1, and 7 Pall Mall, Manchester 2.

METALCRAFT [2]: S1; PIONEER: S1; VOGUE: S1 [28/814]

9. From Clive Weston, details of a **PRIMUS Set B**, apparently unused, the first ever reported sighting (see 24/712). It is in a blue box, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ "x7 $\frac{1}{4}$ "x $\frac{3}{4}$ ", with the label below. The contents are: 6,4,2 of 5,6,11h Strips; 2 each of 6*6h Plates, Architraves, 1 $\frac{5}{8}$ " Wire Stays, & Wood Slips; 5x 1" Loose Pulleys; a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Axle with Tapped Ends (#167); 12 A/Bs; 17 N&B. No sign of a Tool of any sort.



Most of the parts are held in slits in a red backing card, but the A/Bs & N&B are within triangular partitions in two of the box's corners.

The model leaflet is the one described in OSN 24. Some of the 'B' models in it would need parts not in the Set: a Fast Pulley or Axle Stops to locate a Loose one; a Crank Handle; and longer Bolts for the Loose Pulleys, if they were to run freely.

With the Set was a leaflet listing the full range of PRIMUS sets. The 'C' outfit is illustrated and its packaging is in the same style as that of the 'B'. The extra 'C' parts appear to be in line with the details given in OSN 24 except that the Set has 4 Fast 1" Pulleys & one Loose one. A Screwdriver, a Crank Handle, & 2 Axles can also be seen.

The Leaflet is undated but from David Hobson's *PRIMUS* book (see 20/583) it seems likely to be from 1923 or 1924, and the 'A' set, price 1/6, may have been the unidentified outfit from 1923 mentioned on p25.

PRIMUS ENGINEERING: S1 [28/814]

10. From Don Redmond. **STABIL** Flanged Pulleys have two different styles of boss (both on the inside of course). One is the usual stubby cylindrical type with very small peening; the other is thin, with a rounded edge to the free end, and held in position in the disc by a crimped-on wire ring.

STABIL: S1 [28/814]

11. On **ERECTOR** Bolts, Don Redmond mentioned 3 types: 1) Gilbert MECCANO, with what he calls a 'button' head, 5.8 to 6.1mm Ø, the edge almost rounded in at the margin (like antique shoe buttons). 2) Duplex standard or large headed, 7.5 to 7.8mm Ø, 3mm deep. The large head, needed because of the 1/4" holes in the Duplex parts, is prominently round. 3) Medium headed, 6 to 6.9mm Ø, under 3mm deep, with a rather wide slot, apparently forged rather than sawcut as the sides of the slot may slope.

ERECTOR: S1 [28/814]

QUERIES [28/814]

Query 28 from 27/803. Some **STRUCTO** parts are now to hand and the groove in the Axles is vee shaped, with the apex angle rather greater than 90°. The depth is hard to measure accurately and varies a little from part to part but is probably between .5 & .7mm. The Crank Handle & Crankshaft are also grooved.

Query 29 What colour (or colours) is **STABIL** Cord?

MYSTERY PARTS [28/814]

No.51 from Don Redmond. A 19h A/G, with a 15mm slotted arm, the other 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ mm, & the hole pitch is 12.7mm. The metal is only .55mm thick and it has a very marked curve, perhaps 2mm radius, at the bend., It is painted, rather badly, bright green.

No.52 More from Don. Parts similar to **JUNIOR MECHANIC** (see 12/327) but both sides of the Wheels are nicely enamelled red, and both sides of the Flanged Plates are also painted. The ends of the Strips & A/Bs are rounded.

SMALL ADS [28/814]

For Sale. Large collections of **TRIX & FISCHER TECHNIC**. Details from Ivor Ellard, 44 Well Lane, Galleywood, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8QZ; phone 01245 269830; email ellard@nildram.co.uk.

Wanted. Any metal nut & bolted together **constructional car or other vehicle kits**, or any parts identified or not, ie wheels, axles, chassis, steering gear, mudguards, wings, clockwork motors, etc. Anything & everything in any condition considered. Also boxes, instruction manuals (copies if you don't want to part with originals), or any information at all.

Please call Gary on 01635 200460 before 8pm or email me at gary2car@aol.com.

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Back Issues For the zones above : OSN 1: £1/£1.30/£1.50; OSN 2,3: £2.30/£2.70/£2.90 each; OSN 4 onwards : £3.60/£4.10/£4.50 each.

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Small Ads Short ads are free to subscribers. Insertion guaranteed in OSN 29 if received by the end of July 2003.

OSN – Your Credit Balance

after OSN 27

after your remittance of

after this Issue

Please send at least £ if you wish to receive the next Issue.

New System: MECHANTRIX Thank you to Richard Symonds for sending an Illustrated Catalogue dated Nov. 2002 for this new Canadian copy of MECCANO – 'Compatible with other popular brands' it says on the front cover, not with TRIX though. MECHANTRIX is made by John Overeem, Box 542, Picture Butte, Alberta, Canada, T0K-1V0; Phone/Fax: (403) 732-4974/5017; Email: mechtrix@telus.net. Richard has a set and wrote that the parts are well made.

The PARTS Over 150 are listed (using MECCANO PNs) and can be supplied unpainted or painted - the colours aren't stated but see SETS below. The range includes most of the strip/girder parts & brassware, many of the plates, and some gears. The complete list is given below with variations from the MECCANO pattern noted (Br = brass).

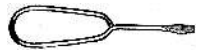
1-6a;6(4h);7-9f;9g(2h);10-11a;11b(1*2*1h);12-12c;12e(12b but 3 round holes);13-18b;18c(1¼");19h,s,b;20a,b(solid Br);21;22;23a,b;24-4b;25-26b;27,a,d;35;37a&b(brassed steel: Nut 6.3mm square; Bolt 6.0mm CH);40(white on a flat card);43;46-48e;51-52a,b(7*3h),f(25*7h),g(13*7h);55a;57;57c;59;62-62b;63,b;64;70;72-74;79;80a;80c;82;90a;97;99-100;103-103h;103j,k,l,r,t,u(13,15,2,49.37.31h);120c;125-126a;133a;142;144;155;155b,c(1½", 2" Flexible Rings);171;173a(Br);176;193,d(3*11h);194-194d;195-197;195a(11*5h);200;215. Note: the Flexible Plates 194-197 are all listed painted/unpainted & are thus presumably metal.)

The whole catalogue can be seen on the web (type mechantrix into Google).



The SETS The basic outfits are 00,0,1,2 with linking sets 0A-1A. Boxes are red (except the 00A is green) with the label above, and the parts are shown arranged on a yellow ground. The general colour scheme is 1950s MECCANO with green Strips etc, red Plates, bright small Brackets, & the larger Pulleys black. However in some sets all the major parts are shown red. The parts in the sets include some not in the list of separate parts (#34, 36, 38, 111c, 212), and the Flexible Plates

are numbered 188-191. The wire Screwdriver below is shown in the 00 & 0 outfits and one with a red plastic handle in the 1 & 2. The contents of the sets are given and are somewhere between those of 1950s & 1960s MECCANO. A No.00 costs \$30 & a No.2, \$100. No mention is made of manuals but 3 small models are shown that can be made from Set 0.



Various special sets are available. In the same packaging as Sets 00-2 are Packs V & W (6 in each of #22, 24), and X, Y, Z (4 each of #19b, 20a, 21). These cost around \$20 each. Also a Pulley Wheel Set (\$31) with 2 each of 19b, 20a, & 21. Then there are 3 Gear Packs A, B, & C with 6 each of #27, 25, & 25a. They are around \$40 each, and are packed in boxes with the design above on the label against a yellow or green ground.



Finally 4 sets with parts to make a particular model. These are: a Model 21 Self Propelled Massey Harris Combine, over 2ft long, at \$1650 including power supply; the John Deere Tractor below (\$375, power supply \$75); a Cultivator 32½" wide with 'wing sections, depth control, floating hitch, tandem wheels' (\$395); & a John Deere Swather, 22" wide, with 'power take off, transport feature & hitch jack' (\$410). They all look nice models and include some special parts for added realism.



MECHANTRIX: S1

OSN 30/906

A METALCRAFT Set The details of UK METALCRAFT (like VOGUE, see 25/714 & earlier) are slowly appearing, and the latest find is a box, the first one seen, with some parts in it, and 2 identical manuals, probably the remains of 2 sets. It's David Hobson's and he kindly lent it for this account.

The **box** is 9*16*1" and the lid, red edged, has its top printed all over with the same colourful scene as on the manual cover in OSN 25. The tray is yellow and the parts are strung to a yellow card with thin, red cord. The small parts are in 2 end-opening, yellow & red card boxes, about 1½*2½*½", which are glued to the card. Their tops are printed with 'METALCRAFT/ CONSTRUCTIONAL SET/ ACCESSORIES'.

The **parts** are as would be expected from OSN 15, painted dark green & the lightish red. No Axles remain but the Crank Handle, Hook, & Span'driver are painted black. The Semi-circular Plates have no extra holes in them. Nuts are square.

The **manuals** are identical to the one described in OSN 25.

No official **Set Contents** is known but from the parts needed for the manual models, and those in this Set & the OSN 15 lot, the likely inventory is: 2,6,2,4 of 25,9,7,5h Strips; 4 A/B; 4 Semi-Circular Plates; 2x 5*5h Plates; 2x 3*3h Triangular Plates; 4 Balloon Wheels; 2 Axles; a Crank Handle; a Hook; 2 Pulleys; 1 Flanged Plate; 1 Span'driver; perhaps 48 N&B (but 158 Bolts were in David's set); 4 each of the 2 types of Spring Clip; 2 DAS.

So compared with VOGUE, in terms of the number of parts excluding N&B, the METALCRAFT set has about a third more than the No.1, and about half of a No.2. The most significant change is the Flanged Plate (not included in the VOGUE sets until the No.3) instead of the 2x 11h A/Gs in the VOGUE No.1.

Also in David's set were the **VOGUE leaflets** in French & Dutch that were mentioned in 17/466. They have the same Abbey Lane address at the bottom (wrongly said to be Abbey Road in OSN 17).

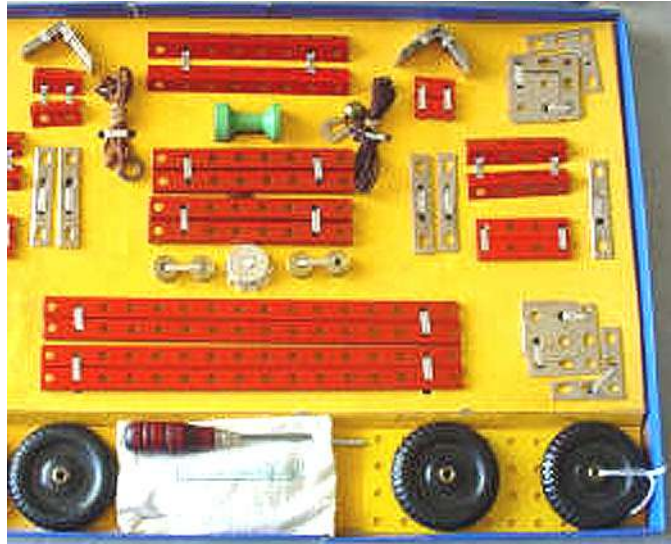
METALCRAFT [2]: S2

OSN 30/906

Snippet: TECHMASTER Since the photo of the No.2 set with coloured parts in 33/997, another set, much more complete, has been seen on Ebay. Its size isn't known but it is probably a No.1 because its box is slightly smaller than the No.2, and it has 4 Road wheels instead of the 6. The lid label is identical for both sets and covers the whole of the No.1 lid. The manual cover too is identical.

The left side of the open box right is a mirror image of the right. The parts that can be seen are as follows (many are illustrated in 13/346): • 2,4,8,16h **Channel Girders** (the 2h are under the 4h A/Bs top right). • 2,4,8h **A/Gs** (the 2h are under the 4h A/Bs top left). • **4h Strips**. • **5h Corner Brackets** (2 in each corner). • **4h Plates** (1 in each corner). • **4h A/Bs**. • The green **Spool** with a **Sling** to its left (cord with Rings at each end), and a **Cable** to the right (cord with Ball Weight & Hook at one end). • 4 small brass **Pulleys** below the 8h Channels with a larger **Pulley** between them, and it may be sitting on the **Ratchet**. • The **Road Wheels**, with what looks like a yellow 4*8h **Perforated Plate** under the righthand pair (a similar 'mystery' part was seen in the No.2). • A **Screwdriver** and white packet.

Most of the parts look to be tied down individually but if so their quantities would be insufficient to build the Tier Lift in 13/



346, a model 'Made from Techmaster Sets 1, 2 & 3' (assuming that means any one of the sets). The model is said to need 8x 4h Strips, 8x 4h A/B, 10x 5h Corner Brackets, & 6x 4h Plates.

OSN 35/1047

TECHMASTER: S2

Snippet: Another METALCRAFT Set You may recall that British METALCRAFT is a single-set, VOGUE-like system, similar to PIONEER. One set was described in 30/906 and it had a typical VOGUE lid with a few idealised models in the foreground & a realistic scene as backdrop. Now a set with an entirely different lid (right) has been seen on Ebay. The models are from the manual though some of the parts are red instead of green & vice-versa. The box is 20" long, 4" more than the OSN 30 set, and the backing card for the parts is green, the only one of that colour in any known 'Vogue' outfit. Compared with the likely contents given in OSN 30 (which should have included 2x 1*3*1h) this set is not complete, with no 25h Strips for example, but at the same time there are too many of most parts, and 4x 11h A/Gs which shouldn't be in a METALCRAFT Set at all. They suggest an admixture of parts from one or more other 'Vogue' outfits. The parts themselves are as expected except that all of the 6 Semi-Circular Plates have 2 extra holes, see



15/421. The cover & two model pages of the manual were shown on Ebay and they match exactly the 25/740 manual. The manual cover is the same as in the OSN 30 set, so it seems most likely that the present set came after it.

OSN 35/1047

METALCRAFT [2]: S3

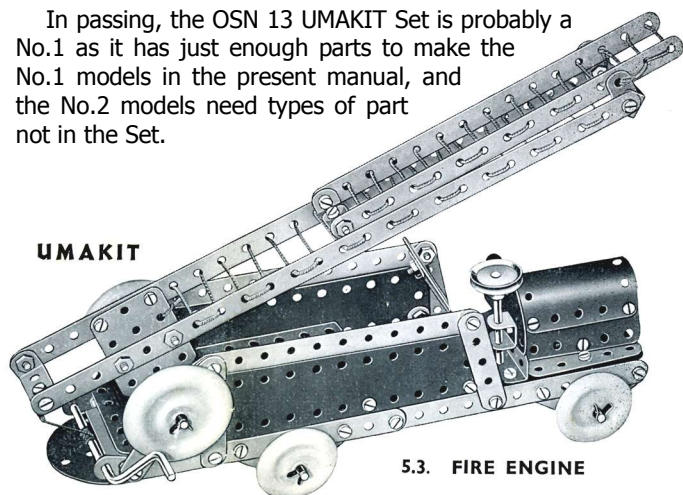
A UMAKIT Manual Notes on some pages of a UMAKIT manual were given in 30/907 and now, thanks to David Hobson, I've been able to see all of it.

It has 8 art paper pages, 265*217mm, and from the look of the staples there were probably no covers. The first 4 pages are as described in OSN 30, and the models on the other pages are as follows: 4.1 FIRE ENGINE on p5 to 4.5 LIGHT CRANE on p6; 5.1 LIFTING BRIDGE on p6 to 5.5 GANTRY CRANE on p8. Again there is one (excellent) halftone for each model, and again all the models are very similar to MECCANO, as in the example right (about half-size).

A number of the models are in the CONSTRUCTO manual described in 25/740 but some of them are for a set one size larger than in CONSTRUCTO.

Curiously of the 4 models on the lid of the UMAKIT set in 13/339, only the Tower Wagon is in the present manual (No.4.2), but all four are in the CONSTRUCTO manual above.

In passing, the OSN 13 UMAKIT Set is probably a No.1 as it has just enough parts to make the No.1 models in the present manual, and the No.2 models need types of part not in the Set.



OSN 35/1047

UMAKIT: S2

Another BILL DEEZY Set It was the same size as the one in 52/1587 but more complete, at least with regard to the Wheels, and it showed some manual pages. Said pages are unfortunately of poor quality and in what follows items in red were very blurry and the most likely to be incorrect.

The 'New' Set is shown right.

The little that remains of the labels on the box are similar to those on the OSN 52 set. The bulk of the Rods lie in the bottom of the box with most of the Joints on top at the lefthand end, but some are in the small cardboard boxes. The latter may of course not be original and among the parts are a few pieces of ERECTOR, the 3" Girder beside the larger box for instance. What is original is the board at the right end which carries the Wheel parts and has notches in its end pieces to carry 7 of the Rods.

Fig.2 is an enlarged view of 2 of the Wheel Parts with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " Loose Pulley with 2 face holes, as in OSN 52, on top, and what looks like a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Pulley with 4 face holes underneath. They can also be seen in Fig.3, a view of the Board with it turned up and leaning on the front of the box. The parts under the Pulleys are discussed in the Parts paragraph below.

The Set Contents One of the Ebay photos showed the contents of the 4 sets produced (Nos.50, 100, 200, 500) as follows. • Flexible Joints: 30/75/180/540. • Coppered Steel Construction Rods: 12" 15/0/0/0; 20" 0/25/60/180. • Bracing Wire: 25/60/150/400ft. • Cable: 10/15/60, 180ft. • Pulley Wheels: 4/4/8/8. • Cart Wheels: 0/2/4/16. • Rubber Tires: 0/2/4/0. • Wheel Rims: 0/0/0/16. • Wheel Bands: 0/0/0/16. • Pair K?? Deezy Pliers: 1/1/1/1. • Catalog: 1/1/1/1.

It is clear from the above that the present & large OSN 52 sets are No.500's and the small OSN 52 sets a No.50.

Also listed on the page are 15 Auxilliary Packages: A,B,C,D Flexible Joints; AA,BB,CC,DD, each with Rods & Bracing Wire; X, 12 Pulley Wheels; X1, Bracing Wire; X2, Pair of Pliers; X3, 6 Cart Wheels; X4, 3 each Wheel Rims & Bands; S, 3 Rubber Tires for Wheel Rims; T, 4 Rubber Tires for Cart Wheels.

The Parts It's hard to reconcile the Wheel parts in the Contents above with those in the sets. All one can say is that those on the pegs in the present set are a $\frac{3}{4}$ " Pulley with what looks like a $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Pulley underneath it, and that the parts underneath them at the bottom of the pegs in Fig.3 might be a Wheel Band on the left peg (a Road Wheel? or part of one?) and a Wheel Rim on the righthand one. Also that the $1\frac{1}{2}$ " Pulley looks like the Wheels on one of the models on the lid, as

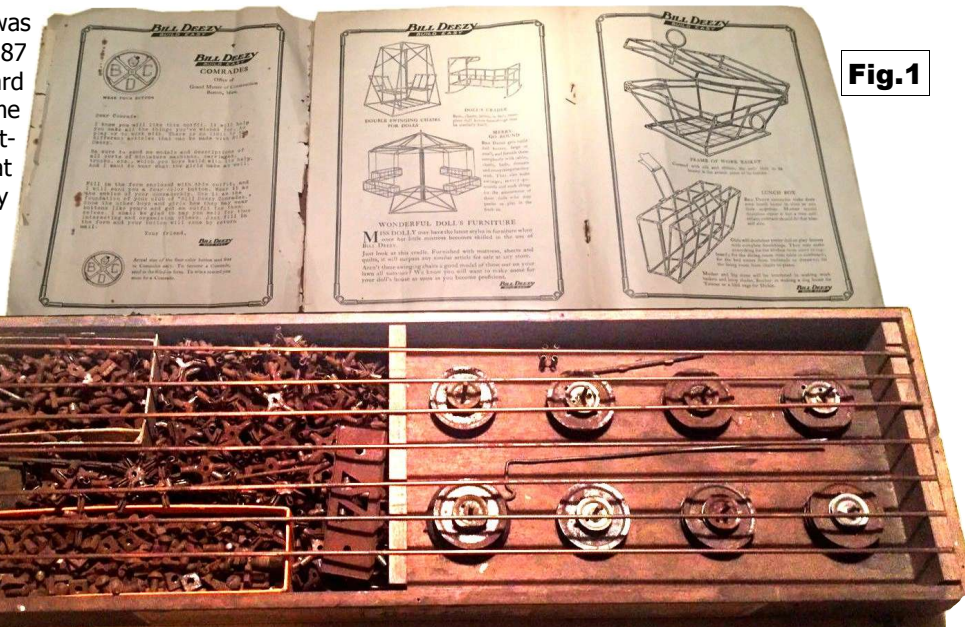


Fig.1



Fig.2

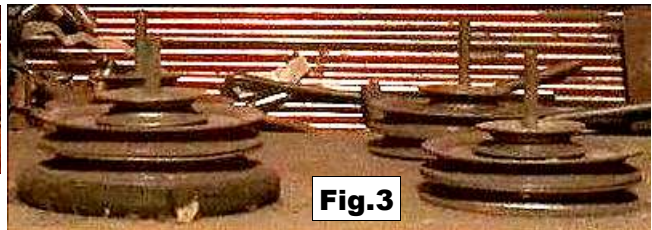


Fig.3

shown in Fig.7 model in OSN 52.

Several of the other parts haven't been seen in any of the known sets: the Pliers; the Bracing Wire (which would presumably be used for cross-bracing but was it thin piano type wire or flexible?); and the Cable (the name might indicate a flexible metal wire but it might I suppose be simply cord).

The Manual is Copyright 1914 and the models that can be seen are the Crane in OSN 52, the Ferris Wheel in Fig.4, and the models in Fig.1: Double Swinging Chairs for Dolls (Fig.12 in OSN 52), Doll's Cradle, Merry Go Round, Frame of Work Basket, & Lunch Box.

The lefthand page in Fig.1 is a letter to 'Dear Comrade' from the 'Office of the Grand Master of Constructions, Bill Deezy Comrades', and signed 'Your Friend, Bill Deezy'. It asks for details of models, and offers a free brochure.

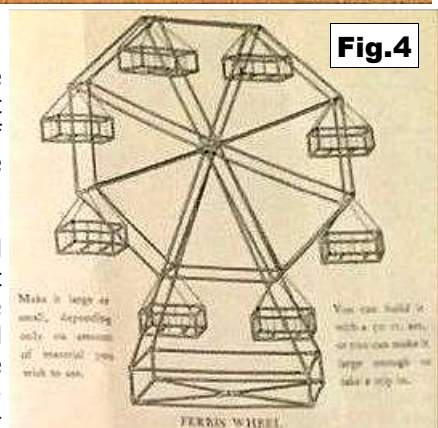


Fig.4

OSN 54/1647

BILL DEEZY: S3

Snippet. METALCRAFT Right a better picture of the label in 35/1047. The latter was on a box larger than on other known sets, but this box is the normal, smaller size. And instead of a green backing card, the present one is yellow, the usual colour in other sets (and also in VOGUE & PIONIER outfits). This set's small parts box is missing.

The parts are entirely 'standard' with no additional holes in any of them.

The manual is as before with the same industrial scene on its cover, and no models at all, quite unlike the label.



OSN 54/1647

METALCRAFT [2]: S4