

EDITORIAL All I have to say this time is to point out that on some of the OSN 32 pages the Issue No. before the Page No. was incorrect, with '31' and even '30' instead of '32'. The pages in question were 950, 959, 960, 964, 965, & 970. Sorry about that.

Shorter NOTES, with thanks to all contributors.

1. David Hobson showed me his Type 1 **MERCATOR** (see 29/848) No.3 set. The red box is 307*405*25mm with a portrait label like the one in OSN 29, pasted lengthways onto the lid, and a No.3 sticker on the lid apron. The parts were obviously the remains of more than a No.3 (they weighed nearly twice as much as the weight given for the set in the Manual) and the green parts were in both the dark & medium shades mentioned in OSN 29. Nearly all the parts described in OSN 29 were present with only minor differences. Points of interest follow. • Some of the 10.5mm Ø **bosses** were 11.0mm, and vice-versa. The peening had the 4 indents in most cases but in a few instances it was very shallow with no indents. • The **18mm Pulley** (see also 30/876A) was double-tapped but with a different thread on each side. Neither could be recognised but the bores were 2.55 & 2.75mm – if 'DIY' it was neatly done. • The **N&B** were all the brass sort. • The slots in the **A/B** were 7.7 & 7.9mm long o/a. • The **Loose Pulley #109** was as in OSN 29 (it was not mentioned there that it is nickel plated) but its **Rubber Ring** was smaller, 4½mm wide & 36½mm o.d. • The 6 **Collars** were 10.0-10.7mm wide and one was double-tapped. • The **Spring Clip #210** was bright steel, 3mm wide with 4½mm long wings. • The **Spanner** was 98mm long o/a, cranked as in OSN 29 but with both ends angled (as illustrated in OSN 29 – the 'straight end' mentioned there was probably an error). • The **Crank Handles** were 102, 109, & 145mm long o/a. • A **small parts box** in the Set was red steel, 58*37*21mm, with a 38*20mm clear celluloid panel in the lid.

The **Manual** was identical to the one in OSN 29 except that the address of the Bureaux was 73 rue Pierre Decoster, Forest-Bruxelles, and the address of the Usines (works) is also given – 97B rue de Fierlant, Forest-Bruxelles.

A **TRIX-type dc Motor** (as Fig.1 in 4/52) with a black painted base was in David's set but the only reference to a motor in the known **MERCATOR** literature is that 2 of the 'Supermodels' on C4 of the Manual are said to be powered by a 'moteur puissant (powerful)'.

MERCATOR: S7

[33/972]

2. Don Redmond wrote that while 3 of his **STRUCTO** Spider (Bush) Wheels are flush on the face side (as were the parts noted in 15/424) the fourth has a boss projecting out about 3mm. All of course are cast parts.

STRUCTO: S13

[33/972]

3. Don also mentioned the **1914 handed ERECTOR 12" Girders**, see 32/940, and wondered if those in the set on p51 in *Greenberg* had been packed upside down, thus making them appear to be the opposite hand to the norm.

ERECTOR [2]: S2

[33/972]

4. Orion DreamDancer has just bought the new, enlarged versions of the **METALLUS** Berlin, the largest standard set, and the Archimedes gear set. He finds them very impressive and he is also impressed with the factory who rapidly replaced some missing/unsatisfactory parts. The only manuals supplied are the old **TEMSI** ones which were of

course for much smaller outfits, but the set contents allow models from the old **MÄRKLIN** manuals to be made. In doing so Orion has had to resort to **MÄRKLIN** & **MECCANO** parts on some occasions though, and he mentioned 3 cases: short Grub Screws, Thin Washers, and the Reversed A/B which has a 5/8" long centre portion in the **METALLUS** version.

METALLUS: S2

[33/972]

5. **Snippet – A KUKO Lid** The name **KUKO** was mentioned in 20/587, and the lid below, from Ebay, is all I have on it. As can be seen the maker is the East German **VEB Ankerwerk** of Schmalkalen, a town 45km southwest of Erfurt. Presumably the parts are metal, & certainly, from the Screwdriver &

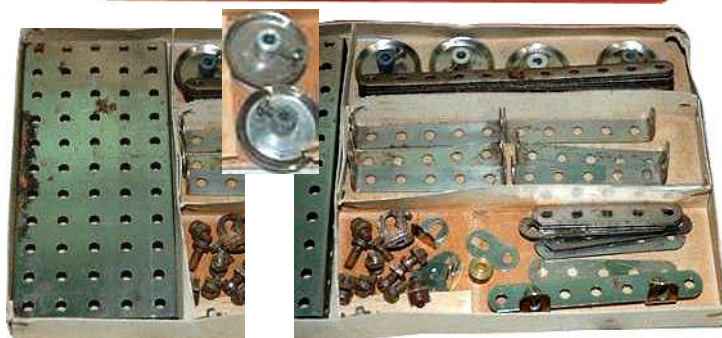


Spanner in the picture, they are joined with **N&B**. The date given in the Ebay announcement was late 1950s.

KUKO: S1

[33/972]

6. **Snippet – 'New' System: MILO** Two identical boxes of this simple system, German presumably, were offered as one lot and the lid is shown below. The contents varied a little



between them and above the left & right ends of the one that looked the most representative, with inset between a slightly

better view of the Pulley. The box is said to be 22½*15cm and by scaling the hole pitch is perhaps a little greater than ½".

The 11h Strips are below the Pulleys in the top compartment. It is clear in other views that, as on the lid, the Plate is flanged on its long edges. 2 Axles with a scaled length of 5.2h could be seen in the other box. The Flanged Plate is obviously green and many of the other parts have a greenish look too, even the 11h Strips in the other box. It may not be clear in the photo that the Nuts are hexagonal & the Bolts roundheaded. The brass Collar to the right of the N&B looks as if it should be keeping more august company.

The outfits' date was given as possibly the 1960s and I'd have thought it might be earlier than that.

MILO: S1 [33/973]

7. **Snippet – An INVENTOR Set** The name INVENTOR was mentioned in 11/291 but without any details. It's not sure if that INVENTOR is actually the one below (the name can just be



seen on the top of the manual). I came across it on a Czech web site (www.e-hracky.cz/zpravy/merkur.htm) in a piece, all in Czech, about the history of MERKUR. The name Jaroslav Vancí and the year 1920 are mentioned, and this ties in with the history of MERKUR given on the Merkur web page (www.merkurtoys.cz). Vancí was the man who in 1920 founded the company which ultimately made MERKUR, but the first set was INVENTOR and the parts were, to quote the English version of the History, 'connected with metal hooks similar to nowadays used (for) scaffolding 'Haki' (the name of a scaffolding firm)'. One might think that the structural parts in such a system would be rods or tubes rather than the slotted parts in the present Set. Perhaps the Czech version of the history, or the e-hracky page would be more helpful, if any reader can understand Czech. To complete the story a change to 3.5mm N&B was made in 1925 and presumably that was when the MERKUR name and parts were introduced, but it's not quite clear that the two changes coincided.

Going back to the Set, the main parts seem to be what look like Angle (or perhaps Channel) Girders, Strips, & DAS. Otherwise just the Spoked Wheels, and inset bottom right is a close-up of them in which the spokes can just about be seen.

INVENTOR: S1 [33/973]

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8. **SNIPPET: A COMBINED Solar Set** Judging from the general appearance of the lid below, the boy on it top left (see



30/887), and the rather peculiar slogans on it, particularly the one after SOLAR POWERED (BAND YOUR EYES ON THE FUNNY TOYS!), another offering from Polylong. I've only seen it once, on the German Ebay in August. It has 172 parts to presumably make either of the models on the lid. The cylindrical Motor can just be seen under the nearest seat of the Roundabout, with a red Pinion on it driving the large red Gear – the latter probably spoked like those in the Windmill. Quite a nice little set really.

POLYLONG: S4 [33/973]

9. **SNIPPET: THE THATCHER TIN CAN TOY** MAKES TOYS FROM TIN CANS. (The ultimate DIY outfit?) This 1919 Gilbert



set was probably inspired by a book, Making Tin Can Toys, written by Edward & Isobel Thatcher, and published in 1919 by J.B.Lippincott Co. of Philadelphia & London. It is said to have been intended to provide occupational therapy for injured military personnel. The Ebay item was an empty, hinged, wooden box, plain on the outside but with the label above inside the lid. No clues as to its contents but some quite ambitious looking models on the label.

GILBERT THATCHER TIN CAN TOY: S1 [33/973]

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