

**NEW SYSTEM - METALLIRAKENNUSSARJA** Ivor Ellard bought this little Set when he was in Finland in 1993, and kindly lent it to me for this write-up. Its name is a bit of a mouthful so I'll call it MJA. The parts are packed in a smart orange plastic box (10½x6¼x1"), covered by an attractive card sleeve in full colour (below x½). It carries the Finnish MJA name plus in smaller letters, the Swedish 'METALLBYGGSATS', which means Metal Construction Set. There is also the '200', presumably the Set No. All the text on the sleeve, and on the single sided A4 size Model Leaflet, is in the two languages and the Importer is named as BRIO SCANDITÖY. And below in English is 'Made in Estonia'. To add a little interest for those of us who try to classify such sets, the Lettish name MEHANISKAIS KONSTRUKTORS · 2 'SKOLNIEKS' is moulded into the box lid, together with the equivalent in Russian.



The parts in the Set appear to be identical to those in ELEKTROMECHANISKAIS KONSTRUKTORS (EMK), described in 8/188, and from the same family is ELEKTRISKAIS KONSTRUKTORS 3 'SKOLNIEKS' (EKS) (2/15, 4/54). So in the days of the USSR, this Set may have been made in Latvia, or for the Latvian market, and is now made in Estonia, though whether by the original maker is not known.

The Set contents include 11, 7, 5 and 3-hole Strips, 34 in all; 13 DAS, one 5x11 and two 5x3-hole Flanged Plates; two 5x5 and ten 5x3-hole Flexible Plates; and some 50 N&B. Those are the main metal parts; all the Pulleys are plastic with two each of 75 and 50mm dia, six 25mm and three 15mm without boss. There are 4 black plastic Tyres for the 25mm Pulleys. Pegs are moulded into the base of the box to take all the Pulleys except the 75mm ones, and a plastic plate fits into the large Flanged Plate and again has pegs to carry the Strips.

The parts are as described for EMK in OSN 8 - only additional points of interest follow:

- Strips are 12.0mm wide, slightly less than the 12.5mm hole pitch, and have fully radiused ends. The end holes in the Curved Strips are very large, 5.7mm dia and the slotted holes next to them are 10mm long.
- End slots in the 5x3-hole Flanged Plates are 9½mm long.
- The 75mm Pulley has 4 long (17mm) radial slots in its face. The mystery of how the Pulleys are held to the Axles is solved: there is a 5½" length of 3mm square rubber strip in the Set and if a suitable length of this is pushed up into the internal keyway (see OSN 8), the Axle can then be

pushed through from the boss side, and the rubber jams the Pulley to the Axle. The grip is more than adequate for the type of models likely to be made from this Set and the slight wobble found was largely because of the oversize bore in the boss. No instructions are provided as to the use of the rubber strip.

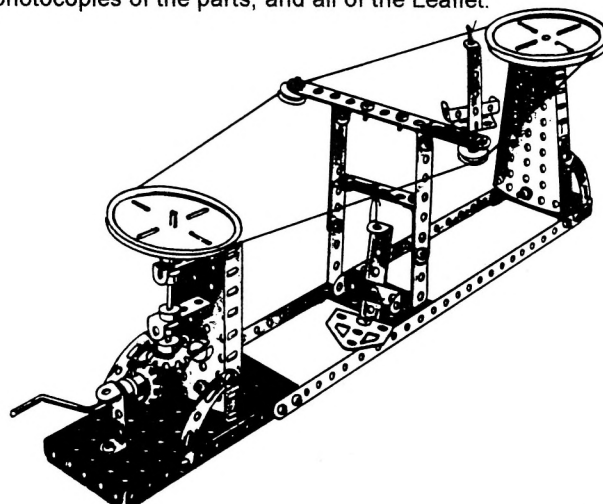
- The N&B are M4. The Nuts are thin hex, 6.9mm A/F, and the Bolts have 6.9mm dia round heads - two sizes are included, 8 and 12mm u/h. There are 21 of the latter but only 5 Nuts for them. 26 Washers are provided, 8.9mm dia and heavily dished.

- The 8 Axle Clips are of pale orange plastic and are 12mm dia discs, 5mm wide, with a radial cut to allow them to be pushed onto the Axle. The light red plastic 'weighted' Hook is far too light and the shape of the hook itself doesn't allow a Strip to be hooked on to it.

- The colour scheme is generally as EMK but the Brackets and the four Curved Strips have an unusual brown metallic finish with parallel narrow streaky stripes of a lighter colour spaced about 1mm apart. Some of the yellow parts are in the dull '78 MECCANO shade and others are the richer 1970 hue. The BZP of the Strips and tools is dull and most of the parts are heavily discoloured with an iridescent look to them.

The Leaflet in the Set is in black and white with a single line drawing of each model - it looks as if it has been photocopied. 9 models are shown although 15 are claimed on the plastic box lid. No doubt this was true for the original Russian/Latvian version, which probably, like the EMK and EKS Sets, had a proper manual. Of the models on the Leaflet all but two need parts, such as trunnions, gears, triangular plates, which are not in the Set and so it is likely that the original Contents differed from those found. Or maybe there's been a mix up over the Models because several models are shown with 25-hole Strips which would be longer than the length of the plastic container. The model shown below is one of the more complicated ones.

Extra MCS Sheets contain full details of the Set Contents, photocopies of the parts, and all of the Leaflet.



## KONSTRUKTOR SHKOL'NIK

Another set from the Leningrad factory that made KONSTRUKTOR UNIVERSAL'NYI (11/285) & KONSTRUKTOR MALYUKTA (16/435), and in between them in size. On the name, the box has on it, IGRUSHKA KONSTRUKTOR "SHKOL'NIK" in Cyrillics, & in English, TOY DESIGNER "SCHOOLBOY", with underneath (SHKOLNIK). Analogous names on the manual are KONSTRUKTOR UNIVERSAL'NYI "SHKOL'NIK", & "SCHOOLBOY" DESIGNER. I've thought it best to stay with the common Russian elements even though MCS has an unrelated KONSTRUKTOR-SHKOL'NIK (hyphenated) already.

KONSTRUKTOR UNIVERSAL'NYI (as described in OSN 11) and this Set were on sale in America last year and my thanks to Keith Cameron for sending over the K S box lid, manual, & some parts, and to John Seaverns for a photo of his Set.

The box measures 23\*18½\*2½cm and the full colour lid has the same rather dreamy quality about it as the K U one; in this case with a photo of 2 of the manual models, one driven by a cat and the other by a teddy bear, and a huge fluffy animal toy in the background. It's a nice picture but I wonder about it's impact on the 9-10 year olds that the Set is said to be suitable for. (The more advanced K U set was for children of 6+, and the simpler K M for the 6-7s.)

The box has cardboard partitions and the parts are loose within them. There are 29 different types against 41 in K U, including in both cases the same 4 Tools. Nearly all were used in the K U outfit, but a 10h Strip, and the Wheel and

Tire for it are new. The Wheel (left) is made of 2 of the discs that are used in the Bush Wheel, turned so their dished centres are next to one another facing inwards, and then peened onto a boss. The boss is the standard 8mm Ø, but at 9mm it isn't as long as the K U Bush Wheel one, and its 4.2mm bore isn't quite such a sloppy fit on the Axles. 2 of the Wheels in the Set are made from 6h, and the other 2 from 8h discs. The Tires are actually soft plastic rings, 39mm o.d., and pale blue-grey in colour.

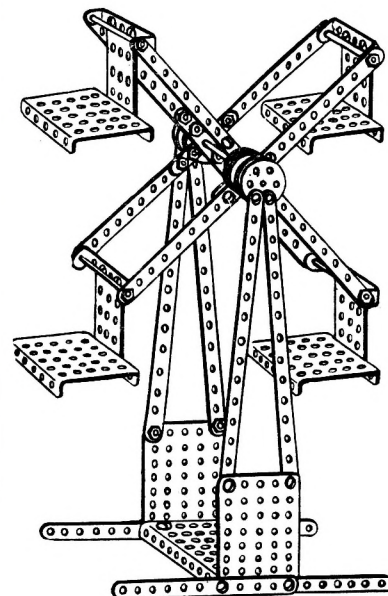
220 parts are claimed on the cover of the manual but adding up the quantities inside gives only 210, including 70/60/12 NBW. K U has the same number of NBW but an extra 88 other parts. The main ones that aren't in this set are 7 & 11h Strips, 7h long DAS, Curved Strips, A/Gs, 2\*5h Plastic Plates, Trunnions, Plastic Wheels, and the formed plastic parts. One part in both Sets worth noting is a 70mm Rod with Threaded Ends - its smooth centre portion is 3.5mm Ø.

The manual has 20 pages somewhat smaller than A4, and the style of its cover is rather like the K M one. Inside many of the illustrations of the parts are similar those used for K U, though the PN's aren't the same. The sketches showing how to use the Tools and N&B, are more like K M, though with English text as well of course. The presentation of the 14 models differs from both, with a clear line drawing and list of parts as before, but with additional sketches to explain the construction, and some explanatory text. The only models that don't have these extras are the last two on the inside back cover (the ones shown on the box lid), and perhaps they were an afterthought because only 12 models are mentioned in the Introduction. No.14 is shown above.

The first model is a very simple Ladder and the largest is the Giant Wheel top right. The others include several simple fair-ground models and several vehicles, but although they are fair of their type, none have quite the charm of some of the K U ones. [It all depends though - Keith describes them as of 'odd appearance', and the K U Automobile as 'amazing, and looks like a caricature of something out of a 1920s comedy, but makes clever use of those red plastic parts for mudguards'.] A few of the names of the models are a little odd but not so unusual as some of those used for the parts, with a Flanged Plate called a Slab and a DAS a Clamp. In both cases they are the dictionary translations of the Russian words used, with no more apt alternatives offered in my dictionary.

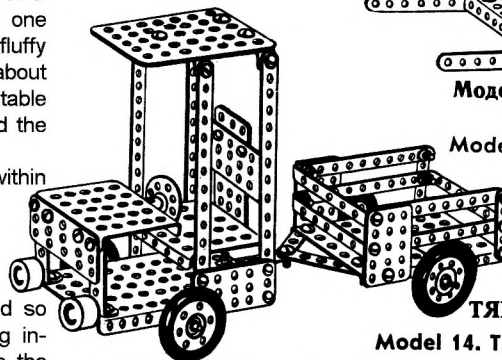
The PR on the back cover includes 908 and the date 22.10.91; the latter is of similar form to the K U 29.09.91, but comparing 908 with the K U 693 makes it unlikely that either indicates a date.

**MANUAL SUMMARY** •Name: KONSTRUKTOR UNIVERSAL'NYI "SHKOL'NIK" | "SCHOOLBOY" (SHKOLNIK) DESIGNER. •Details of maker: none. •Dates &/or Ref Nos: LFOP2.3ak.908. Tir.50000 zkk.22.10.91. on back cover. •Page size: 187\*245mm deep. •No. of



Модель № 12. КОЛЕСО ОБОЗРЕНИЯ

Model 12. GIANT WHEEL



Модель № 14

ТЯГАЧ С ПРИЦЕПОМ

Model 14. TRUCK WITH TRAILER

pages: 20 inc covers. •Language: Russian, English. •Printing: line drgs of models; cover (above) B&W with some red. •Page Nos. of Parts List/Set Contents & highest PN: 4-5,29. •Sets covered: 1 (no Set No.). •No. of models: 14. •Name, Model No., Page No. of first & last model: LADDER,1,7; TRUCK WITH TRAILER,14,19. •Other notes: none.

## The METALLIRAKENNUSSARJA 240 Set

The number 200 outfit of this Finnish system, made in Estonia, was described in 11/281. Sets were still on sale last year and Ivor Ellard kindly brought this one back for me. Just as the 200 was comparable to the SKOLENS 2 (MKS2) Set (see 17/483), so this one is the equivalent of the SKOLENS 3, also described in OSN 17.

The 240 is in a normal lidded box 43\*28½\*3½cm, white but with the lid completely covered by a label which, apart from the set number, is an enlargement of the one on the 200 sleeve shown in OSN 11. Inside the parts are strung into the recesses of a substantial, white, moulded plastic tray, which looks just like the MKS3 one on the right of page X1.4d in MCS.

The set contents too are exactly as for MKS3 in MCS (pp X1.3b/4b/6a & 3c/4c/6b), apart from a few extra N&B and an extra 5\*5h Flexible Plate. With minor exceptions the parts are identical to those in the 200 and the MKS3 - notes on the differences and other comments on the parts follow.

- The Curved Strips and all the Brackets except the Reversed Angle Bracket, are stamped from the thin metal with the brown finish. This, as Ivor suggested, was probably a simulated wood finish intended for some other product.

- The 10½\*7½cm plastic box for the small parts looks just like the illustration in MCS with 2 lines moulded into the lid - it's orange and the one in the MKS3 set is turquoise.

- Axles and N&B are packed in separate small clear plastic packets which are PN 53 in MKS3. Two other parts which may not be obvious in MCS are Nos.10 & 106 - in the 240 they are a 70mm Threaded Rod and 1m of cream Elastic Cord, about .6mm Ø. Also, the Flexible Plates, Nos.66,71 & 85, are 5\*5H, 3\*11h, & 3\*5h respectively, and all have a centre hole.

- The 75mm Pulley is dark green instead of the light blue seen previously. The plastic Axle Clips are orange, yellow, & translucent. The Worm Wheel too is translucent instead of white. The Cord is thin, light brown twine. The Crank Handle is 13cm o/a with a 2cm handle and 9¼cm shaft.

There's no manual, only the single-sided A4 Model Sheet that was also in the 200. Two of the models were shown in 11/281 & 17/483.

**Snippet: METALLIX** This German system was mentioned in 17/477 but with few details. What follows has been gleaned from the photo of a set on p214 of *Baukästen*, and from 2 smaller outfits seen on Ebay. The latter will be called the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> No.1 sets, and the illustrations here are of the 1<sup>st</sup>. *BK* gives the date for METALLIX as the 1930s, but the 1950s was mentioned in OSN 17.

### Leading Particulars

**Name** METALLIX Metall-Baukasten

**Country** Germany

**Maker** Schreiner & Firmont, Hanover.

**Period** 1950s, or perhaps 1930s.

**Hole dia.**

**Hole pitch** Probably nearer 15mm than 1/2".

**Sets** No.1 and one larger.

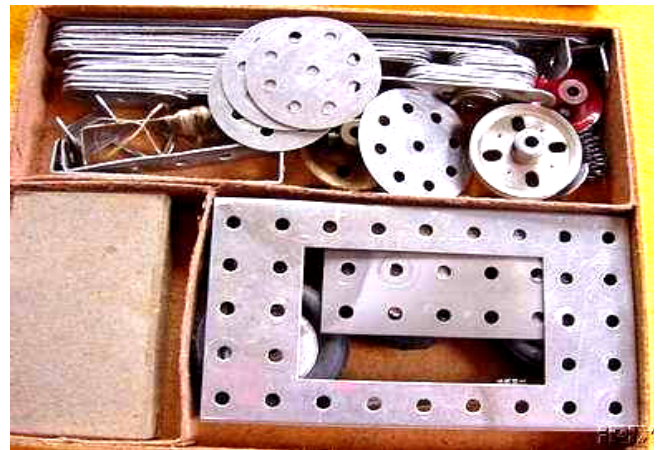
**Colour** Silver, perhaps aluminium, but some Plates red.

**Boss** Probably none.

**N&B** Square Nuts & CH Bolts, both bright looking.

**Axle** Probably Screwed Rods.

**DP** No Gears known.



sets, the parts which are almost certainly METALLIX are listed below, with those in the 1<sup>st</sup> No.1 (above) asterisked:

- A 5\*9h **Flanged Plate\*** & the 3\*5h **Plate\*** from its centre.
- 2,3,5,7,11,13h **Strips\*** with rounded ends. A 1\*5\*1h **DAS\***.
- An **A/B\*** & a **Double Bracket\***.
- An 8h **Wheel Disc\***, & a 2h Ø **Loose Pulley** (possibly fitted with a black Rubber **Ring\*** or **Tyre**).
- **Rods**, probably threaded.
- Bright looking square **Nuts**, & cheeseheaded **Bolts**.
- A **Spanner** with a single, angled end, about 4 1/2h long o/a.
- Possible parts are a flat, S-shaped, **Wire Hook**, and a 2h Ø, balloon type **Road Wheel**.

The **bossed parts** in the 1<sup>st</sup> No.1, above, are thought suspect.

**Finish.** Apart from the N&B, all the parts look silver, perhaps aluminium, except that both types of Plate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> No.1, and in the *BK* set, are painted red.

**SET CONTENTS** No parts can be seen in the larger set that are not in the No.1s, and all that can be said is that it has more Strips, and 2 Flanged Plates instead of one. The Rubber Rings are only in the 1<sup>st</sup> No.1.

**MANUAL** The photos of the 2<sup>nd</sup> No.1 included the top two-thirds of a manual cover, and it is exactly like the lid

**BOXES** Both No.1 sets have the same box, smaller than the *BK* one. All 3 have the same label, but a rubber-stamped '1' can be seen on the smaller ones, under the centre of 'Metallix' (below). The maker's name, Schreiner & Firmont, Hanover, is on the label.



**PARTS** . By scaling, the **hole pitch** it is about 14mm. The 1<sup>st</sup> No.1 box is shown top right; in the 2<sup>nd</sup> No.1 the N&B can be seen in the bottom left compartment. From the 3



label. The 2 models below are from the manual with the 1<sup>st</sup> No.1 They are indistinct but it can be seen that, like the lid, the text is in German & English.

**METALLIX: S1**

**OSN 28/821**