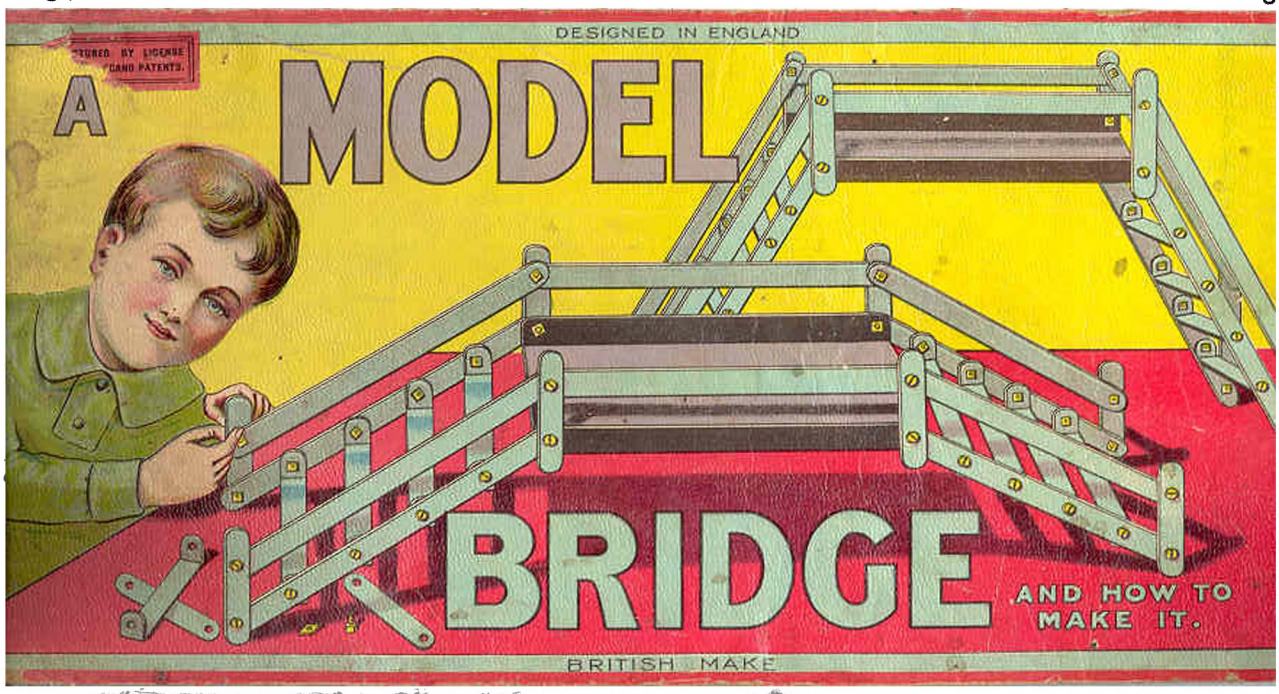
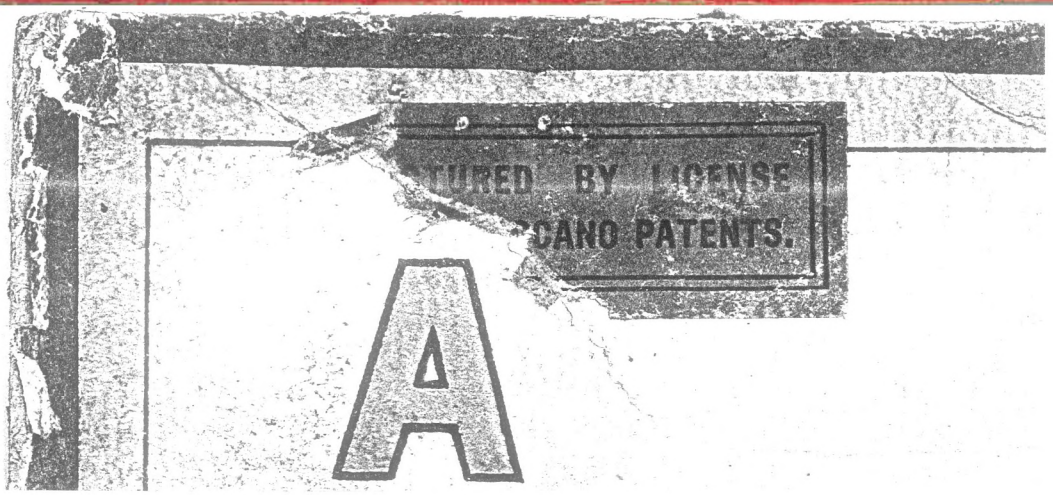




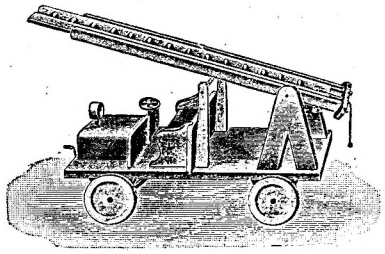
A MODEL BRIDGE (IN METAL).

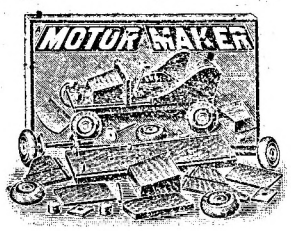
INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUILDING.

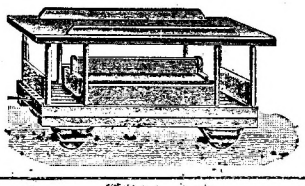
If you look at the label you will see exactly how the bridge will look when finished. All the parts are made to fit perfectly, and you can easily screw them together with the nuts and bolts. The bridge can be taken to pieces and re-built over and over again. If one or two of the nuts and bolts are likely to come loose, which may happen when you are playing with the bridge, you can easily fix these much firmer by cutting out a small piece of cardboard and using it as a washer, you will find this a great improvement. You can easily pick out the top floor of the bridge which is a flat piece of steel; then you have the long strips which go over the side and form the rails, then the upright pieces which go at the corners on to which you bolt these rails, then the bent pieces which act as the steps of the bridge. You can make a low bridge to go over a stream, and the same bridge can be altered into a high bridge which would be the same as is made to go over railway lines.

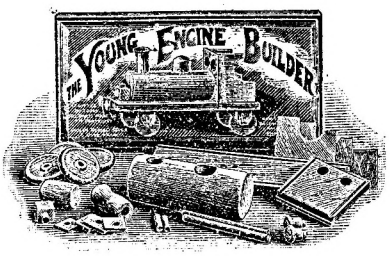
If you like this toy ask to see a Metal Signal, a Metal Crane, packed in boxes as this and the same price.
Other models made up in the same manner we think you will like such as Engine Builder, Motor, Maker, Fire Escape, Electric Tram, Road Roller, etc., as illustrated.

Designed, printed and manufactured in the British Isles.









'MODEL BRIDGE' SET Thanks to Brian Rowe the Editor is now the proud owner of the box lid and most of the parts of this little set. The lid measures 13 1/8"x6½" and its outside and the label on the underside are shown opposite at reduced scale. Its date is not known but it is said, judging by the artwork, that it is most likely to be around WW1. Its interest is twofold, first the parts are similar to MECCANO but with only the holes in them needed to assemble the bridge, and secondly the lid has a small label stuck on it, only half of which remains (see enlargement opposite), but it might have read MANUFACTURED BY LICENSE UNDER MECCANO PATENTS.

The parts consist of a black metallic finished 5½"x2½" Double Flanged Plate with only 4 holes in it, one at each end of each flange; 5½" Strips with 6 holes at 1" spacing; 5½" Strips with just the end holes; 2" Strips with only the first and third holes; and 2½" DAS with only a hole in each lug. The bridge shown on the lid makes the 2" Strips look more like 2½" long with the centre and end holes missing, but otherwise the illustration is a fair representation of the parts. All the Strips are nickel plated and the ends are semi-radiused; they are accurately made with no sharp edges and apart from the missing holes could easily be thought to be of MECCANO origin, and certainly early 2" Strips usually had semi-radiused ends and examples of 5½" ones with that type of end are known. The Flanged Plate has the same dimensions as the MECCANO one but is of thinner gauge steel (.021") and there are one or two slightly sharp edges on it. The DAS are exactly the same width as the Flanged Plate and so fall towards the middle of the 3 widths of DAS given in DMS, but don't correspond exactly with any of tham. None of the original nuts and bolts were with the surviving parts of the set.

So was this a MECCANO product, put out anonymously, perhaps to increase turnover by tapping into the cheap end of the market, rather like BRITISH MODEL BUILDER in the 1930's. Or was it to see how popular more realistic models with no superfluous holes might be. In either case why the label, well possibly a late thought to make any other manufacturer who might think of copying the idea, aware that patents might be infringed by doing so. But against this the toys advertised on the lower half of the inside of the lid look as if they were made of wood and this must make the MECCANO connection less likely.

So perhaps it was a question of another manufacturer having a bright idea and thinking that since the whole point of MECCANO was the equispaced holes, there would be no patent violation in producing parts with only the holes in them needed for assembly. And in principle this must surely be true, otherwise anything, or at least any toy, made of metal and bolted together would have been in trouble. But of course our hypothetical manufacturer chose to make his parts look very like MECCANO ones, with the holes spaced so that they would line up with MECCANO holes, and no doubt that could have led, by whatever route, to the label being attached, perhaps not until after the sets had gone on sale and Hornby had got to hear of it.

Neither theory sounds altogether convincing but whatever the explanation, since this is the only example of one of these sets that has turned up, it isn't very likely that they were popular enough to make anyone's fortune. From the point of view of dating this set does anyone know when the relevant MECCANO patent(s) expired. UK patents normally last for 16 years but in some circumstances they can be extended.

The other parallel sets advertised on the lid may have needed some different parts from those in the Bridge Set, longer Strips perhaps for the Crane. News of any parts that might fit the bill would be welcome, as incidentally would the following Strips - 5 of 2" with 2 holes and one of 5½" with 2 holes. These are the ones missing from the set and with them I could make the bridge entirely from original parts.

NECOBO GEARS Since OSN 4 appeared I have realised that FB's latest version of MCS contains a NECOBO Illustrated Parts List which looks earlier than the one in OSN 4, for one thing it ends at PN 140 and also the Manuals listed go only to Set 5. The interesting thing though is that it contains 5 gears which are not in the list in OSN 4 (but none, of course, of those in OSN 4 after PN 140). The five are Gears PNs 127, 128 and 129 with 16, 35 and 60 teeth respectively, and Nos 130, 130A - Worm Wheel (38 teeth) and Worm. If the 16 and 35 tooth wheels mesh at 1" centres as is likely the corresponding DP is 25.5 and for the 16 and 60 at 3 holes, 25.3. And for these DPs the equivalent Module is 1.0. So it seems that the original NECOBO gears were relatively coarse and as might be expected for a Continental system conformed to a particular Module rather than a DP. At some stage there was a change to the OSN 4 gears which are almost certainly compatible with MECCANO. If the Worm Wheel had the same pitch as the Gears it would have a diameter of about 3/4" and in the MCS illustretion it looks larger than that if anything, but even 3/4" would mean a very small Worm for a mesh at ½" centres. Unfortunately the Worm isn't illustrated.

IRON VEHICLE*. Small model sets seen on New Zealand & Argentinian Ebay which may be in the style of the second type of IRON VEHICLE set in 34/1011.

JOE-MO. Fig.8 shows a set with 95 parts seen on German Ebay.

MENTALITY TOYS. Small model sets, with the name sometimes prominent and sometimes not. The model is usually named as well but sometimes as just 'Engineering'.

METALL BAUKASTEN. Small & medium size models identified only by the logo of a German store called Habermann & Eichler – a red chilli pepper with 'hot.stock' to its right.

METALLBAUKASTEN/METAL KIT. Fig.9 is the bilingual cover of the only set seen. The 'rcee' in the top right corner is perhaps a logo. I don't recall a previous model like the Aircraft.

METAL MECHANIC*. A set for a medium sized tracked Digger with a lid quite different in style to those in 32/958.

MODEL MECHANIC. Several sets for small models with the name in small type top left on the lid and the model's name alongside in much larger letters.

SMART. Small models with bright lids, as in Fig.10.

STANLEY. Several sets for small models with vivid yellow & black lids.

STEEL-MECHANIX. 4 sets from Creative Kids have been seen on the US Ebay. One is shown in Fig.11 and the other models are also similar to some of the larger from Polylong.

SUPER INTELLECT RACING*. Fig.12 shows a set from German Ebay which is quite different to previous sets of this name.

TEAMSTERS. Sets for various models with the Teamster logo on the lid followed by 'Metal' and then the subject of the set, eg Car Kit, Playset.

WRIGHT. The set seen has 200+ parts for a Tank.

FIG.7

FIG.8

FIG.9

FIG.10

FIG.11

Fig.1
FIG.12

POLYLONG: S14 **OSN 41/1256**

More MODEL BRIDGE / BRIDGE BUILDER Type Parts? Sets with these parts – nickelled Strips and chemically blackened Flanged Plates – date from 1913-1914 and were described in 5/84 & 6/115. In both sets the parts were pierced with only the holes needed to make a simple Bridge model. Other sets for a Signal and a Crane were also advertised. A label stuck on the lid of the BRIDGE BUILDER set indicated a Meccano connection, and all the parts looked generally similar to MECCANO with holes spaced at multiples of ½". Over the years 3 more of this type of part have come to hand and recently some other possibles were offered on Ebay.

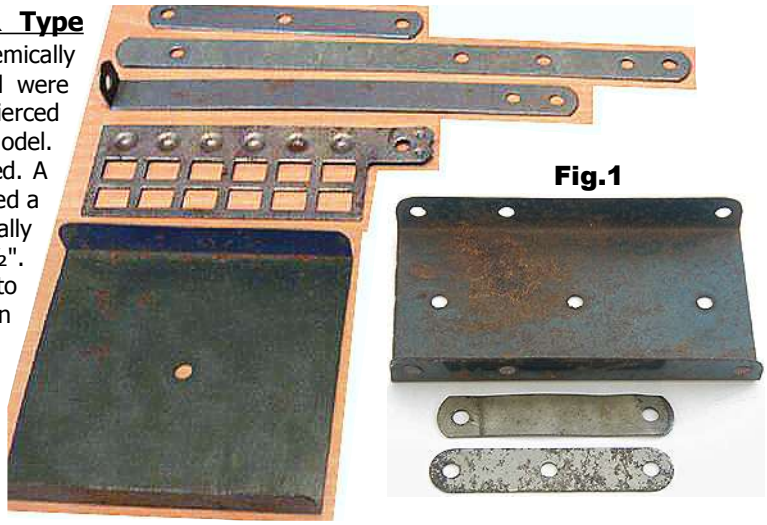


Fig.1

Fig.1 shows the 3 parts to hand. The 1½*4" Flanged Plate has the same overall dimensions as the one in OSN 6 but a different pattern of holes. Of the 2½" Strips, the ends of the 2-hole one match those of the earlier Strips; those of the 3-holer are fully rounded and the part is stamped FABRIQUE EN ANGLETERRE | MECCANO (Fig.1a). So, a French connection? But I seem to recall **Fig.2** that the FABRIQUE EN ANGLETERRE stamp was not used until after WW1.

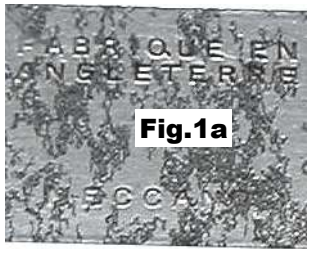


Fig.1a

The Ebay parts were said to have been found in a pre-WW1 German MECCANO set. They are shown in Fig.2 with one of the MECCANO parts, a Windmill Sail, for reference. Scaling from it the Flanged Plate is 3¼" square; the Strips are 3½ & 7" long; and the SAS is 5½*½". The only use I can think of for the Flanged Plate with just the one, centre hole, is as the base of a Crane.

MODEL BRIDGE / BRIDGE BUILDER: S1 **OSN 41/1256**