

## ITEMS FROM LETTERS

1. From Don Blakeborough: • Some notes on the New Zealand **LEDOM / MODEL ENGINEERING** systems. Three Sets have been examined, a No.0 and two No.2's. (Penciled on the No.0 box is 37/6d.)

The Axle Rods are 3.25mm dia and have deburred, sheared ends. The holes in the steel Clips that clamp the Rods are about 4mm dia (MECCANO Axles will not quite fit into them). There were no N&B in the Sets seen. The brass Adapters (Couplings) measure  $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{1}{4}$ " (double) and  $1 \times \frac{1}{4}$ " (triple) and their holes are in the range 3.3 to 3.35mm; they are double tapped  $\frac{5}{32}$ " BSW with roundheaded ( $\frac{3}{16}$ " dia) brass Set Screws,  $\frac{1}{4}$ " long u/h.

The 1" Pulley,  $\frac{9}{16}$ " fixed and loose Pulleys, and  $1\frac{3}{8}$ " Hub Wheel (8 hole Bush Wheel), are also all turned from solid brass; their bosses are 10mm dia, 7mm long, and are again double tapped with brass cheeseheaded ( $\frac{3}{16}$ " dia) Set Screws,  $\frac{3}{16}$ " long u/h.

The tinplate Road Wheels, pressed in two halves, are  $1\frac{7}{8}$ " dia by  $1\frac{1}{16}$ " wide, with 3.5mm centre holes. The Hook is made from 1.3mm brass wire with a small eye above the bottom  $\frac{1}{2}$ " dia part circle.

- The following data to fill gaps in the OSN 6 List:
  - **CLOU** ('matchbox' set) - the hole pitch may be 8.3mm.
  - The diameter of **AMB** Axles is 3.95mm.
  - **MAC ET NICK**. Axle dia 4.15mm, and thread  $\frac{1}{8}$ "BSW.
- On the **classification of parts**, "I have listed my MCS parts in a data base. The headings are (1) system; (2) material; (3) type; (4) from; (5) prefix; (6) No.; (7) suffix; (8) (Meccano) name; (9) space; (10) dia; (11) length; (12) width; (13) size; (14) thread; (15) holes; (16) colour; (17) notes/special features; (18) stock; (19) largest set; (20) odd features. I find it well suited for sorting the parts in any chosen order and for example, if I was looking for a green Perforated Strip with 13mm spacing and 4.0mm dia holes, I could sort by any or all of (16), (9), (15). However, I am not able to sort in, for example, the different types of Flanged Sector Plates. This may need to be set up in a second data base, with a third for Trunnions. Both of these parts can be found with different styles. The system I'm running is a 486, IBM compatible, 345mb HD, and I use a Works database. I started to run out of memory, so split the database into various data files depending on the spacing, for example."
- "I believe I have **HAO WANG** (8/182) parts Nos.1,2,9,10, plus a 5\*3h Flanged Plate not listed in OSN. All these parts are light blue and have 4.5mm dia holes at 12.5mm pitch. The holes in the base of the Trunnion are slotted." [Don kindly sent over a Flat Trunnion and at first glance I would have taken it to be a WISDOM part, but it is actually slightly larger all round,  $37\frac{1}{2}$ mm across against 36mm. The WISDOM Trunnion too has slotted holes in its base.]

2. From David Hobson: • **STABILA** (13/343) is the subject of UK Patent No.360314; it was granted to F.Walther of 60 Harzer Strasse, Berlin, and the date of the original German Patent was Feb 27, 1930.

- **UK Patents** (12/305) - it's worth adding that prior to the 1919 Patent Act the term of a UK patent was 14 years, thus Hornby's general patent of 1901 would have expired on 8 Oct 1915. In 1915 the term of a patent in most European countries was 15 years, but 20 in Belgium and Spain; in Canada it was 18 years and in the U.S.A., 20.
- On **MULTIMOTEUR** (12/304,13/360), the inventor seems to have been Maurice Latour (mentioned in OSN 12), according to two UK patents in his name, 181020 (1922) and 411289 (1933). Convention dates are given (4 June 1921 and 6 June 1932) so there will be corresponding

original French patents. Both Patents are concerned with electrical machines to be used as toys or for demonstration purposes, which can be made using a limited number of standard parts. The approach seems to have been systematic and logical and for example, 13 different devices are listed in 411289 which can be constructed using 12 notches on the rotor and on the stator. These include dynamos, alternators, rotary converters, and various single phase and 2- and 3-phase motors.

- The **TRIX** connection with **X-ACTO** wasn't confined to the U.S.A. (see 12/331). In a 1957 *Hobbies Annual* there is an ad for **TRIX X-ACTO Hobby Knives and Tools** Hobby Knives and Tools, and readers were invited to send for illustrated leaflets from Trix Ltd., 11, Old Burlington Street, London, W.1.



- And some thoughts following Tony Matthewson's comment about UK **TRIX** A/Gs being aluminium (13/361). The Flanged Base Plate, E1, in my prewar Gears set is steel, and seems to be tinplated rather than having the zinc finish found on most steel parts; the postwar 'E' and 'G' Units I have contain both steel and aluminum versions of this part. Perhaps Tony would know if there was a specific point at which the change of material occurred, and if so when. In my unpainted **TRIX** parts there are 25 steel and 25 aluminium E1's. The later blue painted ones are all steel and like some of the other painted parts, seem to be nickel plated under the paint. Perhaps this gave more reliable paint adhesion than the usual finish.

Out of curiosity a check on my accumulation of several kilos of **TRIX** with a magnet (to the eye, some of the better zinc plated parts look identical to aluminium ones), gave 61 aluminium parts (1xF13 and 28xF9 Strips; 14xP29 Discs; 5xW10 and 13xW16 Washers). This represents only a very small proportion of the total but indicates that at some time, some parts were supplied in aluminium. Perhaps this was in the immediate post-WW2 years when there was a shortage of steel, and indeed, when the aluminium A/Gs were introduced.

- For the record, the UK Patent covering the **GILBERT NEW WHEEL TOY** (8/198) is 140101 with a Convention Date of 11 March 1919, but there is nothing in it that wouldn't have been expected. The note on **GILBERT RIDE-IT ERECTOR** (13/360), brought to mind a comment in the 1983 Heimberger House book *A.C. Gilbert's Heritage*. Under 'The Beginning of the End' on p139 he says, "Another 'new' idea for 1965 was 'Ride-em Erector' with gigantic parts to build any of the five toys that the boy could then get on and ride. This idea didn't work. A boy small enough to ride the toys was too small and too young to put it together. They should have checked the company archives. A.C. tried this idea prior to 1920 and it didn't work then either, and for the same reason." Presumably 'Ride-em Erector' was a slip of the pen. There's a similar comment on p23 in *Greenberg*, quoted in 9/219, about the '1919 Gilbert Outdoor Wheel Toy'.

- Still on **ERECTOR**, I noticed at a recent toy fair what appeared to be a new Greenberg reprint of a 1934 **ERECTOR 'How to Make 'Em' manual**. It had a price of \$10 printed on the cover and I wondered if in fact it is a recent publication.

- Some of the Slovenian **METALLICO** sets (see 13/336) were available before Xmas from Kittle Hobbies, 24 Pennard Road, Kittle, Swansea, SA3 3JS; tel: 01792 232508. The range of outfits that were in stock isn't sure but a No.4 was £37 and a No.10, £66. Early in January all the No.10's had been sold and it wasn't known when new

**MAC et NICK** This French system is in MCS but no models are included and although photocopies of a few parts are shown, it's not obvious what many of the others are like. And it turns out that there are many other parts, and some sets, that aren't mentioned. Originally this piece was based on some sample parts that Jeannot Buteux was good enough to send over, and some others that Ernst Leuthold kindly lent me, together with a large Sheet showing 8 models, and the Leaflet that was used for the MCS entry. But after drafting it a comprehensive article by Jeannot appeared in Nos.55 & 56 of the French *Club des Amis du Meccano* (CAM) magazine, and so I've now drawn on that too, and, with the kind permission of its Editor, reproduced some of the illustrations in it. In what follows an asterisk indicates that the part is illustrated below.

None of the literature to hand carries any reference to the manufacturer or any indication of date, but it is known that M&N was made from the late 1940s until probably sometime in the 60s. (*Eisenzeit* says from about 1947 to 1970), in the town of Muzy (Eure-et-Loir), though the company's offices were in Paris.

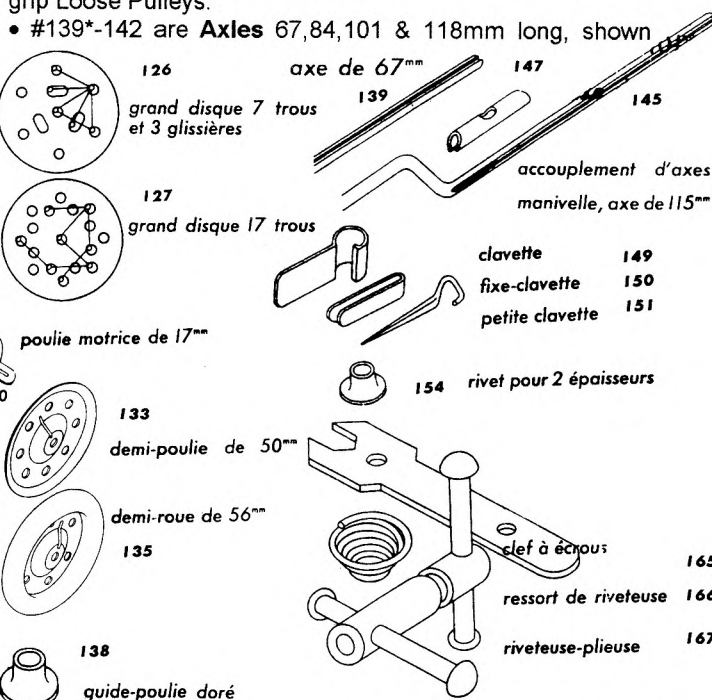
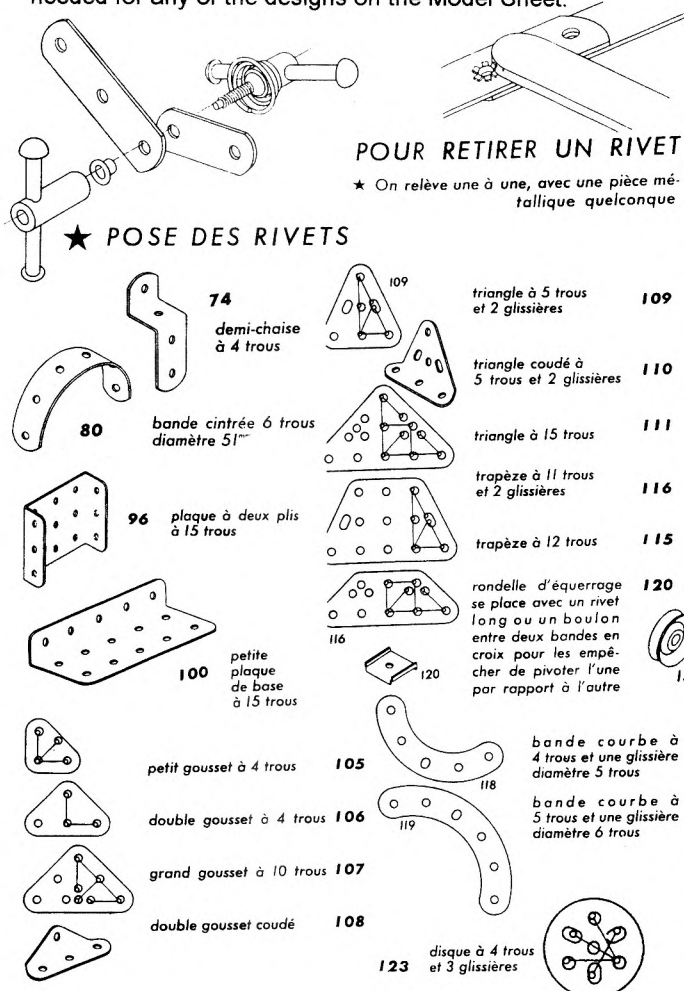
To set the scene, the main parts used in the basic Sets (Nos.1-4) were thin, wide, flexible steel Strips with 4.2mm holes 17mm apart, and a selection of other parts, usually aluminium, including a few Plates, and some Brackets and Pulleys. That accounts for some 50 parts but in all there were probably over 100. About 75 are shown in the CAM article, and the rest are just mentioned in M&N literature - Springs, Screwed Rods, Tyres, Motors, etc., but with no illustrations or details.

A few N&B were provided in the Sets but the main method of fastening was 4mm Ø aluminium eyelet rivets, which it was claimed, could be put in and taken out more quickly and easily than N&B. A tool, PN 167\* was used for insertion but to remove a Rivet its peened over tail had to be lifted using a Strip or whatever, see below. It's not clear whether the Rivets were meant to be reusable, though I suspect not - there were many more in the Sets than were needed for any of the designs on the Model Sheet.

**The PARTS • DATA** (in mm) **STRIP** (2-20h): •hole pitch/dia, 17.0/4.2; •width, 15.6; thickness, .52; •end radius 8.7. **BOSS**: none seen. **THREAD**: 1/8" BSW. **AXLE DIA**: 4 & 4.15 reported. **DP (Mod)**: N/A. **NUT**: hex 6 A/F; **BOLT**: roundhead 5 1/2 Ø; both approximate.

Notes on the parts follow. Unless otherwise stated all, apart from straight Strips, are aluminium, and all holes are round.

- #1 is a **Washer**.
- #2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,15,20 are **Strips** with that number of holes; then there are longer Strips up to #50 with 50 holes (over 33" long), but only #35 is known for sure. #51 & #53 are Strips, length unspecified, made of blued steel and transparent mica respectively. #56 is a Strip with 1 round and 1 slotted hole; #57 is a 3 hole Strip with the end hole slotted; and #58 is as #57 but with both end holes slotted.
- #61 & #62 are #56 & 57 formed into **Angle Brackets** with the bend between the slotted hole and the hole next to it. #65, 66, & 67 are 1\*1, 1\*2, & 2\*2 Angle Brackets. #71 & 72 are 1\*1\*1 and 2\*1\*2 Double Brackets. #73 & 74\* are 1\*1\*1 and 1\*1\*2 Reverse Angle Brackets. #75 is a Double Bent Strip, and #76 & 77 are 1\*2\*1 and 1\*3\*1 **DAS**.
- #80\* & 81 are 6 & 7h **Formed Strips** (51 & 68mm diameter).
- #86, 87 & 88 are 2\*2, 3\*3 & 3\*5h **Perforated Plates**. #91 & 96\* are #86 & 88 bent to form a 2h **A/G** (the only one) and a 3\*3h **Flanged Plate**. #100\* is #88 bent to give one lengthwise flange, and #101 is a similar shape but made from a 4\*7h plate.
- The various **Corner Brackets** and **Trunnions** #105\*-111\* are all shown below. #106\* is also known, as shown in MCS, with an extra hole on each 40mm side, just below the apex, at 17mm centres from the bottom corner hole.
- #115\* & 116\* are **Trapezoidal Plates**.
- #118 & 119\* are 5 & 6h **Curved Strips** with the third hole slotted radially.
- #120\* is a **Strip Lock**.
- #122 & 124 are 6h & 8h **Discs**; #123\* looks like #122 but with alternate holes slotted. #126\* & 127\* appear to be larger Discs.
- #129 & 130\* are similar 17mm Ø **Pulleys** but 130 has a driving arm. #131 & 133\* are **Half Pulleys** (like TRIX) of 33 & 50mm Ø with 6 & 8 holes in their faces respectively. #133 has a 10\*1mm radial driving slot and 131 is shown with a similar one but the two examples I have don't have this slot. #135\* is a **Half Road Wheel**, again shown with a slot.
- #138\* is a 'guide-poulie doré' - brass plated perhaps. It seems to be used as an **Axle Stop** to locate and perhaps grip Loose Pulleys.
- #139\*-142 are **Axles** 67,84,101 & 118mm long, shown



with a narrow longitudinal slot, but some were not grooved at all. #145\* is a 115mm **Crank Handle**.

• #147 is an **Axle Coupling**. #149\*, 150\*, & 151\* are **Spring Clips** used to lock Wheels/Pulleys onto Axles. They can be used in different ways, as shown below. One way uses the Clip 149 ('B'), and when there is no slot in the face the U-Clip 150 ('C') as well. Alternatively the Small Clip 151 can be used for any Wheel/Pulley.

• #154\* & 155 are **Rivets** to join 2 & 3 thicknesses of material, and one of them, probably the longer one, is about 3½mm long o/a, with a head diameter of 6.8mm. The shanks of some of Rivets seen have crinkly ends. Of the handful available all are aluminium except for one brass one in Jeannot's parts. With it is a 13mm Ø steel washer, brass plated, with a circumferential ridge impressed in its face near the outside - this might be the **Washer #1**, but what looks like a Washer in MCS is much smaller in diameter.

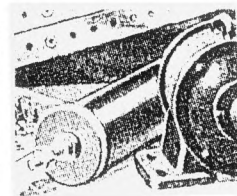
• #156 is a **Nut**, and #157-159 are **Bolts** (shown with cheeseheads), 5, 10 & 20mm long. #165\* is a **Spanner**. No screwdriver was provided, instead it was suggested that the end of a Strip be used.

• #166\* is a **Spring** for the **Riveting Tool**, and #167\* the Tool itself. As well as being used for riveting, it could also

be used to clamp a Strip between 2 other Strips, at 90° to them, so that a bend between 2 holes could be made in the first one.

• Shown opposite are what look like a small Motor and half a larger one, taken from one of the **CAM** illustrations.

• The parts seem to be quite well made and the slight burr around a few of the holes isn't sharp. The corners of most of the Plates and Brackets are fully radiused, or nearly so, but the rounding on a few, though of the same radius, isn't so deep. The steel parts aren't treated in any way and are often somewhat rusty when found; some of the plain aluminium ones look anodised, and in the later years red, green, blue and yellow anodised parts were produced. As far as is known no parts were ever painted.

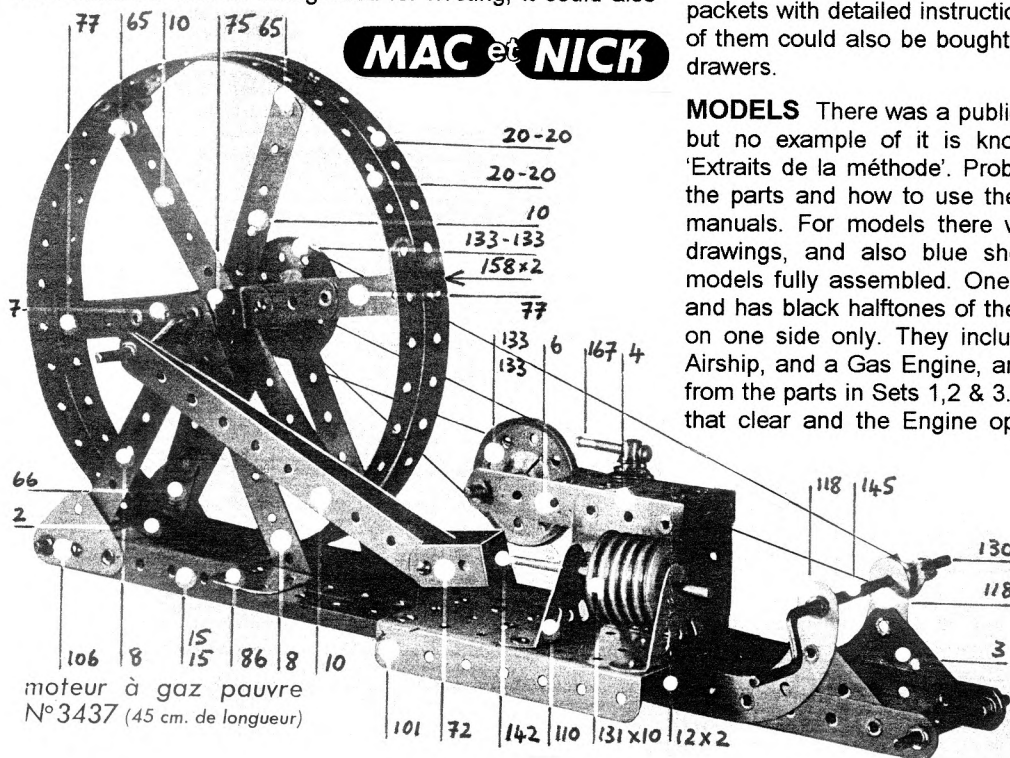


**The SETS** MCS gives the contents of Sets 1 to 4. #1 was the basic outfit with the Tool in it; #2 was an add-on set; #3 & 4 contained mainly extra long and extra short parts respectively. Each set had Rivets (80 in Nos.1 & 2, 100 in Nos.3 & 4), and 8 or less N&B. A Set 5 for Pulleys & Plates was available later, and a #6 for special parts, but their contents aren't known in detail.

As well as these there were theme sets Nos.1-4, including a Loco, a Roundabout, and (#4) a Twin-Engined Combat Aircraft. Individually these were packed in long packets with detailed instructions, but various combinations of them could also be bought packed in boxes with sliding drawers.

**MODELS** There was a publication 'La méthode complète' but no example of it is known, only a brochure called 'Extraits de la méthode'. Probably both were mainly about the parts and how to use them, rather than being normal manuals. For models there were plans with step-by-step drawings, and also blue sheets showing (fairly simple) models fully assembled. One of these measures 21½" x 17" and has black halftones of the models on the blue ground, on one side only. They include a Suspension Bridge, an Airship, and a Gas Engine, and any of them can be made from the parts in Sets 1, 2 & 3. The detail in the photos isn't that clear and the Engine opposite has copied the best.

Most of the models look quite attractive, on paper at least, and they are quite large too - a Submarine is just the longest at 87cm. Mechanically they're quite simple with cord drives on the working models, but the wheels on a Fighter do fold up under the wings (by hand).



**QUERIES 23.** On the question of red/ivory MÄRKLIN Flexible Plates (15/402, 16/431), Thomas Morzinck, writing from Germany, points out that all the colour pictures inside the 1947 manual show blue/silver Flexible Plates - only the picture, seemingly a painting, that was used for the cover, and box lids, shows red and green (!) Plates. There are other anomalies in the painting, and he feels that red Plates probably never existed.

On the aluminium parts in the 1949 No.103 Outfit, Werner Sticht wrote that from the beginning of WW2 until the beginning of the 1950s, Flanged Wheels, Gears, Pinions, & Worms were commonly made of aluminium, and even Strips were sometimes of that material.

Werner also mentioned that the changes of PN (see 16/454) are not new but seem to have occurred in 1982. He has a 1981 #14902 manual for the E3 Set which shows the old numbers, and a 1982 #14900 for Sets A, B, C in which the new ones are used.

As far as he can tell the changes don't reflect any changes to the parts, except for the Small Bevel. On the other hand Part 10860, the Large Bevel, has been changed (as seen in the m100 Set) but the PN remains the same. It is now turned from solid brass instead of having a boss riveted on, and the cone angle of the teeth is greater than 45°. It's still double tapped. The Small Bevel is no longer cone-shaped but matches the design of the large one, with a tooth face of only about 3mm, against the former 6mm.

And on the Coupling (#11718/9), the cross tappings in the 1960s were at 90° to one another, but in examples from the 1980s that angle can be anything up to 10° out. Those in his m100 Set are not as bad.

Don Redmond too has some blue Flexible Plates which are untreated aluminium on the other side, but their date isn't known. He also has 11\*5 & 7\*5h Flanged Plates in bright nickel plate and asks if such a finish is unusual.

## ITEMS FROM LETTERS

1. From Kendrick Bisset: A photo of a **JUNIOR MECHANIC** No.101 Set (see 13/361), courtesy of George Wetzel. The lid is similar to the that of the 201 described in 12/327, but the 6 models on it are different. The packaging and parts, including Strips with chamfered corners, look the same as those of the 201. The Set appears to be complete and the main parts are 2,4,6 of 16,8,4h Strips; 6 Angle Brackets; 4 Wheels; 2 & 1 of the 2h & 8h long Flanged Plates; and 1 Crank Handle. The interesting thing is that



there's a manual with the Set. It covers both the 101 & 201 sets and the cover (opposite) scales at 8 3/4" wide. The top half is blue with white lettering; the bottom half is white with Manual of Instructions and the maker's name and address in blue.



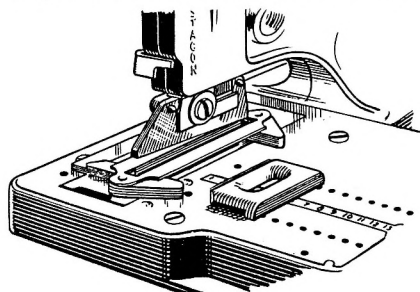
2. From David Hobson: • The **GILBERT NEW WHEEL TOY** was available in Britain well before 1921 (see 13/360): it is the subject of full page Gilbert ads in the Dec. 1919 and March 1920 Boys' Own Paper. [3 sets were mentioned, at £1.19.6, £3.7.6, & £5.5.0. The middle outfit had 'gears and pinions', and the largest 'also makes a small sleigh and racer with runners'. The model left, one of 3 shown, isn't in the manual summarised in 8/199. Both ads contained a coupon which was to be sent to Mr. A. C. Gilbert

(Dept.27), 125, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.]

• The **MANUFAX** Sets 0-4 were advertised (by B&T) before the Sept.1932 date given in 7/155. They are in an Oct.1931 BOP ad at the prices given in OSN 7. It's odd because this ad predates the Dec.1931 Supplement ad which lists only the Nos.1 & 2 outfits.

• A Nov.1956 ad from Claude Rye Ltd. (in the Children's Newspaper) probably marks the end of **JUNEERO** in the UK. It offers Sets 0, 1A & 2A at less than half price, with a further reduction for large quantities. No doubt the manufacturer's stock was being sold off. **JUNEERO** was on sale in Holland in 1962, see 14/395.

• An article in the October 1920 *The Toyshop & Fancy Goods Journal* advises that the **PRIMUS** Motor Chassis Outfit, and an Electric Motor for use with the standard sets, would be available before Xmas. **PRIMUS** vertical Steam Engines to drive models are also mentioned.



• A Guillotine attachment (left) for the **PRESTACON** Tool (9/217) was advertised in *The Toy Trader & Exporter* for July 1948, by L.Rees & Co. Ltd - a *Cyldon* Product. The claim was that it would

cut the 1/2, 1, & 2" Strips into any length from 3/4 to 12".

• A system called **DORFAN**, or DUFAN, was in an MCS lists of possibles: nothing definite is known of a normal constructional set of that name but in *The Toy Trader* of April 1927 there's an ad for a constructional electric railway engine called the **DORFAN** Loco-BUILDER. From the illustration, the motor and gearing had to be assembled and fitted to a body made up of 2 pressed sides joined together. The name on the box is The Dorfman Co., Newark, NJ, and there's NYC 51 on the sides of the loco.

• In the July 1921 issue of *The Toyshop & Fancy Goods Journal*, a review of the range sold by the toy factor Bedington, Liddiatt & Co. included **PYFYLY** (see 14/365) as a new constructional toy.

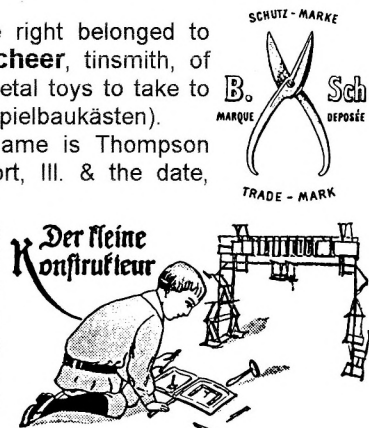
Some of the 30 or so relevant trade marks shown in *Toys & Automata Marks & Labels* by Gwen White, are of interest, and for each a name and date (of registration presumably) are given.

• For **BANGAROO** (see 9/235) they are Alfred James Bartlett of Gloucester, and 1908 (although a later entry shows 1922). The toy is described as 'detached pieces to join together'.

• The 1900 mark to the right belonged to **Bernhard Karl Emil Scheer**, tinsmith, of Burgstädt, and was for 'metal toys to take to pieces' (Zerlegbare Metallspielbaukästen).

• For **STRUCTO** the name is Thompson Manufacturing Co, Freeport, Ill. & the date, 1912.

• The illustration opposite is that of **DER KLEINE KONSTRUKTEUR**, by Hermann Tietz of Berlin, in 1913. No indication is given of the material used. The name was used again in the 1950s, see 12/313.



• **HAPPYNAK** (4/72 & later in MCS) is from The Matchless Metal Polish Co, Old Swan, Liverpool in 1915 - not the name in MCS but both were at Old Swan.

3. Richard Symonds sent a photo of a **CONSTRUCT-O-CRAFT** Model 100 set, which is packed in a tube with a screw top, 3 1/8" Ø by 9 5/8" long. The main point of interest is the 'Manufactured exclusively by Hedge Tool & Mfg. Co.' on the tube. The only address is Chicago, which is also that of the Boxar Tool & Mfg. Co., the maker given in MCS. Hedge came after Boxar because a Boxar manual, like the one the MCS material came from, is © 1946, and this tube carries © 1948 HT&MC. The photo of the boy and model shown on the tube is identical to the one on the Boxar manual. There was no manual in the tube; the few remaining parts in it are the same as those in a #500 Boxar set. Were the two companies one and the same with just a change of name? In case anyone wants a starting point, Boxar's full address in the manual is 2240 W. Ogden Ave., Chicago 12.

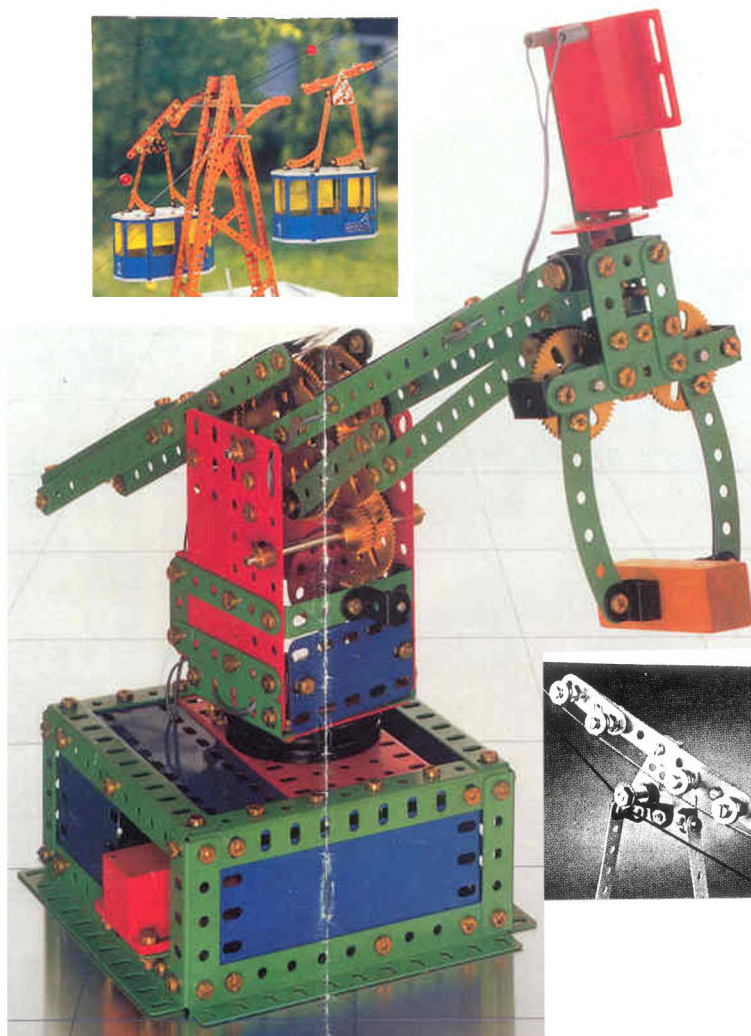
4. Thomas Morzinck wrote that **ebbs** metal construction sets are being made in The Czech Republic for the German company **Ebert & Schön** of Munich, and are sold only by the firm Manufactum, of Marl (near Essen). A leaflet gives a few details - the parts are said to be 50% larger than those of comparable outfits, and all metal ones are nickeled. 8 small sets are available, each making one simple model - a Windmill, Carousel, Biplane, Cross Country Car, Fire Engine, Big Wheel, Tractor & Trailer, and Timber Lorry. The latter is over 70cm long with Road Wheels that look in proportion. A larger outfit with 228 parts makes a nice looking Wind Turbine, apparently driven by clockwork. There's a blurry photo, that won't reproduce, of each model. The address given for further information is Handelskontor Ebert, Aidenbacher Strasse 108, 81379 München, phone/fax 089 788111/788118. This sounds as if it's the same as the E.B.S. mentioned in 17/491.

5. Roger Baker sent a photo of an unused No.3 **MAC ET NICK** set. The lid is covered by a colourful picture of a man & a boy behind a large model Submarine, with a Crane in the background. The 'blueprint' with the set (in French) looks about the same size as the one described in OSN 17 but is in portrait format, and the 10 models on it are different with a Monoplane top right and a Warship bottom left.

6. From Michael Grace: • 'On the **MÄRKLIN Robot** Set from a few years ago, I found it rather 'fiddly' to make up - some of the clearances were tight and there was a good deal of play in the various movements. Overall it was a bit

disappointing for a set that cost so much, though it does contain 4 motors (albeit 6v).'

• 'I also have the **Cable Car Set** and it makes up into a very attractive model that works quite well, and follows real practice in some respects, with steel cable, well articulated pulleys that move nicely over the saddle on the intermediate tower, etc.' [The Robot Set, #1007 was mentioned in 2/16, and the Cable Car, #1057, from the mid-1980s, in 10/266. In neither case was there an illustration but the ones below



will give an idea. The Car is made from special parts, and the body is shown blue with a white roof, and yellow tinted

windows; all the Strips and Girders are orange.

7. From Don Redmond. • The **EZY-BILT** Contrate is distinctive with a very rounded edge ( $\frac{1}{8}$ " rad.) and the teeth actually cut into the curvature. It is nickel with a brass boss.

• On **DÖCO** (15/413), it was displayed in a 1920 Canadian Centre for Architecture exhibition at Montréal, and the catalogue describes it as 'a wood and metal system; split-pin rivet assembly; includes design book; box 10.5\*37\*24.9cm; parts: bars 24.7\*0.8cm, clamps 0.8cm, discs 6.8cm; punch press 8\*34.3\*13.9cm.'

• The **STRUCTO** Worm (see 15/424) is a rather crude looking item of the same alloy (zinc?) as the Gears, and with noticeable flash and mold marks. The teeth look rather chewed but it has probably had much use.

• In a mixed lot, a yellow plastic Wheel, with a square-section rubber Tire, 1.5" o.d., marked **BILDIT**. That's a new name but was it a constructional system? The bore appears to have been drilled out to about  $\frac{3}{16}$ ".

8. From Jeannot Buteux. • The French patent for **SPEDICON** (see 17/470) is No.923760, and it was granted in 1947.

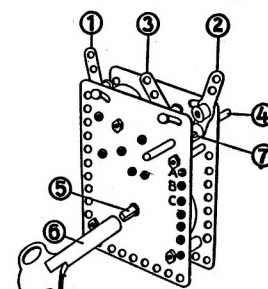
• **MAC et NICK** (17/472) was also patented, by a M.Cosneau in 1948, No.936145. [No equivalent UK patent is known.]

• Manuals in French have turned up for **STRUCTATOR** and **KLIPTIKO**.

• A **PYGMÉE** (16/448) set has been found for the first time: it's in a metal box and includes a complete manual.

9. Following the notes on the **MÄRKLIN** Chassis in 17/482, Josep Bernal sent a photocopy of a 4-page Leaflet in French (Refs: Ta 07 33 m & F. M446) showing the parts in the Nr.1105L **Motor Truck Body** Set, and how to assemble them onto the Chassis. The details of the parts have been included in an Extra MCS Sheet.

10. Thomas Keel sent a photocopy of the Instruction Leaflet, in German, for the **MIGNON C/W Motor** Nr. 250 (right), which was described in 10/262. The holes A,B,C in the side-plates allow a 12t Pinion on the output shaft, 4, to mesh with the other 3 Gears in the system, or their positions can be reversed for higher speeds.



Nr. 1 = Schnell- und Langsamgang  
Nr. 2 = Abstellhebel  
Nr. 3 = Vor- und Rückwärtsgang  
Nr. 4 = Arbeitswelle  
Nr. 5 = Aufzugswelle  
Nr. 6 = Aufzugsschlüssel  
Nr. 7 = Arbeitswellenrad mit Gewindestift.

**EXTRA MCS SHEETS** The Sheets listed here are available at 15p per Sheet plus postage. That makes £4.65 for all 31 Sheets.

MCS Amendments, List No.6 [1]

AKRON: X1.1,2/6,5,5a [2]

ENGINEERO: X1.2,4,5,6 [2]

E.Z.: X1.1,2,4,5 [2]

FAC: X1.1, [1]

FAC [a]: X1.3/4,3a/4a,5 [2]

FAC [b]: X1.6,6a [1]

FAC [c]: X1.2,3,4-4l,5-5b,5c/6,6a,6b [9]

INSTRUCTO: X1.1,2,4,5 [2]

KONSTUKTOR [10]: X1.1,2,4,5 [2]

KONSTUKTOR-MEKHANIKA [2]: X1.1,4/6,4a/6a/7,5 [2]

KONSTUKTOR SHKOL'NIK: X1.1,2,4/6,4a/6a,5 [3]

MAKUMAL: X1.1,5 [1]

MÄRKLIN: X2.3a/4b,5 [1]

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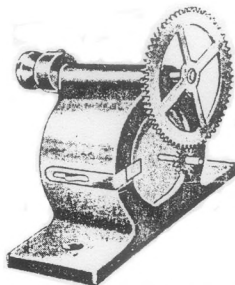
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but the Motor was apparently made by a company called Robilt in Melbourne. It has been described as 'very substantial with a fully controllable governor with forward and reverse gearing'. There was no official electric motor but a small one, The Mighty Midget Motor (left), made by Medo Distributors, 82 Rose Street, Prospect, Sth. Aust., was advertised as being suitable for E-B or MECCANO models. It cost 12/6, weighed 1¼ oz, and ran on 3-6v batteries.

CPPL closed in the mid-1960s and the first EBPL Price List to hand is for 1966 (Ref.H). The 1967 edition shows the same parts and sets, and so does the 1968 except that the C/W Motor, although still in the Sets, isn't listed separately.

**Colours** The standard colours were red and green, with the parts in 1950s MECCANO colours except that the Bush Wheel and all Pulleys except the ½" were red. In a photo of some parts (from New Zealand) there's a green as well as a red 2" Pulley, and also a Bush wheel that may be green. The Contrate was described as brass in the CPPL literature but the ones seen are nickel on steel with brass bosses (see 18/523).

The N&B found in a CPPL parts tin seem to be plain steel. [They are larger than MECCANO, the square Nuts are 5/16" (7.9mm) A/F, and the cheeseheaded Bolts, 6.0mm Ø, and about 6½mm u/h.]

In an EBL leaflet (Ref.G) the Bush Wheel, Wheel Disc, all Brackets including M44 & M45, and the Road Wheel 'tyres' are shown white, like the Axles and Tools.

Yellow E-B Strips exist but it isn't clear whether any were ever included in sets. It seems that at the end, bags of yellow Strips and Wheels were bought at the factory (the CPPL Southwark one I think, but it's not quite clear, so possibly EBPL at Kilkenny).

**Packaging** In TAHC it is said that small sets were in cardboard boxes with the parts tied to a backing cards with green cord; from about Set 4 wooden boxes with heavy sliding card lids were used, with the parts again tied to cards; Sets 6-8 were in metal boxes with hinged lids; and Set 9 was in a wooden box. Whether this applied to all phases isn't known.

The box lid on the cover of the early manual is shown below, while on the right is a later, but still early, CCPL No.4 lid with



the maker's name & Adelaide on the map of Australia in the bottom right corner. The boy is wearing a tie.

Other designs from CCPL were in red, green, white and black. A No.1 Set has 2 boys and 4 small models, all green except for red Wheels, in the centre, with the map of Australia on the left. Boxes for Sets 6 & 8 are similar but with only one model, the Golden Hind, with all the parts properly coloured.

The small parts in many CCPL sets were in 2½" square tins, with green lids. The latter had the name & a boy with a model, both in red & white, and ASSEMBLY PARTS in black.

The EBL leaflet (Ref.G) shows Sets 1,3,6 & 8. The parts are on yellow cards, one each for the No.1 & No.3 Sets, 3 for the No.6, and 5 for the No.8 with one corner of each cut back to fit around the Motor. Small parts are in blue boxes with EZY-BILT on them. Only part of the tops of the box lids can be seen and for Sets 1 & 3 they are red with the ends of blue lines radiating from the top right corner; the Nos.6 & 8

are yellow with a green Strip on the right side. Below are the No.1 & No.8 lids.



**Quality** The reported shortcomings of early parts have already been mentioned, and there was a comment on quality in 7/145. One TAHC reader had 1950s parts that were as good as MECCANO, but another, without specifying a period, wrote of Strips varying in thickness from quite thin to very thick, with some bending like lead, but others very brittle. It was suggested that material shortages after the war gave rise to problems.

## MODEL-IT

That's with a hyphen, not the American MODELIT. MCS contains good illustrations of the parts, and again although the MECCANO influence can be seen, there are some unusual variations. The parts include 7h Trunnions, a 5\*11h Flanged Plate, and another with the centre pressed out, giving a 3\*9h Perforated Plate, a 4-hole Bush Wheel and matching Wheel Disc, and a Super Road Wheel, described below.

Among the 42 parts listed in MCS are just 2 Strips, 2½ & 5½", but 3 A/Gs, 5½, 12½, & 18½" long. Some parts not listed can be seen in the models & sets shown, including a Pinion, a Gear, a Worm, & unusual Braced Girders in 5 & 25h lengths, as above.



The Super Road Wheel is described in TAHC as a 1¼" Pulley, with a Tyre marked Advanx-Spiral Model-It, and a Hub Cap that pushes onto the Pulley. The Wheel has an o.d. of 2¾" and 'made a most delightful motor car wheel, like those on 1939 Chevs and Buicks'.

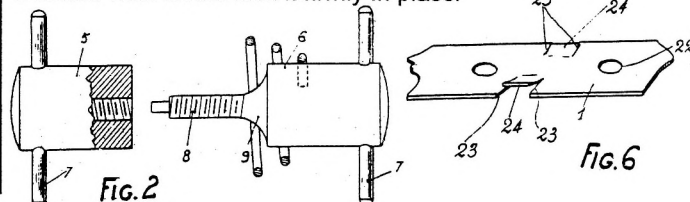
**The MAC et NICK Patent** (No.936145) This was mentioned in 18/523 and David Hobson has kindly obtained a copy of it for me. Although it wasn't granted until 1948 the application was made in Nov. 1946, by Roland Cosneau from Eure, part of Normandie.

The claim was for a constructional toy, using thin, flexible, perforated strips, with the following features:

- Parts to be joined by light alloy eyelet rivets using the tool (Fig.2 below). The rivets could have slits at their ends to make them both easier to deform, & to take out, using a screwdriver or similar to prise up the turned over ends.
- Other, steel, eyelets to be pushed onto axles to act as collars.
- A spring clip (like #149 in 17/472) to be used to hold a pulley fast on a grooved axle, as at 'B' in 17/473.

Also mentioned are 2 methods of locking strips at right angles to each other. The first is the part #120 (see 17/472) which had (I think) been used in earlier systems. In the second, shown in Fig.6 below, the tabs, 24, butt against the edge of a cross strip fastened through the hole 22. Rather a clumsy solution and not used in the actual system.

It was also suggested that a nut & bolt passing through a hollow rivet would lock it firmly in place.



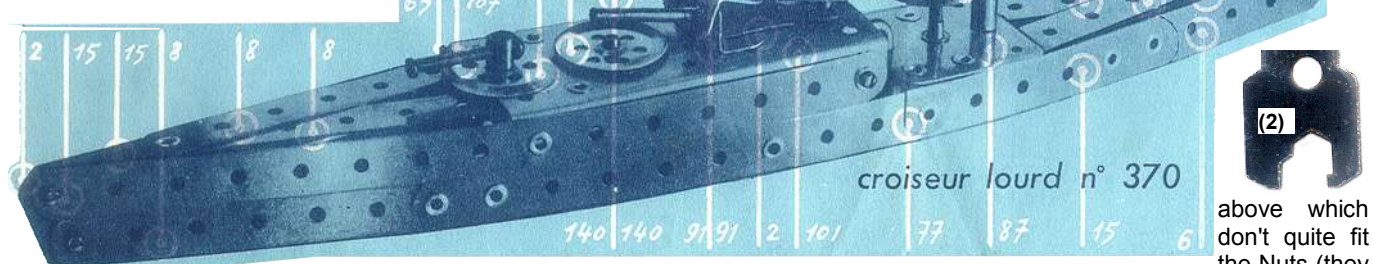
**More on MAC ET NICK** The last notes on this 17mm pitch French system with flexible steel Strips were in 17/472-3. Since then two each of Sets 1 & 3 have come to hand, all incomplete but they add a little to the previous account. My thanks to David Hobson for lending me his outfits. With the Sets were two leaflets showing all the parts – one corresponded to the OSN 17 account, and the MCS Extra Sheets, but the other, probably later, contained some changes - details in the Parts section below.

The No.1 & No.3 **boxes** are the same size, 47\*19½\*3cm, and the lids are the same too except for the blue glued-on flash in the bottom left corner. The No.3 lid is shown below;



the No.1 flash is: '1 base-outillage' (basic-tool). Inside the Strips & Axles push through red card holders glued to the bottom of the box, while most of the other parts, loose or in little cellophane packets, sit in sloping recesses made from yellow card and printed with good advice and plugs for the product. The 35h Strip is too long for the box and sits, curved, inside one of the corners.

Notes on the **parts** follow, to supplement OSN 17. • The **Riveting Tool** works well although quite a bit of force is needed to get a tight joint. The Rivets can sometimes, with care & difficulty, be removed and used again, but often parts of the peening break off in the removal process. The Rivets look very neat but the drawbacks are that using them takes time, and there has to be room for the back part of the Tool inside the model. • **Rivets** The two lengths are about 3 & 3½mm o/a. • **N&B** There were packets of N&B in 2 of the Sets. In one they were bare steel and the Bolts, 10mm u/h, had either a 5.8mm Ø RH or a 5.0mm Ø CH; the Nuts for both were hexagonal, 6.0mm A/F & 2mm thick. In the other Set they were dull plated, on brass for the 5.6mm Ø dome



headed Bolts, 15mm u/h, and on steel for the Nuts, with dimensions as before. The thread was in all cases the old French 3mm Ø by .6mm pitch. • There are different lengths of the **Axle** in the 'later' Leaflet, 62, 79, 96, & 115mm. The 62 & 79mm have been seen, & so has the **Crank Handle**, unchanged at 115mm – that's the shaft, the length o/a is 150mm, with a 30mm handle offset 17mm. All are 4.04mm Ø with square ends and the characteristic longitudinal groove, less than 1mm wide & too shallow for me to be able to measure. • Other changes in the **later Leaflet** are: the Trapezoidal Plates #116,115 are renumbered 115,116; Curved Strips #118,119 are renumbered 130,131; and a #148 has been added, a Rod & Strip Connector, but it isn't illustrated. • The **Axle Stop** #138 is another hollow rivet but brassed steel, with a flat head, 8½mm Ø. It is 5½mm long & a tight push-fit on the Axles – if it is too loose the end is to be lightly tapped with a hammer. • As would be expected the Strips & the parts made from them (#61,65,72,75,76,77) are **steel**. The other parts seen (#86,87, 91,101,106,110,129,130,131,133) are **aluminium**.

There were 2 types of **Model Sheet** with the Sets, both similar in style to the one described in OSN 17 but the models are dark blue on the light blue ground. One is A3 printed on both sides; the other A2 printed on one side only, with 2 panels identical to the A3 sides. All the models are for Set No.1, simple but a good selection. The 8 models on one A3 side go from balance No.122 (Scales) to grue sur rails No.289 (Crane on Rails), & the 10 on the other from manège n° 320 (Chair-O-Planes) to sapine tourante n° 229 (Slewing Tower Crane). This last side is the one mentioned in 18/522, and one of the larger models on it, the Warship, is shown below, about 90% full-size. It would be over 40cm long, and the single-barrel 'guns' fore and aft are the two parts of the Riveting Tool.

**POSTSCRIPT** Since the notes above were written a little more material has come to hand, notably a **1+2 Outfit**, far from complete, but with some interesting parts. The box has 2 trays in a sleeve the same size in plan as the boxes already described, but 6cm deep. The trays are the No.1 & No.2 box bases and the sleeve has a horizontal partition to support the top one. The top of the sleeve is as the box lid but with small '1' & '2' roundel stickers instead of a flash. These are also stuck on the ends of the appropriate trays. '1', '2', 'base-outillage' & 'base-complément' are printed on one sleeve side while on the other are the contents of the 2 sets.

The parts are as expected except: • The two 3\*7h Single-flange Plates #101 are anodised a vivid purple and the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> holes in the flange are 9.0mm Ø. • There are no 3\*3h Plates #87 but instead two 3\*3h Single-flange Plates with a 9.0mm centre hole in the flange. One of these parts is anodised copper & one is plain. This part has not been seen before & is not in any of literature to hand. • Most of the Rivets found

were formed from a flat aluminium blank, see (1) below. The 2 flat prongs must be bent over by hand and don't grip nearly as well as the normal Rivets. • The 2h Strips, & A/B #65, are steel with a dull rustproof finish. • The Spanner is blackened steel, 60mm long, with the unusual jaws at (2)

are the plain steel type, with RH Bolts). The Booklet with the Set is the 'earlier type' and the Axle lengths match it. The Contents on the sleeve are as expected except that the #151 (petite clavette) is not listed for either set. These facts might point to this being an early set but it had been thought that the coloured parts came later. And were the 3\*3h Flanged Plate & the 9mm holes early features later abandoned, or late improvements? The 9mm holes seem a strange change. A similar set but with 4 trays has been seen on Ebay. The top is as before except that COFFRET (Chest) has been added above the number roundels. Of these only the '4' remains but light patches show where the '1', '2' & '3' would have been. The layout of the 'cardboard' in the trays, and the parts in them, are as would be expected. No coloured parts could be seen. Finally, David made the Submarine on the box lid and very smart it looked too with Rivets nearly everywhere. He told me though that he quickly found it best to use N&B initially and then rebuild using Rivets, and in a particular order if the Tool was to be used to clench said Rivets.