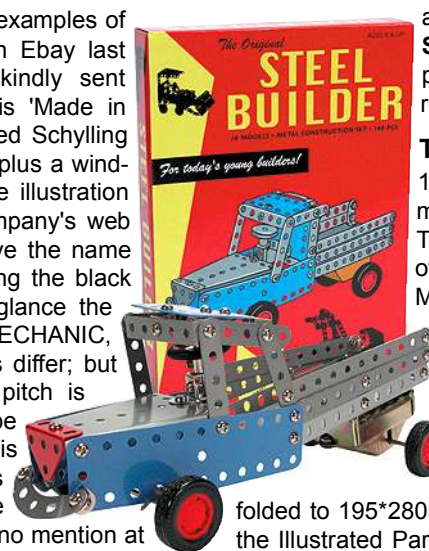


New System: STEEL BUILDER Two examples of an outfit with this name were offered on Ebay last autumn and Orion DreamDancer has kindly sent some details of one of them. The set is 'Made in China' for an American toy company called Schylling of Rowley, Massachusetts, and 168 parts plus a wind-up Motor are claimed for 16 models. The illustration right was taken in February from the company's web site (www.schylling.com). The words above the name are 'The Original' (cheek!) and those along the black flash 'For today's young builders'. At a glance the parts look typically 'Chinese' (WISDOM, MECHANIX, MECHANIX, etc) except that their colours differ; but there is a another difference, the hole pitch is 12.2mm and not the 12.5 that would be expected. The 'Chinese' heritage though is evident from the Instruction Leaflet. It is headed MECHANIX and is in the same style as the one described in 17/471, with no mention at all of STEEL BUILDER. On the front is 'ITEM NO.195', and though the MECHANIX Set 195 has not yet been seen, the present outfit is very similar to the WISDOM No.5, also an Item 195 (see 10/238), and the corresponding MECHANIX outfit, 006, see 24/710.

The PARTS First the **colour**: the Strips are a dark metallic grey, the Flanged Plates silver, the Trunnions red, & the Plastic Flexible Plates a purplish-blue. On the **hole pitch**, the 12.2mm value arises because the parts have the same main overall dimensions as the WISDOM pieces but the metal outside the outer holes is greater. This is also the case for the parts in the STIHL set described below and the remarks there about the Strips may also apply to these parts.

The **Road Wheel** is new with a different red hub and different, treaded tyre – it is still fitted to the thin Axles though. Apart from that the other parts are similar to the MECHANIX ones described in OSN 24 except as follows. The **C/W Motor** is the original 'Chinese' pattern with a 64mm long body against 80mm for the MECHANIX one, and open ends with the spring coming out at one end. The Coupling, actually a **Threaded Coupling**, is a puzzle. It is 18mm long, and is meant to connect the 2.6mm Ø vertical output shaft of the Motor to a normal 4mm Axle in certain models such as the Helicopter right. In MECHANIX it had a 4mm smooth bore single-tapped at each end, and so could be used, albeit with a lot of wobble. But here one end has a single-tapped 4mm bore while the other is threaded M4, with no cross tapping. So although this end will fit over the Motor shaft there is no way of securing it. The **Loose Pulley** is the 18mm Ø type, as in the 003 set, but

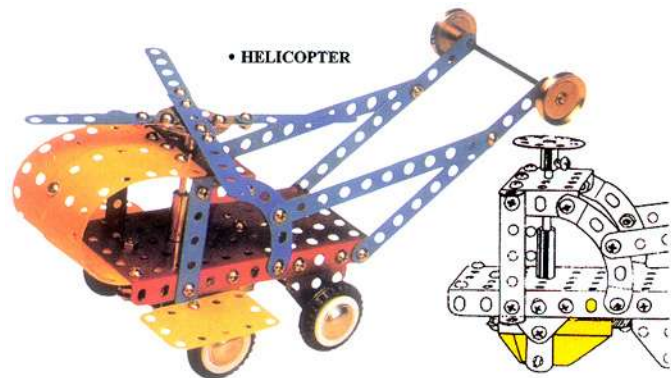


a translucent red-orange, and the (puny) **Screwdriver** reverts to a flat blade & green plastic handle (90mm long o/a but there is room in the packaging for a 120mm one).

The SET The end-opening box is 16½" 11½" 2¼" and the parts are in a clear plastic moulded tray with a matching 'clamshell' lid. The contents found are as given on the front of the Instruction Leaflet and are as the MECHANIX 006 outfit except that 2 extra 5h Strips & A/Bs are included.

The MODEL LEAFLET As already mentioned this is the MECHANIX type and all the photos show MECHANIX rather than STEEL BUILDER colours. Its 6 portrait sides consist of a single sheet folded to 195*280mm with a loose sheet inside. The front has the Illustrated Parts and a large photo of a Tower Crane, one of the Leaflet models. The other pages are devoted to the 16, mostly indifferent models, though some would look better in the Schylling colour scheme. The Helicopter below is a fair example. A goodish photo is provided for each model, together with a parts list and a line drawing showing how the Motor is fitted. The models go from ELEVATOR (a Fork Lift Truck) to Vertical Crane – a strange Mobile Crane in which the Motor drives the travel & slewing motions at the same time and there is a suspended Hook but no means of raising or lowering it.

4 of the models are identical to all that are in part of a WISDOM No.5 manual which Werner Sticht kindly sent, with the same, or very nearly the same illustrations. Only one, somewhat modified, was carried forward to the 6 (little better) models for MECHANIX.



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STEEL BUILDER [2]: S1

New System: STIHL This is another one outfit system and a rather strange one. A good many of the parts are clearly 'Chinese' – they include Strips in the later Chinese blue but with the hole pitch & ends like those of STEEL BUILDER above; the smaller size of push-on Road Wheels and the necessary 2.6mm Axles for them; and a Threaded Coupling identical to the STEEL BUILDER part. Non-Chinese parts included some small Perforated Plates, a 3h A/G, & the corresponding Flat Girder. With 301 parts the Set is a decent size, but it is rather limited in scope because it lacks any rigid Plates larger the 3*5h, and



though there is a reasonably good selection of Strips (up to 11h) & Brackets, there are not enough of them to compensate.

The name on the box & manual is Andreas Stihl AG & Co., D-71336 Waiblingen, a large German firm who make chain saws and much other mechanical equipment. So it's not surprising to find what appears to be a Chain Saw model on the box lid (left), but it was surprising to find that it has no moving parts, and no representation of the chain at all. And the other manual

OSN 32/961

STIHL: S1