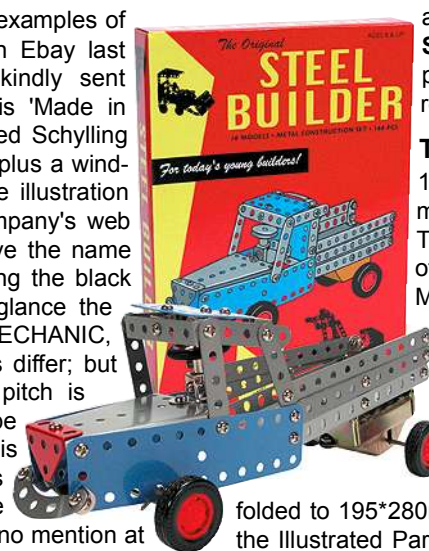


**New System: STEEL BUILDER** Two examples of an outfit with this name were offered on Ebay last autumn and Orion DreamDancer has kindly sent some details of one of them. The set is 'Made in China' for an American toy company called Schylling of Rowley, Massachusetts, and 168 parts plus a wind-up Motor are claimed for 16 models. The illustration right was taken in February from the company's web site ([www.schylling.com](http://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



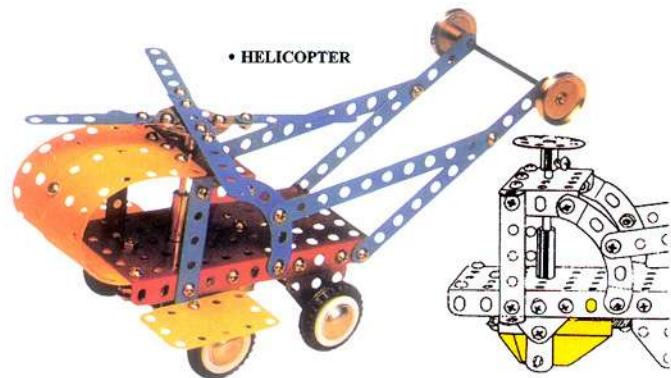
a translucent red-orange, and the (puny) **Screwdriver** reverts to a flat blade & green plastic handle (90mm long o/a but there is room in the packaging for a 120mm one).

**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.



OSN 32/961

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

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STIHL: S1

models are not very exciting either. So why was the set produced? Hardly to swell the company's profits or open up a new market, so perhaps, I thought, as a promotional give away. But the intro in the manual is clearly aimed at youngsters, so was it intended for employees' children at Xmas? Not very likely either you might say.

There is no indication of when STIHL was made but I have noticed unused sets on German Ebay between September 2002 & March 2004. I bought mine, in 2002, from a general dealer who seemed to sell mainly T-shirts.

**The PARTS** A list of the 45 different parts follows with comments as necessary for those which are not typical 'Chinese', and with the **quantities** in the Set in curly brackets. Asterisked parts are illustrated. **Holes** are generally 4.4mm, with a few 4.3, at 12.2mm pitch. Except where stated, slotted holes are 6mm. The general **colour scheme** is blue Strip parts & A/Gs; orange rigid Plates & Trunnions; white Flexible Plastic Plates; nickel Brackets, Wheels, Axles, N&B, etc. **Quality** - all the parts are accurately made with an excellent finish.

- **3,5,7,11h Strips**, the 3h is nickel. {6,6,10,4}. Typically there is 4¾ mm of metal outside the end holes (cf WISDOM at 3¼mm) and this means that 2 Strips end to end must overlap slightly if they are to be bolted to another part. However the width of the Strips has been reduced to about 12.1mm so bolting them down side by side isn't a problem.
- **Curved Strip** {2}.
- **Slotted Strip\*** (like M215a but 80mm o/a with 16mm slots, and perhaps a flattened version of the WISDOM part) {4}.
- **DAS** {2}.
- **Arrowhead\*** made from a 5h Strip and used only to represent a switch on the far side of the Chain Saw body {1}.
- **3h A/G** {4}.



- **3\*3 & 3\*5h Perforated Plates** with all the end holes slotted {3,3}.
- **3h Flat Girder** {5}.
- **Trunnion & Flat Trunnion** {2,2}.
- **3\*1h Triangular Plate\***, the upright part of a Trunnion {1}.

**Flexible Plastic Plates:**

- **3\*5h, 3\*7h, 3\*7h clear, 3\*11h**, all with a centre hole except the 3\*5h, and the 3\*11h has STIHL printed on both sides {1,2,1,2}.
- **3\*5h Triangular** {4}.

**Brackets:** • **Flat, Angle, Obtuse Angle\*** (the A/B with its lugs curved back), **2\*1h Angle\*** (with the top & the foot hole slotted), & **Reversed Angle Brackets** {4,14,4,6,4}.

- **28mm Pulley** {2}. **Wheel Disc** {2}. **28mm Road Wheel**

- {4}. **18mm Loose Pulley\*** {3, red plastic}. Push-on **35mm Hand Wheel\***, with a 5½mm Ø spigot, so it can't be used as a crank pin {1 red plastic}.
- **25,50,70mm Axles**, & **60mm Thin Axle** {2,2,2,2}.

- **Threaded Coupling\***, as in STEEL BUILDER, 9mm o.d {1}.
- **Collar**, 9mm Ø, 10mm long, s/t {2}.
- **Axle Stop\***, red plastic, 11½mm Ø & 4mm wide {7}.
- **Hook** {1}.
- **Spring\***, black, 19½mm long, & 3.5mm i.d. (it is called up for 2 models but its use can't be seen; possibly it acts as a spacer on the Thin Axles - a Bolt can just be screwed into it but is then very difficult to unscrew) {4}.
- **Spring Clip**, the black plastic type with small wings {14}.
- **Hank of the usual thin white Cord** {1}.

- **N&B Crosshead Bolts**, 6,9½,20mm u/h {65,7,4}; **Nut** {76}.
- A **MECHANIX pattern Spanner**, & a crosshead **Screwdriver**, 130mm long with an orange plastic, fluted handle.

**The SET** The box has a flap lid and measures 35½\*25¼\*4cm. Thumbnails of all the manual models are shown, 5 on the lid and 3 on each side of the bottom. The parts are in plastic bags which sit in 9 small card trays, and these in turn sit in cutouts in the box's false card bottom. The Stihl name & address is on the underside, followed by '0464 881 000'.

**The MANUAL** It has 16 unnumbered portrait pages 147\*210mm, and the cover is like the box lid except that only 3 of the small photos are shown along the bottom. p2 has a short introduction in German, English, French, & Spanish, and pp14-15 has the Illustrated Parts with quantities. The back cover is plain apart from the company details. One model is shown on each of the other pages, so 11 in all, from the Chain Saw on p3 to a Crane on p13. There is one photo of each model with a photo of the parts needed for it underneath.

The models are simple and none use more than a fraction of the parts available. They include 2 Cranes, a 3-Wheel Scooter, a fair Racing Car, apart from its small Wheels, various Aircraft, mostly rather strange, and some Vehicles which to be kind might be described as futuristic. One of the Aircraft is shown below (the



Hand Wheel on the nose is purely ornamental), and alongside the Dentist's Chair I made from the Set, inspired by a WISDOM model & the WW1-time MECCANO version.



STIHL: S2

OSN 32/962

### Snippet: New system - METAL KITS

4 sets bearing this name have been sold from time to time on Ebay, from the UK, since November, 2003. Each set makes one model but all four are shown on the lid right, and they are identical to those of the Polylong COMBINED TOYS Outfits Nos. 501, 502, 505, 506, see 30/887. The words in the bottom panel read 'ITEM NO.D55377 FOREIGN MADE'.

The parts from one of the sets were shown in one Ebay offer and are as would be expected, though the colours of some of the plastic items may be different from those on the box lid. The Screwdriver had a green plastic



handle.

One other type of box lid has been seen, similar in style and background but with no 'windows', and only 2 models shown, the Helicopter & F1 Racing Car. Also it has a logo in the top right corner, a yellow 'A' in a blue circle, with ACKERMAN GROUP in a surrounding orange ring. This logo was also on the METALLICA box described in 31/933. Ackerman is a London company who sell a range of products including a variety of cheap toys, some their own and some from other manufacturers.

METAL KITS: S1

OSN 32/962