

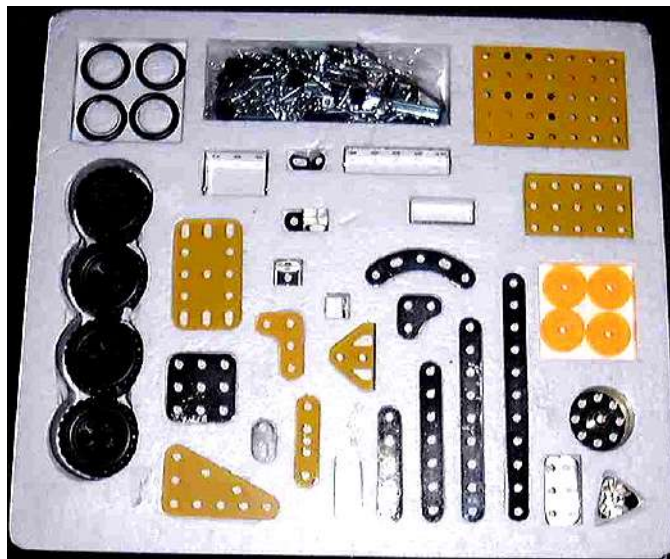
'New' System: MECH-BUILDER Edmundo Veiga found some sets from this 'Made in China' MECCANO-like system in Buenos Aires recently and kindly sent some details. They seemed to be old stock and later John Stark from New Zealand told Edmundo that he saw the brand on sale some 4 years ago.

The SETS The 'NZ' sets were numbered M601 & M602, and



the tray of the M601 is shown above right. Edmundo saw 6 outfits on sale, a basic set at US\$17, a \$10 Racing Car set, & four \$5 'single-model' sets, M603B, D, E, F. The lid of the 603B above shows the 4-Wheel 'Car' that can be made from the Set, the 3-Wheel 'Motorcycle' from the 603D, & a Truck from, no doubt, another set in the series. The 603E makes a very simple Monoplane and the 603F the Snow Vehicle right.

The PARTS With one exception all those seen look just like MECCANO and they match in terms of their 12.7mm pitch holes & 5/32" BSW thread. Nuts



are square and the Bolts have Allen heads. The exception is a

BZP 3-Way Corner Bracket (right) in the 'NZ' set. Using MECCANO PNs the other parts visible (from all the sets) are: 2,2a,3,4,5,6,6a,9f,10,11, 12,12c, 40,50,90mm Axles, 22a(very tight push-fit plastic), 24a,35,37a,37b,38,38a, 2*3*2h DAS, 48,48a,51,53,74,90a, 10,20mm Bolts, 125(all round holes),126,133a,133b,155, black Road Wheel, 188(or plastic), 221. The black looking parts in the 601 tray are, where it would be expected, BZP. The 3-Way Brackets are housed in the bottom right corner. Various combinations of yellow, red, & BZP parts are used in the small models.



The MODEL LEAFLETS Those for the Edmundo's 603 sets are all similar in showing the finished model, as for the M603F left, followed by 6 or 7 building steps, with the parts for each specified. There are no model names, just MECH-BUILDER and the slogan in English, as on the lid. In some Leaflets slotted holes are shown in the Trunnion's base but they are round in the actual parts.

OSN 30/907

MECH-BUILDER: S1

More on UMAKIT Notes on a small, unnumbered set appeared in 13/339, and some similarities with CONSTRUCTO were mentioned in 19/539 & 25/740. Now photocopies of 4 pages, 225*180mm deep, from a UMAKIT Model Leaflet have been found - perhaps they were from a folded-over sheet but references are made to illustrations which are not on any of the pages, so there may have been others originally. The front page has an introduction, then the Price List below (enlarged for clarity), and at the bottom is the address of Denton Claff Ltd, - 8/10 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C2. The other pages show 5 models for each of Sets 1, 2, & 3, one page for each Set.

The intro gives practical hints: 'If you find you are short of a curved strip, take a straight one & curve it'; 'If a sharp bend is required - use pliers'; and 'Rectangular and round "Medicine bottles" may be pressed into service as formers when bending strips or plates.' After that there is mention of models from Sets 4 & 5: 'two fire engines in the illustrations 4.1 & 5.3'. Then a Bogey Carriage running along an A/G

track is explained in some detail, and finally 'The spare part list of over 80 different parts gives you great scope', but only 40 parts are in the List below. Not all the 40 parts are used in the Set 1-3 models - #60, for example, the 3*5h Flanged Plate, certainly isn't.

Compared to the list of CONSTRUCTO parts in MCS, the PNs are different but all of the names common to both are the same, including the unusual ones such as 8 Holes Wheel Disc, & Right Angled Trunnion. Some parts are in one but not the other and one is the Double Pulley, #50 below. The UMAKIT prices are the slightly cheaper of the two, so perhaps it came first.

There is one photo of each of the models and they run from 1.2 SCALES to 1.5 ENGINEERS WORK BENCH, 2.1 MOTOR LORRY to 2.5 WINDMILL; & 3.1 FLOATING CRANE to 3.5 TRAMP STEAMER. Apart from the Wheels most are fairly close copies of MECCANO but only one, 3.2 DELIVERY VAN, is anything like any of the models in the CONSTRUCTO manual described in OSN 25.

No.	Description	Price	No.	Description	Price
1.	Perforated Strip 12 1/2" ...	5 1/2d.	27.	Crank handle, 3 1/2" ...	5d.
2.	" " 7 1/2" ...	4d.	37.	Axle Rods 4 1/2" ...	2 1/2d.
3.	" " 5 1/2" ...	3 1/2d.	39.	" " 3 1/2" ...	2d.
4.	" " 3 1/2" ...	3d.	42.	" " 1" ...	1d.
5.	" " 2 1/2" ...	2 1/2d.	43.	Wheel, 1 1/2" diameter ...	6 1/2d.
6.	" " 1 1/2" ...	1 1/2d.	44.	Wheel, 2" diameter ...	8d.
7.	" " 1" ...	1/-	47.	Jockey Pulley, 1" diameter ...	5d.
8.	Angle Girder, 12 1/2" ...	8 1/2d.	48.	Bushed Pulley 1" diameter ...	8d.
15.	Angle Bracket, 1/2" x 1/2" ...	1/3	49.	" " 2" ...	1/2
16.	Obtuse Bracket, 1/2" x 1/2" ...	1/6	50.	Double Pulley, 2" & 1" diameter ...	1/6
17.	Double Bracket, 1/2" x 1/2" x 1/2" ...	2d.	51.	8 Holed Wheel Disc, 1 3/8" diameter ...	6d.
18.	Reversed Angle Bracket, 1/2" x 1/2" x 1/2" x 1/2" ...	2d.	52.	8 Holed Bushed Wheel Disc, 1 3/8" diameter ...	9 1/2d.
19.	Angle Bracket 1" x 1" ...	2 1/2d.	55.	Semi-circular Plate, 2 1/2" diameter ...	6d.
20.	Double Angle Strip, 1 1/2" x 1/2" ...	2 1/2d.	56.	Right Angled Trunnion ...	3d.
21.	" " 2 1/2" x 1/2" ...	3d.	57.	Flat Trunnion ...	2 1/2d.
22.	Flexible Plate, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" ...	3 1/2d.	58.	Curved Strip, 2 1/2" x 1 3/8" radius ...	3d.
23.	" " 2 1/2" x 2 1/2" ...	4 1/2d.	59.	Formed Strip, 3" x 1 1/2" radius ...	3d.
24.	" " 4 1/2" x 2 1/2" ...	6 1/2d.	60.	Flanged Plate, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" ...	5d.
25.	" " 5 1/2" x 1 1/2" ...	5 1/2d.	61.	" " 5 1/2" x 2 1/2" ...	1/2
26.	" " 5 1/2" x 2 1/2" ...	8d.			

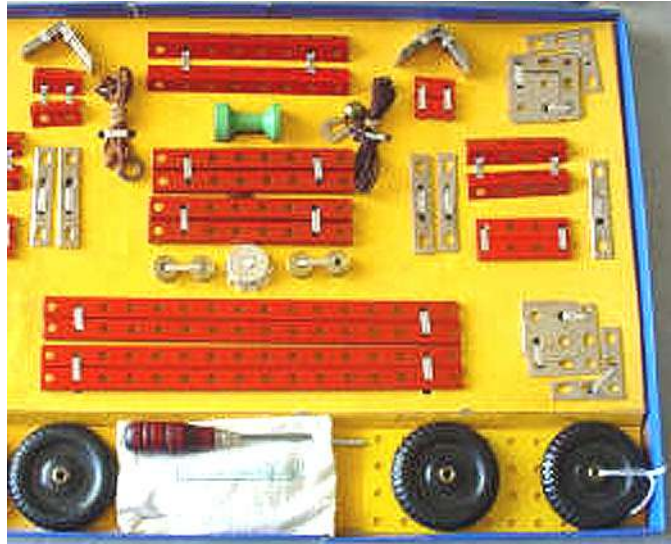
OSN 30/907

UMAKIT: S1

Snippet: TECHMASTER Since the photo of the No.2 set with coloured parts in 33/997, another set, much more complete, has been seen on Ebay. Its size isn't known but it is probably a No.1 because its box is slightly smaller than the No.2, and it has 4 Road wheels instead of the 6. The lid label is identical for both sets and covers the whole of the No.1 lid. The manual cover too is identical.

The left side of the open box right is a mirror image of the right. The parts that can be seen are as follows (many are illustrated in 13/346): • 2,4,8,16h **Channel Girders** (the 2h are under the 4h A/Bs top right). • 2,4,8h **A/Gs** (the 2h are under the 4h A/Bs top left). • **4h Strips**. • **5h Corner Brackets** (2 in each corner). • **4h Plates** (1 in each corner). • **4h A/Bs**. • The green **Spool** with a **Sling** to its left (cord with Rings at each end), and a **Cable** to the right (cord with Ball Weight & Hook at one end). • 4 small brass **Pulleys** below the 8h Channels with a larger **Pulley** between them, and it may be sitting on the **Ratchet**. • The **Road Wheels**, with what looks like a yellow 4*8h **Perforated Plate** under the righthand pair (a similar 'mystery' part was seen in the No.2). • A **Screwdriver** and white packet.

Most of the parts look to be tied down individually but if so their quantities would be insufficient to build the Tier Lift in 13/



346, a model 'Made from Techmaster Sets 1, 2 & 3' (assuming that means any one of the sets). The model is said to need 8x 4h Strips, 8x 4h A/B, 10x 5h Corner Brackets, & 6x 4h Plates.

OSN 35/1047

TECHMASTER: S2

Snippet: Another METALCRAFT Set You may recall that British METALCRAFT is a single-set, VOGUE-like system, similar to PIONEER. One set was described in 30/906 and it had a typical VOGUE lid with a few idealised models in the foreground & a realistic scene as backdrop. Now a set with an entirely different lid (right) has been seen on Ebay. The models are from the manual though some of the parts are red instead of green & vice-versa. The box is 20" long, 4" more than the OSN 30 set, and the backing card for the parts is green, the only one of that colour in any known 'Vogue' outfit. Compared with the likely contents given in OSN 30 (which should have included 2x 1*3*1h) this set is not complete, with no 25h Strips for example, but at the same time there are too many of most parts, and 4x 11h A/Gs which shouldn't be in a METALCRAFT Set at all. They suggest an admixture of parts from one or more other 'Vogue' outfits. The parts themselves are as expected except that all of the 6 Semi-Circular Plates have 2 extra holes, see



15/421. The cover & two model pages of the manual were shown on Ebay and they match exactly the 25/740 manual. The manual cover is the same as in the OSN 30 set, so it seems most likely that the present set came after it.

OSN 35/1047

METALCRAFT [2]: S3

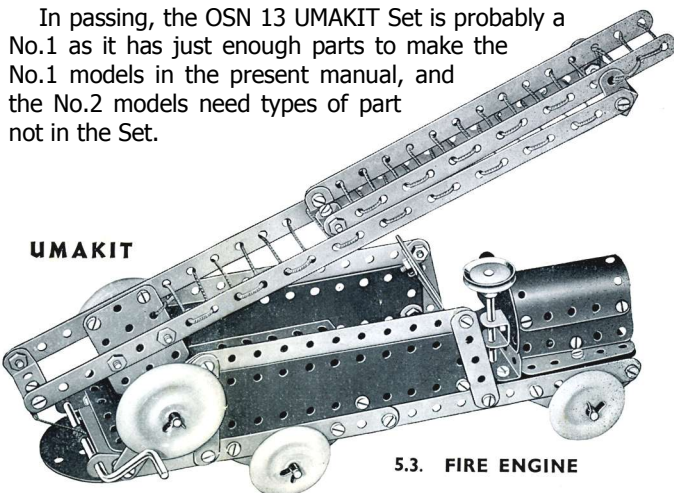
A UMAKIT Manual Notes on some pages of a UMAKIT manual were given in 30/907 and now, thanks to David Hobson, I've been able to see all of it.

It has 8 art paper pages, 265*217mm, and from the look of the staples there were probably no covers. The first 4 pages are as described in OSN 30, and the models on the other pages are as follows: 4.1 FIRE ENGINE on p5 to 4.5 LIGHT CRANE on p6; 5.1 LIFTING BRIDGE on p6 to 5.5 GANTRY CRANE on p8. Again there is one (excellent) halftone for each model, and again all the models are very similar to MECCANO, as in the example right (about half-size).

A number of the models are in the CONSTRUCTO manual described in 25/740 but some of them are for a set one size larger than in CONSTRUCTO.

Curiously of the 4 models on the lid of the UMAKIT set in 13/339, only the Tower Wagon is in the present manual (No.4.2), but all four are in the CONSTRUCTO manual above.

In passing, the OSN 13 UMAKIT Set is probably a No.1 as it has just enough parts to make the No.1 models in the present manual, and the No.2 models need types of part not in the Set.



OSN 35/1047

UMAKIT: S2

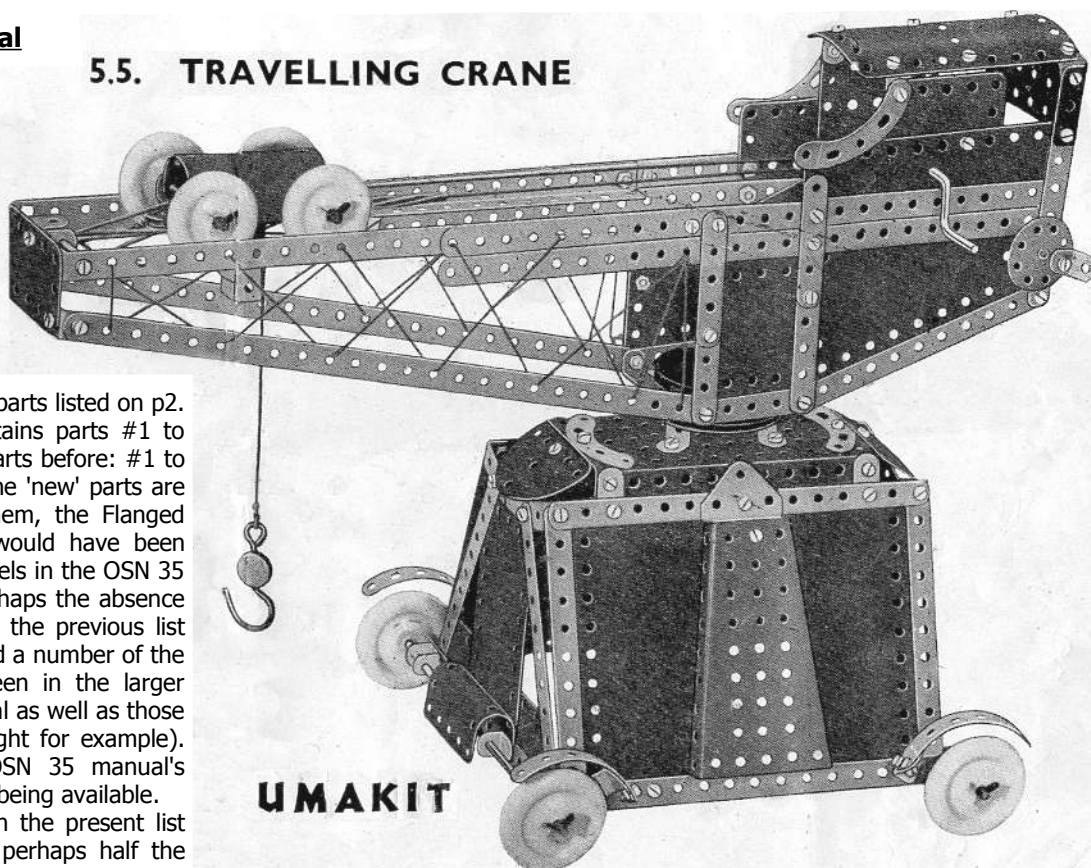
Another UMAKIT Manual

Ivor Ellard kindly sent this item and like the edition described in 35/907 it has 8 of the same size pages. It differs though in covering only Set 3-5, and includes new larger models for each set. Also as before, there are no covers & no evidence that they are missing. p1 has the same Intro but in larger type to fill the whole page, with the parts listed on p2.

The Parts. The list contains parts #1 to #82 as opposed to the 39 parts before: #1 to #61 but with many gaps. The 'new' parts are shown below. Certain of them, the Flanged Sector Plate for example, would have been needed for some of the models in the OSN 35 manual & also the N&B! Perhaps the absence of the parts after #61 from the previous list was simply a mistake. Indeed a number of the 'new' parts here can be seen in the larger models in the OSN 35 manual as well as those in this one (in the model right for example). And remember that the OSN 35 manual's Intro spoke of over 80 parts being available.

The prices of the parts in the present list are either the same or, in perhaps half the

5.5. TRAVELLING CRANE



UMAKIT

No.	Description	Price	No.	Description	Price
9.	Angle Girder, 9½" ...	6d.	64	Curved Plate, "U" Section, ⅝" radius, 2½" x 2½"	4d.
10.	" " 7½" ...	5½d	65	Curved Plate, 1½" radius, 2½" x 2½"	3½d.
11.	" " 5½" ...	4d.	66	Nuts	doz. 3½d.
12.	" " 3½" ...	3½d	67	Bolts, ¼" ...	4d.
13.	" " 2½" ...	2½d.	68	" ⅜" ...	5d.
14.	" " 1½" ...	2d.	69.	" ½" ...	6d.
28.	Crank handle, 5" ...	5½d.	70.	Washers	4d.
29.	Single Throw Crankshaft 3½" ...	5½d.	71.	Hank of Cord	4d.
30.	Double " 3½" ...	5½d.	72.	Spring Clips, ...	Box of 24 1/10d.
31.	Single Throw Handcrank 3½" ...	6d.	73.	Fishplates	doz. 11d.
32.	" " 5" ...	6½d.	74.	Hook	9d.
33.	Axle Rod 8" ...	3½d.	75.	Rod Connecting Tube	2½d.
34.	" " 6½" ...	3½d.	76.	Rod and Strip Connector	2½d.
35.	" " 5½" ...	3d.	77.	Driving Bands, 2½" ...	doz. 5d.
36.	" " 5" ...	3d.	78	" " 4½" ...	7d.
38.	" " 4" ...	2½d.	79.	Spanner	5d.
40.	" " 2" ...	2d.	80.	Screwdriver	7d.
41.	" " 1½" ...	1½d.	81.	" extra long	8d.
45.	Wheel, 2½" diameter	9½d.	82.	Cylinder, 2½" x 1½" diameter	9d.
46.	" 3" ...	11½d.		Supplementary Sets	3A 10/9 4A 14/6 5A 10/9
53.	Collar with Screw	3½d.			
54.	Cord-anchoring Collar	3½d.			
62.	Flanged Plate, 3½" x 2½"	6½d.			
63.	" Sector Plate, 4½"	10d.			

items, appreciably less than in OSN 35.

The Sets. Notice the last item in the list, the Supplementary Sets. The smallest is the 3A, no doubt because the Manual has no models for Sets 1 & 2; the No.5A is the only known reference to a set larger than the No.5.

The Models for Sets 3 & 4 are as in the earlier manual except that there they were for Sets 4 & 5. The five models for the No.5 go from 5.1 MOTOR LORRY to the Crane above, the most original of the five. They include the Tanker shown in 13/339 which was on the lid of a probable No.1 outfit, and said lid also showed the Crane, and a Tank almost identical to the 1937-53 Meccano No.5 Military Tank.

Remarks. With its complete list of parts and the larger No.5 models it seems most likely that the present manual was later the OSN 35 edition. Another possible indication is that 2 telephone numbers were added to the Denton Claff address: TEM. 9155 & 3821. The lower prices for many of the parts is rather surprising as varying degrees of inflation occurred throughout the postwar years (the only reductions in MECCANO prices arose from changes to the Purchase Tax rate

from time to time but these were relatively small). Perhaps the UMAKIT reductions were intended to make their prices match or be lower than their competitor's.

No details are known of the contents of the sets, other than the No.1, and there are various unanswered questions. Was there ever a No.6? And if so did it allow the present larger No.5 models to be made from it? Were the larger sets renumbered downwards at some point so that a No.6 became a No.5, and so on. It seems unlikely from a marketing point of view. Alternatively were the sets, or at least the larger ones, upgraded? That might have meant price rises, but at least it would have avoided the problems which arose for shops when Meccano downgraded their sets in 1970.

Earlier notes in OSN have shown the similarities between UMAKIT & CONSTRUCTO, and the models in the latter's Set 3-5 manual described in 25/740 are identical to those in the present UMAKIT one. The photos are even identical in size, and the only differences are a few minor changes to the names of the models and one of the present No.4 models was said to be for Set 5.

A Google search for 'Denton Claff' gave only one relevant result, an announcement in The London Gazette for 5th Jan. 1962 that the company would be dissolved in 3 months time.