

OTHER SYSTEMS NEWSLETTER

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OSN 1 October 1989

EDITORIAL. This Newsletter is being launched primarily to encourage the recording of the detailed facts about model constructional systems other than Meccano, and the histories and development of these systems. The word 'system', in the absence of a better one, includes everything from Erector in its heyday with hundreds of different parts, to much humbler constructional toys with only a handful.

In this first, free Issue I hope to explain in detail the scope of the OSN and to give a flavour of what it might contain in the future, also to notify the mechanics of subscriptions, etc. But first to try to ensure that all who might be interested in OSN hear of its existence, the following are asked to help if they can:-

Meccano Club Secretaries. Please bring this Issue to the attention of any of your members who might be interested.

Magazine/Newsletter Editors. Please include if possible a mention of OSN, it might be for example, along the following lines -

"Tony Knowles has launched a six-monthly Newsletter concerned with model constructional systems other than Meccano. The main object is to record detailed facts about these systems including their histories and development. If you are interested the first Issue can be obtained by writing to Tony at 7 Potters Way, Laverstock, Salisbury. SP1 1PY. (England); it is free but postage would be appreciated."

Other Recipients of OSN. If you know of anyone who might wish to subscribe please photocopy this Issue and pass it on or let me have the name and address and I will send to them.

I hope that that will spread the word to most potential subscribers. It is important that there are subscribers of course although there is no need to reach any particular number to make the Newsletter viable; that will be governed by the contributors so let me urge anyone who can make any contribution, large or small, or has any questions that he or she would like aired or answered, to write to me as soon as you can. Anything that you intend to be included in the Newsletter should be typed, single spaced, (or neatly hand printed) on A4 using the format, margins, etc of this Issue. If these guidelines can be observed it will help me because I intend that generally items will be photocopied in exactly the form in which they have been submitted and not retyped. However never let presentational difficulties prevent you from passing on information, it is up to me to overcome any problems. Photographs will have to be photocopied and so they should where possible not be used to convey detailed data. The language of OSN will be English but where there is no alternative I am anxious not to debar non-English contributions. If I receive any I will appeal for help with translation; I can probably manage straightforward French. Parts lists and the like in foreign languages are of course inevitable but a translation of key words is often very useful and adds to their interest, particularly for items which are not illustrated.

Turning now to some of the areas that might be covered in OSN, I have in mind the following but I would be glad to receive comments and suggestions -

- Additional, detailed information on known systems to expand on the MCS entry.
- The history and development of each system, including the dates or sequence of the introduction or deletion of parts, sets, motors, etc.
- The literature of the systems, particularly manuals, price lists and parts lists.

- Comments on using the various systems, and interesting models made from them, either from manuals or to readers' designs. The usefulness of particular, unusual parts would be of interest.

- Readers' "Sales and Wants". Details of charges in the next Issue but there will be no charge for items that reach me before the end of February, 1990 (up to a few lines for each item).

- New discoveries about known or hitherto unknown systems.

- Readers' letters and queries including descriptions of unidentified parts.

So your contributions please on these or any other areas of interest. To avoid misunderstanding any correspondence may be published in OSN (in full or in part) unless it is marked not for publication or of course unless it deals with private matters. No payment will be made for any material published.

To avoid infringing the original Copyright which may exist for material in OSN, it will only be supplied on the understanding that it is for the personal use of the recipient for research purposes.

Next finances. I expect that the amount of material available will ultimately determine the size of the Newsletter and/or the frequency of publication, and therefore the cost per annum. I suggest that for a start there should be two Issues a year (probably in April and October), each with 8 to 12 sides. After that it should be possible to see the future more clearly taking into account readers' views. On that basis the subscription for the next two Issues including postage will be UK, £2; Europe and surface mail anywhere, £2.50; air mail outside Europe, £3. Cheques etc payable to P.A.KNOWLES please.

Subscriptions should preferably be in Pounds Sterling; other currency will be cashed locally and the resulting Sterling credited. Each subscriber's credit will be shown to him or her on each Issue and so any excess at the end of a year will be carried forward automatically.

Finally I wish to acknowledge the helpful suggestions and support I have received from Frank Beadle, Clyde Suttle and Geoff Wright of MW Models in starting this Newsletter. Frank has also contributed the next item on the reference book "Metal Constructional Systems" (MCS), which as many readers will know is an essential foundation to any serious interest in Other Systems. Indeed OSN will be written on the basis that reference can be made to MCS as necessary, to do otherwise would mean much more explanation and repetition.

METAL CONSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS

by Frank Beadle

In 1981 Don Blakeborough of New Zealand and Frank Beadle of England became interested in 'Other systems' both at that time unknown to each other. In 1983 they agreed to combine their efforts and produce a work on the subject, at that time about 100 plus Other Systems were known of.

In 1983 PART 1 was published from N.Z. followed by PART 2 in 1984 also from N.Z. with PART 3 in 1986 and PART 4 in 1988. The entire work now runs to nearly 900 pages, double faced, in four volumes of over 200 pages each. Many people have these first publications and should continue with these in order to keep the alphabetical sequence correct.

These books run as follows:-

PART 1 from A to L

PART 2 " M to S

PART 3 " T to Z with additions and corrections

PART 4 of additions and corrections.

In 1988 it was possible to publish the books from England and at this point they were completely revised, although the overall content of systems remains the same as the original. The revised versions are as follows:

PART 1 (early 1989) from A to D

PART 2 (early 1989) " E to L

PART 3 (mid 1989) " M to O

PART 4 (late 1989) " P to Z

In all nearly 400 'Other Systems' have come to light from over 40 countries of the world, and even now there are still systems to be found and these will be included in a possible PART 5 at a later date, although it is evident that we have just about unearthed them all - or have we? The Section on Meccano and associated products is included in PART 4 of the original, but not until PART 5 of the revised due to the sheer bulk of pages required.

Each system is covered as far as possible by; Front Cover of Manual, Information page with hole size, spacing, colours etc etc. Parts List, a Typical larger Model and Contents of Sets plus other details.

The volumes form a massive mine of information and are currently available from either Co-Author as follows:-

Revised: Frank Beadle, 33 Yoredale Avenue, Darlington, Co. Durham or Orig. DL3 9AN. England. Tel (0325) 356097

Original. Don Blakeborough, 9I Cornfoot Street, Castlecliff, Wanganui, New Zealand. Prices and further details on application.

Frank Beadle is always on the lookout for any further other systems not included in the books. Please write or phone first in case we have them. Anyone requiring to purchase any VOGUE or ERECTOR parts should contact Frank for list of lots of same. Will purchase parts of systems of rarer type or unknown systems parts.

(A copy of any information sent to me which could be used in MCS will be passed on to Frank Beadle, even if for any reason it cannot be used in full in OSN - Ed)

MCS SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION. When trying to identify unknown parts it is often very useful to know such things as type or size of screw thread, whether the thread used in bosses is the same as that of nuts and bolts, the axle diameter, etc. There are many other facts that might be useful and I have listed a selection below, please write in if you think any changes should be made to it. I have also added data for Masterbuilder and Merkur as examples; data for other systems will be published as it is sent in.

Name of System (as in MCS)	Masterbuilder	Merkur	NOTES. (i) .390" for some parts.
Axle dia	.154" (Bk)	.147"	(ii) Worm and pinion
Dia of holes in bosses	.155"	.151"	.310".
Dia of holes in strips	.157"	.154"	(iii) Some may be Zn".
Dia of bosses	.373" (i)	.314" (ii)	All gears have St/Ni.
Boss matl/finish. s/t : d/t	Br/" or Ni. d/t	Al/"(iii) s/t	(iv) M 3 Set Screw in most bosses; M 4 Grub in Worm and Pinion.
DP or Module of gears	30 (.85)	.6 (42)	
N&B: thread name or dia	1/8" W	M 3.5	
Nut: matl/finish	St/Br	St/"	
: sq or hex: size A/F	sq .25"	hex .232"	ABBREVIATIONS.
Bolt: ead shape and dia	CH .187"	CH .235"	Dia-diameter
Other threads used	none	M 3, M 4 (iv)	Matl-material
Set screw: matl/finish	none	St/Ni	s/t-single tapped
: head shape and dia		CH .196"	d/t-double tapped
Grub screw: matl	St	St	DP-diametral pitch
Pulleys: matl/finish	Br/Ni	St/dgn	N&B-nut and bolt
Other unusual feature not in MCS	Later parts inc St plates were painted orange or blue.		sq-square
			hex-hexagonal
			A/ -across flats
			CH-cheesehead

Further notes on screw threads, materials, finishes, taking measurements, and finding the DP and Module of gears will be included in the next Issue.

A NOTE ON "CONSTRUCTION"

In MCS the sets referred to are 100, 101, 110, 111, 120, 200, 300 and C01, C02, C03, C04, C06. Details of set contents are given for 100-300. Another entry gives details of C07. In fact sets C01, C02 and C03 (basic sets) replaced sets 100, 110 and 120, and the linking sets 101 and 111 no longer exist. Set 200 (which includes a motor and extra gears) was replaced by C04, and 300 (mainly plastic plates) by C06. C07 is as shown in MCS, a theme set for lorries, C08 is a simplified version of C07 and C09 is another theme set intended to make a tanker lorry. I obtained this information from a visit to a Conrad Electronics store in West Germany during 1986 and from memory their catalogue also showed a C05 set and I think it contained a selection of gears and other parts. All but C05 were on sale there.

In a 1988 Conrad catalogue (the sets illustrated here are from it) all the C0 series are shown except C05 but there is also a gears set, C4 (containing one of each gear plus a universal coupling) and a new theme set to make helicopters, C20. One twist, a set bought in Holland recently was labelled C03 but was found to contain most of the contents of the C06 set as well as all the C03 parts. This set was shown in the Set Contents of the manual as C03+6, with the normal sets C03 and C06 shown in separate columns.

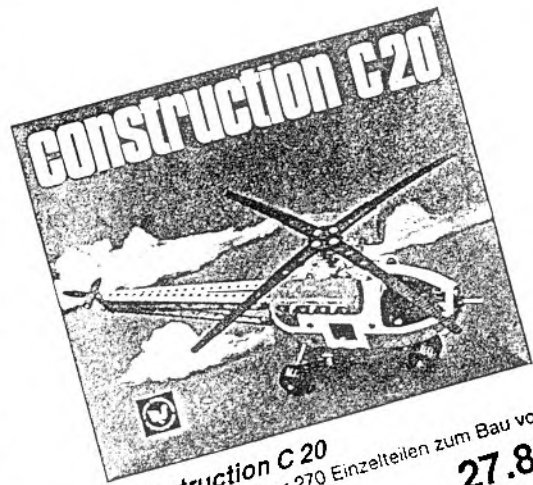
Comparing the contents of the old 100 sets and the C0 replacements there are a few minor changes including the introduction of three new parts, a 20 hole Strip (PN 1010, the 25 hole Strip is renumbered 1011), a Triangular Bracket 1125, and a plastic Windmill Sail, 1147. Comparing the C03 set parts with those of a much older 120 set the Pulley Wheels 1301 and 1302 are made from red plastic instead of from nickel plated steel, while parts 1401, 1403, 1431, 1471, 1481 (collar, coupling, universal, worm, small bevel) are now made entirely from black plastic instead of metal, or for the bevel, white plastic with a nickel plated boss moulded into it. The plastic parts are accurately moulded but the threads in the bosses strip easily if the grub screws are overtightened, despite the shape of the boss being modified, as illustrated, to give more depth of thread. Most of the parts are unchanged though and are still nickel plated. There is a different electric motor, or perhaps it is the same motor with a modified case and mount, and a battery box has been introduced.

One final change, the tyres 1421 and 1422 are now moulded from plastic and seem to be hollow, but the walls are plenty strong enough to stand the weight of vehicles likely to be made from these sets.

I have acquired quite a collection of Construction parts and I have made one or two largish models; I can recommend it for model building, accepting its obvious limitations, as an interesting change from say Meccano or Marklin, and it is relatively cheap to buy. One potential problem might be the varied colours of the plastic plates, there were typically three different colours, all bright, in any one box. Great for fairground models but not so good for a steam engine maybe.

The only set that I have seen on sale in the UK is C07, it was sold in garage shops two or three years ago, with the boxes marked CONSTRUCTIO 7 on the outside although the Instruction Leaflet referred to Constuction C07. I am told that the new Helicopter set is currently on sale in some areas.

Apart from the Conrad catalogue the above material has been taken from (a) the Instruction Manual with the 120 set. It matches the MCS data exactly and has a Reference No. V/4/59. Ag 47/88/71 inside the rear cover, and (b) the Manual in the Dutch C03 set, and that has III/6/15 Rf 78/88 on the outside of the rear cover. Incidentally the rear cover of the earlier manual shows six different packs of parts, No 310 containing strips and 311-315 angle girders and brackets; plates and discs; pulleys and tyres; axles, collars and the largest pulley; nuts and bolts, respectively.



Construction C 08

Baukasten mit 367 Einzelteilen, speziell für den Bau von für Fahrzeuge erforderlichen Elementen, z. B. Räder, Türen, Karosserie.

Best.-Nr. 29 78 28-54 **24.50**

Construction C 09

Der Baukasten C 09 ist der neueste der Construction-Serie und enthält 416 Teile zum Bau von z. B. Lkw mit Containeraufleger, Jeep oder Kleinbus.

Best.-Nr. 29 78 36-54 **29.70**

Construction C 20

Baukasten mit über 270 Einzelteilen zum Bau von Hubschraubermodellen.
Best.-Nr. 29 78 52-54 **27.85**

1147



Windmühlenflügel

C01 C02 C03 C04 C06 C03+06

	4	4			4
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1125



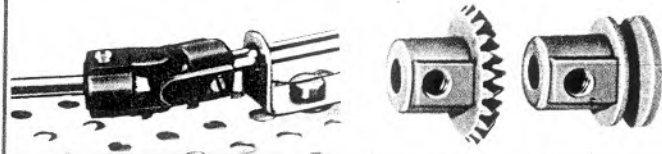
Trapezplatte 5 × 3 Loch, abgewinkelt

	2	2			2
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Top: New Sets

Centre: New Parts

Right: New Plastic Bosses



USING ... CONSTRUCTION. I have recently made one or two models from this East German system and one of the good points was that there were two types of Angle Bracket available. One had the normal arrangement of a hole in one face and a slot in the other, and the other had slots in both faces. The first type is necessary to provide a bearing but apart from that I often found the second type more convenient.

SMALL ADS.

For Sale. Arkirecto parts. 22 red strips, 2" to 12". 8 red connecting pieces. 19 black DAS (3 types). 2x3" faceplates & 6x 1 1/4" pulleys with 5 collets. 1x1 1/4" loose pulley. 1 axle, 4 sprig clips. Some rust on circ parts. £10+Carr - OSN Editor. Wanted. Esco sets or parts - OSN Editor.

NEW FACTS. Premier parts often turn up in the UK but from time to time there are some which might well be Premier but are not listed in MCS. In the Manual described in the Literature Index, which came to light recently, the following parts not in MCS are listed, they are not illustrated.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| B9 3 1/2" x 1" x 1/2" Girder Plate | P4 Rigid Plate 5 1/2" x 3 1/2" |
| B11 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/2" Girder Plate | P5 " " 5 1/2" x 2 1/2" |
| P3a Rectangular Base Plate 5 1/2" x 1 1/2" | W1 1/2" Pulley Wheel |
| P3b " " " 4 1/2" x 3 1/2" | L4 8" Axle Rod |
| P3c " " " 3 1/2" x 2 1/2" | L7 3" Crank Shaft |

Parts W5a, W7, W7a which are shown in MCS were not in the Parts List of this Manual.

INDEX OF LITERATURE. For a start it is proposed that a list of Manuals and Instruction Leaflets, and a list of Price Lists, Parts Lists and Set Contents Lists be established. Considering for now Manuals and Instructional Leaflets it is obviously difficult to specify these exactly but it is suggested that the following details are recorded for each. Two examples are given and comments are invited.

Name of System	Construction	Premier
Page size (format)	211x291 mm (V)	120x216 mm (H)
No of pages (unnumbered)*	6 (folded lft) (6)	20 (20)
Page Nos of Parts List & highest PN	} 2 pages. 1616.	'4'. W6. (*1)
Page Nos of Set Contents & " " " "		None
Sets covered	C09	1-5
No of models for each set	1	3,4,3,2,2.
Name, Model No & Page No of first & last model of each set**.	Tanker Lorry only.	(*2)
Any date or reference	Set on sale 1988-89.	None.
Maker's Name and Address	VEB (*3)	None
OFC design	(*4)	(*5)

(*1) N5 is last in list

(*2) 1: Coster's Barrow '5', Car Trailer '7'. 2: Railway Siding Crane '8', Factory Fork-lift '11'. 3: Motor Launch '12', Steam Wagon '14'. 4: Elevator '15', Railway Wagon '16'. 5: Mechanical Shovel '17', Mobile Railway Crane '18'.

(*3) VEB Spielwaren-Mechanik, Pfaffschwende. DDR.

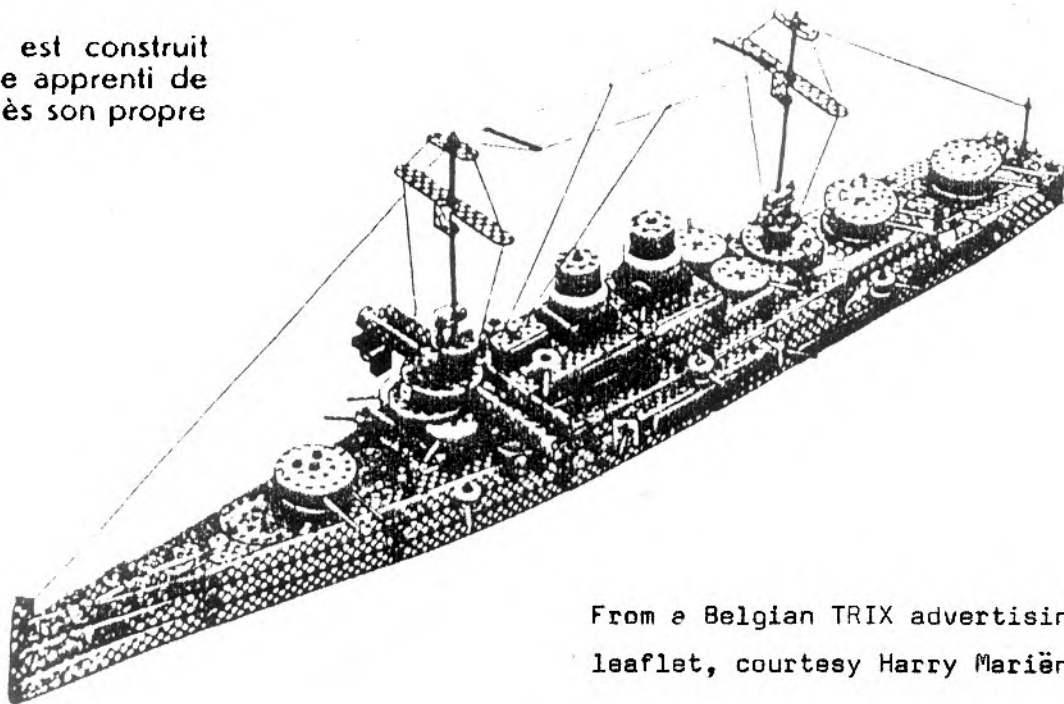
(*4) Red and yellow Tanker Lorry on green background with "Construction Bauanleitung C09" at top.

(*5) Light blue with Gantry Crane in cream on left, and boy in cream and brown on right. Above boy "The 'PREMIER' Steel Constructional Set" (blue on cream), and bottom left "Instruction Book" (brown).

* Including front and rear covers (equals 4 pages) and any unnumbered pages.

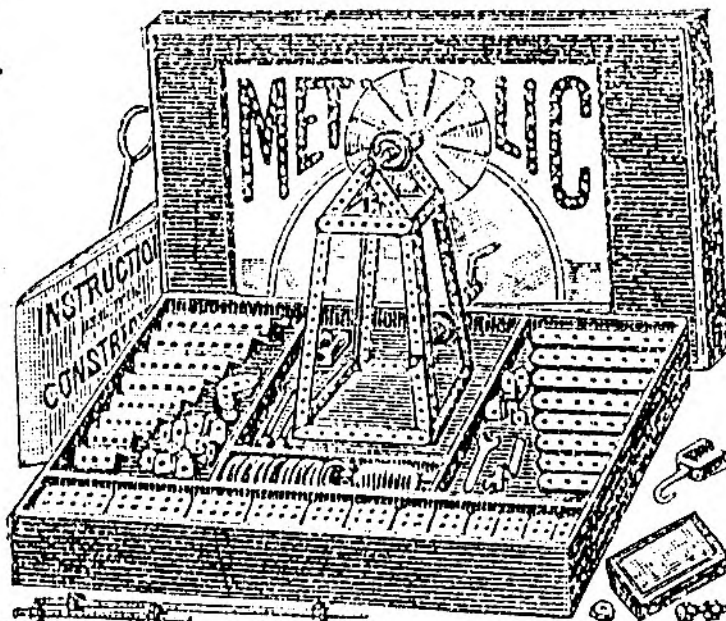
** If no pages are numbered it would be convenient to allocate page numbers starting with the outside front cover as '1'. All such pages should be shown in inverted commas. This approach cannot be easily adapted to fold out leaflets I think. If most pages of a normal manual are numbered the covers can be described as inside or outside of the front or rear cover (IFC or ORC for example). Blank pages will not usually need to be referred to specifically.

Ce modèle est construit
par un jeune apprenti de
13 ans d'après son propre
projet.



From a Belgian TRIX advertising
leaflet, courtesy Harry Mariën.

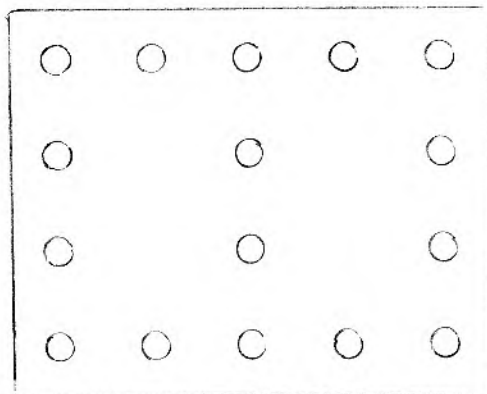
NEW SYSTEMS. Harry Mariën gave me a photocopy of Page 105 from the Au Bon Marché, Paris catalogue of 1913. This included a metal construction set called 'Métallic', available in two sizes to make 15 or 20 models. The ad blown up x2, is shown right. As a matter of interest the page also featured Meccano, Kliptiko, Structator, Arts et Metiers, a wooden constructional set called L'Idéalité, and a set called 'CONSTRUCTION navale' which allowed sailing and steam ships to be assembled from the various special parts contained in the outfit.



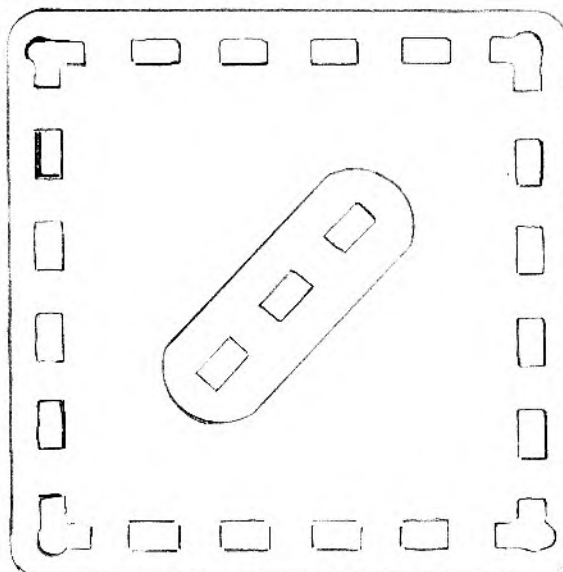
1925. **MÉTALIC**, nouvelle
construction en métal.
15 modèles 2.90 20 mod. 5.90

MYSTERY PARTS. All parts shown have been drawn by tracing around the originals with a sharp pencil.

The plate to the right has turned a number of times and I have at various junctures thought that it might be Erector or Primus; but I have never seen it illustrated or described. The holes are .170" dia and it is made from nickel plated steel .021" thick. On some examples one long edge is rather rough.



As well as the plate and strip shown there are also strips with 2,4,5 and 6 slots. Some strips are bent, often rather crudely, into various brackets and DAS. The slots vary in size slightly from one piece to another but are between .150 and .155" by .27 to .29". Their pitch is approximately 12.5 mm in the strips but nearer 12 mm around the plate. The pieces are made from coated (probably zinc) steel, the thickness of the strips varies from .030" to .040"; the plates are either .025 or .032". The parts that I have have come in three different lots, and from both the UK and Belgium. The width of the strips is between .545 and .555".



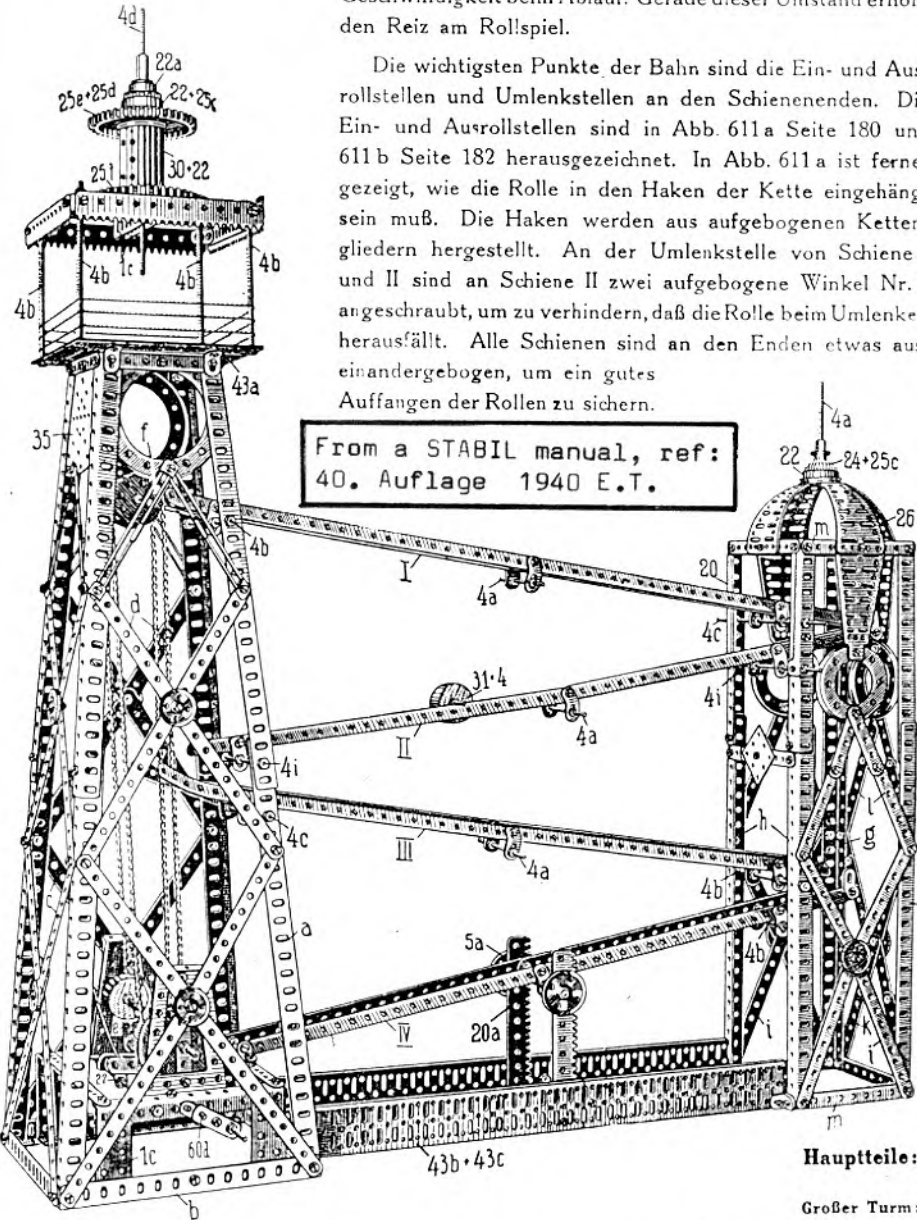
Nr. 611. Rollenspiel

75 cm lang, 90 cm hoch.

Dieses lustige Unterhaltungsspiel erfordert für seinen Bau eine geschickte Hand. Bieten auch die beiden Türme keine großen Schwierigkeiten, so ist jedoch bei den Schienen ein ganz genaues Arbeiten notwendig. In den Schienen laufen die Rollen. Der Abstand der Schienen voneinander muß darum gerade so groß sein, daß die Rollen nicht klemmen. Es darf aber auch nicht zu viel Spielraum sein, da sonst die Rollen kanten. — Kanten heißt, durch Zickzacklauf an den Kanten der Schienen anschlagen. — Da die Rollen nur mit der dünnen Achse auf den Schienen laufen, erreichen sie trotz großer Umdrehungszahl nur eine geringe Geschwindigkeit beim Ablauf. Gerade dieser Umstand erhöht den Reiz am Rollspiel.

Die wichtigsten Punkte der Bahn sind die Ein- und Ausrollstellen und Umlenkstellen an den Schienenenden. Die Ein- und Ausrollstellen sind in Abb. 611 a Seite 180 und 611 b Seite 182 herausgezeichnet. In Abb. 611 a ist ferner gezeigt, wie die Rolle in den Haken der Kette eingehängt sein muß. Die Haken werden aus aufgebogenen Kettengliedern hergestellt. An der Umlenkstelle von Schiene I und II sind an Schiene II zwei aufgebogene Winkel Nr. 2 angeschraubt, um zu verhindern, daß die Rolle beim Umlenken herausfällt. Alle Schienen sind an den Enden etwas auseinandergebogen, um ein gutes Auffangen der Rollen zu sichern.

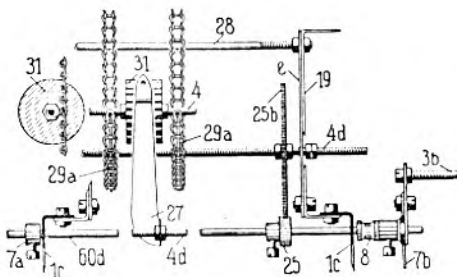
From a STABIL manual, ref: 40. Auflage 1940 E.T.



Modelle Nr. 1—617 gebaut mit Walther's „STABIL“-Baukasten Nr. 54 oder Nr. 53 und 53a

181

Abb. 611a gehört zum Modell Nr. 611, Rollenspiel auf Seite 181.



Aufstellung der Einzelteile zum Modell Nr. 611 Rollenspiel auf Seite 181.

Abb. 611b. Ausrollstelle der Bahn.

Hauptteile:

Großer Turm:

4 Eckstiele	a	W. E.	47	L. lg.	(25+25)
4 Grundschwellen	b	"	15	"	"
6 Streben	c	Fl.	23	"	(15+11)
6 "	d	"	19	"	(11+ 9)
2 Grundböcke	Nr.	1c	"	"	"
2 Lagerständer	"	"	19	"	"
2 Lagerbänder	e	Fl.	7	L. lg.	"
2 "	f	"	3	"	"
2 (oben am Auslauf)	"	"	"	"	"
2 Podestplatten	Nr.	43a	"	"	"
2 "	Fl. dp.	11	L. lg.	"	"
2 Dachplatten	Nr.	1c	"	"	"

Kleiner Turm:

2 Eckstiele	g	W. E.	37	L. lg.	(25+15)
2 "	h	"	37	"	(25+10+Nr. 20)
4 Streben	i	Fl.	19	"	(11+ 9)
2 "	k	"	19	"	2 (7+ 5)
6 "	l	"	11	"	(7+ 5)
4 Grund- und Kopfschwellen	m	"	9	"	"

Sonstige Teile:

2 Laufschienen und Einlauf aus	n	1	Fl.	49	L. lg.	(25+25)
2 Laufschienen	"	2	Fl.	7	L. lg.	+ Nr. 44a
2 "	"	II	Fl.	49	L. lg.	(25+25)
2 "	"	III	"	49	"	(25+25)
2 "	"	IV	"	53	"	(25+25+5)
2 Laufrollen	Nr.	31+4	"	"	"	"

Die Winkel, mit denen die Schienen festgeschraubt werden, sind etwas auseinandergebogen, damit die Schienen schräg stehen.