

OTHER SYSTEMS NEWSLETTER

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OSN 2 April 1990

EDITORIAL First my sincere thanks to all who have given publicity to OSN, it would have been difficult and expensive to have achieved this without your help. Next thanks to those who have written with encouragement, suggestions and criticism, and especially those who have sent me material for publication. It has not been possible to include quite everything in this Issue, despite it being rather larger than I had planned, but it does mean that at least there will be something in OSN 3! It would be nice in fact if the next Issue could be as large as this one, so please readers if you have anything, large or small, do send it to me.

One suggestion that has come from several people is that OSN should contain information on what sets and parts are currently being made and where they can be obtained. This seems to me well worthwhile and if any of you know of sources (worldwide) or have current lists please let me have details. It is infuriating to find out after production has ceased that until recently it was possible to buy some particular system. For example I wasn't aware that Cruson was still being made in Holland until shortly after production ceased. Or again, unbeknown, some factory in the GDR or wherever may actually be making interesting sets without anyone really knowing about it. This certainly happened with Construction which has probably been in production for 10 or 20 years and even now so far as I know it is only possible to come across, by chance, the odd set on sale in the UK, usually in street markets or garage shops.

One thing though, including full details of current sets and parts will take considerable space and therefore increase the number of pages in OSN. This in turn will increase the subscription rate after OSN 3 so I would welcome views on whether subscribers would be prepared to pay more for more pages, bearing in mind that I had really only budgetted for 12 or so pages per issue and this Newsletter has run to well beyond that. Hypothetically would double the present rates be acceptable?

One or two points about this Issue. First the article by Harry Marien on Distler Giant must be just about the acme of surveys of this type, with its detailed chronicle of events and its fascinating glimpses of the way that minor systems of this sort can come into being and disappear. Particular thanks to Harry for translating the article into English from the original Flemish. I don't expect to receive many such comprehensive accounts, welcome though they would be, and please potential contributors, don't think that you have to live up to this standard, all historical information no matter how small or large will be well worth recording. Secondly Malcolm Hanson's information on Arkirecto sheds new light on this system for me because until now I had only known of the 'mechanical' side of it as given in MCS, and I couldn't see how those parts fitted with the name Arkirecto, with its obvious architectural connotation. So now all is clear and for me this is just the type of information that I hoped OSN would bring forth. Finally, one item that has been squeezed out this time due to lack of space is the Index of Literature. John Westwood has sent some helpful comments on this and I intend to get it seriously underway in the next Issue.

DISTLER GIANT, Belgium's "greatest" metal constructional system? by Harry Mariën

[This article was originally published in the 1987 Yearbook of the Belgian Toy Museum (Speelgoedmuseum-Studiecentrum voor speelgoed en volkskunde V.Z.W.) at Mechelen, Belgium.]

In 1901 Frank Hornby took out his first patent on a metal constructional system he had developed and called it MECHANICS MADE EASY. Six years later he changed the name to MECCANO.

Since 1907 the name MECCANO has become a legend and MECCANO has been fascinating millions of youngsters (and adults!) all over the world for more than 88 years already. When it became clear that manufacturing constructional toys could be a lucrative business, hundreds of competitors appeared all over the globe, imitating the great example.

Some of them were straight imitations, others had their own differences and styles. The Belgian toy manufacturers followed promptly: at least fifteen are known, some of only local importance, but others nationally and internationally recognised. Amongst names like MERCATOR, TECNIC (from UNICA-Kortrijk), LE CONSTRUCTEUR, LE PETIT ARTISAN DE LA MECANIQUE, METALLIX, METALBO, KWIK BUILDER and others, we also find that of DISTLER GIANT.

Distler was originally a German toy manufacturer (King 1978). At the end of the last century they already produced the so called "penny toys", marking their products with a thistle or with the initials J.D. (Johann Distler), and later with a globe. The company was situated in the Leinhardstrasse 7 in Nuremberg.

When Johann Distler, founder of the company, died in 1929, business was continued by two members of the board, Braun and Meijer. Due to the changing political situation in Germany, they had to leave there in 1935-36. Ernst Volk took over the production, and so in turn did TRIX, producer of toy trains and the metal constructional system with the same name (Weltens 1976), two years later.

In that period the range of Distler products consisted amongst others of cars, aeroplanes and railway stations. The company continued to exist independently. However in 1962 it was decided, in spite of a short revival after the second world war, to stop production. With the end of the history of Distler in Germany, starts the history of Distler in Belgium (1), and of course also GIANT's.

Distler specialised in the development and the production of micromotors. These relatively expensive, but very high quality motors found different applications, such as battery powered electric razors, mini record players for cars and especially in toy and model trains.

An important customer and, over a certain period, shareholder of Distler was again the TRIX company. Indeed, the latter possessed three production plants of their own in Nuremberg.

Near the end of the fifties, the TRIX group, and especially DISTLER, suffered from a shortage of manpower. Therefore they decided to look out for a possible purchaser.

Around that time, the former Belgian Congo had its independence disturbances which, among other things, forced the Belgian company "La Forminière" (from forest and minière = mining, diamond producer) to bring its capital to Belgium.

For this reason the Belgian company Indufor (from industry and forest) was established and began searching for good investments of several billions (!) of capital. A very small part of these investments was the purchase of the Distler company in 1962. The Nuremberg workforce was entirely taken over by the TRIX group. The company name, installations and machinery were brought to Belgium where, besides the necessary workers, a suitable area of nearly 10 acres (4 ha) was found. On this ground stood the buildings of an earlier motorcoach garage, in which in 1963 they started toy production, as Distler Toy, employing the 270 Belgians that had been engaged.

The operation was supervised by the German REITER, son-in-law of Johann Distler. The shareholders were Distler (Trix) with 50% and Indufor-trust Société Générale, 50%.

Micromotors for divers applications, toy trains with a clockwork motor (toy scale) and train sets, scale H0, electrically operated with an optional transformer, were produced.

The German BRAUN, leader of the Nuremburg development department, joined Distler Toy in Belgium in the same capacity, and designed two new projects: a train set for 9 mm track which required an investment of 25 million Belgian francs and was therefore not approved by the Board, and a new constructional system. Considering the earlier connection with Trix, Braun must have been inspired by this system, since he based his new design on the Trix configuration as to the shape and perforations. He nevertheless doubled the size, e.g. a Trix perforated strip with a length of 2.7 in (69 mm) now became 5.4 in (14 cm) long (fig. 3).

Of course this increase in size increased the surface area by four, and as the thicknesses were increased accordingly, each Distler part became nearly eight times as heavy.

Although one of the remaining instruction manuals (wheelset Giant 3) apparently shows a smooth axle next to the illustration of a threaded rod, as far as is known no sets actually equipped with smooth axles have ever been found.

It was very logical that this new construction system was called Giant, Gigant for the German market. Most of the other parts in the system, namely girders, do show the same resemblance to Trix parts, although by the difference in size and finish (the Giant parts were sprayed in blue metallic colour), Giant had a very specific and unique aspect, obviously quite different from all existing constructional systems. The sets were supplied with 6 mm(!) metric bolts with dome heads and like the hexagonal nuts, finished in black. The threaded rod, widely used in Trix, was also carried over into Giant, and made in brass plated steel and, of course, also in the unusual and robust size of 6 mm diameter. This threaded rod was often shown in instruction books making cross connectios and also acted as an axle. This in contrast with Trix, where next to the often used threaded rods, smooth axles with threaded ends are also available. The fact that these were missing in the Giant sets, along with for example pulleys, formed an essential shortcoming of the Giant system, in order to build, at least with only genuine parts, technically worthwhile constructions : an important aspect of constructional toys is their use for model building purposes. Metal constructional systems are increasingly used to produce technically correct and realistic scale models. In relation to Giant it is of course not difficult to get for example, 6 mm axles, or to make pulleys and similar parts oneself.

Distler seemed to have planned the manufacture of pulleys but never did, for obvious reasons described further on. Once one gets used to the possibilities of the Distler system there is, in spite of the very restricted range of parts (compared with Meccano or Märklin), the possibility to build amazingly large scale technical creations ... and this with a toy that was essentially meant to be a constructional toy of the cheaper type.

The large scale building possibilities are especially assured by the presence of Giant girders: these parts (L-profiles with equal legs) were included in some of the Giant sets but could also be bought seperately, and were available in four different lengths. The longest especially, nearly 64 cm long, gave exceptional construction possibilities.

Distler itself took advantage of this characteristic in their manuals where, apart from the classic examples of constructions and models, there are pictures of children who first built their own chairs and workbenches before building the actual Distler model. In the developemnt of these girders Distler surely considered this rather unusual application: where girders were supplied pvc endcaps were always included. Later on Distler parts and girders would be used for different purposes especially by toy dealers who had difficulties in getting rid of their stock: we still know of a toyshop where all the display tables are made from Distler Giant girders! Distler Toy used part of the remaining stock (in 1965 the production of Giant was stopped) to build racks and shelves for use in their own storehouse.

For driving the Giant models they used the Distler micromotor already mentioned: for use with models the motor was built on a base with a two-speed gearbox for manual use with a neutral and a reverse position. The output shaft had a 10 tooth chainwheel and the whole was mounted on a chassis drilled with holes in Distler Giant

configuration, ready to use in a model. This driving unit was sold with a brass plated 40 tooth chainwheel (identical to that of Trix and probably obtained from that source), a plastic battery holder with reversing switch, nuts and bolts and a series of brackets, in a small cardboard box, under the name "GIGANT-electromatic". Although made in Belgium, the motors still carried the engraving "made in Germany" on their grey finished outside, underneath the logo carrying the name Distler within a globe.

The motors used for the Distler gearbox chassis had bronze bearings, technically the best choice for this purpose, but for other applications they could also be supplied with miniature roller bearings. It is worth mentioning that in the mid-sixties these Distler micromotors were the only ones which met the NASA specifications for certain applications. Distler Nijvel produced ten handmade and very intensively tested (and very expensive) micromotors for the American Apollo space programme.

Distler Toy organised its own marketing and developed a modest sales organisation with dealers all over Europe. A market was also found outside Europe (Brazil), although the highest sales lay in Germany, Austria and Belgium. Sadly sales weren't according to expectations and certainly didn't match production. After investigations in 1965 they had in stock no less than 300,000(!) train sets with clockwork motors and a similar quantity (!) of electric train sets. Most of these were still made with out of date lithographic printing techniques on tin plate. There was also 15 tons of Giant in the warehouse. Most of these goods were sold at cost price, mainly to German speaking countries. The liquidation of this stock took no less than three years. In the reorganisation subsequent to the 1965 investigations it was decided to stop the manufacture of trains and also of the Giant constructional system. Some members of the board and 220 workers were discharged. Micromotors, their speciality, stayed in production and were supplied to model train manufacturers and record player producers. In the last application, it was especially Phillips Germany who was their largest customer, taking more than 300,000 motors per annum. These micromotors were also used for driving Distler's tin plate Porsche model car, which is a rare and much sought after collectors item nowadays.

In 1966 Distler also started to manufacture miniature toy cars of the Dinky (2) type, using zamac injection techniques. This range of toys was commercialised by the company Sablon-Production in Braine-le-Château (Belgium). In the same year they changed the name Distler Toy into Distler S.A.

In 1967 another reorganisation was carried through and they definitely went in other directions producing products which were better placed in the market than toys. Apart from the production of tools for presses, moulds with very low tolerances for the injection of thermoplastic plastics (a.v. Siemens) and for zamac-brass alloys, were produced.

In 1978 they worked on general mechanical projects for among others British Leyland (Seneffe) and for Barco. In 1980 the trust Société Générale and the banks decided to stop new investments and the company was sold to an Anglo-Irish concern. In 1981 this group was declared bankrupt and this consequently led to the final disappearance of Distler.

LITERATURE :

- HORNBY F., 1915, The boy who made \$1,000,000 with a Toy. New York : Meccano Inc.
 KING C.E., 1978, Grote geïllustreerde speelgoedencyclopedie, (translated from English by T.Albarde, K.Brands and M.den Engelse), Alphen aan den Rijn : Septuaginta, p.164.
 Weltens A., 1976, Mechanisch blikken speelgoed, Arnhem : Kosmos, 160 p.

REFERENCES :

- (1) verbal information from interviews from ex-Distler employees and especially ex-member of the board, Mr ir. P. DUBOIS
 (2) Dinky, from Dinky Toys, a product of Meccano Ltd., Liverpool, U.K.



giant



Grosselement-Baukasten
A l'échelle de l'enfant
Op schaal van het kind
At child scale

DISTLER TOY
S. a.
ch. de Namur,
Nivelles
Belgique
Tél. 067-234.15
223.55

DISTLER TOY
S. a.
ch. de Namur,
Nivelles
Belgique
Tél. 067-234.15
223.55

Distler

Fig 1. Different Distler's German and Belgian Logos.



Fig 2. Front cover with four language text of the general GIANT leaflet.

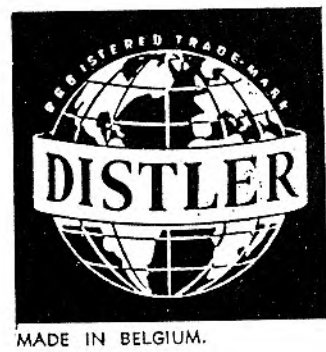
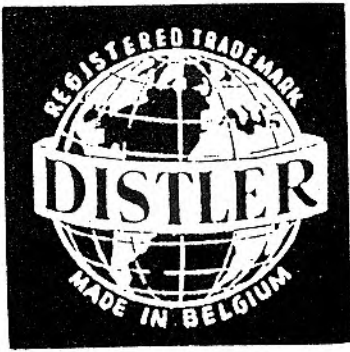


Fig 4. Distler GIANT metal constructional set No 22.511 with 106 parts, for the German speaking countries.

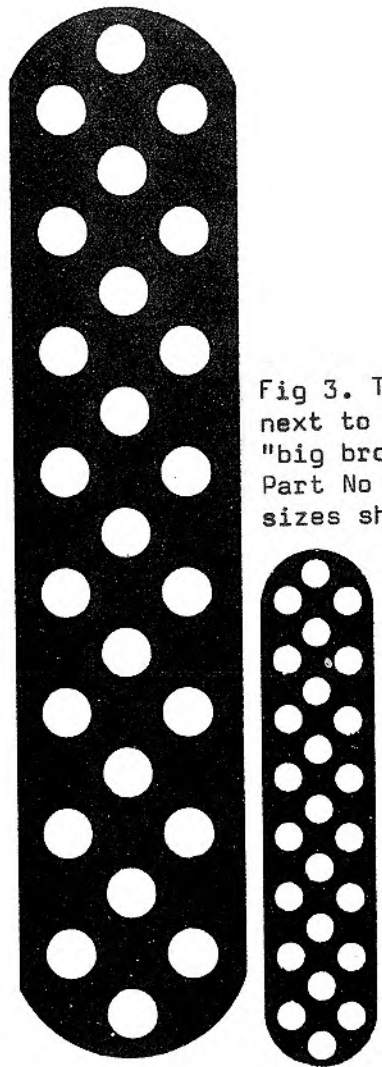


Fig 3. Trix Part No F9 next to its equivalent "big brother", GIANT Part No 5009. Actual sizes shown.



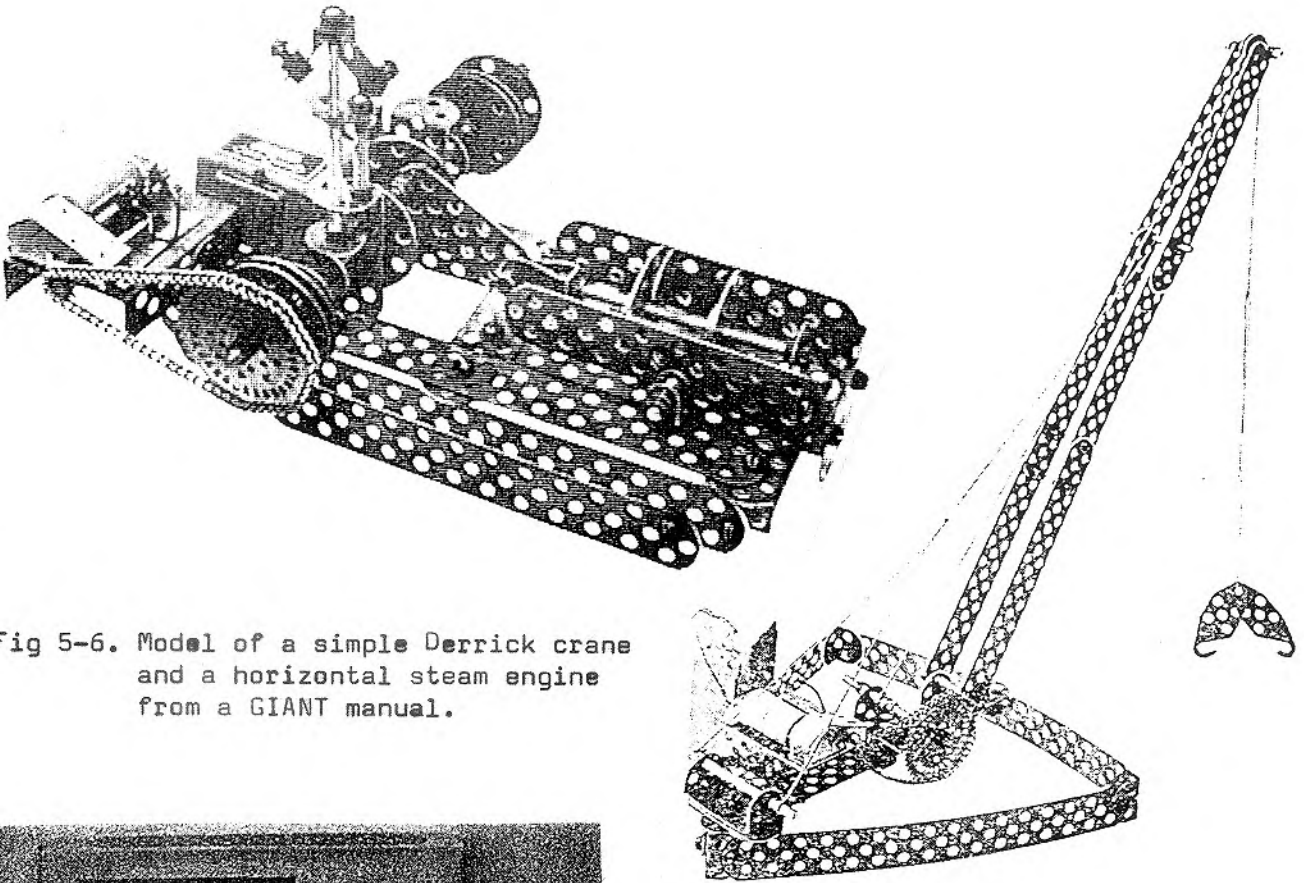


Fig 5-6. Model of a simple Derrick crane and a horizontal steam engine from a GIANT manual.



Fig 7. Distler GIANT, larger metal constructional set No 5000 with 139 parts, in a well presented nice and practical box.

GIANT



Fig 8. Front cover of Electromatic driving set No 5001 manual.

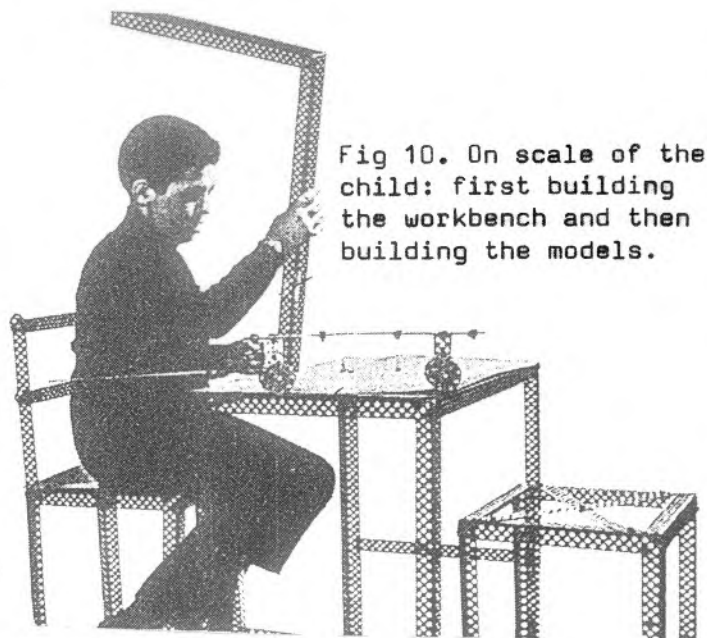


Fig 10. On scale of the child: first building the workbench and then building the models.



Fig 11. On scale of the adult: large scale model building with GIANT. Model of a Derrick crane on permanent display in the Belgian Toy Museum. The model's weight, complete with load and counterweight is approximately 110 pounds.

Fig 9. GIGANT-electromatic: electrical driving unit with the famous Distler micromotor.

NEW SYSTEM.

Elektriskais Konstruktors <Skolnieks> 3

from Keith Cameron.

This electrical kit is packed in a box about 12"x12" with a partitioned plastic insert and contains the following:

- 1 3"x5" Drilled wood base
- 2 5-1/2"x2-1/2" plates of compressed board
- 1 horseshoe shaped core
- 1 wound electromagnet
- 1 1-1/4" core for electromagnet
- 1 bell, 2-1/4" diam
- 1 8-1/2" dowel
- 3 small lamps and holders
- 4.5v flat-style battery
- Spanner and screwdriver
- 2 5 hole strips
- 4 3x1 hole DA Strips

- Plastic box with small parts:
- 12 nuts and bolts
- 20 washers
- 4 angle brackets
- 6 connecting posts
- 6 connecting lugs
- Pre-stripped wire lengths
- 3 springy metal strips

The box label and manual are bi-lingual, in Cyrillic and a language unknown to me. The screwdriver is called a 'skruvgriezis,' the spanner is an 'uzgrieznu atslega.' The manual has a full list of contents with illustrations of each part and of the box layout. There are 21 experiments including variations of series and parallel connections of lamps and switches, double throw switches, and electromagnetism including a working bell. The set was the kind gift of NZ Meccanoman, Mike Stuart, who had bought it while in Poland.

MARKLIN IN 1990. The following is taken from a recent brochure. The main series of sets are designated M30 (342 parts), M50 (458 parts) and M60 (664 parts) and these are linked by extension sets E30 and E50. The catalogue numbers for these are 1004, 1005, 1006, 1016 and 1017 respectively. Then there are two special sets, a Robotics Construction Set, ROBOT (1007) with 676 parts, which makes up into a robot with 4 movements powered by 4 motors; and a Solar Construction Set, SOLAR (1008) with 215 parts including a special 1.5v motor and a solar panel, and with instructions for 5 models. Next there are 3 "Gift Sets", 1034 (96 parts) to make a 3 wheel Motorcycle, 1035 (141 parts) for a Cable Car, and 1037 (113 parts) for a Helicopter.

Finally in terms of sets there are, to mark 75 years of Marklin Metall, 3 Nostalgic Sets. The first, 1075, has the contents of a 1927 No 3 set in a period box with a manual for sets 1-6 of that time, showing over 200 models. Also included is an illustrated brochure about the historical development of the Metall sets from the first years to the present. The second, 1076, is a replica of a prewar set to make the Mercedes 1936 racing car, complete with clockwork motor. The third is a set with 4100 parts to build an Eiffel Tower over 6ft high, and it says that the model is designed to allow an elevator to be added later on. All these 3 sets will be manufactured the brochure says as a one-time limited run in 1989 only, to be sold in 1990 presumably.

Two motors are shown, the 1073 (AC/DC), maximum 16 volts with built in on/off and reverse, and with built in reduction ratios of approximately 37:1 and 9:1 giving speeds of 190 and 750rpm. The second motor, 1018, is a new, small unit, again AC or DC, using a 6 volt DC motor with what appears to be a remote rectifier unit incorporating a forward, stop and reverse lever. Again there are 2 gear ratios of 22 and 6.3:1 (giving 210 and 760rpm) and these are obtained by inserting the output shaft into one of the two locations provided. There is built in overload protection so that a stalled motor will not burn out.

Another new product is a power screwdriver (1020) with a built in rechargeable battery; it can take a normal screwdriver bit or a hexagonal shaft for Allen screws, and can also be fitted with a chuck for drills up to 6mm diameter.

Last but not least there is a list of individual parts available. Comparison with a 1983 list shows that most of the parts introduced for earlier special sets have been deleted as well as the 3 parts incorporating dog clutches, that is the 1" Pulley and the 19 and 25 tooth Pinions. Also gone are the Electrical Coil, the Bulb Holder and the Tension Spring. As well as individual parts there are 7 packs available, 1040 (nuts and bolts), 1041 (strips, brackets), 1042 (angle girders), 1043 (plates), 1044 (wheels, tyres, axles), 1045 (gears, axles, collars), and 1047 (sprockets, chain, axles, collars).

1089

Deluxe Eiffel Tower construction set. 4,100 metal parts in a sturdy wooden box with a total weight of approximately 16 kg (approx. 35 lb). Detailed instructions for building the 185 cm (72-7/8") high model with interesting information about the original. The model is designed for adding an elevator later on. This construction set will be manufactured in a one-time series in 1989 only.



1075

Nostalgic Metall construction set with the contents of Construction Set No. 3 from the year 1927. Reprint of the large historic instruction booklet Nr. 71 for Construction Sets Nr. 1-6 with plans for over 200 models. Illustrated brochure about the historical development of the Metall construction sets from the first years to the present. This construction set will be manufactured in a one-time series in 1989 only.

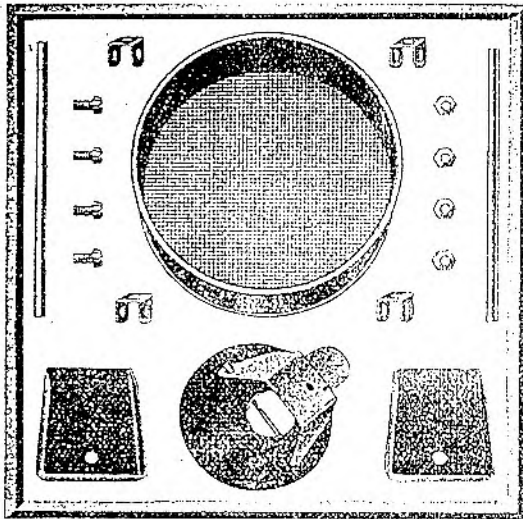


1076

Replica construction set with all of the necessary parts for a 27.5 cm (10-7/8") model of the legendary, supercharged Mercedes Benz race car of 1936. Powerful windup motor for good acceleration. Reprint of the historic instructions with illustrations of the original. This construction set will be manufactured in a one-time series in 1989 only.

NEW FACTS - TRIX. Frans Boerdijk and Harry Marien have sent Dutch and Belgian Trix leaflets (the latter in French) which both show the Sand Motor Set and model, reproduced below. The Dutch leaflet has 1933 on the front cover and the Belgian one is probably from about the same time because it shows letters that have been received by Trix and the dates on these are in 1933 and 1934. In the Belgian leaflet the set is called TRIX-Motosable and the short accompanying text does not say anything of particular interest but the Dutch text below, if I've guessed correctly, says in the second paragraph that the Manual 2 contains a number of models using the Sand Motor.

These leaflets also contain details of the other Trix sets then current as well as some motors which are not in MCS. I hope to give an account of these in OSN 3.

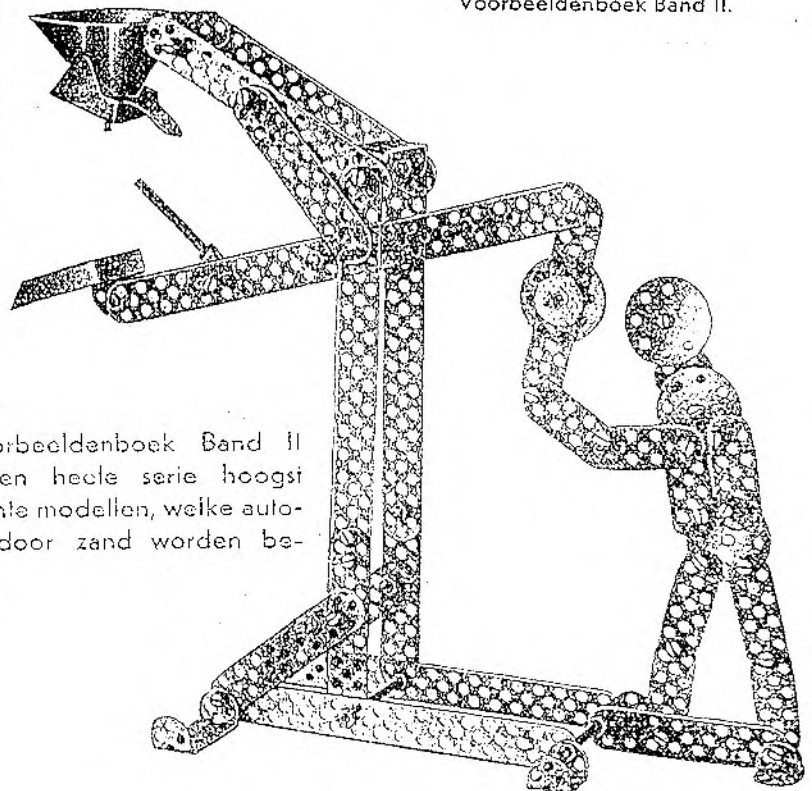


TRIX-Motozand

Aanvullingsdoos 35 cent

De wensch van vele TRIX-vrienden naar beweegbare modellen, die zonder gebruik van technische aandrijfmiddelen gemaakt kunnen worden, was voor ons de aanleiding, deze aanvullingsdoos te brengen.

Het voorbeeldenboek Band II bevat een heele serie hoogst interessante modellen, welke automatisch door zand worden bewogen.



Een mofozand-model
Voorbeeldenboek Band II.

QUERIES.

1. Clyde Suttle asks whether the thread size of British Trix is the same as that of the West German version. The answer is no, UK Trix used 4BA (nominal diameter .142", pitch .66mm) whereas according to an R S Models leaflet the current (German) Trix type of thread is 3.5mm (.138) diameter. The pitch isn't given but the threads in a box of Trix said to have been bought in France (the box lid had the word ANFOE on it as well as TRIX No 1a) have a pitch of .8mm. This is not the pitch of a thread now used in the UK and called M3.5 or 3.5mm diameter ISO Metric Coarse, which has a pitch of .6mm.
2. Ed Barclay notes that on an Instruction Leaflet for 'Construction Models' it says 'Made in China' and wonders if this means Taiwan or The Peoples Republic.
3. In a 1929 Erector No 4 manual the Parts List shows an Eccentric, GS, which is a pulley with the boss mounted off centre. Is this pulley the P7, Small Wheel modified or if not, what is its diameter? Also there is an Eccentric Loop, GU, made of thick wire and presumably meant to spring over the Eccentric. What metal is the Loop made from and what is the diameter of the wire, please?
4. When did the Guilder replace the Florin as the unit of currency in Holland, this to help date some literature received.

18

NO NUTS - NO BOLTS - NO SCREWS - NO LIMIT
TO WHAT CAN BE BUILT



9^d

ARKIRECTO

THE LATEST AND GREATEST CONSTRUCTIONAL TOY

All British

METAL CONSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS Books I.2.3.4. now available from Frank Beadle, 33 Yoredale Avenue, Darlington, Co. Durham DL3 9AN, England. This massive work compiled by Frank and Don Blakeborough, consists of four volumes, each of 220 double faced A4 pages, with a 5th book of less pages to be published later in 1990, covering nearly 400 systems from all over the world. It is available through the NEMS or the FNZMM. Full details can be obtained directly from Frank above.

"ARKIRECTO" BY MALCOLM HANSON

One of several features that makes Lego such an attractive constructional system to today's children is the way it combines the potential for both architectural and mechanical models. The 'standard' and 'technical' parts may come in separate sets but they are fully compatible with each other and a child can progress from one to the other in the knowledge that old parts can still be used along with the new.

However, in the same way that the principle of interlocking bricks was no Danish invention but a British one (Minibrix, circa 1930) so also the notion of a system with compatible architectural and mechanical elements was first realised in this country, and fifty years before Lego took the same route.

Arkirecto was a metal constructional system from around the 1920's (unfortunately none of the literature in my possession is dated and I must therefore judge the date by the nature of the models and the style of the clothing worn by the children pictured on the box lid). 17 different sets were available, 5 main Mechanical outfits with 3 conversion sets, 4 main Architectural outfits with 3 conversion sets and 2 Combined outfits. Prices ranged from 2/6 to 52/6. The largest sets came in birch and alder ply cabinets with two lift out trays and were very comprehensive.

The elements common to the mechanical and architectural parts of the system were called 'girders', 'stanchions', 'bursts' and 'joiners'. These parts were push fits into each other via a sort of sprung ball and socket joint at their ends and could be used to form frameworks. In the case of mechanical models these frameworks formed the structure of the models and parts called 'spindles' could then be passed through holes in the structure and wheels, pulleys and gears then attached to the spindles. In this manner a range of models similar to those that could be found in Meccano manuals of the period could be made. However, similar frameworks could also be used in the construction of buildings. In this case small tinsplate sheets with bricks, doors, windows and roof slates printed on them could be slotted into the framework to produce a large range of buildings similar in style and appearance to Hornby 'O' gauge lineside buildings.

The company that manufactured Arkirecto remains a mystery. However, in common with most constructional toys of the period a club existed for enthusiasts the address for which is given as Charlton House, Regent Str, London, SW1. Does this give us a clue?

Arkirecto was a comprehensive and imaginative system, with over 80 distinct parts, that had a lot going for it. The architectural models were particularly appealing. It is therefore something of a mystery as to why it did not succeed rather better than it did. If anyone has more information on the system I should be pleased to hear from them.

The accompanying illustrations show various of the models that could be built with the larger sets, the complete range of parts and pictures of my M.3 and A.4 sets.

SMALL ADS.

WANTED. Old architectural construction sets e.g. Bayko, Minibrix, Arkirecto, etc - Malcolm Hanson, 11 Willow Close, Long Ashton, Bristol. BS18 9DT. Tel 0272 392321.

WANTED. Trix construction sets/parts, also Scientrix sets/parts, in any condition, also BING TABLE TOP RAILWAY items, everything wanted in good condition, very good prices paid. H Pollard, 62 Ellerbeck Road, DARWEN. Lancashire. BB3 3EX.

MASTERBUILDER - KW Products Ltd - Channels, Strips and Full Parts List Wanted. Page, 418 Tuttle Hill, Nuneaton. CV10 0HR.

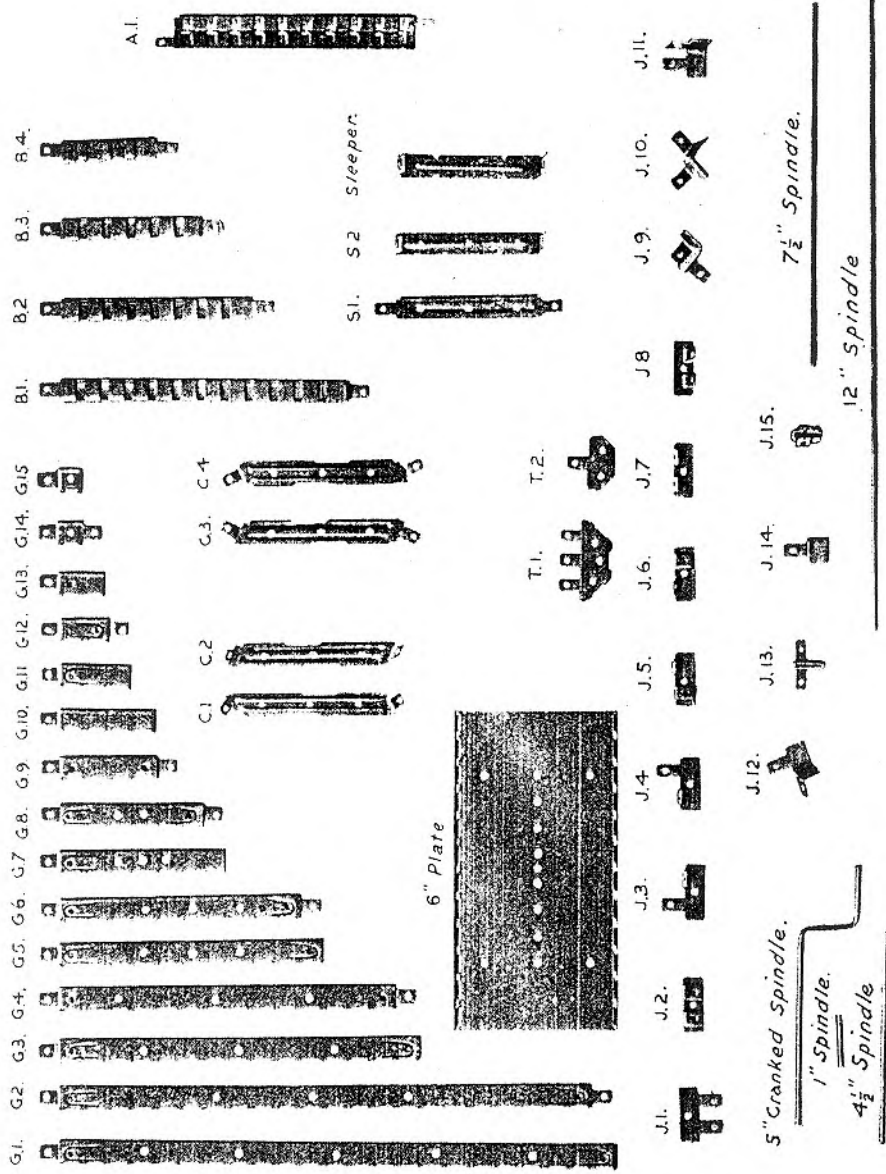
WANTED. Trix chain, any length, even short, up to 6ft total - OSN Editor.

COMPONENT PARTS

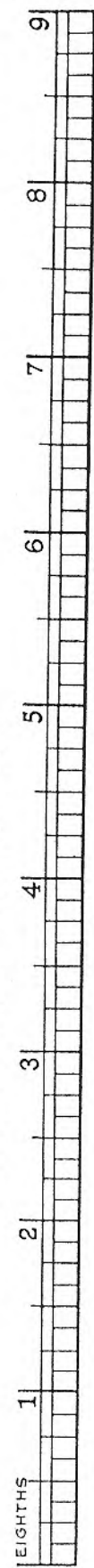
PRICE OF ARKIRECTO PARTS.

Part	Price.
G.1	1 1/4" Girder .. 4d. each
G.2	1 1/2" " .. 4d. "
G.3	7/8" " .. 2d. "
G.4	7/8" " .. 2d. "
G.5	5/8" " .. 1 1/2d. "
G.6	5/8" " .. 1 1/2d. "
G.7	3/4" " .. 1 1/2d. "
G.8	3/4" " .. 1 1/2d. "
G.9	2" " (2 lugs) .. 1d. "
G.10	2" " (1 lug) .. 1d. "
G.11	1 1/2" " .. 9d. per doz.
G.12	1" " (2 lugs) .. 9d. "
G.13	1" " (1 lug) .. 9d. "
G.14	1" " (2 lugs) .. 6d. "
G.15	1/2" " (1 lug) .. 6d. "
J.1	Joiner .. 6d. "
J.2-J.9	" .. 7d. "
J.10-J.15	" .. 10d. "
C.1 and C.2	Cross Piece (bent) .. 1d. each
C.3 and C.4	" .. 1d. "
S.1	Stanchion .. 1d. "
S.2	" (bent lug) .. 1d. "
A.1	Angle Burst .. 2d. "
B.1	Burst .. 1d. "
B.2	4" " .. 1d. "
B.3	3" " .. 1d. "
B.4	2" " .. 9d. per doz.
T.1	Three Way Piece .. 1 each
T.2	Two " " .. 1 "
Sleeper 3"	" .. 1c. "
6" Plate	" .. 1/- "
Sp.1	12" Spindle .. 1d. "
Sp.2	7 1/2" " .. 9d. per doz.
Sp.3	4 1/2" " .. 6d. "
Sp.4	1" " .. 2d. "
Sp.5	5 1/4" Cranked Spindle .. 1d. each

KEY



USE THIS MEASURE TO CHECK LENGTH OF PARTS.



For sale : MR. ANDREAS KONKOLY
 H-1137 Budapest
 Katona J. u. 28, III. 17.
 HUNGARY

(Continued on pages 21 and 22)

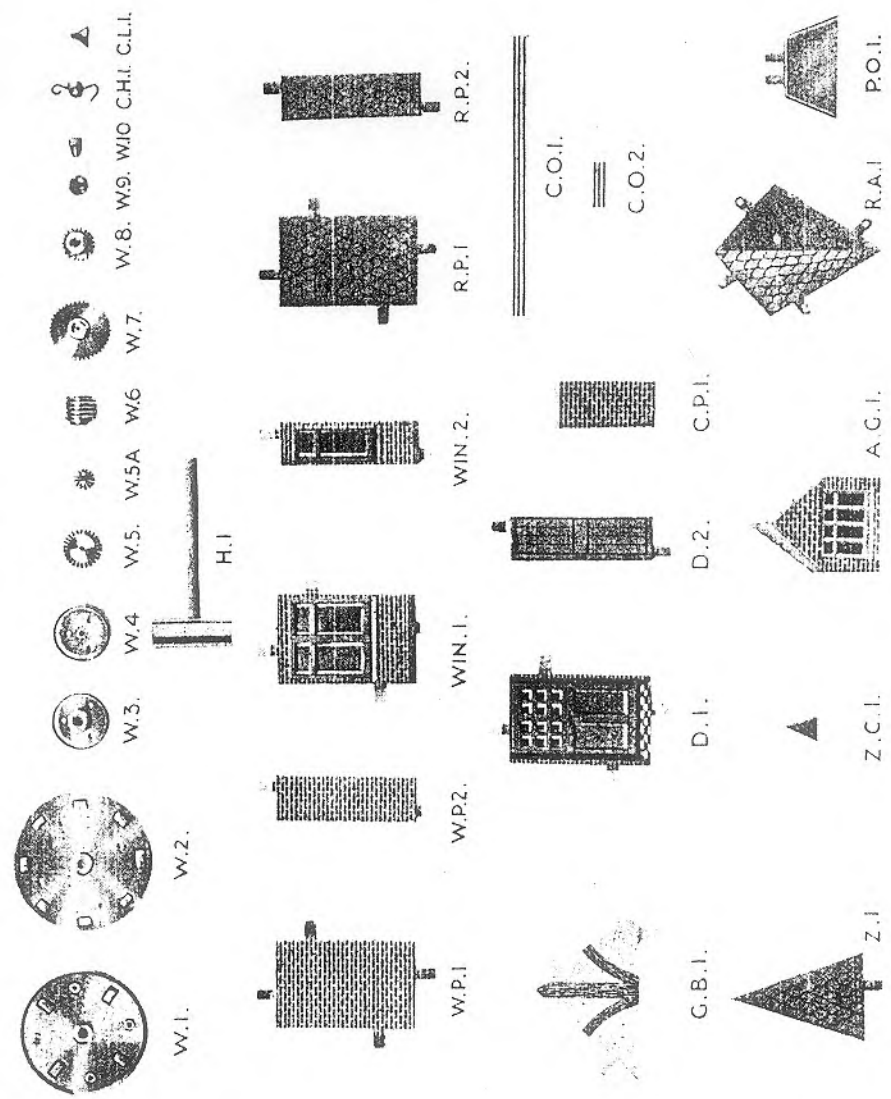
The fantastic Soviet Elektromehanskais KONSTRUKTOR Set. Weight
 cca 3 kg. With 72-page Instr. Book with 45 models.....\$ 50

COMPONENT PARTS

PRICE OF ARKIRECTO PARTS.

Part.	Price.
W.1	5½d. each
W.2	6½d. "
W.3	4d. "
W.4	3½d. "
W.5	4d. "
W.5A	4d. "
W.6	3½d. "
W.7	4d. "
W.8	4d. "
W.9	1d. "
W.10	1d. "
W.11	1d. per doz.
C.H.1	1d. each
C.L.1	3d. per doz.
H.1	1d. each
W.P.1	3" x 2" Wall Piece .. 1/2 per doz.
W.P.2	3" x 1" " " .. 9d. " "
WIN.1	3" x 2" Window Piece 1/3 " "
WIN.2	3" x 1" " " .. 10d. " "
R.P.1	3" x 2" Roof .. 1/2 " "
R.P.2	3" x 1" " " .. 9d. " "
G.B.1	Gable .. 1/- " "
D.1	3" x 2" Door .. 1/3 " "
D.2	3" x 1" " " .. 9d. " "
C.P.1	Chimney Piece .. 1d. each
C.O.1	6" Cornice .. 1d. "
C.O.2	1" " " .. ½d. "
Z.1	Spire Piece .. 10d. per doz.
Z.C.1	" Cap .. ½d. each
A.G.1	Attic Gable .. 2½d. "
R.A.1	Roof Angle .. 1½d. "
P.O.1	Porch .. 1d. "

KEY

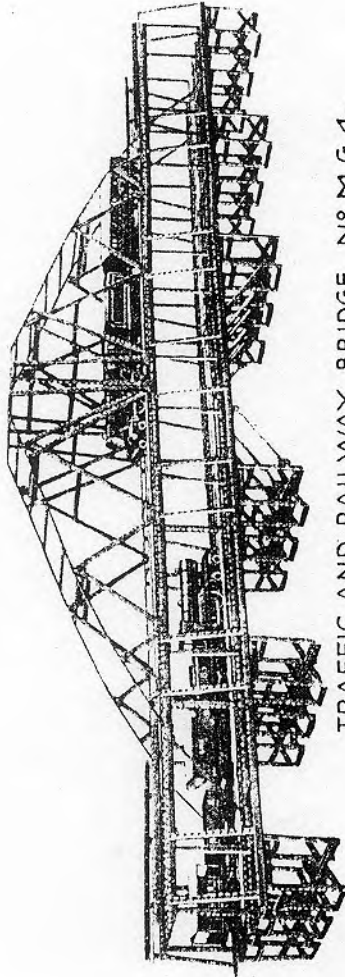


Colour MERKUR Bohemian Set-serial.: No.7,202, M.L. Motorset, No.102 El.Set. Cca 9 kg. With 4 of diff. Instruction color Books....#120

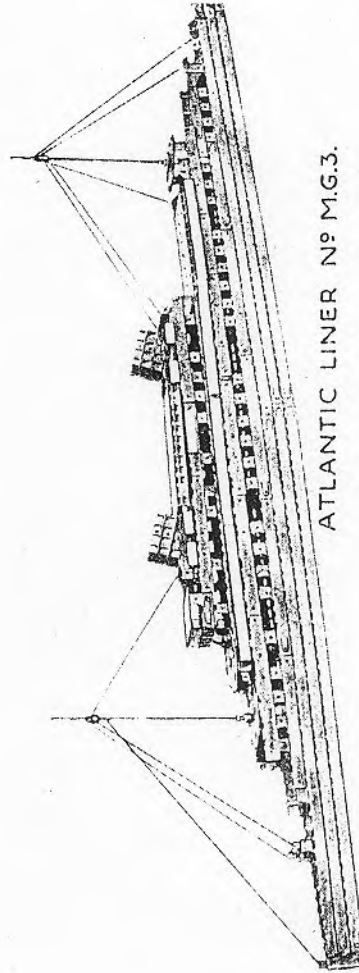
GDR.CONSTRUCTION Set-serial: C03, C02, C06, C07, C08 and C09 Sets. / No.5 dont existed./ Full color Instr.Book.Weight cca 8 kg.#110

Obsolete two different Märklin 1960. Nr.1014 + 1034 giant Sets. In wonderful 6-trays cabinet, staying on 4 of Rubber Legs. With original Nr.14910/20/30 Instr.Books, total 204 page. Plus a fully new motor. The sets are complete, new.....#700

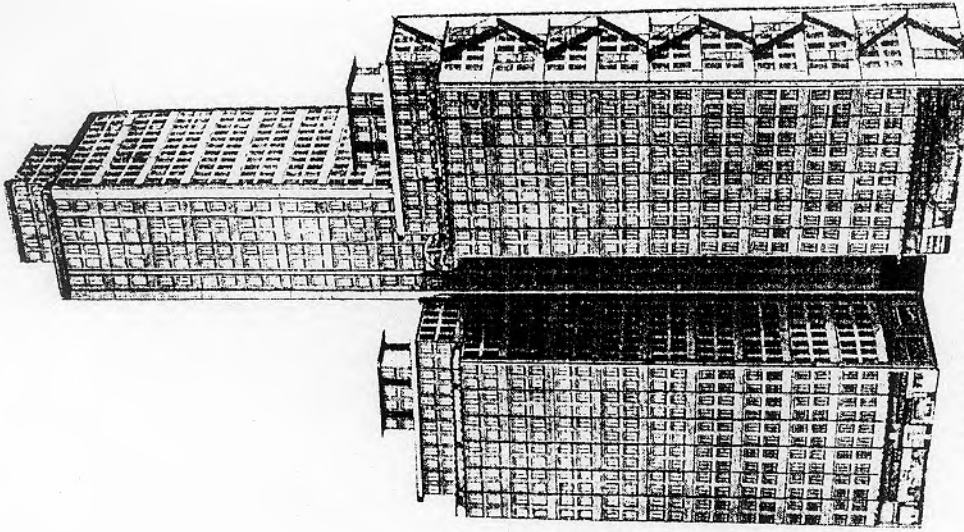
LOOK AT THESE!



TRAFFIC AND RAILWAY BRIDGE N° M.G.4.



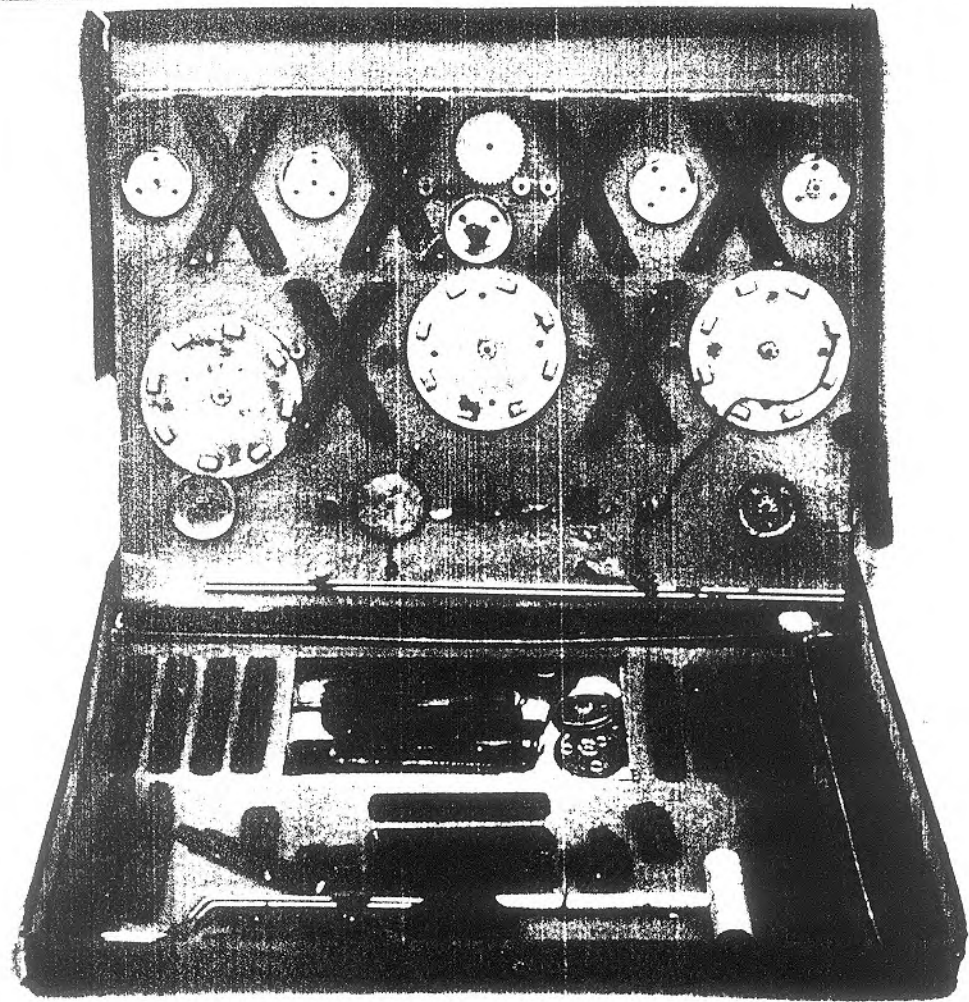
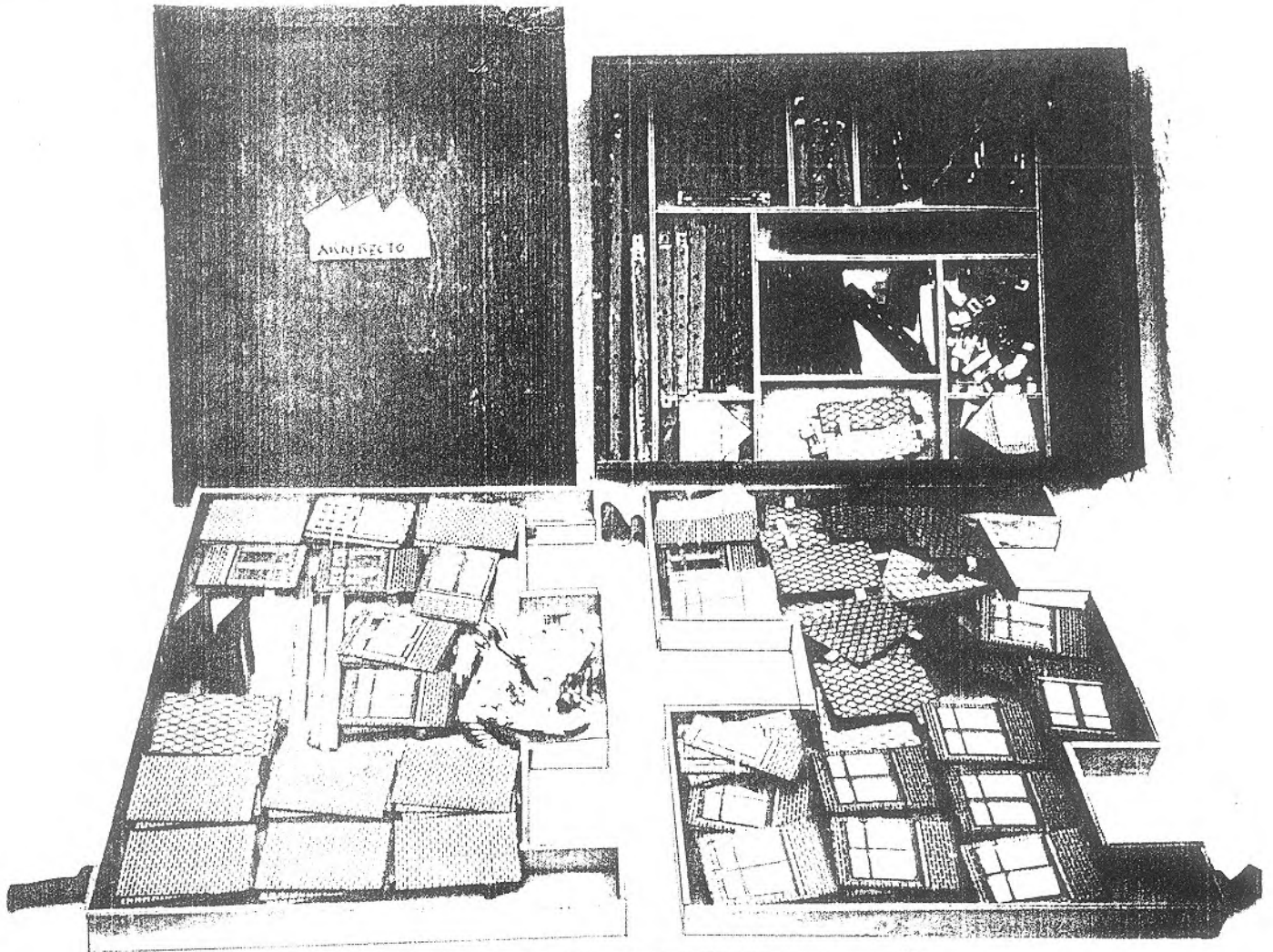
ATLANTIC LINER N° M.G.3.



SKYSCRAPER N° A.G.3.

THREE MODELS WHICH GIVE SOME IDEA OF THE LIMITLESS SCOPE OF
ARKIRECTO

- Obsolete giant GDR.Burgstädter Set-serial. No.3 Grund-, No.6 Ergänzung und No.7. El.mech.Kasten. Total weight cca 5 kg. 3 of diff. Instruction manual.....# 60
- Bulgarian MUSALA colour No.4.Biggest Set. With 32-page very good Instruction Book. Weight cca 1 kg.# 20
- Sioviet Elektriskais KONSTRUKTOR Set. With 104 of electrical experiments. Weight more, than 1 kg. With a little instruction manual. The set sensational is.....# 30



George Wetzel
221 Hickory St.
Park Forest, Illinois 60466

Construction Set Sales List - 1970

Phone (708) 747-5841 - PM
Prices include U.S. postage.

- 1) #10 Erector Set - 1929. Red wood box - fair. Parts good/very good. - \$1350
90% complete. Call or write for details. Repr. manual.
- 2) #12½ Robot Set - 1949. Box - fair. Parts good/very good, 99% complete. - 290
- 3) #10½ Electric Train Set - 1941. Box - fair. Parts good. Has lid cardboard. - 285
Includes Royal Blue engine, transformer, + track. Original manual - very good.
- 4) #9 Meccano Set - 1949. In medium red/green w. original box lid. Includes - 365
five 1948 Meccano magazines - excellent. Parts - excellent. Excellent manual.
- 5) #4 Meccano Set - 1929. In very good original brown wood box. An excellent⁺ - 335
set with original packing cardboard, original wrapping, manual + sales sheet.
- 6) #10½ Amusement Park Set - 1954. Excellent box + parts - 100%. Excellent manual. - 250
- 7) Gilbert New Wheel Toy - 1916. Very good brown wood box w. decal, 2 wheels + misc. - 150
- 8) #4 Mysto Erector Set - 1917. Excellent box w. hand-held girder decal on top. Very - 125
good "Part I" manual, lift-out tray, shiny parts, parts boxes, cardboard packing, etc.
- 9) Gilbert Clock Set - 1920⁺. Distributed by "Klax" Toy Co. Unusual Gilbert toy - uses - 145
Erector gears, axles, + chain. Assembly pendulum clock. Complete - excellent.
- 10) #D Bitt-E-Z Set - 1924. A very large set. Box - good, parts + manual - excellent. - 295
- 11) #12A Richter Anchor Block Set - 1911. In excellent box, w. manuals. All stones - 250
excellent⁺. A hard-to-get set. Very clean - complete.
- 12) #7 Richter Anchor Block Set - 1912. In very good illustrated box - w. metal - 175
bridge pieces. All parts very good or better. Includes manual.
- 13) Builder Boy Set - 1946. Made by Norwood Manuf. "Bottless" metal construction - 115
set. Box very good - everything else mint, untouched, w. manual. Unusual.
- 14) Buildo Set #600 - 1947. Very clean, large cardboard box set, has pit-together - 90
motor. All parts fastened to cardboard, as new. Mint manual.
- 15) Modern Morecraft Set #20 - 1944. Bottless metal construction set in very large - 185
red + green wood "suitcase" box - very good. Has sliding inner wooden drawers, manual.
- 16) Buildal Set #1 - 1930⁺. Böttcher Manuf. Another bottless oddball, w. manual - good. - 85
- 17) Erector Brick Set #2 - 1944. All wood WWII variation. A large set - all parts - 95
excellent⁺. Box + manual - fair. Unusual set.
- 18) #7½ "Little Jim" Truck Set - in good red + black Gilbert wood truck box. Has inner and - \$135
outer lid decals. Includes "White" truck wheels, fenders, hood/grill, axle, boiler,
digger scoop, "Trumodel" girders, large black tray, red B girders, much misc. - some rust.
- 19) #8 Erector Zeppelin Set - 1929. In original box with decal corners still intact. Includes - 265
large black tray, complete manual, all "White" truck parts, 2 Zepp gondolas, nose and
tail cones, support rod, B girders, P 58 motor, 2 propellers, 1 a.b. parts box, much misc.
- 20) #6 American Model Builder Set - 1913. In very good walnut box with nice "flying eagle" - 275
litho A.M.B. label on top. Includes excellent lift-out wood tray, propeller, 2 springs,
3 unused hanks of string, wrench, many wheels, 3 manuals. Most parts excellent.
- 21) #7 American Model Builder Set - 1913. In good walnut box with lift-out wood tray. - 140
Includes many excellent girders, plates, wheels, + gears. Also 2 cardboard small parts
boxes, hanks of string, wrench, pawls, springs, 3 excellent manuals.
- 22) #2X Special Meccano Outfit - 1928. In excellent green wood box with 6 cardboard - 125
parts boxes plus 2 small parts boxes. Includes green boiler and ends, green braced girders,
red wheels + base plates, and tin-plated strips. Also wrench, brass wheels, 2 manuals - fair.

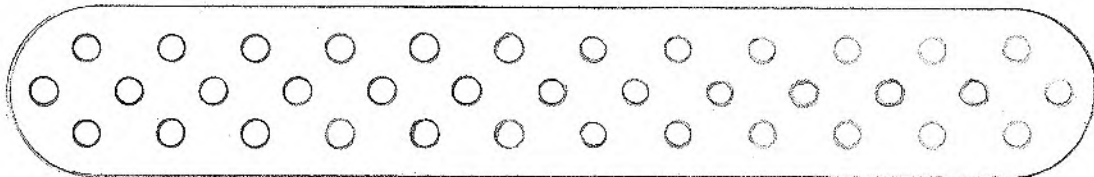
- 23) #102 A Marklin Set - 1953. In large green cardboard box - fair, with original c.b. - 85
parts separators + boxes. Includes large blue wheels, blue + red plates, green girders -
all excellent. Also wrench, wind-up key, manual and Marklin catalogue - very colorful.
- 24) #7½ "Automotive" Erector Set - 1937. First Gilbert parachute set. Good blue metal box - 165
with excellent lid labels. Includes automotive parts plus some parachute parts,
small parts boxes, electro-magnet. Parts and complete manual - excellent.
- 25) #10082 Amusement Park Set - 1958. Includes some musical sound effects parts. - 145
In excellent red box. Includes automotive and some parachute parts - very clean.
- 26) #1 American Model Builder Set - 1913. Very good box. Everything else mint, as new. - 55
- 27) #1½ Erector Set - 1935. Very good box. Everything else excellent, with c.b. packing. - 40
- 28) #2 Arkitoj Set - 1930. Very nice wooden "erector" set, with metal nuts + bolts. - 45
Unusual oddball set in red + green. Box - fair, manual - excellent. Nice collector's set.
- 29) #232 Lionel Construction Kit - 1948. Box - fair. Mint manual + large parts display chart. - 40
- 30) Bild-a-Brik Set - 1952. Truly "mint in the box", unused, untouched, everything sealed - 65
heavy ceramic "brick" architectural set with nice early 50's A.F. layout pictured on lid.
- 31) Modern-Morecraft Set - 1937. Cardboard box - fair, tarnished. Excellent manual. - 20
- 32) Gilbert Electric Eye Set - 1949. Very clean red metal box set. Excellent manual + parts. - 50
- 33) Clipcraft Midget Set - 1940's. Small tube set - very unusual aluminum rods, clips, + collars. - 35
Reminiscent of "Bing Structator". Excellent condition with instruction sheet. Nice oddball.
- 34) Matchbox Construction Set - Marx - 1930's. - Smallest set ever! Good condition. - 45
- 35) American Flyer Typewriter - 1930's. Box - fair. Typewriter - excellent. - 30

P.S. I like to trade. Am currently seeking architectural sets - e.g. Erector Skyscraper, Brikton,
Anchor Blocks, Erector/Meccano Bricks. Not to mention Hudsons, Zepps, *10 Sets, Blue/Gold Meccano, etc.

MYSTERY PARTS. There has been no positive response to the parts shown in OSN 1: several readers have come across the 3x4 hole plate but only Gaston Marette from Belgium mentioned having seen the parts with rectangular holes - he hopes to be able to find out more about them.

Calling the above Mystery Parts Nos 1 and 2 respectively, next there is

Mystery Part No 3 The Strip below, outlined as usual with a pencil, was found among a box of Meccano and assorted OS parts and there were no others that seemed to relate to it. Its width is .875" and the holes are .171" diameter, with a pitch of .442". It is made of aluminium alloy, .040" thick, and is unpainted.



MCS SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION. Several readers welcomed this feature and there were no suggestions for changes to the information provided. Some however found that the abbreviations used were puzzling to say the least, (Donald Redmond ended his remarks by supposing that dgn probably stood for doggone!). Well my apologies, basically space ran out before all the abbreviations were defined and the further notes promised for this Issue were going to explain it all. In fact I still haven't room to go into everything but the following will I hope make all clear as far as OSN 1 is concerned. Bk means black metallic; Br is brass, likewise Ni, St, Al, and Zn for nickel, steel, aluminium and zinc; W is British Standard Whitworth, M refers to a defined coarse metric thread and M3.5 means such a thread with a nominal diameter of 3.5mm (more on threads in OSN 3); the infamous dgn means a dark green paint finish; and ditto marks (") after an oblique (/) mean that whatever is after the oblique is the same as whatever preceded it. And that hopefully is that - for the future I will ponder how best to present the information without using too much space. Perhaps many abbreviations, standard wherever possible, are acceptable provided that they are defined, but colours should be given in full.

ITEMS FROM LETTERS.

1. Clyde Suttle notes that Temsi which looks much like Meccano uses a different thread. He also kindly offers to allow any OS material which has appeared in his Southern California and Erector Club Newsletter to be reprinted in OSN.
2. Donald Redmond writes that at the Toronto Hobby Show '89 non-Meccano construction systems were represented by sets of Erector, Buldo, American Model Builder, and models or parts from Marklin, The Engineer, Constructo (Merkur) and Temsi. There was also a box of "you-guess-it-and-you-can-have-it" parts and it was fuller at the end than at the beginning despite some delighted recognition and removal.
3. From Peter Page "MCS, pleased that Frank [Beadle] is revising the English issue; hope he is adjusting the NZ metrication and also their fixation with Meccano X - instead of Trix - for 3 row systems. Is square alignment across the 3 rows another unique creation of Mr Hornby?"
4. Karst Quast sent a photo of the Stabil Rollenspiel shown in OSN 1, he had made it some time ago from Meccano. The photo won't reproduce but he made the "roller" from, in order on an axle rod, a Collar, a Conical Disc, 4 or 5 Wheel Discs and then another Conical Disc and Collar. As it rolled down the Discs tended to rotate with the axle and then at each turning point the Roller paused while the Discs slowed and stopped, before setting off in the new direction.
5. Newell Smith writes "Don't forget the semi-professional and scientific sets, especially Swiss/German".
6. From John Hanby "I have Frank Beadles 'other systems' which is interesting although at times confusing with so many lookalike systems. My only dealings in OS are Trix and Construments, the latter being from the firm that Ellison Hawkes started after leaving Meccano. It is however purely scientific i.e. microscopes, cameras, etc, well constructed but not really in the same category as Trix or Meccano." [An account of the history of Construments and how well the models work would certainly be of interest I think - Ed]
7. Brian Rowe recommends Temsi brass plated sprocket chain which he says is better and cheaper than Meccano. He has kindly send interesting Temsi literature which it is hoped will appear in the next Issue. Brian may be able to supply Temsi sets and parts, his address is 23 Courtenay Park, Newton Abbot. Devon. TQ12 2HB. He also sent the name and address of the UK Temsi agent - Paul J Day, 23 Fallowfield, Amptill, Bedford. MK45 2TS, although he has not been in touch for some time.
8. So that OSN does not duplicate information that Frank Beadle plans to include in MCS in the near future he has sent the following list of OS which will be in his Part 5 -

METALCRAFT (USA) Train Construction Sets
 EL TECNICO (Arg.) is already in index as name only
 BILDAL (USA) " " " "
 PA-DI-CA-CO (ENG.) Gears Sets
 MEX (ENG.)
 EMPIRE EDUCATIONAL KIT The. (Eng.)
 100 TOYS IN ONE (USA)
 MOADOST (Bul.)

NEW FACTS - MECHANIKA. The following amplification of the information in MCS is based on a set, nearly complete and with manual. The hole diameter is 3.5mm, and holes are 15mm apart. The parts are made of aluminium alloy and are unpainted. In a different manual for Sets 3,4 and 5 a small 4.5v DC motor is shown as being included in Set 5. The strips are 15mm wide and are plenty strong for small models. All the parts are accurately made and the bosses are double tapped.

SOME NOTICABLE FEATURES ON OTHER SYSTEMS

by Frank Beadle

Having collected 'OS' since before 1981 when at that time I had started to put them into some sort of order, several emerged that began to form a pattern or indicate a trend.

I have not found any system made before MECCANO in 1901, though PRIMUS (England) is a near runner at 1903 with STRUCTATOR (Germany) not far behind at 1905. Several manufacturers made toy items such as trains even before 1900 though not Metal Constructional Systems.

The earlier systems came from the heavily industrialised countries early in the century, reaching a peak in the 1930s and another in the 1950s or so, this is mainly due to WWII.

As countries became industrialised systems began to appear from a far wider field, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, this was helped of course by trading between countries being easier in that period.

Today there are nearly 50 countries who had manufactured systems. Many of the systems are copies of MECCANO using the same 0.1678 ins. (4.2mm) hole size with the 0.5 ins. (12.7mm) hole spacing even though the metric system was common to the country or origin. Whilst others such as MERKUR and associated systems have always had a metric 10mm hole spacing. Hole sizes vary more than spacing, this was probably due to the nuts and bolts intended for use as a deciding factor.

The most common part, as in the Meccano system, is the five hole strip, many systems preferring to keep to the odd number of holes in a strip i.e. 5.7.9.11 etc. as a central hole along the length was a useful feature on any strip in any system.

It is hoped to continue these notes in future issues of 'OS' and show trends and variations over the whole span of Other Systems.

CONSTRUCTION. The article in OSN 1 brought in quite a few comments from readers as follows

Dennis Higginson bought a C01 in Bournemouth and would like to be able to buy other sets.

Peter Page has seen locally (Nuneaton) sets C10 (a 4 wheel small lorry), C12, a farm tractor with trailer, [first mention of C10 and C12, can anyone supply details please - Ed], and C20, all at £5.99 each. He says that letters to GDR and to the local distributor for the range have gone unanswered.

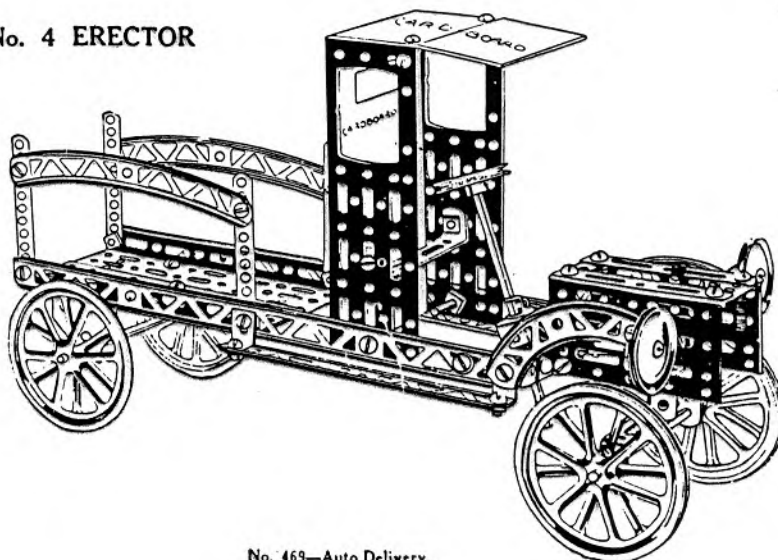
A E Williams (Manchester) says C07 sets were being sold by the Poundstretcher chain and that he has also seen in the local market C010 sets at £5.95. They are in squat, square boxes and make up into small 4 wheel Jeep type vehicles. [I wonder if this is the same as the C10 mentioned above, it is confusing to have a C0 and a C series - Ed]

Brian Rowe (Devon) has bought several sets including C01's at £4 each and C03+6's at under £10. He is impressed by the very acceptable quality of the parts, particularly considering the price, but wonders what will happen to prices come German reunification. His main criticism is the lack of sprockets and chain. He has built a Big Wheel from his sets using the seats from C10 sets as chairs. He would like to obtain other sets, particularly C04 and asks if anyone knows a source of supply.

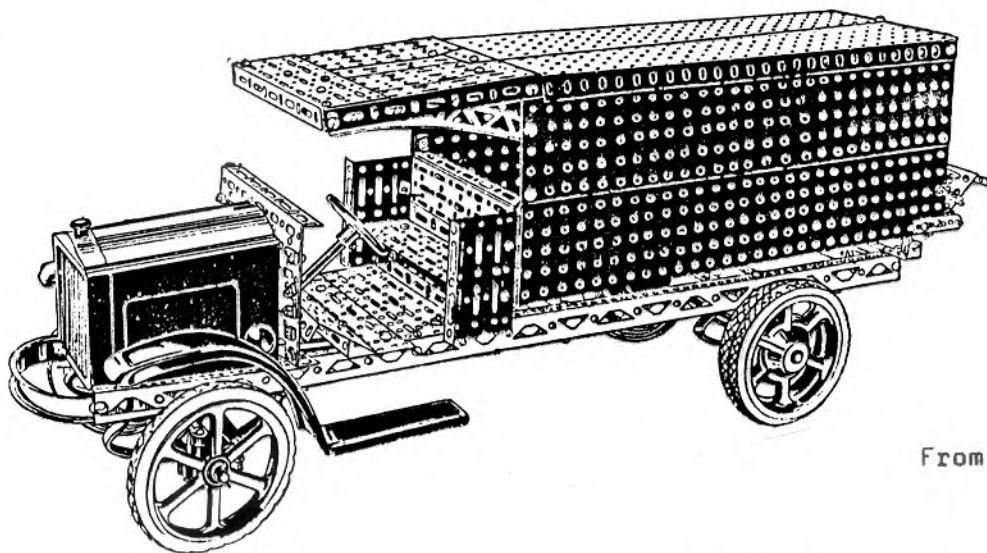
[Several people including myself would like to buy Construction sets of one sort or another. If any reader knows where sets are actually on sale and lets me know, preferably with address, telephone number, which sets are available, and prices, I will pass the information around - Ed]

MODELS BUILT WITH No. 4 ERECTOR

From 1925
No 4 Manual



No. 469—Auto Delivery.



From 1926 No 4 Manual

The Models Shown on This Page are the Kind You
Can Build with the Larger New Erector Sets.

Wonderful Models Built With The New Erector.

ACCOUNTS. Dear Subscriber,

Your remittance of _____ received with thanks.

Your credit balance after deduction for this Issue and
is £ _____

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