

QUERIES.

1. In OSN 2 and 3 it was stated that the thread of British TRIX is 4BA and certainly all the threaded parts commonly found have this thread; however Peter Page has some TRIX which he is 99% sure is prewar British, and the thread is much coarser than 4BA, he thinks it is probably the 3.5x.8mm referred to in OSN 2, p17. In the next issue will be some information on old Belgian threads sent by Gaston Marette, and this includes one with a diameter of 3.5mm and 32tpi. The equivalent pitch is .794mm so if the Belgian standard was the same as that used in other continental countries it is just possible that the TRIX thread is the bastard 3.5mmx32tpi.

11. Thanks to a number of readers who wrote explaining what VEB means (OSN 6, p113). Geoff Davison's letter arrived first saying 'VEB stands for Volkseigener Betrieb, which means a business belonging to the people. It was used in the former DDR (GDR) for what we would call nationalised industries; as the Treuhandanstalt gradually privatises these firms, the use of the term will of course gradually die out.'

12. Several readers were also good enough to send the info on PRIMUS prices requested in the last issue, p113. Enough is to hand to allow one or two tentative conclusions to be drawn, it is hoped in OSN 8. but if anything new turns up please send it along.

13. Back to TRIX, Geoff Wright and others have asked if anyone knows how TRIX hole spacing came to be what it is. Although variations do occur, typically the spacing along strips is between 7.810mm and 7.815, giving a diagonal spacing of around 11.05mm. Converting these figures to inches doesn't improve their roundness. One number is no doubt as good as any other, but few if any OS venture beyond one decimal place in their nominal spacing, unless of course straightforward fractions of an inch are used. So why 7.81? for TRIX?

14. Has anyone come across ALCON as an OS name? I thought I had but I now can't find it in the MCS Index or anywhere else. I was looking for it because I came across an advert for it in the MM of 12/49; one set was on sale at 7/9 'containing over 1000 pieces', and there is an illustration of a skeletal 'Suspension Bridge, 2ft.4in. long'. ALCON conjures up 'aluminium' and 'construction' in my mind but there is no mention in the ad of the material used or how the different elements were joined together. A thousand parts for 7/9 sounds like good value when a No 1 Dinky Builder set, advertised in the same MM, was 10/6. So maybe the parts were wooden or even plastic, perhaps glued together. There were two further mentions of ALCON in MM, in Gamages' ads in 1951, where it was said to be 'Based on an entirely original idea with only seven basic components.'

STOKYS PARTS, 1989. The last Illustrated Parts List I had was No 40 from 1981 but last December Harry Mariën sent me one, not numbered, dated 1989, and I understand that when it was sent, it was still current. There is no List of Parts in MCS (p3), just an illustration of some of them, so I'll compare the new List with the No 40. Quite apart from a few parts being deleted and a fair number added, there have been two major changes since 1981, the PNs have been changed and the screw thread, which was 5/32"BSW, is now M4. The new PNs start with a letter which is sometimes the initial letter of the part in question, for example Z for Zahnrad (gear, everything is in German), followed by a two figure number; fortunately both the old and new numbers are given.

To avoid confusion between parts with the old and parts with the new thread, it is stated that bosses tapped M4 are silver colour and those with BSW are yellow (brass I suppose); also that metric Bolts are black and the 5/32" ones are yellow. Nuts are not mentioned but in the List both the M4 and 5/32" variety are included, but only M4 Bolts. Most of the other threaded parts are noted as M4 but in two cases (Threaded Pins) versions with both threads are shown, and sometimes eg the Coupling, no thread is mentioned.

Deletions since 1981 are the transparent version of the Plastic Flexible Plate; the separate parts of the Universal Coupling; the large diameter 3-hole Collar; the Buffer; the Potter's Wheel and Clay; the Meccanograph (if STOKYS will forgive the word) Table and Paper for it; and the two special Brackets, #646 and 648. The deleted parts that are not illustrated in MCS are shown below.

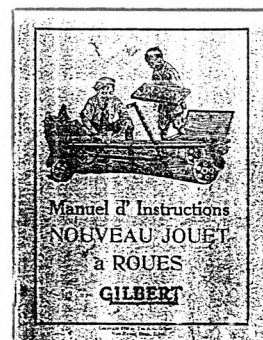
There are over 50 additions and in outline these are:

- 78-hole versions of the standard, Z, and U section A/G.
- 6 extra lengths of the 4-hole wide Perforated Plate, up to 78-hole long.
- 6 lengths of 5-hole wide Perforated Plate from 7 to 78-hole.
- Flat Girders (like MECCANO not 2-hole wide Strips) in 19 lengths from 1 to 78-hole.
- A Wheel with wide Tyre, 47mm dia o/a; and 6 Wheels with large tyres (Ballonräder), diameters from 50 to 120mm.
- Misc items - a 22-hole Rack; what looks like a Geared Roller/Ball Bearing, 115mm dia; different lengths of Screwed Rod and Bands; bulb holders and a range of coloured bulbs. holders.

by a Grub Screw and engages in one of the 5 large holes in the Wheel's face. The Ski Runner N-16, bolts to the Formed Bearing Bracket N-34, which fits onto the Axle instead of a Wheel. • There are 2 sizes of N&B, the standard ERECTOR 8-32 for most purposes but also 14-20x3/4" Bolts (.242" dia), with square Nuts, to hold some of the metal brackets together. The Grub Screw in N-45 also has this larger thread. • The 2 Gear Wheels appear from the Illustrated Parts to have 13 and 39 teeth, and the larger one has a diameter of some 6". They are used in only one model, the Geared Hand Lever Cart (entitled Expédiateur Engrené but Expédiateur isn't in my dictionary). This model has several points of interest and is included in the new MCS Sheets. • The wooden part shown bottom right of the Ill. Parts has no PN and doesn't seem to be used in any of the models. • The metal parts are probably quite substantial, most of the Strips and Brackets are about 1" wide and look up to 1/8" thick in the illustrations.

FOOTNOTE. Gaston wrote again to say that he has now seen one of these sets in the Toy Museum at Mechlin (Belgium). A model from the set is displayed made up and the remaining parts are in the original wooden box. The basic hole spacing is, as surmised above, 2". In addition he sent a p/c of a page from a book called The Wonderful World of Toys, Games and Dolls, kindly supplied by Mr Marc Wellens of the Museum. This shows the Set on a page from a 1919 Sears Roebuck catalogue under the name GILBERT NEW WHEEL TOY. Since this was no doubt the original name I shall use it as the MCS title. Also Peter McCall has showed me a 1923 GILBERT YEAR BOOK which includes this Set, along with two other smaller Outfits. Full details of these items will be included in the Extra MCS Pages.

SUMMARY OF MANUAL. #Name: NOUVEAU JOUET à ROUES GILBERT. #Details of maker: THE A.C.GILBERT COMPANY, NEW HAVEN, CONN., E.U.d'A. AU CANADA: THE A.C.GILBERT-MENZIES CO., LIMITED, TORONTO, ONT. #Dates &/or Ref Nos: Copyright 1919 on front cover. #Page size: 134x177mm deep. #No of pages: 16 plus covers. #Language: French. #Printing: Line drawings of models. #Page Nos of Parts List & highest PN: 15-16, N 48 (Order No. 2642). #Page Nos of Set Contents & highest PN: None. #Sets covered: One Set only. #No of models: 13. #Name, Model No, Page No of first & last model: Glisseur à Trois Roues, 15, 3. Pelle à Neige, 5, 14. [models are not shown in order of Model Nos; there is no #6, and #15 is also labelled #8]. #Other notes: Details taken from photocopy.



EXTRA PAGES FOR MCS: GILBERT NEW WHEEL TOY: X1.1,2,3,4,5-a,7-a. [4 Sheets]

AMENDMENTS TO INDEX IN OSN 6: NAME: GILBERT NEW WHEEL TOY. TYPE: NM. CY: CA. THREAD: 8-32, 14-20. SPCE: 50.8x. dST: DAXL: . Also on p123 add NOUVEAU JOUET à ROUES GILBERT as Alternative French Name.

QUERIES.

14. Malcolm Hanson answered the query about ALCON. He has a Set and the parts are round plastic Strips, thinner than a matchstick, which push into aluminium Couplings of various types, to produce 3-dimensional frameworks.

15. The essence of MOBILO is simplicity, only 3 elements, Rods, Wheels and U Clips; and only 8 different parts altogether, 5 lengths of Rod, the Clip and 2 Wheels. But why 2 Wheels? One is 30mm in diameter and the other is 33mm, not a big difference, and from the material in MCS the diameter appears to be the only difference between them. No question of one with boss and one without; it is possible that only one of them has a pulley groove but then the one without might be thought a luxury in this austere system. So why 2 Wheels?

16. I have a LYNX manual, large format about 15"x8", which has the contents of sets on the inside front cover. Unfortunately half of it is missing and if anyone has it intact please let me know. The smaller LYNX manuals sometimes have a Reference No on the front cover or on the page on which the parts are illustrated. I have ML.1A, MB 4, M.B.6 AND M.B.6A, and I'd be pleased to hear of any others.

SMALL ADS.

WANTED. MÄRKLIN ELEX parts - Roger Baker, The Walnuts, Ashbury, Nr Swindon. SN6 8LN. (0793) 710358.

FOR SALE. TRIX manuals, UK editions including the large format Book of Engineering. Some TRIX cartons with set packets included, and motor carton. Also a few parts in average condition. SAE for details please - Brian Rowe, 23 Courtenay Park, Newton Abbot. Devon. TQ12 2HB. (0626) 52188.

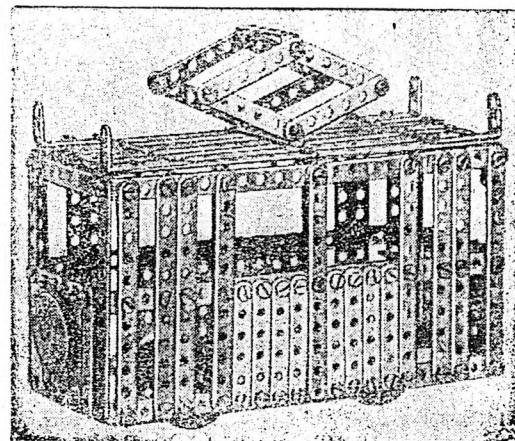
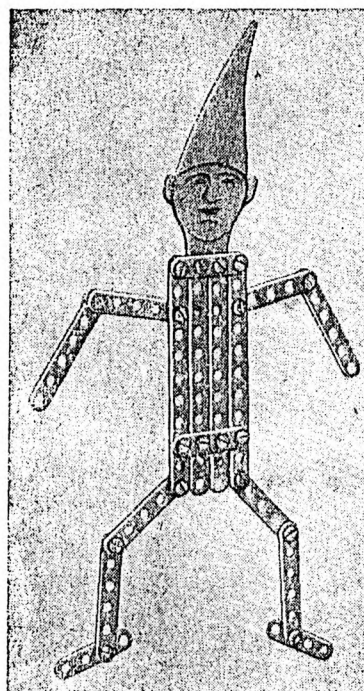
TECNIC WORM. Harry Mariën sent me a photo of a rather smart Chassis he has build using parts from his TECNIC No.9 Set, and the steering mechanism includes a Worm. Seeing it I was reminded that Harry had shown it to me some long time ago and whereas the illustration in MCS shows a conventional worm with a boss at one end, the actual part has tapped bosses at each end.

NEW SYSTEM - KONSTRUKTIONSPIEL. Another find in Zürich, an early postwar German Set, and Thomas Keel kindly sent a photocopy of the Instruction Leaflet, some notes, and a 4 hole Strip and N&B. On the front of the Leaflet is, 'Made in U.S. Zone - Germany'; the U.S. Zone included Bavaria and Württemberg and became part of the new West Germany in 1949. There are only 13 different parts, plus Cord and Spanners, but it is a fair sized Set with 478 parts including 110 Strips (4, 6, or 11 holes), 150 Nuts and 140 Bolts. The parts are quite small with 3.1mm holes, 7.5mm apart, so the 11 hole Strip is only about 3¼" long. There is no mention of any other size sets.

KONSTRUKTIONSPIEL

Inside the box lid is a photo of the largest model, a Big Wheel, and 10 more are shown in the Leaflet. They vary from a simple Chair to the Tram below; the latter came ready assembled and had to be dismantled before most of the other models could be made. Various details:

- There are 4 4-hole Discs listed in the Contents which are used as wheels etc, but the Tram seems to be shown with more, 4 to run on plus at least one at the front. No Axles or Screwed Rods are used, the Discs rotate on a lock-nutted Bolts. Where an Axle is needed for the cord drive in the Big Wheel, it is made from a DAS with Bolts in each end; the Winding Drum for the Crane is made in a similar way.
- The Strips are 7.3mm wide and the holes have some roughness around them; the hole spacing in the 4 hole Strip seen is not quite uniform.
- Apart from the Strips, Discs, and N&B, the other parts are Angle Brackets in 5, and DAS in 2, different sizes. In fact all have 4 or 6 holes in them, eg 2x2, 5x1, 2x2x2, and so are no doubt made from those sizes of Strips.
- The thread used is M3; the Nuts are hexagonal, 5.2mm A/F, and the Bolts, in 2 sizes, 8.1 and 10.2mm overall, have 5.8mm dia cheeseheads.
- The Bolts are untreated steel, all the other parts have a dull, dark grey finish which may be a form of zinc plating.
- Among the parts found was a Scale, made of card and marked in grammes, which is used for one of the models, a Letter Balance. Under the Parts List is a note, 'Der Kopf für den Hampelmann, ['Jumping Jack', top right] die Skala und die Platte für die Briefwaage [Letter Balance] sind aus dem Einsatz auszuschneiden.' So these parts were to be cut out of card but I'm not sure if there is an implication that they were designs printed on the card.



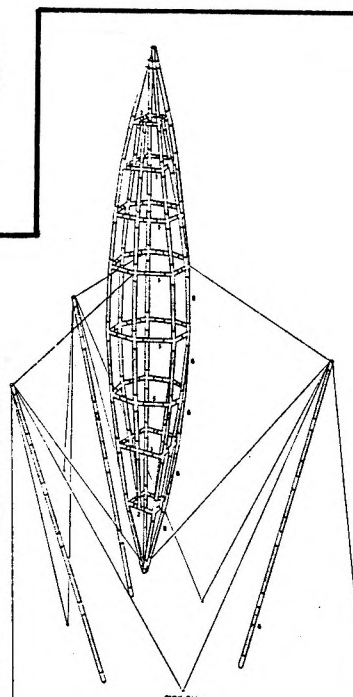
The Parts List/Contents, some more models including the Crane and Big Wheel, and a list of the parts needed for all models, are included in MCS Extra Sheets.

AMENDMENTS TO INDEX IN OSN 6: NAME: KONSTRUKTIONSPIEL. TYPE: MPSH. CY: GG. THREAD: M3. SPCE: 7.5. dST: 3.1. DAXL: --.

QUERIES.

1. More on TRIX threads, Peter Kessler sent a N&B from a Presentation Set No.905, whose literature is all in German. The thread is M3.5, that is a pitch of .6mm. Summarising it seems that the continental TRIX thread was 3.5x.8mm (OSN 2/17), or just possible 3.5mm dia x 32tpi (3/41, 7/166), later (presumably) changed to M3.5; the UK thread was 4BA postwar but the 3.5x.8 was used prewar. This was mentioned as a possibility in 7/166 and was confirmed recently from the N&B in a prewar ELEMENTRIX Set. It may well be that the change in the UK thread did not occur until after WW2.

14. I made a mistake over ALCON in 8/199, the 'sticks' are wooden and not plastic. Malcolm Hanson when he wrote to tell me this, also mentioned that he has since acquired a larger set, probably later because the maker is shown as TRIX. One of the models in its Manual is the 'Skylon' (right) which for anyone who hasn't heard of it, was a tall attraction devised for the Festival of Britain, held in 1951.



ALCON