

ITEMS FROM LETTERS

1. From Richard Symonds. • An ad for a 6" dial calliper gauge that he bought recently for \$19. Made in China, but well made, he recommends such an instrument as being ideal for OS/handyman purposes.

• A photo of a **LYNNCRAFT** Set that's similar but not identical to the one described in 12/309. The outside of the lid looks identical, though I can't quite read if the Model No. is '146'. It's probably an earlier Set because there are no Tyres in it; otherwise the contents look the same, with a generally similar layout, except that all 5 Pulleys are between the Trunnions, there are 2 extra Pulleys (with hidden, or no, bosses), each holding down 3 of the Triangular Plates, no Span'drivers are visible, and in dark areas of the photo on either side of the Large Flanged Plate, there looks to be an extra Bush Wheel on the left, and another part, perhaps a Pulley or a third Bush Wheel on the right. There's no centre hole in any of the Strips.

2. From Don Redmond. • On the **ERECTOR No.100 Set** (from 11/298 & 15/ 411), the bore of the Wheel is just over 3.25mm, & the Axle is 2.90mm Ø. See *Greenberg* 2, p139, for a photo of the Set; it's said there that it was marketed only in 1957, & that the parts were shrink wrapped onto a yellow backing board.

• **JE-IL/JEP** (see 13/344) were still going strong last summer. Their address is Jeil Science Material Enterprises, Kuroku, Kurodong 546-2, Seoul (Buyoung Building, 3rd floor), and the phone numbers are the 858 ones in OSN 13. The firm does not market its products outside South Korea. The sets 1-3 and 5 & 6 continue but there's doubt about the Army outfit (see 6/111). The current manuals are for Sets 1; 2 including 1; 3 including 1 & 2; 5; & 6). The #3 is the same as the one described in OSN 13 with very minor changes to the text, and the models in #5 & 6 are probably the same.

• On **TEMSI** hole spacing, see 9/225, Charles Shrubsole has found that the it is erratic rather than being uniformly a little over ½". Don checked four 25h Strips from one set for himself and found some pairs of holes at exactly ½" while others were up to 1.5mm out. But the erratic spacing was identical between all the Strips, and the end holes were all 3mm over 12" apart. [The 6 in a set from the 1950s or 1960s are all no more than 1½mm out over the 25 holes and the holes seem to be very nearly uniformly spaced; the 4 A/Gs in the set are very similar.]

• **STRUCTOMODE** A/Gs are black, like **MÄRKLIN** used to be, but are easy to recognise because they are copper plated under the chemical blackening.

• The **MASTER BUILDER** Motor shown in 18/495 looks just like the 1914 **ERECTOR** P-51 Motor on p52 of *Greenberg* 1. It was only listed for the one year, and was fitted with strip brushes. Are they identical? And who made them? In 1915 Gilbert changed to the P-58 which had carbon brushes, slightly different frames with 4 terminals, & bracket feet. Said feet had a round hole in each, later slotted right out to the edge of the foot.

• The word in the **KONSTRUKTOR** [10] 'flying goose' logo (18/498) is Moskva (Moscow) in script.

• **Buffing** dull dark grey (tin plated) **STRUCTO** parts using a cloth buffing wheel impregnated with tripoli (rottenstone) gave a bright, smooth shine. Tin oxide is tough.

• Some 5h Strips with very large end radii, of about 2", cut close to the end holes, have been identified, thanks to Kendrick Bisset, as **MASTER BUILDER**. [As far as I know most M B Strips have well rounded ends, see 16/450.]

• **MESO** in the **SONNEBERGER** logo (see 18/502), no doubt comes (in similar fashion to other German abbreviations) from **MEtallwarenfabrik SOnneberg**.

3. From David Hobson. • An unused **MECANIKIT No.0**, still strung in its box, is exactly the same as the one described in 10/250, and MCS, except that all the Strips bar 3x 3h are aluminium, and there are 12 N&B. 8 of the Nuts

are square and 4 hexagonal, both the same across flats. The Axle is aluminium, and the Balloon Wheels have a gold sheen, and appear to have been lacquered. No Screwdriver was found in the Set.

• From the Nov. 1930 *The Toy Trader*. **Sonneberg** (see 18/502) has been known for toys for the last 200 years and has 'the unique **German Toy Museum**'.

• Something on the history of **VOGUE** (ref. 17/464) appeared in the Sept. 1951 *The Toy Trader & Exporter*. The Vogue Manufacturing Co. of Egerton Road, Melton Mowbray was established some 40 years before and produced metal trimmings for shoes. It was bought by A.N.Pallett in 1947 and new machinery for making toys and fancy goods was gradually installed, including plastic moulding equipment. A subsidiary, Vogue Playthings Ltd. was formed in 1947 to market the toys, and in 1949 Thermold Ltd., who made toilet goods and advertising novelties, was acquired. During 1948/49 the original factory was enlarged and another factory at Oakham, 10 miles away, was taken to make the constructional sets. In 1950 A.E.Pallett, father of A.N., and managing director of Casceloid Ltd. from 1919 to 1943, joined the firm and became responsible for admin and sales. In that year additional premises were obtained in Melton for packing and dispatch, and the original factory was modernised. The **VOGUE** pressings were then made there and taken to Oakham for finishing and packing. A blurry photo in an earlier (Feb. 1951) issue showed 3 sets which look like those shown in the Manuals, and behind them is a largish model that might be a Big Wheel.

• An ad from the manufacturers' agent Val Green, in the Jan. 1952 *The Toy Trader & Exporter*, mentions 'The latest & greatest' **KONSTRUKTA** Steel Constructional Sets'. The parts in this system, and their similarity to **BEAVER**, were discussed in 6/129, & this is the first definite date for either. Incidentally **BEAVER** was made by a firm, Rutland Plastics Ltd., in Oakham, where **VOGUE** sets were produced.

• **DAN DARE** Sets 1 & 2 (see 14/366) were announced in an ad by Bartram, the manufacturer, in *The Toy Trader & Exporter* for July 1953, and a similar ad with illustrations of the Sets appeared in the August issue.

• An article on **CONSTRUMENTS** in the Dec. 1932 *Toy Trader* says that the sets have only been on the market for a week or two. So that confirms the date inferred in 5/79. The 20, Plus, & 100 Sets are mentioned and the 20 is said allow instruments worth £20 to be made, or at least £100 for the No.100 Outfit. It is also stated that the interchangeable metal parts were made by The British Thomson Houston Co. Ltd.

• The 1937 **JUNEERO** box lid illustrated in 9/216 was also shown in *The Toy Trader* for Feb 1936, in an ad for cartons, and in a later 1936 Waddy ad.

• **ARKIRECTO** (2/19) was patented in 1933. Mentioned was made of it in the Feb 1934 *Games & Toys*, and in March an ad from the manufacturers, Arkirecto Ltd., Carlton House, Regent Street, London, S.W.1, offered sets from 2/6 to £2-2-0. In October the price range was 2/6 to 52/6 and ads continued until Feb 1935. The next ad, with the same prices, was in June from Waddy Productions, Astor House, Aldwych, London, and they had another ad in September. Finally in June, July & August 1936, E.M.Napier Ltd., Exmouth House, 3 Pine Street, Farringdon Road, London announced 'We have procured the entire stock of **ARKIRECTO** and can offer complete outfits or parts at greatly reduced prices'. (From a Nov 1937 Napier ad: 'Turn that dead stock into £-s-d - London's Largest Job Stock Buyer - pays spot cash for surplus stock.')

• The **MEX** No.2 Set (see 16/452) was advertised by W.H.Cornelius in the Nov 1933 *The Toy Trader*, price 1/-. So unless it had a very short life it's strange that it wasn't mentioned in the later *Games & Toys* ads.

• In 18/523 Don Redmond asked about a yellow plastic Wheel with Tyre marked **BILDIT**. It probably came from the simple plastic **BILDIT** system which was based on a special

Wheel or Spool which acted as a multi-way connector for square section Rods. BILDIT was patented in several countries and was on sale in the UK in the 1950s & early 1960s.

4. Tony Press has suggested, and I'm sure he's right, that it is the packet the parts were in that is under the French **MECCANO X1s** box in 16/446, and not a Model Leaflet as stated. He also mentioned that he has a similar style British MECCANO X box (with the light diagonal stripe), and I've noticed that a 1932 (or '33) UK catalogue shows both the X1 & X2 in the same style of box.

5. On the **STEEL TEC Corvette** (18/496), Keith Cameron wrote that there is a switch for the headlights. It's built into the console between the seats.

6. From Werner Sticht. • On the **MÄRKLIN nickel 5*11h Flanged Plate** in 17/473, such a part, #11321, of nickel plated brass, was included in their ELEX Sets, but I don't know of a corresponding 5*7h one.

• **VEB (K) Schmerbach** (reference SONNEBERGER in 18/504) was probably at the village of Schmerbach between Eisenach and Limenau; there's another Schmerbach near Meiningen but it's only a few houses without a proper road to it. CONSTRUCTION was also made at Schmerbach.

• Werner is in touch with **Karl Debik**, a collector of metal constructional systems from the former GDR. He knew practically all the manufacturers there and is preparing a history of the subject. He would welcome contact with other collectors (in German or in English) - his address is Nordshäuser Str. 25b, D-34132 Kassel, Germany.

7. From Kendrick Bisset. • On **ENGINEERO** (18/520), there was a 7-32 A.S.M.E. thread listed in the 1914 Edition of the *American Machinists Handbook*, together with 7-30, and the standard 7-36 (see 8/203). Haber Bros. were listed in the *Thomas Register* as toy manufacturers at 878 Broadway, New York City in 1917 & 1918, and later at 91 5th Avenue.

• Another **GIRDER BILT** Set (see 17/467). Again it has some parts missing, but the contents are broadly the same. The 15 of both the 4h Strips & Angle Bends in it probably indicate 16 of each originally. Again it contains one of the unusual 6*4h 'Plates'. The Wheels are the same diameter but thicker, more sharply detailed, and a dull red colour. The Screws are 4-40 (a much more suitable size), steel with countersunk heads, and 3/8" & 1" long. The hex Nuts are aluminium, .253" A/F & .095" thick. The Screwdriver & (different shaped) Spanner are 2 5/8" & 2 3/8" long respectively, and are shown below. There was a Model Leaflet with this

Set, the one used in MCS, 15 1/2*8 1/4", folded into 3. Its 18 models (plus 0-9 & 8 Letters) start with Rake and finish with an unnamed framework, 8*8*16h, with on the front, a cross or 4-bladed propeller made of 2x 8h Strips. All the models on the OSN 17 container are included but the Letters are different and use only 4 & 8h Strips.



8. Alan Partridge mentioned **MAKE-AND-KNOW**, a small set with MECCANO-like parts that was bought in India, probably in 1979.

9. Harry Mariën recalls being given a set called **MECANO** in the 1950s, as a child in Belgium. The parts were not copies of MECCANO.

10. Roger Baker writes of **ALCON**, see 8/199 & 9/224. In a 'Junto' Set the wood parts are match stick sized in various colours, and are cut to length according to the 'number' shown for each Stick on the model plan. A scale is provided with the length for each 'number' marked on it. He added that it is extremely fiddly to use, the Brackets are easily bent/broken, and the end result is a small, very flimsy, skeletal model.

11. On **Richter's Metal Sets** (10/260), Jacques Pitrat wrote, 'I have a third Richter set which includes only metal parts. It is a bridge set, but unfortunately not the 1895 one! This is **Set #10 Eisenbrücken**, an accessory set to be used with a normal ANKER set to build the piers, and from the style of the picture on the lid it dates from before WW1. There are 2 kinds of girder. The first is like the one at the bottom of 10/261 except that it has 6 bays instead of 4. Its length is 156mm and it is 34mm high; there are 4 in the Set. The other 6 girders are larger, also with latticed sides but the upper member is arch shaped. They are 205mm long, 34mm deep at the ends and 67mm in the middle. There are corresponding roadway parts, both 62mm wide: two 156mm long, and three 205mm. No N&B are used in assembling the parts, the girders slide onto the arms of a U-shaped strip, one at each end, with the roadway sitting on the base of the U. The girders are painted blue-grey and the roadways brown. In *Eisenzeit* it is indicated that these parts appeared in 1901 and that they were originally nickel plated.' [An illustration of the parts is on p54 of *Bauklötze Staunen*, but the parallel girder shown has only 4 bays. The German patent discussed in 10/261 is Nr. 133728.]

EXTRA MCS SHEETS The Sheets listed here are available at 15p per Sheet plus postage. That makes £3.30 for all 22 Sheets.

KONSTRUKTOR K:115: X1.1,2,3/4/6,5 [2]

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MALY INZYNIER: X1.1,2,3/4/6,5 [2]

METEOR: X2.3d/4d,3e/4e,5a/6b [2]

MÖWE: X2.6/7a [1]

PLASTICON: X2.3/4/6,3a/4a/6a,3b/4b/6b,5,5a [3]

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