

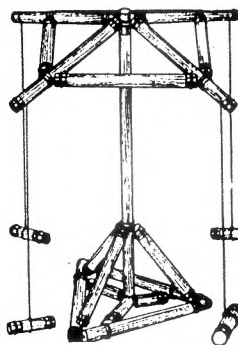
EDITORIAL I always carefully file away anything that I'm sent about systems which are mainly composed of wooden or plastic parts, even though there isn't usually room in OSN to do more than mention them briefly. At least then readers know what I have and I can pass details on to anyone who's interested. I've generally included such items in the 'Letters' section but for the future I thought it would be better to have all of them in a separate column. Having said that, this Issue is so full that I've not been able to find room for anything on them, but the new section will I hope be in OSN 13, along with one or two other pieces that have had to be held over.

My apologies if this Issue is late, preparation

has been delayed by over a month while I recovered from an unexpected operation. And even when you get this I may not have entirely caught up with answering letters, but I hope to do so before too long.

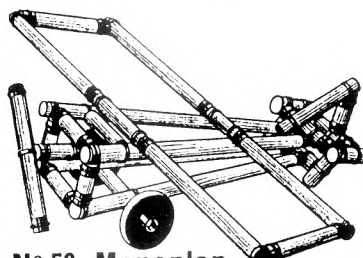
Overseas letters usually arrive intact but from time to time, and there have been several recently, envelopes containing parts, photos, or even those packed full of folded papers, turn up with an end open, apparently abraded through. I don't think anything has been lost so far, but as a precaution in such cases, it may be worth reinforcing the ends with strips of Scotch tape, which seems to prevent the problem occurring.

Please see
p315 for
more details.



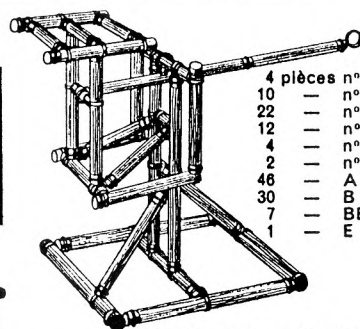
**N° 55.
Pas
du
géant**

14 p. n° 3
14 — n° 9
14 — n° 12
2 — n° 24
41 — A
23 — B
4 — BB



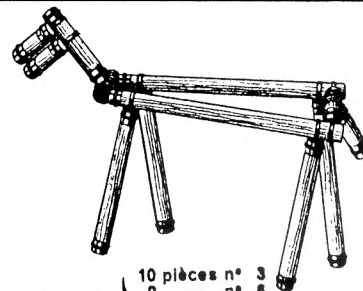
N° 59. Monoplan

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| 22 pièces n° 3 | 38 — A |
| 12 — n° 6 | 29 — B |
| 4 — n° 9 | 8 — C |
| 8 — n° 21 | 1 — |
| 4 — n° 30 | 2 roues |



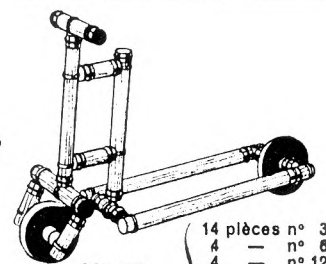
N° 69. Pèse-lettres

4 pièces n° 3
10 — n° 6
22 — n° 9
12 — n° 12
4 — n° 18
2 — n° 27
46 — A
30 — B
7 — BB
1 — E



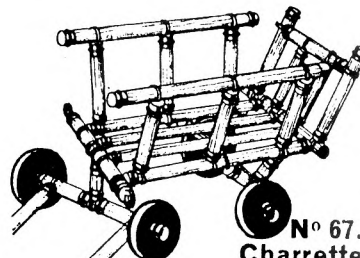
**N° 62.
Cheval**

10 pièces n° 3
2 — n° 6
8 — n° 9
4 — n° 15
22 — A
13 — B



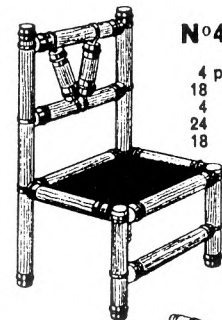
**N° 23.
Patinette**

14 pièces n° 3
4 — n° 6
4 — n° 12
4 — n° 15
20 — A
13 — B
2 — BB
2 roues



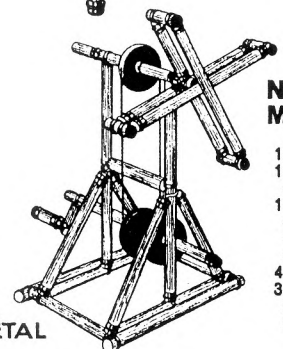
**N° 67.
Charrette**

12 pièces n° 3
16 — n° 6
8 — n° 9
6 — n° 12
8 — n° 15
6 — n° 18
58 — A
33 — B
5 — BB
4 roues



N° 43. Chaise

4 pièces n° 3
18 — n° 6
4 — n° 15
24 — A
18 — B



**N° 68.
Moulin**

12 p. n° 3
10 — n° 6
4 — n° 9
16 — n° 15
4 — n° 18
4 — n° 21
4 — n° 24
43 — A
35 — B
2 — BB
2 — E

AJUSTO

NOUVEAU JEU DE CONSTRUCTION

BOIS ET MÉTAL



- All the parts have PNs, 1-77 including the Motors: there are none in MCS.
- The parts were of good thickness and quality, though the paintwork wasn't very durable. Various finishes were used on the steel parts at different times, tin plating, metallic black (acier bruni), nickel plating, and for some black paint. Certain parts were made of copper, aluminium, brass, and brass plated steel, with some of the changes due to the war.

No details are available of the LIC sets that were marketed; for ÉCÉPÉ there were outfits A,B,C,D,(E), and linking sets A bis, B bis, C bis, (D bis). It isn't explained what the brackets signify. The same range (with no brackets) for MÉCANIC and in addition BB, CC, DD, EE. The latter were sets B to E with a motor added, No.1 for B and C, No.2 for

D and E.

The MÉCANIC manual, which covered all the sets, was developed from the ÉCÉPÉ one, and changed from year to year. The manual mentioned had 52 pages of models against 30 for the one in MCS. The Set Contents were the same in both. There were also leaflets which showed some models.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS The material above is published by kind permission of the Magazine of the *Club des Amis du MECCANO*, of the *Section Champagne* of the Club, and of the *CONSTRUCTORAMA* Archive. My thanks also to André Leenhardt, Editor of the CAM Magazine, for the additional material he sent.

AJUSTO This is another French system but rather an unusual one. There isn't much about it in MCS, but now thanks to David Hobson, much more has come to light. He came across a manual and a No.1 box, empty unfortunately, but the manual explains all, see the illustrations below. Semi-circular section wooden rods, grooved along their flat side are clamped together by push-on steel clips (A, Fig 1). Other clips push into the hollow centre of the united rods to allow them to be joined lengthwise (using clip C, Fig 4) or at right angles (B, Fig 3). As in Figs 4 and 9 the clips C and B can be bent to give an angle between the rods joined. BB is like B but is dimensioned to allow rods to rotate in it, H is similar, and E provides a bearing at 90° to a rod (Fig 6). G allows cross rods be joined in-line (Fig 7), and D allows a 3-way junction (Fig 5). F is just a hook.

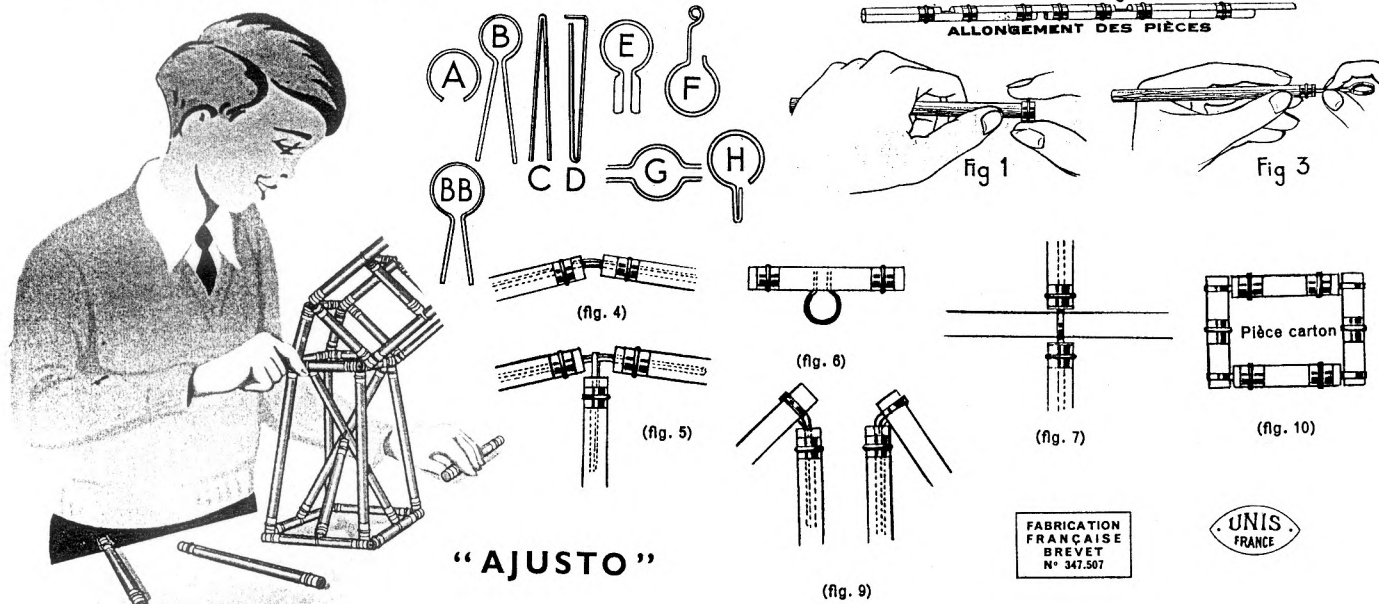
There are 10 different rods from 3 to 30cm long, in steps of 3cm, and each has a No. which is its length in centimeters. Then apart from the 9 clips, the only other part is a pulley wheel, possibly wooden but it doesn't say so. A larger disc is shown in one Crane but there's no reference to it anywhere as a part. It might be card - rectangular pieces of card are shown in some of the models but it isn't clear whether they came in the sets: it is explained that they were held in the gaps in the clips A, suitably aligned (Fig 10).

There were 5 outfits, numbered 1 to 5, and packets and boxes of extra parts were said to be available. No details of contents are given but the largest Set 5 model shown needs

over 300 clips and over 200 rods. The Set 1 box lid measures 19.5x14.3x2.5cm and is very nicely coloured with a stylish looking lad and two models, a bridge and a van. Rods and wheels are red and the panels of the van are dark red-brown. The models are the ones shown in MCS but it's a different boy.

The manual has 8 pages and all the models in it can be made with Set 5. The front cover shows the different parts, and, as on the lid, a logo 'UNIS FRANCE', and a Patent No.347.507. On the next page is the name and address: Établissements LÉON LEVILLE, 48, Faubourg du Temple - PARIS (XI^e), and on a leaflet that was with the manual, this firm is given as the wholesale supplier. 75 numbered models are shown, 1-70, and then, on the last page, Nos.73 and 75-78. Those on the front cover of this Issue are typical: it isn't said which models can be made with which Set. The clips other than A and B aren't used very often and 'D' isn't called up at all. In just one model (the Moulin) pulleys needs to be fixed to their axles, but it isn't clear how this could be done.

Some idea of the diameter of the rods can be obtained by scaling from the models in the Manual but the answers from the 4 or 5 I tried, vary from 8.5 to 11.5mm - 10mm sounds a good round figure. On dates, MCS/FB says the ad shown is from 1933 - the manual gives no information but the boy on the box lid does look like a 1930's boy. Perhaps someone could find out the date of the Patent.



bullet 30 yards.' He added, as if to appease parents, 'Fine for practicing in the garden.' However, the Gilbert Nurses Outfit was not available here - presumably British lads just had to be more resilient than their peers in the U.S.A.

David has also tracked down the French patent for **AJUSTO** (12/315): it turned out to be No.750927 and not the number on the Manual, which had nothing to do with toys. The date of application was 17 February 1933 and it was in the name of Robert Tassel, resident of Eure (to the east of Paris). Of the various clips shown in OSN 12, only types A and B are shown, but an alternative form of A is included (Fig. 3), and also clips to unite various sections other than semi-circular, rectangular for example (Fig.12). A method of joining solid rods is also given (Figs.15-17) - one rod is held in the clip l, which engages in the slot in the thin metal cap o, whose arms are bent down over the other rod and are held by the spring clip q.

And as a footnote, the TUPO ball and socket joints (12/307) reminded David of a 1927 patent No.302303, classified under 'constructional toys, figures'. The claim is 'A model of chocolate representing a human or animal figure comprising two or more parts resting one upon the other without positive engagement, the contacting surfaces being shaped so as to establish a ball and socket joint. The moulded parts may be hollow and weighted at the base by an extra thickness of chocolate.' In David's words, a very rare and short-life construction system.



4. Josep Bernal sent a copy of the cover of a 1921 **STABIL** Manual for Sets 49-52 in Spanish. It is basically the then normal STABIL standard with the righthand panel like the DEN LILLE INGENIØR one in 7/157 and on the left, „Stabil“ and the text details in Spanish.

5. John Hanby wrote that he had recently acquired a **JUNEERO Engineer's Set** (see 8/178, 9/216) and that it is almost certain that it was originally bought at Xmas 1940. The metal Discs in it were 2.50" and 1.75" dia, different to the postwar ones described in OSN 8, and those in my Engineers' Set were different again at 2.13" and 1.68". All were the same thickness.

6. Don Redmond has discovered that at least from 1936 to sometime in the 1960s, the major occupant of the address given for **THE ENGINEER** (12/328) was Armstrong Bros., machinists (Armstrong Bros. Engineering from about 1945 on). He also notes that the Screwdriver shown may have been a commercial, bought in item, and is similar to the **AMERICAN MODEL BUILDER** one, and to those supplied with White sewing machines ca.1919.

He also noted a new OS name, **AIMANTO**, Lot No.21 in a Jean Estève Objets list.

In a later letter Don wrote that in the *Canadian Encyclopedia* under *Toys*, it is said that the **Manual Construction Co.** and the **Reliance Toy Co.** both made steel construction sets. Reliance is one of the big firms in Canadian toys but so far no details about Manual are available. For **STRUCTOMODE** the same article gives the dates 1920-29 under Canadian Toys Ltd. [A Canadian Toys manual has a Price List dated 1918 in it. The maker shown in another manual is Structomode Ltd., again of Hamilton, and fewer

sets are listed, 00 to 3 against 0 to 6 plus 1M and 2M - the prices of corresponding sets are higher, \$6 for a #3 against \$4. The Little Hustler motor and the distinctive Braced Girders are no longer in the Parts List although the manual cover shows some of the latter but with **MECCANO** cutouts. The right-hand boy on the cover is wearing a jumper with a 'diced band' around the bottom, instead of that rather fancy jacket (see MCS). The Windmill Sail shown is also **MECCANO**-like with an arm, 6 bumps and rectangular holes, instead of the round holes in the Canadian Toys manual. Mainly because of the jumper I'm inclined to think that Structomode Ltd. came after Canadian Toys.]



7. Roger Baker bought a German set called **MECANIC** recently with parts that seem the same as those for the German **MEKANIK** in MCS. [In MCS Part 5 there's a Swedish **MECANIC** which is virtually the same as their **MEKANIK** - does anyone know anything of the change from 'Cs' to 'Ks' or vice-versa?]

8. Kendrick Bisset wrote that he has been told that the **MODELIT** Motor No.10 (12/327) was a Weeden product with the nameplate changed; also that he remembers seeing an ad for a motor similar to the one in the Loom (12/332), and it may have been a 'Little Hustler'.

On differences between similar parts from different systems he has found that the small hole for cord in old **MECCANO** Crank Handles is 1½" from the end, while **AMB** holes are 1½" from the bend.

9. Keith Cameron wonders at the number and variety of Other Systems, and the originality of some, but notes that the survivors, like **BRAL**, **TEMSEI** and **MÄRKLIN**, are all cousins of **MECCANO**, and share its greater adaptability and appeal.

He also comments on the difficulties of making sense of the various 'Groupes', Outfits and 'Albums' within **MULTIMOTEUR** (12/304), and hopes that someone who knows the system will kindly explain all. [Jeannot Buteux's comments above are a great help and perhaps later he will be able to give more details, for example the meaning of the titles of the different Groupes, and their scope.]

10. On **JUNIOR MECHANIC** (12/327), Al Sternagle wrote that he has a smaller #101 set in a 11½"×8¼" box, and thinks that it dates from the 1950s. As with the 201 there were no tools or manual with it, but 6 models are shown on the lid. The thread is 5-40 with the same length Bolts as in the 201, and the Nuts are 5/16" A/F and 1/16" thick. The thread on the end of the Crank Handle is 11/16" long.

11. Tony Matthewman, in reply to a question, said that **TRIX** Angle Girders were not introduced until after WW2, and that Continental ones were, and are, steel, and not aluminium as in the UK. He also mentioned that a German mail order house called *Quelle* has for several years sold 3 of the current **TRIX** sets under the name **QUELLE GOOD PLAY**, but 'TRIX' is also on the box lids in small letters.

CORRECTION On **Gilbert MECCANO**, several readers wrote to point out that the disc and vee of the 1" Pulley shown towards the bottom of 12/319 are formed, perhaps spun, from one piece and not two as shown. Also Kendrick Bisset added that the Pulley was at one time a standard **ERECTOR** part.

tainer is 80mm Ø * 205mm high. • There are 110 parts in the Set, of 24 different types, including 14x8mm, 6x18mm, and 2x26mm RH Bolts, and 14 small crossheaded Countersunk Bolts. • The steel parts are nickel plated, the Pulley is aluminium, the Wheels may be Bakelite, and the Cable is white string. • The Handle is 3.00mm Ø; the holes in the Channels, Wheels, and Angles and Corner Plates, are 3.90, 3.50, 4.70mm diameter respectively.

• LEKSAXSSAMLARMARKNAD

(13/360) is not the name of a set, it means Toy Fair in Swedish. **Two unknown systems** were seen there, as well as the aluminium one mentioned in OSN 13; one resembled MÄRKLIN and the other STABIL.

• On TEKNO (13/360), there is also **TEKNO-ELECTRO**, and its Manual is almost identical to the equivalent TRIX one.

• **MAKKO** (13/360) should have been **MAYCO**. [Sorry]

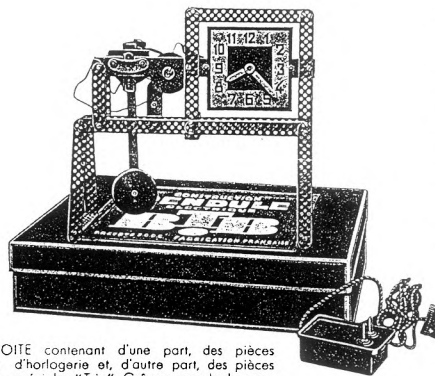
• **AIMANTO** (13/361) is not a constructional toy, it's the brand name of various games in which magnetised pieces are moved about (aimant = magnet).

• For **AJUSTO** in 12/315, the wooden parts in a known Set are red in colour. The 'UNIS FRANCE' isn't the sign of the manufacturer but was a mark of distinction awarded by a toy maker's trade association or the like, in the period 1916 to perhaps 1940. The criteria for such awards aren't known. Also the Brevet No. mentioned was probably not a Patent No. but more likely the Registration No. with a trade body.

• A French system **MÉTALLU** is shown in MCS, the name coming from an advert which is reproduced there. In fact it is a misprint and the real name is MÉTALU - CO' have several Sets with Manuals. Similarly an **ÉRECTOR** Manual is known, another error.

• On **TRIX A/Gs** (13/361), both aluminium and brass plated steel ones were included in French sets.

• And while on TRIX, Jeannot sent a copy of a leaflet for



B OITE contenant d'une part, des pièces d'horlogerie et, d'autre part, des pièces spéciales "Trix". Grâce au mode de mon-

the French **BTB PENDULE ÉLECTRIQUE** (Electric Pendulum Clock). It was a kit made up of standard TRIX pieces and special precision clock parts, and the finished clock 'worked very well and could be regulated'. The address given is 35 Boulevard Richard-Lenoir, Paris XI^{me}, and the price, fr.59, included the necessary battery, or for another fr.15.50 a transformer was available.

7. John Wapshott wrote that he has 2 **ARKIRECTO** Pulleys (W3), see 2/21, with Collets that tighten onto a 2.6mm Rod that was with them, and that a 3.25mm drill goes through their bore (without the Collet fitted). The 3 that I measured for my Database will not tighten onto a Rod of that size, but do tighten on the 3.05mm Rods that came with them (although they were all in a mixed lot), and their bores are typically about 3.07mm. The bore of the solid end of John's Collets is 3.0mm, while mine are 3.1. All the Pulley are stamped ARKIRECTO. Were there two standards or have some of the parts been 'got at'?

TRUNNIONS GALORE Trunnions are often a good way of identifying an unknown lot of parts, or at least narrowing down the possibilities. But it's one thing to have a Trunnion in your hand and another to know which system it comes from. Don Blakeborough and Don Redmond have been working on this and Don B. recently sent me the answer for all known Trunnions and similar Triangular Plates. There's a drawing of each different design - in fact to save space only the left hand side is shown - and a list of all the systems that use each type. In all there are over 130, of some 70 different designs, with notes on material and colour where possible

I find it a great help and with Don's agreement I've arranged it all on a double sided A3 sheet, and I can supply copies at £0.40 each plus postage.

EXTRA MCS SHEETS The Sheets listed opposite are available at 15p per Sheet plus postage. That makes £1.20 + post for all 8 Sheets. There aren't many MCS Amendments this time so they will be included in List No.4 to be issued next April.

BILDO: X1.7 [1 Sheet]
KINCO ENGINEER: X1.7 [1 Sheet]
MECHANIX [1]: X1.3a/5a/6,4 [1 Sheet]
MECHANIX [2]: X1.1,4/6,4a/6a,5 [2 Sheets]
STRUKTIRON: X1.3/6,3a/6a,7 [2 Sheets]
TANSAD: X1.1,7 [1 Sheet]

ACCOUNTS Dear Subscriber,

Your remittance of _____ received with thanks.

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

Please renew your subscription if you wish to receive the next Issue.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES For 1997 (OSN 16 and 17), including postage, at Printed Paper Rate where appropriate: UK £6; airmail to Europe and surface mail anywhere, £7; airmail outside Europe, £8. **BACK NUMBERS** For the zones above: OSN 1: £1/£1.30/£1.50; OSN 2,3: £2.30/£2.70/£2.90 each; OSN 4-15: £3.60/£4.10/£4.50 each.

SMALL ADS Up to about 150 words free for each subscriber in each Issue; above that by arrangement. Insertion guaranteed in OSN 16 if ads reach the Editor by the end of January 1997.

PAYMENT Please make cheques etc payable to P.A.Knowles. Remittances in other than Pounds Sterling will be cashed locally and the resulting Sterling credited, but bank charges are often prohibitive.

• Overseas subscribers can pay by VISA, ACCESS or MASTER cards: please send Card No, Expiry Date and Name and Address of Card Holder. Debits appear under the name 'SIMPLY COMPUTERS'.

• Overseas subscribers need not send sums of less than £5 for Back Numbers, purchases from the Editor, etc, until it is time for subscription renewal.

A No.3 AJUSTO Outfit This is the French system with wooden, semi-circular section Rods and metal Clips to join pairs of Rods together to form a round rod (which I'll call a strut), and to connect these struts together. An account from a manual and a box lid was given in 12/301 & 315, with a little more in 13/361 & 15/427. Now some further details from this set which David Hobson has kindly lent me.

The **box** is red, 32½*25*5½cm, and the lid, right, has the same design of label as the No.1, but has no models around its

aprons. Inside the box is white with a half depth false bottom and 7 compartments formed by red lipped partitioning. The Clips are in greaseproof paper packets and a number of the Rods were found held, 4 at a time, by red paper bands.

The **Rods** are dyed red, and a strut has a diameter of about 12mm.

For ease of reference the various **Clips** are shown below (their use was explained in

OSN 12). Clip A, left, is used to join pairs of Rods together – it is 9mm long & nickel plated. The other Clips & the Hook are bent up from 2.0*8mm rectangular section wire and mostly look like their illustrations. 2 types of B were found, identical save their tails, 12 & 24mm long. The ring of the bearing BB is very loose on the Rods but the end of an A runs well in it, and the A ridge is high enough to prevent the BB ring from passing over it. H has only one tail and it would push between 2 Rods, as right. As a bearing it is looser than BB and the A ridge will

and mostly look like their illustrations. 2 types of B were found, identical save their tails, 12 & 24mm long. The ring of the bearing BB is very loose on the Rods but the end of an A runs well in it, and the A ridge is high enough to prevent the BB ring from passing over it. H has only one tail and it would push between 2 Rods, as right. As a bearing it is looser than BB and the A ridge will



just pass through it. C & D are about 40mm long, and the Hook F 30mm o/a. G is not as shown, it has longer tails and they are joined at one side, like C. It is 50mm long o/a.

Clip A can fairly easily be bent to close it up a little or open it out, but the steel used for the other Clips makes it hard to change their shape, and near impossible to alter the tails of Clip B, as needed in the Example 9 in OSN 12, by hand at any rate. It is quite tricky to assemble the parts and requires some force to do

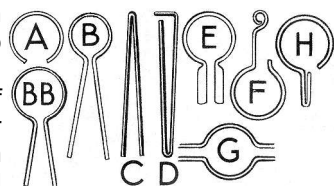
so, but the various Clips are very firmly held once locked in place by Clip(s) A. To build anything other than a simple model would need some forethought as to the order in which the parts would have to be assembled, and it would be daunting to have to add to or alter a structure.

The **Wheel** right, 39mm Ø by 12mm wide, is wooden, painted red, and has a shallow pulley groove. Its bore is 14mm and so it is very loose on the struts, but it runs well with the end of an A in the bore on either side, and is then located by the ridges.

The **Panels** in the Set are made of 1½mm thick brown fibre board. One side is dull & matt, the other (right) is shiny & grained. 5 sizes were in the Set, 61*31,62,121,151mm, & 31mm square.

David's set may well be near complete, apart perhaps from the Wheels & Panels, and as found contained: 27,15,10, 10,4,4,4 of 3,6,9,12,15,18,21cm Rods; 30,24(16 long, 8 short), 2,2,4,2,2,6 of Clips A,B,C,D,E,G,H,BB; 1 Hook; 1 Wheel; and 1 each of the 5 sizes of Panel.

The **Manual** is identical to the one in OSN 12.



OSN 33/997

AJUSTO: S1

Snippet: A No.2 TECHMASTER

Set Until this outfit was seen on Ebay all known TECHMASTER sets were No.50s, packed in canisters, as left, see 14/391 & 15/426. Before discussing the No.2 a word about a No.50 to hand. The main words on the front of the canister are METAL CONSTRUCTION SET | ERECT AND TRANSPORT | CONSTRUCT AND HOIST. The inventory is on the back, as Extra Sheet X2, with the maker's details under it, & 'No.50' under that in letters 1½mm high. The parts are as described in OSN 14 & 15 with the following additions: the Bolts are dull plated steel with 6.9mm Ø countersunk heads & 6.3mm round-heads; the Nuts are aluminium, 8.0mm A/F; the Pulley is ½" Ø; the Crank Handle is 3.2mm Ø & 104mm long o/a; the Hook is flat, nicked, & 19mm long; the Wrench is the span'driver below, nicked, 75mm o/a & only 8mm thick.

Right the

No.2. As can be seen the Girders are painted red, and other

