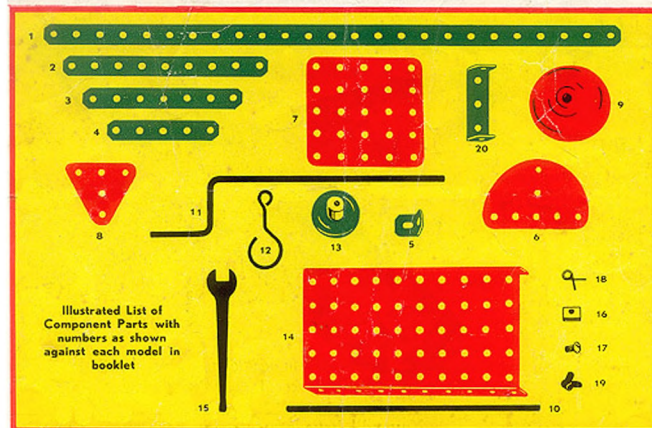


New System - METALCRAFT Chas Shrubsole came across the back page of a manual in Canada and kindly send a copy (opposite) via Don Redmond. That is all that's known of this system, but apart from there being no A/G, the page is virtually identical to the back cover of the PIONEER manual, as shown in MCS. The pages are the same size, and the layout of the parts and the PNs are the same; there are the same strips on either side of *MODELS* under the name, and the same 'Designed and printed in Great Britain' underneath. The PIONEER heading is shown opposite above the METALCRAFT page. So it must be likely that the two systems were made by the same manufacturer. It isn't known for sure who made PIONEER but because of the obvious resemblance of the parts to VOGUE, it may have been Vogue Playthings Ltd. of Melton Mowbray. Whether METALCRAFT was intended for the Canadian market isn't of course known. Looking at the PIONEER and METALCRAFT back covers it does look as if the latter came first and the 11h A/G was squeezed in afterwards. Of the 25 models in the PIONEER Manual, this part is used in 8 of the last 11. A new MCS Sheet will be prepared for METALCRAFT later, in case in the meantime anyone comes up with anything else on it. Metalcraft Corp. was the

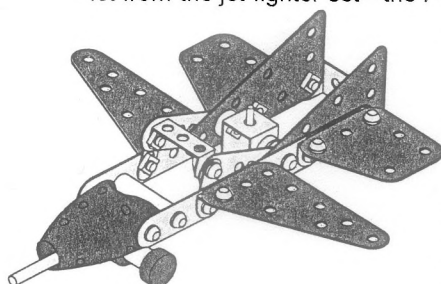
PIONEER MODELS METALCRAFT MODELS



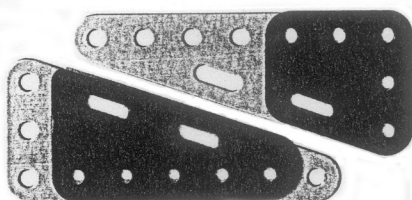
Designed and printed in Great Britain.

name of the American company that made METALCRAFT aircraft and train constructional sets, and so the new system will be listed as METALCRAFT [1].

THE STEEL TEC F-18 FIGHTER 'SK' SET In OSN 12/323 I mention the various SK sets shown on the Leaflet for the Motorcycle. Chas Shrubsole has now kindly sent the Leaflet from the jet fighter set - the *F-18 FIGHTER WITH SPRING SUSPENSION* - and again it's labelled item #7080, © 1993. It contains 78 parts and there are one or two points of interest.



F-18 FIGHTER WITH SPRING SUSPENSION



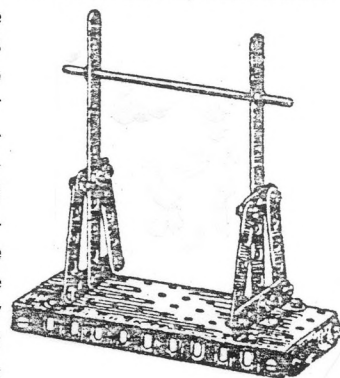
The nose is a 5*3 hole blue Plastic Plate curved around and fastened underneath by a N&B. The latter also carries a Rod and Strip Connector which holds the Rod that comes out of the nose. The Triangular Plates, all red, are shown with different hole configurations in the different illustrations in the Leaflet, but the actual ones are as shown opposite, superimposed on the 3*7h MECCANO part. Pairs of black Wheels, CR and GP, push onto axles that pass through the yellow front and rear undercarriage members, CT and CA. The rear unit is shown with a Spring, AS, but it seems not to do anything because the Axle HD passes through the bottom (round) holes in the Double Bracket, M. But that's odd too because the other parts M are 1*2*1h DAS (plus a centre hole) and there's no Double Bracket shown in the Set Contents. One of the DAS, M, can be seen over the cockpit and it looks as if it ought to be the NS style, but in the set it's of normal width.

QUERIES 1 and 13. On the TRIX thread, from 9/224, and the hole spacing, from 7/166. Tony Matthewman kindly sent copies of postwar UK official workshop drawings for a Strip and an A/G, and the pitch of the holes is shown as .307", both lengthways and crossways. That works out at 7.798mm and so probably the original German dimension was 7.8mm. Why 7.8? Tony suggested that it might be the minimum value to ensure that the Nuts in the different holes didn't interfere with one another, and in fact if all the holes in the outside rows have N&B in them there is just room for the Nuts to turn. The centre holes are all free but with no room for a Nut or Bolt in any of them.

So if the idea was to have the Strips as small as possible given the size of the Nuts, why that size of Nut? Perhaps because it was the standard for whatever thread was originally used. But we don't know exactly what thread that was; its diameter was probably 3.5mm or .138", and the pitch was .8mm or, almost the same, 32tpi. The Belgian No.19 thread (OSN 8/203) might fit the bill but would a German firm have used a Belgian thread? Can anyone suggest an equivalent German or Continental thread, now obsolete.

Another point from the drawings, the hole size is .145", very close to 3.7mm, the probable German diameter.

22. Richard Symonds kindly sent a copy of the 2 panel model leaflet for Australian CONSTRUCTO, with illustrations that look just like the MCS entry. Most of its 18 simple models appear to be direct copies of prewar MECCANO manual models, and include all 4 patterns of 5½*2½" Flanged Plate. But I don't recognise two or three of the models and they have Flanged Plates with only the two long flanges, and with elongated holes in them. For example in the Horizontal Bar opposite.



HORIZONTAL BAR

So I'd like to know what the CONSTRUCTO Flanged Plate, and the other parts, were really like.

white over a grey centre with red panels top & bottom. The first of its 6 pages gives General, & Particular Advice, and then the Illustrated Parts and the Set Contents occupy a page each. Finally 13 models from 1-3 (Swing) to 13-3, with a good photo of each and a list of parts for all except 3-13.

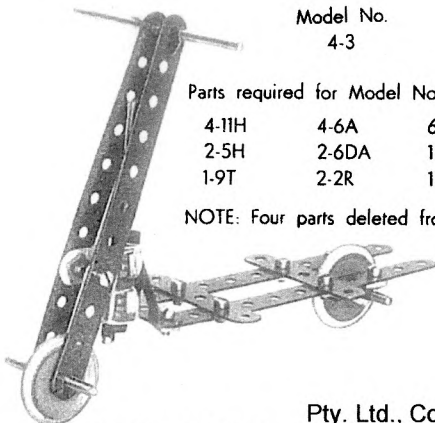
SCOOTER

Model No.
4-3

Parts required for Model No. 4-3

4-11H	4-6A	6-10C
2-5H	2-6DA	15-12B
1-9T	2-2R	13-13U

NOTE: Four parts deleted from list.



Pty. Ltd., Color Printers, Melbourne.

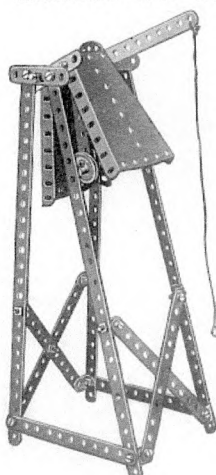
The No. 1 & No.2 manuals are smaller at 6*7" deep, and in each the introduction is followed by a page with the Set Contents under the illustration of the parts in the Set. Photos of 6 models are shown in the No.1 manual, and 12 in the No.2, not numbered but provided with parts lists.

MORE from AUSTRALIA The following notes from Jack Little, and the photocopies he kindly sent, add to those in 19/540 & 22/636. On the general scene: 'As most of the parts from EZY-BILT (1936-41), TOY TOWN, BILD-A-KIT (see below), & CONSTRUCTO are very similar, and as all originated in Melbourne, one or two engineering companies could have made all the parts. Some companies had their own workshops, and those that are known for sure are EZY-BILT in Adelaide (from 1944), BETTAFIT in Melbourne, and BUZ & MODEL-IT in Sydney. All these companies were also making other products at the same time.'

BETTAFIT & YOUNG ENGINEER'S SET The name BETTAFIT is also found spelt BETTA-FIT. No known BET sets had the Flanged Plate with a slot. The 'U' Piece in both BET & YES manuals (shown in 22/639) is only found in YES outfits; in BET it is the normal 5-hole part. YES, 1937-42, was probably not made in-house. By Dec. 1944 Janda Trading had been authorised to start production but had not yet done so. (By that date R.K.Morgan had been granted a permit to make BETTAFIT.) From 1947 to 1950 an engineering & die casting company was involved; in 1950 Robilt Engineers took over the parts, assembled some sets, painted unpainted pieces, and sold them off as job lots. BETTAFIT is thought to have continued into the 1950s.

'New' System: BILD-A-KIT A Model Sheet is known for this system and a tin accessory box. The Sheet is headed

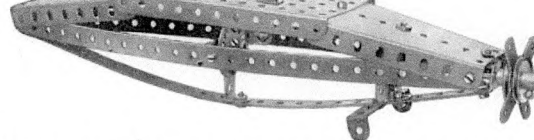
BILD-A-KIT Construction Sets



& the only indication of the maker is Box 2662, G.P.O., Melbourne, at the end. Sets 1, 3, & 5 were advertised in an early post-WW2 wholesaler's catalogue at almost the same price as the equivalent EZY-BILT sets. The Model Sheet, 4 sides 10*13", has 138 models, with no reference to any particular set. The models have no names or numbers and there is a half-tone for each – identical to those in late 1920s MECCANO manuals, with most from the 00 or 0 pages, but with a couple of No.1's, all mixed up together. The main parts that can be seen in the 0/00 ones are 4x 2,5,22,90a;

2x 11,48a,125, 8x 12. For the reproduced here models) an add- & 2x 54 would

126,126a; 1x 24,52, and Fire Alarm & Submarine (they are the two No.1 itional 4x 1, 3x 2, 4x 48a, be needed.



There was a No.4 Australian BUILD-A-KIT mentioned in 7/170 - the same system, I wonder.

CONSTRUCTO Another small MECCANO-like system, known only by its Model Leaflet (as used in MCS). But it was printed by 'Reporter' (a local newspaper) Print of Box Hill, a Melbourne suburb, so no doubt it was a Melbourne system.

HANDY SET Another 'new' system or just a set from one of the Australian manufacturers? The only evidence for this Set is a Model Sheet 9 7/8*12 7/8", printed on one side only. The name (below) is at the top with underneath, 'This set The Better Toy for Boys! has been produced for boys

to take with them on holidays or anywhere desired.' Then a possible clue to the maker: 'This set can be used together with all other 'Bettabilt' sets. So is BETTABILT another Australian system yet to be discovered? Or was Bettabilt a name intended to bring BETTAFIT or EZY-BILT to mind, without actually using either name? Two other possible clues. First, the Set Contents are given on the Sheet and the PNs are the same as BETTAFIT, so did the copywriter get confused and put Bettabilt instead of Bettafit? Secondly, the slogan above the name - 'The Better Toy for Boys!' – but I don't remember it from anywhere else.

The contents of the Set are given on the Model Sheet: using MECCANO PNs, 1x 36,52; 2x 2,12,16,22a,48a,90a, 126; 4x 5; 6x 35,37. The parts in the models look just like MECCANO except that the Trunnions are the 7-hole type and the 1" Loose Pulleys have no face holes. The 5*11h Flanged Plate is flanged all round and has the 1/2" cross slot in some models but not in others. The ends of the Curved Strip are blurry in most of the models but in at least one, the Chair below, they appear to be stepped.



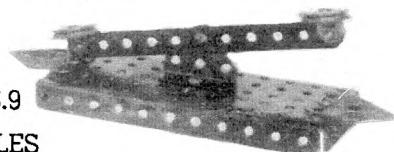
The 15 simple models shown, apparently original, go from H.S.1 GARDEN SEAT to H.S.15 MOTOR LAUNCH, with a half-tone of each. Several need more than the 6 N&B in the Set, and some like the Scales below include Flat Trunnions – two in that case plus an ordinary one.

H.S.2

CHAIR

H.S.9

SCALES



MODEL-IT The range of sets are as given in MCS. Possible dates are 1944 to around 1955.

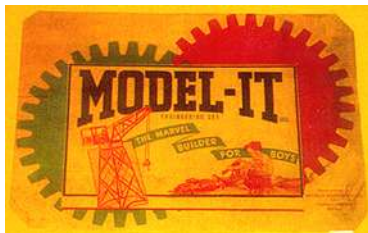
MYSTERY PART No.45 More from Don about the 1 1/2" Gear with the square centre hole for the boss. The disc is almost identical in diameter, and has the same tooth form, as a MECCANO 56t Gear with a similar, thin disc. Two of the 'square' ones have now been found in an American No.5X MECCANO set from c1920, and so it seems possible that the part was a wartime Meccano expedient, with the square hole for fear that a zinc boss would slip under load. As far as is known no 1 1/2" Gears with any sort of zinc boss have ever been found in the UK, so how such parts got to be in an American set remains to be explained.

News from Australia Jack Little has kindly sent over a number of items of interest. The first came from the personal papers of the late E.G. Page, the Meccano agent in Australia for many years. His company, E.G. Page & Co., made an application to the Australian Tariff Board to have the import duty on Meccano sets reduced, and 3 companies who were making small sets at the time, gave evidence, at a Board enquiry on 16th May, 1933, in support of the duty being retained on No.000 & 00 Meccano sets. The representatives of the 3 companies at the enquiry were Theo. Levy Pty. Ltd.

OSN 31/911

BIG-JOY: S1; CONSTRUCTO [3]: S1; EZY-BILT: S3

More on MODEL-IT The range of sets in this post-WW2 Australian, c50 part system was Prep-Set, Junior, Senior, Master, & Master de Luxe. Also a Giant Super Wheel Set with just 4 of the Super Road Wheels in it, see 19/545. The layout



of the parts in all these sets is shown in MCS and now Jack has sent photos of the Senior & Master de Luxe. Both are very similar to the MCS illustrations. Left, the label from the centre of the yellow Senior set lid, it scales at 10*7". The words under the name are ENGINEERING SET | THE MARVEL BUILDER FOR BOYS. Bottom right on the lid is another smaller label with MODEL-IT | SENIOR on it. Apart from some Brackets replacing the Screwdriver, the parts layout is symmetrical left to right, and below the righthand side of the box. The Master de Luxe has 2 layers of parts and one of them is shown bottom right. Points of interest are the 5 & 25h Braced Girders; the green 5*11h Flanged Plates (called Box Girders) with their red, 3*9h cutout Plates beside them; and 2 parts which are not in the MCS Parts List. They are the U-formed 5*5h Flexible Plate above the DAS bottom right, and on the opposite side of the box, what looks like a 3*5h Flanged Plate made from a 5*5h Flexible Plate. The only different parts in the 2nd layer are red



7h Trunnions, bright 1*3*1h DAS, and the parts shown left. They are a Double & a Single Arm Crank (with no slotted holes), a Pinion & a Gear with (like the Bush Wheel) 4 face holes, a Worm, & 2 Fork Pieces. Of these only the Fork Pieces are in the MCS List (#42 Big End). Other parts in the 2nd layer are 2 more Road Wheels and 2 of #32, the Pulley used as their centre. In passing there are two points of interest in the MCS List: the '2h' Pulley is 1 1/8" Ø, and #22 is Rubber Tubing, to be cut to

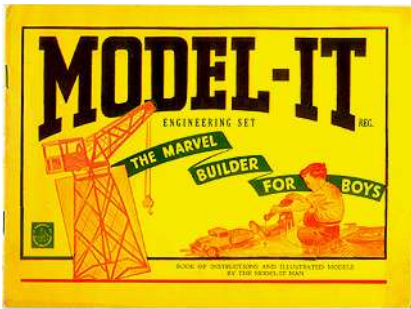


OSN 31/911

for CONSTRUCTO (see 26/753); Mr Cooper of Irving & Cooper, manufacturer's agent for EZY-BILT (see 22/636); and probably Addie M. Keating of A.M.K Mfg. Co., for BIG-JOY (see 24/697). In his evidence Mr Cooper said that 2 more EZY-BILT sets selling at 5/- & 8/6 were in the process of being launched, and this is in line with the Nos.1-3 sets available in 1936 mentioned in OSN 22, with the No.1 at 2/6. This item gives the first sure dates for BIG-JOY & CONSTRUCTO, and an earlier date for EZY-BILT.

make axle stops.

There was no manual with either of the above sets but one to hand could well have been with either. The appropriate pages in it correspond to those in MCS. Right, its cover, and the wording at bottom right are BOOK



OF INSTRUCTIONS AND ILLUSTRATED MODELS BY THE MODEL-IT MAN. The Lawdex logo in the bottom left corner is shown left. The manual contains no indication of date but an example seen on Ebay, with the same cover and number of pages, was said to be from 1957.

SUMMARY OF MANUAL •Name: MODEL-IT •Details of maker: MANUFACTURED BY MODEL-IT MANUFACTURING CO., SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA – A CARVEL PRODUCT on the bottom of many pages, but Lawdex Manufacturing Company INCORPORATING MODEL-IT MANUFACTURING CO., SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA on C4. •No dates/Ref Nos. •Page size: 244*180mm. •No. of pages: 16+covers, unnumbered. •Language: English. •Printing: photos of models. •Page Nos. of Illustrated Parts List & highest PN: C3,42. •No Set Contents. •Sets covered: smallest (unnamed), Junior, Senior, Master, Master de Luxe. •No. of models for each set: 24,22 (inc those on p9 – not designated),8,2,4. •Name, Model No. (only for the smallest set models, which are lettered from A on each page), Page No. of first & last model of each set: smallest: FARM CART,A,1; PICNIC TABLE AND SEATS,F,4. Junior: HAMMER HEAD CRANE,5; OVERHEAD TRAMWAY TROLLEY,9. Senior: LOW WING MONOPLANE,10; FLAT TOP TABLE TRUCK,13. Master: ELECTRIC DRILL,14; MINE SHAFT ELEVATOR,14. Master de Luxe: AMERICAN EXTENSION FIRE LADDER TRUCK,15; OIL DRILL DERRICK,16. •Other notes: intro on C2; printer on C4: Elgood & Son Pty. Ltd. – Sydney.

There is one photo, usually quite clear, of each model,



MODEL-IT: S1