

A MISCELLANY of SYSTEMS In OSN 15 I included some notes on various German systems, mostly based on information from Jeannot Buteux/*CONSTRUCTORAMA*, and now more from the same sources on various non-German systems. As before I'll also use material from *EISENZEIT* and other sources where appropriate.

ASSEMBLO This, as explained in 15/420, is the French original of the DINKY BUILDER type systems. A 1955 Price List shows 7 basic sets, 0-5 and LUXE, with the latter costing over twice as much as the No.5. There are also Sets A and B containing Wheels, and conversion sets 0 bis to 5 bis. The 5 bis cost only about a third of the difference in price between the No.5 and the LUXE, so most of the extra price of the LUXE probably went into better packaging.

Spare parts are also listed as follows: • Plates 1-27, but not the Nos. 28-40 that are shown in MCS. No.28 is a large rectangle and the others are the ones with tabs on both sides (see 15/420). • All the Rods shown in MCS including the 4 Angled Rods, H-L. • Of the Wheels in MCS the Pulley is listed, and one Flanged Wheel but its size isn't indicated, also the Wheel with Tyre, No.204, and the Axle Stops.

Fewer sets are shown in the 1955 List on p7 of MCS, but that was the range stocked by a particular shop.

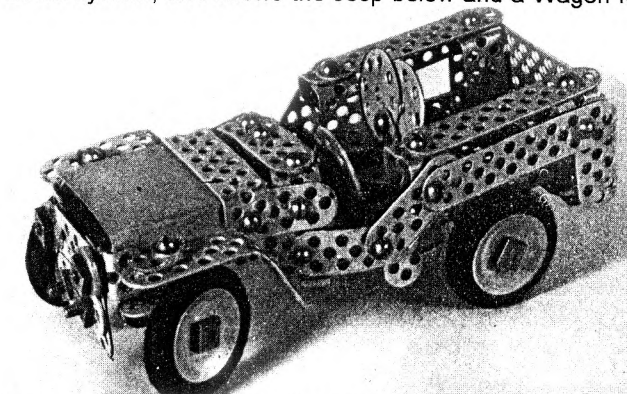
Since OSN 15 David Hobson has sent details of another, later ASSEMBLO patent. Its Convention Date is March, 1932 and it's in the name of P.L.Montchanin of 5 Rue Baudin, Rueil, Seine-et-Oise; the French and UK numbers are 752439 and 408801. The claim was that the tabs would be formed to allow the Rod to be a sliding fit in them, except that one tab on each edge would be partly divided, as below, and the shorter part closed up to grip the Rod.

This made it much easier to insert the Rods. I haven't any ASSEMBLO parts to hand but I suppose they incorporate this feature. STANLO do, but not all DINKY BUILDER parts. Those in a 1953 set do, but I'm told that earlier postwar ones don't - I haven't checked any prewar ones.

David also pointed out that the idea of plates edged with interlocking socket tabs that could be pinned together wasn't new, but was included in 2 earlier patents. No.140329 of 1919 (Edwards & Barker) used elements such as that below, for toy structures and making buckets and moulds for sand; No.166789 (Pierce, 1920) was also for sand moulds, and various shapes were to be made from formed or folded cardboard with just the outside edges pinned together, though how the sockets were to be made isn't clear.



BOY A leaflet introduces Rubber Tyres in a Box H for this Dutch system, and shows the Jeep below and a Wagon for

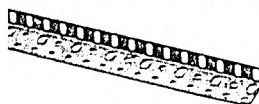


0-gauge track. Except for the Wheels on the Jeep, and the larger than usual square Nuts, the parts look like TRIX, though there is no positive indication of size. The boxes needed for the Jeep are 3 of No.1, 2 of No.1A, and 2 of H. There's no indication of date but at a guess the Leaflet might be from the early 1950s.

CONSTRUC The name of this French system was regis-

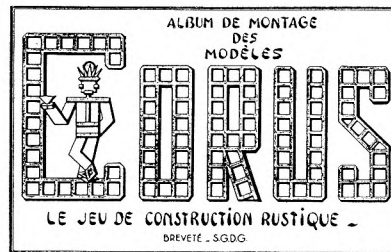
tered in 1948. The illustrations on a manual cover shows the Crane opposite and a boy working on the chassis of a 6-wheel Lorry. The structural parts - Strips and perhaps Angles and other sections - don't appear to have holes in them, and seem to be held together by push-on Clips.

CONSTRUCTOR There is much to be said about the different phases of this French system and I hope to return to it in a future Issue when I have more details. One part that's shown in MCS but I hadn't noticed until I saw it in an illustration from Jeannot, is the



1*2h section A/G (below), with all the holes in the shorter flange and every other hole of the inner row of the other one, slotted. MCS lists both these Girders and a flat Plate version, each 7,11 & 31 holes long. So with the hole pitch of 11mm, the length of the longest would be nearly 13½".

CORUS Another French system, this one patented in 1924. All that's available is the cover of the manual shown opposite. If the figure, or the letters of the name, are made from actual parts, how are they joined? And what are they made of? The word rustique may mean robust in this context.

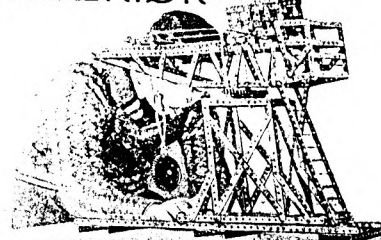


D.V.s INGENIØR This Danish system was mentioned in 13/360 and again all I have on it is the manual cover. Under the name (opposite) is Nr.7200, and apart from that there's a smart looking boy in a collar and tie, holding 2 Strips that are joined together by a N&B, which also holds what may be an Angle Bracket.



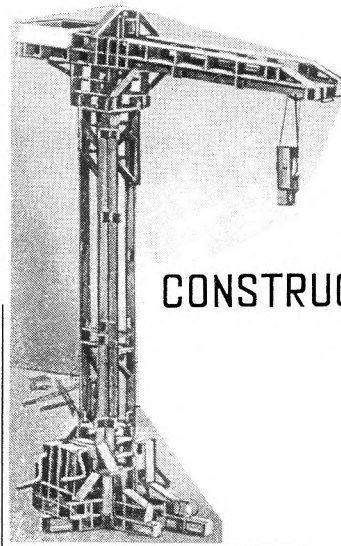
DEN DANSKE INGENIØR Another Danish system which was mentioned in 10/266 as being prewar. A copy of the box lid from a No.1 set shows the medium sized Crane opposite, made from Strips, A/Gs, and a few Perforated Plates, including some that look 5*11h size, flanged on the long sides. The load on the Hook appears to be a Pulley of perhaps 6h diameter fitted with a MÄRKLIN-style Gear Ring.

DEN DANSKE INGENIØR

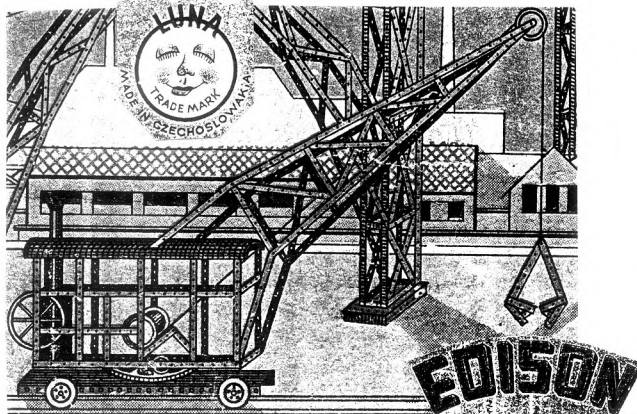


EDISON A box lid of this Czech system shows a boy looking at the Grab on the next page, with a large High-Level Railway Bridge in the background, and a girl with a Swing containing a doll. In one corner is a shop window with sets and other models in it, and children and a young woman looking in. Her dress looks to me to date from the late 1920s or thereabouts.

As far as can be seen most of the parts in the models, Strips, A/Gs, and Flanged Plates, look like the ones shown in MCS, but a few don't. For instance the 8-spoke Wheel in



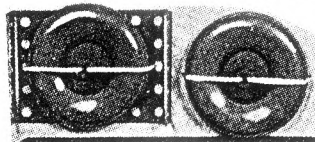
CONSTRUC



the Grab, and the large Gear Wheel under its chassis. Quite a few of the parts in MCS look similar to MÄRKLIN, and included in the Set Contents, though not illustrated, are a 95mm Pulley(?) Wheel and a matching Gear Ring, but the Gear in the Grab looks bigger than that. The hole spacing isn't given in MCS but from the dimensions of the parts in the Set Contents it must be $\frac{1}{2}$ " or very near it.

The 'moon' trade mark shown in MCS, with LUNA at the top, appears on the lid, and above the shop window is EDISON and UNIKUM.

EFEL A Leaflet shows the largest set, the No.7, made in the 1960s Martinaud phase. It weighs 3.28kg and the 503 parts are strung on 2 cards, in a box which measures 51*37*5.5cm. Several parts can be seen that weren't in the



No.5 illustrated in 5/90, notably 45h Strips and A/Gs, and what look like pressed balloon type Road Wheels (opposite), which scale at about 55mm Ø. There's also a long length, perhaps

90cm, of (plastic?) strip or something similar, which is coiled up with the ends held together by a N&B.

The other thing is that at the top of the Leaflet is 'Société Lyonnaise d'Etude, Fabrication, Exploitation, Lancements'. So the initial letters of the last 4 words explain EFEL. Was this organisation the manufacturer at the time? There's no mention of Martinaud who could I suppose have been the maker at a different period, or a wholesaler for EFEL, who also, from the order form shown in MCS, made toys as well.

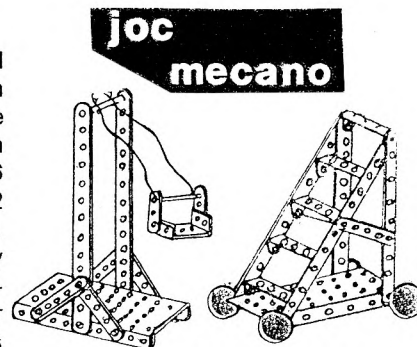
ERECTOR A manual cover in French from 1920 (Code 292-5M-8-20) is similar to the U.S. cover of the time with a Bridge and 3 'undersize' boys, one of them sitting on the centre of the span. The wording is also similar but the references to Parts 2 & 3 have not been included, nor any prices. The New Haven and London (125 High Holborn) addresses are given. Another change is that models are said to be included for Sets 1-7, against 1-6 for the 1919 U.S. and UK editions I've seen. Also although most of the changes have been neatly made, the Sets covered and the French versions of the slogans look as if they have been typed in as an afterthought, and they are not quite in line with the other text.

INGÉNIO The illustration on the manual cover of this 1920s French system is shown on the front of this Issue. Apart from that I have a copy of the Set No.10 model of a House, which is very similar to the one on the cover, and I'll include it in the MCS pages. As can be seen the main parts appear to be Strips, some short Flat Girders, possibly some A/Gs, and the Plate Girder with the 3 large holes in it - in the No.10 model it is shown with rows of 3 holes across its width, at each end and between the large holes. There are also presumably Panels which form the walls and roof of the House, unless they were to be devised by the model builder.

There was another French INGÉNIO system in the late 1940s but I don't have any details of it.

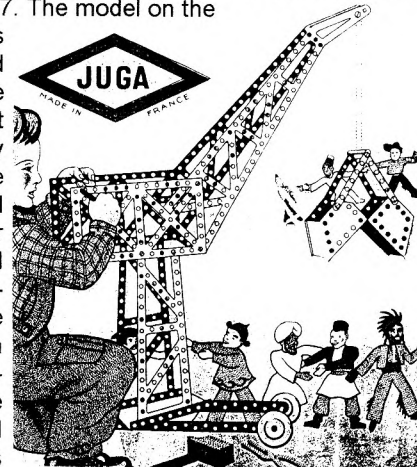
JOC MECANO

This was a small Rumanian system from around the 1970s. A page from a manual shows 16 simple models, and 2 are shown opposite. All are rather roughly drawn and this perhaps accounts for the lengths of Strips shown, with 3,5,6,8,9,11 & 13 holes, and Flanged Plates with, as examples, 3*7, 4*12 & 5*9 holes. Also shown are 1*3*1 & 1*5*1 DAS, Angle Brackets, and what looks like a small Flanged Plate used as the seat of the Swing.



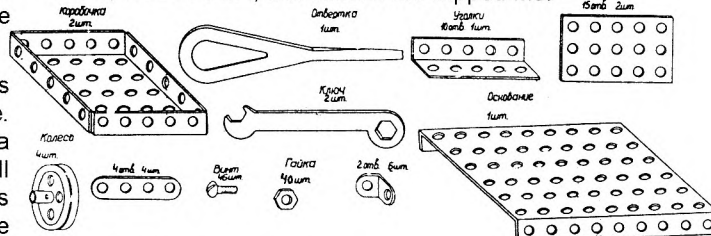
JUGA The name of this rather unusual French system was registered in 1947. The model on the

manual cover is shown opposite and the sides seem to be made from 3 different Braced Frames. They are spaced at the bottom by a Flanged Plate, but it isn't clear how they are held apart higher up. Notice the Strips in the undercarriage with their 2 rows of staggered holes. On the ground by the model are a pair of pliers and a large mallet. In the original, other models can just be seen as silhouettes in the background and include a Multi-Jib Crane, a Digger, and an Industrial Elevator.



KONSTRUKTOR-III The sheet I have on this Russian system shows the parts in just one set, and all of them except the Spanner are as shown for KONSTUKTOR [3] in MCS. But there are only 22 different parts instead of 48, and generally less of those that there are, compared with the 2 sets shown for KON [3]. There may well be some connection between the two systems although the names of a few of the parts are different and KON-III parts don't have PN's. It's just a coincidence that one is labelled [3] and the other ends in '-III' - in fact the latter may be a badly printed character which would transliterate as 'sh'.

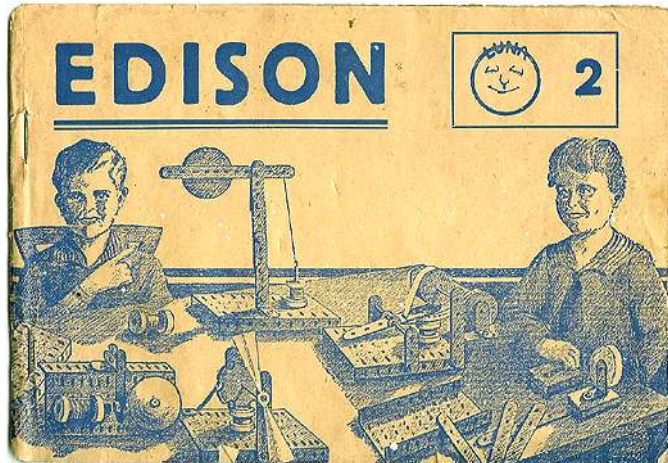
Typical parts are shown below. Others are Strips with 3,5,7,8,10 & 14h; a 1*5*1 DAS; an Axle; a Threaded Rod; a Collar; and Hank of Cord. All holes are round. In all the Set contains 33 Strips, 4 Pulleys, 5 Plates, 6 Angle Brackets, and about 40 N&B. KON [3] parts are said to be aluminium in colour, or zinc plated, with 4.3mm holes spaced at 10mm; N&B are M4, but bosses are tapped M3.



KONSTRUKTOR-MEKHANI Another Russian system from around 1980. I say system though the model I have (on the next page) uses many specialised parts and I'm not clear whether other models can be built. The ringed numbers refer to detailed sketches which give a good idea of the construction. There are 2 Flanged Wheels at the end of each of the 4 arms coming out of the central base, and the whole Crane runs on rails. A Worm drive controls the

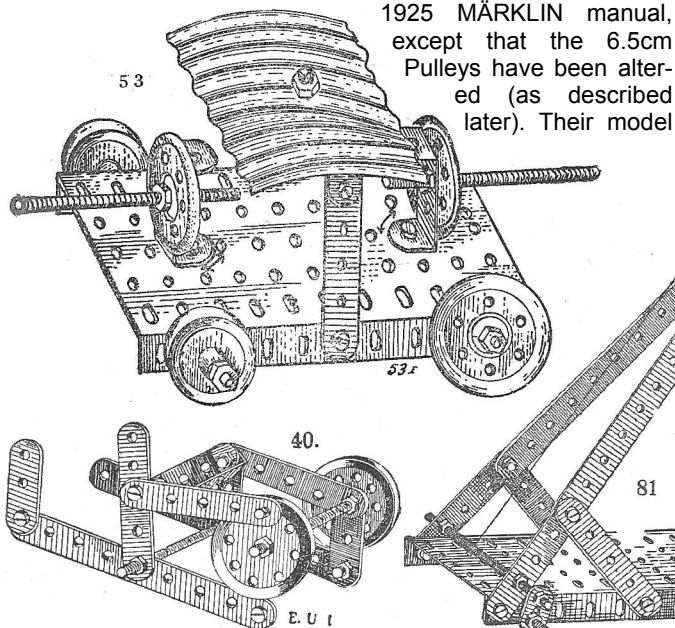
EDISON A few items of interest have come along since the short note in 16/444 about this little known Czech system with a MÄRKLIN look to it. They are a manual, the booklet with it, and 2 sets seen on Ebay. The latter seem rather unrelated to the literature items, and to each other. None contain anything to indicate when EDISON was made or who made it.

First a **No.2 Set Manual**. The cover, below, is similar to the No.3 in MCS, with the LUNA trademark in the top right corner. All the models on it look 'electrical' but all inside are from the standard 'mechanical' outfits, with no reference to Electrical Sets at all. The other MCS pages (Illustrated Parts & Set Contents) are part of the 8 page booklet with the Manual, & though mainly about the standard sets, one page is devoted to ELEKTRO Outfits. The Manual & Booklet are both in Czech.



The Manual has 20 pages, 214*148mm, plus covers. C2 & C3 are blank. There is no introduction. The models are of a simple nature, but with a good selection of them. Each has a line drawing & parts list; the model names are given in the Booklet. The 40 Set 1 models go from 1. abeceda (Alphabet - letter A) on p1, to 40. řezačka na řepa (Beet Cutter) on p7. Set 2 has 51 models from 50. protiletadlové (AA Gun) on p9 to 101a. norimber, nůžky (Lazy Tongs) on p20. (Notes. The Manual contains various errors over the model sequence and numbering. There is no model 56. The reason for the suffix 'a' isn't clear. A No.102a, Freight Vehicle, is listed in the Booklet but isn't in the Manual.) The English names are my best attempts, the Beet Cutter is shown bottom left together with 3 of the better models, but partly chosen because they show the parts clearly. The models don't seem to be copies from other systems, certainly not MERKUR, VASEK, or MÄRKLIN, though I haven't seen the No.0 or No.00 models for the latter. It is noted however that 9 'sample' models, presumably for larger EDISON sets, are shown on pp8 & C4, each with a Model No., and their illustrations are identical to those in a

1925 MÄRKLIN manual, except that the 6.5cm Pulleys have been altered (as described later). Their model



numbers are the same too but don't correspond with any of those in the Booklet for models from the larger sets. One of the models is shown right. All the sample models were still in a 1939 MÄRKLIN manual but with different model numbers.

The Booklet

has the same page size as the Manual. It has the Illustrated Parts on pp1-3; the model names for Sets I-VII on pp4-5 (the Set Nos. are usually in Roman numerals); the Set Contents on pp6-7; and the promotion for the ELEKTRO sets I-VI on p8.

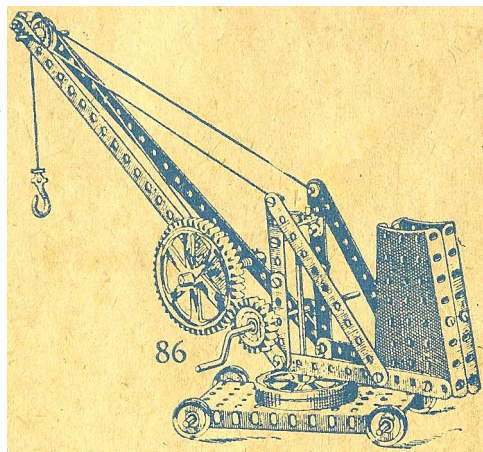
The Parts There are 66 in total and all but 7 look like MÄRKLIN, and have the same pre-WW2 PNs. Notes on the new parts follow. • **A Pulley Disc #28**, and **2 Screwed Rods**, 2½ & 7cm long, #29-2½ & #29-7. These provide wheels, pulleys, & axles for the Set 1 & 2 models. • **A corrugated metal Roof #70**, 6½*6cm. It can be seen in the models below, and in others it is attached through holes in the corners at one end. • The illustration in the Booklet for the **9½ & 6½cm Pulleys**, #66 & 67, looks like the MECCANO 1½" part, but the 6½cm in the 'sample' models, and in a set described later, are rather like MERKUR with 6 spokes. They are described as 'new pattern' in the Booklet. • **A Washer**, #87a, probably fibre, is included as well as the normal metal #87.

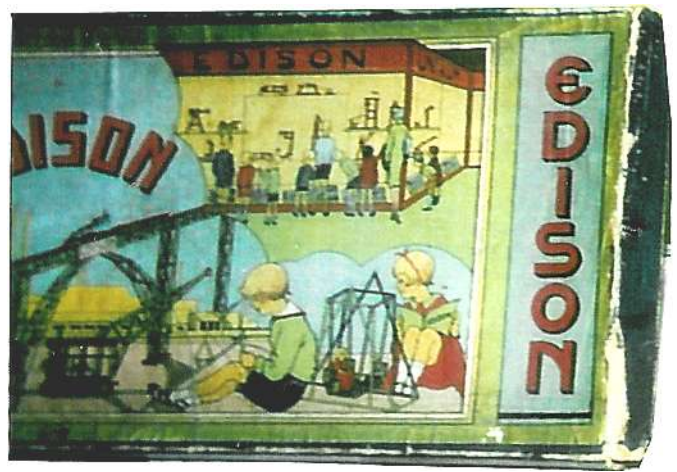
The Set Contents don't match those of MÄRKLIN outfits at all well but in very general terms the No.7 is about the size of a 1920s MÄRKLIN No.3. The major parts in it include 80 Strips, 3-25h; 14 DAS; 8 Curved Strips; 20 A/Gs, 7-25h; 12 Flanged Plates; 4 Windmill Sails; 4 Roof Plates; 44 Brackets; 5 Gears, 2 Pawls; 6 Gear Rings; 2,8,6,8,4 of 12,25,38,65, 95mm Pulleys; 4 Pulley Discs; 10 Collars; 12 Spring Clips; 110 Nuts for 80x 9mm & 15x 20mm Bolts. Equal numbers of the two types of Washer are included in all the sets, with a relatively generous 40 of each in the No.7. Among the parts illustrated but not in the sets are a Coupling, a 50t Gear, a Worm Housing, & a Slide Piece. One part, the 1½" Pulley, is in the larger sets but isn't listed in the Illustrated Parts (though as noted above its illustration in used for #66 & 67.

Actual Sets The Ebay photos of one of the two sets seen are shown at the top of the next column. The lid is quite different to the one described in OSN 16, and all that can really be seen on it are a Crane or Digger bottom left and a Big Wheel on the right. The manual cover too is quite different to the one above, and the words on it are in German. So, an export set perhaps, or one intended for German speaking Czechs (there were some 3 million German speakers in prewar Czechoslovakia but nearly all moved to Germany after the war).

If there is a logo on the cover it must be in the top left corner which can't be seen in any of the photos.

Some of the smaller parts in the box, the Brackets for instance, look to be black, but all the Strips were probably green originally. The 6½cm 6-spoke Pulley can be seen clearly. The red and green parts, presum-





its top left corner.

A few Actual? Parts These may or may not be EDISON. They were the only 'foreigners' in a MERKUR set, one with brown Strips, so quite old, but post-WW2 as far as I know. In total they consisted of a red 5*11h Flanged Plate; several green 5 & 9h Strips; 2 chemically blackened 1*3*1h DAS; a nickel 1" Pulley; a few N&B, and the light green Pulley Disc right. This last part, with its belled out centre, was what suggested EDISON to me because it matches the illustrations of the part rather well. The Plate, Strips, & DAS are close to MÄRKLIN but differ in small details including the overall dimensions - a few examples and some leading dimensions follow.



The **holes** are 4.3mm Ø at 12.7mm pitch. MÄRKLIN were 4.2mm prewar & 4.3mm postwar. The **thread** is 3.6mm Ø x 32 tpi (or .8mm pitch). It could be undersize 5/32" BSW and MECCANO N&B fit the EDISON parts quite well; but a MECCANO Bolt won't quite screw fully home into the boss, whereas the EDISON Bolts are loose in it. The **boss** is nicked steel, 10mm Ø, 4.3mm bore, & double-tapped. MÄRKLIN bosses have been 10mm Ø at times but their bore is usually between 4.0 & 4.1mm. The centre of the ring of peening is tapered, against the MÄRKLIN recess. The slots in the top & flanges of the **Flanged Plate** are 9mm long (7½ for MÄRKLIN). The **DAS** has no slotted holes. The **Pulley** is 25mm Ø, with a 5mm wide vee. The **Pulley Disc** is 38mm Ø. The **N&B** are brass: the **Bolt** has a 5.1mm Ø CH and is 7mm u/h; the **Nut** is hexagonal, pressed, 8.1mm A/F, and 2½mm thick. The red paint is close to the prewar MÄRKLIN shade, somewhere between the MECCANO reds of the late 1920s and 1950s. The green is darker than prewar MÄRKLIN, very near the late 1920s MECCANO colour.

The ELEKTRO Sets All I can glean from the Booklet is that there were 6 sets, I to VI, and their number of parts, number of models, & box size were: Set 1: 45,40,20*29*2; 2: 105,100,25* 32*2; 3: 142,150,25*32*3; 4: 180,190,27*38*3; 5: 206,230,27* 38*4; 6: 410,290,27*38*6cm.

ably genuine, look very like pre-war MÄRKLIN in colour, and their Brackets were also black of course. The major parts that can be seen in the Set don't match the contents of any of the sets in the No.2 Booklet, even if it is assumed that some of the Flanged Plates are missing. The nearest are Nos.5 & 6 but the former has only 4x 1" & 2x 6½cm Pulleys, while the No.6 has 2x 9½cm in addition to 4x 6½cm Pulleys, and there doesn't seem any obvious place for them in the box.

The second set has a lid like the one in OSN 16, and a photo of most of it is shown in the next column (its left end was unfortunately cut off). Nothing can be seen of the parts but the manual cover is like the one in the Ebay outfit above except that the coloured areas are blue instead of red and the wording is in Czech. Again it can't be seen if there is a logo in

EDISON: S2

OSN 34/1034

Snippet: MASTER MECHANIC

All that was said of this item was that it has 20 pages. The words under 'INSTRUCTIONS' are 'An Institution of Education / How Workers may Win / MASTER MECHANIC, Fairport, N.Y.' At the top of the model page is: 'JUVENILE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING'; & below the model: 'This is Gilbert's last effort aeroplanes' - the rest is illegible. But the parts in the Aeroplane don't look like ERECTOR; AMERICAN MODEL BUILDER possibly, but the model isn't in any of my AMB manuals. The purpose of this 'manual' isn't clear but perhaps it is



akin to the *Tin Can Toys* book in 33/973 or *Bauspiele* on p1012.

MASTER MECHANIC: S1

OSN 34/1034