

better view of the Pulley. The box is said to be 22½*15cm and by scaling the hole pitch is perhaps a little greater than ½”.

The 11h Strips are below the Pulleys in the top compartment. It is clear in other views that, as on the lid, the Plate is flanged on its long edges. 2 Axles with a scaled length of 5.2h could be seen in the other box. The Flanged Plate is obviously green and many of the other parts have a greenish look too, even the 11h Strips in the other box. It may not be clear in the photo that the Nuts are hexagonal & the Bolts roundheaded. The brass Collar to the right of the N&B looks as if it should be keeping more august company.

The outfits' date was given as possibly the 1960s and I'd have thought it might be earlier than that.

MILO: S1 [33/973]

7. **Snippet – An INVENTOR Set** The name INVENTOR was mentioned in 11/291 but without any details. It's not sure if that INVENTOR is actually the one below (the name can just be



seen on the top of the manual). I came across it on a Czech web site (www.e-hracky.cz/zpravy/merkur.htm) in a piece, all in Czech, about the history of MERKUR. The name Jaroslav Vancl and the year 1920 are mentioned, and this ties in with the history of MERKUR given on the Merkur web page (www.merkurtoys.cz). Vancl was the man who in 1920 founded the company which ultimately made MERKUR, but the first set was INVENTOR and the parts were, to quote the English version of the History, 'connected with metal hooks similar to nowadays used (for) scaffolding 'Haki' (the name of a scaffolding firm)'. One might think that the structural parts in such a system would be rods or tubes rather than the slotted parts in the present Set. Perhaps the Czech version of the history, or the e-hracky page would be more helpful, if any reader can understand Czech. To complete the story a change to 3.5mm N&B was made in 1925 and presumably that was when the MERKUR name and parts were introduced, but it's not quite clear that the two changes coincided.

Going back to the Set, the main parts seem to be what look like Angle (or perhaps Channel) Girders, Strips, & DAS. Otherwise just the Spoked Wheels, and inset bottom right is a close-up of them in which the spokes can just about be seen.

INVENTOR: S1 [33/973]

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8. **SNIPPET: A COMBINED Solar Set** Judging from the general appearance of the lid below, the boy on it top left (see



30/887), and the rather peculiar slogans on it, particularly the one after SOLAR POWERED (BAND YOUR EYES ON THE FUNNY TOYS!), another offering from Polylong. I've only seen it once, on the German Ebay in August. It has 172 parts to presumably make either of the models on the lid. The cylindrical Motor can just be seen under the nearest seat of the Roundabout, with a red Pinion on it driving the large red Gear – the latter probably spoked like those in the Windmill. Quite a nice little set really.

POLYLONG: S4 [33/973]

9. **SNIPPET: THE THATCHER TIN CAN TOY** MAKES TOYS FROM TIN CANS. (The ultimate DIY outfit?) This 1919 Gilbert



set was probably inspired by a book, Making Tin Can Toys, written by Edward & Isobel Thatcher, and published in 1919 by J.B.Lippincott Co. of Philadelphia & London. It is said to have been intended to provide occupational therapy for injured military personnel. The Ebay item was an empty, hinged, wooden box, plain on the outside but with the label above inside the lid. No clues as to its contents but some quite ambitious looking models on the label.

GILBERT THATCHER TIN CAN TOY: S1 [33/973]

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5. **THALE** Graham Aldous is continuing to research the history of this East German system and I hope to be able to include his findings later on. One thing has emerged though, the summary chart in 38/1138 is incorrect for the early years because the parts & manual thought to be from 1957 are almost certainly earlier than 1955, and the change from the Motorcycle to the Jib Crane manual occurred in 1955-56.

Graham has also found that the pitch of the holes in some early THALE parts is 12.75mm, instead of the 12.5mm later. This led me to check the pitch of the parts described in 38/1138 and (to my shame, that I hadn't done so before) I found it to be 1/2" or very nearly (12.7±.02mm in the various different types of part).

THALE STAHLBAU TECHNIK: S4 [40/1197]

6. **FAC** Jacques Pitrat wrote that the FAC web site, www.facsystem.se, contains much of interest. As well as details of the current products there are photos of a number of models, old sets, and also pdf files of old manuals including 4 in English. The site has English, French & German language versions as well as Swedish.

FAC: S1 [40/1197]

7. **MERKUR in 2008**, from the English version of the Merkur web site. Little has changed since 2007 (see 37/1103) except that the American M-KUR Apache set has appeared as the MERKUR Helikopter Set (#3314) with 486 parts, and the same model on the lid.

Both the Classic C01 and C02 sets are listed with the same reference number, 3345, and the difference in weight between the two seems to be because the C02 is in a wooden box.

One correction to 33/991, the Set 030 has 310 parts.

MERKUR [1] S7 [40/1197]

8. **Snippet. FERROX** A No.2 set similar to the 'in between' one noted in 38/1134 was offered on Ebay. It was not so complete, the main parts missing being the Flanged Plate and the 1*5*1 DAS. Also the the tools were a wooden-handled Screwdriver, & a Spanner with one open end and a ring at the other – similar to the one in the Phase 3 set in Fig.3b of 36/1090.

The most notable difference though was that certain parts were painted a medium blue. These comprised the Large Flanged Disc, the longest DAS (1*9*1h in this set, a size not mentioned before, but the length of the long DAS in the OSN 38 No.2 couldn't be seen), and the 5 & 11h Strips (the latter the longest in, or remaining in, the set). The only other painted parts were the green 6*10h Perforated Plate and the red 1*3h SAS, the same shade as in the OSN 38 No.2.

The present set's box was said measure 35*21*2.8cm and the maker was Dröslar as before.

FERROX S4 [40/1197]

9. **Snippet. THE THATCHER TIN CAN TOY** The picture inside the lid of the wooden box for this 'DIY' set was shown in 33/973. An Ebay set in the same box, 17*10*3 1/4", contained some tools and a booklet ©1920 entitled Gilbert Tin Can Toy Making. The set is pictured in it and the contents that can be seen include a mallet, scribe, pliers, snips, dividers, ruler, bending jig, forming block, soldering iron, & some smaller items.

THE THATCHER TIN CAN TOY: S2 [40/1197]

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10. **STAHL-BAUKASTEN** Since the Snippet on this early post-WW2 German system in 38/1160, Jürgen Kahlfeldt has kindly sent more details, via Thomas Morzinck.

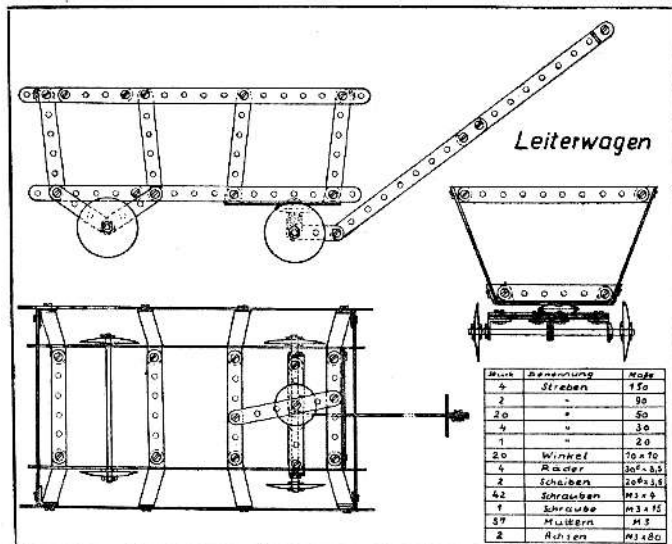
The parts are made of .7mm thick aluminium, and the holes are 3.3mm Ø at 10.0mm pitch. Below the set contents given

Inhalt des Kartons:

Stück	Bezeichnung	Beulänge	Stück	Bezeichnung	Abmessungen	Stück	Bezeichnung	Abmessungen
4	Blechstreifen	10mm	26	Winkel	10 x 10mm	1	Grundplatte	100 x 60 x 10
11	"	20	2	Winkelstücke	100 x 10 x 10	4	Schreiben	20 x 3,5 ^o
6	"	30	2	Schrauben	M3 x 15	4	"	30 x 3,5 ^o
2	"	40	51	"	M3 x 4	1	Schraubenzieher	
25	"	50	60	Muttern	M3	1	Schrauben -	
16	"	90	2	Gewindestifte	M3 x 80		schlüssel	
4	"	100	2	"	M3 x 30	1	Vorlageheft	
4	"	150	2	"	M3 x 20			

on the front of the manual. In order, the parts are 4,11,6,2,25,16,4,4 of 10,20,30,40,50,90,100,150mm Strips (those lengths are overall so perhaps the 10mm is a sort of washer); 26 10*10mm A/Bs; 2x 100mm A/Gs, 10*10mm in section; 2,51 M3 Bolts, 15,4mm long; 60 M3 Nuts; 2 each M3 Screwed Rods, 80,30,20mm long; 1 Flanged Plate 100*60mm; 4 each Discs, 20,30mm Ø, and (probably) dished by 3.5mm; 1 each Screwdriver, Spanner, Manual.

The manual has 8 pages including covers – the front as in OSN 38. 6 models are shown on pp2-7, one to a page, with a 2- or 3-view engineering drawing for each, plus a list of parts. The first model is the Leiterwagon below (slightly rearranged),



and the last is Treppe (a Stairway with Landing). The other models are the Slewing Crane, Radio Tower, & Electric Pylon on the lid, and a Girder Bridge. The back cover has the side elevation of 5 more models including a Lorry, another Crane, and a Guyed Pylon.

STAHL-BAUKASTEN [2] S2 [40/1197]

11. **PHILIPS** In 39/1187 the change from colourless to red Wheels was associated with the introduction of the new sets ME 1201 & 1250, which replaced the ME 1200 outfit. But the change seems not to have been so clear cut because Paul Goodman has found red Wheels in one of his three ME 1200 sets.

PHILIPS: S9 [40/1197]

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