

KIKO and KITOU

by Jacques Pitrat

MODEL LEAFLETS

I have only two documents about these French systems: one leaflet headed 'KIKO N° 2' & another without a name. The first leaflet lists three KIKO sets and the models for them (see Fig.5): No.1 which builds model 2, a Car; No.2 which builds all the models on the leaflet; & No.3 which builds larger models such as a Crane, Plane, Merry-go-round, Travelling Crane, etc, none of which are shown.

Among the models in the second leaflet, there is a Crane, 2 Planes, & a Merry-go-round, and as many of the parts in the models are similar to those of the first leaflet, it is likely that it represents the models for Set 3, although there is no Travelling Crane. In MCS, the first leaflet is associated with KIKO and the second with KITOU.

THE SETS A box which has no markings on the lid contains the KIKO leaflet and is believed to be a KIKO set,. From its contents (Fig.2) it is probably Set 2 since one can build all the models in the KIKO leaflet, but not most



FIG.1

terms of content) KITOU set is larger than the others, 302*200*31mm, and the box is mottled pink instead of black. As some parts were still fixed to the insert, I made a few educated guesses in adding the other parts, but I am not completely sure that the contents and the display are correct.

THE PARTS They are almost compatible with MECCANO: the holes are 4.4mm diameter, and the distance between them is 12.6mm. The 'strip' parts

are shown in Fig.4. The KIKO parts are made in blackened steel. None are slotted, which is curious since all are shown slotted in the models in both leaflets. The steel KITOU parts are painted aluminium. Most of them are slotted, but some of the 2, 5, & 11h Strips, and the 1*5*1h DAS, and all the 1*9*1h DAS have only round holes. So, there were three periods. First KIKO with only round holes, and blackened steel Strips. Later, in the KITOU sets, the strips are painted, but at first have only round holes. Finally they have round & slotted holes, the length of the slots corresponding to 2 or 3 holes.

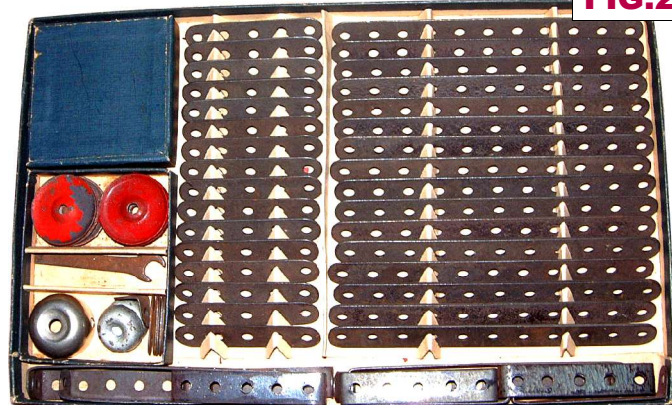


FIG.2

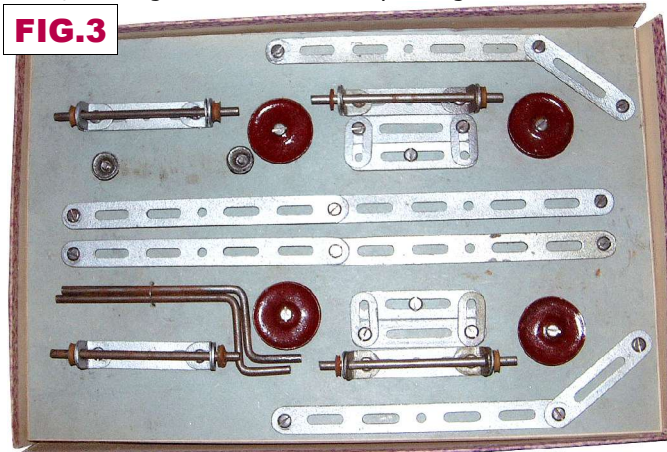


FIG.3

of those in the second leaflet.

I have also a lot of parts and boxes which include 3 KITOU boxes, & some parts from a fourth set. What is surprising is that they too contain the KIKO leaflet, & also two copies of the second leaflet. The parts, apart from, as explained later, the strip parts being pierced differently, are very largely similar to KIKO and can build the same models. So it seems probable that both KIKO & KITOU came from the same maker. Moreover the size (277*174*16mm) and inserts of the two larger, identical KITOU sets are the same as the KIKO set. Their small parts boxes too are identical, with plain lids covered by the same type of paper.

The KITOU sets have a boy building a Crane on their lid labels (Fig.1), with red printing instead of navy for the smaller set. The translation of the text on the lids is: 'KITOU builds all sportsmen, an angler, hunter, boxer, skater, etc | KITOU builds a car, plane, crane, windmill, bridge, boat, scale, etc.' Some of these models such as the Hunter and the Boxer are on the KIKO leaflet, and this adds to the probability that both systems are from the same maker.

There is no indication of the set number of any of the KITOU outfits but I assume that the larger ones are No.2 sets since they can build the models for the KIKO No.2 and not those of the second leaflet, which as already mentioned, probably corresponds to Set 3. The third of the KITOU boxes (Fig.3) contains few parts but can build the Car, so I believe that it is Set 1. Curiously enough, the box of this small (in

Notes on the parts, other than the strips parts in Fig.4, follow. • The **Angle Bracket** is a bent 2h Strip, so there is one form with two round holes and one slotted. • There are **7h Slotted Strips** in the KITOU lot, and as there is no room for them in the boxes, I assume that they belong to a KITOU No.3 set. They are used in several models of the second leaflet. • One kind of **5h long DAS** is the 7h Strip bent twice, but there is also a variety with all round holes, so no doubt



FIG.4

there was also a 7h Strip with round holes. • The **9h long DAS** (only in the loose parts) is made from the 11h Strip with round holes, and I have no example of the slotted type.

• Red **Pulley Disc**, diameter 31.5mm. In the KIKO set

pairs of discs are glued together to form Pulleys. • Threaded **Headlamps** for the Car (below the top left Axle in Fig.3). • 90mm **Axle**, diameter 4.0mm. 85 mm **Crank Handle**. (These parts appear only in Set 1). • Rubber **Collars**.

- Square **Nuts**, 7.0mm A/F, 2.2mm thick. **Bolts** with a pan head, length 10 mm. The N&B have the MECCANO thread.
- Combined **Spanner-Screwdriver**.

- A 65mm diameter **Tabbed Disc** (see Fig.4) as used in several of the second leaflet models. The 8 tabs are 1 hole long. Two examples were in the lot and as this part is too high to be put in the boxes, they probably belonged to a Set 3 whose box is missing.

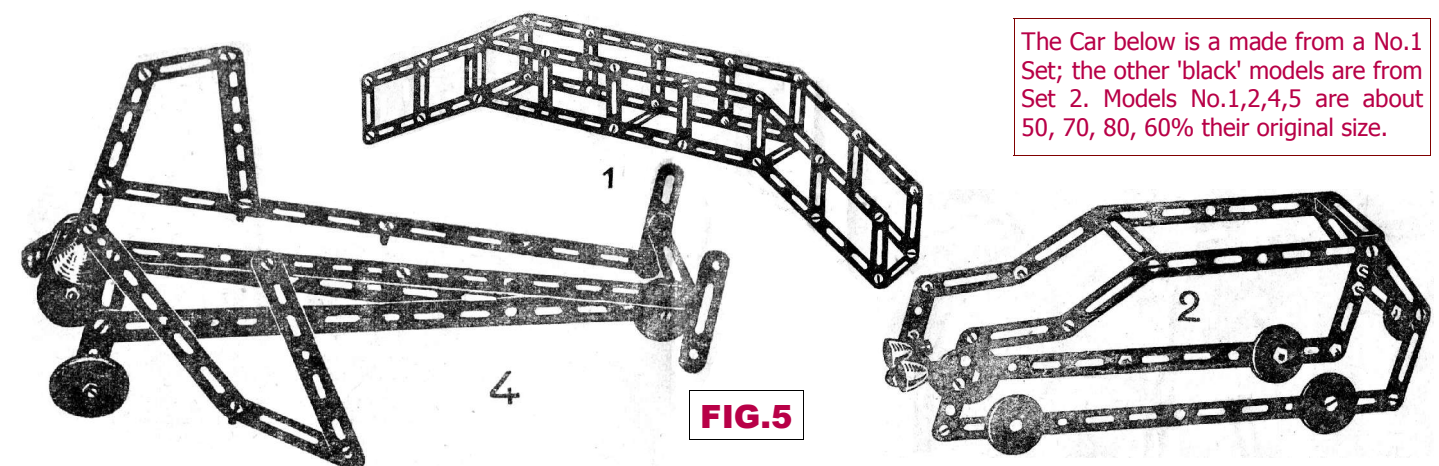
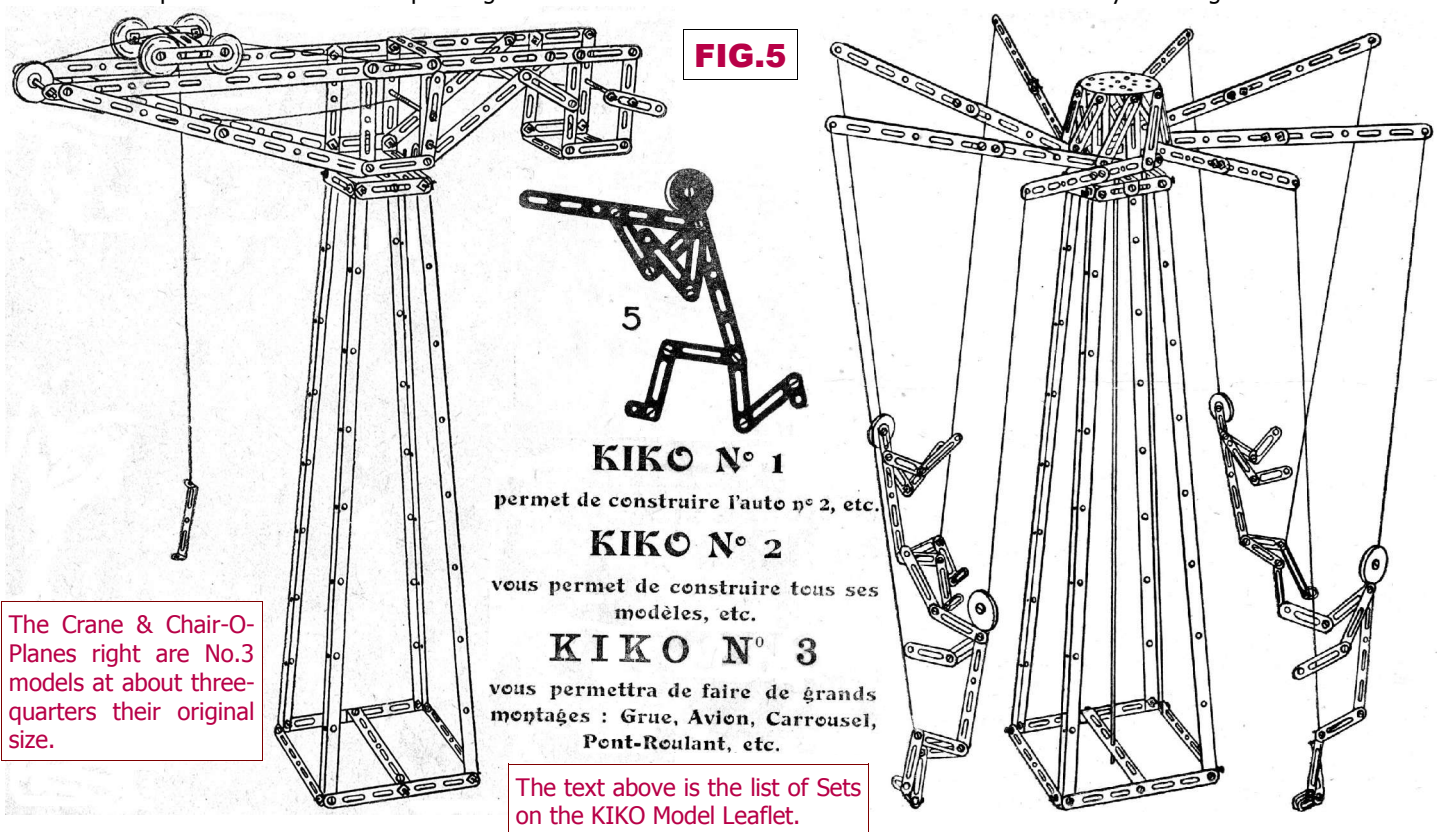
- An **Angle Girder** with 9 round holes on each side is used in most of the second leaflet models. The hole pitch is larger than for the Strips, probably about 1½". So, its length would be about the same as a 25h MECCANO A/G, There were none in the lot, and it would be too long for my boxes.

Returning to the KIKO No.2 set in Fig.2, the A/Bs & 2h Strips are in the compartment above the lefthand DAS. Also there are two circular parts whose purpose is not entirely clear. The smaller one might be an alternative form of the Headlight but it is larger and its centre hole is not tapped. The larger part has a short cylindrical body and could be the part used as the nose of the Aeroplane in Fig.5. As found neither of these circular parts were in the corresponding KITOU outfits.

THE MODELS The models below are the Car for Set.1, a Bridge, an Aeroplane, & the Hunter for Set.2, and a Crane & Chair-O-Planes for Set 3. Some of the constructional details of the Set 3 models are not clear including how the Pulley Discs & other part are held fast on Axles. Given that no Screwed Rods were found among the parts it seems that the parts must have been gripped on either side by a rubber Collar.

REMARKS The models of this simple system are not really very interesting. However, it lasted long enough to have three kinds of strips, and two names. It is a very rare system, I have never seen a KIKO set on eBay in ten years, and the KITOU lot was the first that I ever saw. It is curious to see the presumed KIKO box without any printed text, with parts which do not tally with the models, and another box whose parts agree with models, but which belong to a system with another name! It is likely that both systems were made by the same maker, who initially had difficulties in manufacturing the Strips, and began with a MECCANO pattern. And no doubt the change in the name of the system coincided with the new form of Strip.

There is no indication of the maker anywhere, but the KIKO leaflet has the printer's name on it, 'Imprimerie T. de Grandsaigne' in Thiers (a town in central France). No date is known but considering the parts, the models, and the picture on the KITOU lids, the 1930s, as given MCS for KIKO, is likely. Neither 'Kiko' nor 'Kitou' have any meaning in French.



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EDITORIAL Nothing particular comes to mind so I will simply take this opportunity to thank all who contribute to OSN. Not all the material received can be used immediately but in the long run virtually everything if of use, and most items prove invaluable.

Shorter NOTES, with thanks to all contributors.

1. **'New' Dutch System, METEOR** Jan Ringnalda wrote that he has a manual for Set A of this early post-WW2 system and that the parts look similar to TRIX. It was made by 'Hedi' Metaalwarenindustrie, Postbox No. 6019, Rotterdam W. There are 15 different parts in Set A but the highest PN, of the Hook, is 43. The sets were: A, B, C, A1, A2 (= 2x A1), A3 (= 3x A1), and B1, B2, & B3 were promised. The Manual has 58 pages, including 10 unnumbered, with 49 models, many the same as TRIX. Jan hopes to send more details later. I found the photo



of the manual cover below on Marktplaats.

METEOR: S1

[43/1292]

2. **KIKO & KITOU.** Following the article in 42/1285, Jean-Pierre Guibert sent a copy of remarks on the names and date from Jeannot Buteux et al, Constructorama-France. One Étienne Vial from the Lyon area registered the name KIKONSTRUITOU on 27 June 1947. Obviously it could yield both names and would be pronounced 'Qui construit tout' (= Who built all). However Jeannot continued that sets were often sold well before the name was registered, and also that it was not uncommon for all the elements of a system (parts, manuals, packaging) to have been designed pre-WW2 but because of the war, not to appear on the market until 1946-1948, or even 1948 or 1949.

Jean-Pierre also wrote that he has a KIKO set identical to the one in Fig.2 of OSN 42, and that the pitch of the holes is 12.7mm. In response Jacques Pitrat explained that this is the case for his set too, and that the 12.6mm figure in OSN 42 was a mean value. The pitch for the various parts is 12.5mm for the '5h' long Slotted Strips, 12.65mm for the 7 & 11h Slotted Strips, and 12.7mm for the Strips without slots.

KIKO/KITOU: S3

[43/1292]

3. **Guibert's Encyclopédie.** Readers may recall that a review of the Encyclopédie des Jeux de Construction métalliques by Jean-Pierre Guibert appeared in 37/1108. It was the nearest thing to the now defunct MCS, without as much detail but with the advantage of being in colour and including systems not recorded in MCS. Since then J-P has added many more systems and he recently kindly sent a copy of his latest DVD. The 'cover page' now speaks of over 600 systems against the 300 back in 2007. The main content is divided alphabetically into 16 files and in addition there is an 'Index' rather similar to my Database, and rather easier to sort (by hole pitch, etc), but without the Comments. All in all then J-P is to be congratulated on keeping up the good work. One thing to note though for anyone without WORD, the 16 files are in doc format and though they will open in Open Office the images are displaced to such an extent as to make them unusable – the answer is to download Microsoft's free Word Viewer. The 'Index' is an .xls file and an Excel Viewer is also available but it seems to open satisfactorily using OpenOffice. For more information email jeanpierre1g@aol.com.

Encyclopédie des Jeux de Construction

43/1292

4. **Snippets. More AUTO-CYCLE Junior Sets** 3 Junior sets have been seen on Ebay since the one shown in 35/1045. One has an identical box and the built-up model with it also looks the same, with rounded tips on its slightly tapered wings.

The second set has a label which again looks identical but instead of covering nearly all of the lid, it occupies less than a quarter of its area. Again there was a built-up model with it but it looked like a monoplane version of the 'standard' Biplane in OSN 35, with the tail further back than the other Junior models, and parallel Wings with swept tips (as on all the lid labels). However the Wings differed from the label in not having the chordwise 'ribbing' (always assuming that they were the originals). Going back to the the box: comparing its size with the models it seems that it is comparable to the others and that the label is much smaller.

The third set, with the lid below, is totally different to the others. There were no parts with the box but it is probably safe to assume that they would have been only those needed for the model on the lid. The motorcycle element of it looks rather simpler than known models from the standard sets, with less complicated front forks, and no panel under the top of the frame. The red wheels are new too. The sidecar looks very different to all known varieties: the metal & 'wickerwork' ones in MCS, & the plastic panelled one in 38/1156. Apart from its colour it is much boxier in shape. The box was said to measure 13*25cm and if so it doesn't seem to be the same size as the (very roughly) 20*30cm of the Junior 'Aero' boxes.



AUTO-CYCLE: S7

[43/1292]