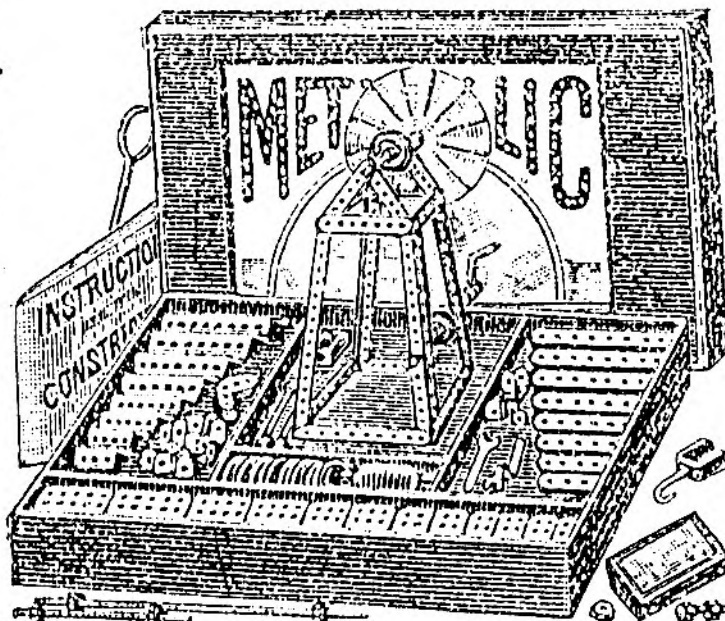


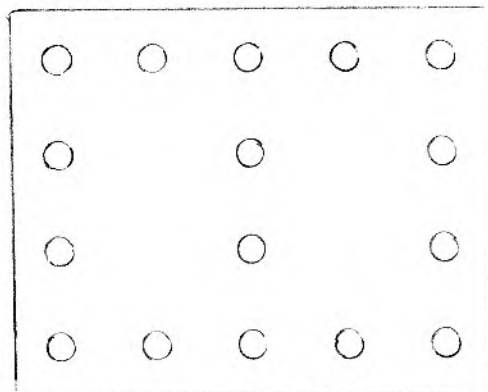
NEW SYSTEMS. Harry Mariën gave me a photocopy of Page 105 from the Au Bon Marché, Paris catalogue of 1913. This included a metal construction set called 'Métallique', available in two sizes to make 15 or 20 models. The ad blown up x2, is shown right. As a matter of interest the page also featured Meccano, Kliptiko, Structator, Arts et Metiers, a wooden constructional set called L'Idéalle, and a set called 'CONSTRUCTION navale' which allowed sailing and steam ships to be assembled from the various special parts contained in the outfit.



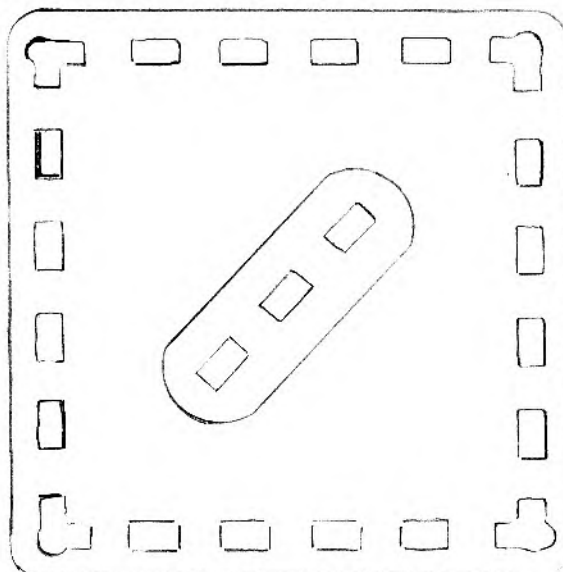
1925. **MÉTALLIC**, nouvelle  
construction en métal.  
15 modèles 2.90 20 mod. 5.90

MYSTERY PARTS. All parts shown have been drawn by tracing around the originals with a sharp pencil.

The plate to the right has turned a number of times and I have at various junctures thought that it might be Erector or Primus; but I have never seen it illustrated or described. The holes are .170" dia and it is made from nickel plated steel .021" thick. On some examples one long edge is rather rough.



As well as the plate and strip shown there are also strips with 2,4,5 and 6 slots. Some strips are bent, often rather crudely, into various brackets and DAS. The slots vary in size slightly from one piece to another but are between .150 and .155" by .27 to .29". Their pitch is approximately 12.5 mm in the strips but nearer 12 mm around the plate. The pieces are made from coated (probably zinc) steel, the thickness of the strips varies from .030" to .040"; the plates are either .025 or .032". The parts that I have have come in three different lots, and from both the UK and Belgium. The width of the strips is between .545 and .555".



4. **Snippets. TRIANGLE Update** Four sets have been seen on Ebay since the account of this early post-WW2 American system in 23/664. All have the same 2-layer box as the OSN 23 outfit and the lid label below, not seen before, was shown for



two of them. In the top right corner is 'SET No.5' & 'MADE IN USA', while in the small black circle under the model is 'FOR BOYS FROM 7 TO 11'.

As far as can be seen the parts in the sets match those described earlier, and the Motor in three of the sets (it was missing in the fourth) was the red THE CONSTRUCTIONER type, as in the OSN 23 set. So it seems that it was a bought-in item and it remains to be seen if the TRIANGLE POWER HOUSE Motor illustrated in OSN 23 ever actually existed.

#### TRIANGLE S1 [41/1229]

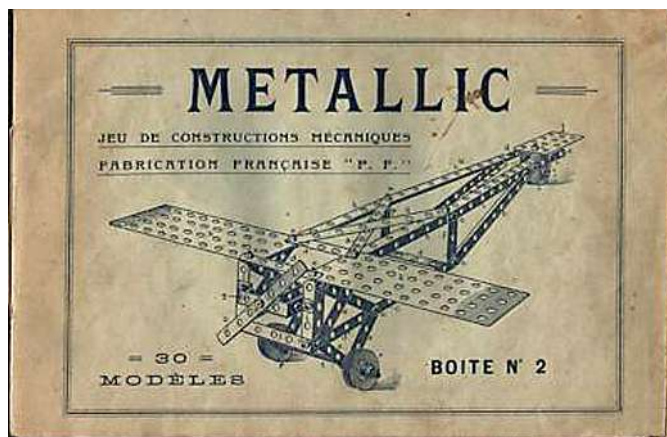
5. **Snippets. METALLIC** A 1913 catalogue illustration of this little known French system was shown in 1/7. Since then two new pieces of information have appeared.

The first is the entry in Encyclopédie des Jeux de Construction métalliques (JCM, see 37/1108) which gives dates of 1910-1918+/-, and shows a No.1 set. It is in a blue box with a blue on white lid label as in OSN 1 but the area under the arch can be seen – it has 2 boys standing behind a table with models on it, and along the bottom 'JEU DE CONSTRUCTIONS MÉTALLIQUES'. It is said in JCM that there are 24 different parts in the No.1 and the holes are 2.65mm Ø at 10mm pitch. The parts are strung onto a yellow card and look a darkish grey. They include Strips, A/Gs, & 4h wide Perforated Plates, all up to 10h long; probably a 1\*5\*1 DAS; a 2h high D/B and probably several other Brackets; a 2h Ø Pulley; the large Fan of about 7cm Ø, as in OSN 1; and 2 single-ended Spanners, one cranked. The manual covers are dark blue on white and the front shows a Garden Bench Seat with under it 'BOITE No.1' and '15 MODÈLES'. On the back cover is a Wind Turbine similar to the model in OSN 1 but with a smaller pylon. The text beside it repeats that on the front cover & the lid label but plus 'FABRICATION FRANÇAISE P. F.', and so perhaps the 'P. F.' is the manufacturer. There is a PR '5994 Imp. Henri Meyer fils. Paris' at the bottom, printed twice, once in blue and once in red.

In the OSN 1 1913 ad METALLIC was described as 'nouvelle construction en métal' and was for 2 sets, a No.1 for 15

models at Fr.2.90 and a No.2 for 20 models at Fr.5.90. The set shown was quite large and was presumably the No.2. Parts in it not so far mentioned are a wire Screwdriver, a Hook, and, from the Wind Turbine model, probably a wire Handle Crank, and possibly a longer A/G. The Fan in this model reminded me of the similar STABIL part (shown in 13/352) and likewise the Handle Crank, and that led to the thought that probably Screwed Rods were used as axles, as in STABIL. With a little imagination the parts in front of the box in OSN 1 could be Screwed Rods with Nuts on them.

The second new item is the 26 page manual for Set 2 below. It was said to perhaps date from 1919-20 because it



was found with a MECCANO manual of that date. 30 models are claimed against the 20 in the 1913 ad. The front cover has "P. F." on it this time.

If METALLIC appeared in 1910 that was about the time that STABIL was launched, and so it's perhaps unlikely that one was influenced by the other. But WALTHER'S INGENIEUR (see 7/164) would definitely have preceded METALLIC and it too included the unusual, large 12-bladed Fan, Screwed Rods, & a Handle Crank. It also had a hole pitch near to 10mm. So perhaps METALLIC was inspired by W I on the one hand and MECCANO on the other (for, notably, the use of N&B instead of the W I 'Paper Clips'). But in any case METALLIC must have been the first system, or at least one of the first, to contain a range of Plates (though W I had a few small ones), and equally to have included Plates & A/Gs instead of Flanged Plates (though I've not actually seen any models in which those parts were used thus).

#### MÉTALLIC: S1 [41/1229]

6. **An ARWILL Outfit** Notes on the parts & a manual of this small UK system appeared in 29/856, and a box lid was shown in 37/1102. Now thanks to David Hobson I've been able to examine an unused outfit. The box measures 26\*18½\*2½cm, the lid looks like the one in OSN 37 except that it is green, and the label is identical.

The instructions are in the form of a Model Leaflet, a sheet 315\*175mm folded into three, rather than the Manual in OSN 29. But the front face including the sloping name, the text, the Contents of Set No.1, and its price, 12s 2d, are identical, as are the photos of the models (though they are not in the same order – they run from SEE-SAW to SWING).

The box's base is plain cardboard and as can be seen in the

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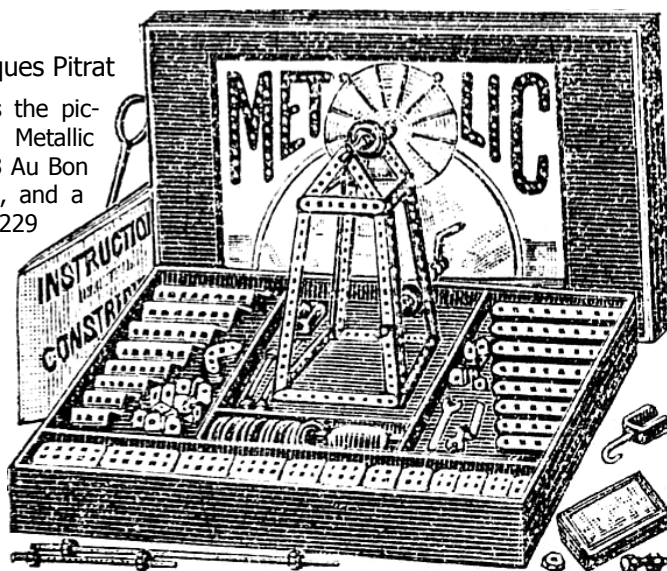


## METALLIC

by Jacques Pitrat

OSN 1/7 includes the picture (right) of a Metallic set from the 1913 Au Bon Marché catalogue, and a snippet on page 1229 of OSN 41 gives a little more information about a No.1 set, and the manual for Set 2 described later. The system has just the two sets; mine is the larger No.2. Sets are very rare; it does not seem that they were made before 1913, and no evidence is known that they were sold afterwards.

From the lid and the manual, this system was made in France by P.F. from Paris; no other information is given on the maker. It happens that, at that time, there was a Parisian toy manufacturer using these initials. Pintel & Godchaux founded a doll company in 1887 and



1925. **MÉTALLIC**, nouvelle construction en métal.  
13 modèles 2.90 20 mod. 5.90

**Fig.1**

working for some time for his father, started a new company in 1913, named Pintel Fils. He was manufacturing good quality products, mainly toy animals, but also some mechanical toys. He was very successful after WW1: in 1920, he was the first in France to produce Teddy Bears. His trademark included the initials PF; therefore, it is likely that he is the one referred to on the lid, although information on this firm does not mention that it ever made metal construction systems.

**The Set & Parts** The parts are strung to five inserts in a 36\*25\*5cm blue box (Fig.3). It was one of the first systems (with ERECTOR in the same year) where Strips & Girders are tied to the inserts. The picture on the lid (Fig.2) shows two children, a boy and a girl, building a model together. Although it looks like a model for Set No.1 (Fig.7), it could not be built even with Set 2: it includes four long A/Gs, which do not exist in either set. This could suggest the existence of a No.3 set with new parts. However, I would rather believe that it is due to the artist's creative freedom: it is not accurately drawn, some of these A/Gs have 15 holes, and others 17 holes. This is a habit for the illustrator: in the advertisement, the Windmill standing on the set is like a model for Set 1 (Fig.6), but all the parts are longer, with again 17h A/Gs. It would have been preferable to reproduce exactly the Windmill for Set No.2 (Fig.8), which is far better.

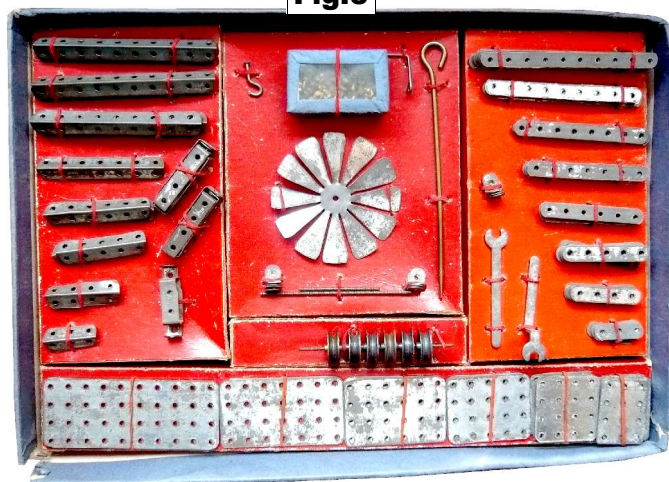
Most parts (Figs.4 & 4A) are tin plated steel; the Plates and a few Strips are still shiny, but the other parts are now dull. The pitch is 10.1mm, and the hole diameter 2.5mm; the width of the Strips is 9.3mm.

My set seems almost complete: with three exceptions (short Rods, 10h A/Gs, and N&B) the models in the manual can be built with its parts. In the list of parts below I indicate sizes by the number of holes, and the quantities of parts between parentheses:

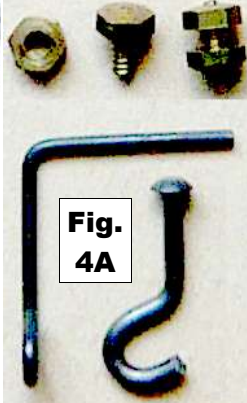
**Flat Plates:** 10\*4 (2), 7\*4 (2), 6\*4 (2), 5\*4 (2), 4\*4 (4) & 3\*4 (6). For a bridge model, the manual indicates that it uses three 10\*4 plates; this is certainly a mistake, it is represented by letter 'J' in the picture, and one of the three 'J's' is, in fact, a 7x4 Plate.  
**Strips:** 10 (14), 9 (6), 8 (4), 7



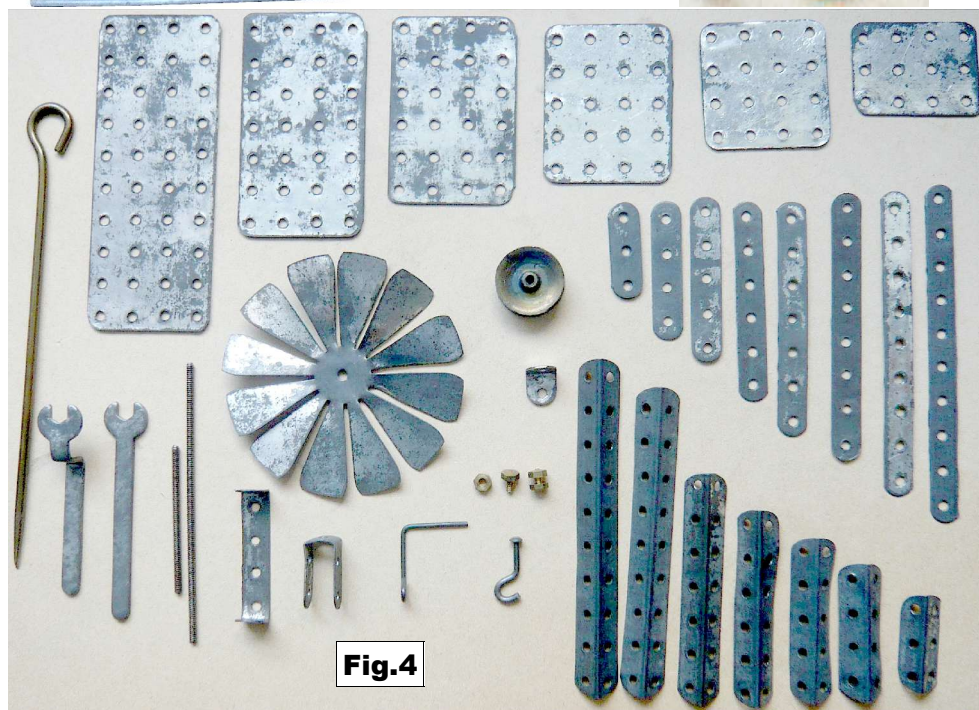
**Fig.2**



**Fig.3**



**Fig.4A**



**Fig.4**



(7), 6 (11), 5 (12), 4 (8) & 3 (7). **A/Gs:** 10 (10), 9 (6), 7 (2), 6 (4), 5 (9), 4 (4) & 3 (2), but Figs.8 & 10 require sixteen 10h A/Gs. **DAS:** 1\*4\*1 (9). It is possible that there is one part too many: no model uses more than 8 DAS. **Single Bent Strip:** 2\*1\*2 (2). **Brackets** (12). Both holes are round. **Wheels,** diameter 20mm (6); the centre hole is threaded. **Threaded Rods:** 85mm (2) & 45mm (1); diameter 2.5mm. One small rod is certainly missing: several models, even for set No.1, use two of them (Figs.7 & 10). **Crank Arm** (1), with a loop for fastening it to a Threaded Rod with two Nuts. **Hook** (1). **Fan** (1), diameter 72mm, with 12 blades; only one model for each set (Figs.6 & 8) uses it. **Bolts** (45), brass, diameter 2.5mm, length of the threaded part 5mm, with a hexagonal head without a slot, the same size as the Nut. Some are missing: one model uses 50 of them. **Nuts** (53), hexagonal, brass, 2.5mm deep, 5.0mm between opposite sides. Some are probably missing: Nuts are also necessary for the Threaded Rods. **Tools:** Flat Spanner, length 65mm; Stepped Spanner, length 60mm; Drift, length 145mm.

**The Manual** The manual, in French, for Set No.2 (Fig.5), has 24 pages, 235\*158mm (three of them are blank), plus the blue covers. Two models from the manual are reprinted on the first and on the fourth cover (the model in Fig.10).

The first page presents the system, followed by 30 models, many more than the 20 mentioned in the ad. The manual does not indicate whether a model is for Set 1 or for Set 2; probably the first fifteen ones are for the No.1.

The models are clear and well made (Fig.9 for example). No explanation is provided to indicate how to build a model, but a list of the parts necessary for it is given under the drawing. Each type of part is represented by a letter, and this letter appears on the drawing, next to the corresponding part (Fig.10). Unfortunately, a part is not always represented by the same letter in the different models, except the Rods by 't', and the Nuts by 'x'. The first part on each list is associated with 'a', the second with 'b', etc. In that way, letter

'a' corresponds to 11 different parts for the 30 models: 7 lengths of Strip, and 4 lengths of A/G! This is not very easy for the builder, who has to refer constantly to each particular list of parts, rather than having a single reference.

**Who was the Maker?** At first sight, it is easy to answer: the lid, both covers and one page of the manual indicate P.F., followed by Paris on the lid. As we have seen, this is likely to correspond to a Parisian firm existing in 1913: Pintel Fils. Moreover, 'Fabrication Française' is claimed four times. If this is true, it would be the second metal construction system made in France, one year after L'INGÉNIEUR CONSTRUCTEUR.

However, the first time I saw my set I thought: this is a WALTHER'S INGENIEUR (WI) outfit, without wooden parts, but with Nuts & Bolts. Three kinds of Walther systems were sold in France under the ARTS ET MÉTIERS name. I have an ARTS ET MÉTIERS set No.82, which is the French version of WI No.12. As it also had a 10mm pitch, I compared the parts.

The number of holes in the parts is not always the same, but WI has also 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 9h strips, 5, 6, 7 & 9h A/Gs, and 3\*4h Flat Plates. Superposing these parts, they are almost identical, the pitch and the hole diameter are the same, but the width is slightly larger for METALLIC Strips. These comparisons are difficult because there are also slight differences between the WI parts themselves and in fact I had to be very careful not to replace a METALLIC part by a WI one! I find it quite improbable that different manufacturers could produce parts that are almost identical. Two other parts, the Drift and the Fan, have not exactly the same size, but apart

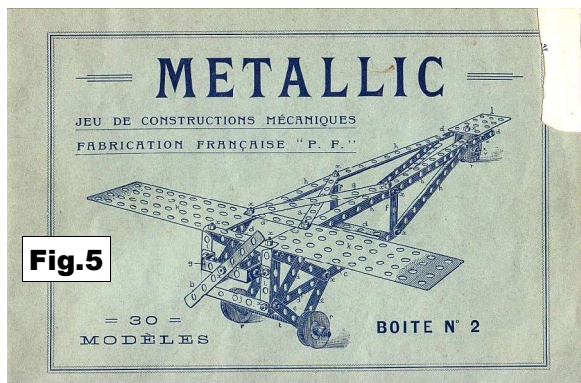


Fig.5

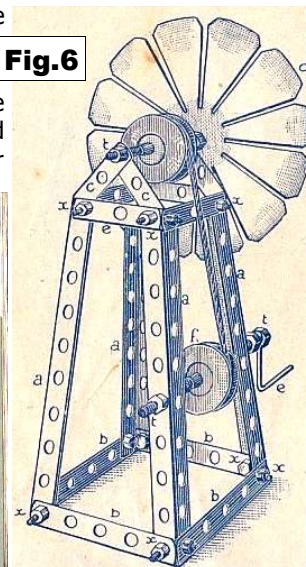


Fig.6

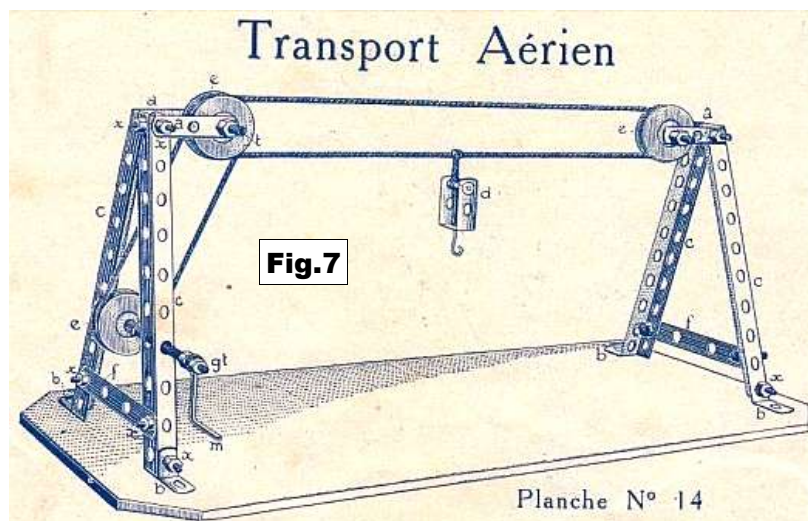


Fig.7

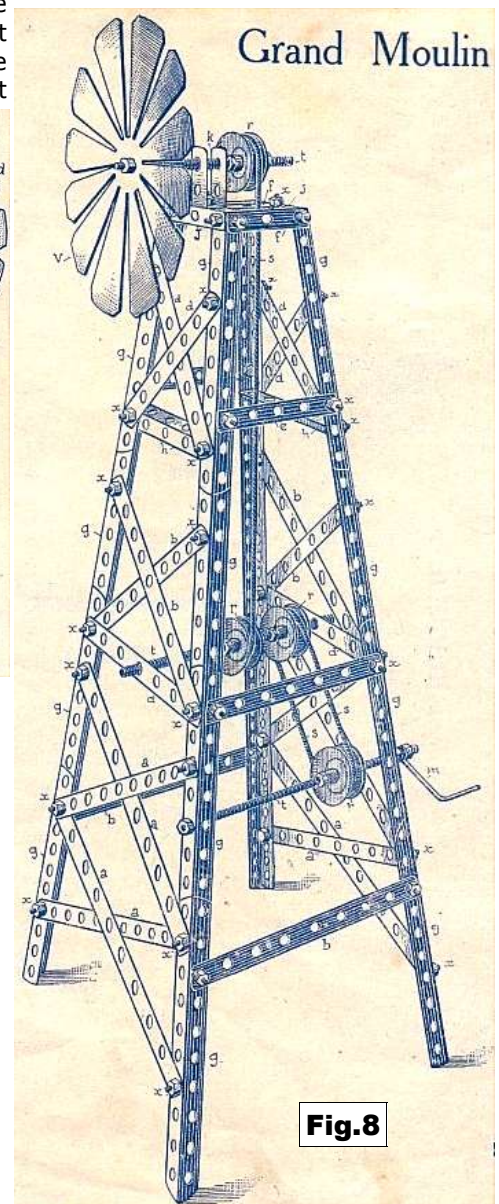


Fig.8



from METALLIC they were only included in Walther's systems.

Furthermore, a new company rarely produces a high quality manual of instructions, and many common points exist between this manual and the French version of the WI manuals. For instance, both are using letters to reference the parts in the drawings, the French names of the Strips and A/Gs are the same: 'fers plats', and 'fers cornières'. Adding 'fer' (iron) to 'cornière' (A/G) is normal for WI, which has wooden and metal parts; it is abnormal for METALLIC, which has only metal parts. In the same way, 'fer plat' is curious: since 1904, Hornby was using 'bande' for 'strip' in his French manuals, and his competitors, except WI, also used this word. Finally, using 'pièce cambrée' for the Bent Strip (only in METALLIC) is very strange, and does not support a French origin for this name. Naturally, the models are different from the WI ones: wooden parts are used in all the WI models.

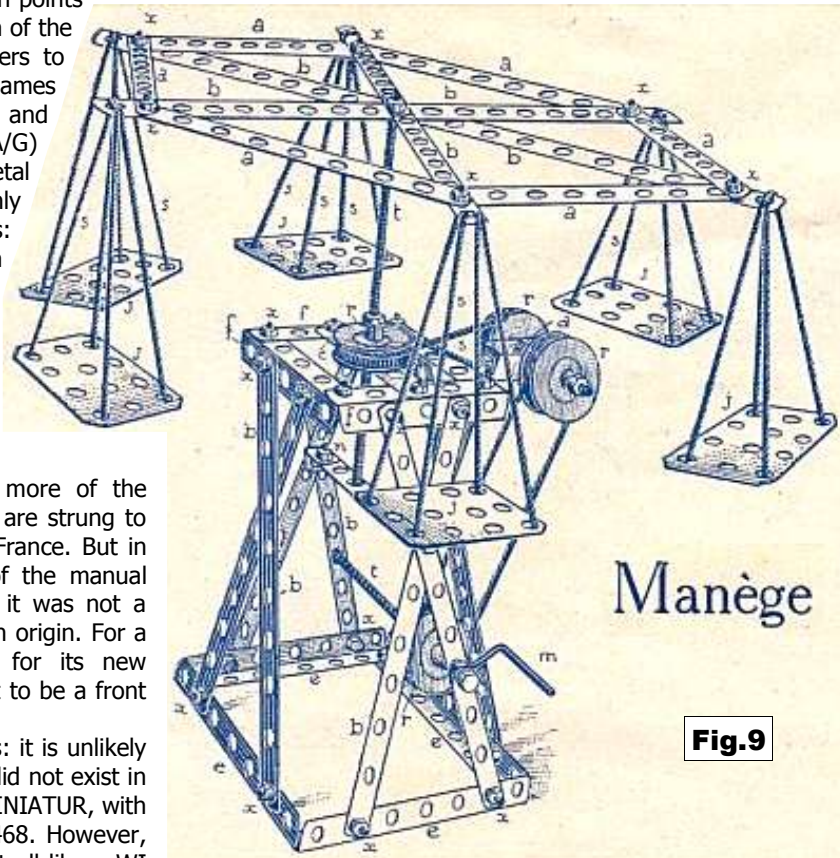
'Fabrication française' could mean one or more of the following: the box is made in France; the parts are strung to the inserts in France; the manual is printed in France. But in any case the parts themselves and the text of the manual could be coming from Germany. At that time, it was not a good selling point in France to indicate a German origin. For a startup such as Pintel Fils, seeking funding for its new ventures, it would have been tempting to accept to be a front manufacturer.

One can raise an objection to this hypothesis: it is unlikely that Walther would sell in France a system that did not exist in Germany. In 1914 he produced a new system, MINIATUR, with a 10mm pitch, described in MCS, and OSN 17/468. However, this system looks like a miniature STABIL, not at all like a WI without wooden parts: it has Flanged Plates, trapezoidal parts, a Screwdriver, only four lengths of Strip, and no A/Gs. Nevertheless, it is also possible that Walther tested in France a miniature system with a 10mm pitch, inspired by WI sets, then thought that it was better to start from STABIL parts, and reduce their pitch.

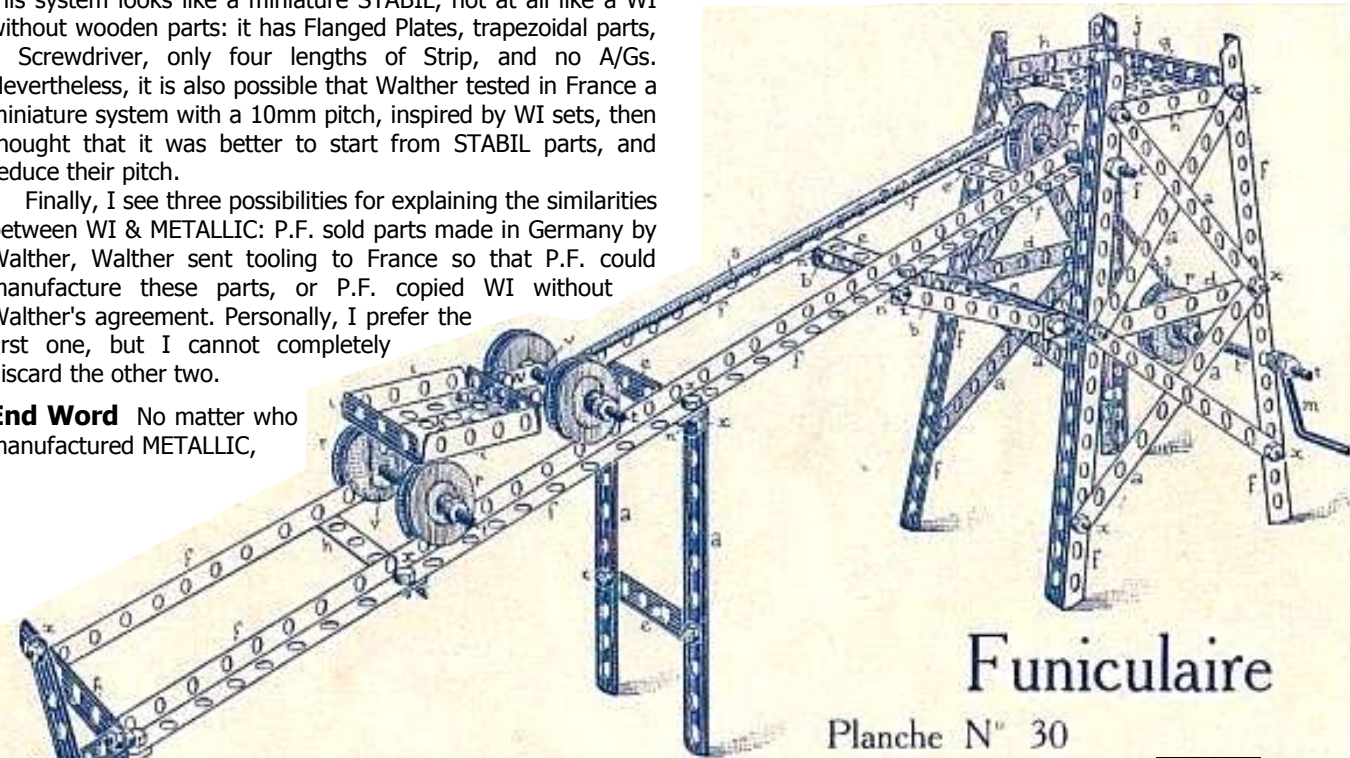
Finally, I see three possibilities for explaining the similarities between WI & METALLIC: P.F. sold parts made in Germany by Walther, Walther sent tooling to France so that P.F. could manufacture these parts, or P.F. copied WI without Walther's agreement. Personally, I prefer the first one, but I cannot completely discard the other two.

**End Word** No matter who manufactured METALLIC,

good quality parts & an excellent manual allow interesting models to be built with this small system.



**Fig.9**



**Fig.10**

*Pièces nécessaires à la construction de ce modèle*

|                         |                          |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A) 10 Fers plats 10 tr. | F) 16 Fers corn. 10 tr.  | K) 1 Plaq. perl. 3 sur 4       |
| B) 2 " " 8 "            | G) 1 " " 7 "             | L) 2 Fers corn. 3 tr.          |
| C) 3 " " 7 "            | H) 4 " " 5 "             | M) 1 Manivelle                 |
| D) 2 " " 6 "            | I) 2 " " 4 "             | N) 6 Équerres                  |
| E) 4 " " 5 "            | J) 1 Plaq. perl. 7 sur 4 | R) 2 Grandes et 2 petite tiges |
| V) 2 Pièces cambrées    | N) 6 Poulies             | X) 45 Boulons et Écrous        |



There is no mention of a No.8 outfit, and again no linking sets.

Sets 10-12 are listed as METALING but their photos have MECCANO METALING on them. All have lids similar to Fig.8. (Some actual sets are labelled MECCANO METALING, some METALING METALING, and some just METALING.) The parts in each set include a Magic Motor. Each has a manual with 4 models for No.10, those plus another 4 for No.11, & another 4 for Set 12. Most of the models are small vehicles running on 1" Pulleys with Tyres; the Robot on the lid is one of the No.12 models. The manual covers are similar to the lids except that the small panel of models is omitted.

Sets 15-17 are labelled METALING SUPERMODELOS but actual sets seen have METALING MECCANO as in Fig.9. All the lids are as Fig.9 apart from the models in the bottom right corner. The No.15 lid shows the 9 models from the Liverpool Combat set, the No.16 the 8 Highway models, & the No.17 the 10 Army models. The 2 large models on the lid are in the top half of the No.15 manual cover with SUPERMODELOS above them and, in the lower half, the Poch logo and '15'. The 16 & 17 covers have just SUPERMODELOS in the top half with the Set models in a large circle below.

Items 30-34 are all METALING. They are, in order, the ELECTROMOTOR Set with parts to make a 4-12v sideplate Motor; a 4-12v sideplate Motor which looks similar to the one

from the Set; a Transformer; an ENGRANAJES [Gears] Set with the nylon Gears, plastic Sprockets & Chain, and a Spring Motor like the Magic. The Motor & Gears sets have their parts in foam blocks under transparent lids.

They are not listed in the 1980 catalogue but one source says that the Action Packs were manufactured in Spain from 1979. And also that early in the 1980s a company called P.B.P, S.A. were making MECCANO/METALING.

#### AND THEREAFTER

After production ceased MECCANO sets were imported from France.

Fig.9



OSN 53/1635

### METALING & Spanish MECCANO: S3

**More on METALLIC** Two items following the Jacques Pitrat article on p1615: (a) notes, thanks to David Hobson, on his No.2 set, and (b) some points of interest about a No.1 set, thanks to Jean-Pierre Guibert.

**From David.** A few remarks on my No.2 following Jacques' excellent, comprehensive write-up of his No.2.

The French toy trader who supplied my set seemed familiar with the "P E Paris" mark saying "Hope you'll love this nice Pintel". I see on the web that there is currently a wholesale toy firm called "Pintel Jouets" in Paris and other French cities – perhaps a descendant of the original firm.

Some of the Strip parts in my set had been used, but the Plates and some of the A/Gs were still strung on the backing cards, and the 'string' is a red woven lace about 2mm wide which I have not seen used before in other MCS.

The tin-plate parts in my set were more oxidised (as in many MME sets) than those in Jacques' set, with only a few traces of bright tin. I have the same number of Plates as Jacques, with a few slight variations in the numbers of Strips & A/Gs.

The Strips & Girders have some ragged edges, presumably from guillotining; their hole size the same as Jacques at 2.5mm but the holes in the Plates are slightly larger.

The Fan is a smaller version of the 80mm Ø STABIL part. The Pulley is cast from a dense alloy – probably lead based – and has a deep V-groove 3-4mm deep. The bore is threaded to match the Threaded Rod, 2.4mm over thread, and I make the pitch to be .6mm.

I have 55 Bolts & 44 Nuts in a cardboard box 55\*33\*20mm with a lift-off lid which has a 'window', probably celluloid but now opaque with age. The N&B are brass turned from 5mm brass hex, and the parting tool has left the bolts with slightly domed heads, and one face of the nuts is also slightly domed. The bolts are 6.5mm overall 4mm long u/h, with the same thread diameter & pitch as the Rod. Many of the N&B combinations cannot now be tightened, perhaps a previous owner stripped the (delicate) thread by too enthusiastic use of the Spanners on the Nut & Bolt head. Also some of the threads on the bolts look slightly tapered.

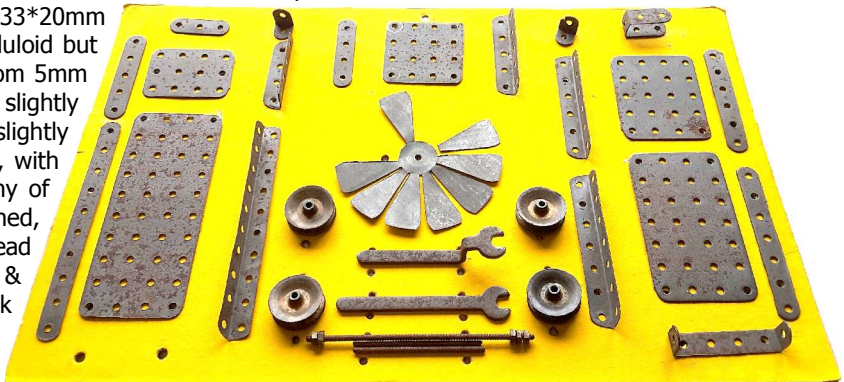
Re the 'Grand Moulin' model in the manual, I

found it is just possible to join the Angle Girders with a N&B by overlapping the holes – perhaps the Drift was supplied to help lever the holes into alignment, although at 3mm diameter only the tip will fit the holes.

**The No.1 Set** The box is 30½\*19½\*4¾cm and is in the same style as the No.2 on p1615, with the same label. Fig.1 shows the location of the parts on the backing board, but it's doubtful if the board is the original. The parts found were: **Flat Plates:** 4\*10,7,5,4h (1,1,1,2) **Strips:** 10,7,6,5,4,3h (6,4,2,3,5,6). **A/Gs:** 10,7,6,5,4h (4,2,3,3,4). **DAS:** 1\*4\*1h (1). **Single Bent Strip:** 2\*1\*2 (1). **A/B** (4). **Pulley Wheels** (4). These bear traces of gold lacquer and have a small boss on each side, 9½mm wide overall. Their bores were threaded but now a Threaded Rod just passes through: perhaps they were drilled out by a previous owner to avoid a loose Pulley moving along the Rod if it only turned in one direction. **Threaded Rods:** 85,45mm (1,2). **Fan** (1, missing 4 blades). **Bolts** (0). **Nuts** (5). **Tools:** the 2 Spanners.

Quite apart from the N&B it's very likely that at least some Strips & A/Gs are missing, also a DAS, and probably a Crank Arm.

The parts are not as good quality as Jacques'. A potential problem when building a model was the hole pitch. In most parts it is 9.9 to 10.0mm but 9.8 to 1.02 in some cases, particularly the Plates, and this could amount to a half hole discrepancy over 10 holes. The hole diameter is 2.7-2.8mm in the different parts. The edges of the Strips are a little irregular but not seriously so.



OSN 53/1635

METALLIC: S5