

MECHANIX from India Soon after I'd typed up the notes on the facing page, Ashok Banerjee wrote that he was sending over a MECHANIX set. I was expecting another NZ outfit but when it arrived it was a new system of the same name which went on sale recently in India. My first impression on opening the box was that the parts bore a striking resemblance to BRAL and the contents are also BRAL-like, with for example 11h Flat Girders and 5*5h Perforated Plates in what is quite a small set.

The box looks very smart. It's quite large (20*12¾*1½") with the parts in recesses in a thin, light grey plastic formed tray, and a transparent inner cover to keep them in place. There's a separate space for practically every of part of any size. The N&B and small parts are in neat little red boxes, and there's a similar long thin box for the Axles - just the same size as the one in my mid-1980s BRAL No.3 set. The box lid is red but most of it is given over to large colour photos of 8 models. There's no indication on the box or in the manual that there are any other outfits in the system. The set is made by Zephyr, 195, A. R. St., Bombay-400 003 and is marketed by Rup Ratna, Raunak Compd., L.B.S. Marg, Ghatkopar (West), Bombay-400 086.

Now for the parts. Unless otherwise stated they are identical to those in my BRAL outfit, so all the elongated holes have large radius ends and the Trunnions have flat tops. All Strips, Brackets, and Trunnions are nickel plated.

• **DATA** (in mm) **STRIP** (11-hole): •hole pitch/dia, 12.7/4.3; •width, 12.2; thickness, .78; •ends fully radiused. **BOSS**: •o/d, see below; •i/d, 4.3; •integral plastic; •single tapped. **THREAD**: 5/32" BSW. **AXLE DIA**: 3.93. **DP (Mod)**: N/A. **NUT**: hex 8.0 A/F; **BOLT**: roundhead 5.9Ø; both iridescent steel.

• The set boasts 26 Strips in all (with 11,7,5,4 & 3 holes, and like BRAL their width is .3mm less than ½"); 4 each of Curved Strips (MECCANO 90a type); 1*3*1 and 1*5*1h DAS, plus a Double Bent Strip.

• There's a selection of Flat, Angle, Reversed Angle, and Double Brackets (including one 2*1*2h); and 2 Flat and 2 ordinary Trunnions.

• Rigid plates consist of a red 5*11h Flanged Plate, a yellow Flanged Sector Plate (8h long), and 2 light blue 5*5h Perforated Plates. The latter have fully radiused corners - I haven't seen the BRAL equivalents. Also in this category 2 dark green 11h Flat Girders.

• The Flexible Plates are all very thin (about 10 thou) plastic: 7 off 3*5h (6 green and 1 transparent), 4 red 5*5h, and 1 blue 5*7h.

• The 2 Bush Wheels are red plastic with a slightly soapy feel and a completely flat outer face. The Pulleys are made of that very light plastic with a shiny metal-like appearance. Loose Pulleys are 2x15mmØ and 3x25mm; with boss, 6x25mm and 1x53mm. The bosses of all the bossed parts are moulded with the disc and are extended outwards on one side to take the Set Screw. The basic diameter of the boss varies from 7.8mm for the 25mm to 10.0 for the Bush Wheel, and the extension adds about 3mm to that.

• The Axles are good quality, nickel plated with slightly rounded ends. They are fairly loose in the Pulleys but the bore of the Bush Wheels is only 4.0mm giving a snug fit. The set contains 2 each of length 40, 92 & 112mm, plus a Crank Handle 145mm o/a with a 32mm handle.

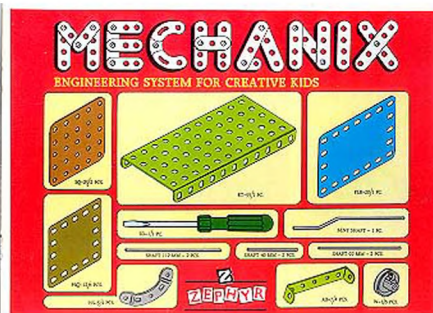
• There are about 50 N&B. The Bolts have neat heads: 4 have 10mm of thread, the rest 6mm. The Nuts are the pressed sort. The 8 Spring Clips are the tiny BRAL type, 4mm wide with wings 3mm long.

• 6 black plastic Rings are fitted to the 25mm Pulleys - fat ones 6mm thick, again like BRAL. There's also a grey 4mmØ circular section Driving Band, about 13" long, which isn't used in any of the models. No Hook was found in the set but there should be the one shown below. It's coloured grey in the models and It looks quite large, with an eye that might take an Axle.

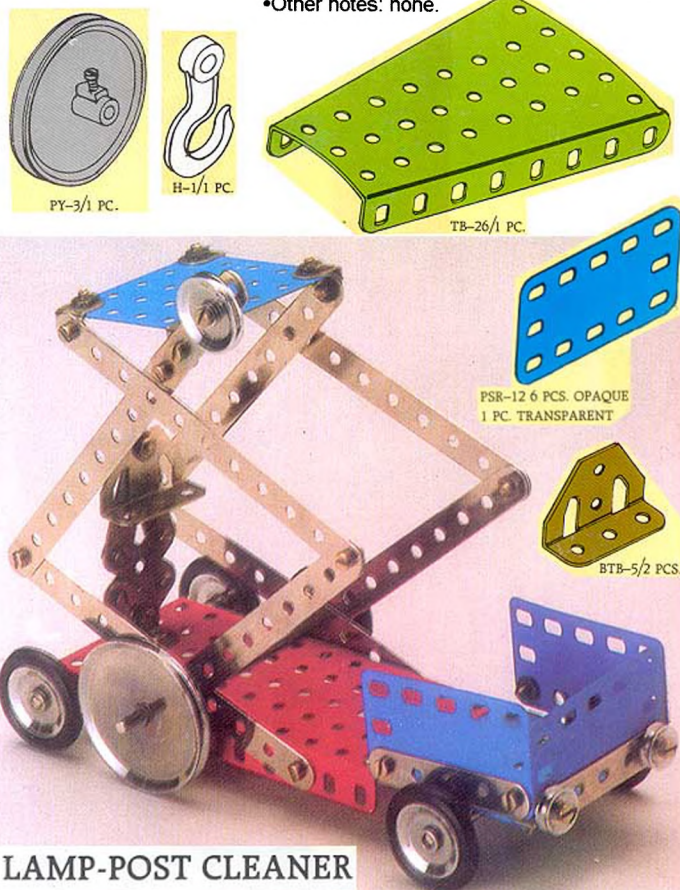
• The Spanner is like the BRAL one except that its neck parts are 7mm wide instead of 6mm, and the joggle halfway along one of them is 1½ rather than 2mm. The jaws of both are about 7½mm and don't fit the MECHANIX Nuts. The Screwdriver is some 155mm long overall and has ALFA 153 moulded into its green plastic handle.

I make that 124 parts plus N&B, which ties up quite well with the claim of '176 pieces including 54 sets of nuts & bolts' on the box. The parts are accurately made and their finish is good if not quite first class. There are one or two speckles of rust on the nickel but the paintwork is as good as new. It's a far cry from MAXHINA and PLANO (10/258, 11/287), though it's a pity about the Spanner not fitting the Nuts. And there's a nice diagram showing lock nuts but only one Spanner in the Set. The slogan on the box and manual is 'Engineering System for Creative Kids'.

The 16 page manual is all in colour with quite large photos of 13 models, and additional views of some of them showing intermediate stages of construction. The model below is typical and generally the models hardly do justice to the set. I couldn't find any of the models in the couple of BRAL manuals I have. All the text, that is the names of the models and a few lines of chat, are in English. The colours in the photos correspond to those of the actual parts except that the smaller Flexible Plates are shown blue and yellow. All the parts are illustrated on the manual's covers and the colours there are generally quite different with for example light blue Strips, red Brackets, and light green Flanged Plates.



SUMMARY OF MANUAL •Name: MECHANIX •Details of maker: Zephyr •Dates &/or Ref Nos: none •Page size: 240*172mm deep •No. of pages: 14 + outer covers •Language: English •Printing: all colour •No Parts List: •Page Nos. of Set Contents/Illustrated Parts & highest PN: front & back covers,W •Set covered: one, no number •No. of models: 13 •Name, Page No. of first & last model: CHAIR,1; HORSE WAGON,14 [no Model Nos.] •Other notes: none.



MECHANIX Abroad This is the Indian MECHANIX set described in 15/409, but found on sale in the Spring by Ivor Ellard in a Clarke's cut-price store in Chelmsford at £16.99, and by Michael Grace in a number of toy shops in Co. Wicklow, Ireland last Xmas. Ivor kindly bought one for me and there are some changes since OSN 15, including a few extra parts, Pulleys with metal bosses, and a new manual. Michael's Set has these changes too.

The packaging is identical except for two additions to the lid - 'WINNER OF "THE BEST TOY OF THE YEAR" AND ALSO "THE BEST EDUCATIONAL TOY OF THE YEAR" (1994)'. Indian awards no doubt, and according to the manual, made at the TAITMA. Also an EEC label (with © 1997 on it), stuck over the maker's address, which looks to be the same, but the distributor is at MUMBAI - 400 086.

PARTS The contents have been increased by 4 Strips, 2 axles, 1 Angle Bracket, and 1 Spanner.

The **bosses** are nickel plated steel, peened almost flush with the face of the Wheel. They are double-tapped, 9.50mm o.d., and the bore of 4.11mm gives a reasonable running fit on the Axles.

Flexible Plates are still paper thin and now have a slightly rough matt finish instead of being glossy. The green & red ones are now a dark shade. (The other colour change is to the **Flat Girders** which are much lighter than before.)

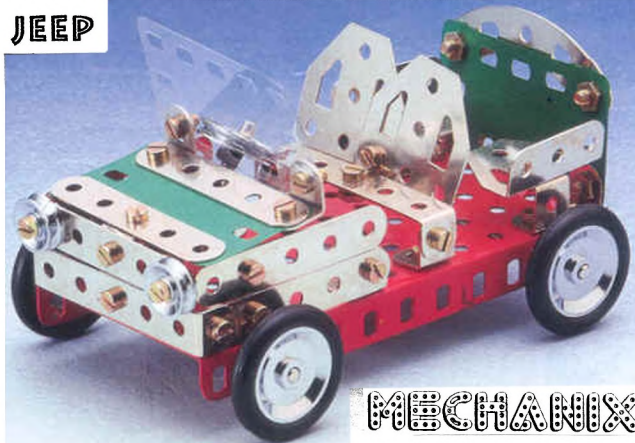
The **Nuts** are smaller at 7.2mm A/F and now fit the Spanner, except the centre opening which, as before, is square. The **Bolts** are cheeseheaded, 6.3mm Ø.

Spring Clips are now made of black plastic, and are slightly larger than before: 5mm wide with 4mm wings. The **Hook** is yellow plastic, 46mm long o/a, with a 5½mm hole. The **Driving Band** is of 3½mm Ø black rubber, with a length of about 9½".

The **Spanners** have a black metallic finish, and the **Screw-driver** is now marked MECHANIX & 453. (The 153 in OSN 15 should have read 453.)

MANUAL It has the same number of pages as before but they are larger, U.S. letter size, and there are over twice as many models, 31 in all. Each now has a Parts List, often illustrated, and all the parts in the models are in their correct colours. One or two very simple models have been dropped and others improved. The Robot for example is now the Robot with Pram. Several of the new ones use more of the parts in the Set, like a Fork Lift Truck & the Jeep below. There's quite a lot of chat about quality and it ends, 'We do not do business at Zephyr's we befriend children. A smile on your child's face is our gain. \ \ love \ \ ZEPHYR'.

JEEP



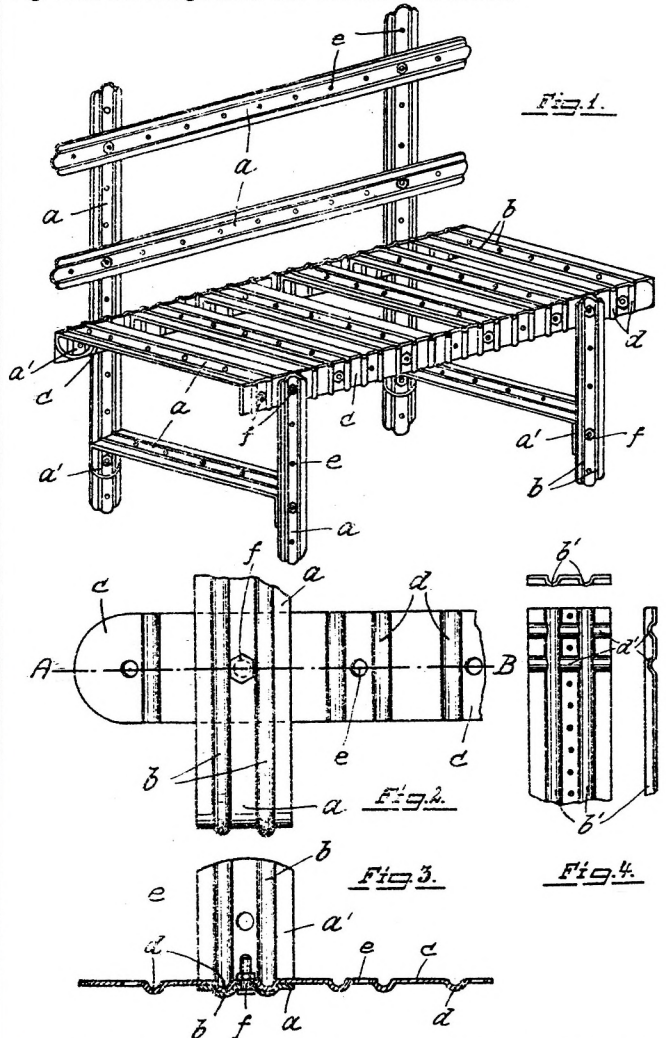
MECHANIX

SUMMARY

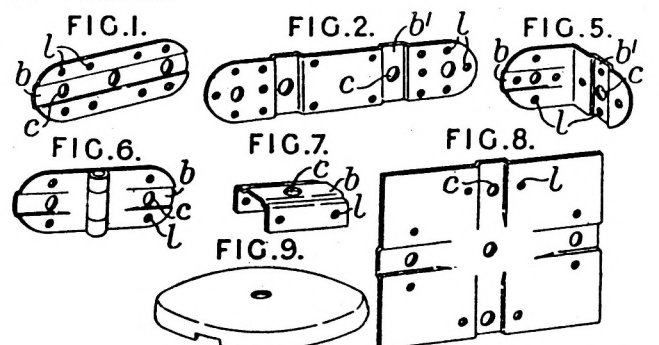
•Name: MECHANIX •Maker: Zephyr, 195, Abdul Rehman street, 4th floor, Gabajiwaia building, Mumbai - 400 003, India. •No Dates or Ref Nos: •Page size: 216*281mm. •No. of pages: 16 unnumbered, including covers. •Language: English. •Printing: colour photos except B&W drgs of parts; cover is white with red left edge, & Helicopter model on blue ground. •Page Nos. of Illustrated Parts/Set Contents & highest PN: 16, W-1. •Sets covered: one, no number. •No. of models: 31. •Name, Page No. of first and last model: HELICOPTER, 3; GARBAGE DUMPER, 15. •Other notes: no Model Nos.

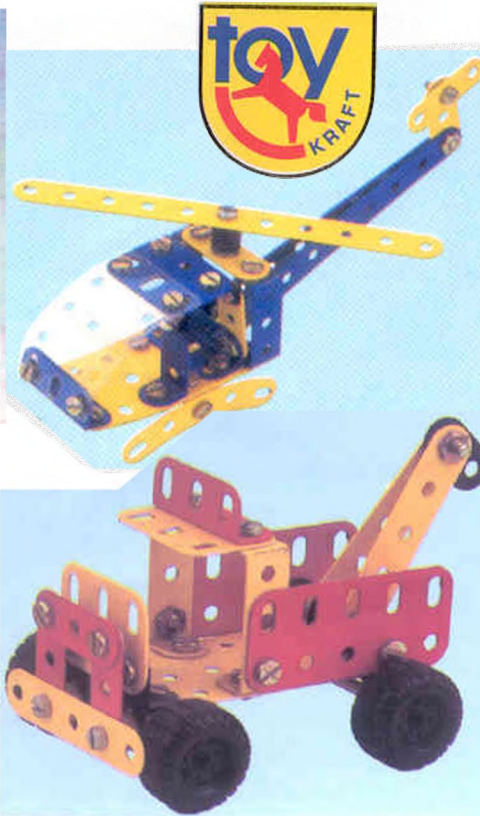
The MAFELL Patent MAFELL was the German system with very large parts, see 15/415 & 17/476. David Hobson has kindly passed me a copy of the relevant UK patent, No.353494 with a Convention Date of 23/12/29, in the name of Maschinenfabrik Fellbach G.m.b.H., Fellbach, Wurttemberg, Germany.

The claim relates to 'constructional toys, e.g. for producing small articles of furniture, small vehicles and the like'. They are to be made from strips, angle brackets, DAS, etc, which have impressed channels in them, some longitudinal, some transverse, which allow 2 pieces to positively engage with each other. Regularly spaced holes are provided for the bolts that hold the parts together, or for axles, and the bolt heads fit snugly between adjacent channels to prevent them turning. Fig.1 shows a finished model; in Fig.2 & 3 the N&B f holds the strips c & DAS a; and the strip in Fig.4 has both longitudinal and transverse channels.



In 1930 there was another patent, No.368758 for NER-SAG (1930) Ltd. and W.H.Ward, 448 Strand, London, which has considerable similarity to the Fellbach one, with engagement between the ribs and grooves, b and b', longitudinal and transverse, in the figures below. It was to build 'toy structures or vehicles, steps, ladders, trolleys, or other articles of utility'. The figures are self-explanatory except that the parts were to be joined by N&B through holes c, Fig.6 is a hinged element, and the holes l are said to be 'formed to reduce weight and to receive auxiliary attachment screws and bolts'.





TOY KRAFT The main name on the boxes of this series of 5 sets is 'Make Your Own Toy', followed by the name of the Set, but alongside this wording is the 'toy KRAFT' logo above centre, & so I'll call the system that. The Sets also have numbers and the range is 1351 "Air-Planes", 1352 "Truck", 1353 "Helicopter", 1354 "Cars", & 1355 "Racer Car".

The brightly coloured, end-opening **boxes** are 14*9½*4½cm and are basically red & blue, with a photo of the main model on the top, plus a smaller one of the alternative that can be made. The bottom of each has photos of one model from the other 4 sets, and 'Mfg. & Marketed by: Aries Incorporation, 37. B.T. Compound, Malad (West), Mumbai - 400 064, India.' A sticker on 2 of the boxes gives the date of manufacture as March 1999. The address is very nearly the same as that for TECNICA and the Angle & Flat Brackets are the same in the two systems. The Spanner and many of the other parts are identical to MR MECHANIC, but since most of the latter are like MECCANO, & there are other MECCANO-pattern parts as well, the overall impression is of a copy of MECCANO. All the parts are the same good quality as MR M.

The parts, and the N&B in a separate packet, are loose in a plastic bag inside the box. In what follows they are the same as MR MECHANIC unless otherwise stated.

- **DATA** (in mm) **Strip** (9-hole): •Hole pitch/dia, 12.7/4.2 •width, 12.9; •thickness, .90; •ends nearly fully radiused. **Boss**: N/A. **Thread**: ½" BSW. **Axle Dia**: 3.95 mean. **DP**: N/A. **Nut**: hex 7.9 A/F; **Bolt**: CH 5.9 Ø; both iridescent steel.
- 3,4,5,7,9,11h **Strips**. A Curved Strip. A 1*3*1 DAS which is like the TECNICA part but without the slotted holes, & is about 2mm wider than M48.
- A 3h **A/G** and the 3 & 5h **Flat Girders**, all just like MECCANO. The 3*5h **Flexible Plate** is yellow, and there's also a transparent version, equally thin.
- **Brackets**. The Obtuse A/B, like the ordinary Angle Bracket, is made from the Flat Bracket. The Double Bracket is MECCANO pattern. The 2*1h Bracket is a 3h Strip, bent so that the centre of the hole in the short arm is 9mm from the outside face of the 2-hole arm.
- **Wheels**. The Small black rubber one is 15½mm Ø and has a very rounded outside. It pushes onto a Spacer and there's an almost identical MECCANO part. The Large one is again black rubber but is a push-fit on the Axle; it is 27½mm Ø & 14¼mm wide with crossways tread, and is partly hollow with 5 webs supporting the boss. It has a slightly smaller MECCANO counterpart, but has 7 pips on the outer face whereas the MECCANO part has 8.
- **Axles** are 50 & 70mm long and some are BZP & some nickel.
- **Nuts** are like MR M but the **Bolts** are 6½, 13, & 19mm u/h, and their heads are slightly smaller in diameter. The **Spanner** has already been mentioned; the BZP **Screwdriver** is M-style but much shorter at 100mm o/a.

- **Paint colours**. The Strips, Girders, Double & 2*1h Brackets are variously red, dark blue, & yellow. The Truck and Racer parts are red & yellow; the others are blue & yellow.

Each **Set** contains about 30 parts, plus some 20 N&B. Full details of the contents found will be included in an Extra MCS Sheet but an idea of the main

parts in each can be gathered from the models above. In each Set is a single-sided **Model Sheet**, 193* 135mm, with colour photos of 2 constructional stages for each model, against a light blue ground. The second is usually the finished model but the photos on the box must be used for the 'Air-Planes'. The only words on the Sheets is MODEL 1 & MODEL 2.

The boxes are similar in same size as those used for the recent MECCANO Collection series, & they have the same general appearance. One or two of the TOY KRAFT models look a little like their MECCANO equivalents but all are relatively simpler in design & none the worse for that perhaps, particularly since they are for said to be suitable for 5 year olds.

A Smaller Indian MECHANIX Outfit At Skegex last year Ivor Ellard spotted a pile of these Sets, called **Junior MECHANIX**, on sale in a novelty shop, and this led to several OS gents queuing up to hand over their £9.99 to a slightly incredulous shop assistant. It's a smaller version of the Set described in 19/531 with similar packaging, in a box 15*9*1¼", with 5 photos of models that can be made from the Set on the red lid. As before the bottom of the box has illustrations of the parts and the number of each in the Set, and photos of 3 more models. The EEC label on the OSN 19 Set suggested it was unsuitable for the under-8s; the equivalent age on this one (again © 1997) is 3, which seems nonsense, and doesn't agree with a RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 7 AND ABOVE label stuck over a line of text in the main descriptive panel on the lid.

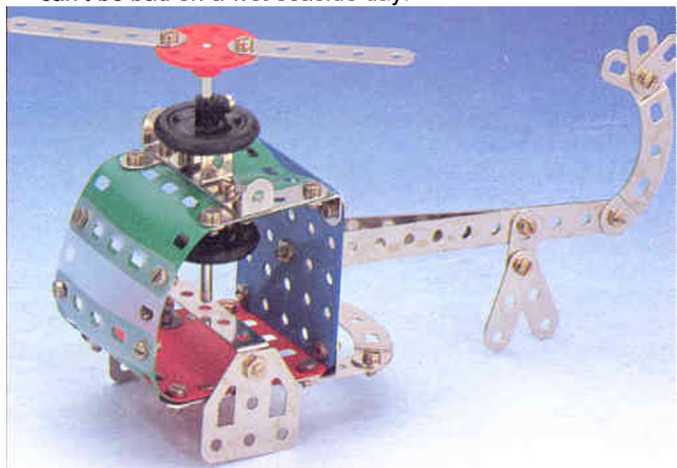
Contents The Set has no Flanged Sector Plate, Flat Girders, 53mm Pulley, or 1" Double Bracket, but otherwise the range of parts is as before, but with reduced quantities of most. In total I counted 74, including 4 of the 6 off 25mm Pulleys with Rubber Rings in the larger Set, plus 37 N&B.

Parts They are identical to those in OSN 19 except:

- All **Strips & Brackets** are painted silver with a thick, hard enamel, instead of being nickel plated.
- The **Nuts** are machined, 7.4mm A/F, and 2.2 mm thick; the CH of the **Bolts** is 5.8mm Ø.
- The **Screwdriver** has the same handle but the '453' is missing and the blade is 10mm shorter at 70mm.

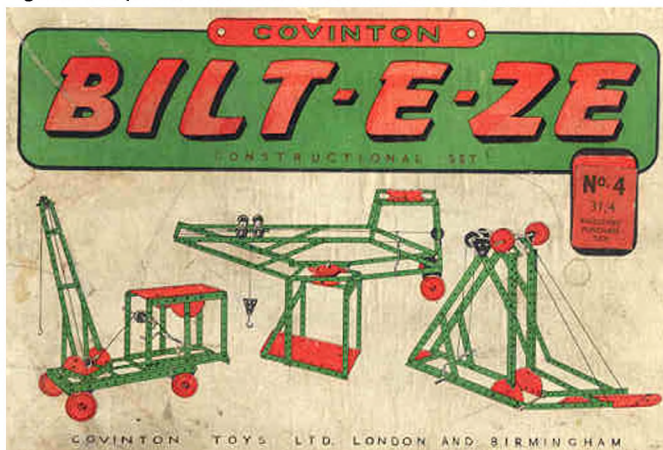
Model Leaflet It is 43*55½cm, folded into 6, with the name JR. MECHANIX on the front. There's one good colour photo of each of the 24 models included; the first is

DENTIST CHAIR & the last HELICOPTER (but different to the one below). Some half of the models are from the OSN 19 Manual, but none has the Parts Lists or step-by-step instructions which were provided. The new models are a little simpler, as might be expected, but are otherwise more of the same. Verdict: 24 fairly straightforward models for £10 can't be bad on a wet seaside day.



BILT-E-ZE Details of this small UK system are given in MCS but its hard to be sure just what the parts are like, and how they differ from VOGUE. Now David Hobson has found a No.4 Set, the largest in the range, complete & still strung in its box, and has kindly lent it for examination. BILT-E-ZE parts were mentioned in 8/183 & 17/465 but they don't exactly correspond to those in this Set, more of that anon.

The Box measures 9*16¼*1½" & the outside is printed with a pattern of fine, irregular brown lines. The white 10*8.4" label on the lid (below) has the name and 4 Manual models in solid red & green. At the bottom is COVINTON TOYS LTD. LONDON AND BIRMINGHAM, a name also on the Manual. A small label stuck over a space provided for it, gives the price, 'No.4 31/4 INCLUDING PURCHASE TAX'.



The PARTS There are 2 layers of parts, each strung to a brown card with thin, dark thread. The 72 Nuts are in a small envelope, and the Bolts & Split Pins in another; both have their contents printed on them. Most of the parts bear a strong resemblance to VOGUE and comparisons will be made in the notes that follow. The most striking difference is that the 4 Wheels run on ¼" Axles, which pass through the suitably sized apex holes of the Flat Trunnions.

• **DATA** (in mm) **Strip** (25-hole): •hole pitch/dia, 12.7/3.9-4.0. •width, 12.5; •thickness, .94; •corners chamfered. **Boss**: •o/d, 9.56; •i/d, 4.01; •brass; •double-tapped. **Thread**: 4 B.A. **Axle Dia**: 3.69 & 6.35. **Nut**: square 8.1 A/F; **Bolt**: round crosshead, 6.7 Ø; both blackened steel.

• The corner chamfers of the **Strips**, **DAS**, & **A/Gs** are slightly smaller than VOGUE, typically 3½-4mm along the diagonal against 4½-5. Holes are very slightly larger (3.9-4.0mm against 3.8-3.9), & the Strips vary in width a little,

12.5-12.7mm for the 25h, whereas all VOGUE are 12.7mm.

• The main **Plate** is 5*11h with chamfered corners and only perimeter holes. The **Semi-circular Plate** (called Double Gusset Plate) & the (triangular) **Flat Trunnion** (called Axle Bracket) are almost identical to VOGUE except for the larger apex hole in the latter (6.4mm Ø).

• The **Angle Bracket** has chamfered corners and round holes, but they are 4.9mm Ø, no doubt to allow a little adjustment (there are no slotted holes in the system). When VOGUE A/Bs have round holes they are standard size.

• The cast zinc **Wheels** (right) are 1¾" Ø with a bore of 6.4mm; they are 8mm wide at the thin rim and boss, with a 2mm thick web which is painted red. The **Axles** for them are 6.35mm Ø & 4½" long; the Wheels are retained by 10mm long Split Pins in 2.1mm Ø cross holes at each end.



• The normal **Axles**, called Spindles, have square ends and are, like Vogue, a loose fit in the bosses. The smallest is 2" long, not the 1½" listed in MCS. They, like the ¼" ones, have a black chemical finish, and so do the steel discs of the **Pulley & Bush Wheel**. The former is 1.04" Ø and the 'V' is wider than usual, more than 5mm - it is just like the 'VOGUE' one described at the top of the 1st column of 17/465. The Bush Wheel is conventional with 8 holes in its disc. Bosses are 10mm long and have similar conical recessed peening to VOGUE but it is usually not as deep.

• The **N&B** are blackened too - the pressed Nuts are only 1.7mm thick, & the Bolts are 6½mm u/h. The **Span'driver**, also black, is just like VOGUE except that the blade end is only 2.7mm wide, to fit the crosshead Bolts.

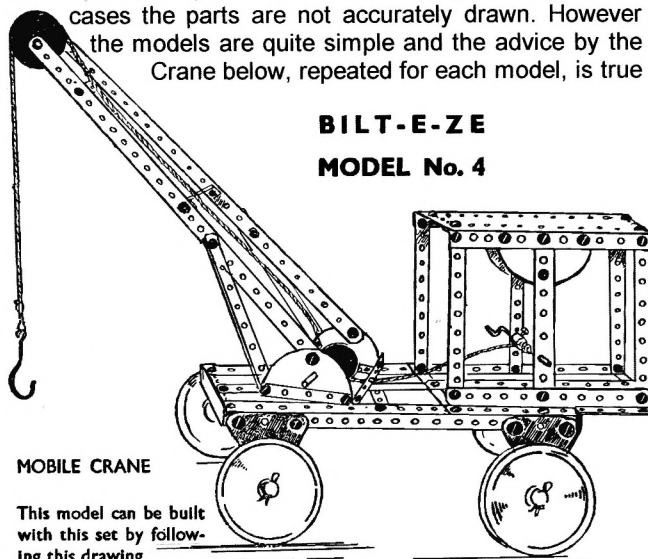
• **Collars** aren't like VOGUE, they are similar to the bosses, & 7.2mm long. The **Crank Handle** is VOGUE pattern except that the shank is 10mm shorter at 118mm, but it is only 2.92mm Ø and is copper plated. The Hook is almost exactly the VOGUE shape but is made of 1.6mm nicked wire instead of 2mm painted black.

• The parts are well made and finished, but with a very occasional sharp edge not found in VOGUE. Other blackened parts are the Flat Trunnions & DAS; the Strips & A/Gs are green, and the Plates red. The red is a shade lighter than VOGUE and the green is a little lighter too, and without the blueish looks of most VOGUE green parts.

• Apart from the unusual Wheels and associated parts, the Plate with its chamfered corners, and the A/Bs with larger than normal holes, the most noticeable difference from VOGUE is the different shade of green paint. Confirmation should come from the length of the chamfers, the size of the holes, and other detailed differences.

The **Manual** is a very simple affair with the Contents of the No.4 Set on the front and no proper covers. The 8 un-numbered pages are 132*210mm deep & the 7 Models run from No.1, OVERHEAD TRAVELLING CRANE on p2, to No.7, EXCAVATOR, on p8. All are line drawings, and in some cases the parts are not accurately drawn. However the models are quite simple and the advice by the Crane below, repeated for each model, is true

BILT-E-ZE MODEL No. 4



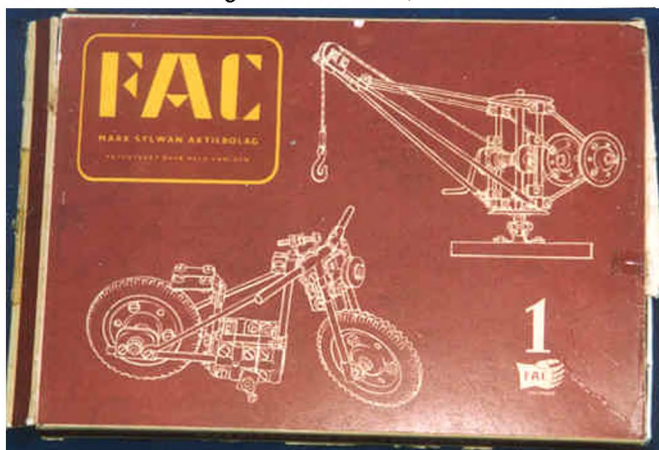


The 'Basic' Indian MECHANIX Set This is a smaller version of the Junior outfit described in 22/627. The box is smaller, 33*21½*3½cm, but the packaging is similar, and the EEC label again has © 1997 on it. The Item No. above the(stuck-on) barcode is 055/091; for the Junior it was /093.

Another FAC No.1 Set This Set, kindly lent by David Hobson, has different packaging to the one described in 18/508. It is complete apart from the manual, the Tools, Tyres, some NBW, and one or two other parts.

The box is brown cardboard, 31½*18*1½cm, and is divided up into 11 areas by 4½mm thick wooden partitions. Printed in dark red on the lid is: 'FAC', & some Swedish words ending in 'MARK SYLVAN A.B.', at top left; and '1' & the Glove logo, bottom right. Pasted on in the middle is a colour photo of a Crane sitting on rocks, as in the manual cover in MCS. This box may be earlier than the No.1 box described in 18/508 – both the lid & the partitioning look less of a 'production job'. Not much can be seen in a copy of the lid so below the one from the OSN 18 No.1 Set – it is printed white on dark red, with the FAC panel in yellow.

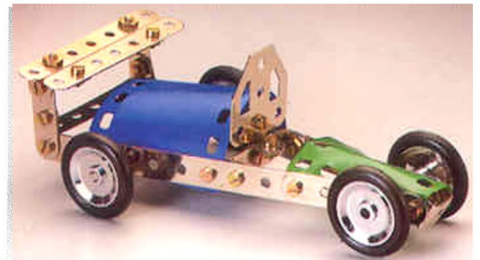
The parts are mostly as the 1953 parts in OSN 18 with the following exceptions & amplifications: • Collars are double-tapped. • The Hook is 33½mm o/a. • The Loose Pulley is brass and 16mm o.d. • Compared to the Set Contents, there are 5 instead of 4x 90mm Rods & 4 instead of 5x 106mm. • The throw of the Crank Handle is 30mm, and its handle is about 22mm long. • The Washer is 8mm o.d. and not the 6mm stated by mistake in OSN 18. • Some of the remaining N&B are the normal FAC black ones, with Bolts in all the appropriate lengths, but there are also some plain steel ones with smaller Nuts, 5.4mm A/F, and 8 & 12mm Bolts with larger cheeseheads, 5.3 to 5.5mm Ø.



On the bottom right of the lid is 'ART. NO. 52', there was nothing similar on the earlier Sets. Otherwise the lid is generally similar to the Junior, red with photos of 5 models on it.

The Set has 25 N&B against 37 in the Junior and the total number of other parts is reduced by about the same proportion. The 6 parts omitted completely are the Flanged Plate, Trunnion, ½" & 1" Loose Pulley, Crank Handle, & Driving Band. Those remaining are identical to their Junior counterparts except that the 1" Pulley is black plastic (with the same nickel boss) and the Screwdriver, missing from the Set, must be shorter, judging by the 12cm long recess for it in the packaging.

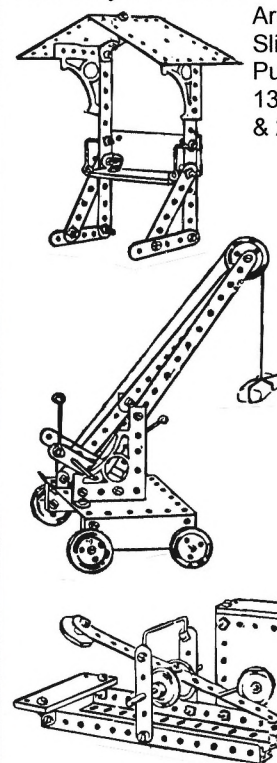
The Model Sheet is generally similar too, but smaller at 47*35½cm, and the Set Contents are shown in the centre on the back. 7 models, from ROBOT to CRANE, are on the front side with the name panel, with 3 photo steps for each. Overleaf are 10 more, from MINI CAR to TRICYCLE, with just one photo of each model. 2 of the 'Basic' models were on the Junior Sheet, including the Helicopter of 22/628, & a few others are modified versions of earlier designs. One of the better models is shown right, and it could easily be improved using the rest of the parts in the Set.



PRIMIUS OUTFITS A, B & C David Hobson kindly gave me a photocopy of the Model Leaflet for these small sets, hitherto only known by name. They are thought to have been introduced in 1924, no doubt in an attempt to boost sales in the face of difficult times for the company.

The Leaflet is a sheet about 17*8½" folded into three. On one side a panel in which is shown 2 boys playing with a Crane, with a Coach & an open set in the foreground, a well known PRIMUS scene, and 30, 54 & 84 models are claimed for Sets A, B & C. Alongside are the 30 'C' models, while on the back are those for Outfits A & B. The models aren't named or numbered, and there is a small line drawing of each.

From the models, the main parts in Set A are 2x 11h & 6x 5h Strips, a 6*6h Plate, 2x 1" Loose Pulleys, & 2 1½" Wire Stays. Added in 'B' are: 4x 6h Strips, another Plate, 2 Architraves, a Crank Handle, 2 Wood Slips, and 2 each 1" Loose & Fast Pulleys; extra in 'C': 2x 13h Strips, 2x 13h A/Gs, 2 Slips, 2x 1" Fast Pulleys, & 2 each 1½" & 3½" Stays.



As might be expected Set C is appreciably smaller than the smallest standard outfit, No.0, and the range of parts in the two are rather different, with no Architraves in the No.0. All the A/B/C models are very simple of course, and some could be improved from the parts in the Sets, but the Architraves do improve the appearance in some cases, and nearly all the 'A' models are much better than those for the very small JUNIOR ENGINEER'S OUTFIT described in 9/231. The models on the left are actual size - the Seat & Crane are for Set B & the Trip Hammer for 'C'.

PHANTASIE Thanks to Wilbert Swinkels for sending references about this prewar German system (see 15/417) from two of his web pages (<http://wiswin.nl/News%202015%202%20Viertel.html> and <http://wiswin.nl/News%202016%203%20Viertel.html>), and for permission to use his photos.

Right, his Fleischmann era No.2 set and it has 1929 handwritten inside the lid. It matches an illustration of the set in a trade catalogue from about that year. The Part 20 shown in the Illustrated Parts and which was called a Spring Clip in OSN 15 is in fact a bifurcated Clip to hold the parts to the backing board. There would have been about 30 in the No.2. However as explained later it can have a limited use in models. The Catalogue listed Sets 1-4 which were said to have 44, 70, 90, & 138 parts. Wilbert's site also has a photo of the No.4 set in EZ (Tafel 40). Its box is wooden with a sliding lid and inside there is sheet metal partitioning along one, and along half of an adjacent, side. The lid label is as on the No.2.

The manual with the No.2 is the same page size as the one in OSN 15 and has the same cover, but only 28 inside pages and 68 models. And it does not include the Illustrated Parts page. The No.4 photo includes an open manual showing models that are not in the OSN 15 edition and a Leaflet with 5 models which are.

Since the OSN 15 piece I've built the Lorry below and it was a sturdy model once the Wedges were pushed well home. The Clip 20 would fit over the Axle (as in Fig.2) but was not springy enough to act as a Spring Clip. It was though used to attach the Axle into which the Crank (starting) Handle was inserted, and to attach the (non-PHANTASIE) Steering Wheel. The other 'cheat' was the Tyres, courtesy Dutch CONSTRUCTOR. The tyres greatly improved the model's appearance and even a disc of the same diameter would have done so. By way of comparison Fig.5 is a Set 4 model, the best Lorry in the manual. Judg-

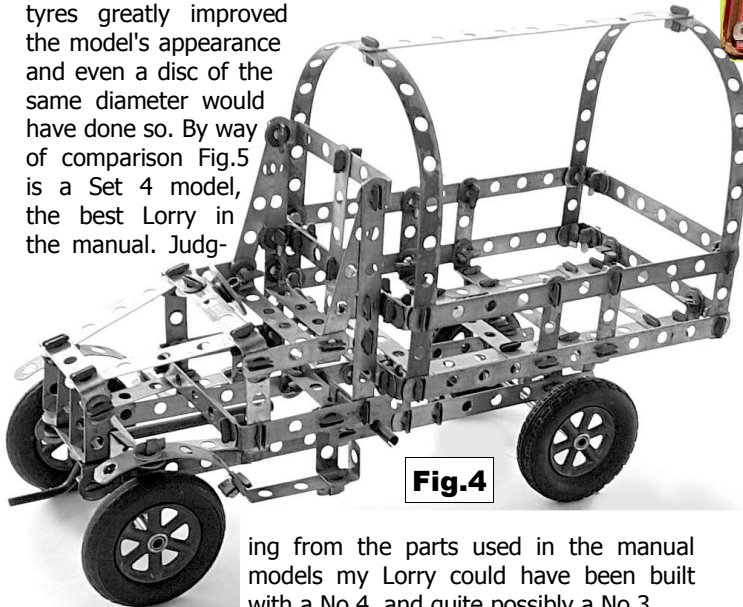


Fig.4

ing from the parts used in the manual models my Lorry could have been built with a No.4, and quite possibly a No.3.



Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3

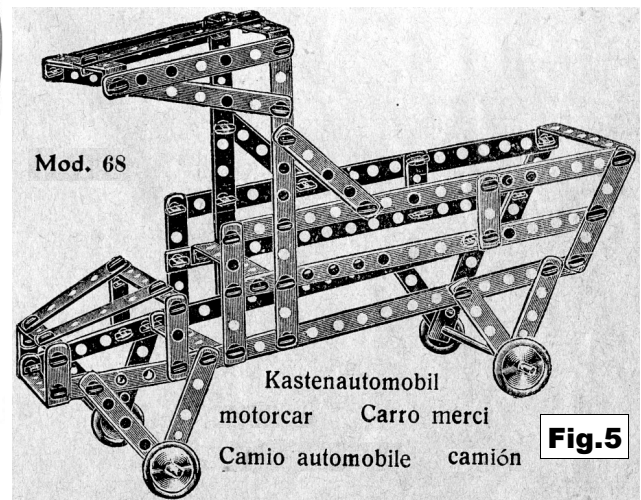


Fig.5

PHANTASIE: S1

OSN 52/1610

MECHANIX Update

This is about the Indian MECHANIX produced by Zephyr Toymakers Pvt. Ltd. of Mumbai. The last note on it was in 24/712.

23 sets are shown on their website: • One right has 2125 parts for a 51" high Eiffel Tower. • 4 have several hundred parts, 2 of them with a Motor. 8 to 25 models are shown per set. • The rest, including a Pocket & a Mini series, are smaller but most allow at least 1 of 3 models. The models: Planes, Robots,



Fig.1

MECHANIX [2]: S1

Cars, Motorbikes, Buggies, & a tracked, motorized little Tank, are in the current fashion, but a few have a slightly 'futuristic' look. Below an exception, the model from a Vintage Car set.

The system has 72 different parts, and they are sold individually from the website.

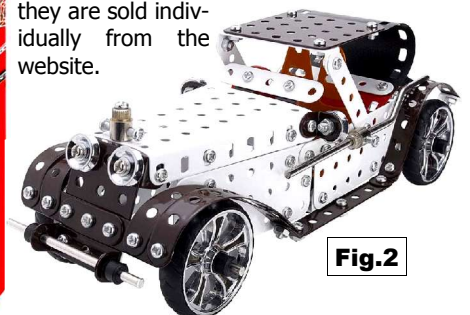


Fig.2

OSN 52/1610