

MÉCAVION

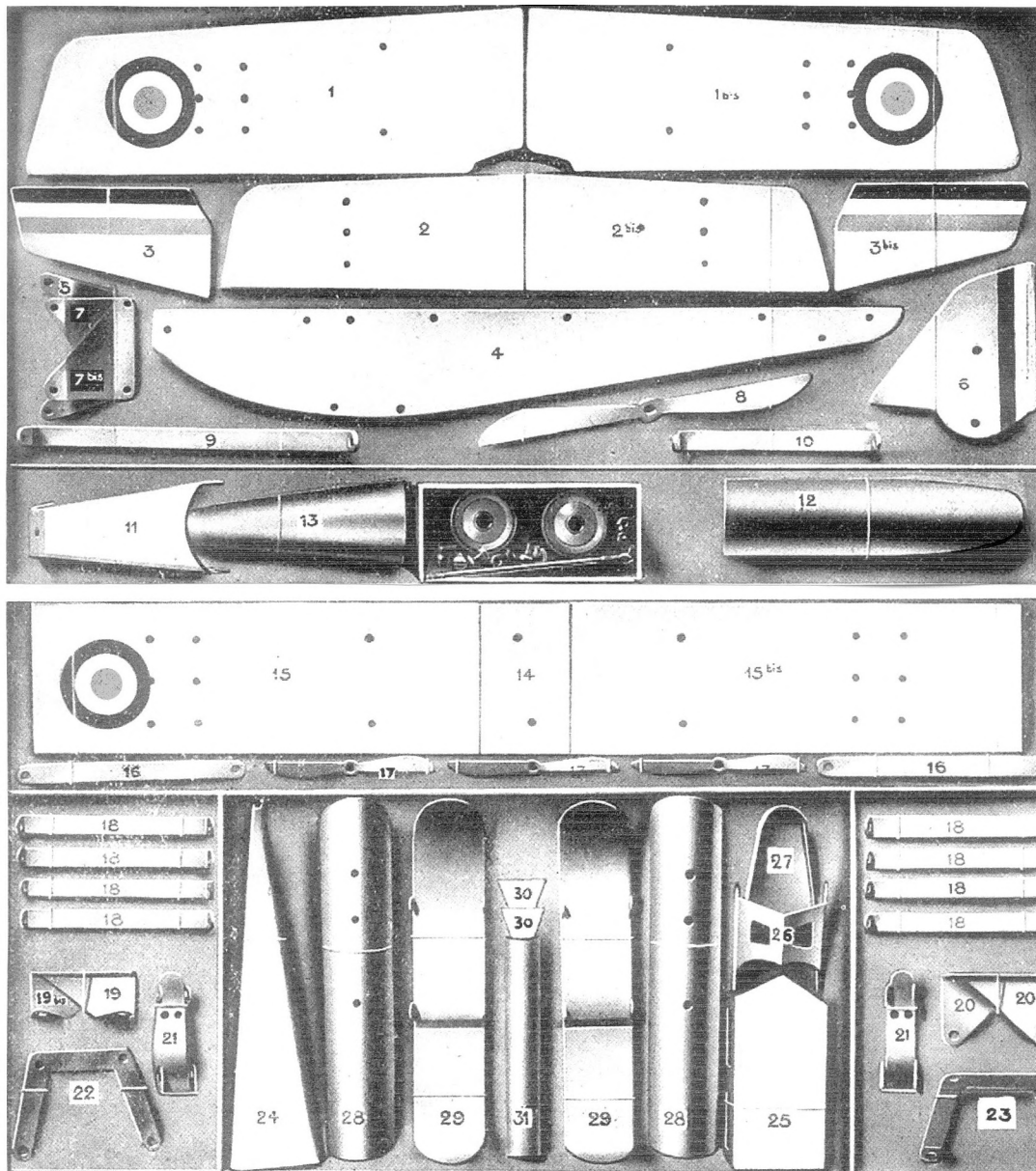
This French aero system is in MCS but only some of the parts are shown. This account is based on: • a manual that Philip Woodcock very kindly sent; • a small lot of parts; • a 'Standard' set, incomplete but with manual, and some additional parts, all kindly lent by David Hobson. None of the material tells anything about the maker, or even where the system was made. Dates too are uncertain: MCS gives 1930 but 1928 has also been mentioned.

The SETS An ad in MCS labelled '1930' shows 2 outfits, a Standard & an add-on Complémentaire. Opposite are the illustrations of them from the manuals. A 'Coffret de luxe' is also mentioned in the manuals, and had all the parts from the aforesaid 2 sets plus a Motor Unit. This Unit was sold separately as well.

The other MCS ad is from 1934 & lists 12 sets: '000 Baby; 000 bis Baby complet.; 00 Baby complet.; 0 Baby; 1 Standard; 1 bis complet.; 2 bis complet.; 3 complet.; 4 moteur; 5 standard moteur; 6 standard compl.; 7 standard complet moteur.' Presumably 'complet.' is 'complémentaire' abbreviated. Some of the prices in the ad can be seen and the '1 Standard' cost Fr50, the same as the Standard in the first ad. '3' is probably the Complémentaire of the first ad, again at Fr50, with the 1 bis & 2 bis intermediate add-on sets. 4 is the Motor Unit at Fr30, & 5 would be the 1 with Motor; the 6 the 1+3; and the 7 the 6 plus Motor, that is the earlier Coffret de luxe. It cost Fr130. In the Baby series the No.000 cost Fr23 & the No.0 Fr35. It's hard to see how the No.1 could be reduced in scope to create these sets, so, at a wild guess, perhaps a range of different, smaller parts was used in them.

By way of comparison a MECCANO No.1 Aero Set, very broadly equivalent to the MÉCAVION Standard, cost Fr65 in 1931.

The lid of David's Standard set is shown below. It is 23*43cm, about the size given for the two boxes in the first



ad, and is an imitation dark brown leather on the outside & light blue within. The large, colourful label is blue with yellow rays and a silver plane, plus boys & models against red wallpaper in the bottom corners. The slogan across the top is 'L'Avenir est dans les Aïrs' – The Future is in the Sky. A yellow label on one side of the lid gives the set's name and says that 7 models can be made from it. The depth of the box is 4½cm and the parts all sit on false floors: 2cm high for parts #11-13, and the box for small parts in the middle; 3½cm high for the card to which the other parts #1-12 are strung.

The Set shown in MCS is a No.1 Standard and, compared with the above, all the major parts 1-13 can be seen, but differently arranged. Small parts are in a box of about the same size, 90*38mm, but it is a rich blue with an 'ACCESSOIRES MÉCAVION' label on the lid. The main box lid is red and the label, in blue, white & red, is much smaller & simpler. It has MÉCAVION at the top, Constructions Aéronautiques at the bottom, and clouds & a Biplane in between. The Instructions, for 7 models, are inside the lid.

The PARTS Holes are 3.6mm at variable spacing. The thread is M3.5. Dimensions given below are overall unless otherwise stated. Struts are 8mm wide; the lengths given for them are between bends for those with angled ends, and between end hole centres for flat ones. Handed parts have 'bis' after their PN. The numbered parts, #1-13, in the Standard Set are as follows.

• **The Wings** #1 & 2, a pair of each in the Set, are 203 & 126mm long, and are flanged at their inner ends. Neither

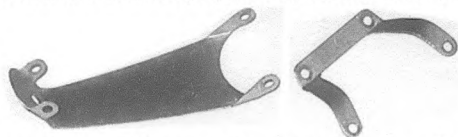
MODÈLE 5

Avion de chasse

Monoplan parasol (1)



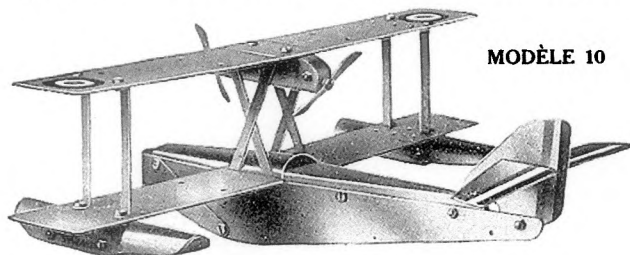
they nor the tail surfaces have any chordwise curvature. • The **Tailplane**, 3, 80mm long, also has an inboard attachment flange, triangular with 1 hole. • The **Fuselage Side**, 4, is 309mm long. • In Model 5, above, the Wings are bolted together through their flanges and joined to the fuselage by a **Centre U-Strut**, 5, below, at each side, also bolted to the



flanges. • The **Fin**, 6, is 72mm long, with an upper hole to provide an alternative position for the Tailplanes. • The triangular **U/C (Undercarriage) Leg**, 7, is 42mm long; the **Propeller**, 8, 140mm diameter, the **Wing Stay**, 9, 127mm long, and the **Interplane Z-Strut**, 10, 75mm. • The Fuselage Sides are joined by the **Front Top**, 12, the **Rear Top**, 13, & the **Nose Underside**, 11, (above, left). The Propeller is attached to the upturned nose section of #11, and the part is bolted to the Sides by the lugs at the back and on the nose. #12 is 125mm long, with the flanges on each side cutback at the front to clear the N&B in #11's nose lugs. #13 is 112mm long, flanged along each side.

Other parts in the Standard set are: • The **U/C Wheel**, a loose pulley, 25mm Ø, with eyelet centre, and fitted with a white rubber ring. • The **Axle**, 3.50mm Ø, 86mm long with the ends threaded M3.5 over 12mm. • **N&B**. The hex Nuts, 6.0mm A/F, & the 6.0mm Ø fillister Bolts, 6mm u/h, are both nicked steel. • A wooden round handled **Screwdriver**, 11½cm long with a 5½cm blade, was found in the Set, and the flat nickel **Spanner** left, 62mm overall, in one lot of parts.

The numbered parts in the Complémentaire set, 14-31, are described below. Items not seen are starred. • Two pairs of rectangular **Wings**, 15 & 15 bis, 180mm long, again flanged inboard. • A wing **Centre Section***, 14, used in the top wing of a Biplane. • 4 flat **Struts**, 16, 85mm long, used as cross bracing between the Floats, and to support an Engine Nacelle above the fuselage, as in Model 10 below.

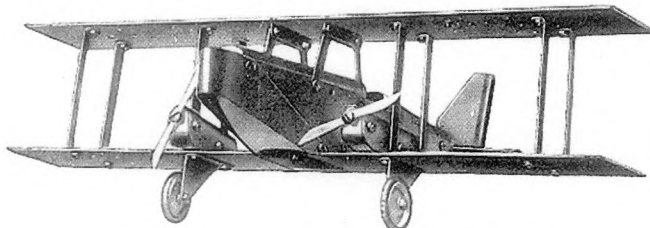


MODÈLE 10

Hydravion, type "GRAND RAID"

Biplan bi-moteur à moteurs en tandem

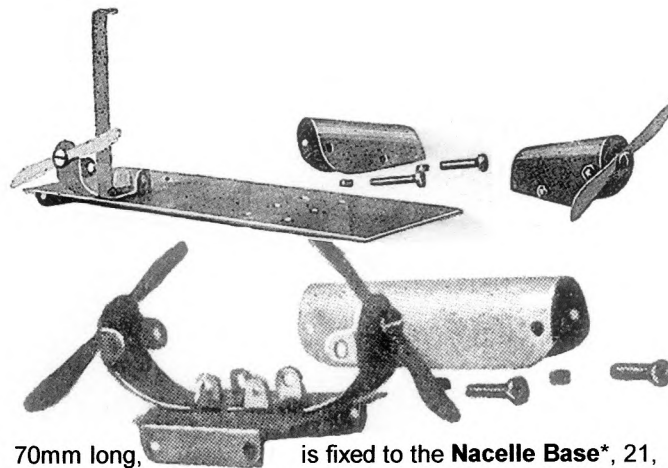
'Grand Raid' by the way means long range. • The shallow U-shaped **Interplane Struts**, 18, 76mm long, are used with the Wings 15, as in Model 9 below. • The **Small Nacelle**, 30,



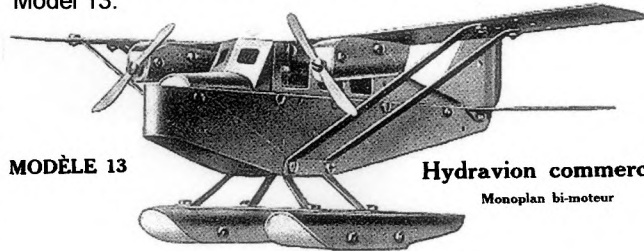
MODÈLE 9

Avion de bombardement

Biplan bi-moteur à moteurs latéraux



70mm long, is fixed to the **Nacelle Base***, 21, as above, top. • The **Large Nacelle**, 30, 92mm long, sits on two of the Nacelle Bases, one at each end, (above), bolted here to the wing Centre Section. • The **Support Bracket**, 19, is used to support an Engine Nacelle clear above a Wing, or, bolted to the bottom of a fuselage side, as a horizontal U/C leg. It is the U/C Leg, 7, but formed into a shallow 'U'. • The **Wing U/C Leg**, 20, (see Model 9) is the U/C Leg but flat apart from the 90° flange at the top. • The 3 small **Propellers**, 17, are 70mm diameter. • The **Flat Centre U-Strut**, 22, is bolted to the flanges of the Wing & Centre Section, as in Model 9. • The **Float Strut**, 23, is made from PN 22 but angled top & bottom, and is used to attach the Float to the fuselage, as in Model 13 below. • The **Float*** is assembled from a Base, 29, & a Body, 28, as shown under Model 13.



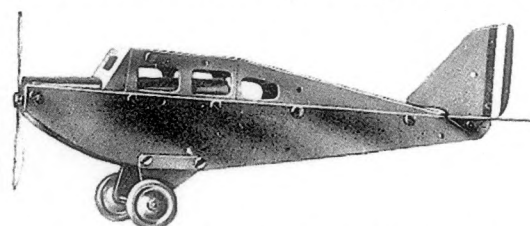
MODÈLE 13

Hydravion commercial

Monoplan bi-moteur



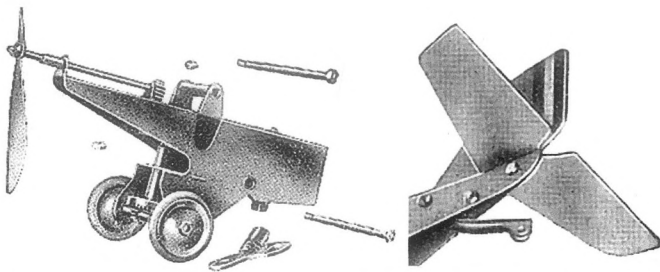
There are 4 extra fuselage parts. • The **Nose Extension***, 27, wraps around the normal nose, as in Model 9, leaving a forward cockpit, but with no floor, by the look of it. • The **Cabin Front** 26, bolts to the **Cabin**, 25, which in turn is bolted over the existing Front Top Fuselage, as in the fuselage E below, with the Top Fuselage showing through



the windows. The cabin is continued backwards by the **Cabin Rear Fuselage**, 25, which replaces the Rear Top Fuselage. It can also be bolted to the Sides with the front lowered, as in Model 10, but I'm not sure what the discontinuity this leaves is meant to represent.

Other parts are a **Short Axle*** for use with the Wing U/C Leg, and 3 **Studs**, 18, 21*, & 36mm long, each 3.5mm Ø rod threaded at each end (like the Axle). They are used instead of long bolts in assembling parts like the Float & Nacelles.

The clockwork **Motor Unit*** is shown overleaf, with contrate drives to the Prop & Wheels. It fits inside the standard fuselage, held by the two long Studs. Also shown is an **Adjustable Tail Wheel** that was supplied with the Motor – it is a U-section arm 44mm long, which has a 13mm Ø,



thin wheel at one end and a Bolt allowing adjustment in azimuth at the other. This holds it fast against a 20mm long shoe above it, which is bolted inside the fuselage and holds the nut for the adjustment bolt fast between its sides. All the parts are brass steel.

COLOURS The parts are painted silver, with red & blue areas in some cases. One lot has all the parts silver but with French roundels on the top of the Wings #1, and 2 of the 4 Wings, #15. The Fin & top of the Tail have French flashes as in the manual photos. (These flashes are on all the known parts and define where the rudder & elevators might be.) Other Wing parts have red on the top of all the wings behind a diagonal from the inboard leading edge to the trailing edge (as in MCS), and sometimes a roundel is added on the silver part of the top wings. A decorated Fuselage Side is red, with the nose & a long, lengthwise teardrop flash silver – on the other side blue replaces the red. A Fuselage Rear Top has a blue top. In lots with these red or blue parts the Propellers and Wheels are red. In one such some of the Struts & U/C Legs are nicked instead of the normal silver paint.

The parts in the MCS set are given as buff, red, & white.

The MANUALS The one with David's set has 32 pages, 186*132mm deep, plus covers. The latter are grey,



and plain except for the black words on the front (left) and the printer 'IMPRIMERIE H.PONTAUT – COSNE –' on the back. After an Intro on pp1-2 there are 2 pages about the parts of full-size aircraft and a little on how they fly, with men-

tion of the role of the elevator & rudder, but not the ailerons. Pages 5 & 6 have the photos of the Sets shown earlier, and 7-12 show Assemblies A – L, from Fuselage to Groupe Moteur (the Large Nacelle). Then come Models 1-7 for the Standard Set, from Avion de tourisme on p13, to Avion de bombardement on p19, and Models 8-19 using the Complémentaire set, from Avion type 'Grand Raid' on p20, to Hydravion torpilleur on p31. p32 is blank. There is a reasonable photo, a parts list, & brief building instructions, for each model. With one or two exceptions the models are interesting looking and credible. The open cockpit looks rather stark and it's perhaps surprising that no Pilot was supplied. The parts seen are well made and fit together neatly, except that there is a small gap between the back of the Cabin Rear Fuselage and the tailplane.

Philip's manual is similar but probably slightly later. The covers are brown and the printer (on p32 with his logo on C4) is A.Waton, St. Etienne. Pages 1-6 are the same but p7 now has a photo of the parts in the Coffret de luxe. Then the Assemblies & Models 1-14 are the same except that different photos are used in some cases and minor changes have been made to 2 models. The earlier Model 15 (a low wing, 3 engine Seaplane) is omitted and thereafter (pp28-31) the Models 15-18 are the previous 16-19. p32 shows the Motor Unit, mentioned but not shown in the earlier version, and how to fit it, and the Adjustable Tail Wheel. The model photos in this edition are clearer than in the first one.

As already mentioned the Instructions for the MCS Standard Set are inside the lid. Not all the detail can be seen but if they contain any general instructions they are much

abbreviated. Most of the space is devoted to the 7 models shown, each with a picture and a few lines of print under it. Only 5 of the models can be seen at all clearly and they seem to be those from the manuals above.

QUESTION Why did none of the makers of Aero sets include items such as (imitation) bombs & machine guns? It would have increased their 'play value' and even a simple release mechanism for bombs could have been included.

SNIPPETS The items in this and all later 'Snippets', are based on pictures culled from eBay, unless stated otherwise.

CONSTRUMECANICO This name is in my Database but with no details except that it is Mexican (and that's in some doubt because I can't now trace where the information came from). But the box lid below proves the name, and from the U-09 Set No., there may have been a number of outfits. The whole lid is in colour with the Crane on a green table, and a



brown-grey wall behind. The models has silver Strips, and probably A/Gs, with red Flanged Plates including a Sector Plate at the back, and blue Flexible Plates. 'METAL BUILDING SET' can be seen on the lid's apron, and the bottom of the box is blue.

A BOYCRAFT SET The metal box below may well be a red herring. It is light blue and has a red label inside the lid with the name, and U.S.A. in small letters under it. To the left are 2 boys standing by a bench which has a vice on its foremost corner, and they are examining a something which can't be seen clearly but doesn't really look as if it's made from the parts in the box. The latter appear to be ERECTOR and are silver, perhaps aluminium, in colour, apart from a red Trunnion, a brass 1" Pulley, and the red/yellow little House. In another view some pages from a manual, almost certainly ERECTOR, can be seen to the left of the box.

I understand that Boycraft made a range of toys but I've no reference to ERECTOR being sold under that name. Probably at some point the empty box was found to be a convenient receptacle for some homeless ERECTOR parts.



included – no doubt with the same content as the No.7 but with different packaging.

The LETTERED SETS The set designations were changed to letters. A lettered Baby set has been seen but no Classic sets. However they probably existed because the instructions in the lid of a set identical to the No.1 (Fig.4) are for sets 'C et 12'.

The DOUBLE-DIGIT NUMBERED SETS Set 12 was part of the range after this final change to the numbering. Both No.12's seen have the same parts as the No.1 except that they have wire Screwdrivers (with MECCANO shaped handles) instead on the wooden-handled ones in earlier sets. One was said to be from the 1950s. One of their open boxes is shown in Fig.3 and the inside of the lid in Fig.4.

Two other double-digit boxes have been seen, No.14, the Motor, in a red box with a plain yellow label, and a new set No.15 described later. So, assuming that it existed, No.13 would have been the successor to the Complémentaire/No.3 add-on outfits.

The BABY SETS

There were two series of Baby sets with many of the parts quite different, and I'll call them Types 1 & 2. It's not known when the first outfits were introduced but their lids were in the Fig.1 style. Nor is there a date for the second phase, and though all have the final, Fig.5, style of lid, it was also used for some of the Type 1 outfits.

TYPE 1 with the FIG.1 LABEL The first lids were blue



Fig.7

with labels which differed from the Fig.1 pattern in only a few details, notably by having the set name across the tailplane (instead of 'Amuse et Instruit'). A Price List with one such set was dated 12/34.

Set 00 Most of the parts can be seen in the set above, in a box 24*43cm. The main Fuselage is in one piece and the part in the top left corner fits into it to provide the nose and under part of the front of the fuselage. It appears to be the casing of the Motor unit in Fig.8. Of the other parts the red Centre Top Wing (top, right) is new, & the narrower Floats, but most of the other parts appear to be from the Classic range. Possibly not the Fin though, it seems a little smaller with no centre hole. The holes in new parts are about 3mm, smaller than the 3½mm of the classic pieces. The old and new parts marry together quite well in the models. The 4-page instructional leaflet has 'Type "Baby" 0 et 00' on the front and 8 models are shown on the other pages with written instructions for each.

Set 0 Subject to confirmation, it was identical to the 00 except that it included the Motor Unit instead of just its Casing. Said Motor Unit has a prop shaft at the front and a large contrate underneath which meshes with a pinion on the undercarriage Axle. (One Ebay seller mentioned a missing Key so presumably it is clockwork and not simply the prop shaft



Fig.8

geared to the contrate so that the Propeller turns when the model is pushed along the ground.)

Set 000 No examples of a 000 from this time have been seen but a later Type 1 Set 000 is described below.

TYPE 1 with the LABEL BELOW Only 'Baby' sets have been seen with this lid label.



Fig.9

Set 0 The set seen is in a blue box with a model leaflet as in the No.00 already described, and with the same parts except that the Floats look to be the wider Classic type. A similar set, but probably a No.00, has the same wide Floats, and has the instructions glued inside the lid. None of the other Baby sets seen, earlier or later, with this type of label or otherwise, have the wide Floats.

Set 000 The next two sets have brown lids, and are probably both No.000. The first, 28*16*2.8cm, looks unused and has a Motor, no Floats, no Struts, only 2 Wings, and the parts are painted all silver with only the usual roundels & flashes as decoration. It was said that there were instructions for 2 models. The few remaining parts in the second set match those above and there are instructions inside the lid (in B&W) for 2 models (the only ones that would be possible, a Low Wing and a Shoulder Wing Monoplane). They include an illustration of the Motor Unit.

New Colours The next set is in a red box with the Model Leaflet for Sets 0 & 00, as before. The parts too are as before except for their colours. The main parts are yellow, with the Fuselage nose and the flash on the Floats blue, and the coloured triangles on the Wings red.

TYPE 1 with the FIG.5 LABEL The sole set seen with this label is a No.000 in a red box. The only remaining parts are the Fin and Tailplanes, silver with the usual flashes.

TYPE 2 All the sets have the Fig.5 label and all, except as noted, have red boxes.

TYPE 2 NUMBERED Sets Of these first sets, examples of Nos.00 & 000 have been seen and neither include a Motor.

Set 00 The parts can be seen in the box below, and in a model overleaf, made from a later equivalent outfit. The parts that are definitely new are the Wings, Fin, Nose (to the right of the LH Float), the Float, the 'V' Interplane Struts, 3-bladed Propeller, and Span'driver. The Fuselage could be the same as before though the models are said to be 23cm long, against the 21cm quoted for Type 1. The span is also slightly greater – with the Wings bolted to the Fuselage it is 31½cm



Fig.10



Fig.11

against 29cm. The instructions, for 8 models, in black & red, are inside the lid. The box size is 35*21½cm.

Set 000 has no Small Wings and no Floats. The instructions, again inside the lid, are for 3 model (the Centre Wing Struts are included in the Set so a parasol wing model is possible). Jacques has one of these sets and its box is 30.7*17.8*3.7cm.

Set 0 It would be strange if there was not a Set 0 at the time and it ought logically to be the 00 with a Motor, though no indication has been found that there was a Motor in the Type 2 era. Or possibly the old No.0 was simply continued alongside the new sets.

TYPE 2 LETTERED SETS With the change to lettered sets the 000 became Set A and the 00, Set B. And as Set C was a Classic set there were presumably only two Baby outfits. The only box seen, a Set A, is light brown and was said to measure 37½*21½cm.

TYPE 2 DOUBLE-DIGIT NUMBERED SETS When numbered sets were reintroduced A & B became 10 & 11 respectively with the same parts, instructions, and colour scheme, except that the nose of the Fuselage was painted red, as in the Fig.9 model. The No.10 box measures 34½*21½cm.

The MULTI-ENGINED OUTFIT

The Set was called Pilote d'Essais (Test Pilot) and it has a single layer of parts in a red box about 51*35cm. The featured model (right) is: Avion type Boeing 'La Forteresse Volante' (The Flying Fortress). The label, below, has photos of 3 of the stars (Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Spencer Tracy) who appeared in the MGM film Test Pilot. Said film was released in America in April 1938 and was probably shown in France in the summer of that year. But the name Flying Fortress was first used for the B-17 during WW2 and so it is unlikely that the Set was prewar. Perhaps the film was rereleased after the war. There is '1 Jan 1957' written in the top left corner of the inside of the lid (Fig.17). The '15' in the bottom right corner of the lid is thought to be the set number – it isn't on all the lids seen but



Fig.12

NOMENCLATURE DES PIÈCES			
401 d	Aile droite.	410	Tige entretoise.
401 g	— gauche.	411	Capot moteur supérieur.
402	Flasque droite.	412	— — Inférieur.
402 b	— gauche.	413	— — Avant.
403 d	Stabilisateur droite.	414	Hélice.
403 g	— gauche.	415	Atterrisseur.
404	Dérive.	416	Bec-entretoise.
405	Nez de Fuselage.	417	Ressort.
406	Capot Fuselage Supérieur.	418	Roue.
406 b	— — Inférieur.	419	Béquille.
407	Cabine avant.	420	Mât d'antenne.
408	Pare-brise.	421	Colerette.
409	Cabine arrière.		

Fig.13



Fig.14

it looks to be a label and so may have been prone to fall off.

Fig.13 is a list of the parts in the Set as given in the Instructions and the major ones can be seen in the open box above (one Wheel is missing), and in the model below. Assembly of the models is mostly as would be expected but unusual or unexplained points are noted in the following list of the parts (as in Fig.13 but with my English names). **#401d,g Wings**, handed and flanged to bolt to the fuselage; **#402,b Fuselage Sides**, handed; **#403d,g Tailplanes**, handed and flanged at each end to bolt to the fuselage & to the Fins; **#404 Fin** (handed in the sets and models seen by virtue of



Fig.15

the flashes on their outside faces); **#405 Fuselage Nose**, in Fig.14 it is the transparent part (yellow in other sets) between the lower pair of Engine Cowlings. I think it pushes onto the front of the fuselage and is held under the head of the Bolt on either side of the front of the fuselage; **#406,b Forward Fuselage, Top & Bottom**; **#407 Mid Fuselage Top**; **#408 Windscreen**, is between the inner Propellers in Fig.14, and is probably held by the Bolt each side under the first side window; **#409 Rear Fuselage Top**; (The Fuselage parts are in the top row in Fig.14

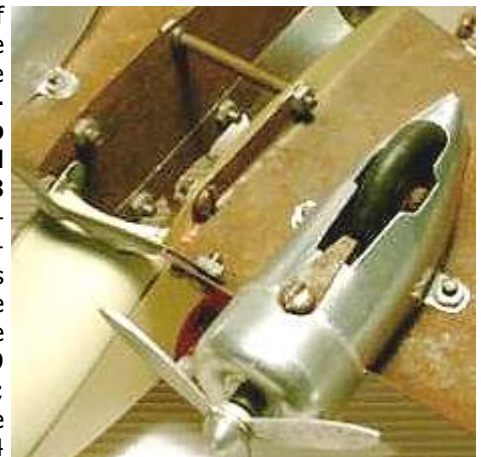


Fig.16

5. MÉCAVION Parts in 1933 Some details of MÉCAVION were given in 40/1199 but with practically no dates, and no complete list of the parts. So an illustrated Parts Price List dated Dec. 1933 now to hand is very welcome, and lists both the 'Classic' & the Baby parts. The maker is as given before and below the details of the parts, rearranged. The Baby parts are the Type 1 in OSN 41, and include the Motor unit (it cost less than the price of a pair of Wings). The Wings etc which were thought to be as the Classic parts have slightly different prices but that might be because of their different finishes. 1933 seems to have been the last year of the Type 1 sets because the 1934 list of sets in MCS that was mentioned in

N°	Pièce		N°	Pièce	
1	Aile.....	4.75	30	Capot.....	1.40
1bis	.....	4.75	31	.....	1.80
2	.....	2.50	32	Essieu.....	0.45
2bis	.....	2.50	33	Tournevis.....	1.75
3	Aileron.....	2.75	34	Clé.....	0.45
3bis	.....	2.75	35	Roue.....	1.25
4	Flasque.....	3.85	35bis	métal.....	0.40
5	Cadre.....	1.20	36	Tige de 36 ^{3/32}	0.40
6	Gouvernail.....	2.75	37	.....	21 ^{3/32} 0.25
7	Flasque.....	0.70	38	.....	18 ^{3/32} 0.20
7bis	.....	0.70	39	Axe.....	0.35
8	Hélice.....	1.20	40	Béquille.....	1.80
9	Mât.....	1.35	41	Axe de béquille.....	0.45
10	.....	1.15	42	Entretoise de	
11	Ventre.....	3.35	43	moteur.....	0.35
12	Dessus AV.....	3.15	43	Clé pr moteur.....	1.80
13	- AR.....	2.80	44	Bandæ de roue.....	0.30
14	Plan.....	1.85	Boîte 10 vis.....	1.35	
15	Aile.....	4.60	10 écrous.....	0.85	
15bis	.....	4. »	10 boulons.....	1.95	
16	Entretoise.....	0.95			
17	Hélice.....	0.40			
18	Mât.....	1.15			
19	Entretoise.....	0.70			
19bis	.....	0.70			
20	Flasque.....	0.70			
20bis	.....	0.70			
21	Bâti.....	1.25			
22	Cadre.....	0.90			
23	.....	1.20			
24	Cabine AV.....	2.85			
25	- AR.....	2.50			
26	Pare-brise.....	1.15			
27	Nez.....	2.45			
28	Flotteur (a).....	2.85			
29	- (b).....	2.90			

Pièces BABY

N°	Pièce		N°	Pièce	
100	Aile.....	2.75	108	Hélice.....	0.70
100bis	.....	2.75	109	Plan.....	1.25
101	Aileron.....	2.50	110	Roue.....	0.45
101bis	.....	2.50	111	Essieu.....	0.50
102	Gouvernail.....	2.50	112	Entretoise.....	0.25
103	Flasque.....	0.70	113	Mât.....	0.90
103bis	.....	0.70		Moteur Baby.....	5. »
104	Fuselage.....	4.25		Assortiment boulons.....	1.75
105	Cadre.....	1.20			
106	.....	0.90			
107	Flotteur.....	4.80			

26/754, has an picture of a Type 2 Baby model with elliptical Wings & a 2-cockpit Fuselage. Oddly the Motor for the Classic sets isn't listed though its Key is.

MÉCAVION: S6

[43/1293]

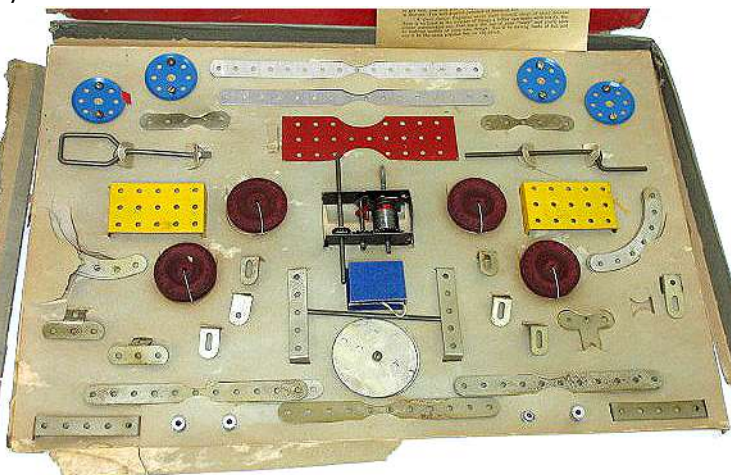
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Small Ads Short ads are free to subscribers; insertion guaranteed in OSN 44 if received by mid-February (but repeats may not always be possible, please ask).

6. Snippet. A JR ENGINEER Special Outfit An account of the parts & manual from this Set was given in 33/976, and now a boxed set has been seen on Ebay, somewhat the worse for wear but probably complete.

The box is the same size as the one for the '4½' Set and the lid is also the same, see 33/975, except that the bright yellow colour of the name and other details is unfaded.



From the parts that can be seen in the box above, the quantities given in OSN 33 are correct subject to the following.

- Only 4 of the 11h Strips can definitely be seen but more could be hidden under them – however only 4 are needed in the manual models.
- There are 4 Curved Strips.
- As in the OSN 33 parts there is only one Steering Bracket (under the righthand stacked pair of Curved Strips), and though the cutout next to it could take another, only one is needed in the manual models.

- Other points. • The Wheels look dark red-brown rather than black.
- The white Cord poking out of the small parts box matches that noted in OSN 33.

The front of the manual was shown on Ebay and it is identical to the OSN 33 example except that the bottom of the 'Fun and Education' box, blank before, now has 2 lines printed in it. The first is indecipherable but the second is 'Playthings Inc. So this adds to the suggestion in OSN 33 that the Special was produced after a change of maker (despite the Coledi name still being on the lid – old stock being used up?).

JR ENGINEER S5

[43/1293]

7. Snippet. An early BENCO Brochure. It was suggested in 26/772 that BENCO was introduced in 1950 but a 4*A4 page brochure seen on Ebay was said to date from 1949. And that is credible because a model building competition was advertised in it with an end date of Easter 1950.

Only Sets A & B were available, price DM5.50 & 11.90, and they had 129 & 282 parts. That compares with the 131 & 282 in later sets (ignoring the Paper Clips in the latter – there is no mention of them in the brochure). 26 parts were advertised in the brochure and though many of their names can't be seen clearly, they are almost certainly all but 2 of the 28 different parts included in Set B later. All the main parts of the later Set B can be seen in the sets & models shown in the brochure, but there is no sign of the small Tyre #32, so that may be one of the 'missing' ones.

BENCO: S1

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