

## WOOD AND PLASTIC SYSTEMS

• **BUILD-OVER** From Kendrick Bisset. The Groves-Van Allen Company who made this wooden set (11/298) were listed in Portland in 1924 and 1925.

• **K'NEX** From David Martin, Geoff Davison, and David Hobson. This plastic system was launched in the U.S. in 1993 and is now beginning to appear in other countries, it was in Woolworths before last Xmas for instance. It consists of rods or strips that push into multiway connecting pieces, with provision for wheels etc, - 23 parts in all. It was reviewed in several UK national papers and one reader subsequently wrote to the Observer that a virtually identical product called (he thought) BILDIT, was on the market 30 years ago; and another recalled TINKERTOY from 1929 as using the same principle.

And from Josep Bernal, a huge colour leaflet that he found in Harrods. On one side are all the many outfits, up to the 'Giant Set' with 1800 parts, and models ranging from a Jeep to a Guitar; and on the other, large 'space' models, and more sets including a Roller Coaster with over 2400 parts.

• From Tony Rednall. **BUILDERIFIC** A set in a similar box to that of the 168 part set mentioned in 11/299, was on sale in Belgium last Xmas, but it only contained 118 parts and costs 250BF, about £5. [The UK set was still in the Winter 1994 *Index* catalogue]

Two other Xmas catalogue sets from Belgium, both with natural colour wooden parts and coloured N&B, wheels, etc, probably plastic. **CONSTRUCTOR** has 130 parts for 899BF. 'Inter Play' is printed on the box, and the wording is in German and Flemish. The words on the **KIDS AT WORK** box (120 parts for 698BF) are in English, and 'from MYKIDS' can be seen as well N&B, a hammer and a pair of pliers. The Strips have a small notch in both edges between each pair of holes.

• From Josep Bernal. A **BRIO MEC** catalogue with a more extensive, and probably later, range of these Swedish sets than given in MCS Part 5. 6 main sets are illustrated, MEC1 to MEC6, plus 14 selections of parts, all called MEC+. Catalogue Nos. are given, from 34311 to 34782. Over 50 different parts are included in the largest outfit, including gear rings which appear to slip onto pulleys.

Geoff Wright gave me another catalogue which shows sets which are different again. There are 22 in all including 4 START outfits, Sets Nos. 1 to 5, and a 'Deluxe Set' with 564 parts. The others are either selections of parts or theme sets to make vehicles, bridges, etc. Catalogue Nos. are between 34210 and 34616. Of the 67 different parts shown many look the same as those above - the others include a 15" square plastic Base Plate and 2 sizes of plastic gears instead of the gear rings.

• Don Redmond sent ads showing the **GIRDER AND PANEL** set mentioned in 11/298. It is being made in Toronto by Irwin Toy and seems to be a revival of the system made by Kenner in perhaps the 1960-70s period. The girders are shown blue and the panels grey, and the parts snap together. A K-Mart ad shows the French name as well, **POUTRE ET PANNEAU**, and the 298 piece set (at \$26.99) is called CITY SCAPE (EDIFICE URBAIN); a similar size set from Toys"R"Us is \$39.99.

He also mentioned **plastic sets**, apparently new, that seem to be copies of the new **MECCANO JUNIOR**, even to bolts with triangular socket heads.

Another newly discovered Canadian wooden system from Don, the **FLINTWOOD** Construction Sets Nos.1, 2 and 3. They were made by Flintwood Ltd. of Toronto, which was listed in 1945 as makers of wooden toys and novelties, with A.W.Flint as president, at 704-706, 60 Front St. W. Perhaps these sets date from 1940 to '45 when there was a

wartime ban on metal toys. On the cover of the manual is 'Designed in Canada' and 'Patent Pending'; and on the box lid, 'Made in Canada'. The 15 or so different parts push together, with 3 lengths of 17mm square bars up to 304mm long, grooved on all sides to take

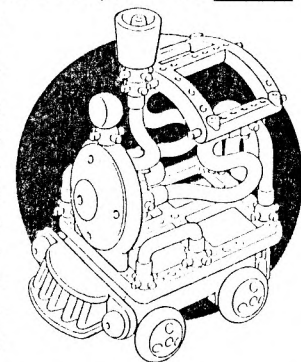
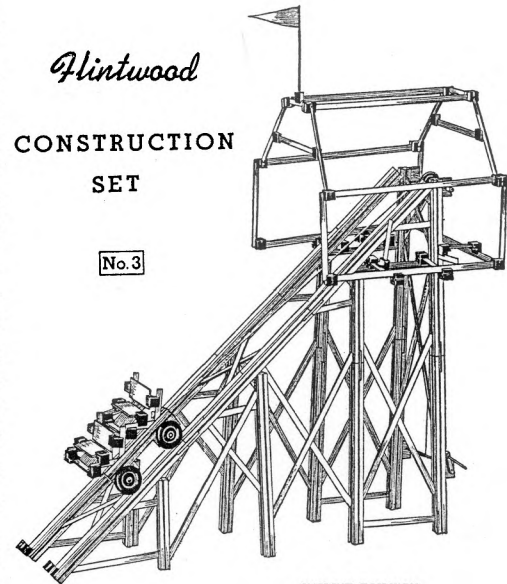
2.5\*9mm section strips. As well as these parts in natural wood there are small connecting blocks dyed black; slats 32\*72mm; red 39mm dia pulleys; green 25mm dia wheels (not shown in the manual); and 3mm wooden axles. One of the No.3 models is shown above. More details of this system available on request.

• Richard Symond's son visited China recently and failing to find any metal sets, brought back a rather nice **plastic toy**. It isn't really an OS in that only one model can be made from it, but it took my fancy as an example of the **Tricky-Track** type of model that Keith Cameron built some years ago. The loco has a geared motor unit built into its base with space there for batteries, and it pulls two similarly styled wagons. The train runs along a plastic tube 'track' and pegs under the loco and wagons engage either side of it. Various 'obstacles' are provided including one of those bridges which closes as the train goes over it, and the track also runs under said bridge to provide the crossover in the figure of eight track. The parts are held together by pegs pushing into holes but the end fittings on the tubes probably have to be glued on.

• Following on from the mention of **FASTECH** in 10/266, Chas Shrubsole lent me a manual which shows models for two sets, the **TECHNICIAN** and the **JOURNEYMAN**. He also found parts in a job lot which aren't in the manual and these may be from a larger (MASTER?) set. The holes in the parts are  $\frac{3}{16}$ " dia at  $\frac{1}{2}$ " pitch. On the box is Irwin Toys Ltd., 43 Hanna Ave., Toronto M6K 1X6. Made and printed in Canada under licence from Schaper Mfg. Co., 1982, a division of Kusan Inc.

Looking at the manual it seemed familiar and it turned out that Geoff Wright had shown me an identical system called **BOLT 'N BUILD**, which was on sale in the UK a few years ago. Despite the name the same 'rivets' are used to join the parts and the manuals are more or less identical except that two extra models are included for the larger B'NB set. The UK outfits are referred to as the MARK 1 and MARK 2, and on the manual's back cover is 'Made in U.S.A. and England by Action Games and toys Ltd., Henley-on-Thames, Oxon. Manufactured under licence from the Schaper Mfg. Co., Minneapolis, U.S.A. © Schaper Mfg. Co. 1982.'

### CONSTRUCTION SET



電動自由軌道車