

8. And a later letter from Don Redmond

New System: Elektriskais Konstruktors (Skolnieks) 3. Further to my letter of 2 May: "Skolnieks" is Latvian for "pupil, schoolboy" and presumably refers to the set size (3). It can also mean "alumnus" but this seems unlikely here. While Keith Cameron writes to me that this set contains no mechanical parts, it seems most probable to me that it is related to "Elektromehāniskais Konstruktors" which does have mechanical parts. Unfortunately no information is in the account of either set, about the manufacturer.

Which reminds me that in MCS the system erroneously listed as "YMAEU" should be listed as "Yun'ii Umelets"--as I had written to Frank Beadle--but since my letter to him I have found (in a larger Russian dictionary than mine) that the name means "Young Craftsman".

By now you will have Clyde Suttle's SoCalMecErector Newsletter (April 1990) with a page on "Instruct-o-Scale". I suspect this may be what is in MCS as "Instruct-o-Steel (?)" And he shows a "Mystery Part" on p.10.

BRAL is being imported directly from Italy into Canada by Merryland Toys Ltd. who have several shops in Toronto and Ottawa. One mailing address is 15 Bloor St. W., Toronto M4W 1A3; telephone (416) 968-9010. They had sets up to 9, at about one-third the price of Meccano; about \$500 Can. (£250) for No.9; but no accessory or conversion sets.

About badly-punched parts: I have a 5x11-hole plate, 2 flanges long sides, 62x140mm, unpainted steel 0.035in. thick; 4.1mm holes at 13.1mm pitch. One flange is 13.5mm, the other is 14.5mm! None of the holes are in uniform straight lines in either direction; they bear all the earmarks of being hand-drilled! Theoretically it could be a home-made item but I doubt it. I have some matching (more or less) nicked strips 6, 7 and 11 holes, steel 0.040in., holes 4.1mm on 13.1mm pitch, these too being punched off-center and straggly.

[On the subject of names in Cyrillic script there seem three alternatives, first to try to approximate to the original using English characters, which often means a quite unpronounceable word, WKONbHNK is my favourite. Secondly to use the recommended English letter(s) for each Cyrillic character, which usually allows one to have a try at saying the word, so WKONbHNK becomes SHKOPNIK or maybe SHKOLNIK because the original letters are stylised and it is not always easy to know one from another. Also there isn't universal agreement about how to change from Cyrillic to English and my dictionary, quite reputable but not perhaps in the Mario Pei class, doesn't favour the apostrophe that Don has put in YUN'II, and from another source I could have ended up with UNYI, so there is some scope there for a little confusion. The third way is to translate the Russian, or whatever, word(s) into English and Don's "YOUNG CRAFTSMAN" does seem to me much more user friendly than YUN'II UMELETS. I was going to try to Anglicize the name of the new system on Page 31 but perhaps readers would like to offer their own suggestions.

On the Cameron and Konkoly sets I presume that "elektriskais" and "elektromehāniskais" just mean electrical set and electromechanical set or something like that, generic terms which don't really identify a system. "Konstruktor(s)" might even be in the same category, possibly implying something that needs to be constructed, it seems to be used on many Russian sets and manuals. The "s" on the end may be significant (e.g. a grammatical termination) but it might be a typing error I suppose. So unless I've missed the point it isn't obvious to me that the sets are related - if the Konkoly one is the MCS ONbITOB then the description of some of its parts do fit some of SHOLNIEKS, but not all of them and the parts in common are those one might expect to find in a simple electrical set. But I would like a copy of your manual please Keith and I will report on whatever emerges.

As I typed that last SHOLNIEKS I noticed that it looks rather like one of my versions of WKONbHNK, that is SHKOLNIK, give or take an "S". Help, what does it all mean please -Ed]

MATADOR Although models made from wooden blocks will perhaps be rare in OSN I was intrigued by a MATADOR manual kindly supplied by José Bernal Moreno. MATADOR was, and I believe still is, made in Austria and the pieces are held together by special wooden dowels. There is no date on the manual but a reproduction of the front cover of a house magazine contained in it bears the date March 1927. As can be seen on the page opposite some of the models contain moving parts and there are even electrical parts with working electric motors shown in the manual, as well as the Morse Telegraph illustrated.

SMALL ADS

WANTED. Pre-war Bayko in at least good condition. R.Widner, 251 St. Clair Ave. East, Toronto, Canada. M4T 1P1.

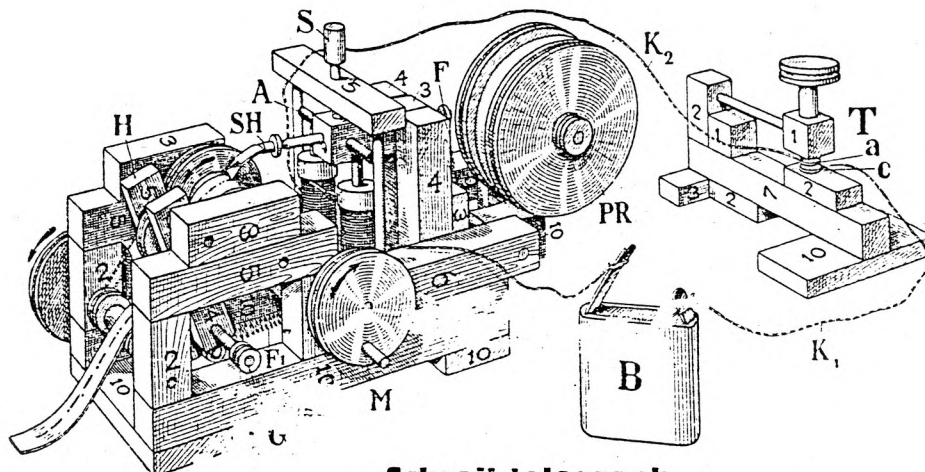
METAL CONSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS - BOOKS 1,2,3,4 now available from Frank Beadle, 33 Yoredale Avenue, Darlington, Co. Durham DL3 9AN. England. Each volume has 220 double faced A4 pages and a 5th Book will be ready later this year - in all nearly 400 systems are described from all over the world.

CHINESE Wooden Construction Set No 3. Push together pieces with axles. Box 10"x6"x1" in good condition (selotape on corners), about two-thirds full of parts in good condition. No manual, one model shown on box lid. £3 plus postage - Editor OSN.

TINKERTOY. Made in Canada. Cylindrical box in good condition with 10 models illustrated on it. Most parts wood but some plastic, generally in very good condition. 110 of original 127 parts plus remnants of plastic Windmill Sails. £5 plus postage - Editor OSN.

WANTED. Minibrix sets and parts. Especially Tudor Minibrix sets, standard sets 4, 5 and 6, Imperial Combination Set, Coronation Set and accessory sets of any kind. Malcolm Hanson, 11 Willow Close, Long Ashton, Bristol, BS18 9DT. 0272 392321.

KORBULY'S BAUKASTEN MATADOR



Schreiblegraph,

gebaut mit Matador Nr. 4 und der Elektro-Erganzung Nr. 165.

ITEMS FROM LETTERS.

1. Erwin Wyss sent the following note on the history of MATADOR, the wooden system mentioned briefly in OSN 3/44, which he obtained from a fellow member of AMS, Norwin Rietsch: "In 1900 Johann Korbuly (Vienna 1860-1919) invented MATADOR as a toy for his 3 sons. He started production of it at Pfaffstätten in Lower Austria, and he opened MATADOR-Haus (1070 Vienna, Mariahilferstrasse 62) where his products were marketed and sold. In 1978 the company was sold to Kurt Falk, former editor of the 'Kronenzeitung', and today editor of 'Täglich Alles'. After that MATADOR-Haus was modernised with considerable investment, but as with many similar systems, sales fell and production stopped some time ago. There may also have been legal troubles with LEGO. Considerable stocks of parts were available and are still sold in so called 'Schüttelkasten' (Shuttle-sets) for a price of öS 590 [about £35 -Ed]. These sets contain a bit of everything, worth about öS 1000. Should sales increase, which regrettably I personally doubt, production could be started again."

2. From Keith Cameron in answer to a query about FISCHERTECHNIK: "fischertechnik (small f) is a most engaging medium. The aim of its manufacturer is to promote it to build prototypes for commercial systems such as production lines and other complex machinery, and large showrooms are set up for this purpose. Its many hi-tech parts include computer interfaces, are what attracted me. (It does have many parts suitable for small-scale toys). When assembled correctly, it is reasonably rigid within the accepted limits. Rigid light alloy long parts are available. One can build a 4-axis robot in f/t in a couple of hours. I doubt that the same could be said of Meccano! I have a small/medium amount of f/t and I admire its ingenuity and the high quality of the parts, far surpassing most systems. However, its owners can make far more money out of commercial customers and the educational establishment, so tend to neglect hobbyists. This is understandable but irritating."

3. From Don Redmond, " • The new MW 16 DP Worm is of identical pitch to the 'old' (Mysto and early Gilbert) Erector, and the early coarse-pitch Erector Worms fit perfectly with the Meccano GRB and Large-Tooth Quadrants - and when found may be a lot cheaper! • The toyshop firm in Ottawa and Toronto which carried BRAL is out of business and I've not learned of any other Canadian BRAL stockist, though I haven't pursued the matter."

In a later letter he noted the many anomalies in a STRUCTOMODE manual. Many of the models are MECCANO inspired and so double railway buffers are shown whereas North American practice is a single, central stop. Two models appear to show slotted holes rather than the normal round ones, in the flanges of the 11x5 hole Flanged Plate; in a few others the illustration looks more like a Flat Plate with 11 hole A/Gs bolted to it, even though neither part was included in any of the sets. An unusual part is the 3/4" loose Pulley as well as those of 1/2" and 1" dia, though the latter was not in the sets.

Don also sent details of a Canadian plastic system called THE GROWING ENGINEER/LE JEUNE INGENIEUR which contains parts made in Hong Kong. They are multicoloured and look somewhat like PLASTIC MECCANO, but the Axles are 12.7mm dia with holes of 13mm; Bolts are 12mm o/d. There were 4 Sets available and the Instruction Sheet shows 71 models that can be made from the different sets. Gears and Braced Girders can be seen but are not included in the #1 Set that Don found. Details from Frank Beadle if anyone would like them, he keeps track of all plastic/wood systems. Don also mentioned a LINCOLN (best known for LINCOLN LOGS, a wooden set) plastic set he had seen, which much resembled Plastic MECCANO in the design of the parts and even the colours.

4. José Moreno sent an amplification of the STOKYS address given in 7/167: Grossmatt 7, CH-6014 Littau-Luzern. Tel. 041 574159. Fax. 041 868554. He also sent some literature on PROTO and PIC (Precision & Industrial Components). The PROTO Parts List shows a few differences compared to the details in MCS and I hope to include them in a later issue. PIC is a new name to me and José sent the index from their catalogue, addresses of their agents worldwide, and the Contents List of some of the Kits of Parts that are (were?) available. The company is American and the catalogue of over 400 pages lists a myriad of small mechanical items, bearings, cams, gears, differentials, etc, etc, etc. The 9 Kits, 3 each for shaft diameters of 1/8", 3/16", and 1/4", contain gears, couplings, brackets, mounting boards, and the like, with 657 parts in the largest one. My feeling is that this little lot probably falls outside the OS field but if anyone would like to investigate and perhaps write it up, I will be glad to send them the details I have. The UK agent is The Barden Corp, Western Road, Bracknell. Tel. 0344 24511.

5. On TECC Brian Rowe wrote: "I have since bought a No.6 Set and it is a comprehensive one with no less than four trays packed with parts - including Braced Girders which are not in any of the Spares Packs. The gears though do not always mesh properly but reaming out the holes to get rid of the paint sometimes helps. I understand that the smaller TECC Sets 1-4 (made by the CONSTRUCTION people) are no longer available."

6. MECCANO's first serious competitor was almost certainly STABIL made in Berlin by Walther & Co. Tobias Haffter wrote that a lady, Emma Walther filed a patent application in 1904. In a 1924 manual,

'The MCS has Wooden Roots'

That was the last line of a letter from Thomas Morzinck about the c1890 Lilienthal sets, which were based on the 1888 patent (see 11/295). He also kindly sent copies of a Brochure, courtesy Tobias Mey, for the Sets, and a 1902 German patent (courtesy Werner Sticht) for the Austrian system MATADOR invented by Johann Korbuly (see 3/45 & 9/234).

The LILIENTHAL Sets The Brochure contains lists of the parts & sets available, illustrations of 31 models that could be made from the sets, & some basic constructions, using the line drawings in the Patent. The 6 types of part are also as in the Patent: Strips with 3,5,7,9 & 11 holes, the Corner Bracket, the Ridge Support, various wire Clips, the Wedge to hold them, and card Panels in various shapes & sizes. However each part was available in 2 sizes, normal (with the holes at, say, 25mm pitch) and giant, about 3 or 4 times as large. The exact pitches aren't known, but from the dimensions given for some of the models it seems to be between 25 & 30mm for the smaller parts and between 90 & 105mm for the larger ones.

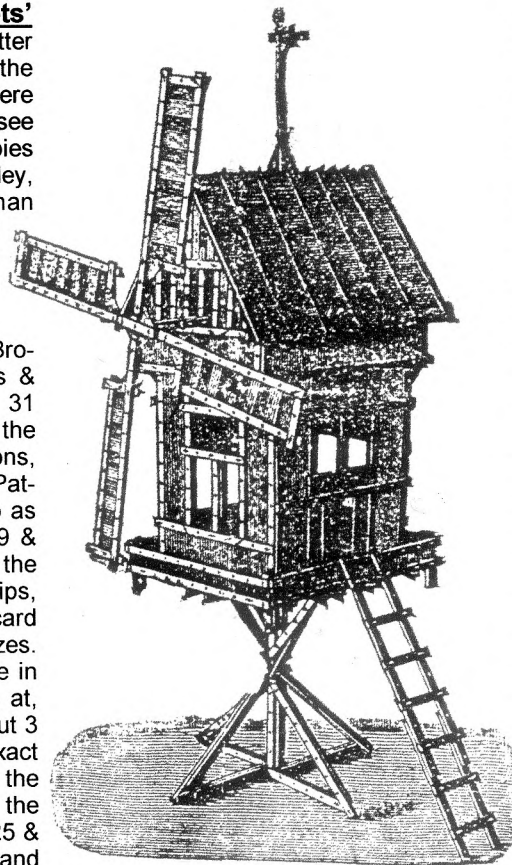
There were 5 Modellbaukästen, I - V, with normal size parts, plus conversion sets IA - IVA, and also IB - IIIB, which gave a jump of 2 sets, so a IB made a No.I into a No.III, and so on. The sets with the large parts were called Riesenspielzeug (Giant Toys) Nos.XI - XV, plus the corresponding 'A' & 'B' Conversion Sets. The No.XIV was packed in 2 boxes, and XV in three, over 1m long. The latter cost 85 Mk, against 16 Mk for a No.V, and 3 Mk for a No.1.

Most of the 31 models were either domestic items, a Table, a Bed, etc, or Buildings of various types, but in addition there were 2 Bridges, and 2 Swings with the moving parts suspended by what appears to be cord. A selection of these models is on the front cover of this Issue. Model 23 is the one in the Patent but fully panelled. Each model could be made with either the normal or giant parts and, with the latter, the Bed was over 1m long, one of the Swings was 2m high, children could act on the Stage, and an adult could stand up in some of the models, in the Church for instance, though it does look a tight fit.

A photo on p94 of *Baukästen* shows the wooden box of a No.IV Set, a few parts, and a small House. The box has a sliding lid with a label showing 3 of the models from the Leaflet in colour, and there's a small 'IV' in the top right corner, but no name that I can see. In the model the Wedges are wooden, the Wall Panels light brown with irregular darker veining (rather like brown blue cheese), and the Roof Panels are a dull red with yellow diagonal lines to give a tiled effect. By scaling, the cross section of the Strips is 12*4½mm, and if the larger ones were in proportion they would be, say, 45*17mm. Imagine an 11h Strip of that size and over a metre long. With such parts how rigid would the structures have been? Mentioned in the Leaflet is an 8m high Eiffel Tower which was displayed at the Leipzig Crystallpalast, and which 'was easily transportable despite its size, and clearly showed the solidity of the fixings'. No doubt, but that 2m high swing would be the acid test.

What prompted Thomas's comment though is the Windmill at the top of the page in which, though it can't be seen in the illustration, the sails are mounted on a metal Shaft. Such a part is not in the List of extra parts but one is included in a well preserved No.V Set owned by Tobias Mey, and he says that the model operates quite well.

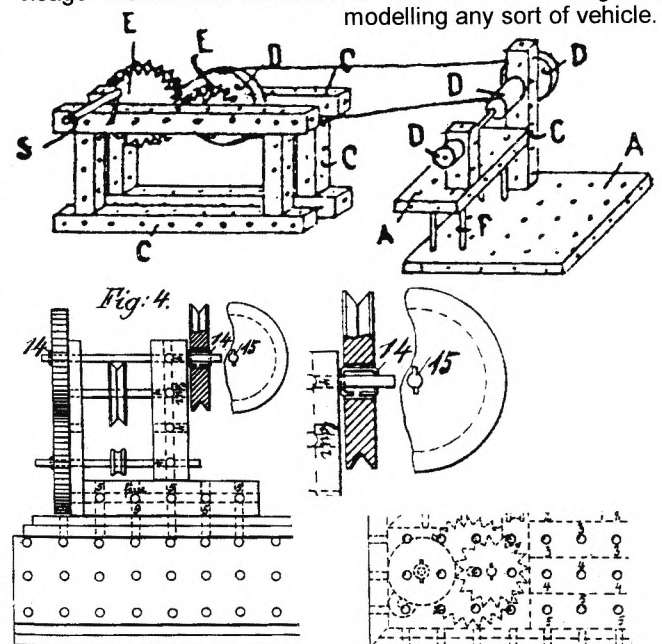
So not only had Gustav hit on the idea of parts with



equispaced holes, he had thought of using a shaft to allow rotary movement. The latter idea isn't in the Patent and so perhaps he regarded it as a refinement of no particular note. With hindsight it is surprising that it seems to have taken 10 years before the axle with wheels came to be used in constructional toys, to allow models of wheeled vehicles, which had been everyday objects for centuries, and must have been just as appealing to youngsters then as they are today.

The name and address on the Brochure is Otto Lilienthal, Gross-Lichterfelde, Marthe-Strasse Nr.5, b. [near] Berlin, But as explained in 21/618, Gustav rather than Otto was the key figure in relation to this construction system. How long it lasted isn't known, but, at least in the smaller size, it does look capable of providing the possibility of interesting models. One item in the Brochure may indicate a lack of commercial sense, the separate parts are priced per 100, and so a lad wishing to add some Strips to his No.I Set, which cost 3 Mk, would have to spend a minimum of 2 Mk for 100x 3h Strips, or 6 Mk if he wanted the 11h length. 'Architects & engineers' were offered Strips of any length at a cost of 5 Mk per 1000 holes.

The German KORBULY Patent This is Nr.138774, and is basically the same as the Nov. 1901 UK one shown in David Hobson's *Primus Engineering*, but it is dated Jan. 1902, the figures in it are slightly different, and there are more of them. It was said in 9/234 that Korbuly had invented MATADOR in 1900 but the date & content of his Austrian patent, presuming that there was one, isn't known. The UK/German patents show beams & plates with equispaced holes (see 3/45), together with pulleys & coarse-toothed gears which could be held fast by a key fixing. Several mechanical models are shown including Pulley Blocks & the Lathe below (from the German patent), in which gears can be seen. How the handle crank, S, was fixed to the end of the Axle isn't clear. The Fig.4 is from the UK patent & shows gears, and the key fixing (14,15), though no details of the key are given. To the right a plan view of parts in a box and 2 sizes of gears can be seen. This seems to be the earliest system in which gears are used, and perhaps, depending on the date of Korbuly's first patent, the first to envisage mechanical models. Still no mention though of modelling any sort of vehicle.



ITEMS FROM LETTERS

1. On **STEELBUILDER** (20/562) David Lawrence has recently acquired a No.1 Set and wrote 'What I hadn't realized, because the manual doesn't mention it, is that the Strip's doubled edge has a pip on the inside at one end, so that you have to press it to snap it in.'

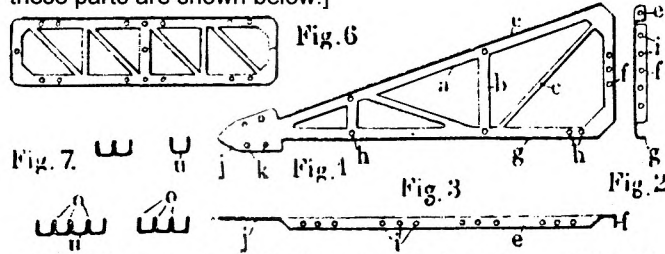
2. From Kendrick Bisset on the **Flanged Sector Plates in U.S. MECCANO** outfits, 'From what I have been able to gather the single row of holes version was used through at least 1927. I have seen two 1928 outfits with the three row variety, and they are shown clearly in contemporary illustrations. BUT later outfits reverted to the single row version. They are in my 1929 #20 & #30 outfits, and in the subsequent New Haven GILBERT-MECCANO outfits. [The history of the sets was given in 12/317.] Is it possible that Elizabeth was making the single row type, and had the tooling? Then when the new version came out [in the UK in 1927] perhaps they were made in England and shipped over until new tooling could be put in place - but this plan was interrupted when Gilbert bought U.S. Meccano?'

3. D. Courdoux wrote that production of **TEMSI** stopped for good in May 1999, and that in future no **MÄRKLIN** spares will be sold, only one or two 'theme' sets. Also that there is a question mark over **STOKYS** because letters to them remain unanswered.

4. Thomas Morzinck wrote that there was a good picture of a **STABA** set on the German ebay site. That's the STABA with the 'outline' Strips, see 8/194. The Set was a No.00 and the contents seem to correspond to those in MCS. The box is red and has 'STABA Constructor' on the lid; the manual doesn't seem to have a proper cover - the front page has just 'STABA' at the top, with '00' in the top right corner, and text underneath. The parts look like those described in OSN 8 except that the 21mm Pulleys are red instead of nickel.

On the **Korbuly patents** (see 22/623), the date of the Austrian one (with gearwheels, connecting rods, etc.) was 1st Nov. 1901 [thus predating Hornby's patent by nearly a month], & the German patent was granted on 14th Jan. '02.

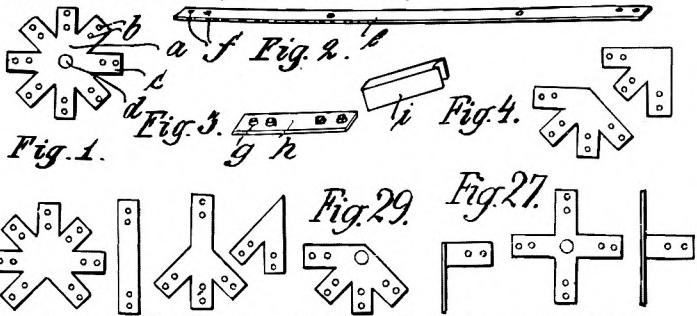
5. From Jeannot Buteux. • The French **CHARPENTO** patent (see 21/617) was No.589377 and a Roger Marie-Joseph Biard applied for it on 2 Feb. 1924. It was acquired by CIJ, who also produced a set for Citroën, and it bore the CITROËN name. Standard CHARPENTO parts were used but painted red & green, and various Garages could be made from the Set. It is extremely rare. [The Patent shows Trusses similar to CHARPENTO but an additional one with a spade end (Figs.1-3) is included, and the Beams have a different pattern of bracing (Fig.6). Various Wire Staples (Fig.7) were also proposed as an alternative to N&B. All these parts are shown below.]



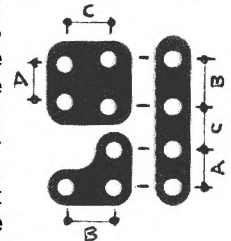
• **EIFFEL** parts (see 19/491) are red & green. • **CLIFFIX** (see 21/596) was patented in France in 1945. • On **STANDARD L.R.** (21/590), the French patent was not quite the same as the UK one. And the order in which the different coloured parts appeared still isn't known. • The name **PETIT GÉANT** (Little Giant, see 21/603) was used for a French system in the 1950s, but it had parts to make a variety of spring & electric motors. • On **MÉCANIC** (21/603), in each large set was a Plate in the bottom of the box, painted matt black, which could be used as a base for various models. It has now been established that its predecessor, **ÉCÉPÉ** (see 12/314) was marketed from 1913.

• The **Black Country Miniature** parts (21/619) really are small, a MECCA-MINI Strip will pass through a hole in a MECCANO Strip, and a BCM Strip will pass through a MECCA-MINI hole. • The contents of **Graham's patents** 125890 & 138824 (see 14/372) are all in one French patent, No. 520081, which was applied for in July, 1920.

Jeannot also sent a copy of a **Danish Richter Patent** Nr.20642, dated 1915. The original German version was from 1913. 28 parts are illustrated in the Danish one, including Figs.1-4, 27 & 29 below. The unlabeled 6 parts below are examples of the other 22 parts - they are like Fig.1 but without the centre hole and with various combinations of from 2 to 7 arms. I can't see how the parts hold together but the idea of hubs with strips attached is similar in principle to **IMPERATOR/ANCHOR ENGINEER** (see 17/486). As far as I know these parts were never produced.



6. From David Hobson. • Snooks's Toy Shop in Bath has a new stock of **CONSTRUCTION** sets: Nos 15, 20, 65, 67, & 77 (at £45,25,7,7,40). Nos.15 & 65 seem to be as described in 14/383 & 22/622 respectively. The others are: No.20 with 365 parts to make space models; No.67 with 214 parts for small space ships; and No.77 (460 parts) for various solar-powered models, and marked as 'new'. Another item is a Parts Pack '**C113 Adapterplatte**', price £3.99. It contains 8 each of the 3 parts right (50% full-size), and they are meant to allow 1/2" pitch parts to be used with those having the 10mm CONSTRUCTION spacing. The dimensions A, B, C are respectively 10, 12.7, & 11.5mm. The latter would be about half the width of 2 Strips, one 1/2" wide & one 10mm. On p151 of *Baukästen* it



is said that these parts were introduced in 1998 'to put more pressure on the MECCANO system in the marketplace' [My free translation]. • On the 'Matchbox' set **CLOU** (see 6/130, 13/345), Werner Sticht kindly provided a translation of a note about it in a March 1932 German toy magazine. It was made by Gebr. Schmid and had recently been introduced. The Discs which push on the wooden Rods were made from pressed sawdust; and the Set sold for 25 Pfennigs.

7. From Tony Press: • A copy of the front cover of a **MONTEX** model leaflet in Dutch, PR 7/632/12(IP), which Alex de Jong had put on the Spanner network. A Spanish system called MONTEX was described in 11/296, but in this case it is one of the names that was used for **BRITISH MODEL BUILDER**. The MONTEX cover of this type in MCS has the same layout as the Dutch one, with the 2 boys & Derrick Crane at the top, but it is in Spanish. MONTEX was no doubt a name that could be used in many different markets, and so perhaps leaflets in other languages were produced. Incidentally it may not be clear in all copies of MCS, but the MONTEX Leaflet there has a PR of 13/1035/2, and its price is in 'Argentina pts.'

• News of a 'new' system called **BIG-JOY**. It was a pre-war Australian made copy of **TRIX**. The parts seen seem to be nickel or chrome plated, but are rather inaccurately punched and have a somewhat ragged finish.

• 2 photos, courtesy Jack Little, of a made-up **GEOBRA** model (see 19/552, 22/631), and the set's box. The parts look to be as already described and are the same colours. The box is shown at the top of the next column, and is red with: *Geobra* in a circle top right; some parts in the panel

Corrections • The page numbering of OSN 23 should read 23/xxx instead of 22/xxx. • In the MCS Database 2000, the 'SM' in 'Codes C' on p44 should read 'SH'.

ITEMS FROM LETTERS

1. From Don Redmond. • John Wapshott recently found a **CASTLE BUILDER** box (22*11½*2½") with no set number on it, and the bulk of the contents turned out to be most of a **STRUCTOMODE** No.6 Set. No manual or other 'paper' was with it. Characteristic STRUCTOMODE parts found included the Windmill Sails with large round holes, Braced Girders with semicircular cutouts, & a Little Hustler motor. Also present were Flanged Plates, whereas CASTLE BUILDER had Perforated Plates & A/Gs instead. The two Propeller Blades of the No.6 were found but they are 'sickle' shaped (as sketched left, ½-full-size)



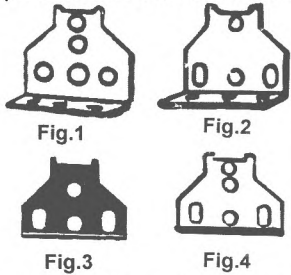
instead of the broad, early MECCANO type shown in STRUCTOMODE manuals. The parts nicely filled the compartments in the box, with the Motor fitting into a full-depth section, and raised level packaging in the other sections.

As noted in 16/458, CASTLE BUILDER was made in Toronto by the Castle Mfg. Co., probably from 1917 to 1918/19. Canadian Toys Ltd. of Hamilton, the makers of STRUCTOMODE, were listed in the Hamilton directory for 1921-22 (after that the manager, R.H.White, appeared until 1925). Is it possible that Canadian Toys acquired and made use of some CASTLE BUILDER boxes?

Points of interest concerning the (supposed) STRUCTOMODE parts found are: • ½" & ¾" Loose Pulleys made of tin discs eyeleted together; • the early MECCANO pattern Pawl is made of ordinary not spring steel, and is nickel plated; • the 5*11h Flanged Plate is as shown in the manual with the flange holes near the bend; • the Motor is as the manual but without the wooden base. (The type was illustrated in 19/551 with 'KNAPP' on the base.)

No Trunnions (see 23/681) were in the box.

• The 1924 **ERECTOR Car Truck** had the top hole raised compared to the STEEL ENGINEERING pattern (see 23/666), and then in 1926 the original hole was restored giving 2 holes at the top. [Referring to *Greenberg*, this last pattern was shown in the Illustrated parts (Fig.1) for 1924-



26, and then changed to Fig.2 in 1927 (with a single hole at the top and the side holes elongated). In 1928 & 1929 the Fig.3 type is shown, and no later illustrations are provided. But these changes may not represent the (whole) truth of the matter because where the Car Truck can be seen in the

photos of sets, it is the Fig.2 type in 1924, 1928, 1929, & 1933 (all in nickel). It is said that the extra hole was added in 1935 (Fig.4) and this part, painted red, is shown in a 1935 outfit and in later sets. *Greenberg* also has a photo of a set, said to be a 1920 No.1, which clearly shows 4 of the Fig.3 parts. Said part isn't listed in the 1920 Parts List or Set Contents, so was this an early trial set, or has it been mislabelled/badly restored? Figs.1-4 above have been copied from *Al Sternagle's Erector Parts Illustrated*.]

• Re the **ERECTOR 24t Gear** (23/666), the standard pattern prior to 1924 was plain with no face holes. My 2-hole version has a 7mm centre hole and no boss. [My mistake over the standard Gear, the 2-hole version was listed from 1914 through 1920 and was never included in any sets. I wonder if Don's example was a disc that 'got away' before it was 'bossed'. It's true that in some brochure illustrations it doesn't appear to have one but it always cost 15c against 10c for the unpierced one with boss.]

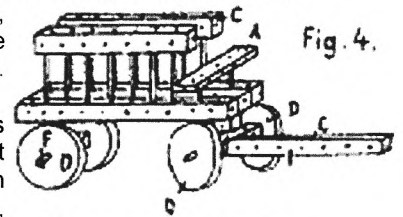
• Were the **STEEL ENGINEERING** Curved Girders the same curvature as the equivalent **ERECTOR** parts D & E?

• Colin Hinz has a pretty Russian set with the transliterated name of **VOENNAYA TEKHNKA** (Military Engineering), which was apparently made in St. Petersburg in 1999. It is packed in a transparent plastic box and the parts resemble **KONSTRUKTOR** [3] (see 22/648), but are steel rather than aluminium. The 16 models in the manual are chiefly army units, & vehicles.

• The 2000 Database lacks some figures for **NECOBO**. The following are from a batch of parts including Mod.1 Gears (see 7/147): bosses are 4.1mm bore & double-tapped 5/32" BSW; Axles are probably 4.06mm Ø, though some with the parts were 4.02mm. Other points: the bore of the Cone Pulley, #176, is less than 4.06mm; the nicked boss of the Face Plate (#83 but with 2 rings of 8 holes) is single-tapped; the tapping of the Handle Crank, #124, appears to be 1/8" BSW & the Set Screw is machined brass with a cheese head; the 16/60t Gears run freely at 1½" centres; the 20mm Bevel has 20 teeth and meshes nicely with **MECCANO** #30.

2. Details of an 11th Edition **C.I.G.E.A. manual** were given in 23/657. Luciano Luppi wrote that his 11th Edition is dated 'X 54'. He also sent some details of a 4th Edition from 1946, as follows. •Name: LA MECCANICA per ragazzi. •Maker: C.I.G.E.A., Milano, Via Nino Bixio, 15. •Date: XII 46, Quarta Edizione 50000 (could be the number of copies printed). •Page size: 246*170 mm deep. •64 pages + covers. Paper quality is much better than in the 11th ed. •Printing: half tones of models; cover is green with off white, grey, black inset. The inset is the same as the lid cover on 23/656. The 'something else' on it is a steam locomotive. •Language: Italian plus French/English/Spanish/German Introduction. •Sets covered A,B,C,D,E. •No. of models for each set: 23,20,21,10,10.

3. From Werner Sticht. • On **Korbuly's MATADOR patent** (22/623 & 23/682), the Austrian patent can be seen at http://members.xoom.com/oelli/matador/Patente/Nr.11515/Seite_1.gif & /Seite_2.gif). It is similar to the German one but also includes a vehicle with wheels, the Cart right. [On dates,



it was applied for on 2 Nov. 1901 and was granted (Beginn der Patentdauer) on 1 Dec. 1902. Hornby applied for his patent on 9 Jan. 1901, added to his application on 9 Oct. 1901, and his patent was granted on 30 Nov. 1901. The 1 Nov. date mentioned in OSN 23 is the application date for the UK patent, which was granted on 6 Feb. 1902. No application date is given on the German patent.]

• Due to a typing error the **5 STABIL DRGM numbers** given in 22/650 (248034-8) were incorrect – they are really 248934-8, as stated in OSN 13/348. [Due to another typing error the numbers from OSN 13 in OSN 22 were incorrectly given as 249934-8.]

• News from Jürgen Kahlfeldt: • Confirmation of the 1933 date for the introduction of **STABILA** given in 13/343. It is said in an ad leaflet dated 5/33 that it would be launched soon, and in one dated 11/33, Sets 1 & 2 are advertised as being 'new'. • The first known ad for the **KNIRPS** Motor (see 11/272) is from early 1933, and also listed at that time were the KNIRPS Conversion Sets 1a & 2a. The Nr.1a was mentioned in 11/273; the 2a was to make the Nr.2 into the STABIL Nr.48, & the same Set was also available as Nr.46a, to make the STABIL Nr.46 into the Nr.48. • A **Walther's Maschinenbaukasten** with manual has been found [it was mentioned in 13/348, and has mostly wooden parts].

• As would be expected nothing of **MÄRKLIN METALL**, **TEMSI** or **TRIX** at the **Nürnberg Toy Fair** in February, but **AMI-LAC** had a stand, and so did **Eitech**. The latter showed a Lorry-mounted Mobile Crane which stood about 3m high. Also present, the firm **Dickie-Schuco**, who use the old Schuco trade mark, and have started to sell a system which looks like repackaged **MERKUR**. [It is hoped to have more