

Some SWEDISH SYSTEMS Staffan Kjellin has kindly sent what is known about three hitherto unknown Swedish sets, and more details, manuals, and parts from the two major Swedish systems, MEKANIK & TEKNIK.



REX The oldest Swedish system is REX, and the label from a box lid, probably a No.3A, is shown above. The original measures 32*12cm, and the lid is the same length but 21cm wide. The label is printed B&W on pale yellow, and the text says Swedish Made, and talks of 200 models from a series of outfits, including linking sets. BYGGLÅDAN means constructional sets. From the spelling of the words, it is thought to date from before WW1. The only known parts (left) are a 25t Pinion, and a Large & Small Contrate. They are marked REX and are cast, from a zinc alloy perhaps.

A friend of Staffan has told him that sets from the 1920s were marked MÄRKLIN-REX and that the parts looked like MÄRKLIN. How far the original system was a copy of MECCANO isn't known but the model on the Label is almost identical with the Tower Bridge that was included in MECCANO manuals as a No.6 model from 1911 through 1923. The only difference I can spot is that the far left Flanged Plate has lost one hole in height. The Plates on the ground by the girl don't look like MECCANO or MÄRKLIN.

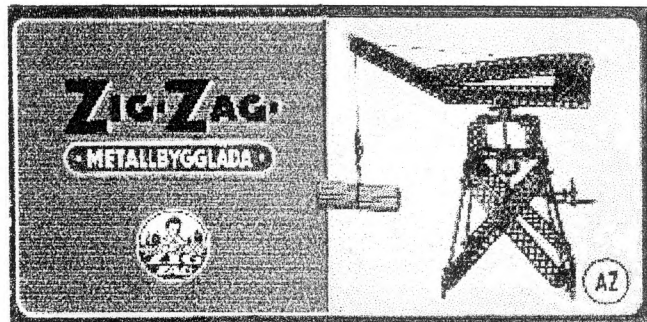
KONSTRUKTÖREN For this 'new' TRIX look-alike I've the cover or title page of a manual, 210*144mm deep, with on it: Modellbok, the name, & N:o 10, the number of the Set no doubt. On other pages are a short introduction, the illustrated parts and set contents.

All the common TRIX constructional parts (from UK

Units A,B,C) are shown plus the Flanged Plate (right), with an extra row of holes along the bends. There are also a few minor variations: the Spanner has no holes; the TRIX 87mm Spindle is listed as 85mm long, and is shown with much longer threaded ends; and the diameter of the Large Wheel Disc is given as 48mm Ø (not 49). Otherwise all the dimensions correspond. The Hook is the round pattern. The Bolt is listed as 7.5mm and is shown roundheaded; the Nut a small hexagon.

The 24 different parts are numbered from 1 to 47. The Set has 161 parts including 40 Bolts & 50 Nuts. The contents are roughly the same as Units A+B+C, with a few extra parts including one Flanged Plate, more Bolts, but fewer Nuts, and only 2 Large Discs, the number in the appropriate TRIX Unit prewar.

ZIG-ZAG A wooden system of this name had perforated strips held together by dowels. Quite elaborate models of a Motorcycle & Rider, a Travelling Tower Crane, & a Tramcar can be seen in a small picture of a box lid with N:o 28 on it. The makers also sold a metal ZIG-ZAG system with TRIX-like parts, and some can just be seen in the Crane on the box lid below. The left panel is red, and the right cream; in the righthand bottom corner is AZ or possibly A2. A small photo of a dealer's cabinet shows a wooden box with a lift-out tray; Tyres can be seen, probably in 2 sizes, and 2 Gears or Sprockets. Some parts look silver and others have a blue look to them, but that may be the light.



TEKNIK Most of the parts of this system in the 1960s are clearly shown in MCS, and though some of them are similar to MECCANO, mostly they are distinctive variants. Many Plates are flanged on one side only, and this allows flexibility in using the parts to best effect, and ease of assembly without the need for too many Brackets. TEKNIK parts and models are characterised by a certain delicate appearance arising from the variety of small Plates in the system, the range of rather light colours used, and the thin metal of the Plates and Gears. The practicality of the Gears may be questioned but the other parts, though light, aren't flimsy.

On the history, Staffan wrote that TEKNIK was made by a company called C.G.Stjernqvist Mekaniska Verkstad, principal Carl Gustav Stjernqvist (1900-1993). [If I've understood correctly, the Gustaf W. Jonsson mentioned in MCS was the extra part distributor.] Production started in 1936 with one size of set, a #2. In 1939-40 a new factory was built at Huddinge (Stockholm) and soon Sets 0-5 were available. In the early 1950s, perhaps 1953, Sets 6 & 7 were introduced, together with a number of new parts including A/Gs. Most of the parts were renumbered at that time. In the late 1950s, or 1960, two larger sizes of Rubber Tyre (supplied by Värnamo Gummifabrik) were added and included in Sets 5-7. The Sets were also enlarged slightly with 870 parts in the #7. The factory closed in 1970 and by that time 1 million sets had been sold, including exports to, for example, the U.S.A., Canada & Australia.

This account is mainly based on the following: • Parts

from Staffan and those in another large lot. • Two manuals kindly donated by Jim Gamble - one for Set III, that I'll call 'early-1940s', has parts not seen in later manuals, and the other, for Sets 2-4, from the 'mid-1940s', has later parts but is not in the format used subsequently. • Another manual, kindly given by Ray Weston, is for Sets 2-5 and dates from before the parts were renumbered - it will be called the 'late 1940s'. • A 'mid-1950s' manual in English, for Sets 2-7, from the time after the No.6 & 7 Sets were introduced but before the advent of the large Tyres. Also an English language Model Leaflet for a No.1 Outfit which may well date from the same time. • A manual (as in MCS) for Sets 1-7, almost certainly from the system's final phase, which I'll call the '1960s'. • A brochure from 1964 that shows the sets, and an identical one but with prices including tax (inkl. oms. skatt), and 1969 typed on it.

Apart from the Brochures none of the dates above are certain; they are my guesses within the framework provided by Staffan's history, to allow easy identification of the different manuals.

THE PARTS Both lots of parts contained a number not among the 90 in MCS, and they are mentioned below in curly brackets. Staffan wrote that some, the Plates for instance, have never been seen in unused sets, but may have been available loose, especially at the Stockholm factory. However, as will be seen, many of them are obsolete parts and one or two from my lot may be 'foreigners'. I'm suspi-

Snippets. ZIG-ZAG. All that was known in the 20/572 note about this Swedish system was that there was a set AZ with TRIX-style parts, and a wooden dealer's cabinet. Now more can be gleaned from Tradera photos of four AZ sets, two smaller BZ sets, and a parts lot which are may be the contents of an AZ outfit.

The packaging of the AZ sets is identical and one is shown right with the parts in recesses in a wooden block. Non-TRIX-style parts are the Bush Wheel, bossed Pulleys, and the Crank Handle. And they seem genuine because they can be seen in the other sets & in the loose parts. The box was said to measure 26*13.3cm and scaling from that gives a hole pitch very near to TRIX's 7.8mm.

It is hard to be sure about the colour of the parts. Most could be 'nickel' with brass bosses, but the loose parts look dull grey, like TRIX perhaps, except that the Brackets look shiny, and the Pulleys are all brass (though they are nearly the same diameter as the Wheel Disc and therefore suspect).

The parts that can be seen in the various photos are as follows, with their possible quantities, mainly based on the loose parts, in curly brackets. Strips, 17,13,9,5h {4 of each}; DAS {4}; A/B {4}; D/B {3}; Narrow 2h high D/B {1}; Wheel Disc {4}; Bush Wheel {1}; bossed Pulley {2}; Washer, large {2?4}; Washer, small; Screwed Rods, $\approx 2\frac{1}{2}$ & $5\frac{1}{2}$ cm {2, 4?}; Rod $\approx 5\frac{1}{2}$ cm {2? if any}; Crank Handle ≈ 9 cm o/a {1}; Hook {1}; cheeseheaded Bolt; hex Nut; Span'driver {1}.

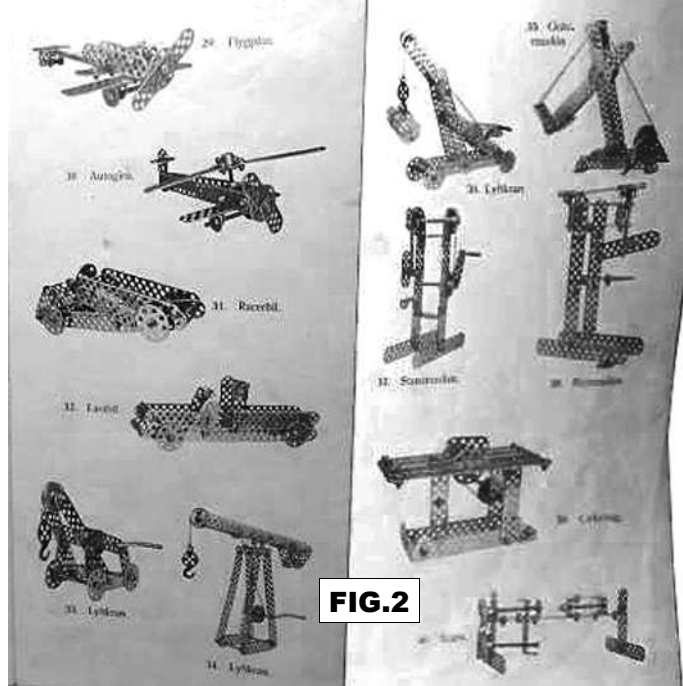
The Model Leaflet is one sheet folded to give 4 panels. The front is shown in Fig.1, and 2 panels from the underside in Fig.2. Text on the panel adjacent to the front says that all the models in the leaflet can be made with the set, and to start with the simpler ones, etc.

The BZ set has the same style of packaging as the AZ but the box is smaller, 22*9½cm, with only 9 recesses for the parts. It has none of the non-TRIX parts, but all the other major parts can be seen except the 17h Strip and the Narrow D/B. The front of the Model Leaflet is similar in style to the AZ version; the models on it are a Bicycle and a 4-bladed Fan.

FIG.1



FIG.2



OSN 49/1489

ZIG-ZAG: S1

MÄRKLIN's Early Days Following the note about the change of name from MECCANO to MÄRKLIN in 48/1452, Clive Weston kindly sent 3 related scans. These also add to the general account of the Meccano/Märklin story in 47/1447.

The first is a pink price list pasted into the last, 1918, Meccano/Märklin manual. It is for 'Metall-Baukasten MÄRKLIN' and gives prices effective from 1st August 1919. It lists Sets 0-6 & 0A-5A in cardboard boxes, and 5H, 6H, 4AH, & 5AH in wooden boxes. Also Sets 201 & 202 (Spring Motors for Sets 0-3 & 4-6 respectively); 300 (Lifting Electromagnet); 301 (Electric Motor); 302 (Magnet, Motor, & Light); 301A a linking set; 401 & 402 (Steam Engines, small & large). The 300 series were all described as high voltage.

Next the newspaper ad right, from Nov. 1919. It features the 'Märklin boy' with a large Crane which was in the early (and all pre-WW2) manuals. It included many of the new MÄRKLIN parts which had been introduced. MECCANO is still mentioned, though in very small letters under MÄRKLIN METALLBAUKASTEN, to no doubt attract/

retain the interest of 'Meccano boys'. The logo is probably unusual and isn't listed on a Märklin enthusiast's website.

The third scan is of an inside cover of the 1918 manual. Printed in a box on it is an announcement which I translate as saying that MECCANO is a completely German product. And that the name MECCANO, the design and manufacture of the parts, and the presentation of the sets are protected from imitation by patents & registered designs. No doubt that when this manual first appeared towards the end of the war it was thought necessary to dispel any lingering thoughts that MECCANO was in any way British.

Clive added that Meccano finally regained the use of their name in Germany from a court judgement, Meccano Ltd. v. Märklin Brothers & Co., Case No.341, at the Anglo-German Mixed Arbitral Tribunal of 6th November 1928. Märklin were found to be in breach of the treaty of Versailles in not returning the use of the Trademark to Meccano. Meccano wasted little time in reopening a German office, but it had faded away again by 1933/1934.

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MÄRKLIN: S5