

COLLECTORS' CORNER

by B.N. Love

INVENTOR'S OUTFIT "B"



As Great Britain made its slow recovery after World War I, Binns Road began to increase its range of Meccano parts, and, in 1919, supplemented its "INVENTOR'S OUTFIT "A" (illustrated in the April 1976 M.M. Quarterly) with the "B" Outfit illustrated in this article.

Meccano enthusiasts will recognise most of the parts shown from the inside of the box lid as being quite familiar, although four of the items are now antiquities. These are the Octagonal Coupling and Octagonal Strip Coupling, Part Nos. 63a and 63b in 1919, the Architrave, Part No. 108, with its plain circular centre, and the distinctive Train Coupling of the period, Part No. 121. There is some question as to whether the large Train Coupling shown inside the lid is artist's licence, based on an identical train coupling supplied by the "PRIMUS" engineering system running as a competitor of Meccano Limited at the time.

A number of Meccano Inventor's Outfits are held by various enthusiasts, but, in general,

the early pattern of Meccano Train Coupling is of a smaller and neater design than the one illustrated inside the outfit box lid. Virtually all of the parts included in the Inventor's Outfit "B" were new designs and were announced by Meccano Limited by means of a single sheet insert in the Meccano Magazine at the time. A list of parts contained in the outfit is given below.

This outfit was never intended to be used as a basic constructional set and the legend on the box lid (outer) is as follows:

"This outfit contains a number of new and valuable parts not contained in the regular Meccano outfits. These parts increase the scope of the Meccano system, improving the models,

and making new models and movements possible."

The plain centre hole Architrave, Part No. 108, is also a Meccano Historian's enigma because, although it is shown in various items of Meccano literature round about the period concerned, usually at the top of the 'standard' model of the Eiffel Tower, specimens of the original have not yet come to light and this may again be a case of artist's licence. Those found in the author's outfit are of the same design as those which we know today, although they are very well nickel-plated. Readers will note that most of the numbers allocated to parts at the time have been retained, with the exception of all of the Double Angle Strips which were subsequently re-allocated the numbers 46 to 48d.

Perhaps the most curious introduction at the time was the Girder Frame with its reduced width of strip section almost suggesting the Narrow Strip of today, but apart from its inclusion in the famous pre-war Supermodel No. 4, Giant Block-Setting Crane (where it was lamentably mis-used for securing the bogies in rigid configuration instead of permitting them to 'float', or pivot), it has remained more of a novelty than a regular feature of models.

Nevertheless, when properly applied, it has both good engineering aspects and aesthetic appeal. Perhaps its lack of application is largely due to the fact that it was never included in any of the standard Meccano sets throughout its history!

| CONTENTS OF MECCANO INVENTOR'S OUTFIT "B", CIRCA 1920 | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|
| No. | Quantity | No. | Quantity | No. | Quantity |
| 12a Angle Bracket | 6 | 60b Double Angle Strip (3½" x ½") | 4 | 89 Curved Strip 5½" | 6 |
| 30 Bevel Gear | 2 | 60c Double Angle Strip (5½" x ½") | 2 | 90 Curved Strip 2½" | 6 |
| 31 Gear Wheel (1", 40 teeth) | 2 | 112 Double Angle Strip (2½" x ½") | 2 | 108 Architrave | 4 |
| 52a Flat Plate 5½" x 3½" | 2 | 62a Threaded Crank | 2 | 109 Face Plate (2½" dia.) | 1 |
| 53a Flat Plate 4½" x 2½" | 2 | 63a Octagonal Coupling | 1 | 110 Rack Strip 3½" | 2 |
| 70 Flat Plate 5½" x 2½" | 2 | 63b Strip Coupling | 1 | 111 Bolt ¼" | 4 |
| 72 Flat Plate 2½" x 2½" | 2 | 64 Threaded Boss | 4 | 113 Girder Frame | 6 |
| 60a Double Angle Strip (1½" x ½") | 6 | 76 Triangular Plate 2½" | 2 | 114 Hinges (pairs) | 1 |
| | | 80 Screwed Rod 5" | 2 | 120 Buffer | 4 |
| | | 81 Screwed Rod 2" | 2 | 121 Train Coupling | 2 |

Pictured at the top of the page is the cover design for the box lid of the 1919-20 Meccano Inventor's Outfit "B" described in this article. Inside the lid, below left, was an illustrated parts list detailing the contents of the outfit. Note peculiar form of the Architrave, Part No. 108, and the large Train Coupling. Below right, general contents and disposition of the parts in the Inventor's Outfit "B".

