



Construction for beginners

Rosie Gordon goes online for some easy Christmas shopping

Ah, the glamorous world of construction. Everyone wants a piece of it. OK, that's not exactly true of adults, but observe the mysterious following of Bob the Builder and enduring popularity of meccano and lego and you'll have to admit that building is a source of fascination for millions of children.

With Christmas advancing, you should be able to use your construction expertise to curry favour with the kids by taking responsibility for their presents this year. So, just how much shopping can you do from your desk?

Grove has a wide range of merchandise, with a good, user-friendly online catalogue at www.groveworldwide.com. It offers access platforms from the 'Manlift' range as well as a large variety of cranes. However, these are fairly impressive scale models, not simple toys.



They range between about £20-£60. Pictured are the Manlift SM3248E Scissors Lift and Manlift AMZ131XT Big Boom Lift.

At www.bobthebuilder.com, cheapskates can actually print out colouring sheets from the website (as researched by Publisher Tim Whiteman, father of two), but there are other gifts available, including books and videos of all the adventures in the builder's yard, with Scoop the digger, Dizzy the cement mixer, Lofty the crane et al. Needless to say, the characters themselves are piled high at toyshops. Pictured is Lofty, the friction powered crane.

For more famous faces, if you visit www.mylittleredwagon.com, you'll find 'Cranky the Crane' in the Thomas the Tank Engine section. Loveable Cranky will no doubt be a hit with children up to the age



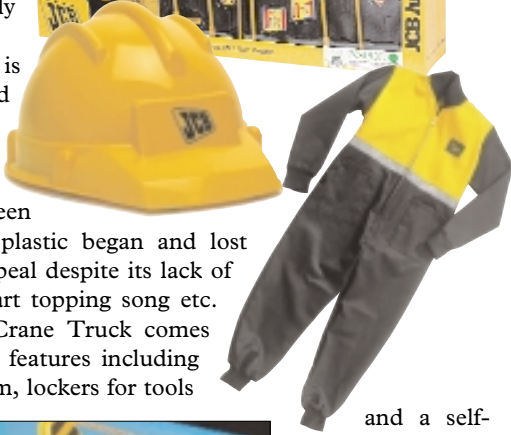
Wishing all
our readers
a very
Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year!

cranes & access

FOR UK BUYERS & USERS OF CRANES OR ACCESS

of four or so, so remember to share him nicely with them.

Play Mobil is easy to get hold of online or in any toy shop. This is a range that has been around since plastic began and lost none of its appeal despite its lack of TV series, chart topping song etc. The Mobile Crane Truck comes complete with features including a 28 inch boom, lockers for tools



and a self-righting winch, for when it gets stuck in 'the soft ground of a building site'. The added bonus is that Mobil construction toys come with workers who look like



band members from the Village People. (Visit playmobil.com).

The Manitowoc Company has just launched its online store of merchandise, so if you think you can get away with it, a few clicks could secure anything from a jacket to a transfer tattoo. For really young babies there are even rompers (creepers) in sugary pink or blue. Manitowoc is an old American city which has the particular distinction of its own version of Monopoly, featuring all the major local businesses. You can buy this through the distributors of Manitowoc merchandise, www.towsleys.com/manitowoccranes, or www.usaopoly.com. C&A personnel can vouch for the 'Born to Lift' tattoos, having sported them at the recent Lighthouse Club dinner, much to the consternation of Manitowoc competitors present.



Dressing up has lost none of its appeal for children either – another option available on line or through mail order is a range of kids clothing, including hard hats and overalls, courtesy of JCB. JCB has a traditional or online catalogue (www.jcb.com) with construction toys, clothes for adults and children alike, mugs, bags and all the usual paraphernalia. Pictured is the kids' outfit and a 'Junior Backhoe Construction Set'.

Unfortunately, the rest of the family is unlikely to be enthralled with overalls and a hard hat 'to make them look like daddy'. But we hope that this guide to the kid's presents takes at least some of the stress out of December.

