

Plasty started importing Airfix kits at some time in the mid 50s. The kits were sold in bags originally with multicoloured headers quite similar to the T.1 Airfix style. The „small“ (Series 1) ones were numbered consecutively, starting at „1“ for the Santa Maria, with the Oldtimer cars, sailing ships, the Southern Cross and the aircraft all in one range. There was no reference whatsoever to the actual producer of the kits. The Series 1 kits all cost DM 2,00. Starting with the Tiger Moth, the design changed to single colour headers, with illustrations independent of the original Airfix style.

The Mosquito and Walrus originally appeared in boxes and were contained in a “Super”-Series, as kits 10 and 11. Besides Airfix, in the 50s Plasty imported (some of ?) the Lincoln range to Germany. These kits were sold in boxes, too, and comprised of the following:

1. Viscount
- 2 DC-7
- 3 Canberra
4. B.707
- 5 Britannia
- 6 L.1049
- 7 Valiant
- 8 F-94 (?)
- 9 Victor
- 12 Sycamore
- 15 DC-3
- 16 Gannet
- 17 Gnat

It is at present unknown if more were added. It appears not unreasonable to assume that the other gap originally contained the Beaufighter and Lightning. The boxes for the Series 2 kits were replaced at some time with bags featuring a German version of the T.1 header.

As kit size grew, a system of Series' was introduced. For aircraft, this denoted the price of a given kit by its association with a specific Series, just as in Airfix's case. For warships and the railway-oriented kits all were contained in one (thematical) series. On the other hand, Serie 1640 not only contained Series 1 aircraft, but also oldtimer cars and sailing ships (both small and large). Most probably this happened with introduction of the Wellington. A list of the Plasty numbers is appended to this article. Note that the Hart was apparently not imported from the beginning, having an out-of-sequence Plasty number.

Starting with the Sea Hawk (at least this is the aircraft kit with the lowest number seen so far), a small paper strip carrying the Plasty number was glued to the bottom of the original T.1 (in the case of the Hart and possibly the earlier kits) or T.2 headers and to the sides of the boxes (T.2 Cossack, for example). This was apparently used for only a rather brief period, however. From this point on, the kits generally received German instructions without illustrations, at first being printed on telephone book paper. The instructions grew and grew in size, some of the later kits having nearly one A4 page in very small typeface with historical information, often including comprehensive serial batch information, notes on alternative colour schemes and sources for reference material.

German retailers were obviously not too taken with the bags hanging around and the hanger hole being ripped through sooner or later, so a number of boxes was conceived. The earliest one is the “Tower box”, a cardboard affair with its top cut out to view the header of the bagged kit inside. This was used not only for Series 1 aircraft (all seen so far with T.2 headers), but also for ships featuring the original Plasty header. An equivalent (at least this appears likely when taking a look at the company name) to the Tower box for bagged Series 2 kits existed, too, in orange and violet, also with a large cut-out in the top, but “neutral”. This was also used for some of the trackside kits.

The next one was a sleeve carrying a Union Jack with a cut-out in the top, in which was placed a strip of card folded to form a tray. The strip carried a picture of the model inside to be viewed through the cut-out. All seen so far are T.2s, too, both Series 1 and Series 2.

Next came plastic trays in various shades of blue, originally fitted with a clear styrene snap-in lid. These must have cost a fortune, so the lid was soon left off, the boxes being shrink-wrapped in tough plastic foil. Some of the early T.2s had the original Plasty header contained as German building instructions. The box was tailored for Series 1 kits, but at least the Buffalo with Jeep was originally crammed in this box, too.

As these plastic trays were obviously still rather expensive and the price had to remain constant (Series 1 kits held the 2 DM-price up to 1970), something cheaper was needed. Back to the cardboard trays, originally in blue. There are two versions that differ mainly with respect to the company name. At first they were delivered sealed in cellophane, but this was rather brittle and most likely deteriorated quickly, so it was replaced with clear vacformed lids.

This basic style of packaging continued until the Blister was introduced. The colour of the tray, however, changed to red at some time in the mid to late 60s, with two versions existing of the red trays, too.

The blister brought uniformity with the packaging on sale in the UK and elsewhere, though not for long. It was replaced by the T.5 box, many of those being "Printed in W. Germany". Very rare are the first runs of the T.5s containing folded Blisters. When stocks of Blisters had run out at Plasty, kits were delivered in plastic bags from Haldane Place and put in the boxes at Neulussheim. This explains why the Me 163, Auster AOP and Spitfire I new mould are very rare in Blisters in Germany.

When the Series 2 kits changed to boxes, there was little to distinguish them from versions on sale elsewhere. They received German instructions and a small sticker with the Plasty number, but that's it. The same applies to the larger kits.

In 1968, the G.91 and the F-104 were released in different boxes with new (excellent and comprehensive) transfers that enabled the builder to build practically every single seater on charge of the Luftwaffe (but not Marineflieger...please note it's not called Kriegsmarine and not even Kriegsmarine, just as it's a Fieseler and not a Fiesler Storch as Airfix would have you believe). This was a promotional effort sponsored by the German Forces, and consequently the instructions contained a section with which prospective military aviators could obtain information brochures. The Heron, Sea Hawk and C-47 were also flown by the Bundeswehr, but the first two had already been phased out of service at the time, and the Dak probably just was not glamorous enough, so are not likely to have received this treatment. The later updated Phantom was definitely hot enough to qualify (apart from the fact that no other version can accurately be built from the kit than the F-4B), but I have never seen any reference to a "special". On the other hand, the Sea King was on offer in a T.5 box with Marineflieger SAR transfers and injection moulded dorsal radome and sonar well blanking plate, but most likely as a very limited run. The box is the standard T.5 with a white label on one of the corners.

The catalogues between 1968 and 1971 contained a large number of national and airline insignia that were said to be "in preparation". A set of transfers containing eight or nine sheets was produced which was on sale at ebay recently, but I failed to have my PC working on time, so it went to someone else...for € 2,50...