

# PLAY IDEAS BANK

Practical Ideas for Creative Play - A comprehensive collection for Playworkers & Playschemes everywhere

No.3



# CARDBOARD CONSTRUCTION

As a play material, corrugated cardboard is unique. You can build just about anything, but what makes it special is that you can make things really big. Cardboard constructions can be as large as life and twice as exciting. Working on a big scale is great for getting children working together on group projects and for bringing their imagination into play.

Our Cardboard Construction leaflet has been written and drawn by Harry Shier and first appeared in PLAY-TIMES magazine.

## Collecting Cardboard

**BOXES:** Cardboard boxes are produced in millions every day. Collect them at home, or get kids to collect them. Look out for really big boxes, such as those you get fridges and washing machines in.

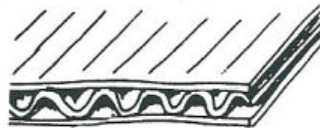
**SHEETS OF CARDBOARD:** There are hundreds of cardboard box and packaging factories around the country. They normally recycle surplus or waste card but many will donate supplies to playschemes. Find the factories in Yellow Pages and explain what you are doing. You can easily scrounge sheets of cardboard up to six feet by eight, so you may need a van or at least a roof-rack to take it away. If you have a local Play Resource Centre, contact them first as they should be able to scrounge plenty of cardboard quickly and efficiently.

It is worth the extra work to secure a supply of giant sheets of cardboard, as this opens up many more creative opportunities.

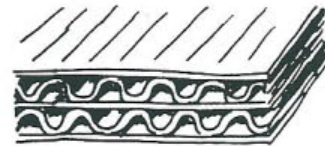
**TUBES:** Everything that comes on a roll means a cardboard tube left over. Contact firms dealing with cloth, paper, leather, carpets, polythene, etc. for giant cardboard tubes.

## About Corrugated Cardboard

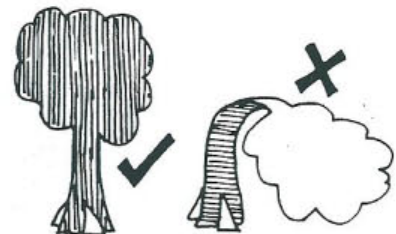
Corrugated cardboard consists of an internal corrugated bit, glued between two flat outer bits. This makes it light but very strong.



Some heavy card has an extra corrugated layer, which makes it even stronger:

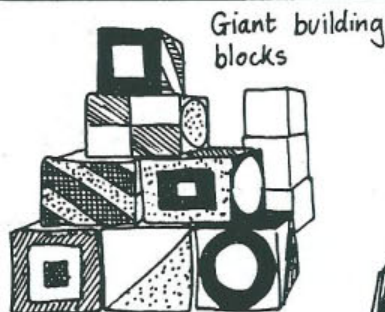


Because of the way it is made, corrugated cardboard will fold easily in one direction (along the corrugations) but is very stiff in other directions. Bear this in mind when building:



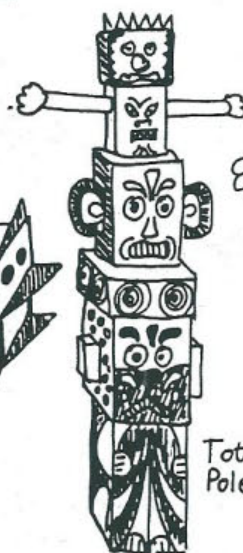
Turn over for ideas.  
Back page for construction techniques.

## Simple Ideas with Boxes

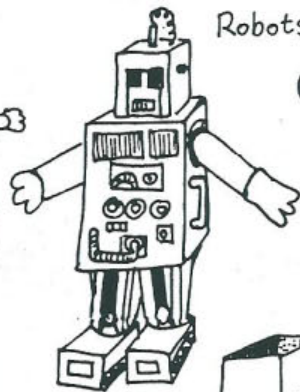


Giant building blocks

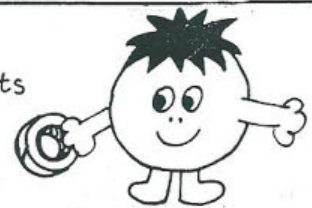
Racing Cars and Spaceships



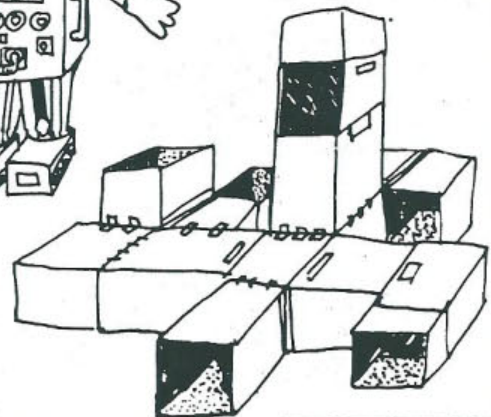
Totem Poles

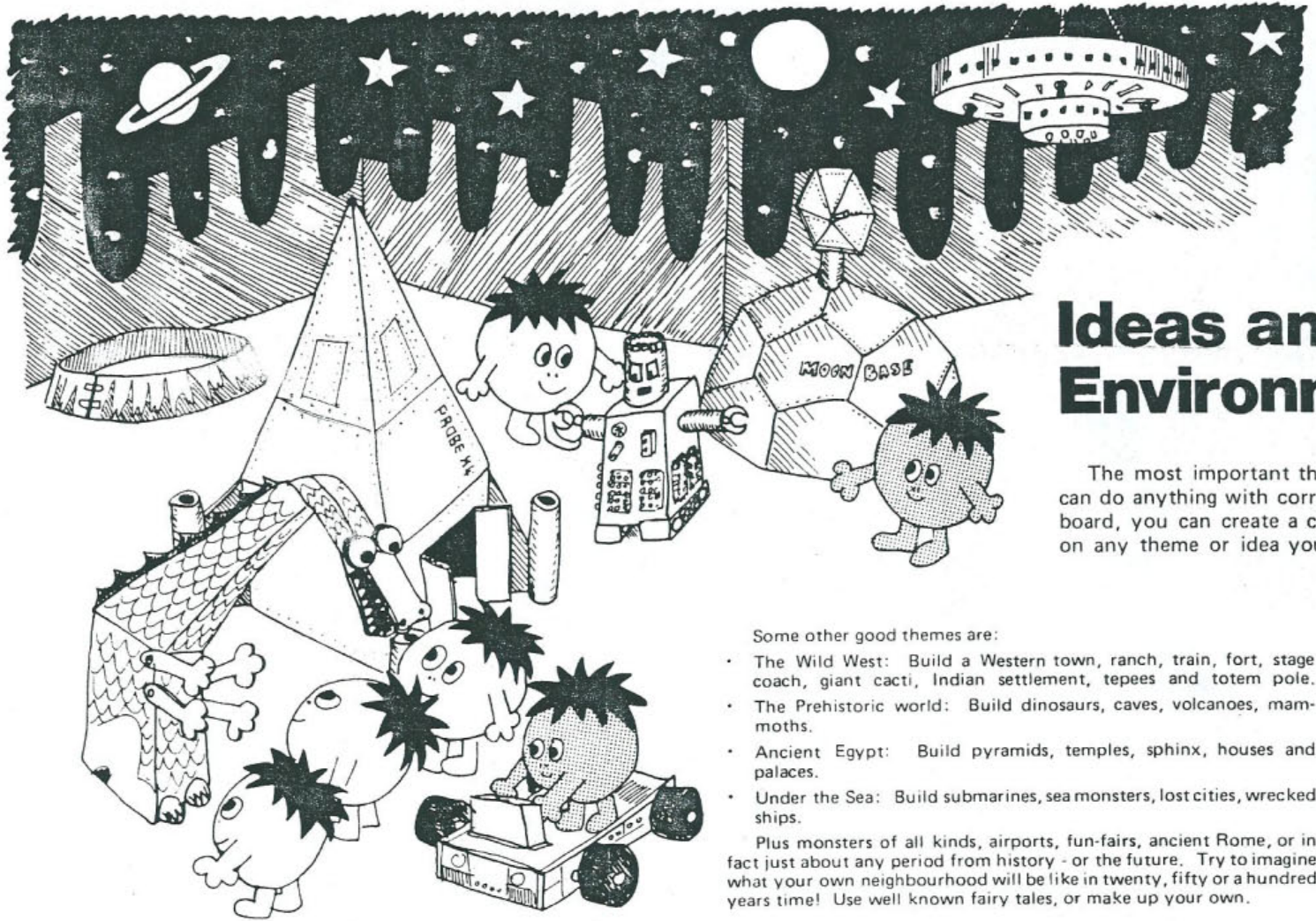


Robots



Tunnels and mazes





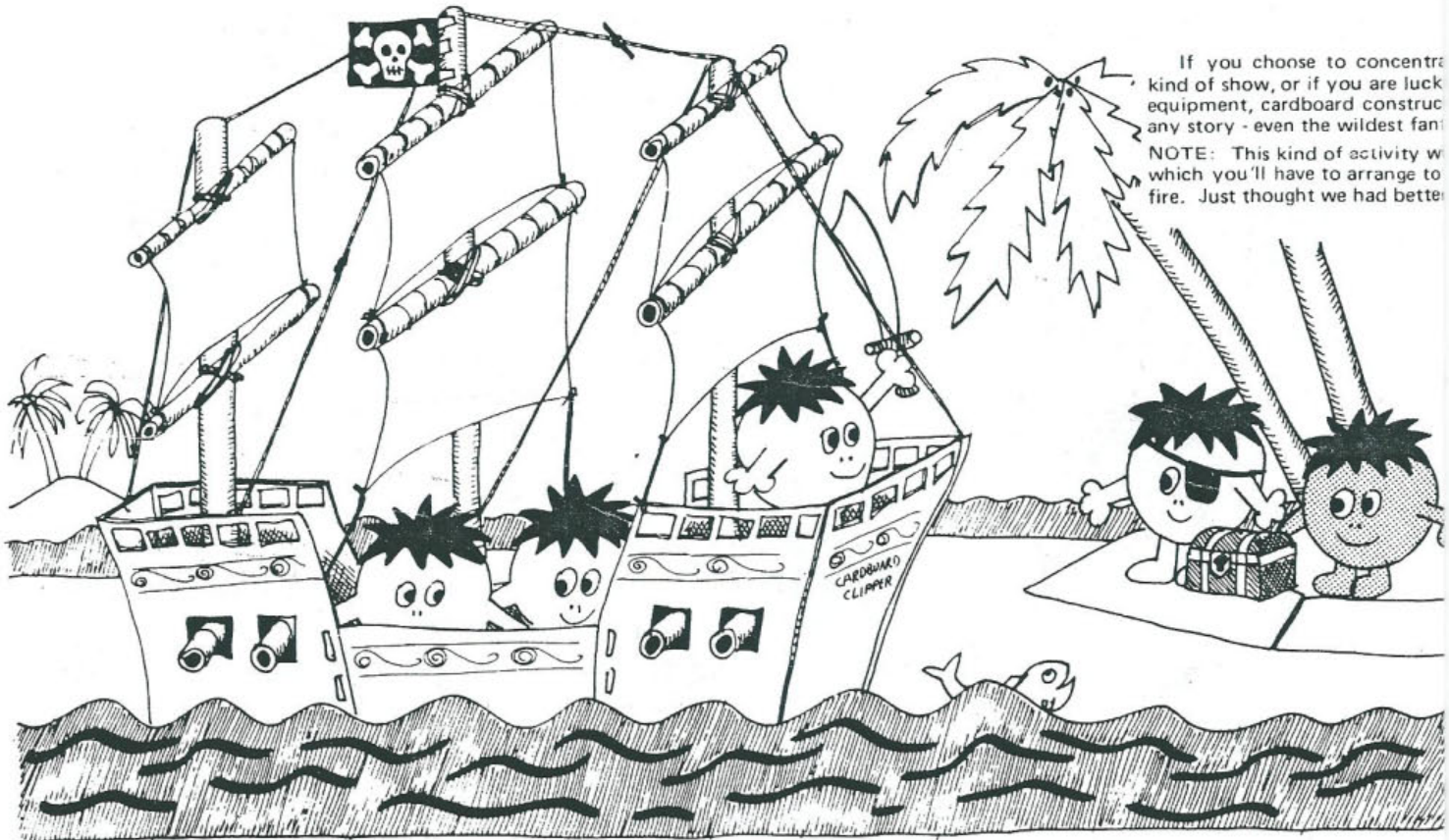
## Ideas and Environment

The most important thing you can do with corrugated cardboard, you can create a corner on any theme or idea you choose.

Some other good themes are:

- The Wild West: Build a Western town, ranch, train, fort, stage coach, giant cacti, Indian settlement, teepees and totem pole.
- The Prehistoric world: Build dinosaurs, caves, volcanoes, mammoths.
- Ancient Egypt: Build pyramids, temples, sphinx, houses and palaces.
- Under the Sea: Build submarines, sea monsters, lost cities, wrecked ships.

Plus monsters of all kinds, airports, fun-fairs, ancient Rome, or in fact just about any period from history - or the future. Try to imagine what your own neighbourhood will be like in twenty, fifty or a hundred years time! Use well known fairy tales, or make up your own.



If you choose to concentrate on a particular kind of show, or if you are lucky enough to have the equipment, cardboard construction can be used to create any story - even the wildest fantasy.

NOTE: This kind of activity will require a fire which you'll have to arrange to have. Just thought we had better mention it.

# lements

is to convince yourself that as a group you  
ated cardboard. With a good supply of card-  
pletely new environment around you, based  
hoose. Several are illustrated on these pages.

We have never come across anything that cannot be built from cor-  
rugated cardboard and assorted junk (with a little bit of imagination).  
So do not stick to the ideas you see here. Be adventurous and dream  
up your own.

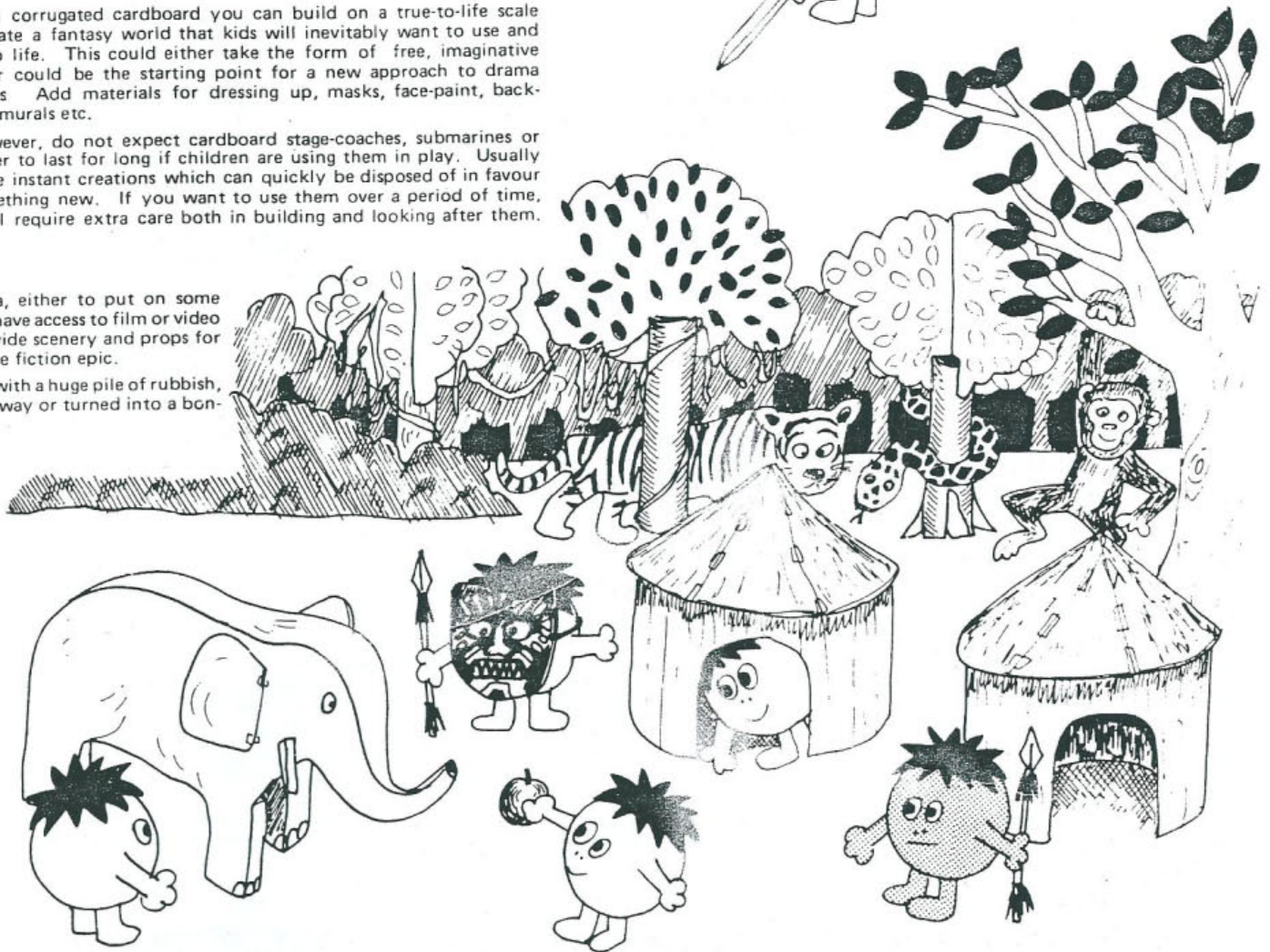
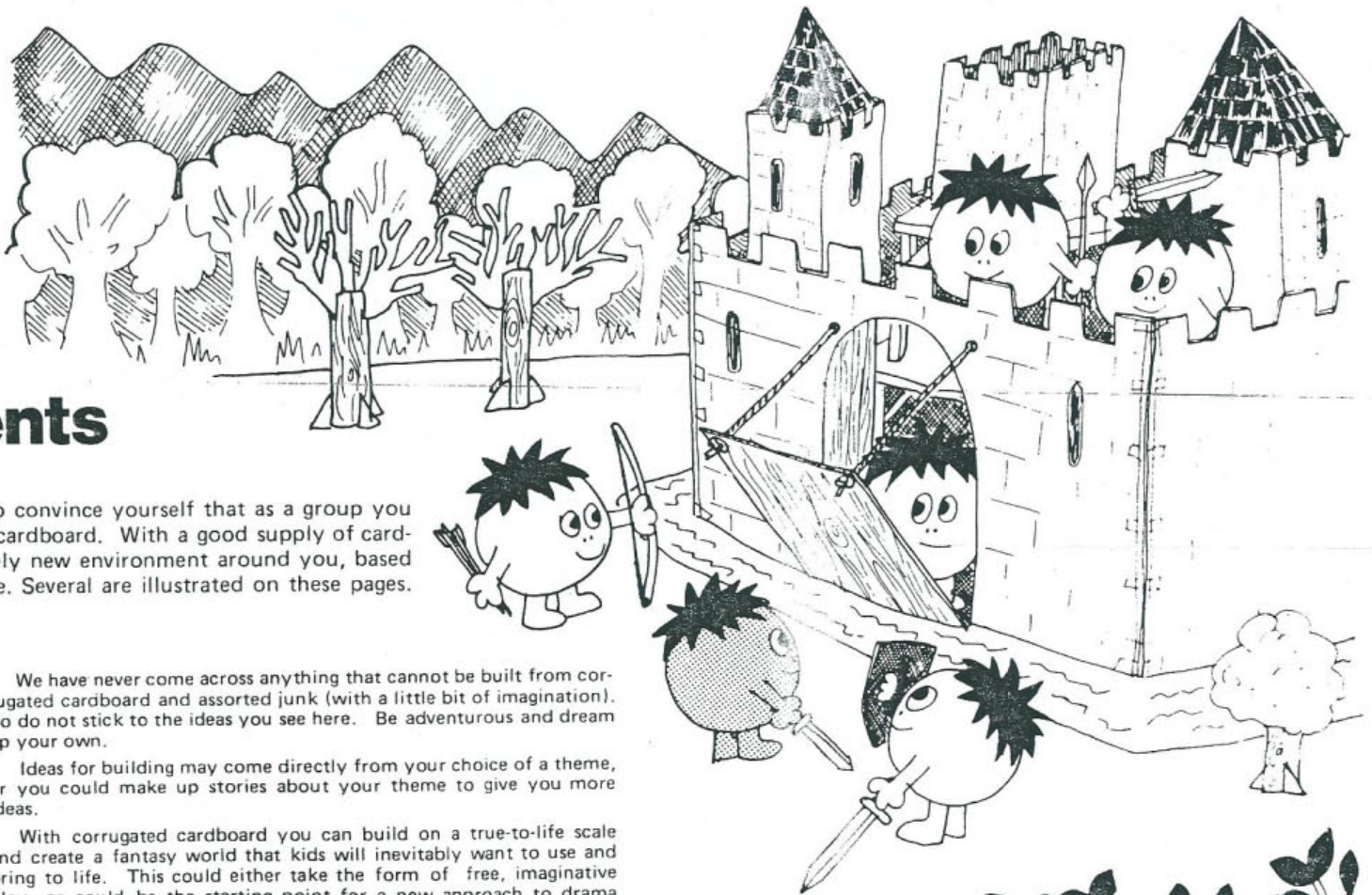
Ideas for building may come directly from your choice of a theme,  
or you could make up stories about your theme to give you more  
ideas.

With corrugated cardboard you can build on a true-to-life scale  
and create a fantasy world that kids will inevitably want to use and  
bring to life. This could either take the form of free, imaginative  
play, or could be the starting point for a new approach to drama  
activities. Add materials for dressing up, masks, face-paint, back-  
ground murals etc.

However, do not expect cardboard stage-coaches, submarines or  
whatever to last for long if children are using them in play. Usually  
they are instant creations which can quickly be disposed of in favour  
of something new. If you want to use them over a period of time,  
this will require extra care both in building and looking after them.

te on drama, either to put on some  
y enough to have access to film or video  
ion can provide scenery and props for  
asy or science fiction epic.

ll leave you with a huge pile of rubbish,  
have taken away or turned into a bon-  
warn you.



## Cutting it

This is the biggest problem in working with corrugated cardboard. After trying different tools, choose the method that suits your own situation.

### ● Scissors

Small children's scissors are no good at all. Big sharp scissors will cut corrugated cardboard, but it requires a great deal of effort and is too difficult for younger children. It is tiring even for adults.

### ● Knives

The quickest and easiest way to cut corrugated cardboard is with a trimming knife:



But these are very sharp and can be very dangerous. You can get children to mark out the shapes they want, and have adult helpers use the knives to cut them out.

On the other hand, all children must sooner or later be taught how to use sharp tools safely. Otherwise they will eventually get their hands on them and learn the hard way by themselves. So with older children, ask yourself whether you can afford the time to introduce them to the correct use of sharp knives, and let them try it under your close supervision.

You can get special hooked blades that are safer, but difficult to use accurately:



When using knives, avoid scoring other people's floors and tables, if you want to use the premises again!

### ● Saws

For very thick card, a special holder that takes hacksaw blades is very useful. It is safe to use, but slow, and the blade can easily break.



## Folding it

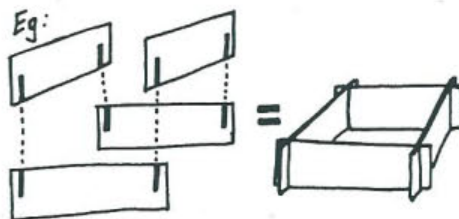
As we said before, corrugated cardboard folds very easily along the corrugations. To fold in any other direction, first score the line with the point or a pair of scissors or other sharp tool:



## Holding bits together

### ● Slotting

You can cut out your pieces so that they slot together to give three-dimensional shapes. It takes careful design and planning to do this, but with practice it becomes quite easy.



### ● Sticky tape

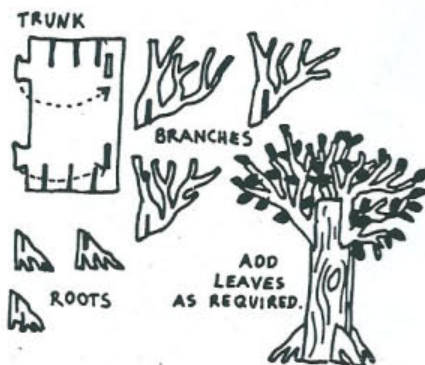
Wide industrial packaging tape is ideal for large scale work with corrugated cardboard. It is expensive to buy, so try to scrounge some from local firms, or contact the nearest Resource Centre. Sticky tape will not stick well on surfaces covered with powder paint, nor will paint stick easily to tape, so avoid it where the paintwork finish is important.

Gummed paper tape is also good (and cheaper) but less convenient to use.

### ● Tying and Stitching

Make holes with scissor points (or six inch nail will do). Use strong string such as sisal. This method is very strong, but fiddly and slow.

### HOW TO SLOT A TREE TOGETHER



### ● Staples

Only big staples will join corrugated cardboard adequately. If you have access to a heavy-duty stapler it will be invaluable for quick joins that would otherwise be awkward. As with knives, children have to be taught how to use it correctly and safely.

### ● Glue

Contact adhesive (Evo-Stik, Thixofix, etc.) will do a good job on corrugated card, but is expensive, and not suitable for general playscheme use.

Most other glues, for example PVA, take a long time to dry, so are not good for instant creation. Glue is most useful for adding details and decoration afterwards (see Finishing Touches below).

## Designing 3-D Models

In many cases it is easy to see how to construct something, e.g. a house, a table, a computer. Sometimes it is not so obvious. Try sketching your ideas on paper, and if still in doubt try it on a small scale with scissors, thin card and sellotape.



## Finishing Touches

Besides painting, giant cardboard constructions can be further improved and made more realistic with all kinds of junk materials:

- WOOL for hair on all kinds of creatures, jungle creepers etc.
- EGG-BOXES for knobby bits on robots, monsters etc.

- SILVER FOIL for robots, space ships, submarines etc.
- SCRAP PAPER for leaves, scales, curled in strips for hair.
- YOGURT POTS, PAPER CUPS for noses, protruding eyes, more knobby bits.
- FABRIC OFF-CUTS for clothes, animal skins (fur fabric?), leaves, hair, ears etc.

For more Play Ideas Bank leaflets go to:

[www.grcltd.org](http://www.grcltd.org)