New System: MOOV This Dutch system, launched in 2008, is the latest attempt to produce sets for models which kids can ride on. Recall Gilbert's NEW WHEEL TOY & ERECTOR SENIOR from 1919 into the early 1920s (see 45/1385); the German MAFELL (15/415, 19/531) from the early 1930s; the French AUKRI (44/1347), date unknown but between 1930 and the 50s; RIDE-IT ERECTOR, Gilbert's second try in the 1960s (brief notes in 13/360, & 14/394-5); and the Russian FANTAZER (45/1377), date unknown but certainly post-WW1.

Fig.1

MOOV is made by Berg of Ede (www.bergtoys.com, plus national sites such as www.berg direct.co.uk, which shows the spare parts available), a company best known for its range of pedal-powered Go-Karts and outdoor children's playthings.

The parts are shown right and models have a spine of red coated steel parts, mostly tubular, with varnished plywood Strips (called Boards) and trim (often plastic) attached by Connectors with a shallow head at one end (they are the 3 labelled '2x 4x 2x' near top centre – the coloured end blobs are identification marks), or the 7 Axles ('2x to 2x' along the bottom). All have grooves along their length, & red Rubber Rings ('123x') are rolled into the grooves to hold the parts together. The black ring (4x) next to the Cables is a Spacer Ring needed to take up slack at some points. An Ebay ad said that the Axles are coated steel. The Wheels are pneumatic (30 psi) with Tyres and Inner Tubes, and they run on the Axles. I think the elongation of the holes in the Strips is to allow a finger to grip a Ring to remove it. The only dimension given is that the Wheels are 12" Ø and scaling gives the length of the 4-Wheeler right as 40", a little longer than the Wheel Toy's featured model, and the holes as 3½cm at 15cm pitch. But those figures could be well out.

Fig.2

There are 4 sets: a Starter Kit at £149 with 125+ parts including 2 Wheels for 3 models (not all at the same time they hasten to add); an Advanced Kit at £199 with 150+ parts, 3 Wheels, 7 models; a Street Kit at £249 (Figs.1 & 2), 175+ parts, 4 Wheels, in a box 68*45*28cm for 10 models; and an Education Kit for schools etc, at £349 with 3 manuals and over 200 parts for 10 models.


Fig.3

The Starter models are a 2-wheel Bike; the Crane right; & a Snowscooter with Wheels at the back & skis (bottom right in Fig.2) at the front. The Advanced Kit adds a Helicopter; the Dino Bird far right; a Scooter; & a 3-wheel Chopper. The extra models for the Street set are the Racer in Fig.3; a Trike; & a Carver (a 3-wheeler with a single front Wheel). The step-by-step instructions for all the models can be downloaded from the bergtoys website.


Fig.4

Apart from 'paddling' along with the feet none of the models can be self-propelled. Steering is from handlebars, either centre-pivot and cable operated; or bicycle style with an Axle in a down tube and Strip forks. The 3- & 4-wheel models have a pivoted brake lever which rubs against one of the rear Wheels, as in Fig.3.

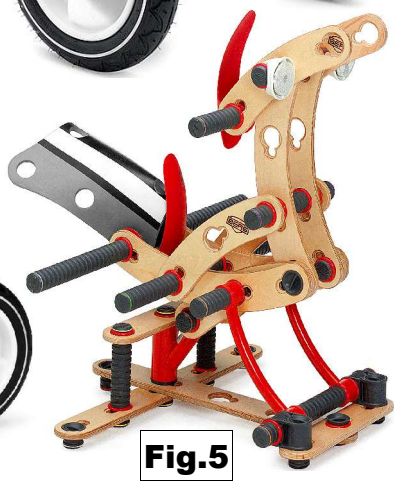
Fig.5

The 3 non-ride-on models follow ERECTOR SENIOR in widening the scope of the sets. The Helicopter is a simple affair but the other two (Figs.4 & 5) are more interesting. At a glance I hoped a youngster could sit on the Dino Bird and that it would rock. Sadly no, but still an imaginative model. The Crane looks to be some 90cm high and could be played with, though a proper hook would have been preferable to the Spring Clasp. A Cable ties the jib's back end to the chassis.

I wondered what purchasers thought of MOOV and I found a few reviews that looked independent, mainly on Amazon. Most were very enthusiastic though all related to 5-year olds: pricey but very good; good instructions; can build the models with help with the instructions; enjoyed the building & playing. The least favourable comments: brilliant but one drawback, no means of propulsion; wanted to like it, good quality parts, but seat uncomfortable & heavy to push. Berg say MOOV is suitable for the 5-12's and one review said his 5 year old, 44" tall, could just reach the handlebars and so the toy would be usable well into the future. Finally, given the method of assembly, might the models be a bit rickety? No-one mentioned any problems.