

Centaur road tests

the

BERINETTE

IT was a fascinating experience riding the Berini Berinette. The concept of the moped was founded several years ago on the single-speeder equipped with the conventional type of clutch. The original Raleigh was such a machine and there were a number of others. Now there are none since the only present-day single-speeders are fitted with automatic clutches and are not strictly comparable.

That is—apart from the Berinette, which has only been recently introduced yet which bears a strong resemblance to the old Berini M.21 tested a few years ago by CYCLING AND MOPEDS when Berinis were imported by a different concessionaire.

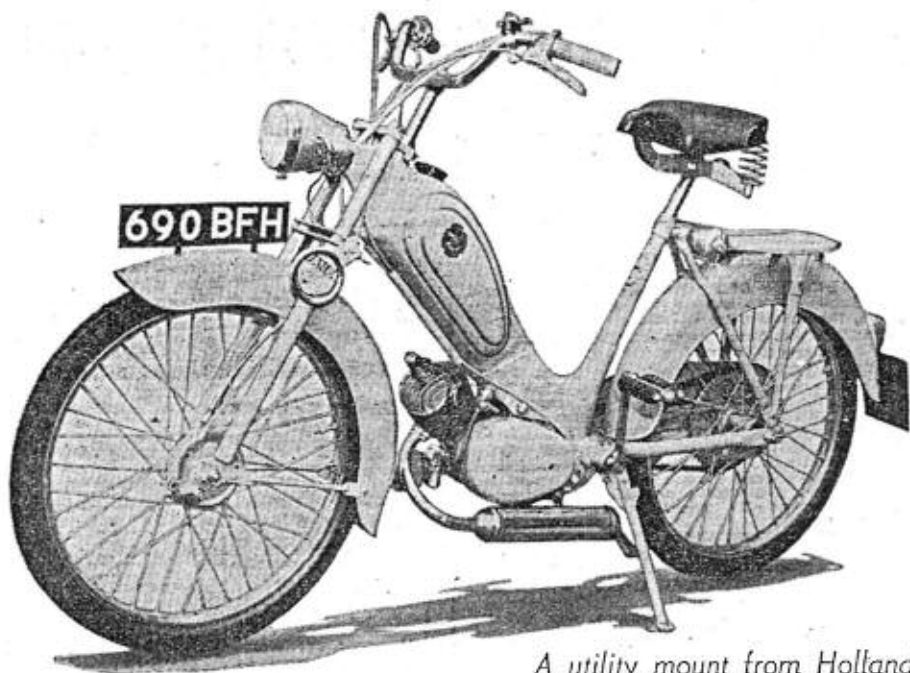
As with the M.21 the most unusual feature about this moped is that the carburettor is mounted at the front of the crankcase. The reason for this is that in Holland, where Berinis are made, a speed governor is required and it is convenient to use this arrangement.

Because there is no neutral the Berinette must first be pedalled away with a dead engine and the clutch is engaged when the speed is sufficient. Since a single gear ratio has to suffice for the whole speed range it is rather on the high side. This means that to avoid unpleasant vibration at lower speeds the pedals must be used.

Pedal Starting

Because pedalling requires more than just the negligible push which is needed on today's multi-speeders, the Berini is a very comfortable upright mount. The handlebars are wide and handily upswept and give a good "sit-up-and-beg" position. They are adjustable for height as is the rubber saddle, and both give a good selection of variation. Once adjusted to suit a particular rider the Berini could be pedalled over quite a lengthy distance. This makes a welcome change from a majority of the mopeds tested recently.

Naturally acceleration is not very good and top speed, as indicated, is limited. Lack of a speedometer prevented a check on consumption although this is likely to be very favourable. If things seem to weigh



A utility mount from Holland

against the Berinette remember that from the point of view of basic cost, it is definitely in the economy class at under £55.

On top of low initial cost there are also a number of very desirable features. The manufacturers have recognised that starting the Berinette is not as straightforward as it would be if the neutral/kick-start arrangement were incorporated and they have fitted a special starting device to the twist-grip.

This consists of a button which can be pressed to allow the slide to descend further into the carburettor thus cutting off most of the air supply and considerably enriching the mixture. Once the throttle is opened this device is over-riden and cannot be engaged without depressing the button again.

Despite the fact that the front brake is tiny in comparison with the full-width hub variety, it has amazing stopping power. The back brake is activated by back-pedalling but is surprisingly smooth in action. For once it is possible to "feel" the braking effort rather than make a blind stab at it, and it is possible to use this brake alone on greasy roads.

Clutch operation is not as smooth as is desirable. A ratchet is fitted so that the clutch can be held in a permanently disengaged position without any effort on the part of the rider. Unfortunately this ratchet tends to come into operation when the clutch is disengaged during normal riding and some fumbling is required to keep it inoperative.

There is also a tendency for the clutch to drag even when the lever is pulled in fully. Both these defects will probably either diminish or disappear when the cable has been in use for some time in a well-lubricated condition.

Telescopic

Telescopic front forks are fitted and they do their job well. The rear end is rigid but compensation is made for this in the large springs on which the saddle is suspended. Handling the Berini is both comfortable and safe.

I am glad to see that a rear carrier is included in the basic specification and that there are substantial vertical members from each side of the carrier to the end of the rear forks. Such members provide an ideal basis for pannier carrying.

A side-stand, a very unusual feature nowadays, is fitted. The construction is commendably sound and the stand can be brought down with the foot.

Tools are carried in a metal cylinder below the saddle. A couple of box spanners are provided—not an elaborate toolkit but then this is an economy moped.

The horn is attached, rather as an afterthought, at the side of the headlamp. The latter gives an above-average beam and was found to be quite useful on really dark streets.

In short this is a well-built, extremely simple utility mount supplied with a selection of equipment which would not be out of place on a moped costing half as much again.

SPECIFICATION

Engine: Two stroke with reversed scavenging, rotary inlet disc; bore, 40mm, stroke 38mm = 48cc. Carburettor: Encorwi with automatic choking device.

Transmission: Primary, helical gears in oil bath; secondary, chain. Clutch: multi-plate operating in oil bath.

Frame: Pressed steel. Suspension: telescopic front forks, rigid rear.

Tank capacity: 1½ gallons including reserve.

Equipment: Tool Kit and carrier side-stand.

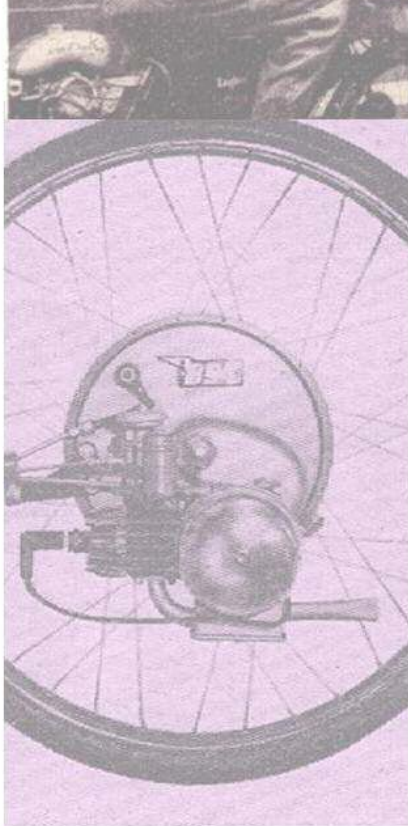
Wheels and brakes: Tyres 23in. x 2in. Brakes: front, hand-operated; rear: back-pedal operated.

Lights: 6v. 17w. direct from flywheel magneto.

Finish: Duck-egg blue with gold trimmings.

Concessionaires: E. Cotton (Motorcycles) Ltd., Vulcan Works, Quay Street, Gloucester. **Price:** £54 including tax.

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