

FRANCE is the world's biggest producer of mo-peds and the Motobecane concern is the biggest producer in France, so a road test of their latest and most luxurious machine is of more than ordinary interest as representing the top point in world standards.

The actual machine tested was the Mobylette "Luxamatic" in its dual-seat form, a logical development of the earlier models but with many distinctive features. It is powered by the new AV.89 engine of 49 c.c. but modified to give a greatly enhanced performance by considerably higher compression ratios in both cylinder and crankcase, larger port areas and larger carburettor. This unit is mounted on a single rubber bushed pivot bearing to enable it to move with the variations of belt position as the automatic gearing operates on the expanding pulley system. The automatic centrifugal clutch is mounted directly on the nearside end of the crankshaft and the very large diameter countershaft pulley has a simple disengaging mechanism to permit the machine to be pedalled, cycle fashion.

There are separate chains for the pedal and engine final drives, the main chain being fully enclosed in a large metal shield with a rubber capped inspection hole for checking tension. Long, handsome side shields secured by coin-slotted screws cover the transmission on either side of the machine.

The frame is of pressed steel all-welded construction with the heavily valanced rear mudguard and large tool compartment integral. Its swinging arm rear fork is also rubber mounted in its pivot bearing as are the ends of the telescopic spring units. Leading bottom links with Neimann rubber suspensions operate

on the pressed steel main front fork blades.

22-inch wheels on full width ribbed light alloy hubs have oversize white-wall tyres and standard equipment includes electric horn and headlamp mounted speedometer. Handlebars are adjustable for height and the single seat models have saddle pin adjustment also, but the dual-seat model, as tested, has no adjustment for seat height and, of course, no luggage carrier.

On The Road

Starting can be effected by simply pedalling away with the throttle twistgrip held right back to operate the de-compressor. For cold starting there is a choke device by a small thumb lever on the left handlebar. At about 4 m.p.h. the automatic clutch engages and the engine turns over and starts. However, we found it easier to stamp on a pedal with the machine on its stand and never failed to get the engine firing with one kick during the test.

Apart from engine starting, the pedals are never used as the combination of adequate engine power with automatic clutch and gearing enable the machine to be pulled away from standstill by simply opening the throttle. As the speed increases so the automatic gearing adjusts itself to the load conditions and there is no sharp rise in engine revs at all. Because of this the acceleration does not feel as good as it really is but in fact there are few 50 c.c. machines of any kind that can equal it and most fourwheeled traffic was left behind on the getaway from traffic stops.

The power available is surprising, not only at peak revs but all the way

ROAD TEST REPORT:

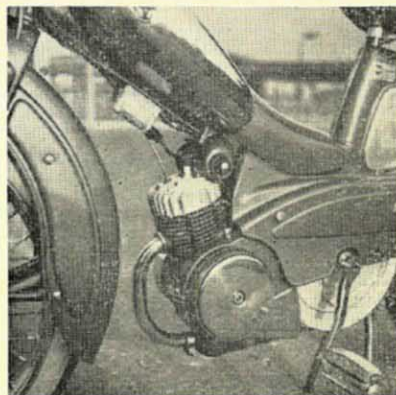
Mobylette "LUXAMATIC"

up the range to a maximum not far short of 40 m.p.h. The unit is very smooth and can hardly be felt except at very low speeds when closing down, just before the clutch disengages. There is no mechanical noise because there are no gears to make it, and the exhaust note is well subdued throughout the speed range.

Cruising at 30-33 m.p.h. is absolutely effortless for both machine and rider and this gait can be maintained up modest main road gradients also. On a long hill averaging 1 in 10 with its steepest section 1 in 8 the *Luxamatic* purred up steadily at 20 m.p.h. with a 13 stone rider. A stop and re-start test on this hill indicated that a couple of turns of the pedals would get the machine away a little quicker but the clutch took up the drive quite smoothly without using the pedals at all and the engine took the load away easily.

The complete absence of noise and

This close-up view shows the rubber-mounted engine pivot and the external H.T. coil. The chromed dome is the automatic clutch



Luxamatic continued from page 207

fuss on this part of the test and also in the continuous stopping and starting called for in heavy London traffic is one of the most attractive features of the performance and is one rarely met with on a machine that can also reel off the miles at a high average speed on the open road.

Steering is above reproach, road-holding excellent and the combination of large section tyres and a most efficient modern suspension system provided a standard of comfort well above average except for the dual-seat itself. This was hard, very hard, and we were astonished to find that it consists of a single rigid metal plate, completely unsprung and covered only by a thin layer of soft padding under its plastic top. Only a well practised horseman would call this a saddle and we reluctantly gave the *Luxamatic* a black mark for this handsome but useless piece of expensive extra equipment.

Both brakes are hand operated, smooth and efficient. This system has the advantage that the pedals can be kicked around as required for starting or getting away. As there is no hand clutch to be operated full braking control is maintained all the time with this system. The only other handlebar control used when riding is the horn button on the left bar.

Nearly Everything

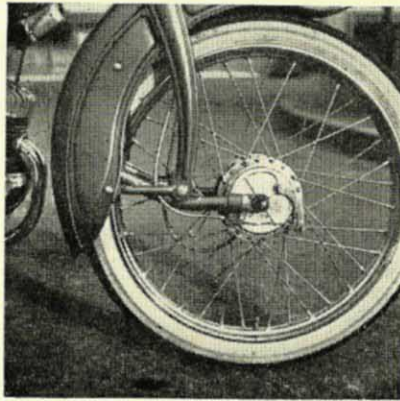
Apart from the dualseat we find little to carp at in this machine. There is no reserve fuel tap, but the tank holds well over a gallon and there is a flexible "dip-stick" attached to the filler cap to save guesswork.

There is no dipswitch fitted and the horn produces only the usual "mo-ped croak", a matter of little importance on most machines but needing attention on a vehicle that does 40 m.p.h. and frequently passes other traffic.

Of the dualseat we can only say that no-one has to pay the extra £4 for this and it would be cheaper as well as more comfortable to buy the single seat model and fit a conventional pillion seat and footrests behind it. It is not a fault in the machine itself.

The "*Luxamatic*" is a machine that has nearly everything a mo-ped can offer, high performance, comfort, safety, quietness and sheer efficiency. It is not cheap, but these standards cannot be obtained without paying for them and for those who are prepared to pay this one is in the very top of the class.

The fully enclosed driving chain is shown here. Also pillion riders foot rests and the telescopic rear suspension



Detail of the front wheel leading link with rubber suspension—an unusual arrangement for mopeds

SPECIFICATION:

ENGINE: Mobylette AV.89, bore 39 mm. x stroke 41.75 mm., capacity 49.85 c.c., compression ratio 8.9 to 1, claimed output 2.8 b.h.p. at 5,500 r.p.m., automatic Dimoby clutch with automatic gearing through belt primary drive, overall ratios variable between 19.9 and 11.1 to 1. Independent chain drives.

FRAME: One piece all-welded pressed steel frame with integral 9-pint fuel tank, adjustable handlebars and seat pillar.

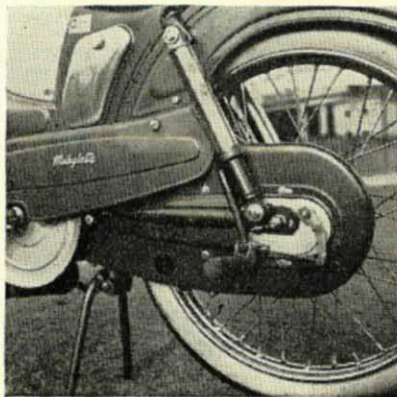
SUSPENSION: Bottom leading link front forks with Neimann rubber springing, rear swinging arm fork with telescopic spring units.

WHEELS: 18-inch chromed rims on alloy hubs, 22-inch x 2.25-inch Hutchinson whitewall tyres.

ELECTRICS: Novi flywheel magneto with external H.T. coil and 6-volt, 8-watt lighting coil. 4-inch headlamp with built-in speedometer. Electric horn.

PRICE: With single seat and carrier £85.19.6., with dualseat and pillion footrests as tested £89.19.6.

CONCESSIONAIRES: Motor Imports, Ltd., 7 Gresham Road, London, S.W.9.



FLASHES

Piaggio's Third Million

A total world production of nearly three million *Vespa* scooters is announced by Piaggio. Their annual production has grown from 2,484 in 1946 to 275,000 in 1960.

Change of Address

FRISKY CARS, LTD. have moved from Wolverhampton to Kent. The new address is FRISKY CARS (1959) LTD., Sandwich, Kent.

Villiers Badge Competition

J. R. Stephenson, of 22, Nickleby House, George Row, Bermondsey, London, S.E.16, has won the £20 prize presented by The Villiers Engineering Co. Ltd., Wolverhampton, for the best design of badge for the newly formed Villiers Engine Owners Club.

His design depicts the British Isles framed within the circumference of a wheel and superimposed by the familiar Villiers name-scroll, and with the words "Villiers Engine Owners Club" running around the wall of the "tyre".

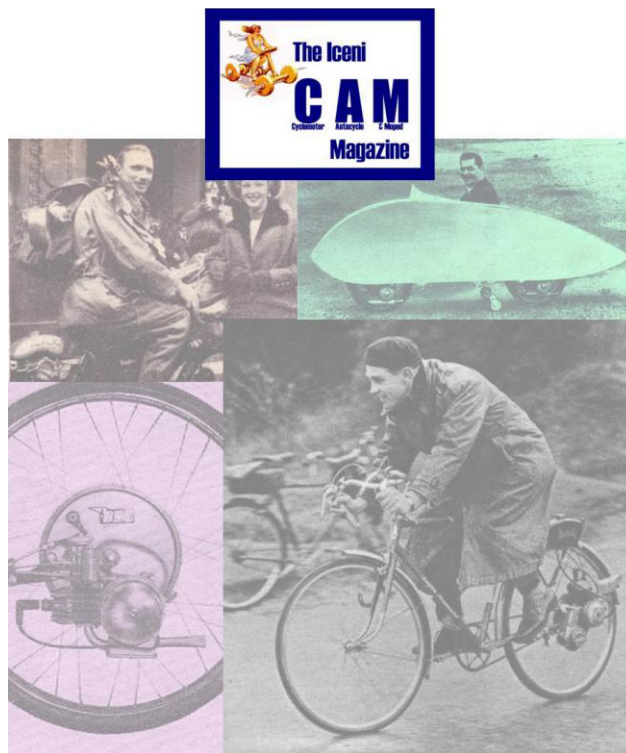
The predominant colours of the badge are red and gold, the official colours of the road vehicle engine division of Villiers, and the design will be reproduced as machine and lapel badges and as transfers

James in Africa

A James 150 Scooter will represent products of the British Motor Cycle and Scooter industry at the Central African Trade Fair, to be held in Southern Rhodesia this year.

The Fair will open in Bulawayo on 3rd May and will run to 14th May 1961.

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