

ROAD TEST REPORT:

The RALEIGH "ROMA"

A modified model, the RS.2

SINCE our first road test report on this model in September last year one or two minor specifications have been made to the design.

The accent is on the word 'minor', for, in the words of a Raleigh representative, the *Roma* has simply been 'tidied up and toughened up'. External differences between the *Roma RS1* and the *Roma RS2* (as the new model is to be called) are not very obvious, the most apparent being the headlamp cowl, which is now made of high-impact plastic and has decorative ribbing across the top.

Also apparent is the fixing of the exhaust pipe which now, instead of leading almost direct from the exhaust port and out some considerable distance to the rear, runs first forward, then at right angles across the bike and finishes up along and underneath the left footboard. In this manner the same length of pipe and silencer is used but the fixings are better and no pipe at all appears out of the rear of the bodywork.

Inside the 77.8 c.c. two stroke engine minor adjustments have again been made and the claimed brake horse power has been stepped up from 3.7 to 4.3 (the latter figure achieved at 6,200 r.p.m.). To accom-

modate this the engine has been stiffened up a little and the gear ratios made slightly higher and closer. Outcome of this is a negligible increase in top speed but much improved performance through the gears, of particular benefit when the bike is used with two riders.

Raleigh also felt that the rubber bushes in the engine mountings could be dispensed with as much of the vibration they were designed to cover up has been eliminated.

This, then, summarises the modifications and the *RS2* is otherwise identical to the *RS1*. A fuller description of the basic machine was given in our September 1961 Road Test, which should be read in conjunction with this report.

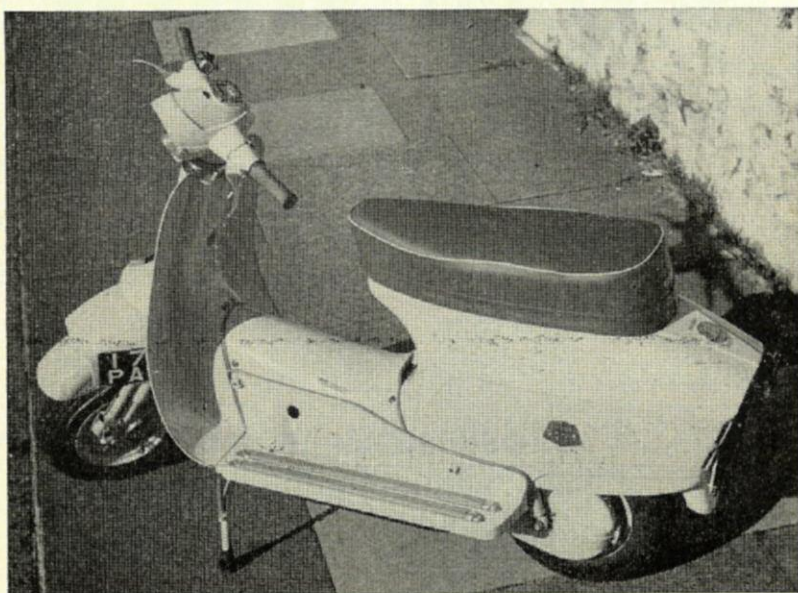
Originally intended for launching at the forthcoming Motor Cycle

Show in November, the *RS2* has been made available earlier because of an encouraging improvement in the *Roma's* popularity. But it was not officially launched when we received the test machine (the first available to the press) and the bike was upon us before we knew in detail about the modifications! As a result it has been tested as a completely new machine.

That extra performance

Oddly enough this new *Roma* is not so quick to fire when started from cold as its predecessor, but when warm invariably started first kick. For cold starts a self-returning rod on the carburettor is pressed down. It is reached through a round hole, perhaps a little too small for a heavily gloved finger.

The Roma is a light, compact and handy scooter, now with a lively performance



Sitting on the machine with the engine running the vibration criticized in the RS1 can still be felt though admittedly much reduced. It is particularly noticeable in the handlebars and passenger's feet when the engine is raced out of gear. However, the vibration was felt very much less when the *Roma* is travelling.

Comfortable Travel

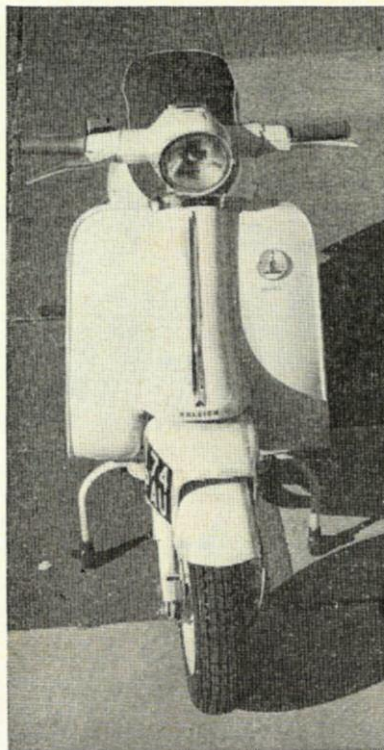
Gear changes remain slick and easily made, with the exception of second which was easy to miss when changing up. This was easily overcome by clutchless changes out of the first two gears.

That extra performance at low speeds is particularly noticeable, though the slightly higher first gear demands subtler use of throttle and clutch when moving off from standstill. A second rider made virtually no difference to the agility of the bike in traffic and gear changes on hills and inclines were surprisingly few. One comment our various pillion riders all made was about the need for an extra inch or two in the length of the dual seat—even the pillion girl in Raleigh's own advertisement hangs over at the rear!

Here the criticism of the saddle ends, for this is one of those rare, well-made items that can't be sat on too much. With this and the suspension which strikes a happy medium between firmly-damped for good roadholding and soft for joltless journeys, the rider is assured of very comfortable travel.

Top cruising speed of the RS2 is around the 40 m.p.h. mark, and it can be driven, we proved, for long periods with the throttle wide open. With this sort of use, plus town work in heavy traffic, one gallon of 20:1 petrol lasted 93 miles, a figure much higher than our expectations.

The brakes are spot on, response to pressure on control lever or foot pedal being gradual yet positive. Headlight power is quite extraordinary for such a small battery-less motor, excellent beams being given dipped or full, but the horn remains of negligible effect.



A wide and very stable centre stand with non-slip feet

A true scooter

As mentioned earlier, the construction of the RS2 is virtually identical to the RS1, and the new model still has fold-out footboards for access to the engine and a tip up seat for access to petrol cap and glove box. This box still has an irritating gap at the back, presumably necessary in the construction of the scooter.

The footstand is mounted well forward and easily operated from either side, particularly as the bike is so very light in weight. This lightness made the machine a delight to handle, and it was most pleasant to have a scooter that could be easily wheeled about with one hand and no conscious effort.

Add to this the fact that its performance with two riders is excellent, that, despite its elegant styling and built-in comfort, it can work hard for long periods, and you have some idea how near the *Roma* comes to being the ideal light transport.

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: 77.8 c.c., bore 48 mm., stroke 43 mm., two-stroke Cast iron cylinder, aluminium flat-topped piston. Develops 4.3 b.h.p. at 6,500 r.p.m.

TRANSMISSION: 3 speed constant-mesh gearbox with hand operated multi-plate clutch immersed in oil, gear primary drive, then enclosed-chain secondary drive. 1st. 19.27:1, 2nd. 10.72:1, 3rd. 6.78:1.

FRAME. Welded tubular steel with pressed steel fittings and body panels. Front and rear suspension by telescopic rubber spring units.

ELECTRICS: Marelli flywheel generator supplying lighting direct; 4½ ins. headlamp in toughened plastic cowl, and rear lamp. Main, dipped and town beams.

WHEELS: 3.50 ins. x 8 ins. tyres, pressed steel split-rim interchangeable wheels. Brakes 5 ins. diameter front and rear.

DIMENSIONS: 3 ft. 3¼ ins. high, 2 ft. ¼ ins wide, 5 ft. 6 ins. long. Weight, 172 lbs.

MANUFACTURERS: Raleigh Industries Ltd., Nottingham.

PRICE: £115 10s. 0d. (inc. P.T.)

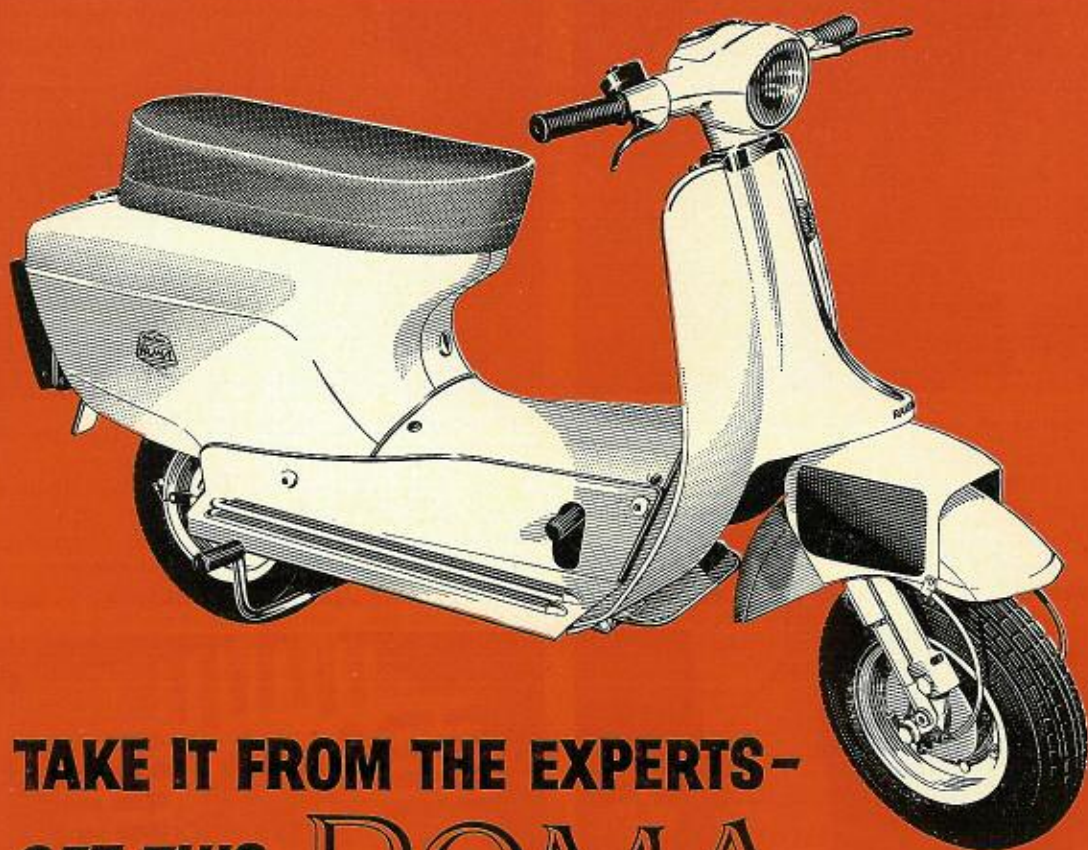
SUCCESS STORY

King's Lynn Scooter & Three-wheeler Club (The Westerners) was formed in March 1960 and though not as strong in numbers as they were (they reached a peak membership during 1961) they feel stronger in spirit. Anybody interested in joining should meet at the Barley Mow, Railway Road, King's Lynn every Wednesday Evening at 8 p.m.

CLOSING DATE

EXTENDED

Closing date for the submission of photographs to the Lambretta Photo Competition has now been extended to December 31, 1962. Entry forms and full details can be obtained from the Publicity Department, Lambretta Concessionaires Limited, Trojan Works, Purley Way, Croydon, Surrey.



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Motor Cycling with Scooter Weekly

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To: *Raleigh Industries Limited, Nottingham. Please send me full colour illustrated leaflet on the Raleigh Roma and the name of my nearest dealer*

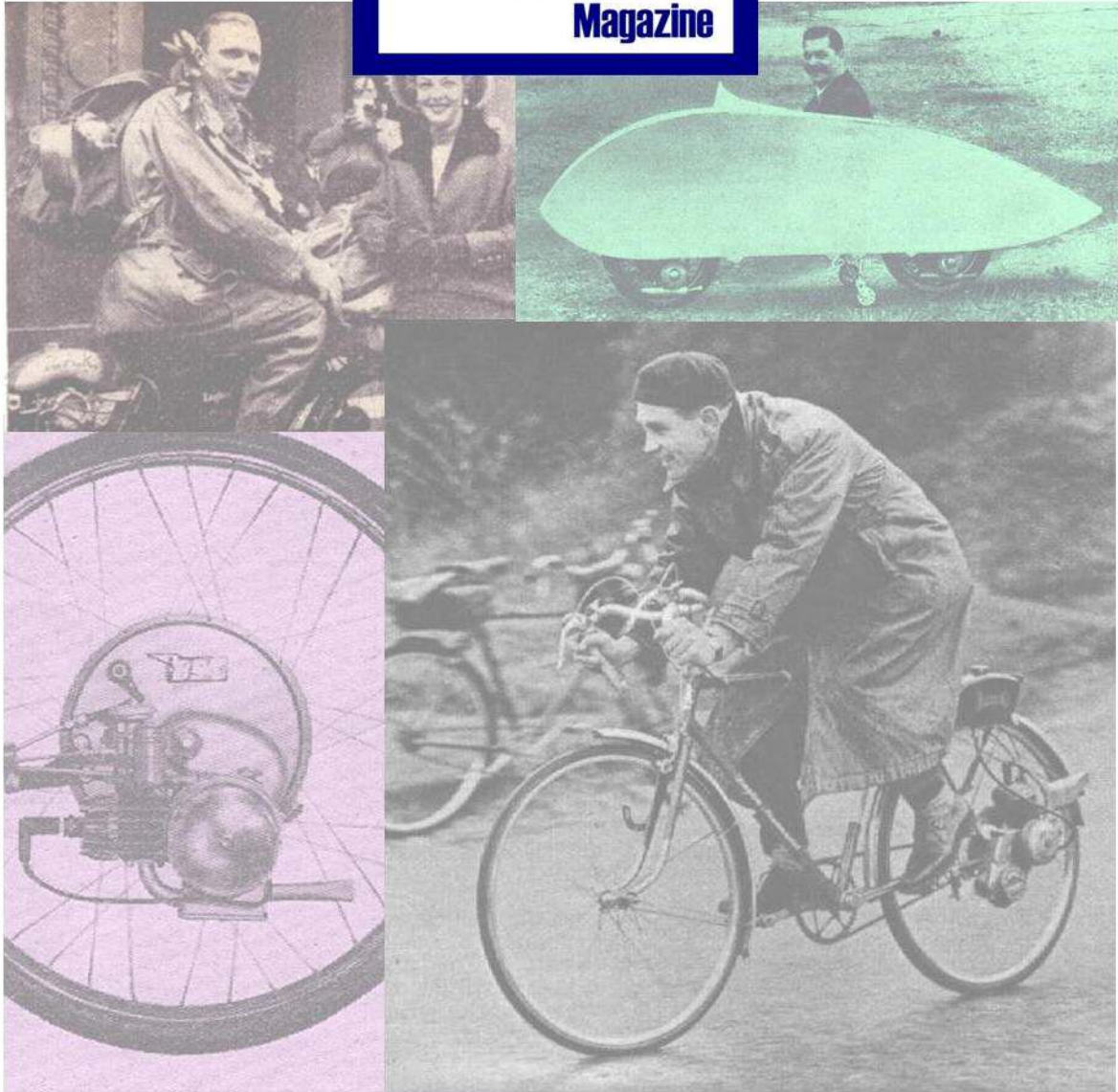
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