

CENTAUR'S COLUMN

Moped News and Views

IT is but rarely that I feel myself justified in giving a "write-up" to a product which I have not first tested myself, but after examining carefully one of the moped coats marketed by Robt. Watson & Co. Ltd., 12 Theobalds Road, London, W.C.1, I feel that I can safely waive my rule for once, and suggest the "Cella" coat as a good buy for moped riders.

This concern, with its factories in Scotland, has specialized in the manufacture and proofing of garments for a century past. When it was decided to produce a moped coat, their designers thought the matter over carefully, and concluded that what was needed was a light but waterproof garment which could as easily be worn off the machine as on it. The result? A stylish double-breasted design in proofed P.V.C., with belt, two patch pockets, and the novel inclusion of button holes on each side of the coat, making it suitable either for men or women riders.

Tests included, so I'm told, placing the coat under water jets for 36 hours at a stretch, and a 52-hour abrasion test. It is available in a range of colours, and three standard sizes, and sells for £2 17s. 6d. Overtrousers in the same material cost £1 16s. 6d., while those who prefer leggings can obtain them for 17s. a pair.

My judgment? I'd say that the coat would certainly be waterproof, but it makes no pretence at providing warmth.

Cute Controls

NOW that control systems seem to have settled down to an almost invariable formula of twist-grip gear and back-pedalling brake, I sometimes like to think back to an ingenious Danish moped which I rode



The touring version of the Skylon (see, "Cute Controls").

in a little town called Randers, in Jutland, in 1955. It was produced by a firm called Nelleman, and had a 49 c.c. Derby engine, built by an associate company.

Known as the Skylon, this machine was unusual in many ways. It dead-headed with the Heinkel, for instance, in having a cast light alloy frame, and it was a single-speeder despite the fact that one version was styled just like a tiny racing motorcycle.

However, the main feature was its control system, which was so simple that I'm still at a loss to understand why nobody else has ever used the idea.

To start it, you pedalled, using a hand clutch. But to stop, all you had to do was to back-pedal smartly, and the machine came to rest with the clutch out, for the initial backwards movement of the cranks was arranged to disengage the clutch. So, in an emergency, only the one movement was required — a backward twirl of the cranks. To get going again you pedalled; that engaged the clutch; and away you went.

The Skylon was a thoroughly nice machine to ride, with a very flexible engine and good steering. Like all Danish

machines it was governed to 15 m.p.h., but was very lively.

It's That Test Again

NO apologies for returning to the subject of the Driving Test, for an excellent book on the subject has just reached me. It is "Motor Cycling's Guide to the Driving Test," published by Temple Press Ltd. at 5s., and the author is CYCLING's John Thorpe.

As you would expect, he has included a section, albeit short, on mopeds and their peculiarities. That apart, the easily-understood explanations of how to handle a powered two-wheeler; why wrong tactics are wrong tactics; how to learn to ride and how to approach the test; and, not less important, how to behave after passing it; all these make this book a "must" for the moped rider who is still carrying L-plates.

Particularly useful, I thought, was the inclusion of all the relevant sections of the Highway Code (I'm forever mislaying my copy of that slim and elusive document!) and of the R.A.C.'s question-and-answer examples of Highway Code test questions.

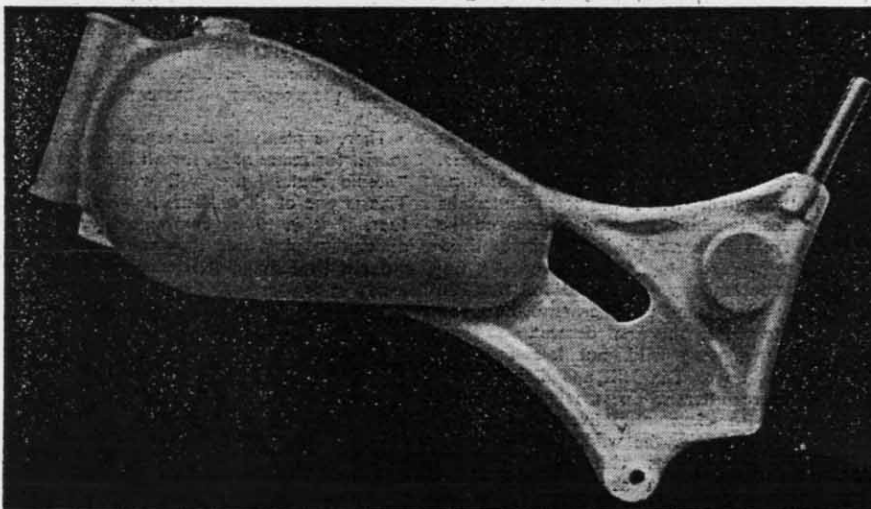
The book has been "vetted" by two leading authorities — Graham Walker and R.A.C. Motorcycle Manager Aubrey Thompson — and though no book can guarantee to lead you to a "Pass" in the test, this one certainly goes a very long way in that direction.

It is available from booksellers, or direct from Temple Press Ltd., Bowling Green Lane, London, E.C.1. By post, it costs 5s. 6d.

Insurance Now Needed

IF you plan to take your moped to France this year, you'll need to arrange third party insurance, either through a French company, or by means of a "Green Card," issued by the motoring organizations here.

This is the result of a new French law, operative from April 1, and while the wise rider always did insure before going abroad there will, henceforward, be no choice in the matter.



The cast light alloy Skylon frame.

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