

SPECIFICATION

Frame: 21 to 25 inches in $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch variations, Reynolds 531 butted tubing, 72° head and seat angles, brazed twin gear-lever bosses on down tube, brake cable eyes and gear cable tunnels on bottom bracket.

Forks: Solid ends, Cyclo boss on rear off-side fork-end.

Head Fittings: Brampton Alate.

Chain: Brampton $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $3/32$ ".

Wheels: 27" x $1\frac{1}{4}$ " Dunlop High Pressure steel rims, Michelin "25" tyres. (Dunlop H.P. optional.)

Bottom Bracket: Bayliss Wiley Featherweight.

Hubs: British Hub Co. Racelite alloy large flange, rear threaded for multiple free-wheel only.

Handlebars: G.B. Alloy Maes on $3\frac{1}{2}$ " alloy extension. Other G.B. bars and stem to choice.

Brakes: Weinmann (G.B. optional).

Mudguards: Bantel Beau Gardes (Bluemel Club Special optional). **Gear:** 5-speed Benelux Mark 7 with 14, 16, 18, 20, 22 sprockets and Benelux front changer on 46-49 chainwheel.

Chainset: Williams C34 fitted to 4- and 5-speed; Continental make double-chainwheel.

Pedals: Webb solid centre quill pattern.

Saddle: Brooks B.15 standard. (B15 Narrow or Flyer optional.) **Weight:** 27-lb.

Price: 10 speed, £33 15s. 0d. (Frame only £10 15s. 0d.)



THE NEW VIKING ON TEST

MY acquaintance with the Severn Valley, the latest model of Viking Cycles Ltd. (Merridale Works, Russell Street, Wolverhampton), in this, their Golden Jubilee year of production, has been a long and enjoyable one. For ten weeks and about 1,500 miles, club runs, evening training rides, the odd rough-stuff excursion and one short-distance time trial have all been taken in the stride of this very adaptable and completely new model.

The Severn Valley is essentially a multi-purpose machine. The clean "specialized" lines of the frame with its eye-pleasing Nervex Professional lugs and the neat seat-stay wrapover hint of a basic road-racing design. This was to be expected for the Severn Valley frame is basically a less costly version of the Viking Tour of Britain, a firm favourite with the massed-start enthusiast and the machine which has been used for so many Viking road racing victories by their independent team. In practice though, a more comfortable and adaptable mount would be hard to discover. When touring, it is a touring machine, yet when switching to, say, time trialing, it was not, I felt, a "stripped-down tourer," but an out-and-out racing machine.

An outstanding feature was the exemplary steering, rock-steady at speed yet sensitive to the slightest pressure from the rider. This combined with the "not too short—not too long" wheelbase of 41 $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. and a beautifully curved 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -in.-offset fork, to give outstanding road-holding and handling qualities.

Speedy Wheels

The machine is completed with accessories which are right up to the standard set by the frame. British Hub Co. all-alloy large flange hubs with steel spindles built into Dunlop High Pressure steel rims fitted with Michelin "25" tyres made for a speedy and light pair of wheels. The tyres were especially "nippy" and, although designed for racing rather than all-round use, stood up well to the treatment imposed on them.

A pleasing point was the fitting of an immediately comfortable saddle—a B.15 standard. Although many would plump for something narrower, this was ideal for my pur-

poses. No "breaking-in" rigours were experienced. It was comfortable to start with, softened up and "shaped" after a couple of weeks and not once caused any discomfort.

The popular Maes handlebars were expertly taped with black translucent plastic tape. Weinmann brake-levers fitted with white hoods completed a smart ensemble. The bars with their long reach and many different positions for the hands were instrumental in finding a comfortable riding position. Although I prefer a longer extension than most, I found that by lowering the bars and having the grips pointing slightly downwards, I felt completely at home.

Ten Gears

Ten gears were fitted, operated by twin levers on the down tube. Ratios, ranging from 56.5-in. to 94.5-in., were ideal for fast work and racing. But long stretches of riding into March winds kept me in "bottom" for lengthy periods. Something five or six inches lower would have been preferable on the hills (alternative ratios are optional at the same price).

A well-chromed, 3-pin, fluted double chainset is a feature of the transmission. The cable-controlled front-changer action was positive, even when changing down on quite steep hills.

The model I tested was finished in polychromatic light blue with a black head tube and black and gold rings on the seat tube. Lugs were outlined in gold but a wide variety of different finishes are available.

An interesting point which added to the overall impression that great care has gone into the choosing of even the smallest fitment is the fitting of "autographed" nuts and bolts on wheel spindles, saddle pillar clip, cotter-pins and handlebar extension clip and expander bolt. Each was imprinted with a silver "V" on a red background.

The model as tested is as specified separately priced at £33 15s. 0d. There are options of a 4-speed model at £31 10s. 0d., 5-speed £31 15s. 0d., 8-speed £33 10s. 0d., 10-speed with sprints and tubulars, £35 19s. 6d. and, of course, you can buy the frame separately at £10 15s. 0d.

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