



ROAD TEST REPORT

The 48 c.c. HEINKEL "PERLE"

PROBABLY alone in the world's production of mo-peds, the *Heinkel Perle* owes its novel and attractive appearance to the use of a frame assembly of light alloy castings. The effect is that of a very smooth built-in-one-piece unit that combines good appearance with functional practicability to a high degree.

The clean lines have been carefully backed up in the design by the use of a cushion seat instead of the conventional saddle, mounted directly on the bodywork, smoothly integrated alloy mudguards and telescopic spring suspension front and rear. The engine/gear unit is almost completely cowed and the final drive chain is totally enclosed in a cast alloy chain case which forms the right hand fork of the swinging arm rear suspension.

Under the seat cushion is a compartment for the tyre pump and tools and there is a flat platform behind for parcel carrying with strap slots provided. The fuel tank is within the frame casting

below the saddle with its filler cap under the hinged lid.

A conventional flat piston two stroke, the 48 c.c. engine is in unit with a two-speed gearbox with handlebar control. Lighting coils are incorporated in the flywheel magneto and a cable operated decompressor is fitted. A worthwhile luxury is the provision of quick release wheels on the knock-out spindle principle. Tyres are 23in. x 2in. and the full width hub brakes have finned alloy shells.

On The Road

The pedals of the *Perle* operate through the gears and the most convenient way of starting is by simply pedalling off in gear and dropping the clutch. With the decompressor in use the engine turns over easily and the unit will pick up on either gear from 4/5 m.p.h.

Gearing is not so low as on some of the German mo-peds here and the mean maximum speeds of 17 m.p.h. in First and 28 m.p.h. in Top are achieved without fuss.

Hill climbing is about average for the type of machine, that is most ordinary main road grades could be taken in Top but First gear has ample power and revs to cope with any grades likely to be met in this country.

Acceleration through the gears is lively and this, with the natural handiness of the machine makes it a very good performer in traffic.

Partly, at least, because of the absolute rigidity of the cast alloy frame the steering and roadholding qualities of the *Perle* are of high standard. The travel of the front telescopic forks seemed rather limited but the movement is smooth with no bottoming at either end. The combination of soft seat cushion and swinging arm rear suspension gives a very comfortable ride on normal roads. On very bad roads bumps can be felt but there is no clashing and stability is good.

Brakes are good without being exceptional, the front being the more effective stopper with the

back pedal operated rear brake used for control on hills and in traffic.

The standard of exhaust silence is above average, a smooth purr when pulling and nothing staccato about running light. But some mechanical noise made itself obtrusive especially at the upper end of the rev range. To some extent this is due to the resonance of the light alloy castings used for the frame (which partly cowl the engine and all the gearbox) and the totally enclosed rear chain. The chain was probably making much less noise than most of its contemporaries running in the mud-laden air of an English Winter, but it sounded noisier because of its enclosure. A little experimenting with sound insulating material inside the castings would pay dividends here and encourage the very desirable idea of fully enclosed transmissions on all mo-peds.

On the side of criticism it must be mentioned that the mounting of a

cushion seat directly on to the frame or "body" cuts out the possibility of saddle height adjustment so that the seat is rather low for a tall rider. The handlebars also are non-adjustable for height although there is provision for adjusting for angle. The steering lock is limited by stops, for no very obvious reason, and the audible warning device on the machine tested was a small bulb horn with a rather pathetic squeak.

Enclosure naturally limits accessibility, but the *Perle* has neat detachable panels with coin slot screwhead fastenings on either side to provide access to the carburettor and gearbox while keeping the smooth line and complete protection of the enveloping alloy frame.

Summing Up

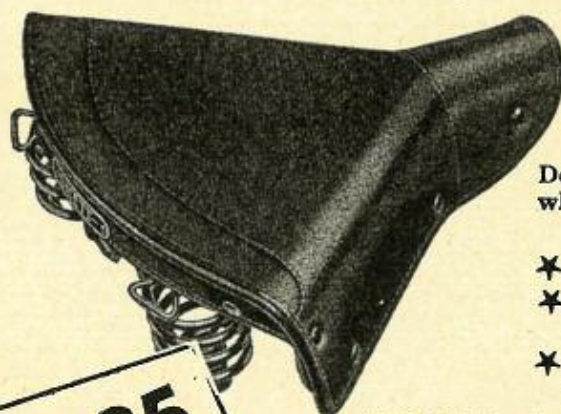
Undoubtedly the outstanding characteristic of the *Perle* is its appearance. The smooth exterior not only looks good in itself but it encourages care for appearances by its easy-to-clean characteristics

and the attractiveness of the self-coloured alloy finish. This good looking frame has strength and rigidity as well as looks and combines the whole with light weight and excellent handling on the road.

Engine performance is up to contemporary average but the fact that the unit is smoother at modest speeds than high and the definite handiness in traffic suggests that the accent for service should be on the shorter distance work rather than long range touring. Power is adequate for practical utility transport anywhere in Britain.

The provision of quick release wheels that enable tyre troubles to be dealt with without messiness or timewasting is a step forward in mo-ped design as is the enclosure of the secondary drive. Altogether the *Heinkel Perle* is a sound piece of engineering and remarkably good value for its modest price of £69. 15s. 0d. The Concessionaires are: Noble Motors, Ltd., 23 Piccadilly, London, W.1.

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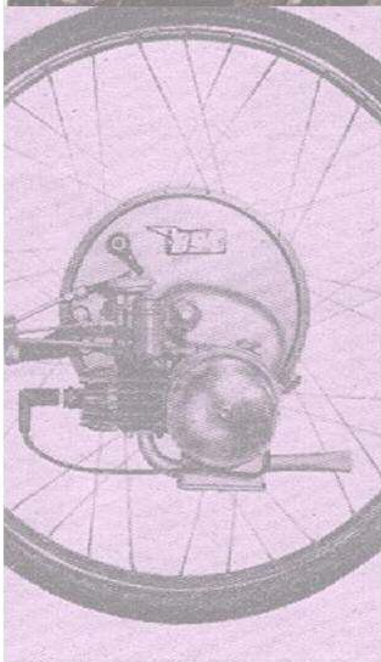
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