THE

50 cc SUZUKI M15D 'SOVEREIGN'

ROAD TEST REPORT

Reprinted from " Motor Cycling ", January 22, 1964

SUZUKI (Great Britain) Limited, Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham 11

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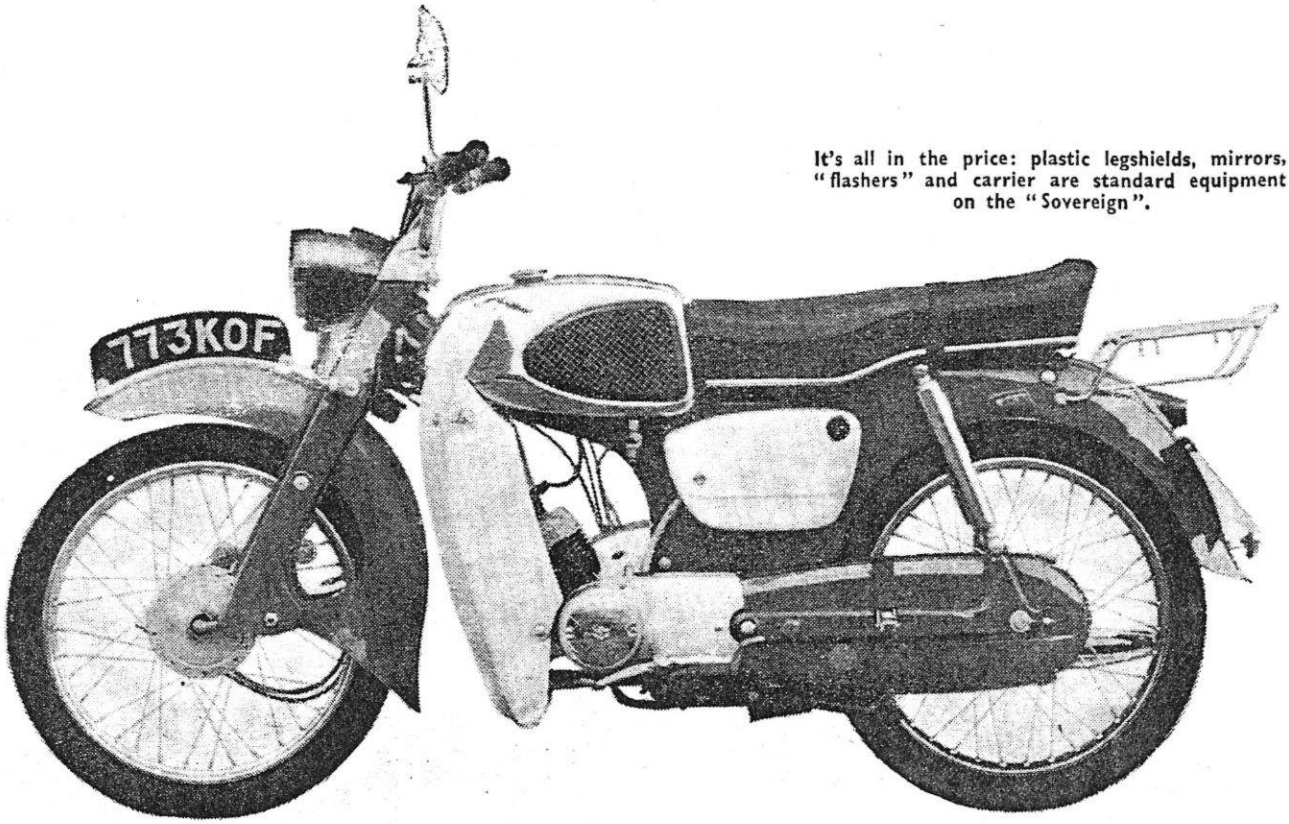


It's all in the price: plastic legshields, mirrors, "flashers" and carrier are standard equipment on the "Sovereign".

Luxury ultra-lightweight with electric starter

THE only 50 cc motorcycle on the British market with electric starting, the Suzuki M15D "Sovereign" has a standard specification which is lavish, even by Japanese standards.

For £114 9s, the buyer gets a machine with 12v electrics, legshields, "flashers", carrier and speedometer. (A kickstarter-only version with 6v electrics, the M15 "Sportsman", sells for £95 11s.)

Full out—ad lib

World champions in the manufacturers 50 cc category in 1962 and '63, the Japanese factory have made their little roadster practically indestructible. When fully run-in, the test model could be driven more or less permanently at full throttle, with the almost accurate speedometer confirming the makers' claim to 50 mph.

The electronic timer at the MIRA track showed a speed of exactly 45 mph, rider prone, at the end of the standard 1,400-yd acceleration strip. That was the mean of two runs on a windy day; the best one-way velocity was 51.0 mph.

On favourable stretches of road, the speedo needle would swing towards the 55 mark.

As the writer of the comprehensive instruction book puts it: "Dash is splendid, just like that of a jaguar!" Third-gear "dash" was especially good, ranging from a fast walking pace—so flexible was the two-stroke motor—up to 37 mph (8,500 rpm).

Throughout the rev band, the over-square single was dead smooth and particularly quiet. In town, the "Sovereign" would drift along with just a woolly purr from the exhaust and a superimposed higher note from the helical gears of the primary drive.

The clutch was light and sturdy. The rocking-pedal gear-change responding to a gentle touch with remarkably little travel. Neutral, beyond bottom, is indicated by a green light in the speedometer face.

No protest

Gear engagement was positive, with no scrunch of protest if the box was misused by deliberately "hammy" clutchless changes.

Performance in the intermediate ratios was brisk and hill-climbing was a strong suit. Two-up work was practicable, though the very low 34 : 1 bottom had to be used frequently. Restarts were successfully made, two-up, on a 1 in 8 hill.

One-up, gradients of the order of 1 in 8 were borderline cases for second or third gear. The willing engine would rev for mile on end, if need be, to get up a long main-road drag.

The suspension was efficient, the steering light and the road-holding good. However, the rather shallow tread of the studded tyres was not suited to greasy town surfaces.

Riding comfort

Tyre pattern may also have accounted for a tendency to lock the rear wheel during emergency braking. A 13½-yd stop from 30 mph was recorded.

The average British rider might prefer a flatter handlebar bend, though otherwise the riding position was comfortable. The controls were well laid out; the brake-lever body incorporated built-in starter and flasher buttons, with matching equipment for horn and dip-switch on the clutch side.

The electric starter was completely reliable. A stand-by kickstarter is provided.

The generator balanced the full load at all top-gear speeds (the headlamp main beam was used in town to conform to the Birmingham dip-light experiment).

Excellent workmanship and thoroughness were observed in the mounting of the 12v battery, protected by a hot-moulded plastic cover and transparent plastic envelope with a plastic breather pipe. The fuse incorporated in the main battery lead is similarly protected by a transparent sealed envelope.

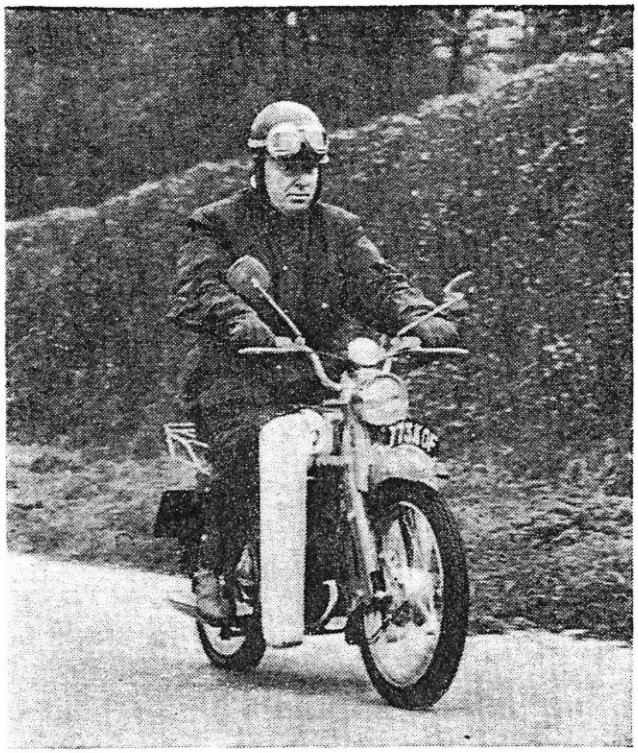
Printed Circuit

Enclosed on the opposite side by a twin moulded cover, the electrical control box carries a printed circuit to guide the do-it-yourself owner, and the securing bracket is used to accommodate the tool roll, which is held fast by an elastic strap and metal buckle. The kit included two open-ended spanners, a multi-purpose flat-blade screwdriver, a Phillips screwdriver and a tommy bar—but no box spanner for the plug. (One is normally supplied, said the concessionnaires.)

Use of plastics extends to major components ranging from the front mudguard and legshields (which could be brushed against door-posts or over steep kerbs without ill-effect) down to diminutive caps for the Schrader-type valves and for the four grease nipples on the front suspension.

Weighing 141 lb, the test Suzuki averaged 136 mpg over 500 miles. The tank held a modest 1¼ gallons, of which just over a pint was reserve.

Driven at a constant 30 mph over a flat road, the M15D returned 168 mpg and consumption was still as good as 130 mpg at continuous full bore—a condition in which this willing Japanese newcomer is perfectly prepared to spend much of its working life.



The "Sovereign" takes an 11¼-stone rider happily up the 1 in 8 slope of Weatheroak Hill, Worcestershire.

SPECIFICATION

Engine: 50 cc single-cylinder two-stroke; 41 mm by 38 mm bore and stroke; cr 6.7 : 1; claimed output 4.2 bhp at 8,000 rpm; VM 15 SCI carburetter with mesh intake silencer; petroil lubrication at 16 : 1 for running-in and 20 : 1 thereafter.

Electrical Equipment: 12v 80w starter-dynamo with voltage control; battery-powered coil ignition; Yuasa 12v 7 ah negative-earthed battery; 12v 25/25w headlamp; 12v 5/10w tail-stop; sundry flasher and warning lights.

Transmission: Primary helical-gear drive with 4.4 : 1 reduction to four-speed constant-mesh gears housed in unit with engine; operation by left heel-toe pedal. Ratios 11.3, 15.5, 21.0 and 34.3 : 1; speed at 1,000 rpm in top gear, 6 mph; road speeds equal to 8,000 rpm; 2nd gear 25 mph, 3rd gear 34 mph, top gear 49 mph. Secondary transmission by chain with full enclosure. Multi-plate clutch running in oil.

Frame: Pressed-steel fabricated stressed backbone type.

Suspension: Hydraulically damped leading-link forks at front, hydraulically damped pressed-steel swinging fork at rear.

Wheels: 2.25 by 17-in front and rear Inoue tyres. 3.9-in brakes in full-width hubs.

Tank: Steel, rubber-mounted, with 3-position tap; knee grips.

General Equipment: 80 mph speedometer, dual seat, legshields, flashing indicators, ignition and neutral warning lights, stop light, folding pillion rests, folding kickstarter, rear carrier, twin driving mirrors.

Standard Finish: Blue with chromium-plated tank panels; cream plastic side covers and legshields.

Price: £114 9s 0d (including £18 6s 6d PT).

Extras: None.

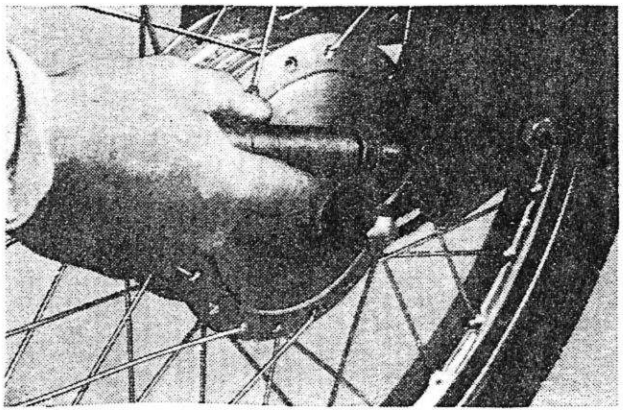
Tax: £1 0s 0d p.a.

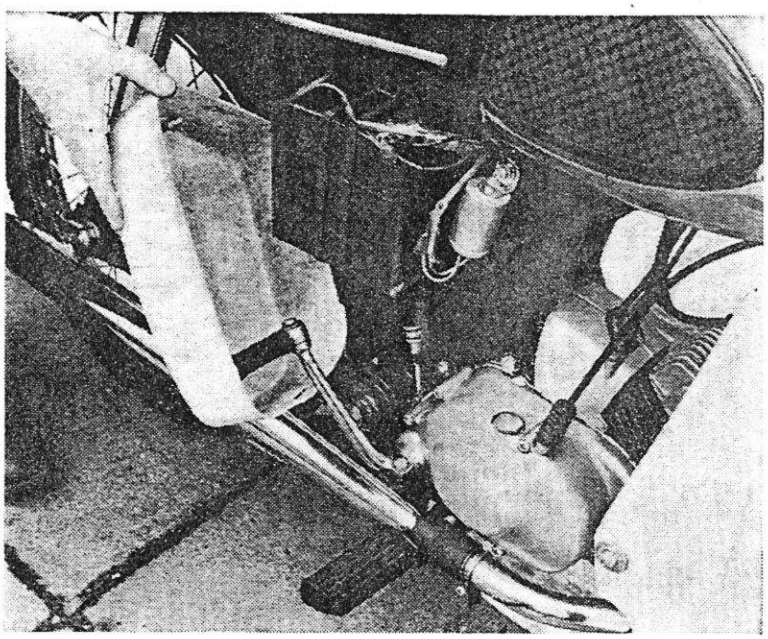
Makers: Suzuki Motor Co Ltd, PO Box 116, Hamamatsu, Japan.

Concessionnaires: Suzuki (Great Britain) Ltd, Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham 11.

(Right) the battery (in its plastic envelope), flasher unit and fuse are housed under the plastic offside cover. Below it is the stop-light switch. The stand-by kickstarter's crank folds.

(Below) Greasing a suspension unit attachment on the short-leading-link front forks.





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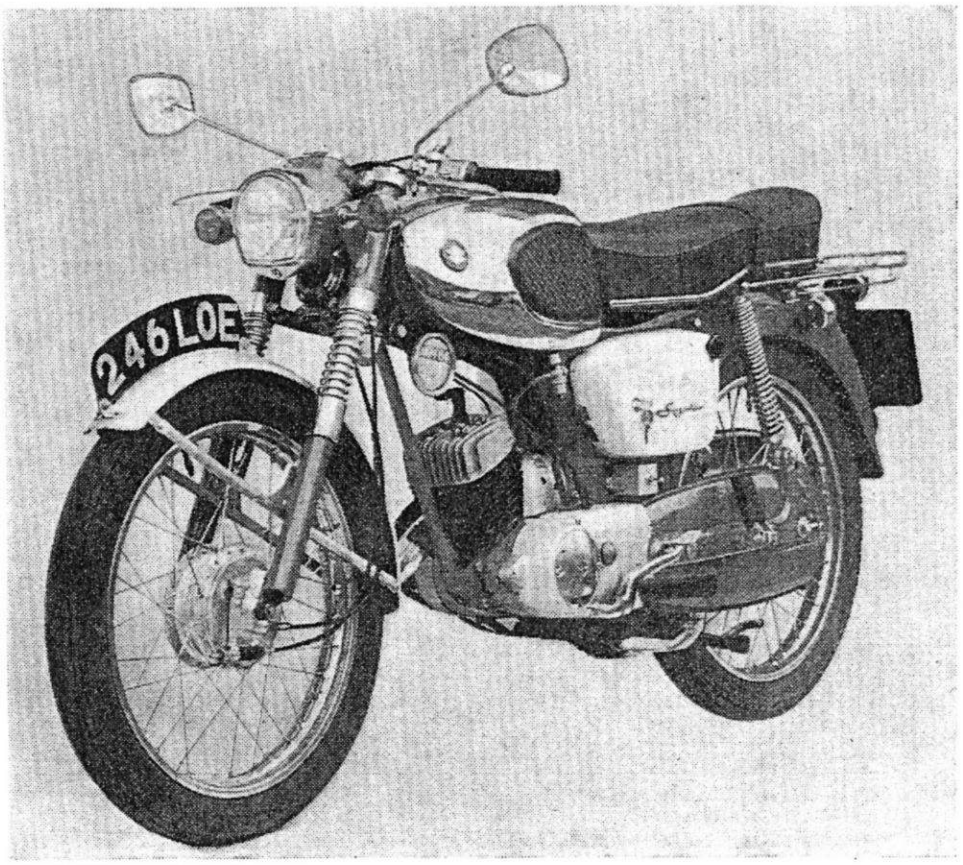

Telescopic front forks, a front down-tube and sports guard and bars distinguish the 80 Sports K11.

On the road with the 80 Sports

A FEW hours on the road with the Suzuki 80 Sports K11, the first consignment of which arrived in Birmingham on the day that our 50 cc M15D was handed back, provided an interesting contrast to the test of the little luxury roadster.

The K11 is the choice of Alan Kimber, sales manager of Suzuki (Great Britain) Ltd.. for his team entry in the Scottish, Welsh and International trials.

Differences

It differs from the M15D in having 45 x 50 mm (79 cc) engine dimensions, telescopic (instead of leading-link) forks, with exposed springs, and unshrouded rear suspension units. Frame rigidity is increased by a bolted-in front down-tube.

A general sporting specification includes a C-section metal front mudguard and almost flat handlebars which provide an excellent riding position for extended main-road cruising at the 50-55 mph of which the machine is well capable.

Mile a minute

Nearly 60 mph is the claimed maximum and it was possible to get the speedometer needle well past that mark without protest from the engine. The brakes were even better than those of the M15D (though with the same rear-wheel locking tendency).

Rated output of the K11 is 7.3 bhp at 7,000 rpm. Lacking the electric starter and 12v battery of the M15D, it is a featherweight to handle and is altogether a rasping little sports mount, just as indestructible as its 50 cc roadster companion.

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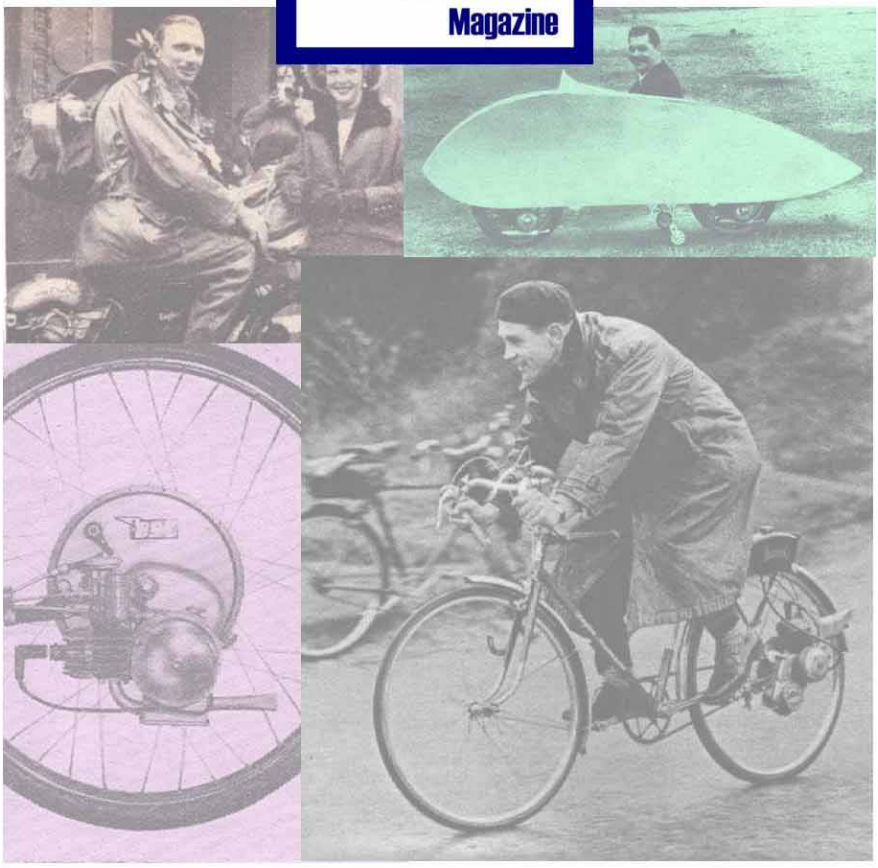

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