

**B**atavus is the leading manufacturer of bicycles and mopeds in Holland, a country which has more than two million mopeds on the roads.

The company originated in 1904, when Andries Gaastra opened a shop in Heerenveen, selling clocks, watches and sewing machines. Bicycles were soon added to the catalogue as two-wheeled transport gained in popularity, and the original business was discontinued when Gaastra acquired the sole Dutch representation for the German bicycle, Presto. He later started selling bicycles under his own brand name, Batavus.

Early in the 1930s, Batavus began making three-wheeled transport bicycles, equipping them with an engine a few years later. At the same time they produced their first motor cycles. By 1940, when Holland was invaded, Batavus employed some 120 people.

Post-war, the company made rapid strides and a new project which had



started out as a bicycle with a motor was soon developed into a functionally designed motorised two-wheeler, with front and rear-wheel suspension for riding comfort and a creditable performance.

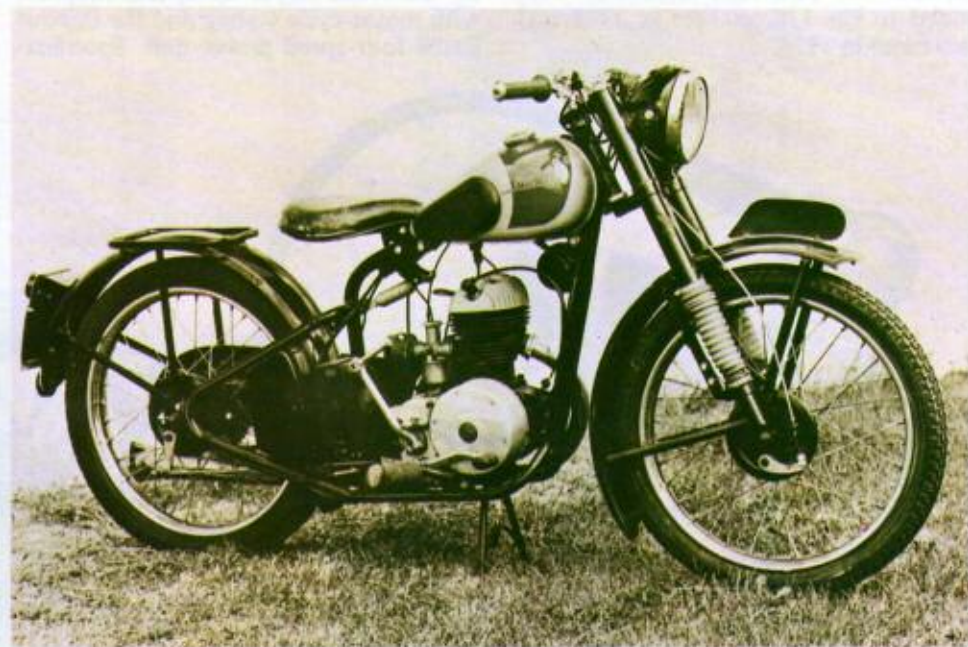
Long-distance rides on Batavus machines through the United States and to places like Morocco, Alexandria and Baghdad, helped to popularise the name outside Holland. By 1954, the company was operating from an assortment of buildings, producing a variety of machines, but in 1956, just 52 years after Andries Gaastra opened his shop, a new factory was opened in the industrial park in Heerenveen.

The new factory had an area of 6000 square metres and the workforce had grown to 300. Further extensions and developments became necessary and today the company employs about 650 people in a modern factory which uses advanced design and manufacturing techniques.

After the new premises were opened, the company continued primarily to be a

# Going Dutch with Batavus

From very small beginnings, selling clocks and sewing machines, Andries Gaastra's Batavus company has grown into a large concern.



*Top: the Villiers-engined, three-speed model of 1938*

*Above left: the Go-Go VA of 1976*

*Above: Batavus founder, Andries Gaastra, seen in 1911*

bicycle manufacturer and benefited from the growing demand for bicycles, not only in Holland, but all over the world. However, in 1969, Batavus acquired the bicycle and motor-cycle production of another Dutch company, Magneet, and in the following year took over an amalgamation of three famous three-wheeler factories in Germany. Although their sales of motorised two-wheelers were subjected to increasing fluctuation, with various model and style changes, there was steady growth every year.

Today, Batavus make more bicycles and mopeds than any other company in the Netherlands. They are the biggest Dutch exporter of machines, with 55 per cent of their total production going outside Holland. As early as 1972 their total production of bicycles was 250,000 and that of mopeds 60,000, within that year. Of these, 60,000 bicycles and 27,000 mopeds were sent abroad. Sales are particularly strong in West Germany and the company has done well in Switzerland. Other important outlets are Iran, Israel, Belgium and Greece. In Turkey, Batavus mopeds began to be manufactured under licence in 1972.

In 1970, Batavus joined the Dutch Laura industrial group, which includes Laura Motoren, and Laura engines are now used on all Batavus mopeds in the



United Kingdom, except the Sachs-powered sports machine, the Mk 4S.

First imports to the UK were in 1973, with the setting up of Harglo Ltd by two former BSA/Triumph executives, Wilf Harrison and Peter Glover. Their primary function as sole concessionaires to Batavus is to import and distribute Batavus mopeds in the UK and Ireland.

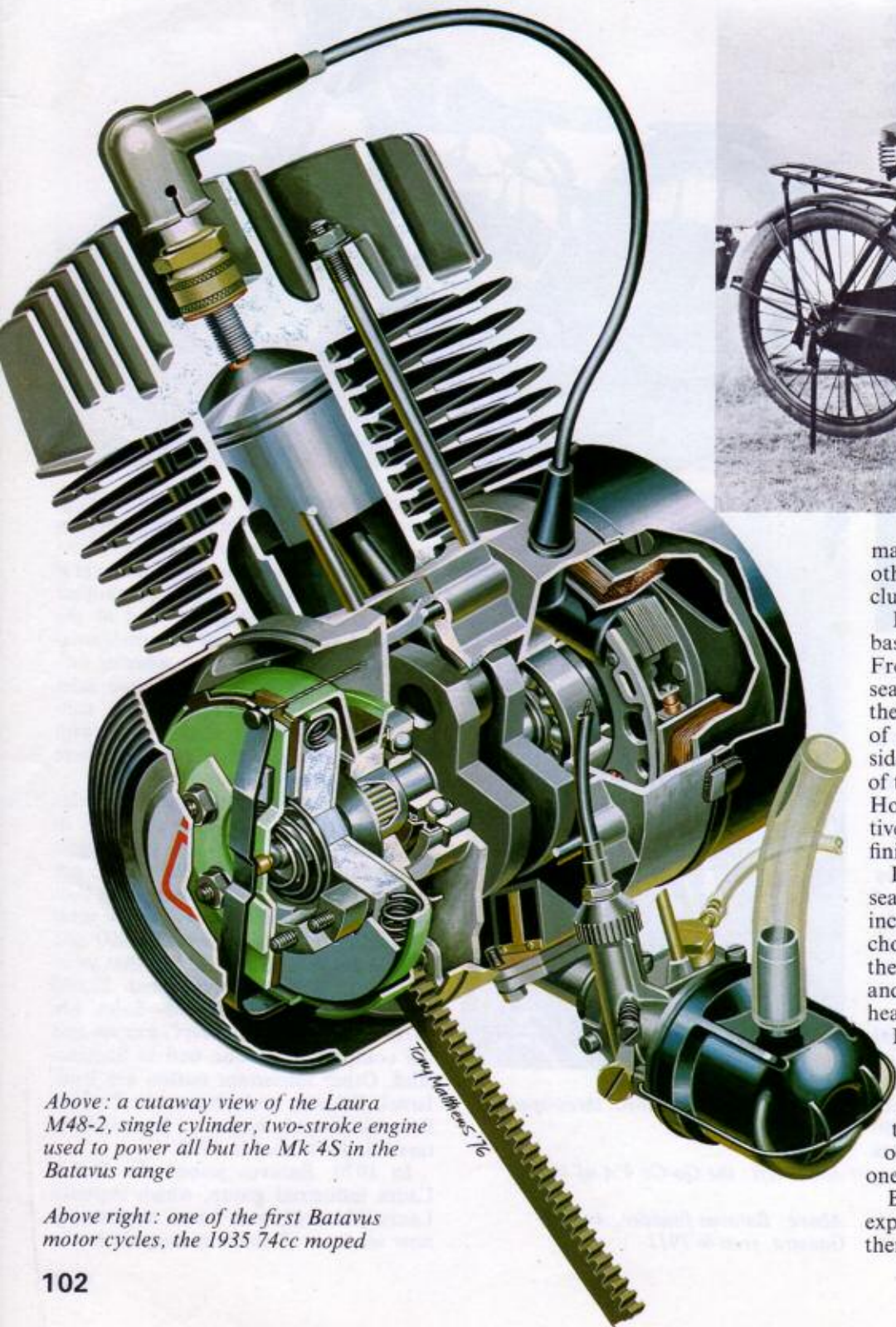
The early Go-Go V was a rigid frame machine, which has since been discontinued, but after the introduction of the Go-Go VA, four new machines were added to the UK market in 1974 and two more in 1976.

The company has won a reputation for the manufacture of good quality, well made and well finished machines, which, while not the cheapest, are good to look at and give little trouble.

At the Earls Court, London, Show in 1976, Batavus showed their seven-model range; six of those machines were powered by the well known 48cc Laura engine, with V-belt primary drive and automatic clutch. The exception was the top-of-the-range Mk 4S, being promoted as the Rolls-Royce of sports mopeds, with motor-cycle styling and the famous Sachs four-speed power unit. Specifica-

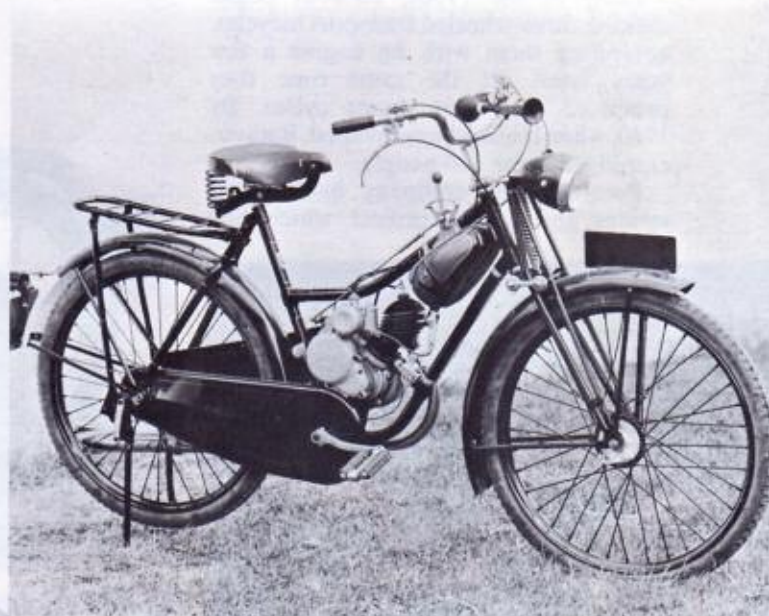
tions for that machine include an electronic tachometer, battery-operated turn signals and heavy-duty suspension front and rear. This model, which has the overall dimensions of a full-sized motor cycle, is the biggest machine sold by Batavus, who are essentially bicycle and moped manufacturers.

The HS 50, although still incorporating a 48cc engine, also has motor-cycle styling with the tank positioned between the knees. This model is of Anglo-Dutch design and was built by Batavus to a Harglo specification for the British market. Its success has resulted in the



Above: a cutaway view of the Laura M48-2, single cylinder, two-stroke engine used to power all but the Mk 4S in the Batavus range

Above right: one of the first Batavus motor cycles, the 1935 74cc moped



machine being introduced into several other Common Market countries, including the Netherlands.

For some time the Batavus range was based on the popular Go-Go model. From this was later developed a two-seater version (called the Go-Go 2) and the Starglo, an economy priced version of the single-seater Go-Go and considered by many authorities to be one of the best machines ever to come out of Holland. A stylish machine at a competitive price, the Starglo was impressively finished and it had a tireless performance.

In addition to the Go-Go VA, a single-seater luxury moped, the Batavus range included the Bronco, built on semi-chopper lines with a high-rising back to the seat and motocross-style handlebars, and the Compact, a small-wheeler with heavy-duty frame and forks.

In Holland, close to the factory, Batavus have set up a unique collection of veteran bicycles, mopeds, motor cycles, cars and carriages in their own museum, and the collection of antique bicycles there is said to be one of the largest in Europe.

Batavus do not manufacture fast and expensive mopeds; instead, they build them as practical as possible. PC