

# AT EASE ON THE FRANCO SUISSE

*Our tester on  
Carlton's latest model*



THE Franco Suisse was Carlton's last-minute introduction at the Blackpool cycle show in May, 1963, and at £26 19s. 6d. featured the latest in accessories, with the Simplex Prestige plastic gear and the quick-release button on the Weinmann 999 centre-pull brakes.

It is a medium-priced machine which offers many of the refinements found only on more expensive models.

My first encounter with the Franco Suisse (French Swiss) was a cold November afternoon when I left the office to try the newly-opened Dartford tunnel which passes under the Thames from Purfleet in Essex to Dartford in Kent. I left London along the A.13 which eventually runs into the "old" Southend Road (not so famous as its northerly brother which runs mostly along the A.127) but offering plenty of scope to use the Carlton's bigger gears.

Along the slightly undulating, smooth road, and with a following wind, I changed gear often to make the best of the time available—I knew how hard it was going to be on the return journey. Being used to an alloy gear change lever, the plastic one was at first strange, but its slight "give" had no adverse effect on gear changing, which was positive and smooth over the plastic rollers.

## Smart Effort

The frame design follows normal Carlton practice of producing a light, responsive unit and their choice of lugs strikes a "medium" course, neither elaborately decorated nor sweepingly plain as on the currently popular Italian design.

They have their own front and rear mountings for the cable stops on the centre-pull brakes. A neat U-shaped member across the seatstays houses the rear adjusting screw, and the front adjuster is fitted to the drilled alloy handlebar stem. I do not easily take to the latter practice of drilling the stem, especially an alloy one, although I must admit that I have not heard of any reports of any breakages at this point; and the work was beautifully carried out, providing a smart effect.

Weighing only 26lb., it was an easy matter to load the machine on to the cycle transporter at the tunnel entrance, and heading back to London after passing through the

**Frame:** 22½ in. with wrapover seatstays and oval forks in forged crown. Also available in 21½ in. and 23½ in. sizes.

**Wheels:** 27 in. x 1¼ in. Dunlop high-pressure rims on British Hub Co. Racelite large-flange hubs.

**Brakes:** Weinmann Vainqueur 999 centre-pull.

**Saddle:** Brooks B15 Champion Narrow.

**Mudguards:** Bluemels Club Special.

**Gear:** Simplex Prestige "532," on Benelux 14-16-18-20-22 block.

**Chainset:** Williams.

**Pedals:** Steel rat-trap.

**Pump:** Britannialloy.

**Handlebars:** G.B. alloy Maes in forged G.B. alloy stem.

**Finish:** Black with red head and seat panel, mauve with ice blue head and seat panel, or flamboyant gold with blue head and seat panel.

**Price:** £26 19s. 6d. including purchase tax.

## Specification (as tested)

gleaming tunnel I hit the anticipated headwind. The bottom gear of 56.5 in. was adequate enough for the headwind and gradients which I encountered, but I think that had I been undertaking an extended tour with a heavily loaded saddlebag I could have made use of a lower gear.

## Fine Finish

This Nottinghamshire concern have always been noted for the fine finishes to their machines and the Franco Suisse was no exception. The finish and durability of the flamboyant enamel leaves nothing to wish for.

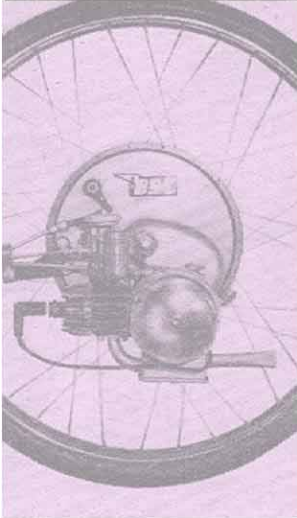
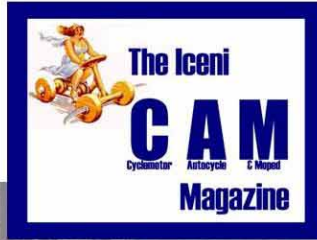
The Britannia "Quickfit Sprint" mudguards had stays which were attached at the forkends by bolts and "shakeproof" nuts, a welcome

feature if you have ever been troubled by the normal type of set screw fitting which sometimes persistently shake loose. These nuts are in turn capped by plastic covers, two of which disappeared during the test and, I regret, were never seen again.

Considering the stiff headwind on the return journey and the general dullness of the day, it was not the best of times to be thrown together with a strange machine; but I was not unduly worried and was pleased to use the machine for all my riding over the following weeks.

Franco Suisse could be a misleading title, since apart from the Swiss brakes and French gear the machine is exclusively British, the overall choice of accessories producing a light and relatively inexpensive unit—ideal to start serious cycling once again in the New Year.

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