

## Road Tests of New Models

# 48 c.c. o.h.v. Cucciolo

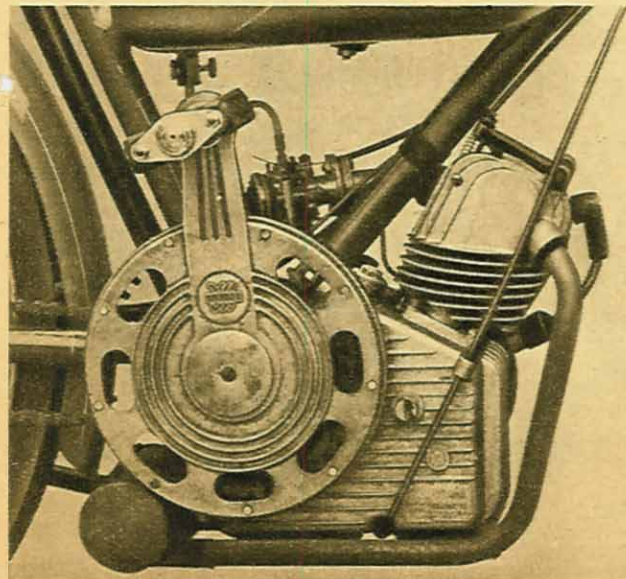
**A Lively Ultra-Lightweight with Preselector Gear Box and Exceptional Hill-Climbing Capabilities**

WHEN the 48 c.c. Ducati Cucciolo was introduced to this country, it was sold as an auxiliary engine-gear unit to be fitted to ordinary pedal cycles. However, the high power output of the engine combined with the two-speed preselector gear meant that speeds well in excess of 30 m.p.h. were possible, and pedal cycles are rarely designed to withstand such a pace. Accordingly, a specially strong frame incorporating a sprung front fork and wheels with internal expanding brakes (described in *The Motor Cycle* for July 9) was designed to accommodate the Cucciolo unit. The frame is made by the Enfield Cycle Co., Ltd., and is marketed by the Cucciolo concessionaires to enable full benefit to be derived from the lusty little engine.

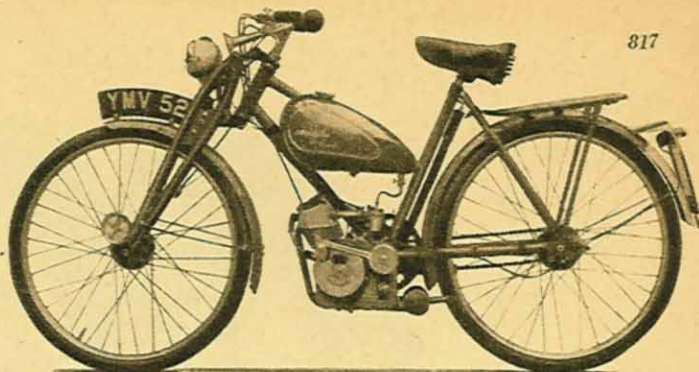
Before attempting to ride the machine, it is necessary to understand the operation of the preselector mechanism. The pedals are used to preselect the required gear; subsequent engagement of the gear is effected by pulling back the clutch lever, which is mounted on the handlebar. Bottom gear is preselected by pointing the left pedal crank forward, parallel to the ground. Top gear is preselected by pointing the right crank forward. Neutral is obtained by placing the pedal cranks vertically. To engage the required gear, the clutch lever is withdrawn and the drive is taken up in the usual way as the lever is released.

Best procedure for starting with the engine cold was to flood the carburettor liberally, then pedal the machine away in neutral (with the engine warm, no flooding was necessary). When a road speed of about 4 m.p.h. was reached, top gear was engaged while the throttle was about one-quarter open. In such circumstances the engine usually fired almost immediately, although on one or two occasions the machine had to be pedalled for 50 feet before the engine would start. Once under way, the engine would warm up in less than quarter of a mile, and when the throttle was shut would tick over slowly and reliably.

With the engine running, the machine could be ridden away from rest in bottom gear without pedal assistance; in other words, a normal clutch start was practicable. Top gear was usually engaged when a speed of about 10 m.p.h. was reached. The gear change was extremely fast and positive and preselection by positioning the pedals involved no difficulties. Acceleration of the Cucciolo was out of all proportion to its diminutive size.



Close-up view of the lusty 48 c.c. overhead-valve engine. With the pedals in the position shown, the gear is in neutral



Quite normal getaways from traffic lights left all but the most spiritedly-driven cars behind, and the machine's cruising speed was such that it could more than hold its own in town traffic.

Maximum speed, which was in the region of 35-40 m.p.h., could be maintained indefinitely without any signs of protest from the engine. Exhaust noise was limited to a burble that could just be heard from the saddle if the rider twisted his head in the direction of the silencer. There was a certain amount of "growl" from the valve gear, and on the overrun there was a whine from the gear primary drive.

The rubber sprung front fork evened out road irregularities admirably once an initial stiffness had worn off. Comfort was further enhanced by the large saddle which effectively insulated the rider from most of the shocks transmitted via the rear wheel.

On the machine tested, the brakes were outstandingly good—so good, in fact, that the rear brake was used only for test purposes. At no time during the test did either brake need adjusting.

### INFORMATION PANEL

**ENGINE:** 48 c.c. (38 x 42 mm) four-stroke, with pullrod-operated overhead valves. One-piece light-alloy cylinder barrel and head; cast-iron liner. Wet-sump lubrication; oil sump capacity, one pint.

**CARBURETTOR:** Weber, two-jet, single lever.

**TRANSMISSION:** Two-speed preselector gear box operated by pedals. Gear ratios: Top, 7.5 to 1. Bottom, 13.5 to 1. All-metal nine-plate clutch running in oil. Final drive through pedalling chain.

**IGNITION and LIGHTING:** Flywheel magneto incorporating lighting coils with 6-volt, 12-watt A.C. output.

**FUEL CAPACITY:** 1½ gallons.

**ROAD TAX:** 17s 6d a year; 4s 10d a quarter.

**PETROL CONSUMPTION:** Approximately 160 m.p.g. under hard riding conditions.

**PRICE:** Engine alone, £40 (no p.t. payable). Cycle, £22 10s 9d (including purchase tax, payable only in Gt. Britain).

**SOLE CONCESSIONAIRES:** Britax (London), Ltd., 115-129 Carlton Vale, London, N.W.6.

Hill-climbing capabilities of the Cucciolo were so remarkable that a sufficiently steep climb to baulk the machine could not be found. At no time was pedal assistance needed. A gradient of 1 in 6 proved no obstacle at half throttle in bottom gear.

The metal clutch proved to be virtually indestructible even under conditions of use to which few private owners would subject their machines. There was a tendency for the clutch to drag if the machine was held in gear at a traffic halt, but it was so easy to select neutral that no advantage could be gained by remaining in gear with the clutch withdrawn.

Petrol consumption averaged approximately 160 m.p.g. That figure, it must be emphasized, was obtained with the model most zestfully driven under all conditions of use. There is no doubt that the figure could be considerably improved upon at more leisurely speeds. The headlight was reasonably good, though not sufficiently powerful to enable daytime open-road speeds to be safely maintained at night.

Steering and stability were far above the average for a pedal cycle, whether the roads were wet or dry. Finish of the machine is bright red, with wheel rims and other bright parts chromium plated.

The Cucciolo can be summed up as a comfortable and economical machine which will have a big appeal to those who prefer rather more power than that possessed by the average cyclemotor.



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