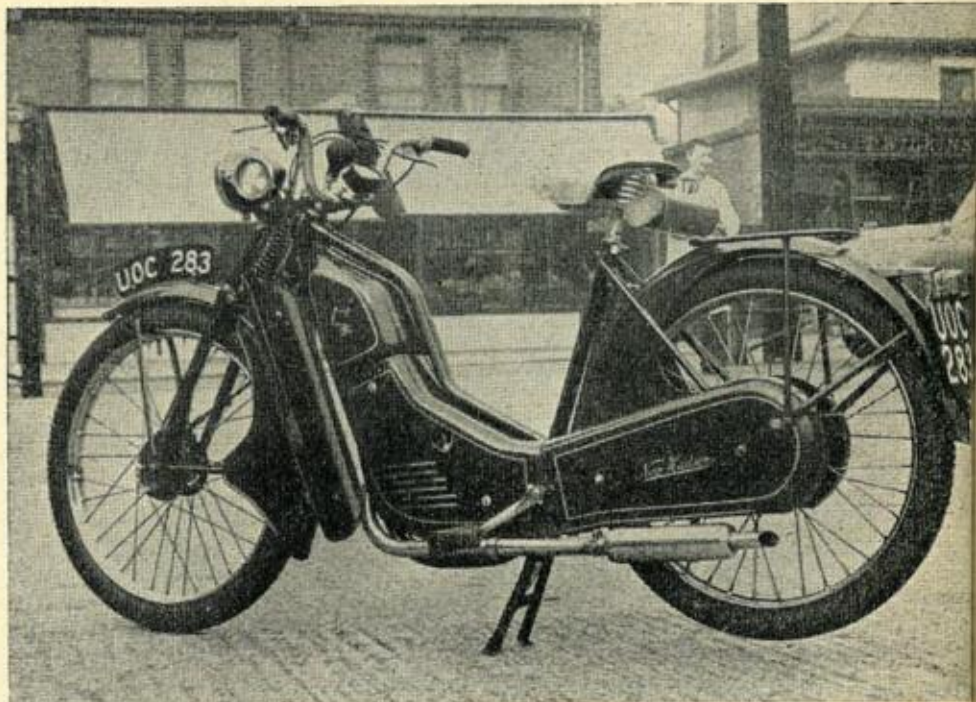


*The 98 c.c. auto-cycle in its latest form combines old style simplicity with modern standards of enclosure.*

## The Last Survivor



# The 98 c.c. NEW HUDSON

ALTHOUGH the demand for 98 c.c. autocycles has fallen steadily over the past few years until they have all disappeared from the market except one, there is a hard core of riders who still remain faithful to the type and even gain new adherents to share their enthusiasm. Our own readership includes many "98" fans and we have been pressed to test one of these machines for some time.

The machine tested, the last survivor of the type, was the *New Hudson* now produced at the Birmingham works of B.S.A. Motor Cycles Ltd. It has an open frame of tubular construction with rigid rear end and parallel link front forks. The 21-inch wheels have 2.25-inch tyres and internal expanding brakes. A ten-pint fuel tank is mounted within the frame tubes behind the steering head and lines up with the fully enclosing panelling that extends right back past the rear hub, enclosing both engine and transmission. The legshields which are an optional extra, are designed for the machine and look part of it.

A Villiers Mk. 2F engine provides the power. It is a single geared unit with a large cork-lined clutch running in oil and operated by a hand lever

with a finger release ratchet device to provide the equivalent of "neutral".

### On the Road

Although the handlebars are adjustable only for angle and not for height they are so shaped as to provide a wide range of positions for the comfort of riders of various heights. The mattress top saddle is adjustable but proved rather hard for a rigid framed machine and was replaced with advantage by a *Lycett L.100* in the course of the test.

Starting is effected by pedalling off and dropping the clutch. After some unwillingness due to a faulty plug, the start became a first time, every time business if preceded by a one-second depression of the tickler when cold. A toe operated choke device is fitted but does not appear to be necessary. The actual pedalling off is heavy going and starting on an upgrade so hard as to be not worth while. Once the engine is running, however, the machine can be driven off from standstill on the clutch without special care.

Acceleration is good, particularly so

as there is no time lost in gearchanging and the engine pulls well from 5 m.p.h. right up to its on the level maximum of around 33 m.p.h. But the real pleasure of handling the "98" is on hills. The machine simply romps up grades on its single gear and will slog right down to a crawl if balked and then pull away again. Pedal assistance can be given at low speeds if required but with full use being made of the clutch such pedalling is rarely really necessary.

In traffic the docility and flexibility of the engine take most of the work out of driving and the freedom from continuous up and down changing with accompanying screaming revs from the low gear work is one of the big factors that keeps the big engine in favour. The technique of handling the ratchet clutch and two hand brakes at once is soon acquired with practice and it is very convenient to be able to leave the clutch on the ratchet in the free position and control the machine through a jam of vehicles on the pedals.

Steering is a trifle heavy at low speeds but accurate and certain all the way up and road holding is definitely good under all conditions. Vibration can be felt moderately at all speeds but is never excessive.



Noise, particularly mechanical noise, seems to be exaggerated by the enclosure since the *New Hudson* was "restyled" a year or so ago but this is only apparent to the rider. From the roadside the passing of the machine attracts no attention at all.

**Why They Like It**

As a result of this test we now know with certainty why so many users are keen on this machine and the qualities that endear themselves can be summed up in two words, "guts" and "simplicity".

The ability of the engine to deal with all normal tasks without fuss, freedom from the conscious effort of gear-changing and the absence of mechanical noise inseparable from indirect gears; make driving easy and comparatively pleasant, while the sheer physical solidity of the machine as compared with motorised cycles or light mo-peds gives an impression of safety and potential reliability in no way related to technical fact.

The differences between the 98 c.c. machine and the modern under-50 c.c. job are by no means all one sided, however and the balance is very much open to personal prejudice, experience and opinion.

For a start the *New Hudson* is a heavy and unwieldy beastie to man-handle, almost impossible to pedal and clumsy to park. The stand is set low and severely limits ground clearance while, when it hits a kerb or step it jams against the rear tyre and stops all movement.

Appearance and cleanability are much

improved by the enclosure but accessibility is poor and the panels are by no means as easy to detach and replace as the instruction book would have us believe. A side panel has to be removed to change a plug and both the rear transmission covers have to come off to adjust the chain. The fuel consumption figure of a fraction over 120 m.p.gallon compares with the current mo-ped average on recent test machines of 150-160 for the same performance. Insurance and replacement costs are relatively high.

The question of actual, as distinct from apparent reliability is one that cannot be answered in the short time of a normal press test, so we have arranged with B.S.A. to keep the *New Hudson* as a staff machine for some months to check its needs in the way of adjustments and replacements. So far the score is two lamp bulbs and a new plug (1200 miles) and adjustments to clutch and rear chain.

Our own feelings are that this—20-year-old design was so good then that it still is good now, but on balance the best of the modern mo-peds is better than the "98" for most peoples' uses.

For those who really like the slogging power of the bigger engine so much that they are prepared to put up with the unhandiness of the whole machine the *New Hudson* will give satisfaction for years. For ourselves we can only wish that the makers would turn their attention to a modern 50 c.c. mount with the power, flexibility and reliability now available in that size used to full advantage in this day and age. We hope that the quality and value associated with the *New Hudson* will stay with us in new designs before long,

but meanwhile anyone who likes real power with his pedals can get it in the "98".

**SPECIFICATION**

**ENGINE:** "Villiers" Mk. 2F. 47 mm. x 57mm., 98 c.c. two-stroke flat piston, multi-plate clutch in oil. single gear and pedals.

**FRAME:** Cradle type, tubular, rigid rear, parallel link front forks with single central compression spring.

**WHEELS:** 21-inch with 2.25-inch "Dunlop" tyres. Internal expanding brakes both hand operated. Independent chain transmission.

**PRICE:** £75. 12s. 0d. Legshields as fitted for test 39/8 extra.

**MAKERS:** New Hudson Autocycles, Ltd., Small Heath, Birmingham 11.

**DON'T READ THIS YET**

*Its the solution to the cross-word on p.670.*

- |               |        |
|---------------|--------|
| 25. PARILLA   | DOWN : |
| 24. AISIE     |        |
| 22. ORCANISES |        |
| 21. TAR       |        |
| 19. SPIV      |        |
| 17. SUN GENIS |        |
| 14. ATTEND    |        |
| 13. PISTON    |        |
| 11. ARRESTED  |        |
| 10. ACES      |        |
| 9. EVE        |        |
| 8. LAMBERTTA  |        |
| 5. DIANA      |        |
| 1. BINETTA    |        |
| 23. NOR       |        |
| 20. VESPA     |        |
| 18. NORDS     |        |
| 16. RING UP   |        |
| 15. EXPOSAL   |        |
| 13. FESSETTA  |        |
| 12. DOVE-COTT |        |
| 7. AMENDED    |        |
| 6. AGENT      |        |
| 5. DIANETTE   |        |
| 4. ASTORS     |        |
| 3. TOR        |        |
| 2. NUMBERS    |        |
| 1. BELTA      |        |



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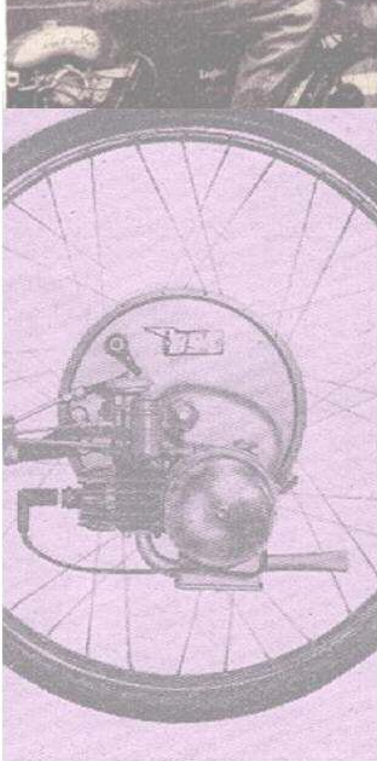


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