

ROAD TESTS OF NEW MODELS

49 c.c. Bianchi Falco

A Stylish Three-speed, Fully Sprung Moped which Handles Extremely Well Both in Heavy Traffic and Out of Town



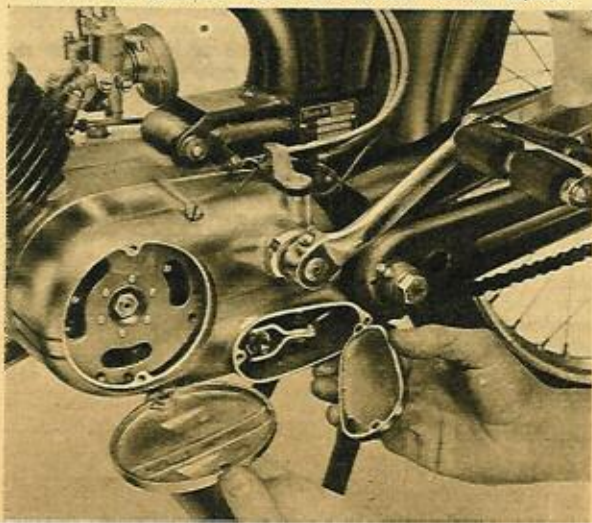
ONE of the latest mopeds to become available on the British market, the Bianchi Falco is a luxury machine in the full sense of the term. Points which immediately impress are the three-speed gear box, hydraulically damped suspension of both wheels and full-width hubs. The stylish lines are accentuated by a brilliant red finish which never failed to attract attention wherever the machine was parked. Its two-stroke engine-gear unit is of 49 c.c. Few engines suit the term "power egg" better as the aluminium-alloy crankcase is sleekly symmetrical.

Starting was extremely simple and was accomplished by using either of the pedals as one would the kick-starter of a motor cycle. The engine's response was always immediate. For most of the test the Bianchi was used as home-to-office transport and under such conditions it was hard to find fault with the charming little mount. Its most generous steering lock and extremely low bottom gear enabled many minutes to be saved by trickling along while other traffic was at a standstill. A further advantage of that very low ratio was that it obviated pedalling except for restarting on sharp inclines.

Given its head on the open road, the Bianchi would cruise steadily at 30 m.p.h. without complaint from the engine and with no discomfort for the rider. At its maximum of 34 m.p.h., however, there was a good deal of vibration.

A three-speed gear box is an exception rather than the rule for mopeds. The intermediate ratio was very welcome as it allowed full use to be made of the engine's capabilities and enabled the majority of the main-road hills to be climbed with very little slackening of pace. Gear changing is by means of a twistgrip on the left side of the handlebar. The procedure needed getting used to, for it was easy to bypass second gear when rotating the grip;

The two covers on the left-hand side of the power unit are removed to reveal the flywheel magneto and the gear-selector adjuster



SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: Bianchi 49 c.c. (38 x 43mm) two-stroke. Cast-iron cylinder barrel with detachable light-alloy head. Compression ratio, 6.8 to 1. Petrol lubrication.

FRAME and SUSPENSION: Open, spine-type frame in pressed steel. Telescopic front fork with oil damping. Pivoted rear fork controlled by spring and hydraulic suspension units.

IGNITION and LIGHTING: Flywheel magneto incorporating coils for direct lighting. Double-filament headlamp bulb; dip switch on handlebar.

TRANSMISSION: Three-speed gear-box in unit with engine; twist-grip control; gear ratios: bottom, 30.8 to 1; second, 19.8 to 1; top, 13.5 to 1. Multi-plate clutch in oil bath. Gear primary drive; chain final drive.

PETROIL CAPACITY: 2½ gallons.

TYRES: Pirelli 2.00 x 19in.

WEIGHT: 104 lb.

PRICE: £66 13s 3d; with British purchase tax, £79 19s 11d.

ROAD TAX: 17s 6d a year.

CONCESSIONAIRES: Layford (Automotive), Ltd., King Street, Hammersmith, London, W.6.

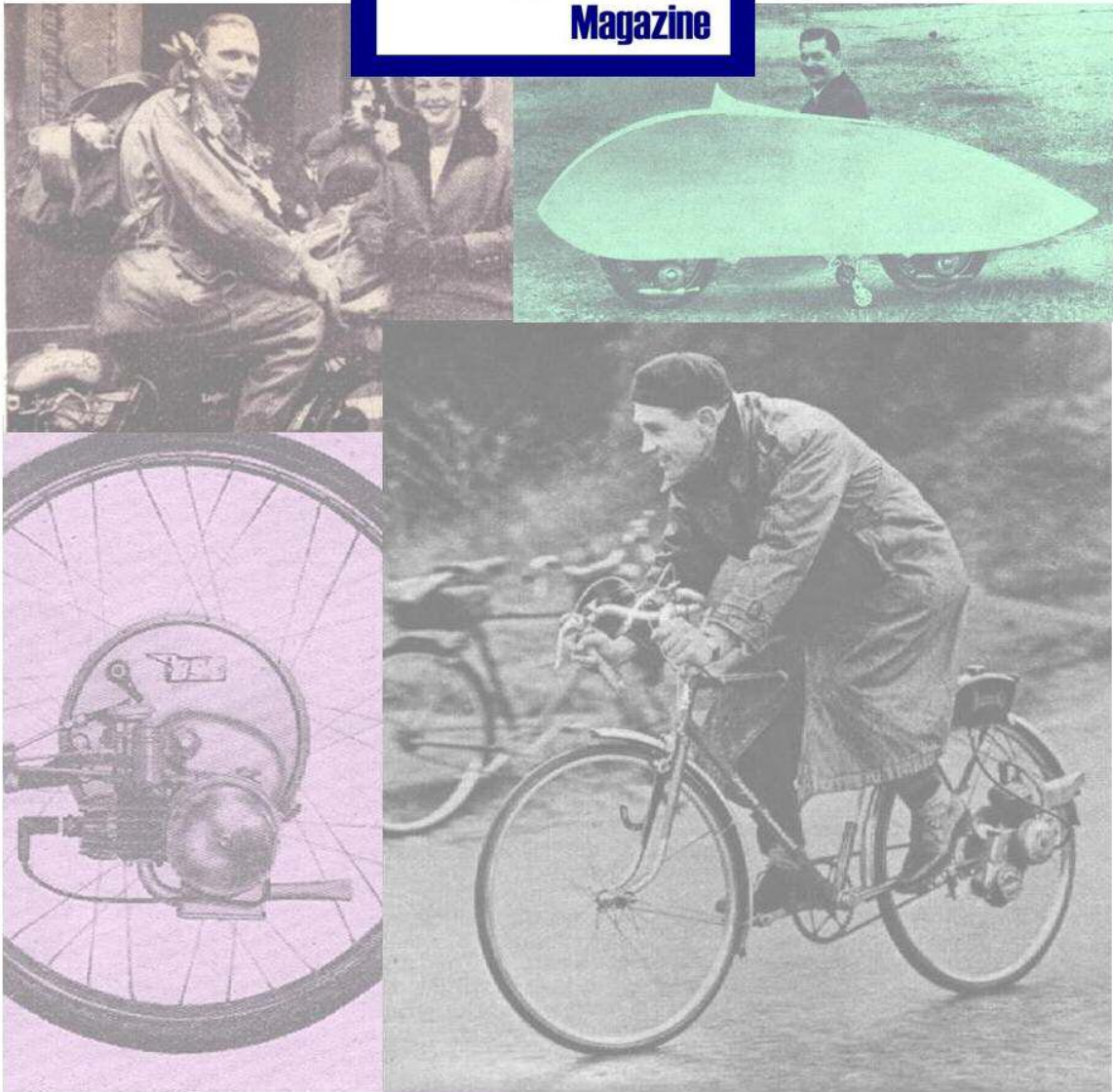
but once the knack had been acquired, quick and silent changes were possible. Exhaust noise at low speed was not troublesome. When the machine was ridden with gusto, a note reminiscent of an aggravated hornet was emitted yet the pitch was not unpleasant.

The fuel tank holds 2½ gallons, giving a range of roughly 250 miles. It also inspired confidence in another sense, being well sited to be gripped between the knees. The handling was exceptional for a moped and, indeed, as good as that of many pukka motor cycles. A factor which contributed to the good handling in no small measure was the excellent suspension which resulted in a very smooth ride, though for complete comfort on a long journey the bicycle-type saddle could have done with a little more give and was a shade on the small side. Incidentally, both the saddle and the handlebar are adjustable for height. Braking power was good. On wet roads the rear brake—operated by reverse movement of the pedals—called for sensitive application owing to the amount of leverage involved.

A combined dip switch and lighting switch is mounted conveniently near the left-hand twistgrip and was useful for flashing if the need arose as the horn voiced all too feeble a croak. However, the arrangement left something to be desired at night for, although the driving beam was adequate, when the dipper was operated there was a momentary blackout as the switch passed through the middle off position.

Petrol consumption was good considering that the Falco lugged around a 13-stone rider and that most of the test was carried out in town under conditions of heavy, slow-moving traffic. The overall figure was 110 m.p.g.

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