

IMPRESSIONS OF CURRENT MODELS

NINETY-EIGHT cubic centimetres of engine capacity, once regarded as being suitable chiefly for autocycles, motor-mowers or the lightest of lightweight motorcycles, has come to be accepted now for far more strenuous duty. The power unit under review in this case, namely, the Villiers 98 c.c. F-type engine, has graduated from the original 2F specification to the 6F, in which form the engine is now more robust and styled in keeping with the remainder of the Villiers range, being equipped with foot-operated gear-change mechanism. Keeping pace with this advance, The Excelsior Motor Co., Ltd., with long experience of lightweight motorcycle manufacture, correspondingly extend the scope of their range in this capacity by offering a machine with enclosure of the working parts and a dual seat, with the implication that this model, the "Skutabyke," is now adequately powered and sufficiently sturdy for two-up transport.

This, the first Press test of the "Skutabyke," does not purport to deal extensively with the rather ambitious aspect of two-up usage; but it is worth recording that, within a mile of the factory, the writer, *en route* for the office after collecting the machine, espied a companion in need of a rush-hour lift home and, so early in the test period, the "Skutabyke" carried a double load. It seemed to do so quite willingly.

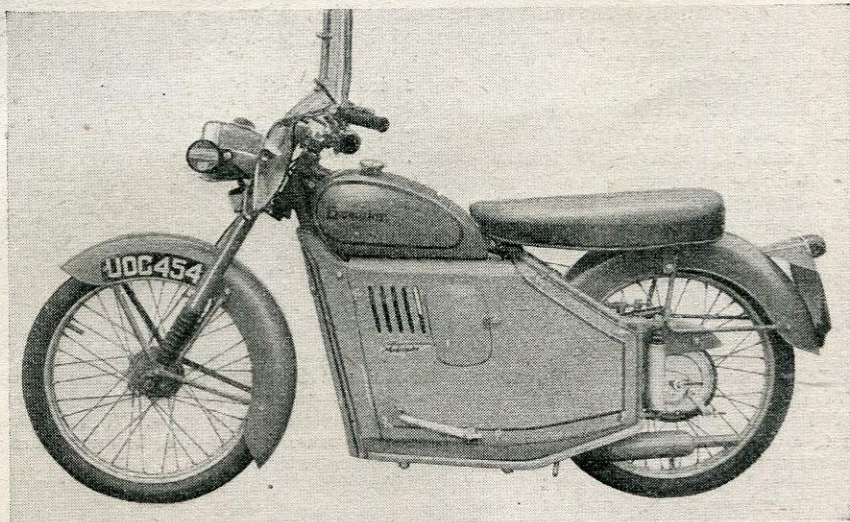
It was at this stage, incidentally, that the new heavy-duty nature of the plunger-type rear-springing assembly became obvious for, with a passenger, the action of the mechanism seemed to improve considerably, eliminating a first impression of undue hardness at the rear end. The little model, a successor to the "Consort," has been toughened up at the back, and the advantages of telescopic forks in place of the tubular girder-type previously specified for the 98s from Tyseley were appreciated.

The initial stiffness of the suspension eased still further with use, but for serious touring a slightly wider and more resilient seat would also add to the comfort of the "Skutabyke."

The test model was fitted specially with a Smiths 65 m.p.h. speedometer—a speedometer is not, of course, legally necessary on an up-to-100 c.c. machine—which made possible a check on petrol consumption and revealed the very good figure for all-round

The 98 c.c. Villiers-powered Two-stroke EXCELSIOR "SKUTABYKE"

*A Lightweight with Scooter-type Enclosure
and Extra-Low Fuel Consumption*



The shielding has been devised to blend nicely with the lines of a handsome little machine without detracting in any way from its character as a motorcycle.

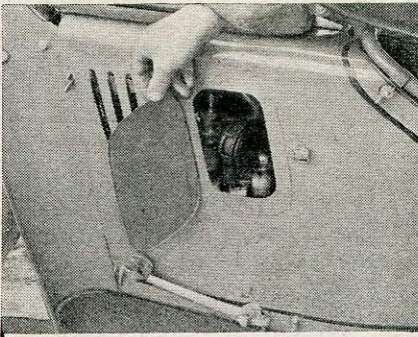
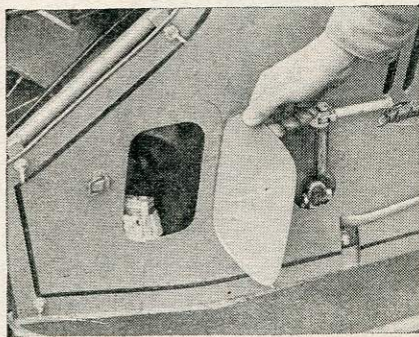
driving conditions of 145 m.p.g. Fixed now at 8.47 : 1, the top-gear ratio of the "Skutabyke" was slightly lower than that of an equivalent-capacity Excelsior lightweight previously tested. In comparison with that machine, the "Skutabyke" acceleration was slightly better and top gear could be maintained over a wider speed range—roughly from 18 to 36 m.p.h.

Because of the relatively low ceiling speed of the test model, fixed-speed consumption checks were conducted at 20 and 30 m.p.h. At 20 m.p.h. it was difficult to find a stretch of road of adequate length, without the impediments of traffic lights and built-up areas, in which to use the test measure of

fuel at a sustained speed but, with this difficulty overcome, the figure of 180 m.p.g. was logged. At 30 m.p.h., the figure recorded was 148 m.p.g. As the best and most-used cruising speed was in the region of 25-28 m.p.h., it would be reasonable to anticipate a regular 150 m.p.g. That is equal to the distance from London to quite a lot of coastal resorts and back again—a two-way trip achieved for the price of a gallon of petrol, plus a 1/24th proportion of oil. And that cost, even at the current high fuel prices, puts the price of rail or coach transport for one, let alone two, well into the shade.

Appropriately for a machine designed for utility purposes, the test model was fitted with a windscreen; this served to complete the all-weather character of the "Skutabyke." Neat side panels blend into built-in legshields, and this comprehensive enclosure extends downwards to meet the footboards which run the whole length of the frame. The boards are horizontal and their location, in conjunction with that of the seat, was found to provide a good riding position for one or two people. The handlebars, too, are well placed and the foot-operated controls—the brake pedal on the left and the two-speed foot gear-control lever on the right—conform with generally accepted motorcycle layout. A note was made of the particularly light but positive action of the gear lever.

Access to the Villiers carburetter is by means of a hinged door fastened by a spring clip. For more detailed attention to the



The secrets that the green doors are keeping! (Left) the tool kit and spares and (right) the carburetter.

Despite wet weather testing the rider "never felt it necessary to adopt anything . . . drastic in the way of protective clothing . . ."

engine, the panels, fixed in position by wing nuts, are readily removable. Fitted with deeply valanced mudguards front and rear, the machine finished the test period in reasonably clean condition after facing every variety of February weather—throughout which, incidentally, the rider never felt it necessary to adopt anything more drastic in the way of protective clothing than a riding coat.

Given adequate flooding of the carburetor, the engine was a good starter with, or without, application of the choke (a rotary control built into the air cleaner). Bottom gear provided a useful getting-under-way ratio, but for anything more than a jog-trot pace the wide-span top gear was employed. Smooth, generally, in performance, the engine imparted a very slight indication of vibration roughness when pressed hard at near-maximum road speeds.

Light from the 5-in. diameter headlamp, using direct A.C., was adequate for likely night-speed riding requirements. Outstandingly good was the performance of the brakes. Application of either would bring the little machine rapidly to a standstill without locking the wheels, throwing the model



off line or otherwise upsetting the good handling which is an outstanding characteristic of the model.

Detail items, such as the gaitering of the lower fork members and the plunger rods to the rear suspension springs, improve the appearance of the machine and were effective in protecting the moving parts in each

case. The neat housing for tools built into the panelling on the off-side is a good point and the bright, cheerful and durable finish in cactus green with red lining is just right. With this machine, Excelsiors appear to have made a worthy approach to the scooter school of thought without resorting to a sky-high price.

BRIEF SPECIFICATION

Engine: 98 c.c. Villiers 6F single-cylinder two stroke; bore 47 mm. by stroke 57 mm.; cast-iron cylinder; light-alloy head; C.R., 8.0:1; claimed b.h.p., 2.8/4,000 r.p.m.; Villiers carburettor, type, Junior, jet J120; taper needle No. 2½.

Transmission: Two-speed gearbox in unit with engine; positive stop footchange; ratios, 8.47 and 13.89:1; primary drive by Renold 110037 ⅝-in. by 5/32-in. by .25-in. chain; final drive by Coventry 112045 ½-in. by 3/16-in. by .305-in. chain.

Frame: Cradle frame of lugged and tubular construction with provision for three-point engine suspension.

Wheels: WM2-19 rims, carrying Dunlop tyres, 19 in. by 2.25 in. front and rear; hubs incorporate ⅜-in. brake at front and rear.

Lubrication: Petroil; test carried out with 1:24 proportion.

Electrical Equipment: Villiers flywheel generator with A.C. output for ignition and lighting; 5-in.-diameter headlamp accommodating battery for parking light.

Suspension: Telescopic front forks of Excelsior design, controlled by multiple-rate double-action springs; rear springing by plunger/spring assembly with guide rod to shrouded springs; spindle adjustment by means of cycle-type draw-bolts.

Tank: Welded steel fuel tank, of 1⅞ gal. capacity.

Dimensions: Wheelbase, 47 in.; ground clearance, 5 in.; unladen seat height, 27 in.; dry weight, 165 lb.

Finish: Cactus green with red lining; wheel rims and hubs aluminized; handlebars chromium plated.

General Equipment: Full kit of tools and tyre pump. Licence holder.

Price: £76 10s. plus £18 7s. 3d. P.T. = £94 17s. 3d. Extra: Speedometer, £4 5s. inc. P.T.

Annual Tax: 17s. 6d.; quarterly, 4s. 10d.

Makers: The Excelsior Motor Co., Ltd., King's Road, Tulseley, Birmingham, 11.

"MOTOR CYCLING'S" EXCURSION TO SEE THE SENIOR T.T.

FARES and most train times are now available for *Motor Cycling's* excursion to the Isle of Man for the Senior T.T. on June 7. Trains set out after working hours on the evening of Thursday, June 6. All fares include meal boxes on both journeys, with the exception of the Euston train, on which full dining car facilities will be available. Details are as follows:—

INCLUSIVE RETURN RAIL FARES

	£	s.	d.
EUSTON	4	6	0
ST. PANCRAS	3	12	0
COVENTRY	2	13	6
BIRMINGHAM (New Street)	2	9	6
WOLVERHAMPTON	2	6	9
LEICESTER (Midland)	2	14	6
NOTTINGHAM (Midland)	2	12	6
DERBY (Midland)	2	9	3
LEEDS (Central)	2	6	9
BRADFORD (Exchange)	2	6	0
MANCHESTER (Victoria)	1	17	9

TRAIN TIMES

Outward		
June 6	EUSTON	dep. 7.50 p.m.
June 7	LIVERPOOL (Riverside)	arr. 12.22 a.m.
Return		
June 7	LIVERPOOL (Riverside)	dep. 11.40 p.m.
June 8	EUSTON	arr. 4.10 a.m.

Outward

June 6	COVENTRY	dep. 8.00 p.m.
	BIRMINGHAM (New Street)	dep. 8.45 p.m.
	WOLVERHAMPTON	dep. 9.12 p.m.
	LIVERPOOL (Riverside)	arr. 11.15 p.m.

Return

June 8	LIVERPOOL (Riverside)	dep. 12.05 a.m.
	WOLVERHAMPTON	arr. 2.11 a.m.
	BIRMINGHAM (New Street)	arr. 2.39 a.m.
	COVENTRY	arr. 3.07 a.m.

Outward

June 6	LEEDS (Central)	dep. 9.57 p.m.
	BRADFORD (Exchange)	dep. 10.30 p.m.
	MANCHESTER (Victoria)	dep. 11.52 p.m.
June 7	LIVERPOOL (Riverside)	arr. 1.10 a.m.

Return

June 7	LIVERPOOL (Riverside)	dep. 11.20 p.m.
June 8	MANCHESTER (Victoria)	arr. 12.35 a.m.
	BRADFORD (Exchange)	arr. 1.56 a.m.
	LEEDS (Central)	arr. 2.15 a.m.

A second London train will run from ST. PANCRAS. Its arrival and departure times will be announced next week, as will the times of the trains from LEICESTER, NOTTINGHAM and DERBY.

Thos. Cook and Son, Ltd., will be able to accept bookings for tickets from APRIL 8 ONWARDS, and applications should be made to them at any of their branches listed below, or to any Thos. Cook office—NOT to *Motor Cycling*. Tickets are already earmarked for those who have made reservations with us.

LONDON—

45 Berkeley Street, Piccadilly, W.1.
378 Strand, W.C.2.
108 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.
Euston Road (front of St. Pancras Station).

BIRMINGHAM—

123 New Street.
3 Victoria Square.

BRADFORD—

19 Market Street.

LEEDS—

55 Boar Lane, Leeds 1.

LEICESTER—

3 Gallowtree Gate.

MANCHESTER—

79 Market Street, Manchester 1.
14 Oxford Street, Manchester 1.
c/o Kendal Milne and Co., Ltd., Deansgate, Manchester 3.

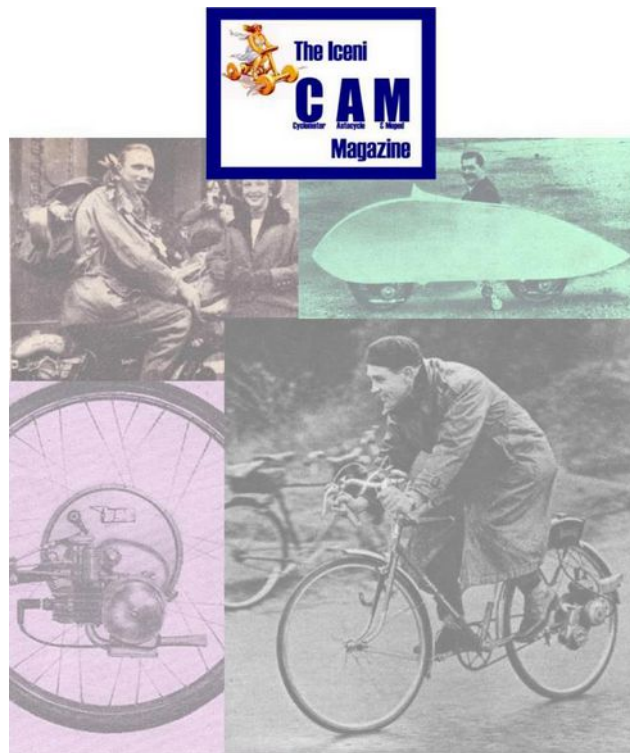
NOTTINGHAM—

47 Clumber Street.

WOLVERHAMPTON—

32 Lichfield Street.

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