

Road Testing . . .

THE MOBYLETTE SUPER DE LUXE

IF I were to describe the delights of riding in London traffic on a moped with an automatic clutch again, I would be doing a disservice to some of the excellent single- and two-speeders I have tested lately. Nevertheless I have recently been enjoying just this pleasure and since the moped in question is the one I am reviewing at present I shall not be able to refrain from mentioning this fact.

The moped is the Mobylette Super De Luxe and I think it is without question one of the finest town-dweller's mopeds available. High praise, you will say, but I defy anyone not to agree. The ease with which those sweetly designed "cowhorn" handlebars can be manipulated in heavy traffic, coupled with the silky automatic clutch action, make a ride on the Mobylette a memorable experience.

Theoretical Journey

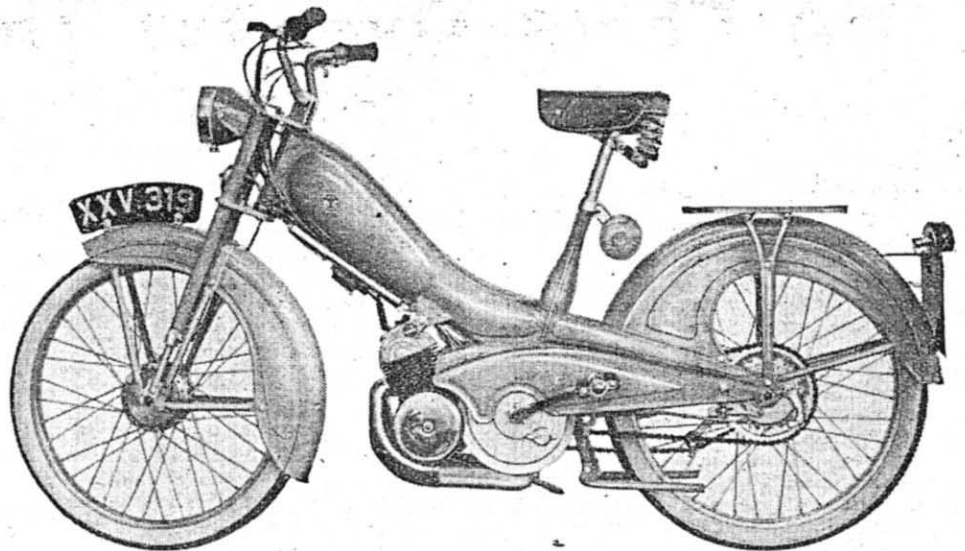
For those who have not ridden such a moped before let me describe a theoretical journey. Sitting astride the mount the right hand reaches down to turn on the petrol, a sensible plastic knob which protrudes from the fairing near the carburetter. The left thumb reaches away from the left hand-grip to depress what must surely be the neatest and most unobtrusive strangler lever on any moped. The feet pedal gently away and at somewhere near the 10 m.p.h. mark the clutch takes over and the engine bears you away.

Traffic lights loom up ahead of you. Throttling back you apply the brakes and the Mobylette comes to a halt. The lights turn green and with a twist of the throttle and, if the gradient is uphill or you are a weighty person, perhaps a couple of revolutions of the pedals, you move away. The simplicity of riding the Mobylette is breathtaking. A good publicity stunt would be to approach a willing septuagenarian woman and, with a stopwatch, time her to see how long it took her to learn. I guarantee that if she were in possession of all her faculties it would not take much longer than five to ten minutes.

Handlebar Layout

What else is there besides sweetness of action? First, take a look at the handlebar layout. I have mentioned the delightfully sweeping bars and the neat strangler but the brakes deserve special mention. The levers are long and widely flared, thus giving plenty of braking action at the lever end. They also possess knurled thumbscrews for easy adjustment, a very thoughtful idea. The throttle is combined with the decompressor and it only needs a reversed action to kill the engine.

Then we have the engine itself. The German mopeds have gained their well-deserved reputation for silence mainly through a streamlined though rather lengthy silencer unit. The Moby-



Centaur reviews a well-ried French moped with automatic clutch

lette, a French moped, has a much shorter silencer which ends just about where the engine ends. The exhaust pipe, instead of being of the normal straightforward tube variety, bulges outwards almost immediately from the stub. The final effect is that when the Mobylette engine bursts into life, it tinkles! There is no other word for it.

The Mobylette makers have considered a point, which several other manufacturers seem to have overlooked. The word "moped" implies that pedals play a certain part in the propulsion of the vehicle. They should be, therefore, reasonably easy to operate. I have no grumbles here for the Mobylette can be propelled like a "sit-up-and-beg" bicycle for lengthy distances.

A Hill Test

One of my reasons for designating the automatic clutch moped, a town-dweller's mount is because of its reluctance to climb long hills without pedal assistance. Riding the Mobylette in the St. Albans area, I was not surprised to find that I had to pedal quite vigorously up the steep main street in that town. However, a little further out, I encountered another hill, almost as steep but not quite as long. Just for interest's sake I decided to find out just what the Mobylette would do before the gradient

became too much. In a rather cruel fashion, I set it at the hill and allowed it to make its own way up without any help from me. The revs. sank of course until the engine was labouring, but it hung on. A lorry across the road prevented me from finding whether it would have taken me to the top, but I have every reason to believe it would.

The Snags? *

Finally, what are the snags? Alas the Mobylette possesses a couple and one of them is the same that disqualified an earlier moped from taking the Oscar for being more or less perfect. Why on earth is the Mobylette supplied with such a niggling saddle? None of my rides on the Mobylette were particularly long but I could certainly feel most of the miles that occurred after the 20 mark. A "pan" saddle or some type of dual seat would make all the difference. The other point is that I found it difficult to use the carrier for what it was intended: carrying luggage. It is rather on the small side.

But I can't end on a note of criticism. Let me commend the Mobylette's neat tubular tool carrier beneath the saddle. It is easy to open, and close, does not require any planning on where the tools are going to lie, and is equipped with some usable tools.

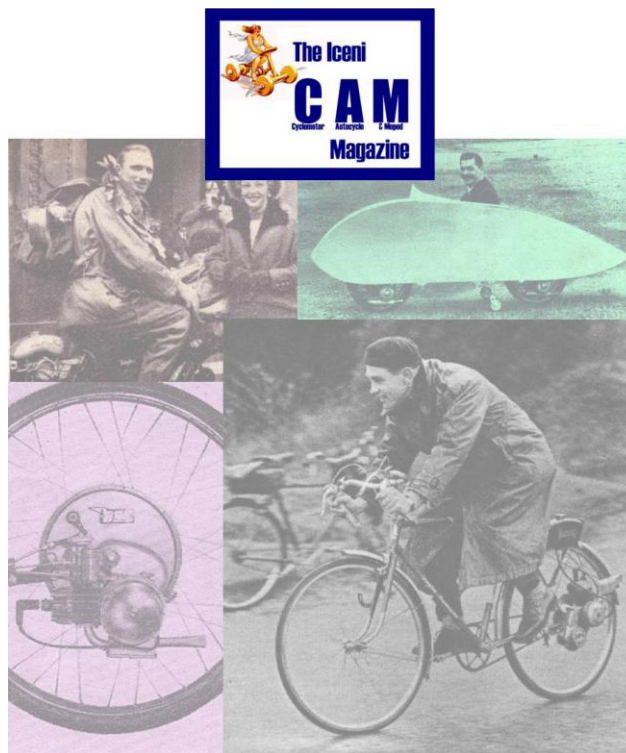
Performance

Maximum speed:			
Flying 1/10th mile, 29 m.p.h.			
Standing 1/10th miles, 16 m.p.h.			
Acceleration:			
0-10 m.p.h., 5 secs.; 0-20 m.p.h., 13 secs.			
Economy:			
At 20 m.p.h., 180 m.p.g.			
Hill climbing:			
Time for hill: 2 min. 13 secs.			
Pedal assistance from 0.3 miles.			
Test hill 0.5 miles long, max gradient 1 in 10;			
average gradient 1 in 16.			
Braking:	Front	Rear	Both
At 20 m.p.h.	24½ft.	33½ft.	14ft.
Peddalling:			
Maximum pedalling speed: 15 m.p.h.			
Comfortable pedalling speed 10 m.p.h.			
Tester's rating: Easy to pedal.			
Tester's weight: 220lb.			

Specification

Engine: Motobecane two-stroke; 39mm. bore x 41.75mm. stroke=49cc.; c.r. 6 to 1; 1.35 b.h.p. at 3,400 r.p.m.
Gearbox: Single speed through fully automatic Dimoby clutch; primary belt, and final chain drive; pedal starting.
Frame: Welded up from steel pressings; telescopic front fork and rigid rear end; integral fuel tank.
Tank: 1½ gal. capacity.
Lights: Head and tail lamps fed direct from Noviflywheel generator.
Wheels and brakes: Both brakes 4in. internally expanding in full width hubs; chromium-plated rims and heavy gauge plated spokes; 2.00 x 23in. Hutchinson tyres.
Equipment: Tool box; tool kit; centre stand; luggage carrier; pump.
Finish: Blue enamel with chromium-plated details.
Makers: Ateliers de la Motobecane; Pantin, Paris, France.
Concessionaires: Motor Imports Ltd., 158 Stockwell Road, London, S.W.9.
Price: £58 19s.; legshields, £3 15s. 6d.; electric horn, 10s. 6d.; pair of panniers, £2 16s.; windscreens £2 7s. 9d.; speedometer, £1 15s.

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