

Road Impressions of 1940 Models



"WHAT a nice-looking machine!" How many times I heard this and similar remarks during my test of the new Rudge autocycle I have no idea—I lost count. There is no doubt that the machine, with its metallic-sheen maroon enamel, lined in gold, is particularly attractive, though I was not expecting such almost overwhelming approval. And, as I found during my lengthy and diverse test, the enamel is remarkably tough and difficult to scratch.

The model tested is the £22 15s. "De Luxe" machine. This differs from the £22 "Standard" model only in the type of tool-bag and the fact that it has neat shields which cover in the sides of the engine unit and help to keep the rider clean as well as facilitating cleaning the machine.

While the shields, which are finished in the same manner as the tank, appear to be identical, the near-side one, which covers the flywheel magneto, is specially made of brass so that there may be no possible question of the performance of the lighting-and-ignition unit being adversely affected. Forethought such as this has been applied to many features of the new machine. Not only is nothing skimped, but the whole machine is remarkable for its sturdy construction. A case in point is the rear stand that has been standardised. This has a base some 12in. wide to ensure that the machine does not topple over and a massive spring clip on the rear mudguard which eliminates all possibility of the stand falling down and, thanks to special collars on the cross-member of the stand, all chance of rattles developing, even after years of service.

So sturdy is the stand that there is no need to pedal the machine up the road in order to start it, or to walk alongside the machine with the compression release raised.

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All one needs to do is to pedal with the machine on the stand, or even push down one pedal, and the engine will start. This ease of starting should make a special appeal to those getting on in years who might fear, generally quite unnecessarily, that the slight effort of pedalling the machine in order to start the engine would tax their strength.

The machine submitted for test was brand-new, one taken "off the shelf." On my collecting it from the local station and pouring a quart of petrol into the tank a little thing happened which, in the case of the normal purchaser, would have been rectified by the agent selling the machine. I pressed the tickler knob on the carburettor, the float chamber failed to flood. A lump of dirt was choking the hole in the petrol tap and preventing any fuel reaching the carburettor. This is a thing which is liable to occur with a new machine almost irrespective of the care taken to swill out the tank before despatch. Nevertheless, I suggest that a pencil of filter gauze soldered over the upper end of the "reserve"-type tap would be a small but excellent refinement, particularly as it would prevent the possibility of the reserve supply of

An Attractive-looking
and Beautifully Made
Villiers-engined
Machine with an Ex-
cellent Performance

By "TORRENS"



Rudge Autocycle

fuel not being available when wanted owing to that not-infrequent silting-up of the passages.

Both the model tested and the "Standard" machine have the new Villiers "De Luxe" two-stroke autocycle unit, the one with the detachable light-alloy cylinder head and the flat-topped piston. The economy and power of this latest unit are now well known. Once the engine has been run-in the machine to which it is fitted can be counted upon to tour at any speed from a normal cycling pace up to 30 m.p.h., and at an average of 20 m.p.h. to cover at least 150 miles on a gallon of fuel over anything like straight-ahead running.

The particular Villiers unit fitted to the machine tested had a piston which appeared to be a little on the "tight" side, and gentle running was, of course, desirable at first. With the object of assisting the running-in I temporarily removed the large, clipped-on mudflap attached to the rear

cyclist's eyes, has a thick layer of special felt beneath the saddle cover that effectively eliminates any hard ridges. I will not say that I should not like a larger saddle—this applies to all the many autocycles I have ridden—but the Rudge saddle is, I consider, the most comfortable I have tried.

Inverted levers are provided for the two brakes. Both are effective and fully equal to all conditions. The rear one was a little heavy to operate. The clutch was also on the heavy side at first, but this was merely a case of the clutch wire not being arranged to run in quite easy enough sweeps; rearranging the wire a trifle immediately overcame this.

At times there was slight clatter from the rear of the machine. This was found to be due to the driving chain occasionally touching the rear mudguard and occurred even when the machine was brand-new. There is not a lot of clearance for the chain, a point that might be rectified. Another little alteration which seems desirable is to the outlet of the exhaust pipe which is such that there is something of a "crack" from the exhaust when the machine is being driven hard.

Timed over the usual undulating mile the Rudge averaged 32 m.p.h. in one direction and 31 m.p.h. in the other, while the fuel consumption at some 20-22 m.p.h. under give-and-take touring conditions worked out a 149 miles per gallon of petrol, which gives approximately 158 m.p.g. of petrol.

To sum up, the new Rudge is a particularly good example of the modern autocycle, a machine notable for its sound design, sturdy construction and first-class manufacture—which one might rather expect in view of its pedigree!

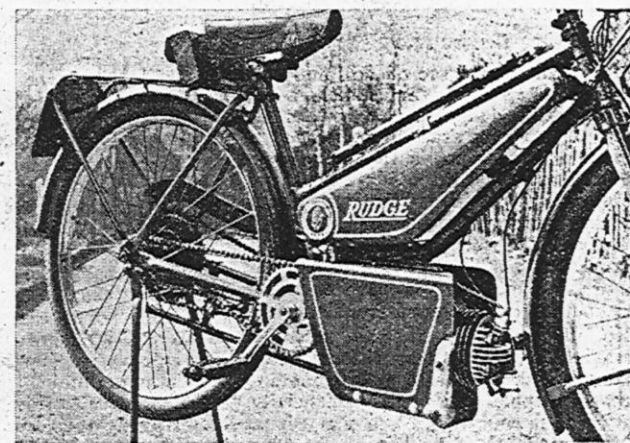
The specification of the machine tested was as follows: Rudge "De Luxe Autocycle," with the 98 c.c. Villiers "De Luxe" deflectorless-piston autocycle unit; Villiers single-lever carburettor, with air and petrol filters; Villiers flywheel magneto and electric lighting; 1½-gallon fuel tank, with oil measure attached to underside of the filler cap; reserve-type petrol tap; 26×2×1½in. Dunlop heavy "Carrier" tyres on chromium-plated wheels; sturdy tubular luggage carrier and rear stand; large mudflap on front mudguard and shields around engine unit; internal-expanding brakes, 4in. diameter rear and 3½in. front; spring-mattress saddle; price including electric lights, tools, licence-holder, bulb horn, and a six-months' guarantee, £22 15s.; makers, Rudge-Whitworth, Ltd., Hayes, Middlesex.

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of the front mudguard and mixed rather more oil with the petrol than the recommended one part to sixteen.

Once again I was to feel surprise at the lusty power of the little 98 c.c. Villiers engine. Hills that appeared to be causing the majority of cyclists to walk were generally breasted at a full 20 m.p.h. Not once during some hundreds of miles of runabout and touring work did I have to help the machine along via the pedals. Another good point was that the engine appeared to develop a particularly useful amount of power at low speeds, with the result that it was possible to get away even at traffic lights set on steepish gradients without one having to pedal.

The Rudge is far more than a runabout; it is a machine that can be used for long-distance touring. It is also unusually comfortable. There are no spring front forks, but I imagine that those cycle-type front forks must do a rather unexpected amount of shock absorbing, also the spring-mattress saddle, while not by any means large to a motor



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