Buzzing and



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The National Autocycle & Cyclemotor Club Ltd.

A company limited by guarantee.

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This issue's front cover features one of the moped world's lost causes, the Hercules bicycle company's Her-cu-motor models, which unfortunately didn't make "moped history" or much money for the company, which folded soon after the model went on sale. Originally launched as the Grey Wolf at the 1955 Earls Court Show, two versions were offered for sale in 1957; the Mk1 with a bicycle-type frame along Trad-Brit autocycle lines, and the Mk2, with a somewhat Germanic-looking part pressed-steel frame. See page 23 for more on the Her-cu-motor story.

Club Information

Membership

Membership of the NACC in the UK costs £15.00 a year. Associate Membership costs is £3 in addition to the full membership fee. Application forms are available from the Membership Secretary (see previous page) or downloadable from our website **www.thebuzzingclub.net** . European membership costs £17.00 and the rest of the world £20.00 per annum.

Dating and Registration

The current dating fees for club members are: £7.50 (£20 for non-members) for a certificate supporting an application for an age-related registration, £12.50 (£30 for non-members) for processing a V765 application. Contact the Machine Registrar for details, please send an SAE.

Affiliations

The NACC Ltd. is a member of the **Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs** and we have corresponding agreements with; the Register of Unusual Microcars, New Zealand Classic Scooter Club, the Bermuda Classic Bike Club, Rijwiel Hulpmotor Club Nederland, AML GC17 in France, the Sjællands Veteranknallert Klub Denmark and the British Two Stroke Club.



Club Insurance

Full and Associate members of the NACC can benefit from our

Footman James NACC Insurance Scheme, offering a range of policies to suit Autocycle, Cyclemotor and Moped owners, including those riding sub-50cc machines on full car licences without a motorcycle licence or CBT. Please quote your membership number when contacting **Footman James** on **0333 207 6101**

Library

Nick Devonport can supply copies of material held in the NACC Library (contact Nick for a copy of the Library List, see previous page for his details)

Website

http://thebuzzingclub.net Our new site has up-to-date news on upcoming events, events calendar, club activities and shortly a new forum. Next time you're on the 'net take a look.

Events Calendar

If you want to organise a club-permit event and wish information to appear in Buzzing in time, please write to the Events Secretary at least 2 months prior. Application forms can be downloaded from the NACC website. Events organised at short notice (min 28 days), apply via email or in writing to Events Secretary Bob Jeffcoat to ensure issue of a permit. Details will be posted on the NACC website. Signing-on sheets must be returned within 14 days of holding the event. The rule for riding on NACC events is no membership card- no ride. Those who cannot produce a valid card have to pay a £3 day membership fee. All participants must personally sign the official sign-on sheet issued by the Events Secretary. Events shown in BOLD on the next page are official NACC events, those not shown in bold are non-NACC events which may require a day membership payment.

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News from HQ:

Chairman's Chat

Hello Members,

I'm sure we are all looking forward to more pleasurable weather to enjoy our hobby, although the Winter doesn't seem to have been too bad in most regions; but "March/April" caught us out last year you will remember, so fingers crossed!

It's time to consider attending the National Rally at Wolverhampton. Please come along, it's always a great event. Please make yourself known to me if we have not met, it's always good to hear the views of members.

I think it is timely to raise a few Committee issues. Firstly, the Club is "blessed" with a very sound and hard working Committee. We the Committee and therefore the Club have in the last few year been very lucky in that several new members have come forward to take up positions. But sadly it's still not enough.

A number of the Committee wear more than "one hat" and we still don't have a permanent Secretary. Liz B. has been Acting Secretary for several years now to her credit, but as Chairman I often feel that too much is being placed upon her, given her other duties. It's time for others to "step up" please. You have heard me say this before, but "The Club does not run its self!" Please consider my request and get in touch if you think you can help. Safe riding

Ray B.

Regalia - 2019 NACC Calendars - still a few left, now half-price!

It's not too late to order your 2019 Buzzing Calendar! Yes, I know we're well into the New Year but the twelve Martin Squires illustrations depicting Club-type machines are a worthy decoration for your garage or man cave! All of "our" types of machines are represented – autocycles, mopeds and cyclemotors – so there'll be something in it for you.

Price is now £5 + post & packing. Supplies are limited so if you'd like a calendar please order from me, Regalia Secretary Nick Devonport asap. Contact details on the inside front cover of this issue of Buzzing.

News

Obituary: Andy Speak - 3rd May 1960 to 1st March 2019.



Andy Speak died at 3am on 1st March 2019, following a devastating stroke he suffered on 17th January 2018, from which he never recovered consciousness.

Never other than a proud Boltonian (Lancashire, not Greater Manchester), his life was generally lived within a square mile of his home in Great Lever, Bolton. His business, A & S Motorcycles, operated from a railway arch in Bolton, which displayed a notice bluntly stating that no Chinese machines would be worked on.

Andy never embraced change or modernisation! Gruff, stubborn,

monosyllabic, set in his ways, of fixed opinions and outlook. Andy was all of these, but beyond all that, he was clever, funny, and a thinker. Not one to suffer a fool, Andy was very ready to help a friend, which included anyone riding a New Hudson. Other makes were tolerated.

He had a quick, quiet, and very dry humour. One favourite anecdote comes via Frank Brzeski from the 2008 End to End Ride. On or about the 3rd day we had arrived at our Premier Inn, and Alan Eden (Andy's brother in law) was on his knees outside tending to his sickly Bown autocycle which was very much down on power. The head and associated parts were strewn on the flags outside the Inn. Andy strolled up, pint in hand, looked on and said "I'd love to help, but I'm on holiday"!

love to help, but I'm on holiday"!

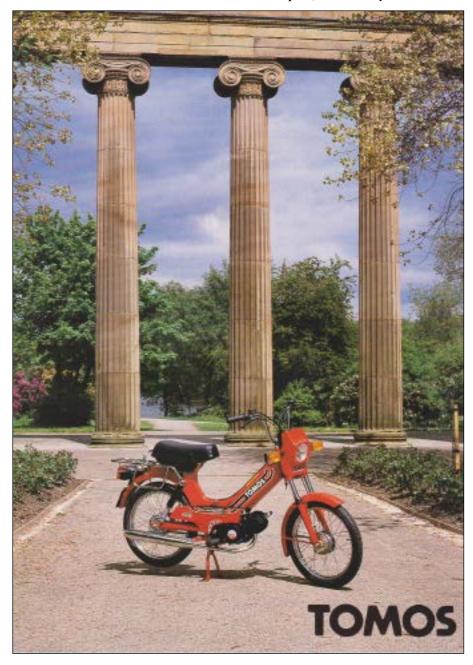
Andy and the late Derek Ashworth were usually to be seen as a pair (photo above, courtesy Ian McGregor) riding their implausibly quick New



Hudsons, and neither would tell their secrets of success. If an explanation for their performance was given, beware trying to emulate - it was bound to be a hoax! With their passing, a huge store of autocycling knowledge has been lost - for none of it was written down. The many NACC events which they enlivened will be emptier without them. Our sincere condolences go to Andy's family and many friends. On March 1st 2019 another light in the world of autocycles just went out.

Peter Moore

Last issue's tribute to the now-defunct Tomos moped manufacturing business, which went bust in January, prompted member Andy/skungheeney to send Buzzing a few scans of rare Tomos brochures from his collection. The one below is superb, thanks Andy!



Mal Wright of the Northern Ningers writes: "I've just sat and read this month's Buzzing and thoroughly enjoyed the content as usual. Our group are having our next European Adventure III between 17th and 20th May this year. Lots of our members are also members of the NACC, though we're a Facebook Group of friends, not a club, hence not formally affiliated to the NACC. If you're interested in letting people know about our little trip (we did Arnhem in 2017 and Ypres in 2018), your members would be most welcome."

NACC members interested in joining the Ningers on their European Adventure should contact Mal via the Northern Ningers Facebook page or by email **to** steadyaway@me.com



The Motobécane/Motoconfort Club de France is organising their 24th International Rally over the weekend of 22-23 June, at Pluvigner, near l'Orient on the south coast of Brittany.

And while on the topic of events taking place in France, our old friends from the SoleX Club Spirales at Calais are celebrating their 25th anniversary over the weekend of 8th-9th June 2019 at the Salle du Minck, rue J-F et Maurice Delanoy in the centre of Calais. The club was established in 1994 and since 1996 Jean Maurice Duhaut has been its president.

(contd. next page)



The full Solex weekend comprises; **Saturday 8th June**- 09.00 signing on at the Salle du Minck, 11.00 the bar opens! Filled baguettes available. 14.00 a ride round the Calais area on country routes, returning to HQ by 16.00 for the evening meal at 20.00. Bar and the Salle closes at 23.00

Sunday 9th June- breakfast served from 07.30 at Salle du Minck, 08.30 departure on a longer run to Belgium on country roads, 12.30 lunch, return by 20.00 to the Salle.

Anybody interested in joining the Solex Club Spirales should confirm participation by 8th May, the closing date of inscriptions. Application forms are available from Dave Beare via *hello@thebuzzingclub.net*. The weekend costs 50 euros, which includes a 3-course dinner with wine on Saturday and Sunday breakfast & lunch.

Talking of France and birthdays -

member Paul Wichard celebrated his birthday (it would be rude to ask which one) on 23rd February at the Bristol Classic Bike Show at Shepton Mallet.



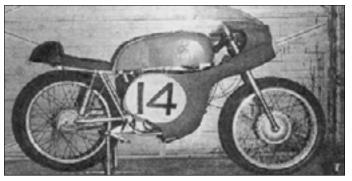


Paul and Pat had struggled through the snow to get to the original show on 2nd-3rd February, taking five hours from Portsmouth and the ferry from France, where they have lived in Normandy for many years now. Paul is a native of Chipping Sodbury so the Bristol area is his home territory.

Jo Stanley kindly made and presented Paul with a massive choclate cake, followed by a large pork pie with a single candle stuck in the top. Happy Birthday Paul! In the last issue of Buzzing (February 2019) we published scans of a Heldun Engineering Ltd brochure, dating from 1968/68 of the Heldun 50cc sport mopeds and scrambler models, which were sent in by Andrew Harrison. More information has arrived from "Jeep" (J.E.Elton Payne) who runs the Classic 50 Racing Club website and who has generously given permission to quote from the website's Heldun history and provided the images reproduced here.

"The Heldun Engineering Company took its name from the founders, Helen and Duncan Mitchell and it commenced production in Dudleston, Shropshire before later moving to premises in Birmingham. Using proprietary power units sourced from Germany and Italy, the firm offered an extensive range of 50cc 'featherweight' models, both complete and in kit form.

The new Marque "Heldun" was born in 1965. The Company was new to the 50cc motorcycle production market and had, like other manufacturers of small motorbikes, seen a gap in the market that they could fill with their type of products. They described themselves as the 'Company to make the first British made 50cc road racer' but an argument exists as to whether Britax [with the 50cc Ducati Cucciolo-powered Britax Hurricane] was there first. Heldun were at the time seeking export markets for their hand-built models and a few of the production racers went to the Scandinavian countries in 1965. These were Sachs two stroke engine based bikes. They also intended to make their machines available in Britain by the New Year of 1966.



For the UK market they decide to develop a different racing model to the ones sent to Scandinavia and moved away from the two stroke. Heldun then heralded the new racer's birth and its first flight, it was the Heldun 50cc HAWK racer. The bike was a prototype machine and was to be ridden by a young 18 year-

old Rex Caunt who currently runs Rex Caunt Racing, suppliers of electronic ignition systems and BSA Bantam race parts. [Rex Caunt is the brother of NACC member Roger Caunt]

This Shropshire based firm, Heldun Engineering, put together a smart rolling chassis, as can be seen in the photograph (above) and used a European double overhead camshaft engine to propel it. We have not been able to identify the manufacturer of the engine but Heldun were able to get 8bhp from it at 15,000 revs. It was a 6 speed unit and it was fitted with a Novel two speed primary system which gave it a 12 gear capability. Sales of this bike did not get off the ground and for whatever reason the Company moved to the small village of Knighton (Powys) in 1965. The race bikes, sent over to Denmark and Sweden, competed in a number of races and held their own until the Kreidler and other more advanced machines came into private hands."

In 1965 a Heldun racers, ridden by Anders Bengtsson, came 10th in a race held at Ring Djursland in Denmark, see photo next page top of Bengtsson on No. 61, he is at the back of the field which includes Bjorn Carlsson No.39 on a 3-speed JLO-based G50. Lasse Johansson is on No.34.





"In 1965 the Company brought out four new designs. A Racer, Sports/
Racer, a Trial bike, a Trials and a
Scrambler. Engine units were a variety of German and Italian products, both two and four-stroke, but fitted with Amal carburettors and considerably modified by the makers. On the overhead-valve engines the inlet ports were opened out and cam followers were reground to a flat-base pattern, resulting in a considerable power boost. Modified porting and expansion type exhaust systems gave a similar lift to the 2- strokes."

Right: Arthur Mills (Minarelli) leads A F Clapham on the ex-works Heldun Hawk in 1969.

"The works Heldun competed in the short-lived 50cc T.T. in 1967 in the hands of the lightweight rider P J Walsh, more used to MV and Aermacchi, who did not finish, and the same fate befell Heldun rider Doug Cash in 1968. This machine, from its frame number is thought to be one of the TT entries, went on to further use in UK short-circuit racing in the hands of A F Clapham and was then retired.

Part way through 1968 Heldun ceased trading, but before then its products had competed in the Isle of Man 50cc TT and one even finished the Scottish Six Days Trial, earning its rider John Buchan a bronze medal."



Photos arrive of a beautifully-restored and ultra-rare Harding Safety Tricycle, made in Bath in 1956, with a 32cc Cyclemaster engine in the back wheel. It was presumably assembled for a disabled person who needed assistance with pedalling. R.A.Harding of Lower Bristol Road, Bath, specialised in invalid carriages from the early 1920s to the 1960s. The company was closed in 1988.



Adverts dating back to the early 1920s posted on the *gracesguide*. *co.uk* website indicate Hardings had been making simple "bathchair" invalid carriages for the war-wounded.

A 1963 electric Harding invalid carriage, as seen below in a Harding advert, is on display at the Dover Transport museum.

The Harding Safety Tricycle shown above is for sale, full details can be found in the For Sale advert on page 45 of this magazine.





NACC NATIONAL RALLY 2019

5th-7th July at Wolverhampton Rugby Club, Castlecroft Road, Castlecroft, nr.Wolverhampton WV3 8NA

Booking Form

Welcome to the 13th running of the NACC National Rally

The campsite will be open and available from Friday afternoon, with a curry served in the licensed Clubhouse on Friday evening. Full English cooked breakfast will be available on both Saturday and Sunday mornings, and there will be a dinner on Saturday evening.

Bring your bikes along and enjoy a great camping weekend, or just come along and join us for any of the days. (Remember, if you are planning to join us on either Friday or Saturday evening or for breakfasts we will need to know in advance as ALL meals have to be booked.)

Camping costs-£7 per night including use of Clubhouse facilities, showers etc. No electricity hookups are available but small generators can be used until 10pm.

Please fill in the form below and post, together with your cheque (made out to the NACC Ltd.) for the total amount due, to-

Bob Terry, Rose Cottage, 5 Sandy Lane, Codsall, nr. Wolverhampton WV8 1EJ, Staffs.

Any enquiries please call 01902 842198 or 07976 076398 or email: rterry526@btinternet.com

This form can be downloaded from the NACC website under Events Calendar + click the link.

Name	NACC memb. number
Address	
	Post code
Telephone	email
Friday overnight camping:	No. of people
Saturday overnight camping	No. of people
Friday evening curry	No. of people
Saturday breakfast	No. of people
Saturday evening dinner	No. of people
Sunday breakfast	No. of people
Vegetarian option (Sat evening)	Yes/No

TOTAL enclosed £.....



The club does not hold itself responsible for the opinions of its correspondents. Please send all items to Dave Beare, contact details on page 2, and please include your name and address.



Hello Dave,

We are two new NACC members, Andy Grabham and Blake Lowman. We would like to thank Phillip Wright for all his help in obtaining the V5C for our BSA Winged Wheel, which is now on the road, but without Phill's help I would still be thinking about it.

We also have a Rudge Whitworth bike with a Trojan Mini Motor on it and are looking forward to to the National Rally so we can make some new friends.

Regards, Andy and Blake

(Thanks for the photos Andy, and welcome to the NACC! We look forward to meeting you and your great-nephew Blake at the National Rally in Wolverhampton, July 5th-7th)

Blake is seen right with the Mini Motor.

Dear Dave,

Recently you kindly put a small item in your club magazine to help with some Teagle parts I was needing. This resulted in 3-4 responses leading to getting the parts and I am very grateful all round. Thanks very much, **Dudley Ellis.** (Dudley put in a request for 1/16th x 1/2" big-end needle rollers to rebuild his Teagle, which were found via NACC members, so many thanks to all who helped. As a result Dudley joined NACC so we look forward to seeing his Teagle out on a run soon. Ed)

The cutting on the right was send in by Norman Smith who spotted it in the Metro newspaper!

Dear Dave,

re Nigel Harper's letter on tyres for roller-drives, I use Schwalbe City-Jet 26" x 1.95" and have done twenty-one thousand miles on them. They are cheap rubbery tyres that cost £8 each from Spa Cycles in Harrogate. I buy six at a time. I cannot see the point of paying for better tyres just to put them up to a grinding wheel!

I have found that roller-slip is usually due to the fact that the grit roller needs dressing or resurfacing. I normally get 500-900 miles per tyre, though over 900 miles the tyre walls are prone to failure. I'm making a bicycle tyre do what it is not designed to do in the first place. Regards, **Stan Watters**

Hello, thought I should write to say I was very surprised to receive the latest mag. which I found most enjoyable, & slightly retro. I was aware that you had joined

THIS CHAP NEEDS A COPY OF "BUZZING" Tuesday, January 8, 2019 | METRO | 9 METRO BITES THE BBC is considering making its programmes available on iPlayer for at least 12 months, as well as offering more box sets and archive shows - in a bid to compete with streaming rivals such as Netflix. POLICE were bemused when they pulled over a pushbike to find it was fitted with an illegal petrol engine. West Yorkshire officers, who seized the bicycle in Pontefract, said the rider had no helmet or documentation. AN extremely rare coin bearing the head of King Edward VIII is set to sell at auction for £55,000. The prototype was never issued as the king abdicated in 1936. The sale takes place tomorrow in New York

the massed ranks of modern machine riders, so was unprepared for the bits of old school content-hopefully not merely as a stop-gap measure? I have to say I am fed up with all the scooters & small motorcycles now dominating the club-not an Autocycle & Cyclemotor Club any more, really, is it. Should be renamed, perhaps? That might provide an incentive for the renaissance of a new NACC club, albeit probably smaller, devoted specifically to Autocycles & cyclemotors, as originally, & hopefully, with a cut-off date? These machines are now worlds away from the Nanfangs, "twist & go" stuff , new Honda 50s & such like. Actually,we now seem to be getting to the point where simple maintenance & repair tasks are causing todays riders problems in sorting them out-fuel supply & ignition primarily, it seems. (contd. next page)

Hence (as you recently suggested) the reason for club members modern machine preferences, no doubt. But home maintenance, fettling, rebuilding, researching etc. is supposed to be part of the hobby, isnt it? With all due respect to the riders of relatively recent machines who enjoy themselves (fair enough) droning uneventfully & reliably around the lanes to a cafe stop, there isnt really much of interest to write about is there. I noted that you recently expressed the hope that one of the reintroduced Honda 50s will soon appear on a run-I dont share that desire, & would prefer them to stay away!

I realise all this does seem very negative, but I do think there is a real problem here. It seems to me that very few owners of the interesting old machines, including autocycles, are going to turn out on runs where the modern machines can, & will, simply power away into the distance-it is in the nature of things that this happens, unfortunately. I cannot accept that the passing of the years means that more modern machines should replace the fascinating & quirky stuff the NACC was formed to nurture-it cannot be claimed they are all now worn out, can it! As to changing road & traffic conditions, thankfully quiet lanes still exist. Yes, impatient car drivers tend to spoil things somewhat, but cyclists have to cope with this scenario & generally seem to manage. That said, they are better able to hear vehicles approaching from the rear, I suppose. From **R. Mawer**.

PS-it might (even now!) be of interest to some members to learn that a large quantity of the British Salmson companys original Cyclaid paperwork survives in my possession. Comprising parts lists, advertising stuff, & general material related to getting this foreign design of clip-on unit into production. I am going to have to find a good home for it-there is/was an enthusiast in New Zealand very keen at on time on these clip-ons-is he a club member? If so, he may feel free to contact me, via Buzzing, should he wish. PS again-do feel free to publish this letter-I am not afraid of criticsm!

EDITORIAL

Richard's missive returns to the complaints which surface every few years in the Letters pages, the grumbles about the growing presence of modern machines on NACC runs. It is important to remember that the NACC has two roles. Firstly, that of assisting preservation, restoration and riding of cyclemotors, autocycles and mopeds from the 1940s onward, and the sharing of information on them. Secondly, the NACC has the role of a social club and forum where people with common interests can discuss techniques and problems associated with owning and riding ancient and modern small-capacity machines, and to meet up with their mates now and again for a ride out.

In my personal view, both are of equal importance. Many of my closest friendships have developed from meeting NACC members (both ladies and gents- the NACC has a significant number of female members) on runs - people who in the normal course of things I wouldn't have been able to meet without our links via the NACC. I value this aspect of my club membership very highly indeed.

For many members born in the 1930s and 1940s, age and infirmities now make it difficult for them to pedal a cyclemotor or autocycle but they continue to want to ride on section runs with their friends, so they use point-and-squirt scooters. Nothing wrong with that. One NACC member I know is nearly 90 and he still turns out for local Section runs and the National. Unable to pedal a cyclemotor, he uses a scooter or small motorcycle to enjoy his rides out. Do we want to deprive members such as him of that pleasure?

There are plenty of cyclemotor-oriented runs listed in the Events Calendar every year, some exclusively for cyclemotors, while others are too long or hilly for constant pedalling, so it is horses for courses. Back in the 1980s I used to ride a VéloSolex on the VMCC Cyclemotor Section 100-Mile Run (often in the company of the late Solex-addict, Tim Bunting), something I cannot physically do nowadays. I ride a scooter on the likes of the Wobblers Welsh Mountain Challenge because nobody, unless very fit and 40 years younger than the average age of riders, would try it on a cyclemotor. I also ride a scruffy, brakeless Power Pak on cyclemotor-friendly runs and had a New Hudson for more demanding runs, the reason I'm now restoring a derelict 1948 Excelsior Autobyk.

The NACC has always been a broad church, welcoming a wide variety of bikes of all ages with pathetic power-outputs, lousy brakes and dubious engineering. You can still experience similar thrills riding a brand-new Chinese bike with hard plastic tyres, dodgy CD ignition and hopeless brakes. They still fit the NACC "crap transport" ethos perfectly! Younger members have no memory of cyclemotors and autocycles in the 1950s, but they often owned a Honda Cub 50 as their first bike, hence many members ride them.

Most local Section runs field a remarkable variety of bikes; some slow, some fast, and in my experience a run is often paced for the oldest, slowest machines, with occasional bursts of speed for modern bikes, who then wait for the slow ones to catch up. Many such runs are both democratic and considerate. Imposing an age time-limit has never worked for any "vintage" club. The commonly-used 25-year age limit (e.g VMCC) now includes bikes from the mid-1990s, with disc brakes, high-power engines and twist & go transmissions, the very bikes Richard does not like to see on runs.

Dave the Ed.

Dear Dave,

I was flattered to see a picture of my lovely old Calthorpe Junior in Nick Driver's article on p31 of the December 2018 issue. Nick shows how I coiled the petrol pipe to prevent engine vibration from reaching the petrol tank. Nice to know my efforts didn't go unnoticed. He might like to know that I also made the tank from scratch out of sheet tinplate and soldered the spats onto plain mudguards to copy the originals. I also did the paintwork, nickel-plating and re-build from scratch.

Sadly I had to sell my baby last spring because I was getting a bit wobbly when "running and Jumping-on"

Tony Lloyd

Referring to Robin Cork's letter in February's Buzzing on the Hercules Her-cu-motor moped, John Redding sent in photos from his album and writes:

Robin.

With mine, it ran perfectly for the 5 or 6 years that I owned it, never broke down, the JAP engine was sound. I decoked it and checked the "spigot/key" on the end of the crankshaft/gearbox which did not look too healthy, there being plenty of torsional strain on that small coupling when accelerating and slowing down. I considered a rubber/plastic reinforcing braided tube to strengthen it but never got round to it.

However, fun to ride and attracted attention both here and in France because of the crank being in line (the French were fascinated and said "en ligne") with the frame as opposed to convention. That's about all I can tell you Robin, fun to ride so enjoy. Regards, **John**



Above, the village square at Sars Poteries with the band-stand in the background, where signing-on takes place every year.

Right, John out for a ride "somewhere in England", as wartime photo captions usually put it!



Shows and Runs

Carol Nash Bristol Classic Bike Show Autocyclus

Rod Western's Somerset & Avon Section put on a superb show at Shepton Mallet - when the show finally took place. Originally planned for the weekend of 2-3 February, the bad weather changed everything with heavy snow in the area, which forced the organisers to cancel the event at midday on Saturday 2nd, though not before a number of exhibitors and traders had struggled through impossible road conditions, only to be told on arrival that the show was postponed. Rescheduled for the 23-24th February, the show then took place during the warmest late winter weekend ever, with sun and temperatures in the 15-18°c range, much higher than the average for late February. Go figure......

Rod and his team had rustled up an amazingly diverse display of 23 bikes, ranging from Ian McGregor's very rare 1940 Scott Cyc-Auto, via 1950s machines such as Peter Stockhill's 1951 Cyclaid, several Power Paks, John Aston's Alcyon 650 and on to some 1960-1970s sports mopeds such as Alan Burton's Cimatti Sports, Joe & Jenny Skinner's Yamaha FS1E and John Hembrough's Gilera 505V.



Above, the NACC stand was busy both days with many visitors admiring the wide range of small bikes on display. In the foreground; Mobylette AV92, 51V, MBK Swing, Honda.

Below, the autocycle corner, with Bryan Norton's 1941 Sun (554), Ian's Cyc-Auto (553) and John Hayes' 1948 Excelsior Autobyk G2. The Scott Cyc-Auto was the first true autocycle, introduced in 1934, the only autocycle to have an in-line crankshaft and was the work of Ernest Wallington Butt. Excelsior's Autobyk G2 was the only autocycle to be sold with a two-speed gearbox.



Cyclemotors were well-represented, with Bryan Norton's nicely restored Berini M13 "Egg" fronting

a line-up of three Power Paks; two were Synchromatics (Geoff Warren and DB) while Roy Best's was without a clutch. Other cyclemotors in the central display were John Hays 1980s Mosquito in a Halfords Freewheeler bike, Peter Stockhill's British Salmson Cyclaid and Nick Devonport's Metrom, a Romanian military clip-on used to power bicycles on military airfields. Geoff Warren's Power Pak deservedly won the Best Cyclemotor / Autocycle award!





Above: the sports moped line-up attracted a lot of attention. Just visible is Geoff Warr's lovely RAP Imperial, with Joe & Jenny Skinner's super Yamaha FS1E being discussed - it won the Best Moped/Sports Moped prize.

Another moped attracting a lot of interest was John Aston's 1954 French Alcyon (right) which has two clutches. Motobécane had patented the two-way DiMoby centrifugal clutch so Alcyon had to do it differently. One clutch on the engine to start it and engage drive, the other is part of the rear hub behind the sprocket, which progressively takes up the drive moving off from a standstill. Complicated, but the best Alcyon could do without infringing Motobécane's patents!



Below: other sports mopeds in the line-up included John Hembrough's 1972 Gilera 505V off-roader and Alan Burton's 1965 Cimatti Sport, both superbly restored. The Bristol Show was a great success, many thanks to Rod and his team for all the effort put into lining up so many unusual bikes.



Vale of Glamorgan St. David's Day Dawdle 3.3

Remember the wonderful weather of the Bristol Show weekend, 23rd-24th February? Hot, sunny, calm? What a difference a week makes! Storm Freya appeared on Saturday 2nd March, so Sunday 3rd was wild, wet and windy, not to mention about 10°c colder.... Nevertheless, 11 loyal members turned up at the Llandow circuit



café to ride off into the gloom, heroes all.

Despite the fact that we have stopped charging the English to come into Wales, we had no takers for our St Davids Day Dawdle. Never mind, eleven of our own turned up ready to face storm and tempest that was duly raging all around them. It was really blowing and heavy showers but as we were denied last year by snow off we went. As we did the rain stopped and a flicker of sun appeared. It turned out to be a peasant 30 mile run with no probs at all. So thank you all for turning up, Your Leader, Baz.



Riders were: Barry Cooksley, Jack Madge, Deryl Vaughn-Jones, Terry Hopes, Ifor Slade, Stuart Robson, Steve Leech, A Williams; visitors Philippa, Glyn and Dave B, plus Chairman Ray in the backup van.

Right - grim, wet and windy (viz the trees in the background) as riders set off, but the weather improved soon after.



Bookworm

Cyclomotors - John Muckle. Festival Books. 1997. ISBN 0 9518100 8 6. 62 pp plus endpapers. Cover price £7.95.

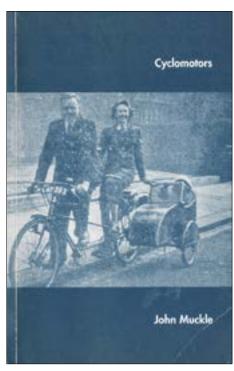
This small (A5 size) book of 62 pages was passed on to me recently by a cycling friend who thought I might be interested. He was right, although the book is not what I expected.



It is a fictional tale, not specifically, or even mainly, about cyclemotors, but about a family, what we would now call a dysfunctional family (but the word had not yet been invented), the tale being set South of the Thames, in the early post-war years. We can be pretty certain that the end of the tale is in 1951-1952, but the start is not clear, but still post-war.

This is a story about a boy, Geoff Stanway; his chancer of a father Frank; his wearied mother Alice; and a number of other adults of varying reputations in whose orbits Frank moved. However, the thread which is of interest is that the story is based around the scrapbook which Geoff compiled of cuttings featuring cyclemotors - he is fascinated by them and lusts after the Bantamoto, perhaps the least successful of the (nominally) British units. Those with long memories may remember Paul Hornby's article from December 1995, and others can still search for it.

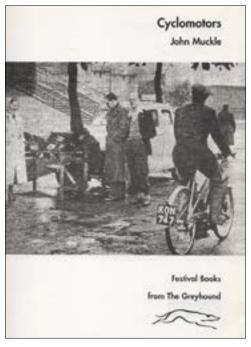
The book is illustrated with (intentionally?) poor photo reproductions of the press cuttings which made up the scrapbook, and these date from 1951-2, as they must, for these were the two years for which the Bantamoto's flame flickered. As such, they bring nothing new to the archives, but are of interest. The noted Professor A.M. Low is seated beneath his hat at a table bearing his famous Noise-o-Meter during the 1951 ACU Wembley Stadium Cyclemotor Trials, and I am still having fun trying to identify his car behind. The front cover photo is of a Sinclair-Goddard Powerpack



- propelled tandem with sidecar, smiling parents astride the machine and bonneted infant clutching the windscreen header rail. But they have yet to set off! Further Powerpack advertising material shows Mr. W.R. Walker of the Hub Cycle Co., Glasgow piloting a quad with three smiling lads in line astern, and claiming 18mph on the level.

The end of the Cyclomotor tale comes at around August 1952, when Geoff, who has been working at a pleasure boat hire outfit on the Thames under Hampton Court Bridge, cycles to East Acton, to the premises of the Lettington Engineering Works in order to buy a Bantamoto.

contd.



He finds it to be a cycle shop, and the old man within is Mr. Alf Lettington who proceeds to sell Geoff a Bantamoto unit on easy terms for 8 guineas to cover the deposit and the first 2 instalments of 18/6d. Mr. Lettington proceeds to fit the Bantamoto to Geoff's bike outside at the kerbside, and in no time, Geoff cycles away "as though he had released himself into the air".

Ah, haven't we all felt that delirium? Maybe not all of the detail of this tale is factual or accurate!

But the book is an enjoyable read. It will stir recognition and memories in those of a certain age. It can also serve to remind that the Old Days were not always Good.

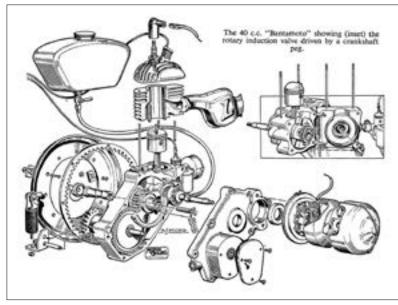
The book was written in 1997 as a work of fiction, and copies are still available through online booksellers at a modest price. The apparent mis-spelling in the title serves to point up the distance between the author and

our hobby, but the word "cyclemotor" had perhaps not attained currency in 1951-2. The motorised bicycles were sometimes referred to as autocycles. But by 1997, Mr. Muckle has perhaps left it a little late to coin the term "cyclomotor".

Peter Moore

Peter Moore

Right, the complex Bantamoto cyclemotor unit with gear drive and a rotary induction valve feeding mixture directly into the crankcase. The unit was hung from an extended wheel spindle on the near side. Made by the Cyc-Auto autocycle company.



Sheffieldish Stepthru Saunters

Phil Nuttall

Our last bulletin from the frontline of Stepthru Mania ended with one of us wingin' it on the byways of Northern England and the second of us ensnared in multiple quandaries in his shed with two bikes, four engines and a pile of scrap. For the continuation and a partial resolution read on:

The winger's view (or is that whinger's view?)

Last year feels like a period of too many holidays for me and a busy year for Dave with foreign campervan trips, grandparent duties and the small matter of the magnificent Mini Motor-powered LEJOG previously reported in these pages. Despite these distractions we have, by my calculations, managed ten outings of between 60 and 100 miles supplemented by a 'shed meeting' to inspect one of Dave's random purchases with a view to applying for the retention of a registration number on a very original Mini Motor and bicycle. Dave, organised as ever, maintains a detailed log for all our journeys – consequently, his reports are based on truth whilst mine rely on a year planner for dates and an imaginative, selective, ageing and probably faulty memory.



All our runs this year have been Peak District based around cafes, some visits to heritage railways and mild 'outlaw' activity. Almost every ride has started at Ladybower Café at the eastern end of Snake Pass. This is run by a lady called Julie who has supplied us with hot drinks and entertaining banter. She also has an endless stream of interesting customers – notable for me this year has been a Harley-mounted, multiply redundant ex-miner from Barnsley who assured us that the only politician who he shared values with was.......

Jacob Rees-Mogg (how things have changed in 35 years when miners rode C90s and painted the town red), a pair of BMW mounted Belgian tourists carrying a box of tissues to hand to fans of the England football team who they were convinced would be heavily defeated by Belgium in two day's time, (England won!) and a Dutch tourist who couldn't understand Spam (the meat type) which features heavily at Julie's – he wouldn't try it but took a photo of the menu. The year was also notable for the reservoirs adjacent to the café going from full to their lowest ever, giving rare views of the villages & farms drowned when the dams were built in the 1930s.

Heritage railway visits have been to Peak Rail – steam hauled and excellent chip butties and a long ride to Rudyard Lake railway in Staffordshire – diesel hauled on the day of our visit and with very small carriages-quite a squeeze for two elderly, overdressed C90 riders but a splendid ride along the lake shore where Mr & Mrs Kipling found a name for their son. Rudyard was also memorable

from a catering point of view – "Please See our Specials Board". Today's specials were choc-ices and/or cheese and onion crisps, served by a very enthusiastic young volunteer who gave us lectures on the workings of the railway and cheese and onion crisps. Apparently they don't contain any onion at all but are flavoured with garlic salt – "not a lot of people know this" or indeed want to.

By far the most memorable ride was a long one on a very windy day to Flash, the highest village in the UK, just south of Buxton. The run had an interesting start as the A57 from our meeting place crosses the Ladybower Reservoir via the Ashopton Viaduct which has high, solid concrete sides - these produced a corkscrew wind effect which threw our little bikes all over the road. After fighting the headwinds across the high Staffordshire moorlands we finally joined the A53 main road from Buxton to Leek. This road carries a high volume of HGV traffic and the strong west winds blowing unhindered across the Cheshire Plain made for an exciting ride described by Dave as one of his most frightening motorcycle experiences ever. After visiting Flash, a village with apparently little to commend it, we headed back to The Old Smithy Café in Monyash where we enjoyed a

late All Day Breakfast before heading home aided by the tail wind.

The outlaw activities we have indulged in consist of possibly touching an indicated 31 mph when the wind gusted strongly, running a traffic control which was stuck on red, had we not done so we might still be there, and circumnavigating a closed road barrier on a minor road which had partly slid down a hillside. There seems no end to our wild ways!



If this contribution seems short on technical topics it's simply because nothing mechanical has happened this year: 1000 miles, 12 months with no breakdowns or mishaps. Just one simple service – put petrol in, ride it, put it away, get it out and ride it again. That's why we got stepthroughs in the first place and so far it's paid off handsomely. Unless Dave tells you otherwise.

Resolution: (from David Stevenson)

For reasons explained in the last piece, I had ended up with a Honda C90 and a Yamaha T80 in the garage. I was running the Honda with a Lifan 110 (actually 107cc) engine. It was convenient to have one bike always ready for a run but my storage space is too small to keep two bikes of the same type. The Yamaha had done less than 3000 miles and could have made a good project for a full restoration but having been stored in damp condition would have needed all its chromework as well as its paintwork replacing. Phil and I share an interest in riding this type of machine and get a certain satisfaction from riding them to the limit of their performance on back roads. When things don't work out the limited speed and low weight usually ensures a timely correction is possible. However, although I enjoy these machines, I don't have an interest in them aesthetically to want to spend a lot of time restoring one to 'as new'. One of them had to go, but which one?

No one will probably be surprised that I made a list comparing advantages and disadvantages of the two machines. This was no help. Does '4 speed gearbox' outweigh '12v electrics' or vice-versa? Meanwhile on one of our Peak perambulations I returned with considerable discomfort in Arthur the arthritic knee. The 'semi-automatic' clutch on these bikes is double acting. A centrifugal clutch sits behind a conventional plate clutch activated by the gear lever – or sometimes not in the case of the Lifan. The speed of the engine seemed to sometimes work against the clutch and require considerable pressure to change down. To be fair without a dodgy knee it wouldn't be a problem but I decided to take the carefully run-in Chinese engine out and replace it with the original, being now pretty sure that the problem noise I had experienced was a loose engine bolt. This done I took the bike for its MOT. The tank on the Cub is only 3.75 litres and it was showing almost empty but I was late leaving for the appointment. I arrived on time and the C90 passed as, to be fair, it did every year I owned it. I then set off for the petrol station about 3 miles away.

Everyone who has a Cub rides on fumes from time to time. Sensible owners have a spare litre container in the topbox but a petrol can, however tightly closed, always stinks in a confined space. During its 'round-the-world-Cub' incarnation the C90 had twin boxes fitted to its front rack with a litre of petrol in one and of oil in the other. As this caused the front suspension to bottom out they were discarded and nothing took their place. I had never run out before... but there is always a first time and sure enough about a mile out we staggered to a halt. The Honda is a lightweight and on the level pushing is fairly easy but uphill? I ducked down a bridleway which joins the route of a very old horse-drawn tramway. Greeting several dog walkers with what I hope was a manly insouciance I struggled along the unmade two miles to Silkstone garage. As can be imagined the section about three quarters of the way on where the old stone sleepers are still in place provided a welcome challenge.

From here things just seemed to gather pace. The Honda was going. I'd had it since 2012 and ridden it about 5000 miles. Its frame had been time-consumingly stripped and rust proofed, its electrics adapted with LEDs, it even had the patent high level brake light but the Yamaha and its dodgy 6v lights it was going to be. Stag Chilli sold for enough to pay me back for an awful lot of the modifications, even the stupid ones that were later discarded. (Who was going to moan about the C90 being iconic as the bidding war heated up on eBay?) The hard panniers once attached to it, like the shot weighing down a corpse buried at sea, sold separately. The Lifan engine made its price. The engine out of the Rust-Bucket, a 2003 model with only 11000 miles on it, amazingly proved harder to shift. Nothing, of course, can give me back the years I lavished on it, but then without one of these bikes I would have been unable to let Phil risk my life being blown under an HGV on the A53. That was even scarier than the winter a couple of years ago when he suggested 'popping' across the Snake Pass on the Cubs to the excellent Glossop Café for a brunch. There turned out to be very low cloud or thick fog on the tops and for a while the condemned men wondered whether they would ever get to enjoy their hearty breakfasts.

So that's it sorted. I can spend the rest of my riding career trying to get the 6 volt indicators on the Townmate to work properly. Oh, and selling the rack full of Honda C90 parts I still have. My only mechanical excitements this year have been with MOTs – one day on the way down to Julie's I realised that the Yamaha's had run out the day before. Who says you never see a police car in rural areas anymore? I'll finish with a word of advice. If you really want to spend money like you're pushing £50 notes down a storm drain, sell your Honda C90 and buy a Spanish Servetta. I did.

Letter from Italy #4. part 1

Autocyclus

In December 2017 Steve the Editor kindly published my Letter from Italy #3, much of which was a report on a visit we made to the Piaggio museum, situated within the factory complex at Pontedera, not far from Pisa. Since that time Piaggio have massively expanded and opened a whole new wing of the museum to house not only their Vespa scooter collection and range of mopeds such as the Vespino, but also a big new display of motorcycles from Gilera, Moto-Guzzi, Aprilia and Derbi, all marques owned by Piaggio.





Left, a prototype moped, designed by Corradino d'Ascanio of Vespa fame, dating from 1955. The pressed-steel frame is in two halves, electrically welded together, which also contains the fuel tank. The front suspension was carried over more or less intact for the first Piaggio moped, the Ciao of 1967.

Below: another prototype, this one is a neat, compact modern version of the petrol motor-in-the-rear-wheel concept. Sadly it didn't make it into production either.





Another design study which never got beyond the cost-analysis stage is the

Piaggio Ciao-based Porter three-wheeler urban commercial transporter, below. A box-at-the-front version of Piaggio's wonderful Ape transporter - Italy's mechanical donkey.



In the background of this photo can be seen part of the Gilera display in the hall alongside Piaggio's own products, the Ciao, mopeds and Apes.

One of the latest Ape three-wheelers had been converted into a mobile coffee-shop and was serving perfect coffees from a proper espresso machine to the hordes wandering round the museum.

Not. It was a Thursday in late November so the place was empty.

Piaggio may have noticed the proliferation, certainly in the UK, of Apes converted to mobile coffee stalls for outdoor events and looks to have come up with their own version, the Vespa Caffè. It is a typically clever design with a fold-down espresso machine, a slide-out *pasticceria* cabinet and a roof held up with gas-rams which folds down and completely covers the top and right side when in transit from one place to another.

And here it is!

The Gilera display mentioned previously turned out to be fascinating, with a number of Gilera mopeds and scooters on show. Included is the first motorcycle ever made by Giuseppe Gilera in 1909, a singlecylinder 4-stroke



engine driving the rear wheel by belt straight off the crankshaft. The frame is pure bicycle, the engine replacing the bottom-bracket, could it be called an early cyclemotor?



Gilera has a distinguished racing history, beginning in 1935 with an across-the-frame 500cc four-cylinder supercharged twin-cam engine producing 80bhp. It formed the basis of a racing dynasty which, post WWII, won the 500cc road-racing championship six times in eight years until Gilera quit racing in 1957.

(Part 2 of Letter from Italy #4 will be in the next issue of Buzzing)

The Ceccato Romeo

Peter Moore

I bought this moped on impulse a little while ago, probably because it is blue. It is undeniably neat, and, the more you look at it, well thought-out and fitted to its purpose. I had never heard or read of the maker, but was aware of similar, - very similar - machines from Garelli and others.

Our time together did not start well. On the first proper group ride, the steering fell apart, which was interesting, as the handlebar stem and the steerer tube parted company with each other. This event forced the repair and a (largely hidden) modification which has strengthened this area and eliminated the repeat of this failure! It incidentally gave the opportunity to clean, lubricate and tighten all the fork links, so that the front end now behaves as it was originally intended.



Then there was the pedalling gear. Fixing this, - and it is necessary to have this item in good working order - entailed more than one strip-down, new bearings, helicoil, and crank and pedal rebuilds!

Now that's over with, we can get on! Until this point, I was wondering why I had bought the machine, but a few good rides and some fine weather brought out the enjoyment and an appreciation of the little moped, which I will try and share.

It's an Italian 49cc roller-drive utility moped, dated to 1954. Never imported to or sold in Britain in its time, as far as I know, this may be the only example in the UK currently. Which makes it rare, interesting, but not necessarily valuable! Think about what was on offer from British makers in the early 1950's for ride-to-work transport, and compare with this.

I don't wish to denigrate British manufacturers or the population (of which I was a young one) but the arrogance of the "British is Best" mindset, institutional xenophobia, and that includes the Press-we had just won the War single-handedly (no help from the Americans, then), is plain to see through the lens of hindsight.



The Ceccato Romeo is built around a welded-up steel frame of pressed and tubular sections, with pressed-steel girder fork front suspension. The fuel tank is formed by the deep-section downtube, the rear triangle is all welded, and the rear mudguard, stays, and carrier form a rigid, bolted-up sub-assembly. The rear mudguard is deeply valanced, the chainguard encloses the chainwheel and the top run of the chain, and the front mudguard extends down well below the wheel centreline, to stop dirt and spray drenching the spark plug. Front and rear 4" drum brakes ensure performance unaffected by wet weather. A short curved tube welded between the downtube and the seat tube acts as a frame stiffener and as a lifting and carrying handle to allow the moped to be transported up steps etc, for which purpose it is placed, ideally, over the centre of mass of the moped.

So, considerable thought went into the design and manufacture of all this for a utility, commuter moped. But Ceccato cannot claim the credit, for this is a bought-in frame set manufactured by Casalini and used by a considerable number of Italian manufacturers (Garelli, Itom, Olmo, Wilma, Paglianti, and possibly Casalini themselves using the Garelli Mosquito motor) to produce machines to satisfy basic mobility requirements.

Ceccato can, however, claim credit for the motor, which they also sold to other assemblers such as Paglianti. So here is the other side, showing the neat, underslung mechanicals. Ceccato seems to have been as much an assembler and user of bought-in components as almost all motorcycle manufacturers. Bearing in mind that this example has been previously partially restored, and I do not know its history beyond the last three years, it has wheels from Agrati Monticello, 4" headlamp from Aprilia, front fork links stamped "Gloria", 10mm carburettor from Dell 'Orto, and electrics from FILSO Magneti and CEV, freshly re-worked with new coils.

A coil-sprung mattress saddle covered with waterproof vinyl, and a small plastic cylindrical toolbox mounted below it, complete the standard spec.

But the motor is all Ceccato's own work. Again it's neat, very functional, but hardly a thing of beauty. The Italian designers and engineers had a knack of bringing art into their products, but in this case, practicality ruled! The French term "bloc moteur" could have been invented for this one!

The cylinder block is cast iron, with an aluminium cylinder head, and cast aluminium crankcases and roller housing. Head and block form a finned box, with flat, horizontal finning which is ideal for the location below the bottom bracket, providing a large surface area, and being easy to mass-produce. The whole motor is suspended from a pivot bolt the bosses for which are formed integrally with the cylinder block, and a serrated alloy clamp (with oil nipple for the pivot) locates the unit on the rear frame stay tubes, as well as providing fore-and-aft location adjustment for setting initial roller/tyre clearance.



Engine design appears entirely conventional for the period, being piston-ported, with inlet on the top of the block, exhaust beneath, and 2 transfer passages at 90 degrees to these, with welded-in deflector plugs. The flat-topped piston has 3 pegged rings, and plain bushed little end, and there's a short reach central spark plug in the head. The drive roller is mounted on one end of the crankshaft, with the flywheel generator on the other. No-one seems to have been credited with this simple but effective design. There is a small decompressor, sufficient to snuff out the motor but not to kill all compression, as you find out when pedal-starting! I guess that compression ratio will be around 5:1, since the rest of the design follows convention, and that power output may be about 1 1/2 hp, since this little unit is happy to rev. Bore and stroke are 39 x 41 mm and there is a 15:1 reduction ratio between roller and tyre. This gives 23.43mph at 5000rpm., and the moped has been paced at 26mph on the flat, so it is clear that it's a feisty little unit, and the power output guesstimate is reasonable.

Riding the moped, you are in no doubt about its torquey performance and the exhaust note is enthusiastic! The exhaust system is short, and effectively unsilenced! There's a baffle-free expansion chamber and the only restriction and back pressure is provided by the ball-shaped end cap with letter-box slit opening for the gases to escape.

There's no clutch. Drive engagement is via a toe and heel rocking lever arrangement pivoting the motor and roller toward and away from the rear tyre. There is a thumb screw barrel adjuster which varies the roller engagement pressure against the tyre, very handy for coping with wet weather. In practice, this drive engagement system proves to be a little clumsy. To engage drive, you have to take your left foot off the pedal. This means that your right foot and pedal descend to 6 o'clock and the left pedal rises to 12 o'clock. You toe the drive engagement lever forward and down, there is a spring-loaded over-centre action, the roller engages the tyre smartly and the lever comes to a stop against the pedal spindle or shaft. Your shoe meanwhile has fouled against the upright pedal crank!

There are in theory two methods of starting up from rest. Both involve pedalling and some effort. You quickly learn to avoid uphill starts, and to anticipate hold-ups so as to avoid coming to rest. You can engage drive, hold open the decompressor, pedal away and close the decompressor, whereupon the motor will fire up. Of course it will! But, as I mentioned earlier, by no means all the compression is killed, and pedalling against the engaged motor is hard work. So, the preferred method is to leave the motor disengaged, pedal away to at least a fast walking pace, lift the decompressor, toe the engagement lever, resume pedalling as quickly and elegantly as you can, and then close the decompressor. The thing is, as soon as you engage drive and are not pedalling, the moped tries to stop dead! Once the motor is running, keep it so. Stopping and restarting the moped with a running motor is much easier! It is then possible to modulate the engagement with your left foot so as to achieve a smooth and satisfying take-up of drive. Needs a bit of practice, though!

It's a small machine, running on 24" overall diameter wheels and tyres. Wheelbase is 1090mm (43") and overall length is 1690mm (66.5"). Fuel tank capacity is about 2 litres max., but about 1.8 litres realistically, since beyond that there will be splash-out from the cap-vent. Maximum seat height is 900mm (36"). Kerb weight (with a full tank and ready to ride away) is 34kg (75lb.) My 5' 10" build somewhat dwarfs it, but it is fun! The bit that always brings out the kid in the rider is the blat-back from the exhaust as you pass buildings or street furniture. The noise is out of all proportion to the performance!



(Ceccato continued to build motorcycles until 1961, by which time the company had become a large-scale manufacturer of aircompressors and in addition is now one of the largest makers of automated train and vehicle-washing equipment in the world. Air-compressors remain a successful and large part of Ceccato's business to this day.)

Caption Competition - a new one!



Here you are, ladies and gents, a new photo caption competition for you to apply your wit to writing something suitable and printable! The picture is of Pat Witchard and John Aston, somewhere in darkest France judging by the Citroën 2CV in the background, with yet another Mobylette purchased on a whim...... (Photo courtesy of Jo Stanley)

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