



Impressive Puch: the M125 which is scheduled soon to be fitted with six-speed gearbox and higher c.r.

mixture was "as before," except that Suzuki were showing their exciting new 500 c.c. vertical twin two-stroke Cobra in roadster and production racer forms, and also a prototype 250 c.c. scrambler of the type currently being ridden by Swedish ace Olle Pettersson. Wisely Suzuki are doing their development *before* putting the machine on the market. At the moment the main problem is, apparently, achieving a sufficiently wide power band. Power is there in plenty—indeed there's almost too much—but it's all at the top end of the scale so that the model isn't yet right for release to riders for European moto-cross circuits. When it is right—and it is anticipated that another season's development should be enough—this well-styled, well-engineered moto-cross machine should be comparable with the world's best.

Impressive 500

The production racer version of the new Cobra is one of the most impressive looking five-hundreds I have ever seen. With a performance apparently to match many six-fifties, and the reputation of the 250 c.c. Suzuki Six to back it, this model, too, should be a winner.

The only new British machine on show was the prototype 125 c.c. Faron built by Harry Phillips and his son Ron, who were there with the machine on the Frank Stephenson stand.

Experienced practical engineers—Phillips senior has a lifetime of machine shop work behind him—they built the show model in only eight weeks from start to finish. It would be wrong to describe it as especially impressive, but parts—most notably the engine—are most beautifully made. If they can afford the time and money necessary to develop the project it could prove quite successful.

While Dots hadn't a stand, a Dot scrambler was being shown by Moto-Cross Motors. Looking at the machine, I was not really surprised to hear that

none had been ordered. While it may not be the case, one could be forgiven for thinking that Dot development came to a standstill about five years ago.

Most interesting item on the Huldun stand wasn't a motorcycle at all but a model veteran car—a half-size version of a 1909 Opel. Adding to the authenticity—possibly unintentionally—it was powered by a 98 c.c. single-cylinder J.A.P. Claimed to be suitable for children of from six to 10 years, it can be bought by rich parents for £150.

Though in size a mere shadow of the display last September, the *Motorcycle News* Market Place was interesting because it included several new firms—Moto-Cross Motors, for example, Unity Spares, Bernie Andrews with his Super Trailers and racing sidecar maker Colin Bell.

Unity Spares are the sort of firm—unhappily all too rare these days—which will take the trouble to get you something (or, if the worst comes to the worst, even make it) if they haven't got it in stock. Moto-Cross Motors, as the name implies, are primarily interested in catering for the scrambles enthusiast, but also market a fair range of goodies. One idea struck me as the best potential money spinner of its type that I've seen for a long time. Furthermore, it could work. Stick-on finning! To help cool your racing Triumph, Norton or B.S.A. you can now buy a finned plate with suitably moulded back which you can stick on to the timing cover with Araldite. On the face of it, providing Araldite is a reasonably good heat conductor, there doesn't seem any reason why this scheme shouldn't be as effective as it looks.

Colin Bell is another of those northern dealers with a good technical background. Motorcycle engineers would perhaps be a better description, for his firm, too, are capable of making things as well as selling them, and what they make is backed up by plenty of knowledge and

experience. For the aspiring sidecar road racer—or even the expert—there is a combined frame and chassis designed primarily to take the Triumph or Norton pre-unit motor, though other engines can, of course, be fitted. Manufactured from 16 gauge T.45 tubing and complete with leading-link front fork (but no suspension units), this frame costs only £85. This means that if you buy a Bonneville or 650 SS you should be able to make yourself a really competitive road-racing outfit for the price of that plus, say, a further £150 or so. Bells can supply virtually all the other extras you may need.

Also on the Bell stand was a Triumph 750 c.c. conversion. Costing £50, it consists of a specially cast and bored block complete with oversize pistons designed to fit on the standard 650 c.c. bottom half.

Most amazing thing about the Bernie Andrews Trailer is how Andrews does it at the price. A single-bike trailer is only £25, while the biggest of his range—an impressive two-bike or outfit size model with high, polished wooden sides—is only £53. And these prices include the ball hitch. As he pointed out, with the new taxation rates it can be far cheaper to buy yourself a new trailer than to tax and insure a van. R. T. M.

The luxury two-wheeler that never was

E. ALEC LAWSON (who is chairman of the Sackville concern which supplies the car and motorcycle industries with a wide range of accessories) has written to us with a story for which he has thoughtfully suggested the title "The luxury two-wheeler that never was." Well, as you can see, we don't waste time searching for catchy titles when they are presented to us . . . He wrote because of an item that appeared recently in the "Vintage Postbag" section of *Motor Sport*. An hitherto unknown engine had been indentified as the work of one Mr. Haythorn, and Mr. Lawson wrote to confirm this and then (to us) to recount the story of how he purchased, many years ago, one of Mr. Haythorn's engines—a 288 c.c. c.h.c. in-line four-cylinder, water-cooled, with integral three-speed gearbox which he had built into what he—Mr. Lawson's words—described as "the most unique and most sophisticated two-wheel vehicle ever produced in the world." It was twice described in *The Motor Cycle*, in the late 40s and in 1950, and as many readers will not have read those reports, we present here some of the salient points.

In the earlier article (November 4, 1948) *The Motor Cycle's* reporter introduced his description like this: "A machine that looks like a small, two-

wheeled car and is fitted with an air-cooled, four-cylinder engine of 288 c.c.

Mr. Lawson built his "special" on the chassis of a 1920s Ner-a-Car, lengthening the frame by about 5in, retaining the original front suspension but welding (instead of bolting) the mudguard to the chassis. But what really distinguished Mr. Lawson's Ner-a-Car from any other Ner-a-Car you were likely to see (very unlikely!) in those days were the two extra wheels with cushion tyres, which formed the "landing gear" for use when Mr. Lawson couldn't be bothered to put his feet down at traffic lights.

"A touch of the appropriate control knob on the fascia board releases the landing gear, which falls by gravity and is locked in the down position by a pawl and ratchet. In order to raise the small (10in diameter) wheels, the rider merely pushes forward and downward a left-hand lever, having first disengaged the pawl by pressing the button in the top of the lever. In the up position the assembly is locked by a spring-loaded plunger."

Mr. Lawson had shown much ingenuity in building his Ner-a-car, apart from the landing gear. The engine had been positioned amidships, with a hand-starting lever set horizontally near to the right-hand running board. A four-blade fan was mounted at the forward end of the camshaft to assist in drawing air over the engine fins. The main tubing of the frame served as part of the exhaust system, forming twin silencers 36in long, with baffling being provided by the assorted brackets, nuts and bolts, and other protuberances in the frame. And for those long winter rides Mr. Lawson had arranged for some part of the hot gasses to be fed via branch pipes into the handlebar tubes, to provide warmed handlebar grips. Luxury!

The bodywork, of sheet aluminium, had been moulded into reasonably streamlined form and painted green.

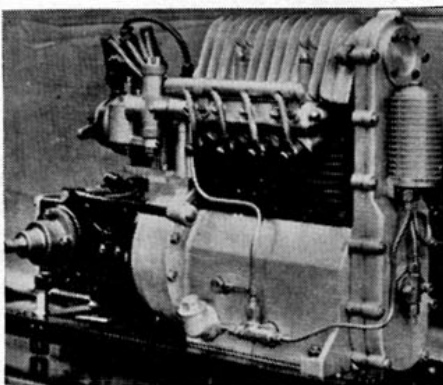
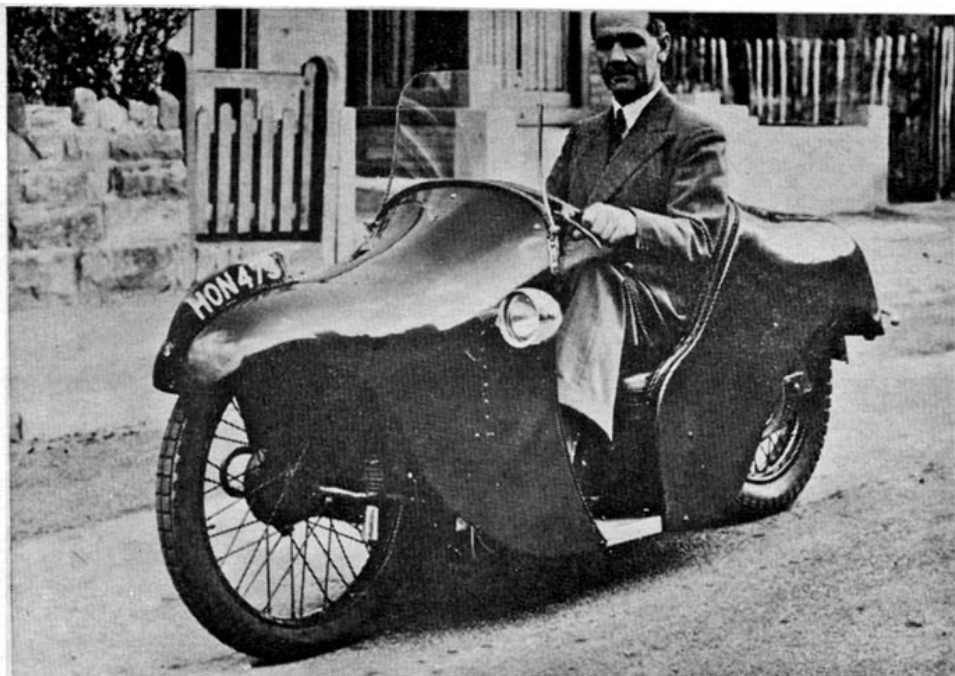
The brakes, one to each wheel (the original Ner-a-Car had twin brakes on the rear wheel), were operated in normal style by handlebar lever and pedal.

As finishing touches Mr. Lawson made a windscreen of Perspex and fitted a fascia of polished oak to hold: speedometer, ammeter, clock and controls for carburettor, magneto, undercarriage release, and the electrical system.

The writer of the 1948 article was not able to ride the machine and ended with the firm avowal: "Mr. Lawson . . . has no intention of marketing this unique motorcycle: he has built it entirely for his own edification and pleasure."

A riding report had to wait until August, 1950, when George Wilson, then covering the Midlands for *The Motor Cycle*, spent some chastening hours with what he, carrying on the hyphenated theme, termed the Car-On-Two-Wheels. He headed his report "Learning to Ride!"

I can appreciate that Mr. Lawson's vehicle must have been difficult to ride—you sit so low, and the steering re-



E. Alec Lawson in his special. It's difficult to say whether the "undercarriage" of two small outrigger wheels is down but presumably it is. The 288 c.c. engine built by Mr. Haythorn is an in-line four-cylinder, water-cooled, with an overhead camshaft; the three-speed gearbox is built in unit with the engine. Not bad for home-workshop production!

action is obviously a mystifying blend of car and motorbike—yet I found it strange that Wilson says: "In order to turn the front wheel to the left, the handlebar and column have to be moved over to the right . . ." Only in the sense, surely, that you perform the same sort of action with the "opposite" end of a motorcycle's handlebar? But, still, it was obviously very strange after a conventional bike, and Wilson went on to describe his encounter with The Car On Two Wheels in these words:

"I lifted the clutch and moved the gear lever forward. The meshing gears went "Crrrr"—not "unch" because I didn't use any force. A quick flick, I was told, was what was wanted. It was. Off I set, footing lustily, thinking that I'd ridden many bicycles that steered better and that—This was Going To Be Awful! Came the first corner. I was still in bottom and rolled back the grip to make a slow and unsteady approach. And when I say that I was seized with a mild panic, I'm not telling any whoppers! I couldn't even remember which way to move the steering column! I let the speed down so far that I had to drop my left foot and give a prod on the corner! I felt myself blush furiously.

"Came the second corner—another to the left, a road junction. I had to stop, anyway—and was jolly pleased to do so! Away again. Gradually, however, I began to get the feel of things. I was, of course, being silly in the early stages when I attempted to turn corners by turning the front wheel. As with a motorcycle the

machine wanted banking. But sitting in a bucket seat, behind a dashboard, and with what amounted to a steering wheel in my hands, I found banking in order to change direction difficult. I developed a complex about it in the early stages that was not easy to shake off.

"The point is that to put a motorcycle round a corner one leans on one side of the handlebar or on a footrest, or presses a knee on one side of the tank, or does a combination of all three! So far as the Lawson vehicle was concerned, one could do none of these. What it amounted to was that because of the unusual seating position I was having to learn to ride all over again. I am convinced that the tiller-type steering had nothing to do with that aspect of it at all, and that the difficulty lay in my sitting low in the bucket-type seat, with my legs well out in front rather than under me.

"After a couple of miles my neurosis disappeared. I could corner feet-up with a bit of confidence and even face on-coming traffic without breaking into a cold sweat, dropping into low gear, and making preparations for stopping. At length I began to feel really confident and then, quite suddenly, it seemed, I was able to drive it!

"There came almost immediately a tremendous feeling of affection for the little vehicle; and there came the realization that on the straights the degree of stability of the model is unusually good even for these days. I will go further and say that it is better than that of some of what we consider to be the best steering jobs today. I wonder how much the low c. of g. of the mass of the model and rider are responsible for this and how much the Ner-a-Car type of steering?"

George Wilson finished his page by remarking "it is on these Lawson lines—basically on these lines, at least—that the machine of 20 years hence will be fashioned."