



AllAboutMiniBikes.Com

WORLD'S OLDEST MINI BIKES

We've searched for the oldest and funkiest mini-bikes — we may have found them.

THROUGH the years we've received numerous letters from readers telling us about old mini-bikes and heard various claims as to which was the oldest. It's been interesting to read through these and see how our present line of machines have evolved. Surprisingly enough, the older bikes are very similar to present-day models.

An example of one such letter and pictures recently arrived from R. W. Wright. In his letter he describes the bike with a great deal of accuracy and substantiates his claim with illustrations from the manufacturer. His letter is as follows:

"Enclosed are three pictures of the first mini-bike made in this or any other country. The pictures enclosed were made in 1948 of the Hiawatha Doodle Bug model number 24-5501 D and 24-5501 E. The first bike was built in 1946. The model remained the same until 1950 with the only changes being the clutch and an extra hand grip. They were painted red with white pin-striping and a white pearl seat of leatherette. The total weight was 112 lbs., length 47½", height 23½", width 17". Tires are 10 x 3½ x 4 with a universal tread. Full lighting equipment was included (not shown) with a six-volt battery.

"The engine is a Briggs & Stratton 1½ horse model which got approximately 200 miles per gallon. Most of the bikes came with fluid drive but I still have one and mine has a clutch and gearbox.

"My Doodle Bug is street legal and I ride it every day. Parts are still



This is how the bike was found behind an antique store. The seat is tacky but can be covered with new leather to match the original. The original tires are still in good shape requiring tubes only.

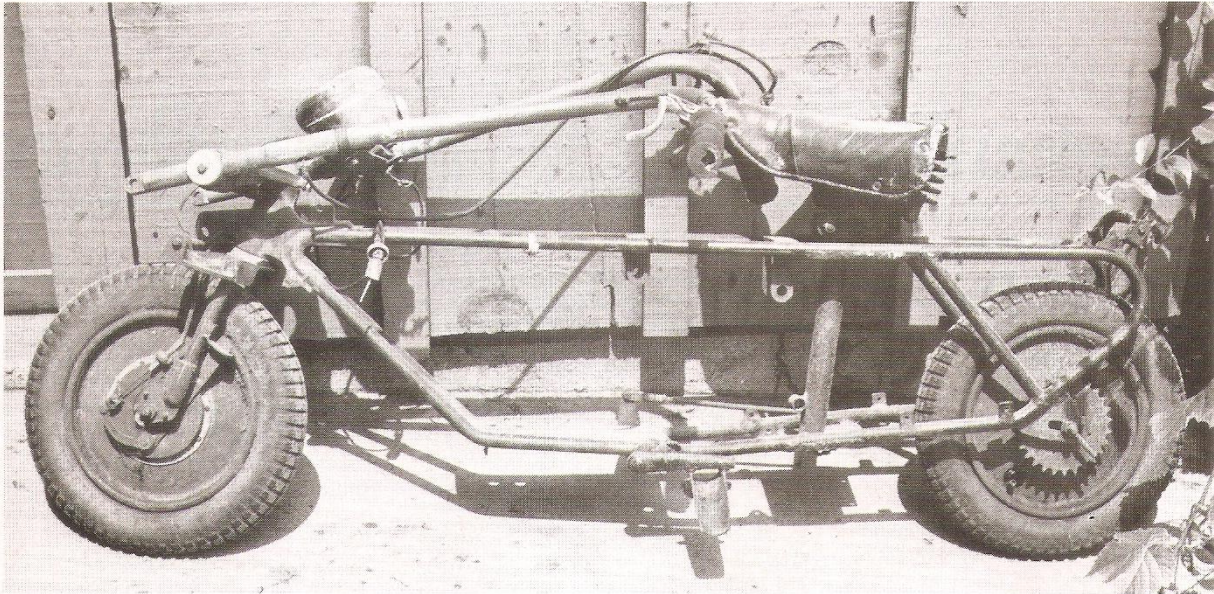
available since components haven't changed that much."

Another reader sent us a story from an Australian magazine called *Stratocruiser*. The story involves a mini-bike which was used during World War II by British paratroopers. We are thankful to this unknown reader for the valuable tip-off. The next day we found the same machine rusting away in the back of an antique store. The model we found is dated 1925 and is in reasonably good shape considering that it is nearly 50 years old.

A quick check at the library revealed that this mini-bike was made by the Corgi Company in England. It was designed to fold into a neat little package to be carried on board aircraft and transported to a jump site. The paratroopers would send their bikes out of the plane first and follow its descent as they parachuted to the ground themselves. Once on the ground, theoretically, it took only an instant to unfold the bike and take off. We can't tell how successful they were but we can imagine that the extra mobility for the fighting men must have helped a lot.

Finding this machine disputes a claim made by Suitcase Cycles in a recent issue of *MiniCycle*. The SC people claim to have designed and built the first carry-on two-wheeler for aircraft. Obviously, the Corgi preceded their concept by nearly forty years.

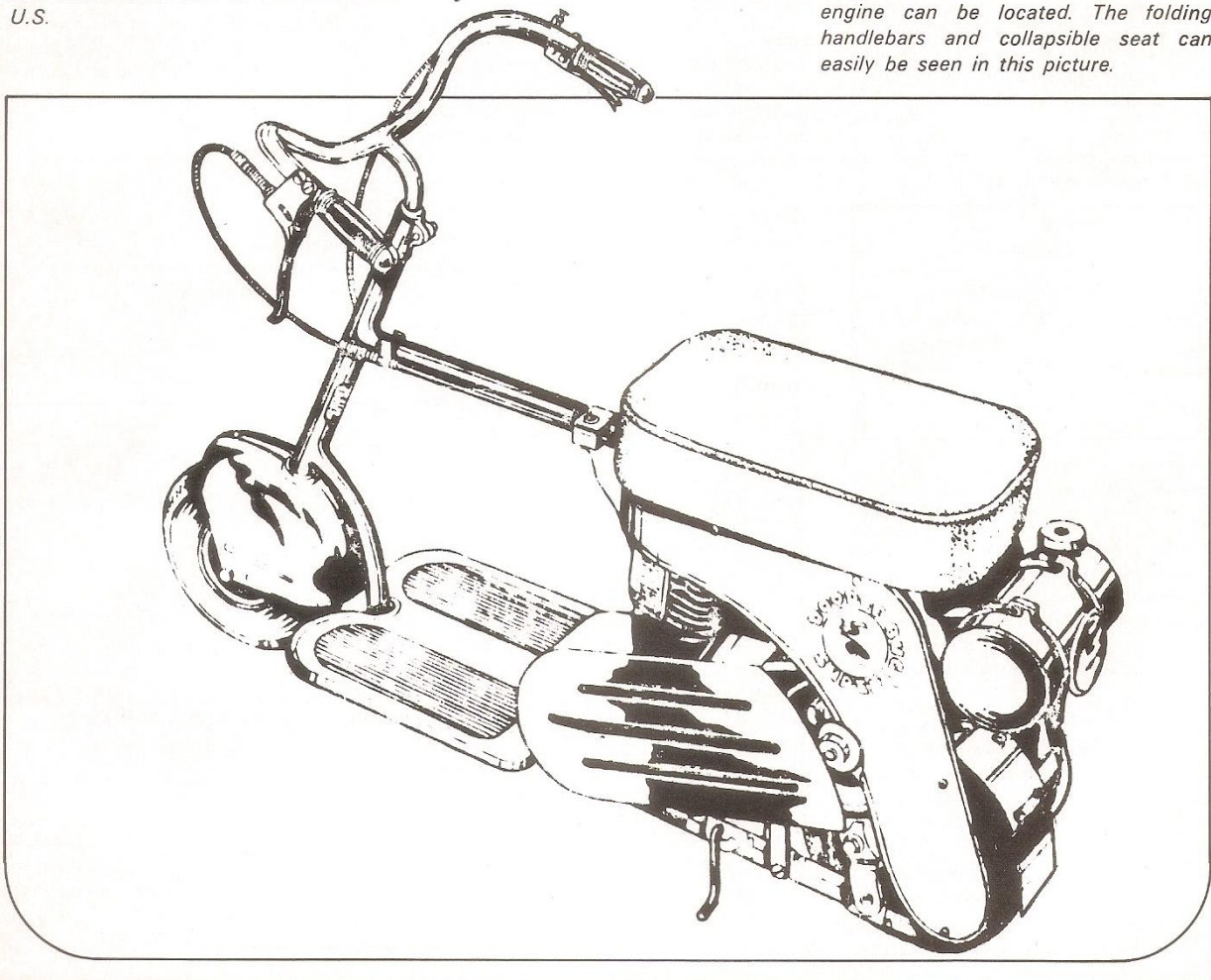
We want to restore the little machine to its original condition complete with military markings. The main problem we have is in locating a 100cc Villiers engine. Most of the other components are still on the bike or can be fabricated. The gas tank is also missing but it is of simple design and can be fabricated, if necessary. Any information or parts will be appreciated and acknowledged in a future issue (write to Brick Price). After the bike is completed we will run pictures on the work involved and the finished product. Meanwhile let's see if we can find an older mini-bike or minicycle. □



The Hiawatha Doodle Bug was first made in 1946 and features a 1½ horse Britts & Stratton engine. This may be the first commercial mini-bike made in the U.S.



Current claimant to the "oldest mini-bike" title is this 1925 Corgi used by British paratroopers. We intend to restore it as soon as a 100cc Villiers engine can be located. The folding handlebars and collapsible seat can easily be seen in this picture.



[FOR FREE STUFF CLICK HERE!](#)



Thank you,
Dan & Sarah

