ELECK RIDER

GRAUPNER'S EXCITING MOTOR CYCLE BUILT UP

I WAS by no means alone in falling for the Eleck Rider the very first time I saw it in action at the Euro meeting in Nuremberg. Drivers surged forward to try their hands at controlling this miniature Barry Sheene, Kenny Roberts – you take your choice since the kit comes with saddle tank names for Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki bikes. Ripmax is distributing in the UK and have to my delight sent me along a bike to make up and try out, and by the time this appears it should be in all the shops.

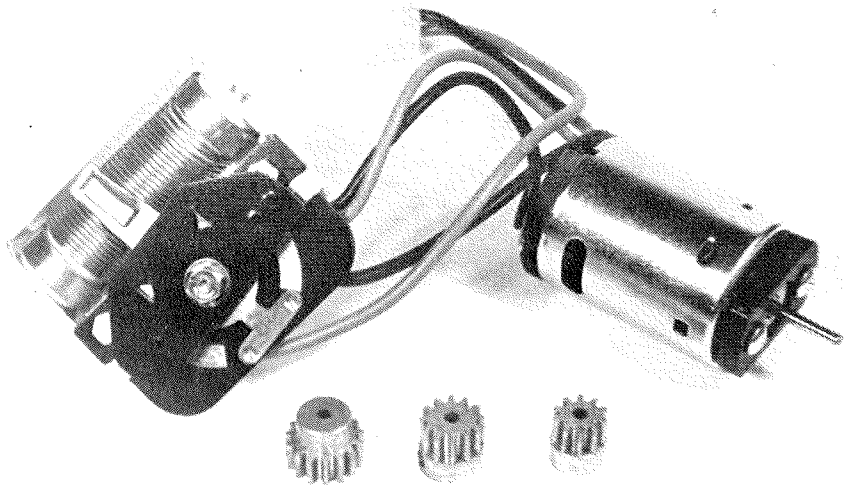
Graupner are the main agents for Europe and have prepared an excellent set of instructions in German plus a suitable translation in English: there are excellent line drawings to assist in assembly. As it comes in a moulded foam packing the rider is mounted and the main assembly complete. It looks as if all that is needed is to paint up the tank and fairing and you will be away.

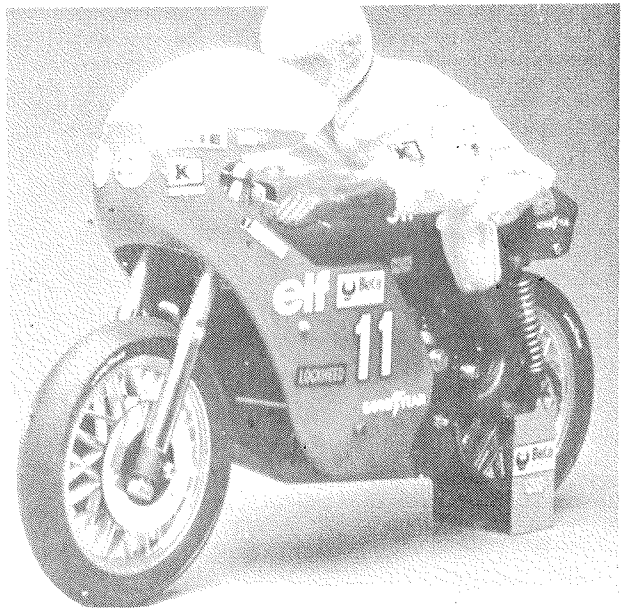
Speed controller and motor with the three sizes of gear for novice, average and expert!

It is not quite as easy as all that! Radio gear and motor must also be added, though before this is done a little thought should be given to the ultimate ready-to-run bike. If the instructions are followed exactly we finish with receiver tucked inside the rider, with the aerial fed out through the seat to the antenna; a battery pack (or nicad block) concealed in the tank, with the power pack under the frame. Steering servo sits beside the battery pack for rx and the speed control (resistor type) goes neatly round the motor. The motor is provided with a set of three gear alternatives. Advice given is start with the least hairy gear and work up to racing speed via the other two after some practice.

I should add that the power pack which is designed to fit exactly in place under the frame puts weight in a low c.g. position just where it can do the most good. Ripmax also sent me a quick charger which can be plugged into the cigarette lighter on the car to complete a very comprehensive packet. Connectors are all of the 12 amps continuous current positive locking type.

At first sight it looks as though the normal Futaba servos, battery etc will be too big to go in. Not a bit of it they just fit. The on-off switch is intended to go aft of the seat and the tank/seat moulding is cut out to take a switch. It is too small a cut-out for the standard Futaba harness and the choice is to make it bigger or visit the local electronics merchants to try and get a smaller one. Lazily I made mine that much bigger.

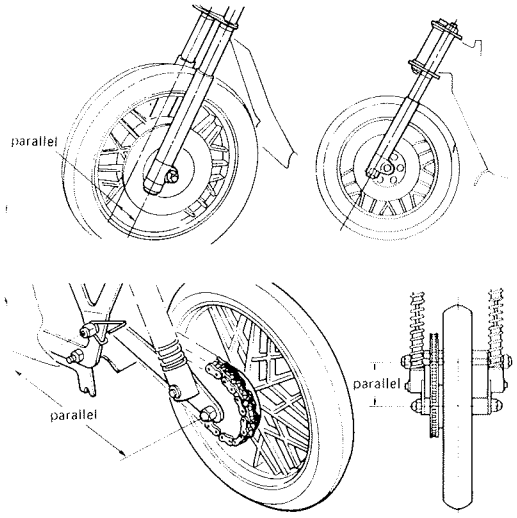




The bike assembled and r'aring to go!

However, would-be dicers who have seen the bike in action, especially those brought up on motorbikes, will be desirous of getting something extra in the way of performance. My first thoughts were that the designers had apportioned the weights deliberately and that any rearrangement might be less than satisfactory. But second thoughts plus discussion with such valuable advisers as Phil Booth convinced me that more and more weight should be lowered to produce a very nearly BMW bike weight distribution. This can be achieved by cutting out the Rx battery and feeding power from the motor battery with the usual blocking diodes or whatever method is favoured. The space occupied by the Rx battery can then be filled by putting the Rx in its place instead of in the driver's chest. With these modifications we can look into the question of operating our rider.

Sketches from the Instruction Book — emphasising the importance of parallel set up.



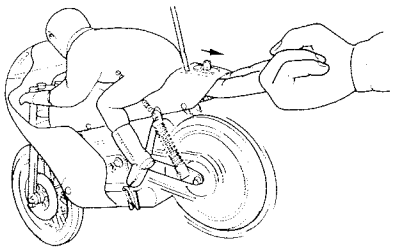
A lot of the instruction booklet is devoted to the matter of careful set up of the steering. However, since the bike is already assembled it is at this stage only necessary to see that the works assembly does indeed conform to the accuracy demanded. Mine did. The steering is really very ingenious in that it follows two wheel practice of a turn by weight change, that is your bike is leaned over just as in fullsize riding. A quick action servo good and robust is desirable to produce this lean, which in fact produces the turn, that is to say, the front wheel is free to turn without being pulled round as the front wheels of a car, it will follow the movement of the steering head as it is inclined.

For that reason you will note that the rider's gloved hands merely rest on thin wires and do not have anything to do with the steering. This has been deliberately shown in my photos – those on the box may suggest the rider plays a larger part than in fact he does for the sake of the real effect.

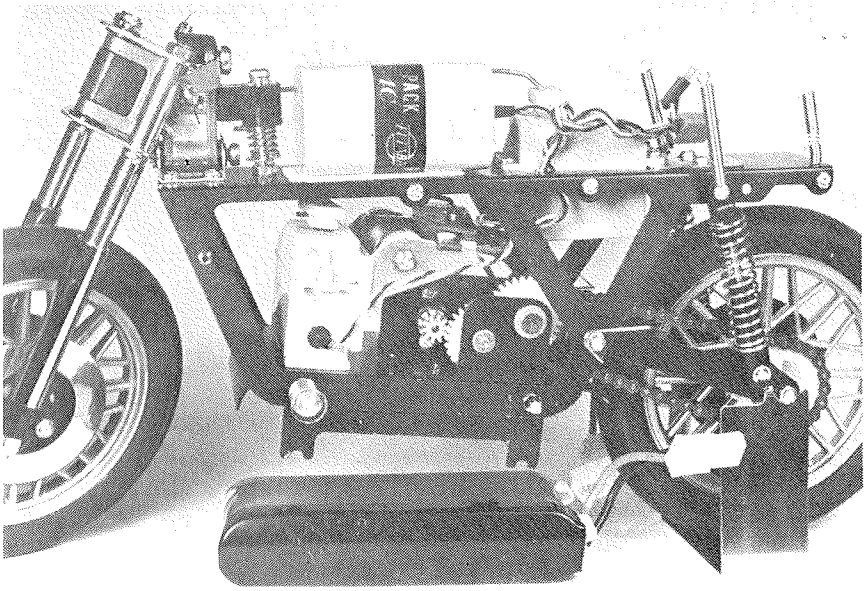
Do not expect to get footrest scraping turns! The most you can hope for is about a 45 deg. inclination from the upright. Not being on the seat there is no way of knowing just when you are going to lose it and there will be frequent lay downs in the initial stages. Ted Longshaw has fitted crash bars to his to protect the paintwork on the cowling!

By the way, although assembled, it is still necessary to glue on the tyres with the usual Evo-stik. Do not take the bike to pieces to do this, fiddle it with them still assembled. Tyres are smooth and likely to be very slidey on an indoor hall floor, so make the first practice runs on tarmac or similar good surface gripping base.

With a friend to hold the bike upright – a finger under the saddle – you can set off in a straight line. No problem. Now comes the turn. Ease off the throttle and steer into a widish bend, say about twenty foot radius as a start. The bike leans over beautifully, and you can give a little more throttle, straightening up so that you have made a wide half circle and are bringing the bike back. The turn can be reduced progressively, always giving throttle if lean-over gets too great. With practice it is sometimes possible to recover control when bike is almost on its side. Do not despair: it will take a few charges to get the hang of it, and then the fascination grows. When shall we see the first motorcycle race? What about it organisers – allow time in the lunch break for some brave souls to try their hands.



Another "works" sketch — the easy way to start the ride.



Parts in place — just room. Nicad pack hooks up below with elastic bands & gives low cg.