



DOUBLE DEALERS!

New to the Trade, faced with the task of introducing the British-produced Clark Scamp moped, R. T. Townson tells of his impressions of the retailers he has met.

Having recently had the task of visiting motorcycle and moped retailers through the length and breadth of England, your Editor has kindly allowed me to publish a few of the impressions I have gained.

Let me hasten to add that 'Double-' in the heading refers only to the number of wheels on the machines you sell, because my first impression, reinforced the further I travelled, was what a splendid bunch of people you are. Mind you, it is not easy to get this across in print for obvious reasons, so just let me assure you that this is meant to be a genuine tribute to all of you who have stayed with two wheels.

Before continuing, let me explain that my brief has been to find one service/sales outlet for our British moped (the Clark Scamp) in each average-sized town. In principle, I have used no trade lists or information from outside sources but have judged each town, and every dealer in each town, strictly on a local basis. I must acknowledge, with many thanks, the help given in the Manchester area by the N.A.C.T.'s local chairman, Eric Morgan, and the help which is on the way from another area officer in a different part of the country. With these two exceptions, however, I have 'gone it alone' and conducted an independent exercise.

Source of Information

In each town, as many sources of information as possible have been used to help form a judgement. It may surprise many of you to learn that you are well known to the local police! In point of fact, the police have been singularly helpful when approached for information and I owe them much thanks—their help might be due to the fact that many of them are ardent motorcyclists!

Returning now to my impressions of the Trade. Another pleasing fact to emerge was that there are, still, many family businesses in existence. From the experience of my own family, I know how difficult it is for father and son to work together yet in many cases I found this happening, seemingly happily and obviously successfully. In several cases even 'Grand-Dad' had started the business! All in all, though, it was good to see interest in two-wheelers transcending the minor irritations which can occur when members of the same family work together—and it was good also to see that family ties still mean something, whatever Doctor Leach may have said in the last Reith Lectures!

Yet another impression was that of the sheer enthusiasm for two-wheelers which put any other trade out of the question for you. Needless to say, I met famous riders, both active and retired, but I am rather thinking here of the less-than-famous who are still in the business because they love it. In surprisingly few cases was I told that there was not enough of a living left in two-wheelers, that a switch was being made to cars. In several cases, in larger towns, I found that the whole gamut of cars, three-wheelers and two-wheelers was being sold, yet the underlying enthusiasm was for two wheels and this seemed to motivate the whole business.

Downright Friendliness

My other major impression is that of not just courtesy but downright friendliness and willingness to help newcomers to the trade. After all, we at Clark's are well aware that we are a small company entering an area of high competition which is new to us. But whatever you really thought you were never negative, and you gave us the benefit of your considerable experience in a positive way. This obtained, not only for the one-man business but also for managing directors of some of the major companies in the trade.

Only once was I shown the door, yet on the other hand I also once enjoyed some 45 minutes of a busy managing director's time, an incident that would have compensated me for a great many rebuffs, especially as I saw him without an appointment.

To all of you, our sincere thanks for your help. We can think of no other trade in this country in which our reception would have been in any way comparable.

In conclusion, and in the light of the current 'Back Britain' campaign, I must add that the two-wheeler trade seems to have been running its own similar campaign for a long time! The response to our British moped has been almost 100 per cent enthusiastic and it is good to see that the trade is still prepared to give a new product every chance of proving itself simply because it is British.

To those of you I had the pleasure of meeting, let me say 'Thank you very much' for the way you received me on behalf of my company; to the many more I have yet to meet, let me add that I am indeed looking forward to the pleasure.