

## ROAD TEST REPORT

## The Three-Speed LEOPARD

### BOBBY 5

SINCE the introduction of the *Leopard* range of mo-peds to this country last year, the model known as the BOBBY 5 has been consistent favourite and it is this model that is further developed by the introduction of a three-speed gearbox.

The main specification of the machine remains similar to that of the earlier models and features a high degree of enclosure forming part of the main frame at the rear end with a cushion seat mounted directly on it instead of a conventional saddle. The rear chain is also totally enclosed and forms part of the swinging arm suspension system. Front forks are of the bottom link type and full width hub brakes are provided to both wheels which have 23in. x 2in. tyres. The finish of the new model is in two-tone grey and blue.

As far as the power unit itself is concerned there is no change in the *Sachs* 47 c.c. engine but the primary drive to the unit construction gearbox is now by gears instead of the chain as on former models (This change will also be made on the two speed unit in the BOBBY 6). The three-speed gearbox looks out-

wardly the same as the two-speeder and is similarly controlled from the left hand twistgrip.

#### On The Road

The immediate effect of the three-speed gearbox is to make getaway from standstill quicker and easier. First gear is low and the change up to Second is made within twenty yards, but the change is very fast and positive and the overall acceleration through the gears is very good compared with the two-speed *Sachs*-engined machines we have tested. The flexibility of the engine itself enables Top to be used from 6 m.p.h. upwards if in no hurry or alternatively the speed may be taken up to 20 m.p.h. in Second and then the engagement of Top brings in a fresh surge of speed that keeps the *Leopard* a leap ahead of most pursuers.

An idea of the value of this performance may be gained from the fact that during the course of the test a round trip of twenty miles was taken in exactly one hour through heavy traffic from the centre of the City to the outer suburbs and back, a feat that no car could have

accomplished under these conditions.

Steering and roadholding are well up to the performance of the engine and the rider was safe and happy at all speeds up to downhill swoops at 40 m.p.h. Maximum speed was around 30 m.p.h. mean but any favourable grade took this up and the advantage of the slightly higher Top gear was felt in the smoothness of the engine when over-revved in this way. The general feel of the unit is much smoother than the comparable two-speeder and there is also an improvement in mechanical silence but both these characteristics may in part be due to the new gear primary drive rather than the extra gear ratio.

Suspension is good and the ride comfortable at all speeds and even on poor surfaces, but the brakes, though adequate, would not lock their wheels and a little more stopping power would have been appreciated when the performance of the machine was being used to the full.

Overall, hill-climbing ability is not much affected, although the extreme limit of gradient that can be climbed with a given load in bottom gear must be somewhat extended. The intermediate gear does, however, permit much faster climbing of gradients around 1 in 15. Climbing is certainly much quieter and therefore pleasanter for having the right ratio for the job in hand.

#### Summing Up

The real effect of the 3-speed gearbox is not so much what the new gear ratio in the middle does as the fact that its presence enables a slightly lower Low and slightly higher High gear to be used. The results of this in practice are quicker getaway from standstill, slightly higher maximum speed under favourable conditions, smoother cruising and probably slightly improved economy on long straight runs.

Control is in no way complicated and it is doubtful actually whether there is any more gear changing done on a normal run than with a two-speed box. It cannot be claimed that the extra gear is a necessity by any means, as modern mo-peds do their designed job most efficiently, but it is a worth while luxury for those prepared to pay for a little extra in performance and comfort.

Apart from the number of gear ratios provided, the BOBBY 5 is a well balanced and attractive looking mo-ped without vices. The built-in cushion seat is, of course, non-adjustable so that the machine cannot be ideally comfortable on long runs for people much above or below medium height but for any average sized rider it represents good value for all round work and pleasure riding.

