



ROAD TEST REPORT:

A sound machine - the JAMES 150 c.c. scooter

SEVERAL British motorcycle firms have had a try at making scooters but few have really produced a machine that comes anywhere near the basic requirements of one. Among the successful few are James Motorcycles, Ltd. who have been steadily turning out a very efficient and sensibly designed scooter for some time. It has unrivalled locker capacity and a design with built-in safety.

Only one model is produced, powered by a Villiers-built AMC 150 c.c. engine. This two-stroke has a bore of 55 mm. and 62.69 mm. stroke, and it drives through a three-speed gear box. Gear ratios are 15.1, 8.58, and 5.84 to 1 respectively, and they are controlled by two toe-operated pedals.

The scooter is built on a big tubular frame which forms the outside edges of the legshields and footboards (built-in crash-bars, if you like) and makes a box shape at the rear. Due to the horizontal position of the engine under the footboards, this box space has been used for an exceptionally large luggage compartment, with petrol tank behind, above the rear wheel.

Both wheels are carried on swinging forks, the front being a leading link swinging arm with coil spring and damper. At the rear there is a telescopic damper on each side. The wheels are perforated disc-type, with 12 x 3.5-inch tyres and 5-inch brakes.

Starting and Cruising

When it came to starting the engine, the *James* was not always first time. After clocking 1,000 miles, we

found starting very hesitant, despite a new plug. It was handy to operate the carburettor tickler with the foot—it protrudes through a hole in the footboards. Two toe pedals operate the gears, one lying slightly behind the other and to one side, and are set conveniently and proved positive and effective though needing a firm pressure to engage.

First gear is not low and some crafty clutch work was needed to get away up really steep hills, even with only one up. One should bear in mind, of course, that there are only three gears, but even so we had the feeling on other occasions that the engine was working rather hard. Pulling away from standstill with one rider was fairly quick, but with two up not as rapid as might be expected.

Road Holding and Comfort

Second gear was useful, doing much of the work in heavy traffic and for cornering. Third took the *James* up to its maximum a fraction over 50 m.p.h., though normal cruising (with windscreens) was between 40 and 45 m.p.h.

A word here in praise of the silence of transmission parts and exhaust would not come amiss. That far too familiar rattling and rustling from gear and chains found on many motorcycle-descended scooters just does not exist on the *James*. Also absent is the engine shake and vibration—probably reduced by the horizontal position of the motor.

Where this scooter really comes into its own is in handling and com-

fort. Designed for maximum road-holding, it is the happiest blend between motorcycle stability and scooter comfort we have come across.

The large wheels enable a rider to brake more fiercely and corner faster than normally expected for a scooter, while comparatively high footboards allow the bike to be banked right over on corners.

The road-holding qualities were reflected in the braking, which was rapid and safe every time. Front wheel braking was smooth and fast thanks, no doubt, to the leading link suspension. We tested the front suspension on one occasion by riding up a kerb and were surprised to find the handlebars just rising up and carrying on, instead of a frame-jarring jolt.

Comfort doesn't end with suspension, and the seat and footroom of the *James* are spacious and convenient. Although pedals restricted the driver's footspace somewhat, it was comfortable to put knees together and rest the feet on the engine cover. The snub-fronted seat added to the convenience of this position.

Checking and Changing

When it comes to servicing, the common sense of the design does not let you down. Plug changing can be done simply by turning the front wheel slightly to one side and working from the front of the machine. Further engine access can be had by taking off the cover on the footboards or by lying the bike on its side.

The semi-circular body sections on

each side of the rear wheel lift off when a retaining clip is released and the remaining bodywork can be unscrewed in pieces for replacement or servicing as needed.

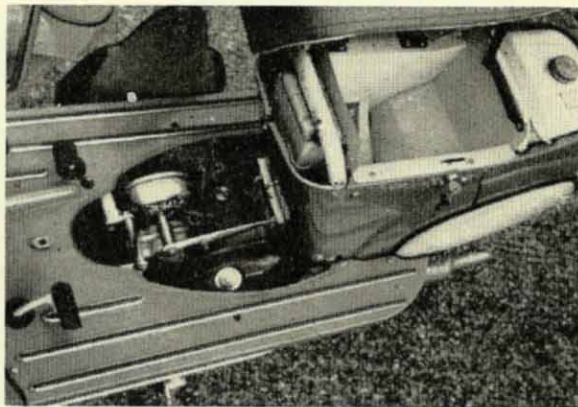
Among the small items we liked were the soft, finned handlebar grips, the well-placed audible hooter and the wide easily-operated stand. The lighting was fair, but we regretted the need to stop to turn the petrol tap to reserve. The tap is fitted low-down at the rear of the bodywork. The main lighting switch, too, was somewhat inaccessible, but the lever choke control and legshield cubbyholes were most convenient.

All told, the *James* is a most practical vehicle built not for gimmicks and good looks (though these latter are not forgotten) but to suit someone who wants a bike that will work hard, carry him, his luggage and passengers properly and comfortably, and will be safe to ride in all weathers and conditions.

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: Two-stroke single, bore 55 mm. x stroke 62.69 mm., capacity, 149 c.c. Compression ratio, 7 to 1. Amal carburettor.

When the engine panel (top left) is removed most of the engine can be reached. The raised saddle gives access to battery, luggage box and petrol tank



TRANSMISSION: 3 speed gearbox, overall ratios 15.1, 8.58 and 5.84 to 1. Chain primary drive to multi-plate clutch with fully enclosed chain final drive.

FRAME: Tubular steel duplex, meeting edges of legshields and footboards and through rear end, carrying detachable steel body panels.

1½ gallon fuel tank with reserve, side-hinged dualseat covering fuel cap and luggage space, with lock.

SUSPENSION: Front by leading link with coil spring and damper inside

mudguard, rear by swinging fork and two damper units.

WHEELS: 12 x 3.5 inch tyres on well-based perforated discs, with 5 inch brakes.

ELECTRICS: 6-volt battery, Wipac flywheel magneto. Circuit includes horn, main and dipped headlamp beams, rear, stop and parking lights.

WEIGHT: 270 lbs.

PRICE: £152 16s. 1d.

MAKERS: James Motorcycles Ltd., Tomey Rd., Greet, Birmingham 11.

FLASHES

Service Courses

Wesley Evening Institute, Wesley Road, Stonebridge, N.W.10 will be holding scooter and minicar maintenance courses as from January 8th. There will be arrangements for experienced riders and special classes for newcomers. An experienced staff is available to help students at all stages.

Newcomers, Mondays and Fridays.

More advanced, Thursday.

Minicars, Wednesday.

All classes run from 7.30-9.30 p.m. FEES: 20/- for one evening weekly per 2 terms to July 13th, 1962.

25/- for two evenings weekly per session.

L.C.C. residents are now admitted at the same fee as Middlesex Residents. The same applies to Essex, Kent, Herts, and Surrey.

The Institute is situated about 800 yards on the East (Londonwards) Side of the North Circular Road.

Enrol by post to:—

“Jeanville”, Brighton Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey.

Several Clubs have had special facilities at the Institute. Secretaries of Scooter Clubs (any type of machine) interested in the Courses, should write as soon as possible to the above address.

Kart price cuts

Under a scheme designed to make a go-kart within the reach of every family, a stub axle chassis kit suitable for one engine is now available at only £20. Live axle kart kits cost £22.10.0d. This offer is made by Trokarts of Croydon (at Trojan Works, Purley Way).

A stub axle kit for twin engines costs only a little more at £21.10.0d. and for live axle £22.10.0d.

Trokart *Tiger Single* A.490 kits, including engine, can be purchased for £25.10.0d. for the stub axle models and £27.10.0d. for live axle.

A twin-engined Trokart *Tiger* now costs £31.10.0d. complete with engines for the stub axle model and £34 for live axle.

“We believe this offer will give an even greater impetus to the very rapid growth of karting in this country,” commented Mr. David McMullan, Sales Executive of the Trokart division of the Lambretta/Trojan Group of Companies. “Young people everywhere will now have the opportunity of owning their own karts and competing at kart meetings held every week-end throughout the country.”

Prices are net ex-Works, with carriage and packing £2.2. extra (U.K. only).

TWO BOOK REVIEWS

Scooter Tyres. (Free on application) Pirelli, Ltd. 343-345 Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

AN illustrated booklet on tyres, what they do and how inflation pressures and maintenance influence their performance. Well worth reading and discussing. Bulk supplies are available to club secretaries.

How to get the Most Out of Your Scooter Tyres (Free on application) The Avon India Rubber Company, Ltd. Melksham. Wilts.

FACTS and figures, including a very useful load and pressure table for setting the tyres to the job in the best possible conditions. Fitting and removal instructions for both split and wheel-base rims are a valuable contribution as is an eight-point section on tyres for motorways.

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