

# THE JAMES

## 150 c.c.

Lowest priced full-size scooter  
now with four gears

**O**NE of the difficulties of road-testing is the unavoidable fact that each machine is an individual and the results of a test on one may be entirely different to those on an identical machine of the same make (this is one of the reasons why *P&P* road tests don't include minutely calculated data regarding speed, performance, consumption etc.).

The situation arose when we recently took out another *James* scooter, first road tested in January last year. Since then the price has been cut dramatically (the bike is now the cheapest 150 c.c. scooter by far, and £6 less than the cheapest 125 c.c.) and the machine has been given a 4 speed gear box.

The first machine, we commented, was difficult to start yet was free from vibration. Broadly speaking, this latest machine is almost the opposite on these two points, though retaining the many other good qualities.

Only difference in the four-speed model is, of course, the gears, which have these ratios: 1 to 17.8, 10.8, 7.72, and 6.08. Compare them with 1 to 15.1, 8.58 and 5.84 on the three-speed version. Lay-out and construction of the new model is identical to the earlier one, including the horizontal forward-pointing 149 c.c. two-stroke engine.

It is slung just under the high footboards, giving very low weight distribution well within the wheelbase.

Both primary and final drive are by chain, the former running in oil, the latter partially enclosed.

Tubular frame of this scooter is a break from the conventional single-tube backbone, as the frame forms a loop around the entire edge of the footboard and legshields. A box-shaped framework at the back carries

the rear swinging forks and two sturdy suspension units.

This accent on strength and simplicity is continued in the steering column support and front suspension.

Bodywork consists of various panels secured by bolts or self-tapping screws and is easily removable. On the legshield frame loop there is a metal skin in front and behind, forming at the top pockets suitable for gloves, maps etc. The large space beneath the dualseat, occupied by the engine on conventional scooters, has been used to accommodate the battery and an un-

usually large luggage box. Access to these and the petrol cap is gained by lifting the seat which can be locked down. Petrol is carried in a tank occupying the 'tail' of the bike, with the tap protruding from the bodywork low down at the rear.

Control lay-out is straightforward, except that gears are changed by two pedals, one slightly to the rear and left of the other. Access to the engine is from underneath or through a detachable panel in the footboards.

Motorcycle influence in the *James* is shown by the 12 inch wheels and

*The Tower of London formed a striking contrast with the modern James scooter*





almost even weight distribution (only 55 per cent on the rear wheel).

### Easy Starter

One good lunge on the large, well-placed starting pedal spun the engine of the test machine easily, and was usually enough to cause a firing stroke. Quick starting was facilitated by a lever choke control and a petrol tickler easily operated by the foot. We were amazed that the scooter started second kick after being buried in deep snow.

At rest the *James* is supported by a wide, curved-end stand, operated from either side. In normal conditions the machine can be ridden straight off the stand.

Essentially a tough, hard-worker, this scooter justifies the lower first gear which enables it, we proved, to cope with even the heaviest going two-up. Second and third did most town work up to about 30 m.p.h., though the engine needed a fair amount of revs to give its best and frequent gear changes were necessary in traffic.

Top gear, which is, surprisingly,

lower than that of the 3-speed model, was happiest between 25 and 35 m.p.h. after which test riders felt a need to change up.

However, the vibration period eased off as the road speeds went up and at speeds above 40 m.p.h. the power unit became comparatively smooth. We believe that the actual test machine was a bad specimen in this respect as our previous experiences with the *James* led us to praise it for freedom from vibration.

Transmission fuss was not to blame, indeed, as we found before, the gear changes and chain drives were remarkably smooth and quiet for a scooter with such a strong motorcycle background.

Both gear pedals were well placed and responded to a firm pressure from the toe. Never were we left in that unwanted neutral between gears when making rapid changes.

### Confident ride

All the reports of the *James* scooter praise its handling and road holding, and it is praise well earned. You sit at ease on the broad saddle and the

controls fall easily to hand (or foot). The wheels will follow a chosen course confidently, even on the slushy roads we experienced during the test.

Really excellent suspension and large wheels iron out all road shocks, giving a comfortable ride and assisting the handling. Two six-inch brakes provided good braking to match the road holding of which the bike is capable.

Looking at the smaller points, we found the horn gave a sensible note, though the headlight beam was not as good as some. The rear light is large and prominent, blending in with the neat, simple lines of the bodywork—this bike is delightfully easy to clean. Large locker and two legshield pockets are practical points in the *James* favour, as are the easily accessible engine and rear wheel (panels on each side of the wheel unclip).

It seems that the changes to the *James* have been, in the main, to its favour—the amazing drop in price leaving little doubt about the matter. Here is a machine that will work hard and take a deal of knocking about, offer very safe handling and prove easy to maintain.

## Specification

### Engine:

A.M.C. horizontal single-cylinder 149 c.c. two-stroke; bore 55 mm., stroke 62.69 mm.; compression ratio 7:1.

### Transmission:

Three speed gearbox controlled by two toe-pedals; ratios 1:17.8, 10.8, 7.72, and 6.08. Multi-plate clutch, chain primary and final drives.

### Electrics:

6v. 30 w. generator feeding ignition coils and lighting circuit; circuits include headlamp, battery, horn, brake light and switch clusters.

### Bodywork:

Frame of tubular steel round rim of legshields (acting as crash bars) with tubular structure at rear; detachable steel panelling attached to this; 1½ gallon fuel tank, dual-seat, lockable luggage compartment. full-width stand all included.

### Wheels & brakes:

12 inch perforated disc wheels with 3.5 inch tyres; 6 inch diameter brakes front and rear.

### Suspension:

Leading link front suspension with coil spring and hydraulic damper concealed inside mudguard; rear suspension by swinging fork with twin dampers.

### Dimensions:

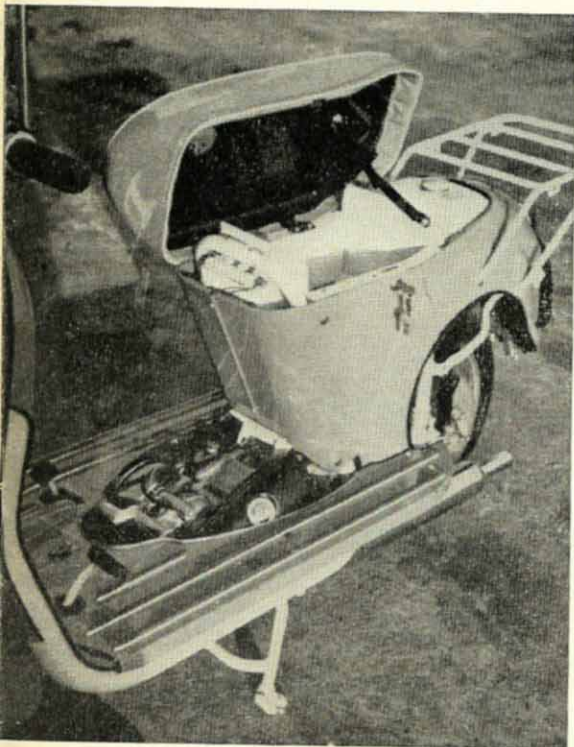
Length, 72 ins. width, 26½ ins. height, 39½ ins. (seat height, 30 ins.) wheel-base, 48½ ins. weight 270 lbs.

### Price:

£129 12s. 0d.

### Manufacturers:

James Motorcycles Ltd., Britannia Works, Handsworth, Birmingham 21.





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