

A  
Quiet  
handsome  
Italian

Something new  
in mo-peds



## The Lambretta "48"

THE announcement last year that a new mo-ped appeared in Italy under the famous name of *Lambretta* at once created a lively interest. The success of the scooter prepared the way for ready acceptance of the new machine and it became immediately popular in its country of origin. Now it is on the British market and there is little doubt that it will gain a strong following here very quickly.

In appearance the *Lambretta* "48", as it is known, is unusual. The single beam frame has a straight member from steering head to engine bearers in pressed and welded steel with the seat tube and the forward half of the rear mudguard in a single unit. Front forks follow the same design and match exactly; bottom link front suspensions are incorporated. Rear springing is by telescopic tubular units controlling the move-

ment of a swinging arm rear fork assembly. Helical springs are used at both ends and completely enclosed.

Both wheels are shod with 2in. tyres and fitted with large internal expanding brakes. The fuel tank holds just over 5-pints and is situated under the saddle. Nose hinged saddle, built-on carrier and dipping headlamp are standard fittings. A notable feature is that the wheels are of the knock-out spindle, quick release type.

The power unit is of the over-square type with a bore and stroke of 40mm. x 38mm. giving 48 c.c., in unit with a handlebar operated 2-speed gearbox. The totally enclosed flywheel magneto has incorporated lighting coils but the high tension ignition coil is externally fitted high up above the engine. A roller bearing big end is provided, with ball bearing mains and the

single plate clutch runs in oil.

The unusually shaped silencer is fitted well back in the system and silencing is completed by ducting the air intake through an air filter inside the frame. A small push/pull button control on the offside of the crankcase enables the pedal gear to be operated free of the clutch and layshaft assembly in emergency.

### Remarkable Manners

A decompressor lever is fitted to the left handlebar but was used for stopping the engine only during the test. A light pressure on either pedal with the gear control in neutral would start the engine at any time and provide evidence of the first of this machine's surprising qualities—Silence.

Instead of a roar followed by the usual spit and bang of a two-stroke

engine running light, the effect of starting is to produce a low and barely audible purr. Almost instinctively one opens the throttle sharply to make sure that the engine is really running; it can then be heard but is still almost unbelievably quiet. The makers claim that the maximum noise it can be induced to turn out, even when over-revving in neutral, is 80 phons and this figure is a long way below any two-stroke single we have ever met.

There is no violence in the get-away; the clutch takes up the drive smoothly and the machine moves off to surprise the rider again by attaining very high revs quite quickly and being able to travel at around 20 m.p.h. in bottom gear without fuss, still quietly and with engine vibration barely felt. Alternatively, top gear can be engaged at walking pace and the throttle opened without any juggling to take the machine away smoothly and silently.

This ability to rev mightily without fuss is one of the *Lambretta's* most endearing characteristics. It enabled the mean maximum speed of just over 30 m.p.h. to be reached and held quickly and comfortably, making full use of the engine's 1.7 b.h.p. maximum power output and it also allowed the throttle to be kept open on downhill swoops up to 40 m.p.h. Even at this speed the unit stayed smooth and silent and there was none of that hectic feeling that usually accompanies over-revving on small engined machines.

Hill climbing proved slightly different from that of other contemporary machines in that there was less sheer pull at low revs but that this is compensated for by the ample power and fuss-free high revs in 1st. gear. In practice this meant that a change down could be made fairly early in a climb, then a build-up of speed in 1st gear enabled a change up to be made when the gradient eased a trifle. Again it is the remarkable standard of silence, both exhaust

and mechanical, that makes the maximum use of the performance pleasurable as well as efficient.

Both handlebars and saddle are adjustable for height and tall riders can be accommodated in comfort. The suspensions were designed to take the roughest of roads and really bad going can be taken without reducing the normal cruising speed. Brakes on both wheels are smooth and efficient,



that on the rear wheel, back pedal operated, being a very good and easy to use stopper indeed. Steering is of the hands-off-at-any-speed variety and narrow circles, stop and restarts and similar manoeuvrability tests were made comfortably with the feet firmly on the pedals.

In criticism we are frankly baffled as to how such an incredibly bad stand came to be fitted to so excellent a machine. The thing is made of bent wire and will just support the machine on a dead flat surface where it wobbles like a jelly on a plate. Apart from that there are two milder ones; that the speedometer (an optional extra) is fitted too low down to be read comfortably and the metal toolbox is small and awkward to get at.

#### New Standards

In summing up our impressions of this machine we have to say at once that its completely new standards of silencing and engine

smoothness put it into a class by itself. The *Lambretta* "48" looks different and is different and does not compete with its German rivals so much as form a new market.

The appearance of the machine alone gives rise to varied expressions of opinion, some people admiring the slimness of line and "open" look while others condemned it as "bitty" and deplored the lack of enclosure. These are matters of taste, of course, and have nothing to do with the technical quality and design features of the machine.

The Italian engineers have established a fine reputation for themselves in this field and the *Lambretta* "48" reflects this quality in material and workmanship. Some slight roughness here and there in detail finish do no more than bring an appreciation of the high value for money ratio offered. This machine is the cheapest mo-ped of similar specification now available.

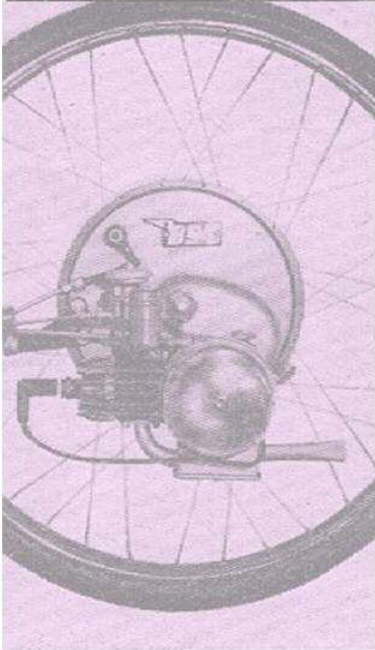
This new mo-ped is a pleasure to handle, of good performance and tough and strong into the bargain. It will have a very wide appeal for its own sake and has the additional selling point of being backed by the first class *Lambretta* service that has already been established in the scooter field.

#### Specification

**Lambretta engine, bore and stroke 40 mm. x 38 mm., 47.75 c.c. Flywheel generator / magneto with external H.T. ignition coil. Nickel iron cylinder, light alloy head and piston. Big end roller and mains ball bearings. Single plate clutch in oil, 2-speed gearbox with gear primary drive.**

**Pressed steel girder frame with welded up seat tube, bracket and rear assembly. Leading link front and swinging arm rear sprung suspensions. 2-inch tyres, internal expanding brakes, 6-volt/15-watt lighting. Lambretta Concessionaires, Ltd. 424-6, Kingston Road, Raynes Park, S.W.20. Price: £71.17.6**

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