

Road Testing . . .

THE NORMAN NIPPY MARK THREE

LATE in 1959, Norman Cycles Ltd., announced their 1960 range and with this announcement came news of an addition to the range—the Nippy Mark Three, the first single-speeder to be produced by this Ashford firm. I had previously seen the new Nippys only in photograph form and when I went to collect my road test Mark Three, I became convinced of one thing before I even sat on the saddle. This moped will be a strong competitor in the single-speed concours d'elegance. Later as I familiarized myself with it on South London roads it was apparent that many other people thought so too, for at every hold-up in the traffic the Norman was the object of inquiring and appreciative glances.

The fundamentals of the design, centre around an ingeniously-styled plastic cowl which makes headlamp and forks seem integral, a tank which is incorporated in the frame, boxed-in handlebars and a pan saddle. The cantilever front forks with their graceful streamlined shrouds covering the springing device, also contribute to the pleasant styling.

But what about the moped itself? The first thing that struck me by its eagerness was the rear brake. This is operated by a back-peddalling device and after my first genuine braking effort on the road test, I regarded it with great caution. Only a little back pressure was needed to lock the brake solid. Usually the back brake figures are not as good as the front, but in this case the reverse was true. In fact for my first run, the front wheel landed on exactly the same spot as it had for the front brake. Later I surprised myself by being able to reduce this distance by two or three feet. And this does not mean that the front brake is defective. The figures themselves testify to its efficiency.

While riding the Nippy I did experience some trouble with the dimensions between the handlebar and saddle. As I was in a hurry at the time I examined the saddle and decided that it would only adjust for angle and not for height. Later I discovered that the saddle will move backwards on the horizontal bar on which it is located and also the handlebars can be raised just over two inches. I retract a criticism I was going to make about the smallness of this moped.

The maximum speed is a couple of miles per hour less than most but this does not mean that the Nippy is necessarily a laggard. I ought to point out that although I specify rider's weight as 220lb., there are days when it is heavier. In winter, moped testing is a cold job and I bundle myself to keep out the bitter weather. During my familiarization, the Nippy chortled away quite happily at a speed that was only just below its maximum despite the extra weight.

Once again normal performance proved deceptive when it came to hill-climbing. Throughout my utility riding it had cheerfully tackled all the hills I had put it to. Faced with the steep twisting test hill the revs. began to drop and I had to use the pedals. I was rather surprised since nothing else had balked it before, and, more important, it possessed the ability to take me away from a pedal-less



A newcomer to the Ashford company's range
is examined by Centaur

standing start without any protest. I would have welcomed the opportunity of testing it with a lighter person at the time for it seemed beforehand that it would have climbed the hill carrying a normal weight. But I happened to be alone and my curiosity remained unsatisfied.

Seating Factor

I am determined to include in every road test report details of the seating arrangements as I believe this to be an exceedingly important factor especially if long runs are envisaged. As can be seen from the illustration the Nippy is equipped with an excellent wide rubber saddle which is well-sprung and comfortably contoured.

The decorative fairing at the bottom of the front forks does not hide shoddy workmanship. The cantilever action is not at all

"soggy" and gives perfect "tramline" riding. Quite honestly I did not find the lack of any rear springing particularly noticeable. The saddle took care of most of the jolts from the rear.

One point I would like to emphasize, is the tool-bag. For the sake of neatness in design many mopeds have tool containers located on the frame, either in canister or "cup-board" form. These are perfectly all right if no thought is needed when the tools are replaced. But when planning has to be done to get the tools to lie flat, they become a bit of a nuisance. The Nippy is provided with a saddlebag which will hold a good many tools before planning becomes necessary.

In short the Nippy is an eye-catching welcome addition to the Norman range. In its present bright red finery (it can also be bought in black) it should be seen on the road in ever-increasing numbers in the future.

Performance

Maximum Speed:
Flying 1/10th mile, 27 m.p.h.
Standing 1/10th mile, 17 m.p.h.

Acceleration:
0-10 m.p.h., 5½ secs. 0-20 m.p.h., 16½ secs.

Economy:
At 20 m.p.h., 151 m.p.g.

Hill-climbing:
Time for hill: 2 min. 27 secs.
Pedal assistance from 0.3 miles.
Test hill 0.5 miles long; max. gradient 1 in 10;
average gradient 1 in 16.

Braking	Front	Rear	Both
At 20 m.p.h.	22ft.	19½ft.	15ft.

Peddalling:
Maximum pedalling speed: 14 m.p.h.
Comfortable pedalling speed: 8 m.p.h.
Tester's rating: Fair.

Tester's weight: 220lb.

Specification

Engine: Mi-val two-stroke; 38 mm. bore x 42 mm. stroke=48 c.c.; c.r. 6.5 to 1; 1.5 b.h.p. at 5,700 r.p.m.

Gearbox: Single speed in unit with engine; chain drive, final and primary; pedal starting.

Frame: Made up from steel pressings; cantilever front suspension, rigid rear end.

Tank: 1½ gal.

Lights: Head and tail lamps fed direct from flywheel magneto generator.

Wheels and brakes: Both brakes 4in. diameter internally expanding in full-width hubs; chromium-plated rims; 23 x 2.00in. Dunlop tyres

Equipment: Tyre pump; tool kit and bag; horn; luggage carrier; centre stand.

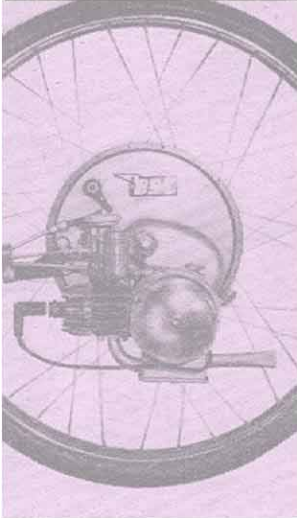
Finish: Red or black.

Weight: 102lb.

Makers: Norman Cycles Ltd., Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent.

Price: £56 14s.; speedometer £2 8s.; windscreen, £2. 10s. 9d.; legshields, £2 2s. 6d. All prices incl. P.T.

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