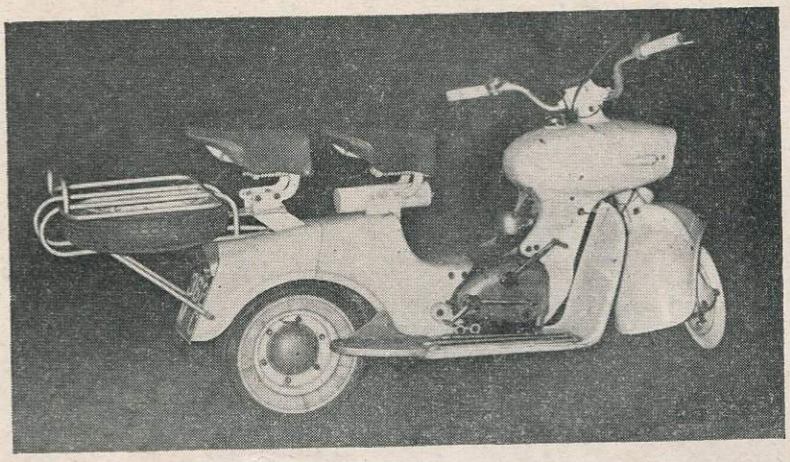
A UNIQUE SCOOTER

125 c.c. Twin cylinder

RUMI "Little Ant"



IN appearance, specification and performance the 125 c.c. *Rumi* scooter differs radically from everything else on the market at the moment. Some of its features, such as the forward mounting of the power unit, are straight motorcycle practice while the small wheels are definitely scooter. The semi-open frame is something of each, as are the footboards and built-in legshields but the whole makes a compact machine as interesting in performance as in technical detail.

The first and most important unique feature is the engine which is a parallel twin cylinder two-stroke of 125 c.c. The claimed horsepower output is 6½ at 6000 r.p.m. but we found that this was not the maximum either of the power or the revs in actual running. The cylinders lie heads forward almost horizontally and the single *Dell 'Orto* carburettor feeds downdraught through a "Y" section manifold. The exhaust pipes lead into a common silencer with a built-in baffle system under the crankcase.

Separate barrels and heads are employed for each cylinder, held by long through bolts to the crank case. Separate H.T. coils are also employed for the ignition on current supplied by the A.C. flywheel generator. Primary drive is through a multi-plate clutch mounted on the right hand end of the crankshaft and by pinion gears. The secondary is by ½in. x $\frac{5}{16}$in. chain totally enclosed in the alloy chaincase that forms one side of the swinging arm rear suspension. Rather unusual is the system of lubrication for the mainbearings by oil channelled from the gearbox. Piston and big end lubrication is by petroil.

In unit with the crankcase, the four-speed gearbox is controlled by rocking pedals on the right footboard. Front suspension is through bottom link tubular forks using enclosed coil springs and the rear by swinging arm on rubber. Wheels are of the split rim type 8in. x 4in.

There is no frame as such. The machine is structurally based on a group of light alloy castings forming a rigid shell that carries all the working parts within it.

The Threepenny Bit Test

Perhaps we only half believed the story; anyway we tried it out as a first part of the test.

The engine was started with the *Rumi* on the stand and an ordinary nickel-brass threepenny bit stood on edge on the polished aluminium top of the crankcase. Then the throttle was opened steadily until the engine screamed, then cut back sharply, *and the threepenny bit continued to stand on its edge.* We tried it several times and it always worked and this test makes it fair to state that the *Rumi* is the smoothest thing in power units we have ever known. Its performance on the road bore out this test result on the stand and the experience of riding this machine was really something new.

The gear change is very fast, a quick stamp on the pedal and a simultaneous flick at the clutch lever taking the merest fraction of a second from gear to gear. The revs mount rapidly and the getaway left everything on four wheels and most things on two well behind. This on a 125 c.c. machine is itself remarkable and it gave considerable pleasure in actual riding.

Over-revving does not appear to worry the unit in the least. The mean maximum was in the neighbourhood of 55 m.p.h. but speeds of well over 60 m.p.h. were reached on favourable grades several times during the test, still without vibration. Not only the engine but the steering and roadholding were also well up to this performance.

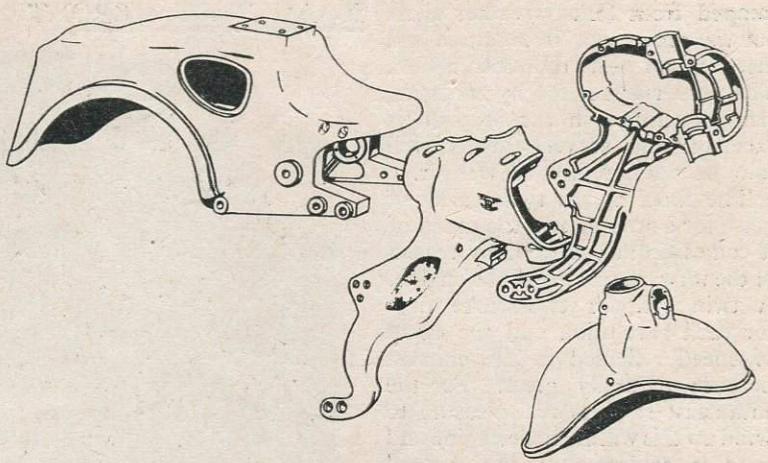
The use of small wheels on relatively high speed scooters has been the subject of much dispute but little factual evidence. The main trouble is that comparisons are inevitably made with motorcycles, experienced riders of which have preconceived ideas about what constitutes good steering. We can only say that the *Rumi* did not behave like a motor cycle on bends and corners at speed but it did feel like one of the most stable two-wheelers ever. It did not go round

" on its own " but it did try to stand upright by itself so that one felt it was possible to walk about on the footboards in safety. This self-righting tendency takes some getting used to but it is an excellent trait in a good scooter.

Naturally such a small unit calls for plenty of use of the gearbox for the maintenance of fast averages but both engine and box on the *Rumi* invite this kind of treatment and thrive on it. Third gear produces an honest 40 m.p.h. with acceleration in the middle part of the rev range that is better than anything outside the genuine sports class. Passing other traffic on busy main roads is easy and safe while main road hills could be rushed in Top or swept up in Third with equal ease.

Conversely, it was possible to amble around quite comfortably at 15 m.p.h. in Top without noise or transmission snatch, but a lively getaway from that speed was best effected by a double change down and a good wind up in Second and Third.

The recommended tyre pressures of 22 p.s.i. front and rear proved too high to obtain the best roadholding and we found that 17 lbs. front and 20 lbs. rear suited better with a heavyish rider up. With these settings, the roadholding and comfort are very good indeed. Travel on the bottom link un-



Neither frame nor chassis, the Rumi is built into these light alloy castings to form a single rigid unit.

The RUMI
LITTLE ANT

125 c.c.

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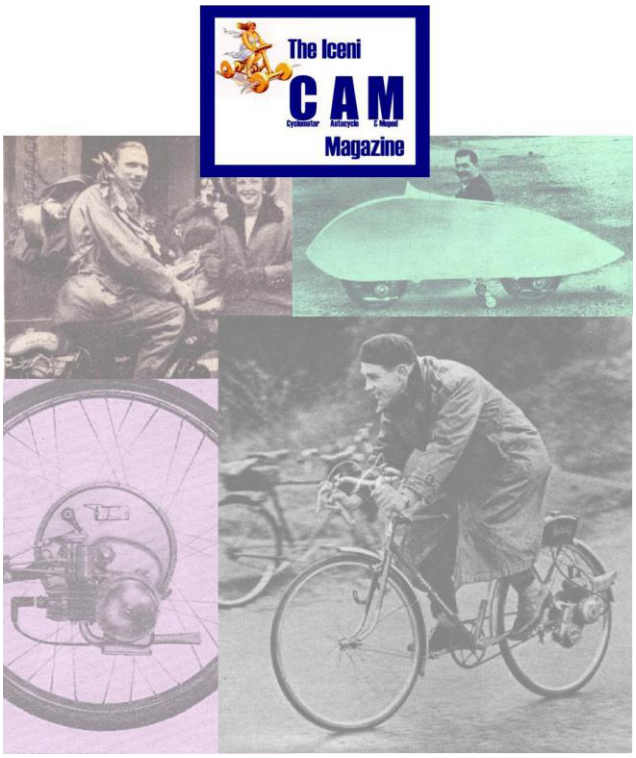

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