

ROAD IMPRESSIONS OF NEW MODELS

James 149 cc SC4 scooter



specification

ENGINE: AMC-Villiers 149 cc (55 x 62mm) two-stroke. Compression ratio, 7 to 1.

IGNITION and LIGHTING: Wipac flywheel magneto with direct-lighting coils for head and tail lamps. Battery (for horn and stop lamp) charged through rectifier.

TRANSMISSION: Villiers four-speed gear box with racking-pedal control. Ratios: top, 6.08; third, 7.71; second, 10.81; bottom, 17.86 to 1. Primary and final drives by chain.

CONSTRUCTION: Tubular frame with pressed-steel bodywork. Pivoted front fork controlled by single tension spring and separate damper. Pivoted rear fork with two spring-and-hydraulic units. Seat and steering-head locks standard.

TYRES: Dunlop 3.50 x 12in.

WEIGHT: 278 lb, including half a gallon of petrol.

PRICE: £129 12s, including British purchase tax.

ROAD TAX: £1 a year.

MAKERS: James Motor Cycles, Ltd, Gough Road, Greet, Birmingham, 11.

THIS one hasn't a fancy title. It isn't the James Comet or Cadet. It isn't the James anything-in-particular; just the SC4 scooter, but it stands out from the general run of scooters on several counts.

For a start, the hefty (1 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.-dia.) tube frame is carried round the outer edges of the weathershield and floor. So if you *do* drop the model it isn't likely to suffer much harm.

Then there's the engine. Same AMC-Villiers job that powers the Cadet motor cycle, but here installed with the cylinder horizontal and facing forward under the floor.

So you get good weight distribution—and at the same time the vacant space inside the rear bodywork serves as a useful, lockable bin in which to dump helmet and gloves at the end of a ride.

All right, but with the engine in that position isn't the plug vulnerable on wet days? Phooey! There's a big rubber flap on the tail of the front mudguard.

We've had rain enough recently, goodness knows, but it didn't cause the James to miss a beat. Nor did a careful crossing of the 3in.-deep ford near my home drown the engine.

For a one-fifty, the power unit has punch in plenty, spread nicely through the range, not concentrated at the top end. That's a boon in hilly districts or for passenger carrying.

Moreover, it allows the scooter to hold its place in a traffic stream without much need for chasing up and down the gear box. Ease back to 20 mph in top and there's still urge enough to pull away strongly when the occasion offers.

It's the familiar Villiers four-speed box on the SC4, with third and top ratios set relatively close. Third can

send the needle up to the 40 mph mark.

Maybe the two pads of the rocking-gear pedal are a little too close for comfortable operation in overboots, but most scooterists ride in ordinary shoes, anyway. More to the point, it's a firm, positive change—typically Villiers—and not likely to result in a missed cog.

There is a certain degree of vibration; at low revs it is felt through the soles of the feet and higher up the scale through the handlebar. It never becomes worrisome; on the contrary, it allows the rider to sense the mood of the engine.

By scooter standards the James feels big, if not downright burly—but not clumsy, for the unusual position of the engine lends a nice sense of balance. Springing, particularly at the front, is soft and has a long range. Handling is outstanding.

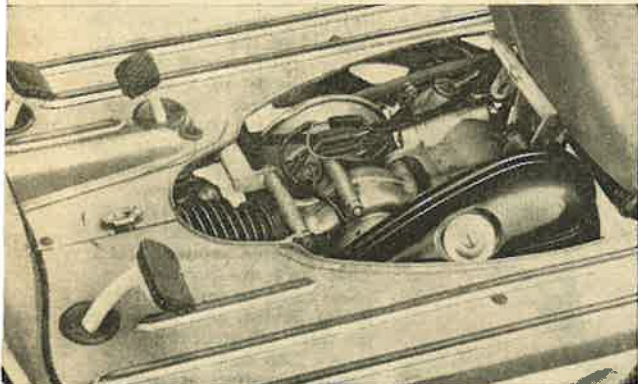
Given a following wind, you could see 50 on the dial, but the true mean maximum is more like 45 mph.

Speed did not lighten the pocket unduly, for fuel consumption over a country route with the machine driven vigorously worked out at 72 mpg. A more decorous town trip—stops, starts and nothing over 30—resulted in a figure of 96 mpg.

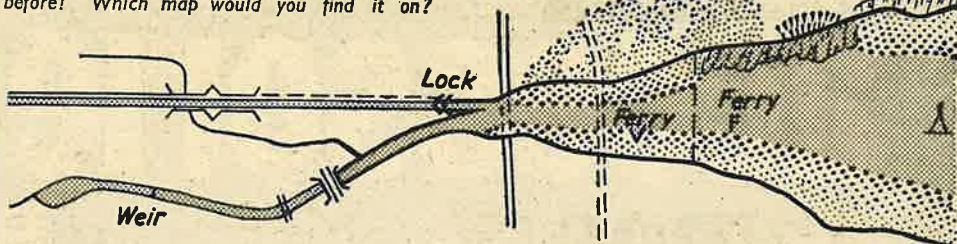
Economical, then; quite sprightly, bearing in mind its modest engine size, and easy to manoeuvre. Add to that first-time starting and excellent brakes. The James has a lot in its favour.

BOB CURRIE

The engine-gear unit is mounted horizontally under the floor and gives a commendably low centre of gravity



(A) Of course you've seen this stretch of coastline before! Which map would you find it on?



TOURING QUIZ

BY JOHN EBBRELL

1. Britain's first stretch of motorway was opened: (a) when? (b) where?
2. How many miles of motorway are at present open in Britain?
3. When the Forth road bridge is completed it'll be the longest in Britain. Is it also: (a) longest in the world? (b) the second longest? (c) the fourth longest?
4. The four mostests: in the mainland of the British Isles, which points are farthest north, south, east and west?
5. For Londoners, this. A man in plain clothes orders you to halt. He tells you he is a Metropolitan police officer. How do you know if he's telling the truth?
6. This year a 50 mph speed limit was temporarily imposed on all general-purpose roads in Britain. When was an all-over daytime speed limit last in force?
7. King George VI, T. E. Lawrence, George Bernard Shaw, Maurice Wiggin. What do they all have in common?

(B) Dickens made this place the setting of his celebrated novel. Where is it?



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8. Which is England's smallest county? And Scotland's?
9. Why do we describe surfaced roads as "macadam"?
10. The song says: "Old Father Thames keeps rolling along." From where?
11. At which English cathedral city would you find trained swans who ring bells for their dinner?
12. How's this for a laugh—what's a ha-ha? Where would you find one?
13. Beaulieu for old-time bikes and cars, but what historic vehicles are found at: (a) Bucklers Hard; (b) Bovington; (c) Biggleswade?



(C) This sign still lingers in a few places. What's wrong with it?