

MAINTAINING THE AUTO VAP CARAVELLE

Centaur tells how to keep this French luxury moped in tip-top condition

MAINTENANCE and minor repairs on a moped are often left unattended for a variety of reasons. Many people, for instance, are ignorant of the fact that some component may require attention, while others, although they know that something is wrong, fear to investigate in case their inexpert servicing causes further damage. Poor weather is a great discouragement if the spanner-work has to be done out of doors, and another hindrance is insufficient space—few of us like attempting major overhauls in the gutter where components and tools are prey to every small boy that passes.

But perhaps the greatest enemy is plain inertia. Certain riders like to pull their machines to pieces, but on the other hand, the majority do not, even though they are perfectly well acquainted with what is necessary. It is surprising how many deficiencies are tolerated for lengthy periods before finally something occurs which forces the rider to remedy the fault.

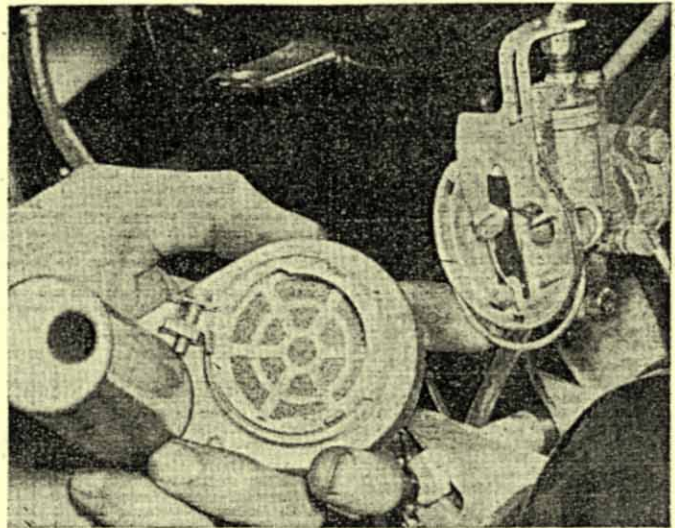
A bubble-car driving friend of mine is a case in point. His particular model is rather inaccessible when it comes to maintenance or repairs and after the hand-brake became inoperative, he spared it only a cursory glance (which informed him that the repair would be a dirty job) and continued to run his car for several weeks before he was finally forced to grovel beneath the bodywork and put the thing right.

The mopeds I see in London on the roads suggest that this type of attitude is by no means confined to bubble-car drivers. Habit—in the form of a 10-minute session every Saturday morning—is the best way to combat this type of laziness and it does pay dividends.

Easy Maintenance

Passing from the general to the particular, nobody should have any difficulties in maintaining the Auto Vap Caravelle de Luxe in tip-top condition. Everything is accessible and there has been a genuine effort made in the design to ensure that various natural weak-spots such as cables have as long a life as possible. Casting round for something to tackle, I recalled the depressing news read in a newspaper cartoon, that in only two or three weeks time, the days "would be shortening again" and decided to inspect the Caravelle's lighting system.

Spare bulbs should always be carried since riding a moped with blown bulbs is illegal, extremely dangerous and selfish to other road-users. The Caravelle's rear light is equipped with an unusual type of cylindrical bulb with contacts at both ends, and would obviously be difficult to replace in the back of the beyond so buy a replacement



The carburettor is accessible and easy to maintain. The filter, released by the circular spring clip, should be cleaned regularly.

before it becomes necessary. Once the replacement bulb has been fitted, buy another immediately.

The wiring to the rear light is taken through a hole in the mudguard and carried back to the headlamp switch via a bent-over flange in the edge of the mudguard. At the point where abrasion is most likely there is extensive extra sheathing over the insulation but all the same, any time the rear wheel is out of the forks, it is worth checking whether the coverings are standing up to the bombardment of grit and spray thrown up by the tyres, and replace with new wiring if there is any sign of the plastic becoming brittle.

A single screw holds in the headlamp rim, lens, and reflector which are kept together by a spring-clip. The bulb holder is held in the centre of the reflector merely by a push clip. The bulb is a screw-fitting Moby 6 volt, 1 amp, though no doubt there will be other makes which will suffice.

Note the very simple switch which is easily checked for corrosion. Another factor which makes for easier maintenance is the fact that the wires are not soldered to the terminals. Thus they can easily be disconnected and if their electrical efficiency is reduced a little scraping or roughing-up with emery paper will bring them back to normal.

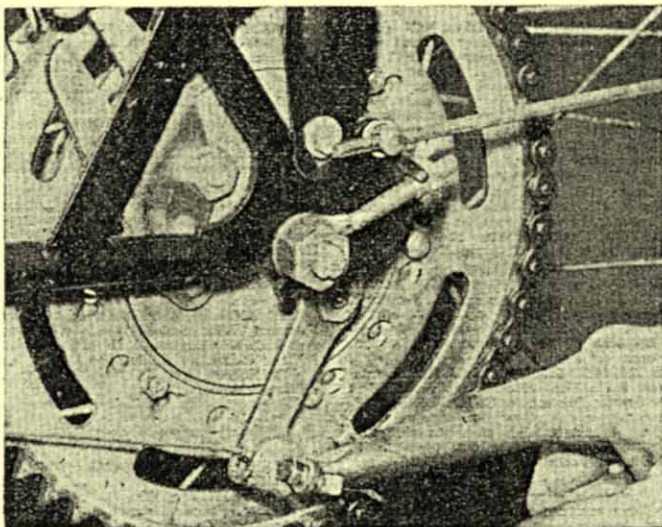
A couple of points to remember when refurbishing the lighting system are to ensure that the pyramid pattern surface of the rear reflector is mud-free (it is in a rather vulnerable position as far as this is concerned) and also that the headlamp beam is aligned properly. Adjustment is simple and probably does not necessitate the slackening of the two holding bolts at either side of the two mounting brackets. Remember that it is no use aligning the beam without a rider sitting on the saddle at the time.

Easy-to-adjust Brakes

Both brakes employ large, easy-to-adjust, solderless nipples. The front brake uses the normal bicycle-type threaded collar while the rear adjustment is effected through a slightly modified version of this system. Whenever the brakes are disconnected the collar adjusters should be slackened right off and a majority of the slack should be taken up by properly positioning the solderless nipples.

The pump is in rather an awkward position as it could easily be knocked off by an unwary foot. Two cardboard washers round the handle ensure that it does not rattle about on its mounting pins, but after a time, the spring which holds it in place may weaken. To stop it falling off, it is a good idea to build up some washers at the back of the tyre end of the connector tube. These will prevent the connector from slotting in too far into the handle of the pump and will effectively increase the length of the latter, thus creating more tension between the mounting pins.

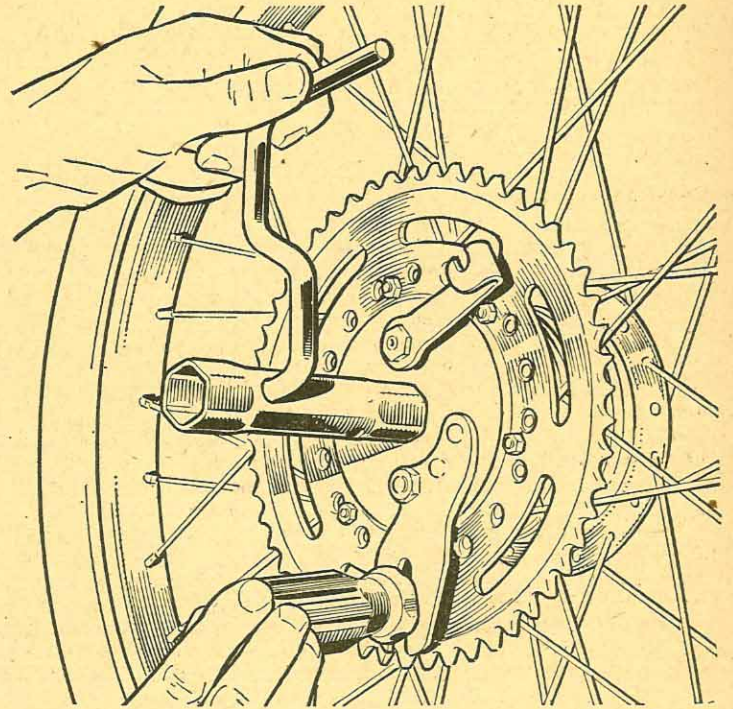
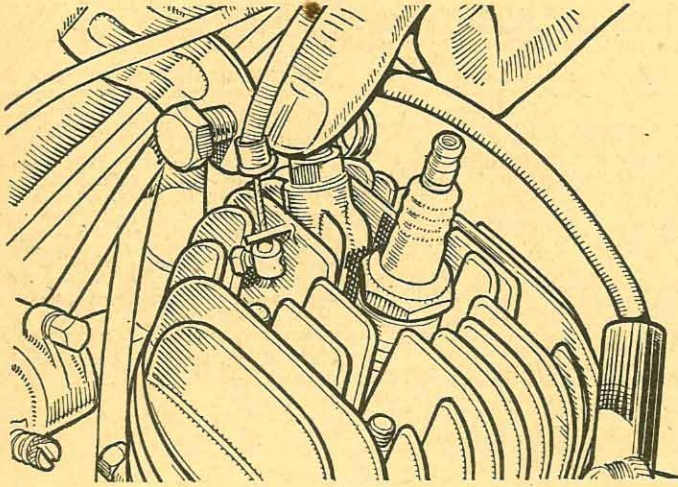
Apart from these few factors, maintenance on this moped follows general lines. The only slight complication in decarbonisation is the existence of a decompressor valve but this has been dealt with in other issues and presents no difficulties. The carburettor, which is commendably accessible, is of a standard design and also offers no problems.



The knurled nut and lock nut control brake adjustment. The chain adjuster can be seen in the centre of the picture, and the brake drum locking peg in the top left-hand corner.

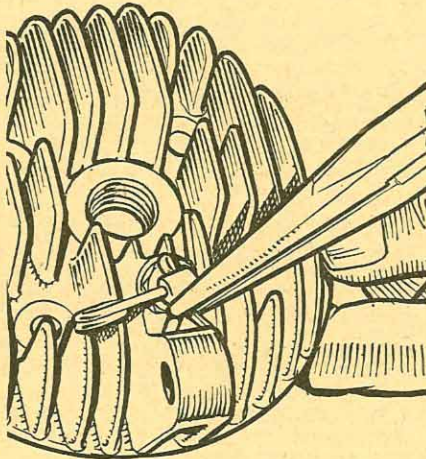
MORE CARAVELLE MAINTENANCE

Centaur follows up his recent article on maintaining the Auto-Vap Caravelle de Luxe with this easy-to-follow guide on two important jobs



'DECOKE' HINTS

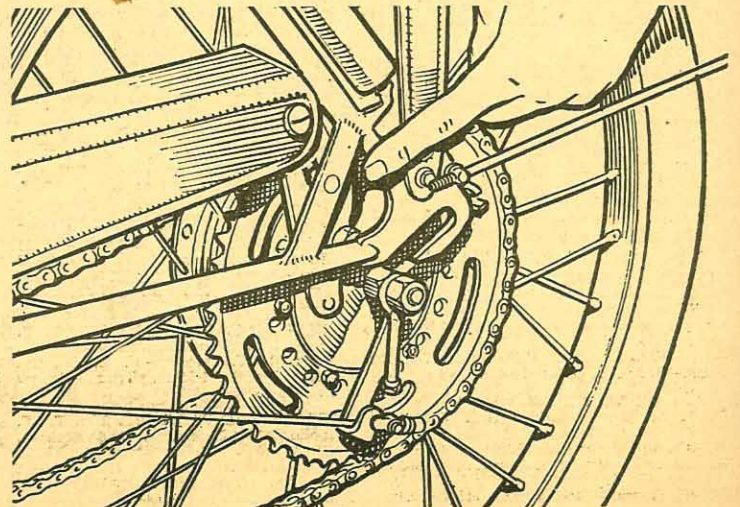
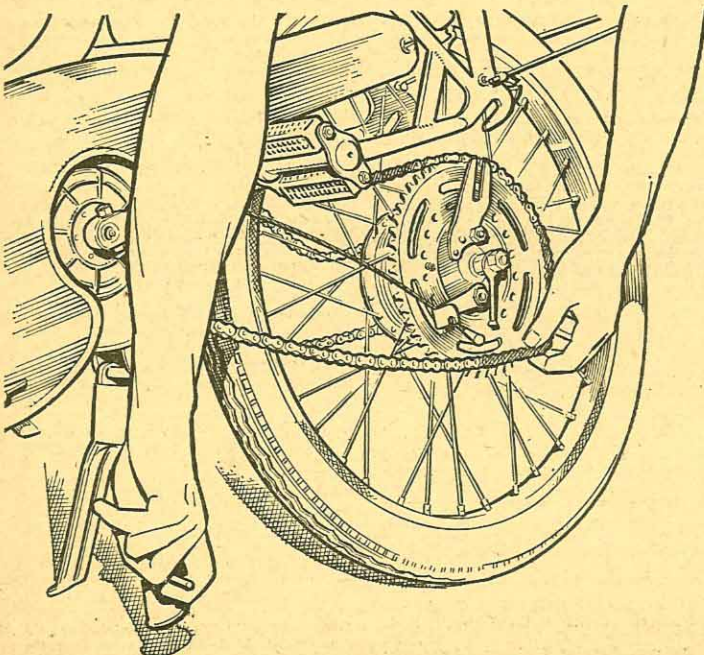
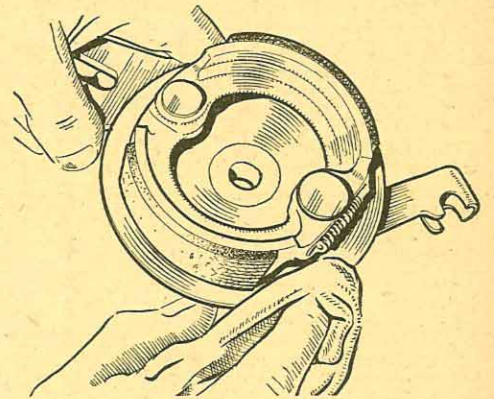
Decarbonizing the Caravelle is simplicity itself. Take out the plug, loosen evenly and then remove the four cylinder-head nuts and take out the cylinder-head/frame securing bolt (above). Before the left-hand top cylinder nut can be removed the decompressor valve cable must be released by depressing the spring and sliding the slack cable free. The nipple holder can now be pushed to one side and the nut freed with a box spanner. Once the cylinder head is off (right) remove all the carbon from the head and piston as described for other models. To remove the decompressor valve straighten and remove the split pin as shown, but be careful to hold down the spring as the pin is removed, or the horseshoe-shaped spring holder will be shot forcibly into the distance.



WHEELS AND BRAKES

The shoes and drum should be cleaned of dust and particularly grease, wiping them with a rag moistened in petrol. In extreme cases the shoes can be warmed until impregnated oil boils out of them. If the shoes are worn they must be replaced. Factory exchange units cost 12s. 6d. a pair from the concessionaires; new springs cost 6d. (Below) When replacing wheel make sure the brake plate locking arm slots onto its peg before the spindle is slid into its slots. Fit the adjusters as quickly as possible to prevent the wheel sliding out again and before tightening the hub bolts check chain tension and wheel alignment.

With the rear wheel out the brakes can be cleaned and checked for wear. To remove the back plate and shoes insert a screw-driver in locking slot as shown above and undo the bolt. Note the positions of the three washers underneath, and remove the brake assembly.



Rear wheel removal is an art that comes with practice, but a second person is invaluable. Slacken off the chain adjusters and the spindle bolts. Release the brake cable, if necessary slackening off the nipple. Lift, or get your helper to lift, the rear of the machine. Push the stand forward with a free hand and slide the wheel forward. The chains will now be slack enough to lift off their sprockets, and the wheel is free.

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