

## ROAD TEST REPORT:

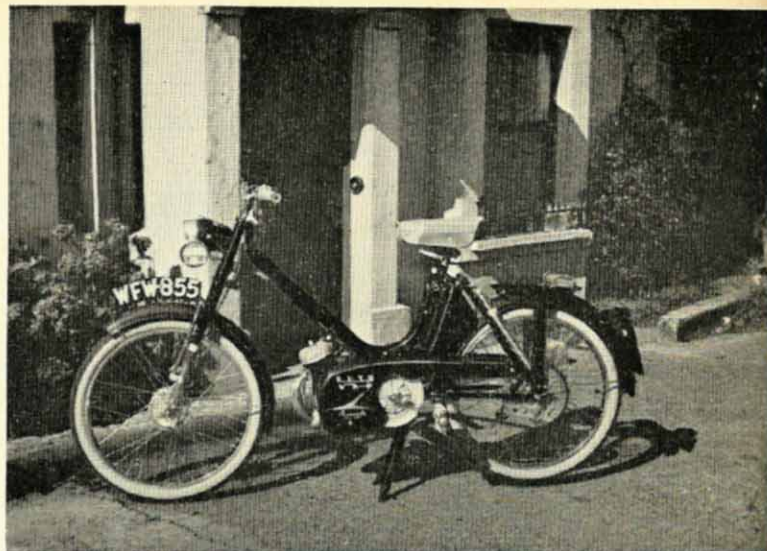
# The Auto-Vap CARAVELLE

**T**HE *AutoVap* range of mo-peds came to Britain just a year ago and has already established itself as in the best selling class. The basic simplicity of the single speed engine with automatic clutch allied to tough but light and handy bicycles make all the models attractive in their various ways, but an extra model was added recently with gay colours and a modest price as added attractions. It is called the *Caravelle*.

This model has the same *VAP* two-stroke engine as the others in the range, slightly "over-square" with 40mm. bore by 38mm. stroke and built to be almost indestructible in use. The piston is long to give maximum bearing area, the small end of the con-rod runs on needle roller bearings as well as the big end and the crankshaft is a two piece forging with a hardened and ground crankpin pressed in. The fully automatic centrifugal clutch is mounted direct on the crankshaft on the near side and drives by V-belt to the countershaft pulley.

On the offside is the unique Magneclair magneto / generator unit instead of the more conventional flywheel magneto. A feature of this unit is that the coils can be removed and replaced without the use of tools.

The frame is of large section single tube base with rigid rear end and telescopic front forks and a 5-pint fuel tank under the saddle. 23-inch x 2-inch wheels with finned hubs and whitewall tyres are standard equipment.



### Easy

Starting, like riding the *Caravelle*, is easy. One depresses the choke plunger on top of the carburettor mixing chamber and presses either pedal with the machine on its stand. The result is usually a first kick start. After running for a few seconds the throttle is opened and the choke automatically cancelled. The point needs to be made, however, that if the throttle is opened before the engine has fired it won't!

Once the engine is running it is only necessary to open the throttle and the machine will glide away smoothly and quietly. A few turns of the pedals make the getaway quicker but, except on very steep gradients they are not necessary to ensure a reasonable standard of acceleration. The automatic clutch engages fully at about 7-8 m.p.h. on the level and acceleration from there up to about 28 m.p.h. is brisk. Mean maximum speed on the test machine was 33 m.p.h. with a tendency to go higher without undue noise and fuss on even slight down grades.

For smooth and quiet cruising the speed range 15-25 m.p.h. is quite remarkable, with lively acceleration on tap for passing and plenty of reserve power for climbing. No main road hill in the London area called for pedal assistance when taken with a run and standing starts were made on 1 in 7 without the rider having to work

hard. The pedal gearing is slightly on the low side and they could not be used for any distance at over 8-10 m.p.h., not that they were ever needed that way during the test.

With the engine drive disconnected by turning the centre plate of the countershaft pulley through 20° the *Caravelle* can be pedalled at a modest speed in reasonable comfort, enough to get to a petrol station a couple of miles away without fatigue.

The rubber sprung front forks have a limited range of travel but take in the major bumps well and provide firm steering. The tail end being unsprung it took a good road to make the maximum speed comfortable although we tried it over some rough stuff and found the steering unaffected and road-holding good. A larger saddle of the pan type as fitted to the deluxe models would be a help here. The slightly high position of the pedals enables the machine to be banked over without grounding and provides a reasonably comfortable leg reach for a rider of normal height or more.

Braking is very good, the front brake in particular pulling the machine up quickly and without any judder. Both are operated by hand levers and a fine degree of control is obtained for any road surface conditions.

A point on which we have been critical of most of the French mopeds we have handled has been the

lighting and we note that the *Auto-Vap* is a conspicuous exception in this respect. Partly because of the high output of the *Magneclair* generator and partly through the fitting of lamps of adequate size, the lights on the *Caravelle* are very good indeed by any mo-ped standards.

#### Essential Value

No machine is perfect and we are critical of the *Caravelle* on several minor points. One is the non-provision of a reserve fuel tap, particularly needful with a capacity of a trifle over half a gallon. Another point is the hard and small saddle already mentioned and the third complaint is that the

handlebars are not adjustable for height.

All these, however, have to be seen against one of the undoubted attractions of the machine, its very competitive price. For 53 guineas here is a sound and solid mo-ped that can do almost anything a mo-ped is asked to do, is economical, reliable and reasonably comfortable. The essential value of the *Caravelle* is its best selling point.

#### SPECIFICATION

**ENGINE:** VAP two-stroke single 40 mm. x 38 mm., 48 c.c. compression ratio 6.5 to 1., output 1.75 b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m. Single speed, centrifugal automatic clutch, V-belt primary and chain

final drives with independent pedal chain.

**FRAME:** Single tube, welded construction, telescopic front forks, integral rear carrier. Tank capacity 5-pints.

**ELECTRICS:** Magneclair Magneto-generator, 6-volt 24-watts. Double filament headlamp 18-18-watt, handlebar dipswitch and hornbutton.

**WHEELS:** 23-inch x 2-inch with whitewall tyres,  $3\frac{3}{4}$ -inch internal expanding brakes in full width hubs.

**WEIGHT:** 82 lbs.

**PRICE:** £56 13s. 0d. (Including P.T.).

**CONCESSIONAIRES:** Scootomatic Ltd. Glaisdale Drive West. Apsley. Nottingham.

## WHERE TO BUY YOUR CARAVELLE

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