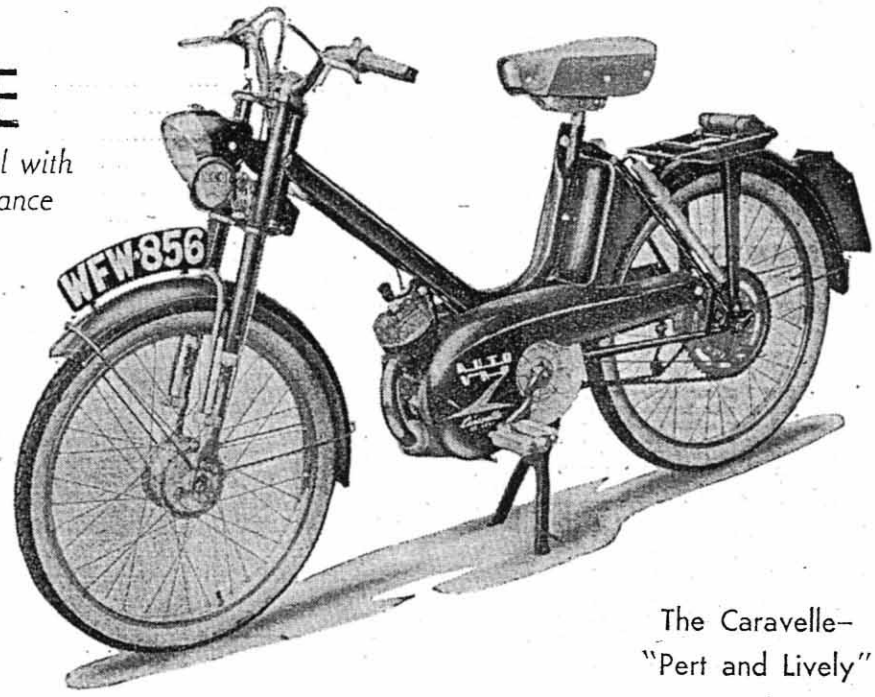
THE AUTO-VAP

CARAVELLE

Centaur reports on a French model with good looks and a lively performance



The Caravelle—
"Pert and Lively"

AS pert and lively as a demoiselle from its native France, the Auto-Vap Caravelle captured my heart within seconds of our first meeting. It would be difficult to pick out a single point from the many in its favour.

Like its namesake, the Caravelle airliner, this moped is primarily intended for short to medium distance travel, with emphasis on the shorter journeys. Fair enough; once this is realized, there are few criticisms which can be levelled with either fairness or accuracy. Limited, perhaps, in its number of fittings, as indeed it must be by virtue of its within-all-pockets price of £55 13s. (the concessionaires prefer to say 53gns.), it is nevertheless lacking in nothing necessary for speedy, comfortable transport.

Let's have a look at it.

The frame is of the single beam tubular steel variety, not unlike an ordinary pedal cycle, with semi-wrap-around seat stays, and forward drop-out rear fork ends. Forward there is a pair of shapely telescopic forks which perform their task admirably, absorbing all but the most savage jolt.

At first glance, the Caravelle may seem petite, and indeed the 3ft. 9in. wheelbase, 3ft. 3in. height, and 6ft. overall length do not indicate leviathan proportions. Nevertheless, the large family-size test rider, of whom a speak-your-weight machine once said "Wow," and who is not, one hopes, representative of moped riders, managed, with the use of the 6in. seat height allowance, and handlebar position adjustment, to find a safe and comfortable riding position.

The engine is securely shut up in its own little world by two attractive streamlined cowlings, definitely of the non-rattle variety thanks to three bolts on each. Mudguards are neat but unextravagant in cut. I liked the solid way in which they are secured, the front one with double stays. In fact, there was not a rattle on the whole machine throughout the considerable miles I covered with it.

As is common on automatic machines from the Continent, the five-pint fuel tank is stowed under the seat, allowing maximum leg-room, and unobstructed mounting and dismounting. Further, it is quickly detachable, and the filling hole is located to one side for easy access. Seating arrangements are by a Monsieur J. Rydel, and take the form of an agreeably large and sympathetically-shaped leatherette saddle fitted with interior springing. In view of the lack of rear suspension on the Caravelle, the rider is surprisingly comfortable, and M. Rydel must take the credit for that.

Let me enlarge a little on the bare details of the performance given in the data box. If it is the maximum speed which interests you most, then you will see that that is 31.3 m.p.h. from a flying start, which it will maintain mile after mile on level ground (and 18.5 m.p.h. from a standing start). At top speed, the Caravelle runs smoothly, and is as completely stable as it is at lower speeds. The logical companion to speed figures are the braking figures, and a glance at the data box will show that these are well within the necessary standard. I was impressed by the smooth operation of the brakes, and admired the efficiently-acting levers which are of alloy and extremely well-made.

Unaccompanied by pedalling, the engine was able to draw away without strain, and accelleration was reasonable. With pedal assistance, it shot away most satisfactorily. Which brings me to the pedalling aspect of the Caravelle. I would have no hesitation in pedalling this moped for as far as necessary. At 84lb. it is not too heavy, and the conversion from moped to bicycle is so simple that it cannot be accepted as an excuse from the pedal-shy. The finned centre section of the pulley wheel is rotated until it clicks into a new position, and you are all set for an under-the-hour "25." As further proof that the Caravelle is meant to be man-propelled if necessary, a separate chainwheel, chain, and rear sprocket are provided for pedalling, and are suited in gearing and so on, for the purpose.

Finally, on the subject of economy, the Caravelle engine shows a very modest appetite, sipping only one gallon per 172 miles at 20 m.p.h., which means at that speed a range of about 107 miles is possible on one tank filling.

Running lightly over the remaining details, there is the attractive headlamp, which in conjunction with the Magneclair mag-dyno provides a quite adequate beam, though not of solar intensity. Similarly, the horn situated below the headlamp produces a cry of modest rather than eye-brow-raising volume. For easy starting there is a decompressor valve, the trigger for which is neatly incorporated with the throttle twist-grip. And for easy standing there is a strong, spring-loaded stand which can be put into place with a minimum of effort, and which resists over-balancing tendencies quite successfully.

Specification

Engine: Single cylinder 2-stroke, twin transfer ports, flat topped piston; 40 m.m. bore × 38 m.m. stroke = 48.5 c.c.; c.r. 6.5 : 1; output 1.75 b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m.
Transmission: Automatic centrifugally-operated clutch; primary belt drive, final chain drive; pedal starting.
Frame: Tubular steel single beam pattern; telescopic front forks, rigid rear.
Tank: 5 pints capacity.
Lighting: Magneclair mag-dyno supplying 6v. 1 amp headlamp, and 12v. 0.5 amp tail lamp.
Wheels and Brakes: Both brakes 3¾in. diameter internally expanding in full-width hubs and handlebar operated; chromium plated rims; 23 × 2in. white wall tyres.
Equipment: Tyre pump, tool kit and bag, luggage carrier, centre stand.
Finish: Maroon, with chromium fittings.
Concessionaires: Scootamatic Ltd., Glaisdale Dr. West, Aspley, Nottingham.
Price: £55 13s.

Performance

Maximum speed:
Flying 1/10th mile, 31.3 m.p.h.
Standing 1/10th mile, 18.5 m.p.h.
Acceleration:
No pedal assistance.
0-10 m.p.h., 5 sec.
0-20 m.p.h., 15 sec.
0-30 m.p.h., 19.5 sec.
Economy:
At 20 m.p.h., 172 m.p.g.
At 30 m.p.h., 141 m.p.g.
Hill climbing:
Time for hill: 2 min. 3 sec.
Pedal assistance from 0.25 miles.
Test hill 0.5 miles long; max. grad. 1 in 10; average grad. 1 in 16.

Braking:	**Front**	**Rear**	**Both**
At 20 m.p.h.	43ft.	41ft.	25ft.
At 30 m.p.h.	63ft.	62ft.	41ft.

Pedalling:
Maximum pedalling speed, 16 m.p.h.
Comfortable pedalling speed, 8 m.p.h
Tester's weight: 200lb.
Conditions for Test: Calm, dry.

KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE

CORRECT air pressure is essential for maximum riding comfort, safety, performance and tyre life. The following chart shows the pressures for various sizes of tyres.

Tyre Size	Max. Speed m.p.h.	Load per tyre in lbs. 80	100	120	140	160	180	200
20 x 2.5	40	19	20	23	26	30	34	38
23 x 2	30	23	25	30	35	40	45	50
25 x 2	30	21	23	28	33	37	43	48
26 x 2 x 1¾	30	20	22	28	32	35	40	45
21 x 2.5	—	16	18	20	23	26	29	32
26 x 2	30	20	22	28	32	35	40	45

To calculate the load on each tyre, allow one third of the total weight (including the machine's weight) for the front tyre, and two thirds for the rear tyre.

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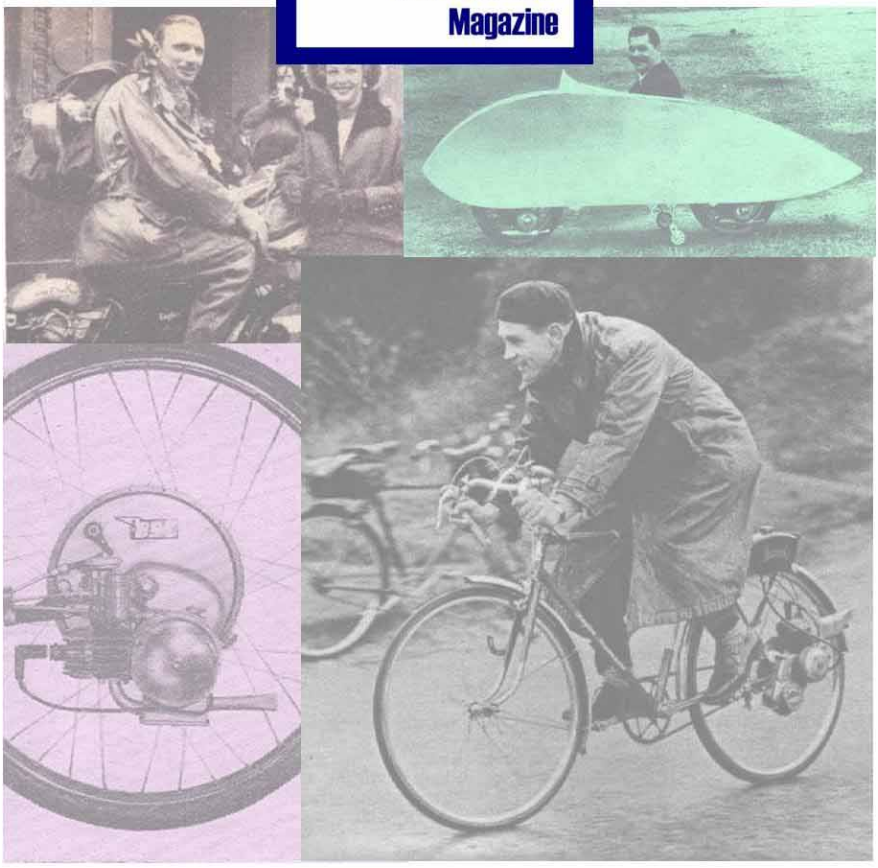

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