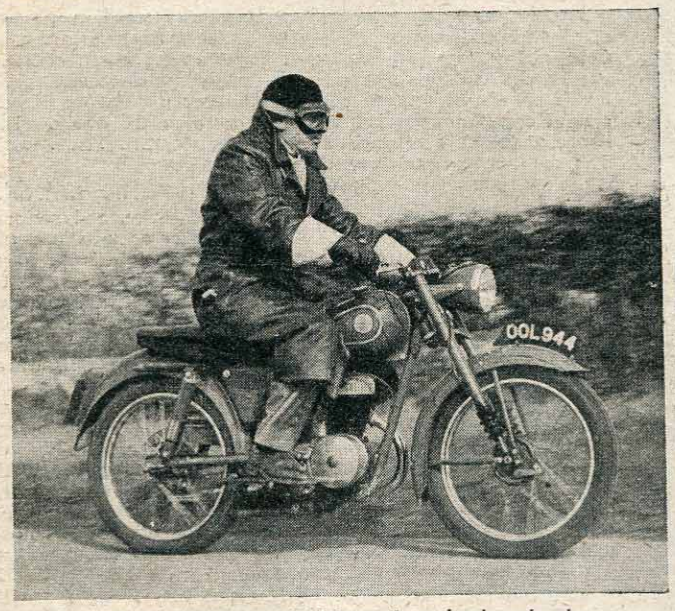
ROAD TESTS OF CURRENT MODELS

The 197 c.c. Model K7 "CAPTAIN" JAMES

Impressions of a Lightweight Two-Stroke with Luxury Specification



A maximum checked speed of 60 m.p.h. on level roads, plus a fuel consumption averaging over 90 m.p.g. places the James "Captain" in a favoured position when performance plus economy is sought.

TESTER'S ROAD REPORT

Maximum Speeds in:—

			Time from Standing Start
Top Gear (Ratio 5·74 to 1)	62 m.p.h.	4880 r.p.m.	35 secs.
Third Gear (Ratio —— to 1)	—— m.p.h.	—— r.p.m.	—— secs.
Second Gear (Ratio 7·7 to 1)	53 m.p.h.	5500 r.p.m.	20 secs.

Speeds over measured Quarter Mile:—

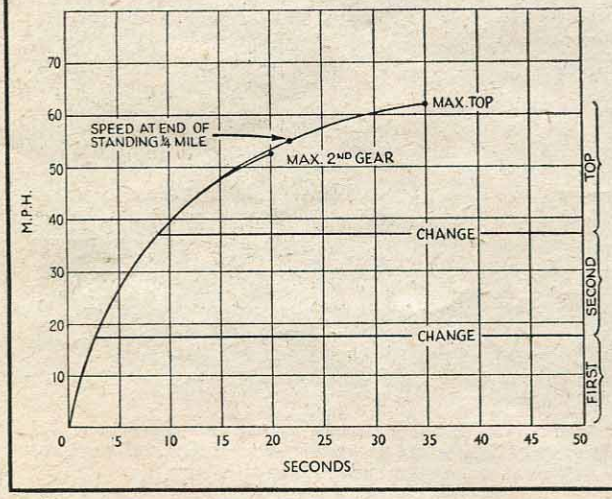
Flying Start 60 m.p.h. Standing Start 40·91 m.p.h.

Braking Figures On DRY TARRED GRAVEL **Surface, from 30 m.p.h.:—**

Both Brakes 31 ft. Front Brake 58 ft. Rear Brake 45 ft.

Fuel Consumption:—

30 m.p.h. 114 m.p.g. 40 m.p.h. 98 m.p.g. 50 m.p.h. 90 m.p.g.



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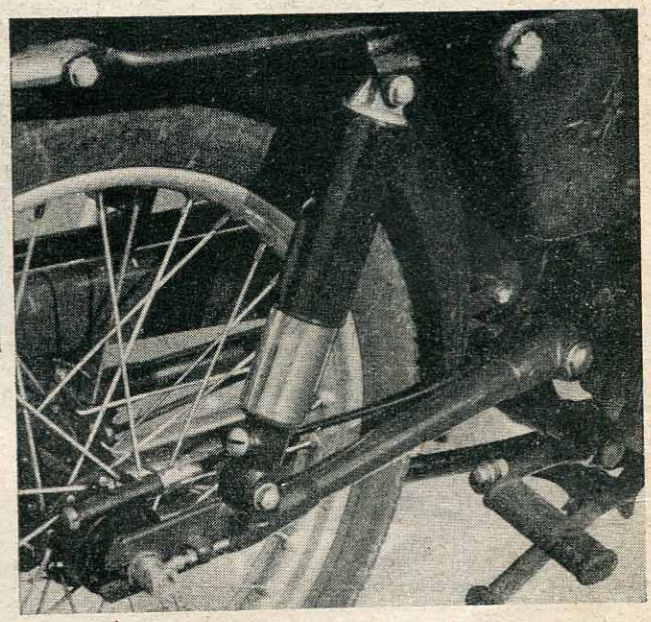
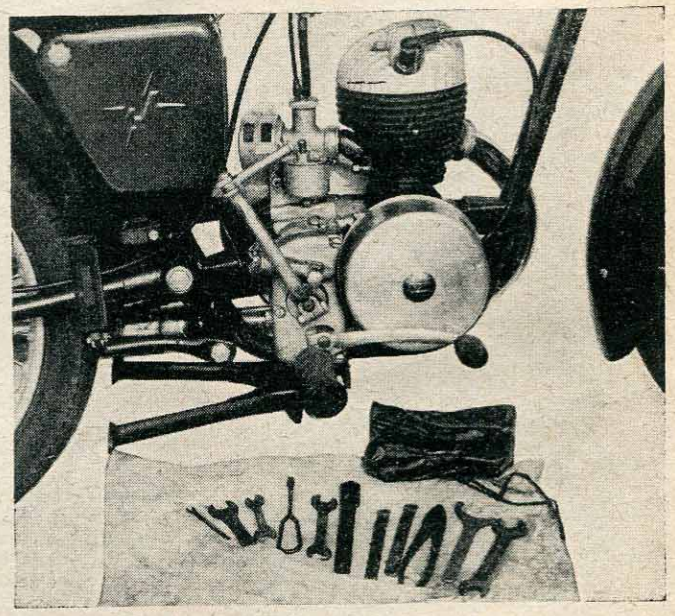
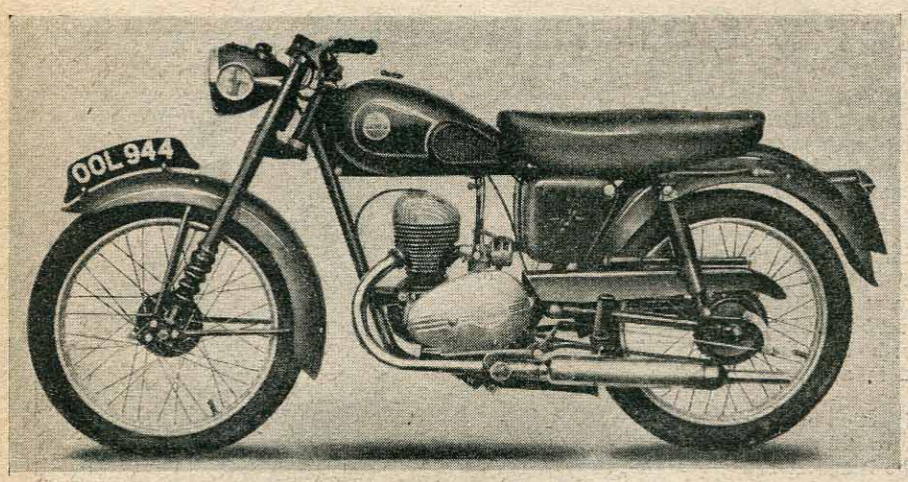


The rear of the James is carried upon an hydraulically-controlled swinging fork, which provides a comfortable ride, in conjunction with "telescopic" front.



Accessibility is an excellent feature of the "Captain" model K7 James, and the tool-kit provided is planned to enable the owner to carry out regular maintenance easily.



Full marks for neatness are awarded to the 1954 James "Captain"—and especially for the clever blending of a full size dual seat with a lightweight machine.

FIRST impressions of the 197 c.c. K7 James "Captain" were gained in interesting circumstances, the machine being ridden straight from the Temple Press car park, in London, to Birmingham, as return transport following a quick run from the Midlands southwards on a fastish o.h.v. "500." The tester naturally, was prepared for the homeward journey to be slow by comparison, a frame of mind stimulated by the fact that *Motor Cycling's* John Griffith, the proud owner of a new 500 c.c. sports twin, also Midlands bound that night, offered his company—for so long as the James could keep pace! It was some way up A5 that Griffith went on ahead, but not without first confirming, surprisedly, that, by his checked speedometer, the "Captain" had several times exceeded 60 m.p.h.

Tested against the clock later, the James recorded consistent 15-sec. times for the measured quarter-mile, the time possible on the level-surface test stretch used. On gently graded highways, such as the old Roman road between Weedon and Atherstone, speeds of 62 m.p.h. and more could be built up, but not held. Normal main-road *cols* were breasted at 45-50 m.p.h., a figure which dropped to 40 on several occasions when heading uphill into a stiff breeze—the sort of air flow which, in domestic circles, provides what is described as a "good drying day."

The second-gear ratio (7.7 : 1) gave good acceleration to 53 m.p.h.; once again the needle showed a high peak, actually in the region of 55 m.p.h., but none would claim that a usable figure. The speeds now "on tap" from a modern "200," the James in particular, are such that they become a buying point to many who, like the writer, fail initially to realize the value of this type of motorcycle for serious riding — the London-Birmingham run took just over three hours—as well as pottering.

Mixed usage of this type in give-and-take conditions resulted in an average petrol consumption of 90-95 m.p.g., the consumption recorded at fixed speeds is shown on the report form, and it should be mentioned that these figures were obtained with a 24 : 1 petroil mixture. James recommend 20 : 1, a most inconvenient proportion compared with the 1½-gal./half-pint (24 : 1) admixture upon which most two-stroke engines thrive.

Four-stroking under light loads, the engine developed even firing between 20-25 m.p.h.; the little model would patter along in top gear at less than 20 m.p.h., pulling away progressively and smoothly to maximum speed.

The new brazed-and-welded loop frame, with three-point engine fixings, transmitted no vibration, save for a faint tremor noticeable through the footrests at around 40 m.p.h., and then only when the model was pulling really hard into a stiff wind and on an up-grade—conditions under which it paid to use the ever-willing second-gear ratio. The frame incorporates two-way oil-controlled dampers, which dealt very satisfactorily with normal road corrugations. Movement of the rear swinging-fork members left the steering unaffected; altogether, the handling of the machine, either one or two up, was first class. The pillion footrests were well positioned from the passenger's point of view and folded out of the way when not in use.

Other specification items contributing to comfort were the dual seat, a 24-in., very soft, well-"tailored" component, adding considerably to the machine's "grown up" appearance; and the adjustable footrests and handlebars, both well located for a rider of average stature. The telescopic front forks are of simple construction; as in 1953, they are undamped and there did not appear to be any need for damping.

The "Captain" has been extensively redesigned for 1954 and is now remarkably "clean;" absence of tacked-on accessories and looped wires and cables was striking. The horn, emitting a pleasantly strident warning note, is mounted frontally but out of sight behind the headlamp shell; the battery is encased in a box compartment behind which is mounted the rectifier—out of sight but adequately cooled. Built into the well-valanced mudguard, the rear lamp is neat and the housing, semi-streamlined, protects the cable connection and is easy to keep clean. The front guard, rigidly supported by four tubular stays, is neat, effective and vibration-free.

Having a total effective lining area of 13 sq. in., the two 5-in. diameter brakes, in particular that at the rear, retarded the machine positively. Except when applied with intentional harshness, the rear brake pulled up the model without locking the wheel and without any tendency for the back of the machine to hop about.

None would fail to give credit on these important aspects of the K7. On the debit side, however, it must be said that so swift a little lightweight might be improved by the possession of a better headlamp beam. On the model tested demand for current exceeded the rectified supply and the direct A.C. switch-over facility had to be employed on two occasions.

An exacting man, too, would prefer a more precisely controlled fuel reserve. Only one tap is fitted to the 2¼-gallon tank and at low ebb the dodge is to tilt the machine, so transferring a small residue from one side of the tank to the other.

A flexible cover joint, bridging the moving upper chain guard and the static gearbox unit, would add a practical finishing touch and be in fashion with the Continental style. And better gear selection, particularly of the neutral position, might be appreciated, notably by the less practised type of novice owner for whom a model of this type has considerable appeal.

Irrespective of that constructive criticism, the K7 is tip-top value. It is a machine with which the tester would willingly set out on any kind of journey—a ride to the office or to any country in the world where reasonable roads exist.

BRIEF SPECIFICATION

Engine: 197 c.c. Villiers Mk. 8E single-cylinder two-stroke engine: bore 59 mm. by stroke 72 mm.; cast-iron cylinder, with light-alloy cylinder head secured by four bolts. C.R. 7.25 : 1. Villiers type S24 single-lever carburetter; No. 3½ needle with 1.95-in. setting; throttle slide No. 3.

Transmission: Gearbox in semi-unit with engine; positive-stop foot-change mechanism; ratios, 5.74, 7.7 and 14.7 to 1; Renold No. 110038 ⅜-in. by ¼-in. by .225 pre-stretched primary chain; Renold No. 110044 ½-in. by .335-in. by .205-in. final drive.

Frame: Loop-type brazed and welded, providing three-point fixing for the power unit. Rear fork members incorporate slotted brake anchorage and brazed-on wheel adjuster blocks.

Ignition and lighting: Villiers flywheel generator for A.C. ignition; six-volt 12 a.h. battery charged via rectifier; Lucas 575 headlamp with optional A.C./D.C. switch.

Suspension: Telescopic front forks undamped; swinging-fork rear frame with hydraulically damped spring damper units.

Wheels and tyres: WM-19 rims fitted with Dunlop 3.00 by 19-in. tyres.

Brakes: Internal-expanding 5-in. front and rear; total braking-lining area 13 sq. in.

Equipment: Smiths illuminated 65 m.p.h. chronometric speedometer; built-in footrest lugs for pillion; toolbox; dual seat.

Finish: Frame, tanks and mudguards finished in red enamel, chrome rims and cycle parts.

Tank: 2¼ gallons welded steel fuel tank.

Dimensions: Wheelbase 50 in., saddle height 30 in., ground clearance 5½ in., overall length 78 in., weight 220 lb.

Price: £104 plus P.T. £20 16s., total £124 16s. Pillion footrests extra 7s. 6d.

Annual tax: £1 17s. 6d., quarterly 10s. 4d.

Makers: The James Cycle Co., Ltd., Greet, Birmingham, 11.

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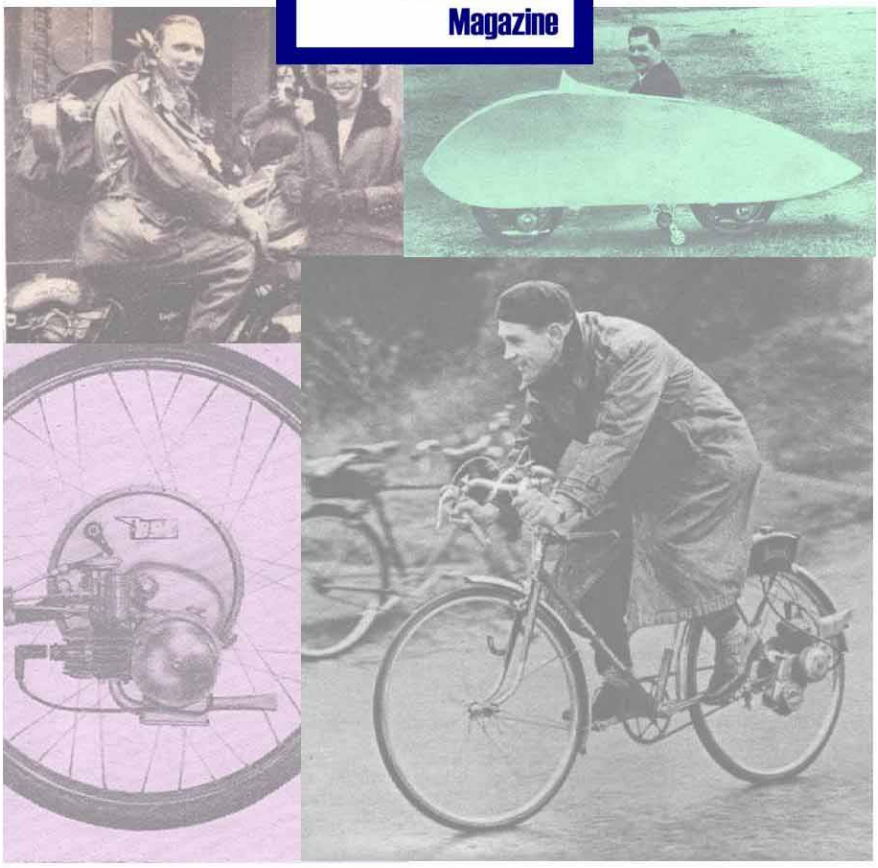

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