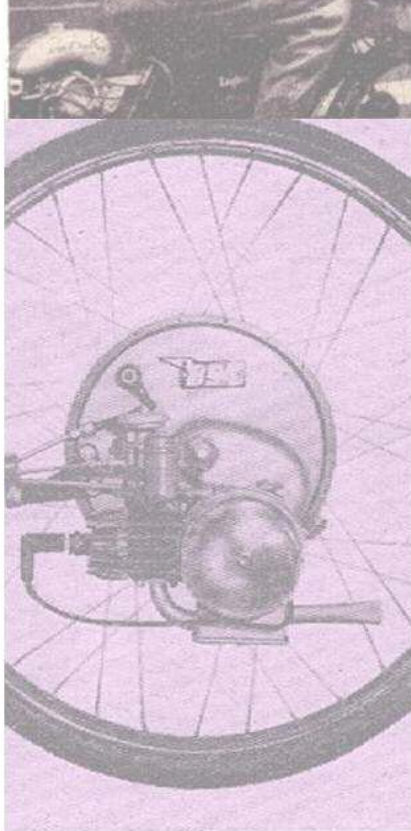


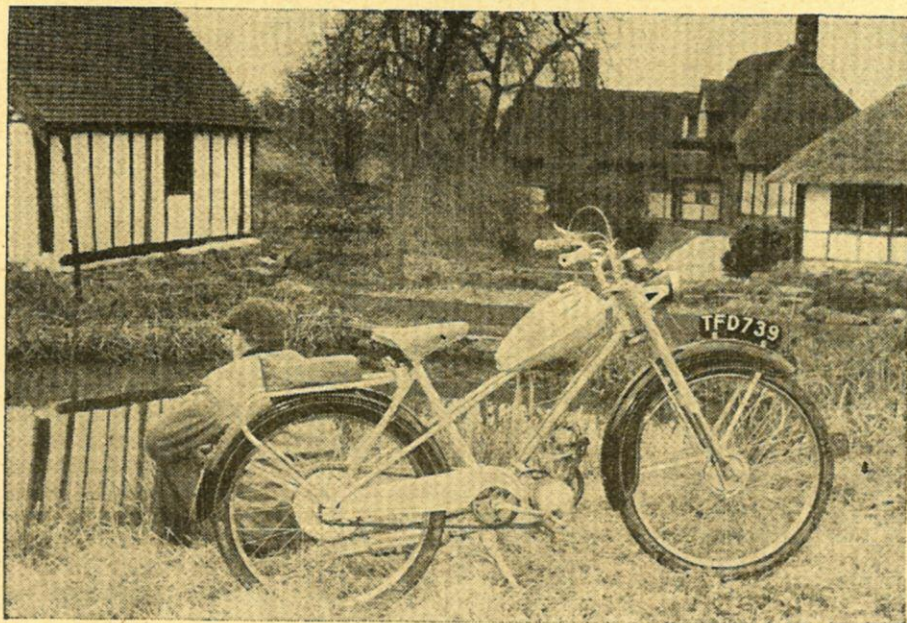
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MERCURY "MERCETTE"

An Unusual British Moped Gives
Over 35 m.p.h. on Test



THOUGH a better-than-average top speed is the most obvious result of our test of the overhead-valve Mercury "Mercette" the characteristic which struck me most forcibly during the mileage put in on this moped from Dudley was its complete cleanliness. This is a factor likely to weigh heavily with such potential users as businessmen who are seeking a reliable and oil-free "tender" for transport to the local station, and to lady riders who may fight shy of a petrol-lubricated machine for fear of soiled dresses or nylons. Any such objection is overcome with the four-stroke Mercury, in which no oil is mixed with the petrol, there being instead a fully-automatic lubrication system with the lubricant safely sealed away in the crankcase.

Not, of course, that cleanliness is the Mercury's sole virtue. Its engine provides the sort of power which makes for a good top speed, the 36 m.p.h. recorded being the sort of figure that one might expect on any reasonably level road, with "flash" readings of up to 45 m.p.h. on down gradients. The one fly in the performance ointment proved to be hill-climbing, which was not the "Mercette's" forte. Its performance on CYCLING's test hill was below the average normally attained. Not that the "Mercette" would refuse to climb . . . it merely demanded earlier pedal assistance. However, it is only fair to add that on long, tiring gradients—the type more often met in general road work—it was, if anything, a little quicker than most two-strokes. Its failure on the test hill can thus be explicable only as an unfortunate combination of gradient, gearing and load.

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Thanks to a good pair of telescopic front forks and to the unusually rigid, fully-triangulated tubular frame, the "Mercette" has steering and handling characteristics which are quite impeccable, no matter how bad the road surface may happen to be. Its riding position is comfortable, save for a tendency for the lateral seams of the fuel tank to dig into the thighs if one succumbs to the temptation to grip it between one's legs motorcycle-fashion. Comfort is enhanced by the almost total lack of vibration in the power unit, which can rev. nicely without setting up any noticeable frequency in the pedals or the bars.

Though one could soon become accustomed to the layout, the control system of the Mercury appears to be its one major weakness. The front brake is mounted on the left bar, below the clutch lever, and rotates with the twist-grip gear change. The rear brake is operated by the right-hand lever, and the throttle by the twist-grip in the normal way. Though this system has been employed on such Continental models as the Ducati it is not ideal, for even a contortionist would find it difficult to operate the clutch, throttle and both brakes in unison, and delicate front-brake control is impossible, owing to the great wrist deflection which is required before the lever can be grasped. The quite creditable braking figures obtained during the test were in spite of, and not as a result of, this layout! With a more rational approach to this aspect of design, the Mercury would probably become the best stopper on the market, as well as one of the quickest movers.

Fixed-speed fuel-consumption figures, of

The MERCURY at a GLANCE

Maximum Speed: 36 m.p.h. in 41 sec. from rest.

Economy: 126 m.p.g. at 20 m.p.h.
113 m.p.g. at 30 m.p.h.

Braking: From 20 m.p.h. From 30 m.p.h.
Both brakes . . . 10 feet. 25 feet.
Front only 25 feet. 48 feet.
Rear only 18 feet. 37 feet.

Load carried during test: 200 lb.

Engine: Mercury overhead-valve four-stroke; 39 mm. bore x 40 mm. stroke = 48 c.c.; c.r. 6.5 to 1; 2 b.h.p. at 5,200 r.p.m.

Gearbox: In unit with engine; two speeds, with handlebar twist grip change; gear primary and chain final drives, with separate pedalling gear.

Frame: Of welded, tubular construction; telescopic front forks; rigid rear end.

Tank: 1 gal. capacity.

Lights: Head and tail lamps fed direct from Miller flywheel magneto-generator.

Wheels and Brakes: Both brakes 4-in. internal-expanding; chromium-plated rims and rust-proof spokes; 2.25-in. x 23-in. Dunlop tyres.

Equipment: Luggage carrier; electric horn; number plates.

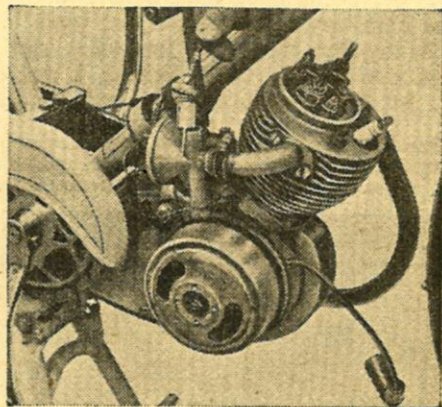
Finish: Beige and maroon enamel with chromium-plated details.

Weight: 104 lb.

Makers: Mercury Industries (B'ham) Ltd., Dock-lane, Dudley, Worcs.

Price: £71 18s. 9d.

An unusual British moped (left) the Mercury "Mercette" does not look out of place in a typically English setting of water, Tudor buildings and willow trees. Below is seen the four-stroke Mercury engine with its magneto cover, rocker box and carburettor throttle slide removed—indicative of the unit's great accessibility.



course, provide only a guide to the economy of a machine. Though not outstanding, the Mercury's abilities in this respect are up to average, with overall consumptions in the 120 m.p.g. region attainable. Oil consumption, of course, is negligible by two-stroke standards . . . a teaspoonful in a thousand miles would be a safe bet.

Sturdy and fleet; handy and, above all, as clean to use as a scooter. That, in a nutshell, will remain as my over-riding impression of this out-of-the-rut British moped.

CENTAUR.