

## IMPRESSIONS OF CURRENT MODELS

The 98 c.c. Two-stroke

## MERCURY "PIPPIN"

An All-British Economy Scooter

Announced This Month



*The "Pippin" could be cornered with confidence, even on wintry surfaces. (The transparent panel of the apron, just above the headlamp, is obscured by snow.)*

**C**OSTING only £115 10s. (incl. tax) and having an exceptionally low fuel consumption, the 98 c.c. two-speed Villiers two-stroke-powered Mercury "Pippin," introduced by Mercury Industries (Birmingham) Ltd., Dudley, Worcs, just over two weeks ago, is designed for economy both in original outlay and in operation.

Briefly, as described last week, the frame of the "Pippin" resembles an all-metal sleigh in appearance and the flat, up-swept pressed-steel main member has a box-like construction at its forward upper-extremity to support the steering head and telescopic front forks. The Villiers engine has integral fan-cooling and a unit construction two-speed gearbox operated by a ratchet handlebar control.

Since the "Pippin" is unusual, by modern standards, in having no rear suspension, the tester was curious to sample the effect of an unsprung rear wheel on road-holding and was pleased to note that the handling was of quite a high order. Despite the light weight (175 lb.) bends could be negotiated with confidence in the knowledge that the scooter would hold a pre-determined line, even on bumpy surfaces, and the un-sprung rear wheel was only noticeable over large pot-holes. Two-up, comfort was excellent and one passenger, after extolling the virtues of the machine's "feel," was incredulous when told he had been sitting on a solid rear-frame!

Considerable difficulty experienced in starting on taking delivery of the scooter was traced to a chronically weak carburettor setting. Raising the taper needle effected an immediate cure and with a flooded carburettor, a few kicks of the conventional motorcycle-type kickstarter brought the machine to life. In this connection, the excellent accessibility of the engine, gearbox and rear wheel was fully appreciated. Removal of four screws from the side and detaching the snap connector to the rear light enabled the whole bodywork to be easily removed.

A high bottom gear made necessary the slipping of the clutch on moving off and this gear was normally held until the speedometer (an extra) showed 20 m.p.h., when top gear was engaged. The scooter would then cruise happily and without fuss at 30-35 m.p.h. On the flat the indicated maximum speed was about 38 m.p.h. and on a long downhill stretch a flash reading of 44 m.p.h. was observed. The top gear was eminently suitable for traffic negotiation down to about 15 m.p.h. and it was a very steep hill indeed that made engagement of the low gear necessary. Gear changing from low to top was quick and easy and only involved a flick of the ratchet control; but selecting neutral from bottom was difficult and the machine was normally halted in top to make neutral selection easier.

Fitted with a windscreens, as an optional extra, the "Pippin's" weather protection was

first class. Even in snow the tester kept dry and warm, looking through the screen; the deeply valanced front mudguard stopped most of the road dirt from reaching the scooter's coachwork and in this respect was outstandingly good.

Both front and rear brakes produced a smooth, powerful retardation, although the front brake was found to need adjustment at the outset. As regards fuel consumption, in the mêlée of start-and-stop London traffic, and cruising at 25 m.p.h., the average was in the region of 120 m.p.g. For a run-in engine used in the country and under conditions free from snow and ice, the impression gained was that the maker's 160 m.p.g. claim could be justified.

The 5½-in. head lamp, supplied by direct current from the flywheel magneto, shed a powerful, wide beam of light that was quite exceptional for a machine of this capacity.

One criticism concerned the totally inadequate horn, which made a squeak barely audible even from the driving seat, despite an attempt at "tuning." Another was the absence of handlebar adjustment—a more forward mounting of the bars would have alleviated a slight back-ache resulting from a crouched position. The comfort of the firm dual seat left nothing to be desired—for rider and passenger.

With its useful cruising speed and economical operation and cost, the "Pippin" is ideal for local journeys and its attractive styling and finish and excellent weather protection should make it a favourite with the utility scooter rider.

## BRIEF SPECIFICATION

**Engine:** 98 c.c. Villiers Mk. 4F two-stroke; forced draught cooling by integral fan; aluminium head; cast-iron cylinder; bore, 47 mm. by stroke 57 mm.; claimed b.h.p., 2.8 at 4,000 r.p.m.; Villiers carburettor.

**Transmission:** Two-speed gearbox in unit with engine; gear change by "finger and thumb" ratchet handlebar control; ratios, 7.76 and 13.3:1; primary drive by gears; final drive by roller chain.

**Frame:** Welded tubular frame, reinforced at steering head.

**Wheels:** 15-in. rims, carrying 2.50 balloon tyres; full-width hubs, incorporating 4-in. brakes, front and rear.

**Lubrication:** Petrol; test carried out with 1:20 proportion.

**Electrical Equipment:** Flywheel magneto, also supplying direct lighting; 5¼-in. headlamp with dip-switch and double filament bulb; parking light; rear light; horn.

**Suspension:** Telescopic front forks; solid rear forks.

**Tank:** Of 1 gal. capacity.

**Dimensions:** Wheelbase, 51½ in.; ground clearance, 7¼ in.; unladen seat height, 29 in.; dry weight, 175 lb.

**Finish:** Dual-tone pearl-grey enamel with bright parts chromium plated or polished

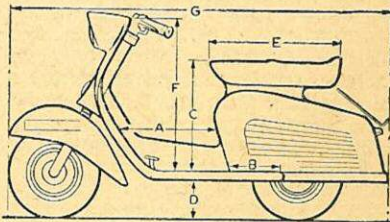
light alloy; weather-proofed by bonderizing.

**General Equipment:** Tool wallet; luggage hook; centre stand; dual seat; test carried out with windscreens, 60 m.p.h. speedometer and luggage carrier extra.

**Price:** £92 11s. 8d. plus £22 18s. 4d. P.T. = £115 10s.

**Annual Tax:** 17s. 6d.

**Makers:** Mercury Industries (Birmingham) Ltd., Dudley, Worcs.



Dimensions: A = 8½ in.; B = 10½ in.; C = 21½ in.; D = 7½ in.; E = 24½ in.; F = 29½ in.; G = 77 in.



January 30, 1958

MOTOR CYCLING

# It's a Pippin!

*a winner all the way*

- ★ **A Winner in Price :** One of the cheapest British motor scooters on the road.
- ★ **A Winner on Running Costs :** Three miles a penny.
- ★ **A Winner on Road Ability :** Bigger wheels, ideal wheel base, armchair comfort.
- ★ **A Winner on Performance :** Steady 35-40 m.p.h. cruising speed, with 2 up and luggage.
- ★ **A Winner on Reliability :** Thanks to the Villiers 98 c.c. fan-cooled engine.



*3 miles a penny—* **for only £115.10**

Including Tax

Mercury Industries (Birmingham) Ltd., Sales Office, Hardy House, 16, Beak Street, London, W.1.  
Phone: GER 4404/5