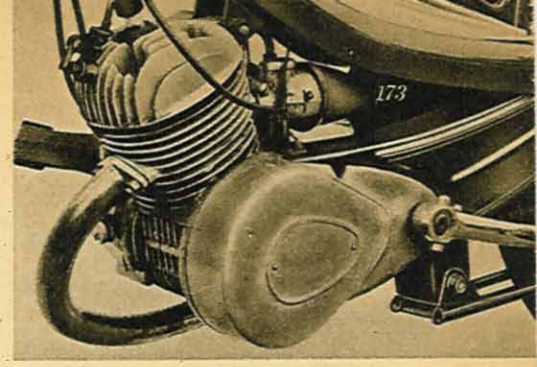
Road Tests of New Models

49 c.c. Phillips Gadabout

STYLISH MOPED GIVING A BRISK PERFORMANCE WITH EXCEPTIONAL FUEL ECONOMY



Close-up of the two-speed power unit. The carburettor embodies an air filter

TO enrich the road-user's vocabulary Germany coined the word "moped," a noun which describes admirably a two-wheeler incorporating a motor and pedals. But the moped of today is far removed from its ancestor, the motor-assisted pedal cycle; the modern machine is a designed-as-a-whole, light autocycle, a sturdy little mount in its own right.

Typical of the modern moped—at least so far as appearance is concerned—is the Phillips Gadabout, now entering its second year of production. The spine-type frame comprises twin D-section tubes which sweep in a smooth curve from the steering head to the rear-wheel spindle; a neat steel pressing forms a support for the saddle pillar and is continued rearward to blend with the fore part of the rear mudguard. A door in the left side of the pressing gives access to the tool compartment. Space between the chain stays and the mudguard is enclosed by steel panels; a bright aluminium pressing bridges the gap between the twin frame tubes from the base of the fuel tank to the foot of the saddle support.

Front suspension is by telescopic fork in which the same springs provide both shock and rebound cushioning. The sliding members are carried in bronze bushes which are lubricated via grease nipples. Unusually for a moped, the handlebar is attached to the fork upper bridge in motor-cycle fashion and can be adjusted for angle. The rear wheel is unsprung.

Built in unit with a two-speed gear box, the 49 c.c. two-stroke engine is suspended below the frame in the accepted position. Drive to the rear wheel—both power and pedal—is taken through a single chain; the pedal spindle passes through the gear box. Both front and rear brakes are of the internal-expanding type; the front is operated by hand lever, the rear by reverse pressure on the pedals. Gear changing is effected by a twistgrip on the left of the handlebar; a right-hand twistgrip controls the throttle.

Whether the engine was cold or warm, starting fell into the "child's-play" category. For a cold start the carburettor strangler was closed, the compression-release trigger operated and, with the machine stationary and the gear in neutral, the pedal crank was pushed forward gently. At working temperature, of course, use of the air strangler was unnecessary.

Torque at low engine revolutions was particularly good and at no time during the test did the pedals have to be used to assist the power unit. The Gadabout would move away from a standstill without effort and, though a speed of 20 m.p.h. could be attained in low gear, the high-gear performance was such that the machine would accelerate steadily from a speed as low as 10 m.p.h. Hill-climbing ability was first class. The Gadabout was ridden regularly over a very hilly route which included a gradient of 1 in 6; low gear was used only for the steepest parts of the run and the little engine pulled strongly without the slightest complaint.

In heavy traffic the machine more than held its own. Indeed, the flexibility of the power unit and general ease of control enabled the rider to employ the tactics of a London taxi driver. Maximum speed proved to be about 35 m.p.h. but for normal running the speed was kept down to between 25 and 30 m.p.h. While the telescopic fork absorbed the worst of the bumps, over stone setts the luxury of rear springing would have been an advantage.

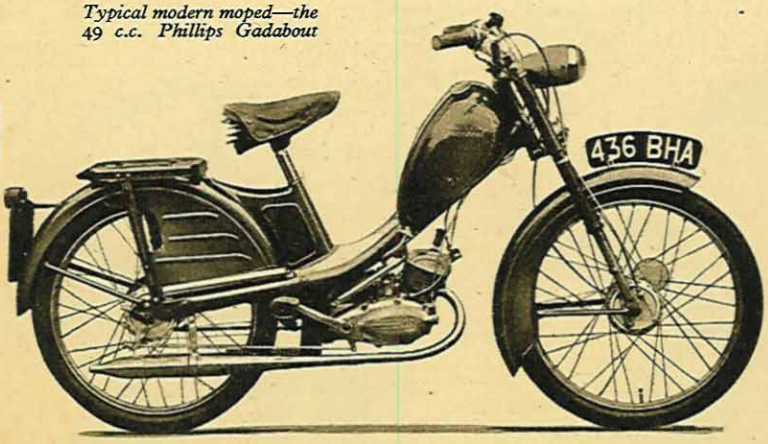
In the all-important matter of fuel economy the Gadabout was outstanding. Into a special test tank was measured exactly half a pint of petroil. The rider set out on a proving run at a steady 20 m.p.h. or as near to that figure as was possible with traffic lights and other city hazards to contend with. As the last drop of fuel was expended the Gadabout's speedometer indicated 12.7 miles. In other words, the consumption was at the rate of 203 m.p.g.

The test tank was replenished and another test started. This time the heaviest London traffic was deliberately sought—the maelstrom of Marble Arch, Oxford Street, Charing Cross Road and Trafalgar Square. No attempt was made to run at a steady speed and in such places where 30 m.p.h. could be attained (e.g., Victoria Embankment) the throttle was used to good effect. The Phillips came through with flying colours, returning 167 m.p.g.

Ease of control was notable and in this respect the width and comfort of the handlebar must be mentioned. The brakes, too, were most effective. Such was their efficiency, indeed, that both wheels could be locked by really vicious application. Back-pedal braking is an acquired technique and hence for normal gentle retardation the front brake came in for greater use.

Exhaust noise was pleasantly modulated by a long and very effective silencer. Main and dipped headlamp beams are available. The lighting is of the direct type and the output from the coils in the flywheel magneto was ample. Dry battery lighting for parking is not provided.

Finished in an attractive shade of metallic red, the Phillips Gadabout is a well thought out and highly practical moped, tractable in traffic and possessed of a liveliness unexpected from an engine of such small capacity.



Typical modern moped—the 49 c.c. Phillips Gadabout

INFORMATION PANEL

ENGINE: 49 c.c. (40×39.5mm) two-stroke. Detachable light-alloy cylinder head and light-alloy cylinder with cast-iron liner. Compression ratio, 6.8 to 1. Power output, 2.1 b.h.p. at 6,000 r.p.m. Petroil lubrication.

FRAME: Open spine type of twin D-section tubular construction.

CARBURETTOR: Pallas with air filter and strangler.

TRANSMISSION: Helical-gear primary drive to two-speed gear box in unit with engine. Gear control by handlebar twistgrip. Twin-plate clutch running in oil. Gear ratios: low, 22.6 to 1; high, 14.9 to 1. Final drive by chain.

IGNITION and LIGHTING: Bosch flywheel magneto with 17-watt lighting output. Headlamp providing main and dipped beams; 15/15-watt bulb.

FUEL CAPACITY: Approximately 1¼ gallons. Reserve-type tap.

WEIGHT: 96 lb.

PETROIL CONSUMPTION: At approximately 20 m.p.h., 203 m.p.g.

ROAD TAX: 17s 6d a year; 4s 10d a quarter.

PRICE: £57 11s 7d. With purchase tax (payable only in Great Britain), £71 8s.

MANUFACTURERS: Phillips Cycles, Ltd., Credenda Works, Smethwick, Birmingham, 40, Staffs.

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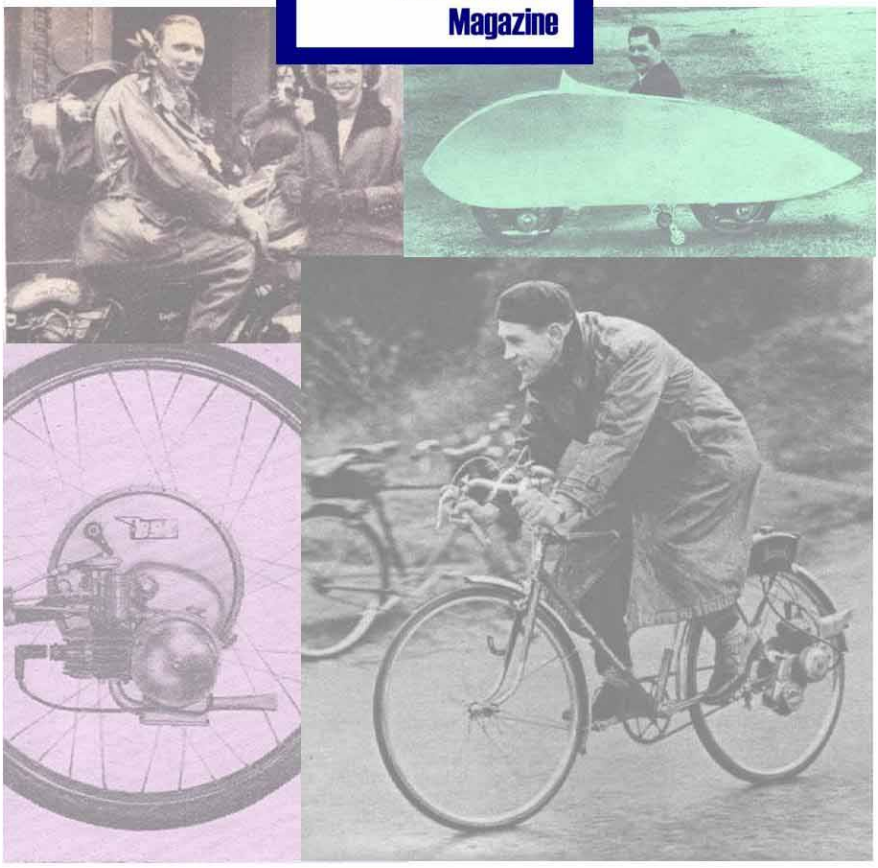

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