ROAD TEST REPORT

THE 125 c.c.

PIATTI

THE introduction of a new British built scooter would be an event of major interest itself, but in the case of the *Piatti* the interest is heightened by the originality of the design and the fact that it is produced by a firm which has already established a great reputation as a pioneer in the field of cyclemotors. Cyclemaster, Ltd. have foreseen the logical development of this form of transport and the new scooter is created to meet the demands of this rising market. It is more than appropriate that the designer of the machine, Vincente Piatti, was himself the designer of the first attachment engine to achieve wide popularity in this country.

Most noticeable feature of the new scooter is its body in the form of a single steel pressing with internal welded stiffeners. This is the main member of the machine and is body and chassis in one. All the points of attachment for suspensions, engine and transmission are mounted inside this pressing and access for servicing is gained by simply leaning the whole machine on its side. The combination of low over-all weight (180 lbs. fully equipped) and low centre of gravity make leaning over and picking up easy, even for the not so strong.

The 125 c.c. engine lies head forward horizontally under the body and the drive is by chain with a simple jockey pulley adjustment with micrometer setting. The three speed gearbox is incorporated in the rear axle and the drive is through a single plate clutch running in oil.

A *Wico-Pacy* flywheel magneto provides the sparks and also the current for direct lighting and horn. The headlamp has a double filament dipping main bulb with provision for a battery operated parking light as well.

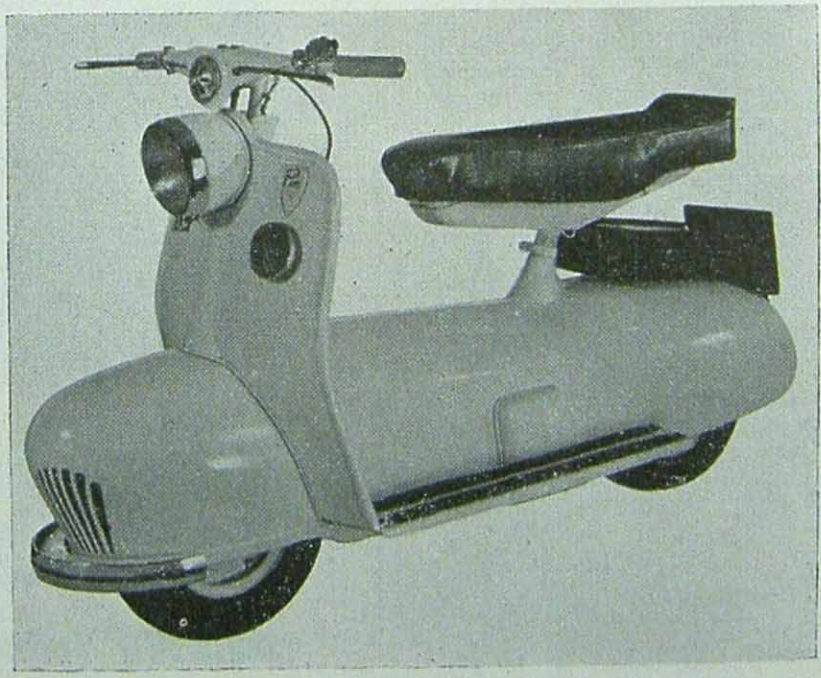
The fuel tank lies over the engine and has a capacity of over 1½-gallons, including reserve. Front wheel suspension is by enclosed compression spring and that of the rear wheel by tension spring with an ingenious arrangement for positioning a spring tensioner in three stages for varying loads and conditions.

Much attention has been given to details for the convenience of the rider and these indicate the essentially practical approach of the designer to the type of usage expected. The central stand, for instance, will almost certainly claim the *Power & Pedal* "Oscar" for the year as the easiest and safest stand yet devised. A small pull-button behind the steering head is connected by Bowden cable to the stand and all that is necessary to park, in the saddle or standing alongside, is a gentle pull on this button and the machine rolls back on to the stand without any effort at all. To release, the machine is either rolled forward or simply driven off under power.

A front end carrier will take a sizeable suitcase and an extra provided on the test machine was a wire mesh shopping basket secured by aerolastic straps. Another worth-while extra is a neat zipped cover for the spare wheel which provides space for a raincoat or similar garment under cover.

On The Road

The outstanding quality in the performance of the *Piatti* on the road is its flexibility. The machine could be brought down to little more than walking pace in top gear and driven away again without effort or transmission snatch. Control in traffic was simple and



the rather low bottom gear only used for moving off from standstill.

Up to 25 m.p.h. silence is good but inlet roar made itself heard above this speed and vibration also increased as the revs went up. The maximum speed obtained on the test vehicle was 42 m.p.h. on the flat but high performance was never intended to be a feature of the design and the qualities of the *Piatti* are best enjoyed in quiet and relatively low speed travel.

Steering has the familiar scooter characteristics of the small wheel types, a marked inclination to stay upright that increased with the road speed. But the even weight distribution between the wheels permitted by the design eliminated the front-wheel-light feel common to many scooters and afforded a marked stability on wet roads. Fast downhill runs coasting indicated that steering and braking were well up to far higher speeds than the engine afforded. Both brakes were very good and pulled up quickly and smoothly without squeals.

As might be expected with a modest powered machine, acceleration is not of the "flashing" order, but it enabled most urban traffic to be left behind and the engine felt quite happy at being worked hard through the gears. Hillclimbing, too, is modest and no fast main road averages were attempted during the test—these were not what the machine was made for.

Ridden solo, comfort was helped by the alternative positions offered by the dualseat and as this is adjustable for height it should be suited to any size and shape of rider. With two people aboard, however, especially largeish people, the little machine seemed somewhat cramped and neither rider nor passenger felt comfortable on a longish trip. The protection from road dirt in any weather is complete but a slightly larger screen would have covered a biggish rider rather better.

Summing Up

At the time of the test the *Piatti* was not in full production and there are undoubtedly several points receiving attention before the machines reach the public. We understand that Messrs. Amal are working with the makers on the production of a combined air-cleaner/intake-silencer and that engine vibration is also being dealt with. With these points under control and, we would suggest, some experimentation towards two-up comfort, the *Piatti* comes into a market more than ready for a British scooter at a modest price and backed by Cyclemaster service.

Signor Piatti has returned to the original functional conception of a scooter as a light, economical, easily handled runabout and his boldly original design appears to have achieved the objective.

ROAD TEST REPORT

The PUCH *"Scooterette"*

MANUFACTURED by Steyr-Daimler-Puch of Vienna and handled in Britain by Ryder's Autoservice, Ltd. of Bootle, Lancs., the *Puch* mo-ped and scooter have already established themselves with the discriminating public as machines of more than ordinary interest. The *MS50L* mo-ped in particular attracted favourable notice when we road tested it in our April issue this year and we were most interested to receive for test recently a new machine known as the "Scooterette" which is a development of the mo-ped.

The 49 c.c. *Puch* engine is blower cooled and the air cowling almost completely covers the engine, exposing a smooth and easy to clean exterior. The cylinder is fairly steeply inclined and is in unit with the 2-speed gearbox. Pressed steel is used for the frame members, welded into a single unit of backbone, saddle post and rear mudguard. The 5-pint petrol tank is mounted on rubber behind the steering head. Front forks are telescopic.

Ignition is by flywheel magneto with 17-watt lighting coils, the saddle is nose hinged and the wheels are quickly detachable by knockout spindles. The rear springing is on the swinging arc principle with enclosed telescopic suspension units.

Performance

As on the mo-ped, the scooterette has a car type choke control behind the steering head, but even this convenient control is rarely used—only for a dead cold start. In fact the starting of this engine in scooter form is the easiest thing we have ever met.

Pedals have been replaced by footboards and a kick starter and the pressure required to turn the engine over is so light that we were able to start up by pressing with *one finger* only. From a more conventional position one merely rests the foot on the pedal and the engine is quietly running—every time.

A feature of this engine is that it has a very wide range of revs and gets smoother as the revs go up. It two-strokes evenly all the time, even when running under light load, and mechanical silence is well above average. It must be admitted, however that the scooter is not so good in this respect as the mo-ped, presumably because the one piece welded engine shield and footboard assembly magnified both noise and vibration.

The gearing affords a lively getaway in first and a quick change up to top gear. Normal urban traffic speeds could be easily maintained. Top gear would serve down almost to walking pace if desired and at such low speeds the engine and

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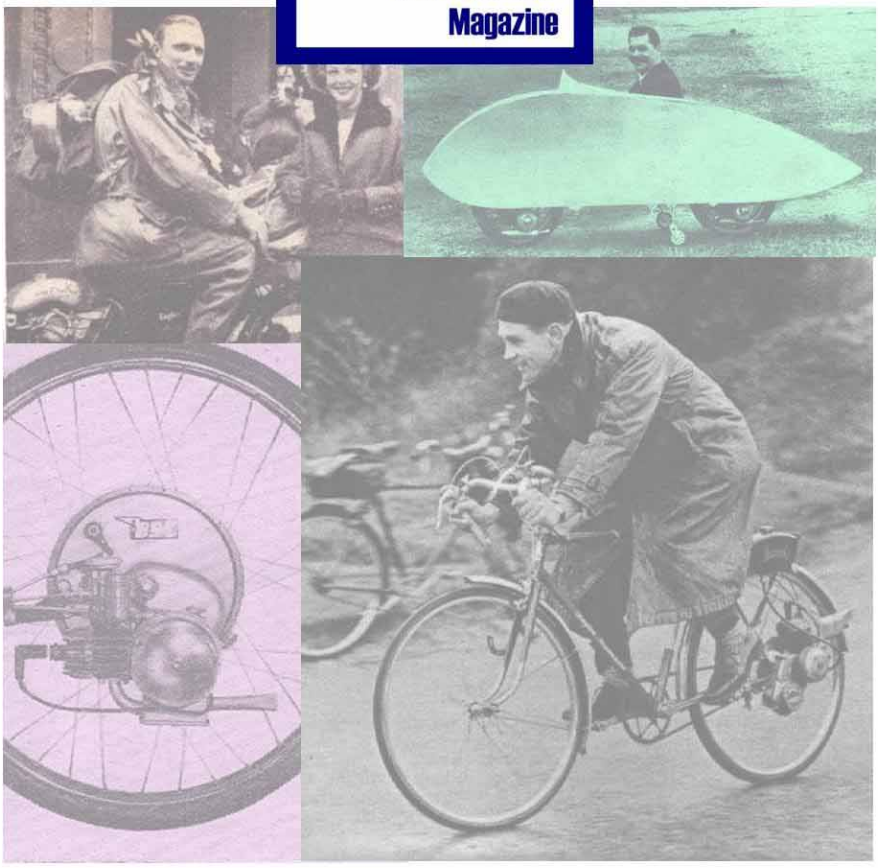

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