



## PRIOR 218

### Three-Speed Sports Moped, from Wolverhampton, Tested in 1958 Form

IT was in the autumn of last year that I last had the chance of testing the three-speed Sachs-powered Prior 218 Sports moped, then the newest addition to the Prior range. The machine which I rode at that time gave a tantalizing indication of what could be expected from the then-new three-speed Sachs engine, and I was happy to include a second look at the Prior at an early stage in our 1958 test programme, to see just how six months' "shaking down" had affected the model's characteristics.

This cobby sports mount has, I think, got most of the attributes which even the most demanding owner could desire. First and foremost, it is tough, and equipped with good front, and excellent rear, suspension systems. Its mudguarding is highly effective, and there is engine shielding of a degree which is adequate, without being prone to drumming or a complication to maintenance. The riding position is comfortable; the luggage-carrying equipment better than average for this class of mount; the performance sufficient to per-

mit a sustained cruising speed of around 30 m.p.h.; the hill-climbing first-rate.

Handling, of course, is of prime importance in a machine of this type, and in this respect I found the Prior 218 to be almost ideal. The deep, narrow tank enables the rider to get a good grip with the knees—always a help when you wish to waft a moped round corners smartly—and the combination of good suspension and low centre of gravity makes for a machine which will hold to its line uncomplainingly, even when the road surface is indifferent. This the Prior will do, though I felt that a little more movement in the front suspension would obviate a slight tendency towards oscillation of the swinging links, which could be induced on really vicious surfaces above 15 m.p.h. I doubt, however, if it would ever be encountered on normal going, where the combination of coil springs for the suspension media and rubber buffers as rebound dampers is perfectly satisfactory.

Gear ratios have been nicely judged, and should translate the machine's better-

#### The PRIOR at a GLANCE

**Maximum Speed:** 33 m.p.h. in 35 sec. from rest.

**Economy:** 122 m.p.g. at 20 m.p.h.  
110 m.p.g. at 30 m.p.h.

**Braking** From 20 m.p.h. From 30 m.p.h.  
Both brakes ... 16 feet. 35 feet.  
Front only ... 24 feet. 71 feet.  
Rear only ... 23 feet. 51 feet.

**Load carried during test:** 200 lb.

**Engine:** Sachs two-stroke; 38 mm. bore x 42 mm. stroke=47 c.c.; c.r. 6 to 1; 1.6 b.h.p. at 4,750 r.p.m.

**Gearbox:** In unit with engine; three speeds, with handlebar twist grip control; gear primary drive; chain final drive; kick starting.

**Frame:** Welded-up from steel pressings; swinging fork rear suspension with pivoted engine unit; trailing-link front forks controlled by rockers bearing on coil springs.

**Tank:** 2-gal. capacity.

**Lights:** Integral head and tail lamps fed direct from Bosch flywheel magneto-generator.

**Wheels and Brakes:** Both brakes 4-in. diameter, internal-expanding in full-width hubs; chromium-plated rims and rust-proof spokes; 2.25-in. x 23-in. Phoenix tyres.

**Equipment:** Horn; luggage carrier; speedometer; tool box; tool kit; centre stand; glove locker; head, toolbox and locker security locks; number plates; licence holder.

**Finish:** Black frame and forks, with cherry tank and beige engine shields. Chromium-plated details.

**Weight:** 114 lb.

**Makers:** B.P. Scooters Ltd., No. 10 Buildings, The Airport, Wolverhampton.

**Price:** £99 19s. 6d. inc. P.T.

Something to crow about! Possession of a luxury moped like the Prior 218 confers on its owner the freedom of the road for all-weather touring.

than-average hill-climbing into something approaching pedal-free riding even in mountainous districts. Gear selection, however, was not invariably positive—a feature common to most three-speed gearboxes with twist-grip control, I fear—and as a consequence this operation could not be rushed. Hence, the advantage over a two-speed machine on acceleration, which the possession of three gears *should* confer, was rarely achieved in practice. Instead, one had acceleration which was less obtrusive, requiring lower engine speeds in the intermediates. Since lower engine speeds obviously pre-suppose lighter loadings in the unit, the Prior's "sports" performance is not gained at the expense of durability—itsself quite a good argument for the extra gear.

Fuel consumption—as the 1957 test had indicated—was roughly average for the sports class of machine. Braking, too, was average, though requiring rather heavy pedal pressure on the back-peddalling rear anchor to obtain the best results.

In only two departments, I think, would I class the Prior as wanting—it possesses a dual seat which has extremely hard, rather square, edges which would, I'd say, take quite a time to break in, and the exhaust note is flat, but a trifle too obvious. Otherwise, this sportster from Wolverhampton "makes the grade" in everything, and is assured of a high place in my personal list of favourites.

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