

IMPRESSIONS OF 1959 MODELS

The 197 c.c. Two-stroke

BOND "MINICAR" Mk. E

SALOON COUPÉ

On the Road with Preston's Latest Three-wheeler,
described on Pages 628-9 of this Issue

AS announced on page 628 of this issue, the 1959 range of Bond "Minicar" three-wheelers will include a handsome new-comer, the Mk. E Saloon Coupé. One of the first of these models to be built was recently lent to *Motor Cycling* for a short test.

As the model had not been run in, it was impossible to drive it under maximum power, but the new plastics top did not vibrate or rattle at any speed used. The interior was noticeably more snug than that of the "convertible" type, and better all-round vision was afforded by the wrap-round rear screen and rear side windows. The joint between the screen and the new top is very neat and completely weatherproof, as, indeed, is the rest of the vehicle.

A smell of new plastics could be detected if the machine were left overnight with the windows closed, but this is a small criticism that can be made of almost any vehicle constructed of this material and invariably it does not apply after a few weeks' service. As it was, a few minutes' run with the windows open soon cleared the air.

The makers are to be commended on the

Absolutely modern in line, the new Bond has all the good characteristics of its predecessors.



excellent finish achieved on the exterior of the new canopy; it blends well with the lines of the rest of the bodywork and only very close examination reveals it to be of non-metallic construction.

When the car was driven at night, the large rear window admitted plenty of light from following traffic, but this did not cause any undue concern—thanks very largely to the excellent view ahead provided by the really superb lights from the twin headlamps, which operate from the 12-volt system used for the Siba "Dynastart" equipment.

In general characteristics, the model lived up to the standards set by its predecessors. Starting was exceptionally simple, only a shade of choke being employed on cold starts. With the engine hot, the briefest of touches on the starter key brought instant response from the engine. Driven with the

restraint due to the new power unit, the model would cruise quite happily at 28-30 m.p.h. The newness of the machine was also evidenced by the brakes, which had not completely bedded down when the model was taken over.

Other points worthy of comment include the really large stowage space behind the rear seat, sufficient for a great deal of luggage plus the optionally extra spare wheel. The twin wipers kept the screen clear even in heavy rain and were self-parking—a labour-saving point. The mirror is well positioned to give a good, wide, rear view.

In short, the little vehicle proved that its designers had achieved their object of adding "full saloon" amenities to the handiness and economy associated with their established models—and this without extra weight or first cost.

FRANCIS-BARNETT ADD THREE

Continued from page 608

exhaust pipe contribute to remarkably high power output obtained without loss of reliability.

A loop frame embraces the unit, but bifurcates at a point beneath the gear compartment to join a fabricated lug structure from which bolt-on duplex tubes extend up at 45° to a mudguard-cum-seat support member, forming an immensely strong triangular sub-frame. Ear lugs locate a transverse pivot for a fabricated oval-tube swinging fork. Group resources have developed special "Roadholder"-type front forks modified to suit the "Scrambler" and there is a short foam-rubber seat. Wheel details are: front, a WM 1-21 rim carrying a Dunlop 2.75-in. by 21-in. "Sports" tyre;

rear, WM 2-19 with a Dunlop "Sports" 3.50-in. by 19-in. tyre held by two security bolts. Standard gear ratios are calculated with a 56-t. rear-wheel sprocket, but 54-t., 58-t. and 60-t. sprockets are available.

Developed from the "Scrambler," a further sports machine is the "Trials 83." This model has most of the technical characteristics of the "batting iron," but its engine has a generator incorporating lighting coils—though the full equipment for direct lighting is an extra at £6 11s. inclusive. A centre-of-head plug position is retained and the normal side aperture is occupied by a compression-release valve. A 9.25 : 1 compression ratio and wide gearbox ratios cater for more sedate speeds on roads. For rough

and watery conditions there is a high-level exhaust system with the silencer set inboard of the rear frame structure.

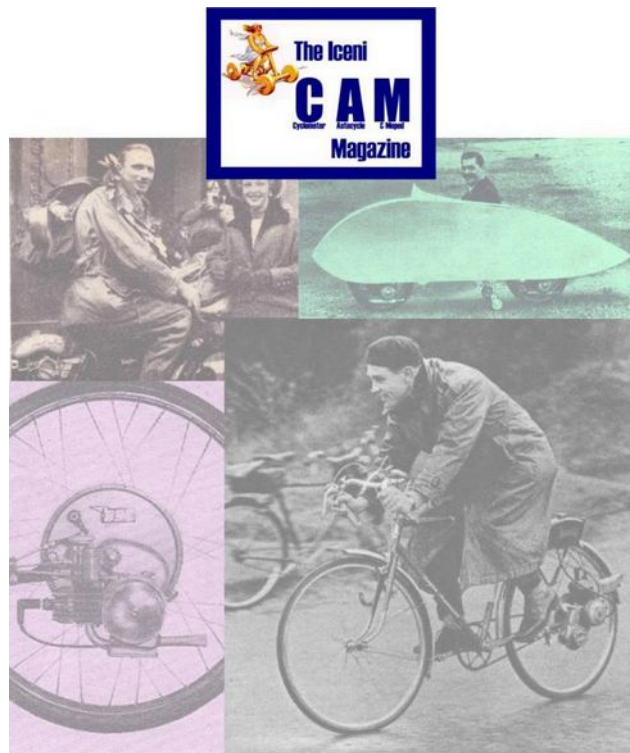
"Scrambler" wheels are used and the same option on sprocket sizes applies for the "Trials 83," but the tyres specified are Dunlop "Universals" (2.75 in. by 21 in. front and 4.00 in. by 19 in. rear). Arden green is the basic finish for both models; wheel rims are chromium-plated and fuel tanks dull-chromed to resist special fuels.

The "Trials 83" has a saddle, instead of a seat; a circular canister accommodates the tool-kit, which is standard equipment. Also standard are a Smiths speedometer, a pump, a bulb horn and competition number plates—all ready for riding from the showroom to the first observed section.

SPECIFICATIONS AND PRICES

Model and type	Engine capacity	C.R.	Approx. b.h.p.	Suspension		Gear ratios	Weight	Tank capacity	Wheel-base	Ground clearance	Saddle height	Basic price	Total inc. P.T.
				Front	Rear								
							lb.	gal.	in.	in.	in.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
78 "Plover" t.s. ..	147	8.25	—	T	SF	6.6, 8.9, 16.9 ..	185	2½	49½	5	29½	98 10 0	122 17 7
79 "Light Cruiser" t.s. ..	171	—	—	T	SF	6.9, 9.0, 12.8, 20.2 ..	247	3½	51	5½	29½	132 0 0	164 13 5
81 "Falcon" t.s. ..	197	7.56	—	T	SF	6.1, 8.2, 15.6 ..	244	2½	49½	6	30½	128 0 0	159 13 7
80 "Cruiser" t.s. ..	249	8.1	—	T	SF	5.9, 7.7, 10.9, 17.4 ..	290	3½	51½	5½	30	148 10 0	185 5 0
82 "Scrambler" t.s. ..	249	10.5	—	T	SF	8.03, 10.4, 14.04, 23.3	263	2	53	8½	31	155 0 0	193 7 3
83 "Trials" t.s. ..	249	9.25	—	T	SF	8.0, 11.5, 19.4, 28.6 ..	273	2	53	8½	34	159 0 0	198 7 0

IceniCAM On-Line Library



www.icenicam.org.uk