ROAD TEST REPORT

Four Months with an ITOM "TOURIST"

THERE is a puritanical streak in most cyclemotorists. They like to praise their machines for demure qualities like silence or braking power. But there exist also those who hold speed or even noise in high esteem. Owners of bright red sports cars have their kind of mentality. So does the present writer—four months ago he chose an *Itom*.

This review is based on impressions gained during this time riding daily from an inner suburb to work in the very centre of London and from week-end trips both south to Sussex and north to the Midlands.

The *Itom* is manufactured in Milan and so, the linguists say, should be pronounced *EE-tom*. The 48 c.c. two-stroke engine is mounted under the pedals and has an ungeared roller drive—the roller being mounted on one end of the crank-shaft and the flywheel magneto incorporating a lighting coil on the other.

The flywheel magneto projects so that a special crank is required to carry the left-hand pedal clear of it. This crank is supplied with the engine. It might be thought that such an arrangement would make the machine awkward to pedal but in fact it is scarcely noticeable.

The roller is engaged on the back wheel by the movement of the whole engine about a pivot. Engagement is controlled by a pedal resembling a motor cycle foot-change gear lever.

The carburettor has a strangler that is also operated by deft foot movement but this is only required when starting. Other controls comprise the throttle lever and the decompression lever.

The *Itom* under review is fitted to a *Raleigh* "Lenton" sports cycle modified by an *Alfa* spring fork. Wheels are 26in. x 1¾in., the rear having an *Avon* "Powermaster" tyre.

That, briefly, is the machine. What of its performance? Despite a 14 stone rider, this has proved to be really lively. It has been stated on good authority that another *Itom* has reached 47 m.p.h. The writer's machine has never achieved this but can repeatedly attain a maximum speed on the level of over 30 m.p.h. It will cruise indefinitely at 25 m.p.h., this speed falling to about 20 m.p.h. uphill. Acceleration from 5 to 25 m.p.h. is very good and the steady increase in power output over this speed range imparts a pleasing sensation to the rider.

The *Itom* will climb modest hills, say of 1 : 20, without pedal assistance. But the best way to tackle hills is to pedal right from the base and not let the engine revolutions drop. In this way the engine

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is allowed to give its maximum power and steep hills can be overcome without difficulty. Readers may know Arundel Hill, Sussex, with its tiresome left hand turn off and up in the middle. This the *Itom* climbs easily without much effort on the pedals. The only hill which has beaten man and machine is Bury Hill, Sussex. This is three quarters of a mile long and has a gradient of 1 : 9 most of the way. It had to be walked. Petrol consumption is about 200 m.p.g.

There are alternative techniques for riding the *Itom* in heavy traffic when manoeuvring at under 5 m.p.h. is required. Either the left hand is kept on the decompressor or else the pedal is used to disengage the engine. This latter has the advantage of leaving the left hand free for signals.

The *Itom*, being an under-bracket unit with low centre of gravity, will coast down hills beautifully when the engine is disengaged.

One reason for the *Itom's* fine performance is doubtless the simplicity of its exhaust. No back pressure and no silence.

Some faults can be found in the *Itom* even by those who do not mind the noise. The tank holds two litres which is just under half a gallon. A can is needed to take petrol from a British pump which delivers a minimum of half a gallon. The consolation in using an intermediate can is that it gives an opportunity for thorough petrol-oil mixing.

The *Itom* roller is necessarily small as it is ungeared. Used with a narrow, fairly high pressure tyre, it slips in wet, though not in dry, weather. In rain bad slip is experienced over 15 m.p.h. In this respect the *Itom* compares unfavourably with those units which by using a reduction gear are able to employ a much larger roller.

Another criticism can be made of the method by which the roller position is adjusted relative to the back tyre. This may involve moving the position on the frame of the front engine-retaining bracket ; or removing the carburettor and adjusting a distance rod ; or both. Admittedly such adjustment is seldom required, but it is a bore when the purchase of a new chain necessitates shifting the back wheel and hence the position of the roller.

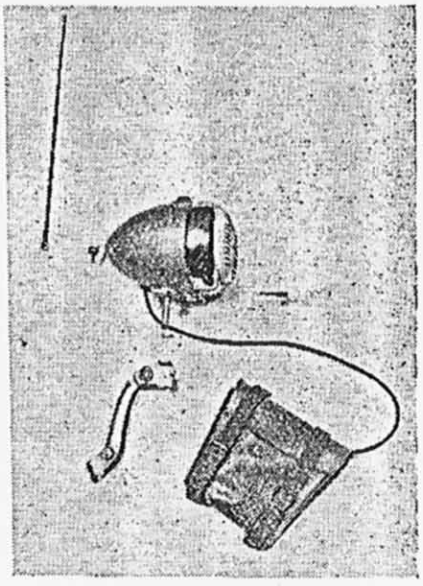
(*This has been modified on the latest models*—ED)

Under-bracket engines are agreeably inconspicuous and the *Itom's* silver tank, though prominent on the frame is elegant. Appropriate indeed to a unit with gallant speed and thunderous power.

Two Wheeled Radio

RECENTLY demonstrated in London was the newest attraction for the gadget-minded cyclist, a cycle radio set in the shape of a headlamp mounted on the handlebars. It is a 4-valve job with a telescopic aerial and powered by dry batteries carried in a neat leather case little larger than a normal pedal cycle tool-bag.

Tuning was selective, range sur, prising and the volume from the 3in. speaker quite adequate. The cost, including duty and tax is around £15.



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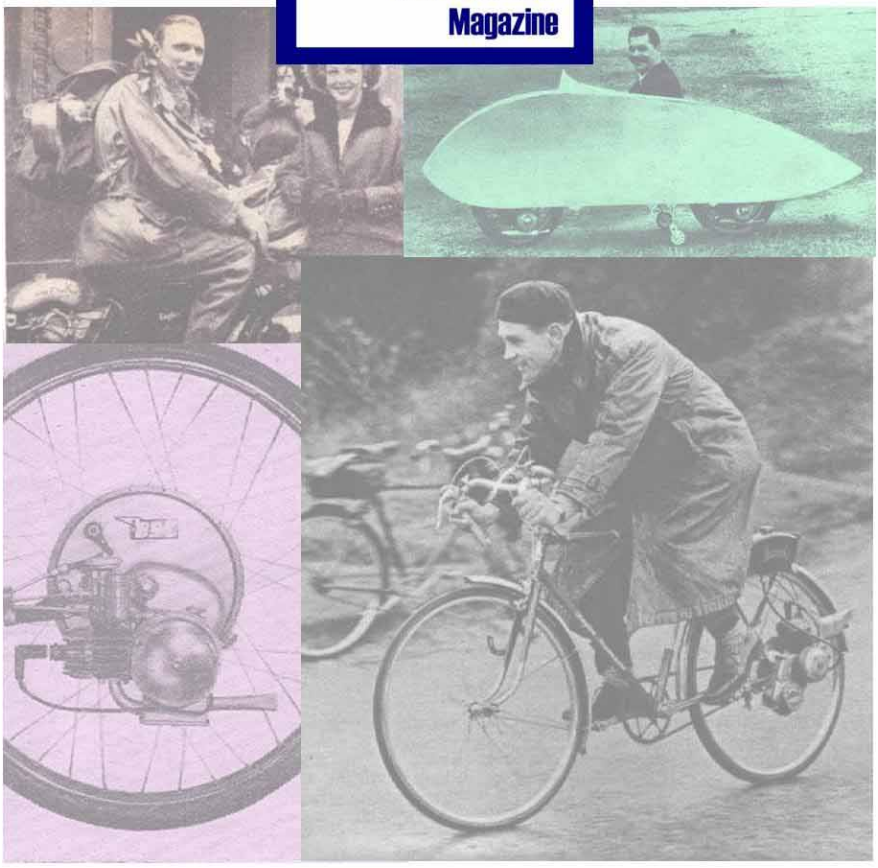

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