

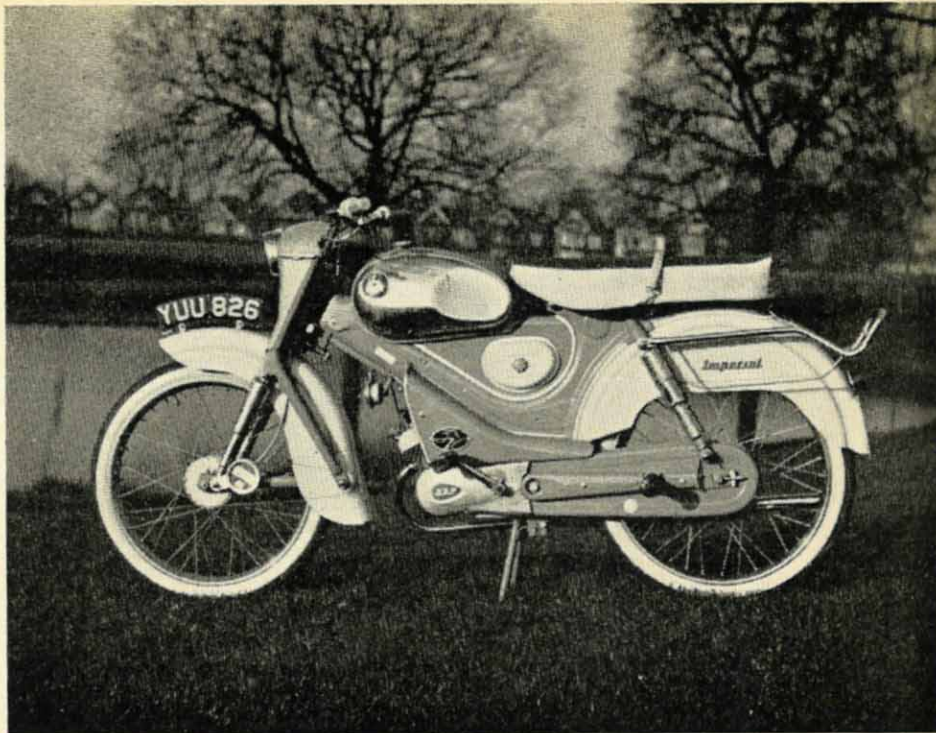
ROAD TEST REPORT:

R.A.P. "Imperial" Quality and Performance

IN Holland the mo-ped has higher status in motoring circles than anywhere else in the world and, although the mass sales naturally go to the cheap and simple powered bicycle types, the Dutch market is notable for some real quality machines that owe little to the pedal cycle in design or market appeal.

One such quality range is the R.A.P., well established in Holland and now re-introduced to this country by the R.A.P. MOTOR COMPANY, of Stoke Heath Works, Bromsgrove. There are three models in the range, all sharing the same basic specification and the model received for test was the *Imperial*.

This machine, despite its 50 c.c. engine, is a full sized fully sprung, two-seater motor cycle except that it has cycle type pedals for starting and operating the rear brake. The dual-seat is really big and can take two normal adults. Pillion footrests are built in and everything about the model is up to good class motor cycle standards. The rear chain is fully enclosed and there is a shapely two-



and-a-half gallon fuel tank, deeply valanced mudguards and hydraulically damped swinging arm suspension front and rear.

The 49 c.c. engine has an output of 2.1 b.h.p. and in practice the power does not depend on peak revs but is there in useful quantities all the way up. Gear primary drive and a multi-plate clutch transmit the power to a three-speed gearbox and the final drive is by fully enclosed chain. Both wheels have full width hubs in light alloy with fins and the tyres are of large section, 23-inch x 2.25-inch. Controls are conventional except for the cold starting device on the *Encarwi* carburettor which is operated by pressing a thumb lever and turning the twist grip forward, past the closed position. As soon as the engine is running the twist grip is opened and the choke release is self-cancelling.

Quite Different

Although by definition a mo-ped, the handling and performance of the R.A.P. mark it down as something quite different from any other machines in this category. We have become accustomed recently to sporting type three-speed mo-peds of equal or even greater output than this one, but they all develop their power at high revs and the driving techniques are conditioned accordingly.

With the R.A.P., however, one drives off from standstill at quite modest revs without much clutch slip and upward changes are made quietly and easily at speeds more like those of much larger engined machines. Acceleration in all gears is brisk and

positive and Top can be used comfortably in traffic from about 15 m.p.h. to the machine's maximum of a little over 30 m.p.h. Vibration is almost completely absent throughout the speed range and it is as quiet and comfortable to cruise at maximum as at half throttle.

By virtue of the famous "Frankfurt Pot" silencer design the standard of exhaust silence is very good indeed, almost too good in that because of it some slight mechanical noise from the transmission can be heard which on most machines would be drowned by the engine. It goes without saying that on a quality job such as this there is not a rattle anywhere.

Even apart from the engine performance the R.A.P. is in a class by itself in general handling. The motor cycle layout of the large tank placed horizontally between the rider's knees gives a feeling of solidity and the really excellent suspension system with a pair of large damped telescopic spring units fore and aft controlling long swinging arm forks provides first class road holding with a high standard of comfort. This comfort angle demands note of the seating which is a real full sized dualseat and nothing like the hard and narrow posterior props that have claimed that name in the mo-ped field of late. It cannot, of course, be adjusted for height and this means that the machine is not suitable for short legged riders (the open framed *Matador* model has a slightly lower conventional saddle).

On the machine tested the rear brake called for rather a lot of pressure and afforded steady rather than firm stopping power but this

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may have been a matter for adjustment. The front brake is smooth and powerful, a good stopper on any surface. The well valanced mudguards provide good protection from road dirt to both machine and rider.

As might be expected on a mo-ped costing nearly £100, the quality of detail work is very good and this makes for pleasant handling. The gearchange is positive and Second cannot be missed either upward or downwards. Everything that is meant to move does so easily and everything that is meant to be fixed is firm and rigid. Standard equipment included in the price includes a reasonably effective electric horn and a speedometer built into the headlamp cowl and illuminated at night. There is a steering headlock with two keys supplied. The tool "box," however, consists of a hole through the frame with detachable panels on both sides. Within this space is a kit consisting of a plug spanner wrapped in a white duster and secured with a R.A.P. tiepin!

Another minor criticism is that the tyres have cycle type valves and cannot, therefore, be checked for pressure with a gauge nor pumped up from a garage airline.

New Class

By far the silliest thing about this machine is the presence of pedals. They serve no useful purpose and are less comfortable than proper footrests. It is possible for the driver to use the pillion footrests but not very comfortable and, of course, this loses contact with the rear brake and is not to be recommended.

Given a minor modification in this direction, the R.A.P. Imperial would be an excellent light motor cycle combining light weight and economy with very high standards of comfort and a useful performance. Appearance also is most attractive and we found plenty of interest from members of the general public who appreciated this handy looking, quiet and clean machine with its built-in passenger accommodation and up-to-date design features.

The sports version sold as the Rocky with similar specification but tuned for higher speeds is available at the same price. But it is the quality of this Imperial model that it does its job quietly and efficiently and is a practical tool of transport.

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: Two-stroke single, bore 40 mm. x stroke 39.5 mm., capacity 49 c.c. Compression ratio 6.8 to 1, output 2.1 b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m. "Encarwi" carburettor with self-cancelling choke control and induction silencer.

TRANSMISSION: Unit construction 3-speed gearbox. Ratios 15.6, 18.5 and 29.4 to 1. Helical gear primary drive, multi-plate clutch in oil, fully enclosed secondary chain.

FRAME: Beam type welded assembly in pressed steel with forged steel

lugs. Side panels to engine. Fuel tank capacity 2½ gallons plus Reserve. Cowled in headlamp. Thief proof lock. Dual seat as standard, with pillion footrests.

SUSPENSION: Swinging arm forks on silentbloc rubber bearings front and rear. Coil spring sealed, oil-damped telescopic units all round. 3-inch travel.

WHEELS: Internal expanding brakes in full width hubs. Plated rims, "Vredestein" tyres 23-inch x 2.25-inch. Whitewalls.

ELECTRICS: "Bosch" magneto/generator. 6-volt/17-watt lighting. 15/15-watt headlamp with adjustable beam.

WEIGHT: 139 lb.

PRICE: £96 (including P.T.).

CONCESSIONAIRES: R.A.P. Motor Company, Stoke Heath Works, Bromsgrove, Worcs.

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en the clamp which connects the silencer to the exhaust pipe (C Fig. 1). The silencer can then be withdrawn from the machine.

With the 10 mm. box spanner unscrew the bolt in the tail piece of the silencer (Fig. 2) and the silencer can then be split in half to enable the interior to be cleaned. Wipe off all the oily deposits with paraffin. To remove the carbon which is blocking the holes in the baffle plate, use a piece of stout wire and poke through the holes. Scrape away all the carbon deposits from the interior of the silencer and reassemble in the reverse order.

If deposits are not very hard a silencer can be effectively cleaned by merely washing it thoroughly in a strong, hot detergent solution.

STAGE 2. The Cylinder Exhaust Port

The exhaust pipe is held to the cylinder barrel by two 10 mm. nuts (Fig. 3). Take care not to damage the asbestos gasket as this can be

used again. Remove the spark-plug. Now by shining a torch through the spark plug hole (Fig. 4) and peering through the exhaust port on the cylinder barrel you can observe the piston in the cylinder barrel. With the engine in gear, rotate the back wheel until the piston is at the bottom of its travel. Small jagged particles of carbon deposit will be seen in the exhaust port. These can be removed by prodding them with a stout nail file, allowing

them to fall inside the barrel. *Take care* not to let your file scratch the wall of the cylinder. After thoroughly cleaning the exhaust port aperture, re-assemble in the reverse order. The small granules of carbon that you have dislodged will eventually be blown out through the exhaust pipe.

STAGE 3. The Cylinder Head and Piston Crown

Remove the spark plug. With the 11 mm. box spanner unscrew the

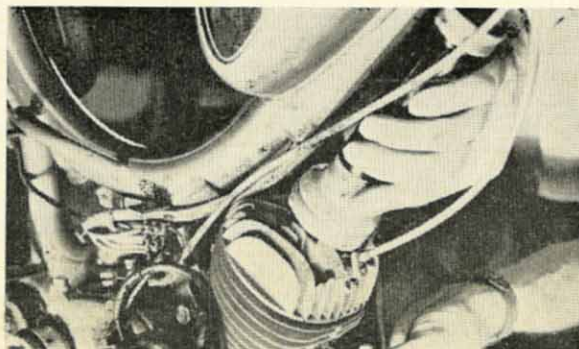


Fig. 4
Shining a torch
through the
spark plug
hole to see how
much carbon
is in the
exhaust port.



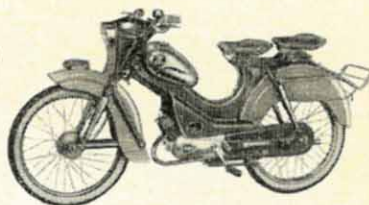
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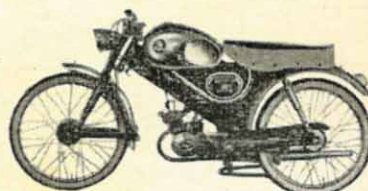
IMPERIAL

3-speed engine. Safety gear handle grip. Large 2.3/5 Imp. gallon tank with chromium plated panels. Very large dual seat (length 24 inches). Richly chromium plated luggage carrier. Foot rests for passenger. **Colours:** red/grey blue/silver light grey/dark grey. RAP MATADOR 3V is supplied with two separate seats, richly chromium plated luggage carrier and and foot-rests for the passenger. Price complete, including Purchase Tax, £96. 0. 0.



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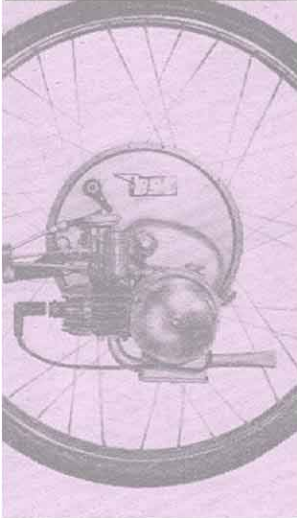
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