

Road Tests of 1929 Models



The 996 c.c. A.J.S. Outfit

The New Big Twin A.J.S. Proves to be an Admirable Sidecar Machine.

IN most respects the model M1 A.J.S. differs from the model K1 (last year's 799 c.c. machine), but strange though it may seem the 1928 instruction book still covers the current models, but for the addition of a leaf dealing with the dry sump lubrication. The re-designed frame, accommodating a saddle tank and giving a low riding position, new forks using girder blades of round-section steel and a compression barrel spring, detachable cylinder heads to the engine, which has been increased to 996 c.c., adjustable and sportingly shaped bars, a clean and handsome exhaust system employing nickel-plated pipes, silencer and fishtail are all outstanding changes, while those good features, totally enclosed chains, quickly detachable and interchangeable wheels, and elaborate and efficient mudguarding all go together to make a mount combining sporting lines and amazing power with the sweet running and flexibility of the ideal touring machine.

The model which we took on road test was fitted with one of the heavyweight Hayward launch-type sidecars, and the general ensemble was so attractive as to cause comment and arouse admiration wherever the machine was taken.

Comfort a Feature.

We took over the model just before the Christmas holiday, and as we used it in connection with the London-Exeter run we were able to put it through its paces under all manner of conditions. The weather was particularly cold, but when once the knack of starting was acquired no trouble was experienced in this respect, although starting became easier as the miles were run off. The riding position was really comfortable, and we found no need to experiment with

the adjustable bars. The position of the rider was just slightly leaning forward, while the feet rested on footboards which were so admirably placed that it was possible to arrive at the end of a long trip with not the slightest feeling of cramp or fatigue in the lower limbs. The heavy and rigid sidecar chassis gave one a sense of absolute security. So sturdy, in fact, was the frame that it was found nearly impossible to skid the outfit on rain-soaked roads. Several efforts were made to do this, all without success, but a number of companions on other sidecar machines were unintentionally broadsiding in all directions.

A Flexible Motor.

The steering was light, and on left-hand bends could be described as being as near perfect as possible. Quite sharp curves could be taken fast without the slightest tendency to lift on the part of the sidecar, and with no trace of kick from the bars. It was found, however, that it was as well to ride with the damper rather tight, for otherwise on right-hand bends on not very good roads the bars were apt to give rather an unpleasant jerk on striking a pot-hole.

As has been said earlier, the engine combined a surge of power, which was quite astonishing, with exceptional docility. It was possible to potter through London traffic all day on second gear, the outfit getting under way from a standstill on this ratio without any bother whatsoever, and although it struck us once or twice that a slightly higher figure than 8.83 to 1 for this gear could have been employed, acceleration and speed were good, 40 m.p.h. being reached in second gear on quite a number of occasions. On the other hand the machine

would roll smoothly along at less than 10 m.p.h. on this particular gear. On top we could accelerate from about 15 m.p.h. to 55 m.p.h. with really remarkable ease, and in fact it was easy to travel all day on main roads in this gear, only changing into a lower for towns and villages. There were few main-road hills, at any rate in the South of England, which required second gear. The outfit romped up River Hill—well known to Londoners as a long and rather winding acclivity near Sevenoaks with a maximum gradient of 1 in 8. Flat-out speed was, perhaps, a little disappointing, it being never possible to push it beyond 58 m.p.h., but, on the other hand, speeds between 50 and 55 could be easily maintained, apparently for unlimited time.

The dry-sump oiling system gave no trouble whatever, and although no check was kept on the amount of oil used, it is sufficient to say that on two occasions when the rider thought that it was about time to buy some oil the tank would not even take a pint. An auxiliary oil feed to the cylinder bases was provided, but we found no need to use it. The petrol consumption was good, being in excess of 50 m.p.g.

A point which, in the opinion of a number of sporting riders who looked over the machine, could be altered with advantage was the employment of two pedals for the brakes. The pedal on the left, operating the rear brake, was placed just a little too high to be reached comfortably, it being necessary to take the foot from

the board, and consequently the left knee was removed from the knee grip, and on a windy day macintoshes and coats which were being kept in place by being nipped between the knee and the grip were apt to blow back and expose the riders' knees to wind and rain. This was an annoying point as it occurred pretty nearly every time the foot was placed upon the brake. The front brake pedal was also too far from the board, but this did not worry us so much as the need seldom arose to make use of it. Quick adjustment is provided for both brakes.

In spite of the cleverly designed and quite excellent cover over the tappets and valve springs, the valve gear began to get a little noisy towards the end of our test, but we had never an opportunity to take off the cover to see if tappet adjustment was necessary. In all probability half an hour with a couple of spanners would have made a lot of difference, as the valve gear, when the machine was taken over, was quite reasonably silent.

The general equipment of the machine was good. The electrical fittings were of Lucas manufacture, the headlamp incorporating an illuminated ammeter and a very easily operated switch; the beam cast was long and brilliant. On "dim," quite a good fog light was obtained. The sidecar screen (adjustable), apron and cover, were all of stout materials, while the mudguard was very rigidly mounted to the frame.

Summing up, the 996 c.c. A.J.S. is a delightful sidecar machine for heavy work and with a sporting "chair," such as the Launch, it is a "goodlooker."

BRIEF SPECIFICATION OF THE 996 c.c. MODEL ML DE LUXE A.J.S. AND SIDECAR.

Engine: A.J.S., twin cylinder, bore 84 mm., stroke 90 mm.; capacity, 996 c.c.; side-by-side enclosed valves; detachable cylinder heads; roller-bearing big-ends; aluminium pistons; dry sump lubrication with auxiliary feed to cylinder bases.

Frame: Diamond pattern.

Forks: A.J.S. with central compression spring, shock and steering dampers.

Gearbox: A.J.S. three-speed with improved foot-starter; ratios 16.092, 8.866 and 4.925 to 1.

Transmission: Renold chains, $\frac{5}{8}$ in. by $\frac{3}{8}$ in., both totally enclosed; shock absorber on engine shaft.

Wheels: Quickly detachable and interchangeable; 26 in. by 3.50 in. Avon heavy wired-on tyres; $7\frac{3}{8}$ in. and $6\frac{3}{8}$ in. diameter internal-expanding rear and front brakes respectively.

Tank: Saddle type, holding $3\frac{1}{4}$ gallons; $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon oil carried in tank on seat pillar.

Equipment: As tested; tubular carrier, two toolbags; footboards; Smith's non-trip gearbox-driven speedometer, mounted in tank; Lucas Magdyno electric lighting set and electric horn.

Sidecar: Hayward Launch type M2E; four-point attachment; four C springs, outside wheel bearing; roomy body with locker behind seat, adjustable windscreen and apron; finished in mottled aluminium fabric with metal decking grained to resemble polished mahogany.

Price: Machine solo and equipped; £76 10s.; sidecar, £25.

Makers: A. J. Stevens and Co. (1914), Ltd., Graiseley House, Wolverhampton.



(Right) The Launch sidecar has distinctly pleasing lines. (Below) Off-side view of an attractive outfit.

