

1926 MODELS on the ROAD

The 349 c.c. o.h.v. JAMES.

SPECIFICATION.

ENGINE: 73 × 83.5 mm. (349 c.c.), overhead valves.
GEAR BOX: James (5.5, 7.59 and 11.27 to 1), with kick-starter.
FORKS: James-Druid, with shock-dampers.
CARBURETTER: Pilot jet sports Amac, two-lever.
LUBRICATION: Lamplugh mechanical pump with sight feed.
TYRES: 27 × 2.75 in. Dunlop wired.
TRANSMISSION: Renold $\frac{5}{8}$ × $\frac{1}{4}$ in. chains.
BRAKES: Internal expanding front and rear.
WHEELBASE: 53 in.
SADDLE HEIGHT: 28 in. (rider seated).
WEIGHT (with lamp, no petrol): 264 lb.
PRICE: £67 10s.

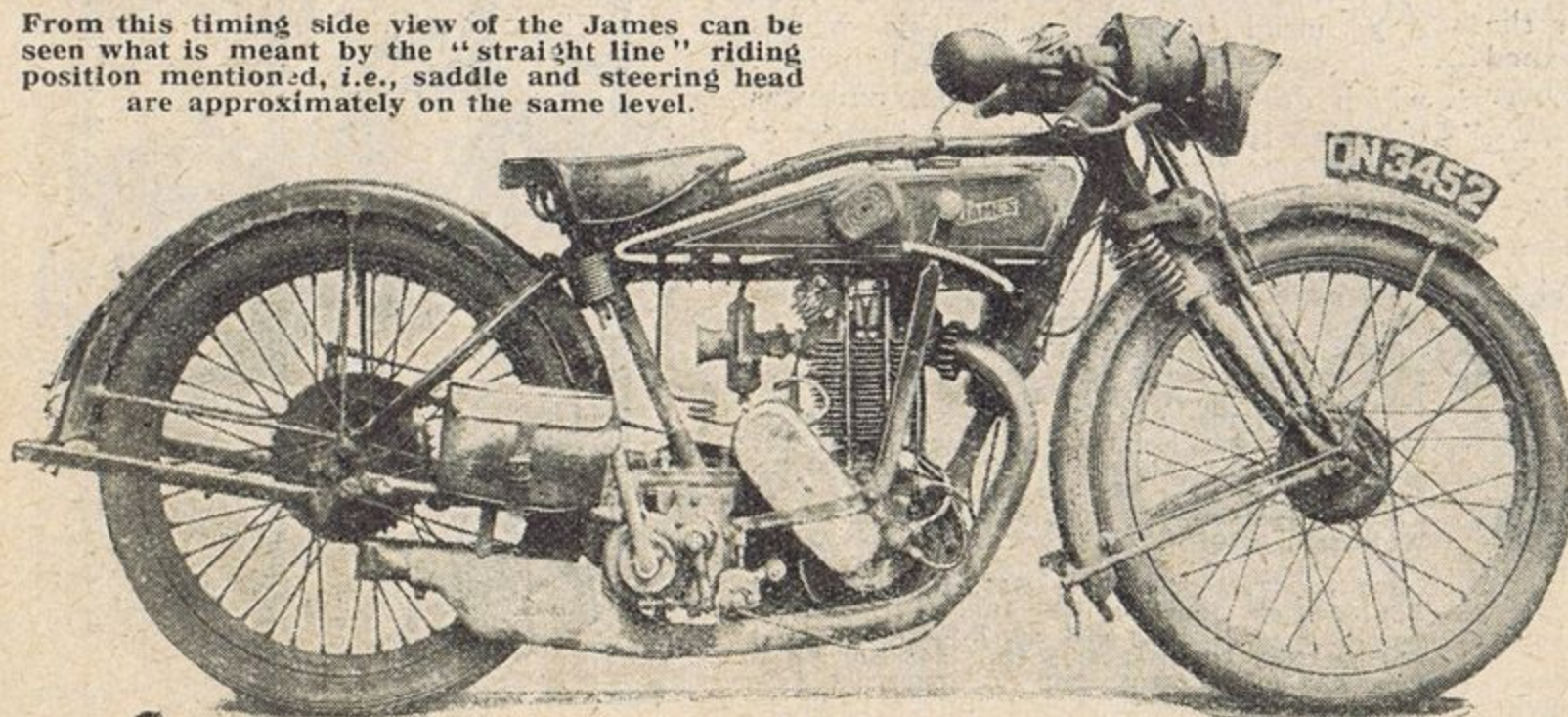
AMONG sports machines of the present day the 350 c.c. type so noticeably preponderates that, as experience with each new example is gained, it becomes increasingly difficult to pick out distinctive traits and marked peculiarities. So much so that one is apt to give up the struggle and strive to discover in what way the general performance of one machine stands out from, or, conversely, conforms with, the "standard" average performance of similar machines.

The Centaur Breed.

Instinctively, one places the super sports member of the James family—the 349 c.c. o.h.v. model—in the "centaur" category which "Ixion" has created, and here at the outset emerges a definite individual characteristic which James products share with a few select others in the two-wheel world.

Of how many "perfected" machines in this year of enlightenment can it be said that a fumbled gear change at speeds between 20 and 40 m.p.h. will not provoke a

From this timing side view of the James can be seen what is meant by the "straight line" riding position mentioned, i.e., saddle and steering head are approximately on the same level.



tremor of wobble? How many machines can a moderately experienced rider take over and steer for the *first* hundred yards quite unconsciously in a dead straight line while running through a set of gears with an awkward middle change? To be finally brutal, how many solo motor cycles really do give that "centaur feeling" from the moment the rider first flings a leg over the saddle? Half a dozen? Scarcely. But the o.h.v. James scores on all these points.

Blending Comfort with Speed.

There can be no doubting the fact that speed was the prime consideration influencing the designer of this machine, but it is remarkable how skilfully comfort has been blended into the layout. The riding position is the "straight" type, i.e., handle-bars and saddle are approximately at the same level, but curiously enough the rider has ample control in spite of the rather high saddle (28 in. from the ground), and of sitting, therefore, "on top" of the machine; he feels essentially a part of the whole.

At speed on badly potholed roads there appears a faint suggestion of frame whip, which can safely be ignored, but the same trait is

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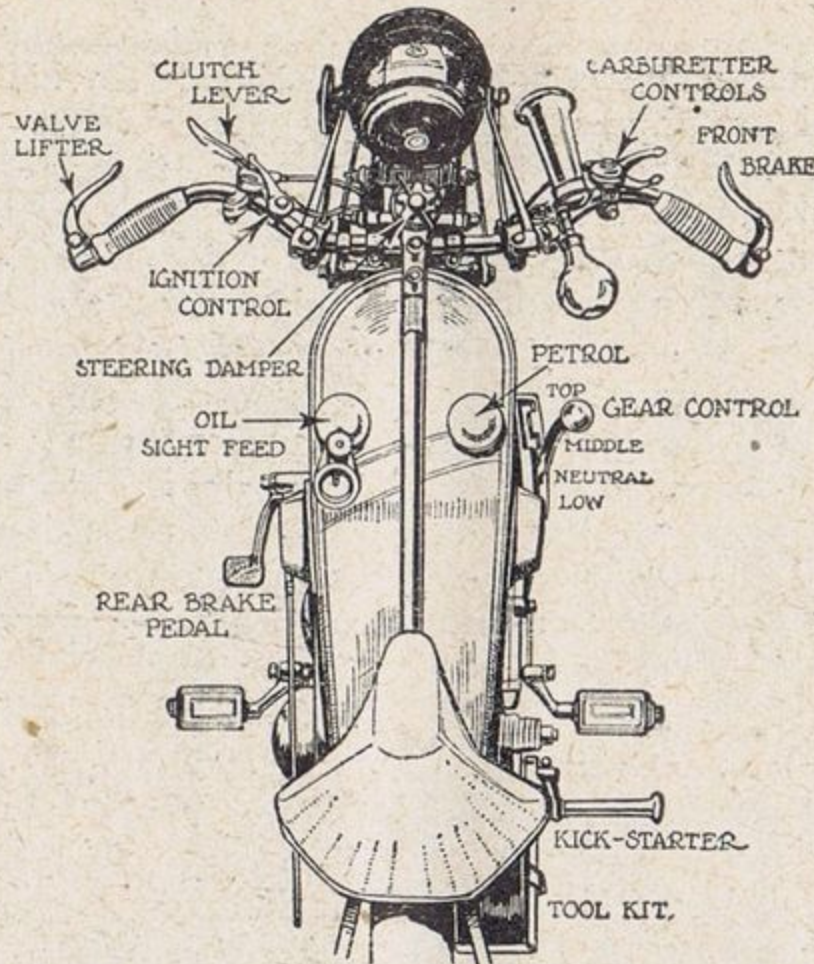
more marked on mud of the Victory Cup trial variety, in which the James seemed slightly less stable than the Dunlop ribbed front and square-studded rear tyres warranted.

Two points mar an otherwise delightful gear change. The movement to engage second gear from first entails a meshing of pinions which cannot, without a very great deal of practice, be accomplished quietly. When in the "low" (rearmost) position, the gear knob is in unwelcome proximity to the rider's right knee, and on bumpy ground it can almost be guaranteed that the knee will disengage the gear. The same trouble was experienced by James riders in the Scottish Trials of last year, and should have been remedied ere now.

Although the o.h.v. James will attain very useful maximum speeds on each of its gears, the acceleration does not seem so shattering as the high compression ratio used might lead one to expect. There is always present a slight suspicion that the magneto timing is slow for a revving engine, yet in actual fact this is not so.

High Speeds and Pulling Power.

This may explain, however, the extraordinary pulling or slogging power with which the James o.h.v. engine is endowed, and by reason of which it is peculiarly suited—much more so than most 350 c.c. o.h.v. machines—for heavy duty sidecar work. With a 70 m.p.h. guarantee—and a confirmatory road performance—at one end of its speed range, and slow, steady pulling at the lower end, it seems to possess all the necessary characteristics of a very fascinating dual-purpose machine. Unfortunately, *The Motor Cycle* had no opportunity of testing the o.h.v. model in harness.



Controls of the 349 c.c. o.h.v. James.

Gear ratios of 5.5, 7.59, and 11.27 to 1 are perfectly suited to the engine—as they should be when the gear box is made in the same factory—and the changes down are a sheer delight. Theorists have asked at various times why we cannot have motor cycle gear changes calling for a touch as light as the average modern car requires. The James is one of the very, very few motor cycles on which a gear *can* be changed with the pressure of one finger on the lever. For all changes except first to second, the operation is almost automatic, and the hand is no sooner dropped on the lever than the change has been effected.

It is rather ironical that from the same factory which produces the silent, sweet-running twin James should also emanate one of the most aggressively noisy single-cylinder machines on the market to-day. True, the o.h.v. James has an exhaust note which, when merging into one long roar as the revolutions rise on the open road far away from human habitation, gladdens the heart of the enthusiast. But it is an impossible machine to drive decently in Suburbia or through a high-walled village street; or in any restricted place, and it is a type of motor cycle which, unfortunately, fosters public prejudice.

An Almost Perfect Brake.

Turning again to good points, the rear brake, toe-operated with the heel *in situ* on the left footrest, is beyond reproach, and too near perfection to be adequately praised. The braking power available in the back hub is enormous, but as lightly controllable as the wonderful gear change. It is the sort of brake a Pressman, wearied with fumbling and jabbing with flapping feet on the numerous machines it is his lot to test, longs to find on his ideal make.



The comfortable and natural riding position the o.h.v. James gives is well brought out in this cornering impression.