

ROAD TESTS OF NEW MODELS

This picture shows the sturdy lines of the AJS. The raised handlebar may be specified at no additional cost. The luggage grid, of course, is an optional extra

646 cc AJS 31 CSR and Watsonian Monza Sidecar

LAST summer, we borrowed a six-fifty Matchless double-adult sidecar outfit from George Clarke Motors of Brixton, later returning it with a posy of congratulations on a splendid chair job. "What this bike really needs for fun," we said, "is a light, sports sidecar." "Keep in touch, then," replied Henry Smallbone, manager of the sidecar department. "I'm thinking about an AJS 31 CSR with Watsonian Monza chair."

The thinking became reality and we've given the outfit a 1,700-mile towing, the sort of brisk life any keen enthusiast wants to get out of a sporty machine.



MIRA-timed performance figures tell a part of the story. Mean maximum speed was 75 mph; the standing quarter-mile was covered in 18.6s; petrol consumption was 60 mpg at a steady 50 mph; braking distance from 30 mph was 35ft 6in.

When you bear in mind the Ajay outfit is offered at an all-in price of £369, its performance-per-£ value is extraordinarily good.

The machine is adapted for sidecar use by fitting

front-fork springs of 50 lb rate, instead of the standard 36½ lb; sidecar-type fork yokes to reduce trail from 3½ to 1½in; 150 lb-rated Girling telescopic legs at the rear instead of the usual 110 lb solo units; and a 22-tooth engine sprocket (standard is 23-tooth).

Alignment could not be faulted. In traffic or on the open road the outfit handled superbly. There was exactly the right feeling of steering tautness, without any pull to the left, and perfect response to throttle work and braking through corners.

However, when returning

from the Dragon Rally with camping gear and a pillionist as well as a sidecar passenger, the back end of the bike felt lively as we drove round those high-speed bends down to Capel Curig.

It could be that fitting even stronger rear springs would pay off; adjusting the 150 lb Girlings to the maximum-load position made an improvement, but did not cure the slight wallowing entirely when the outfit was really heavily laden.

All-round performance proved very good indeed. Gear-ratio spacings matched the power curve admirably: there was no need to fuss around in the rev band for the

ing quarter-mile bids at MIRA, the clutch took up the drive and disengaged just as sweetly as it did initially.

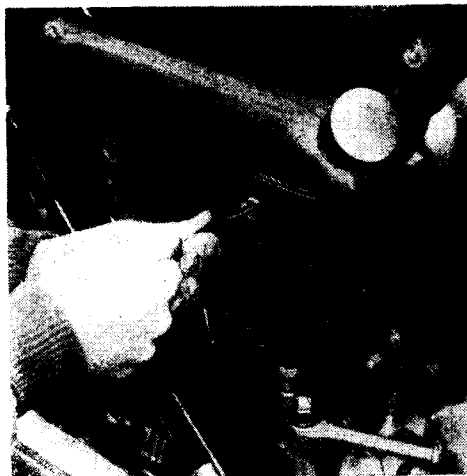
Perhaps because of that over-high top gear, the outfit put up some outstandingly good constant-speed petrol-consumption figures.

SURPRISE

Naturally, though, hard driving on the open road with generous use of the lower gear ratios increased the consumption, and around 45 mpg was usual.

Reserve capacity guaranteed some five miles, a rather small allowance if petrol stations were widely spaced; and it was

Below: John and Eileen Ebbrell out for a spin through the lanes of Essex. The six-fifty AJS-Monza makes a first-rate touring outfit. Right: The heat shield on the oil tank protects the rider's leg. Far right: Access to the two six-volt batteries is restricted by the sidecar connection. The space alongside the battery compartment is for the well-above average quality tool kit



best output. The outfit could, and did, cruise for mile upon mile with the speedometer needle registering 75 mph—68 genuine.

ON TAP

There always seemed to be ample power in hand to stay with the fastest vehicles encountered, except solos enjoying their advantage of small bulk.

This despite the fact that top gear was much too high. Its 4.71-to-1 ratio meant that the test model proved faster in third than top. And unless conditions were favourable it was too high to be regarded as a motorway overdrive.

First gear also was too up-pity. A really fast getaway from rest demanded conscious co-ordination of twistgrip and clutch lever.

Happily, the clutch nobly withstood all demands made on it. After a series of stand-

disappointing that the tank could not be refilled with a round four gallons even from apparently bone dry.

The braking department was beyond criticism. In fact, the 35½ft test figure was a surprise, so smoothly did the brakes do their work. Furthermore, the outfit remained easy to control, even under the most strenuous deceleration.

The engine turned out to be a sulky starter. When warm, more than one swing on the kickstarter was usually needed. Cold, it took five and more prods before firing.

A well-flooded carburettor, the air lever closed and half retard on the ignition lever offered the best prospects for a cold start.

Because the Ajay is equipped with magneto ignition, its lighting system enjoys full benefit from the Lucas 12-volt, 100-watt alternator.

Lights, indeed, were somewhat better than average, but

the horn could have been more powerful to advantage.

Driver-comfort is excellent on all counts. The broad dual-seat might have been expressly designed for sidecar men. It has plenty of room, besides giving good support to the thighs.

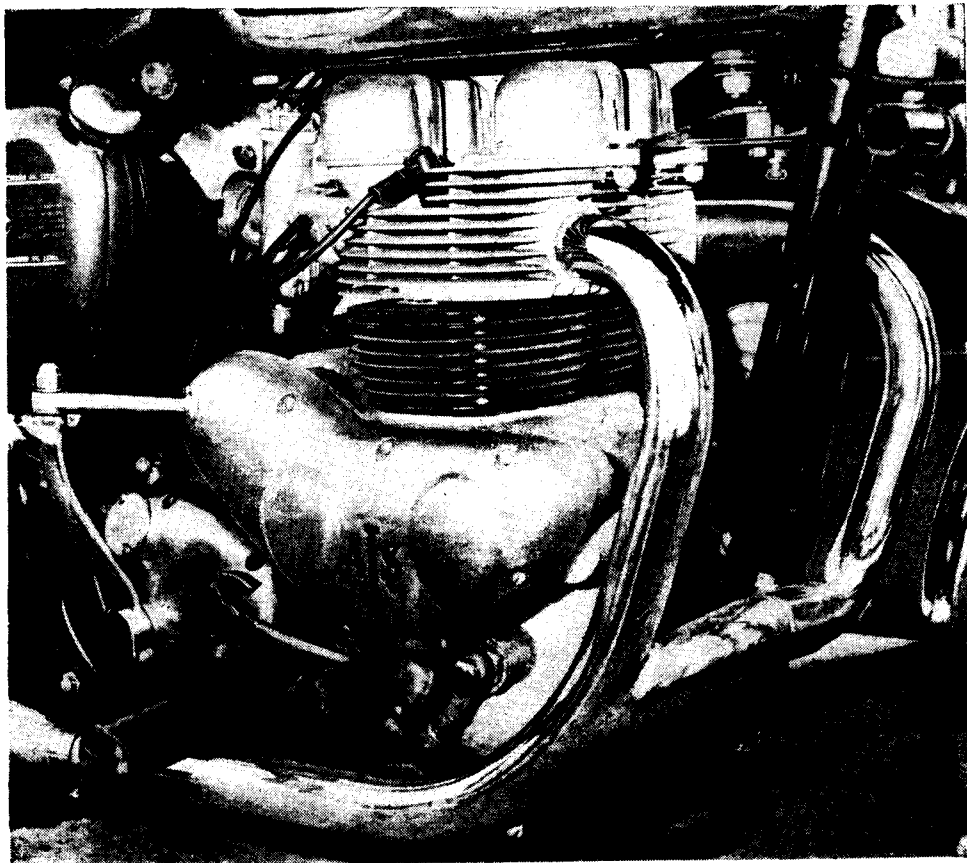
The footrests, too, are nicely placed for an average-size driver, though the folding starter pedal could foul the right leg in a rather annoying way. The wide handlebar gives ample leverage.

A lower-level, standard bar can be supplied if preferred.

Although the engine was not notably smooth, its vibrations are mild and more of the thumpety-thump variety reminiscent of a big single.

Mechanical noise was limited to a patter from the valve gear. The exhaust combined a sporty tone with a pleasing lack of decibels.

Maintenance proved to be straightforward if not invariably speedy. It is necessary to take off the fuel tank to adjust the rockers. The rear wheel detaches easily enough, but the three fixing bolts have to be withdrawn and the



Above: Beefy six-fifty power unit with separate gear box. The engine was exceptionally oil-tight



The Watsonian Monza with the hood fitted. A tonneau is a neat optional extra

speedometer drive must be disconnected.

The tool kit, incidentally, is of good quality, though it was annoying that the test machine had no C-spanner to adjust the rear springing, or a socket key to fit the rocker covers.

The engine remained totally oil-tight throughout the test. There was a slight weep from the primary chaincase and an

oil-pipe union at the tank remained obstinately leaky.

Because of the angle of the oil-tank filler cap, checking the level was awkward. Overall oil consumption worked out at about 400 miles to the pint.

Chromium plating and paintwork on the machine and sidecar body withstood the ravages of winter salt-spray very well—which was more

than could be said for the sidecar connections. The exhaust pipes yellowed in the vicinity of the ports.

The speedometer was some 10 per cent inaccurate throughout its range; the mileage recorder did better—some 5 per cent optimistic.

These defects came to light during the test: the rear-brake cam tended to stick in

the on position; one of the batteries suddenly refused to hold the charge.

The only involuntary roadside halt occurred when a spot of oil found its way to the contact-breaker points during a prolonged traffic stop.

Finally, the sidecar. This is the "austerity" Monza Standard, normally supplied without tonneau, luggage grid or brake, with a straightforward mudguard instead of the streamlined type fitted to the de luxe model.

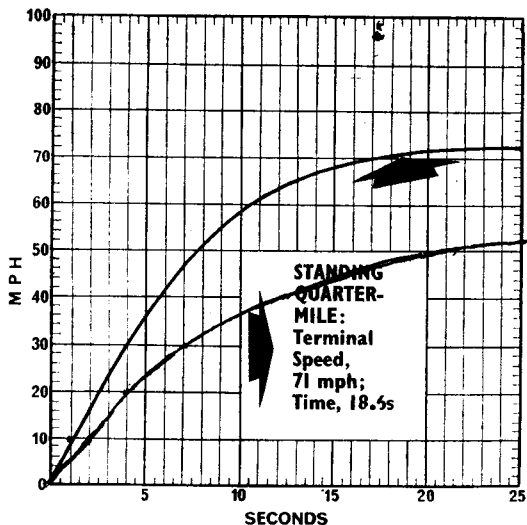
The tonneau was much missed; an owner should buy it as an extra.

By sports-sidecar standards, the Monza is adequately comfortable. Springing is well chosen and there's plenty of leg-room even for a tall passenger. The semi-reclining seat affords good support to the small of the back.

Siamezed exhaust pipes and a mechanically quiet engine helped to make passengering a pleasant experience. Vibration was felt only at peak revs.

This AJS 31 CSR-Monza sidecar outfit is a first-class job; its few faults are emphasized only by the excellence of the whole. Offered at George Clarke's keen price, the value must be unrivalled today.

ACCELERATION



Motor Cycle
ROAD TESTS

646 cc
AJS 31 CSR
and
WATSONIAN
MONZA
SIDECAR

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE

Capacity and type: 646 cc (72 x 79mm) overhead-valve parallel twin.
Bearings: One plain and two roller mains; plain big-ends.
Lubrication: Dry sump; capacity, 4½ pints.
Compression ratio: 8.5 to 1.
Carburettor: Amal Monobloc, type 389/92 with air slide. No air filter.
Claimed output: 42 bhp at 6,200 rpm.

TRANSMISSION

Primary: ½ x 0.305in chain in oilbath case.
Secondary: ⅝ x ⅜in chain.
Clutch: Multi-plate.
Gear ratios: 12.04, 8.01, 5.74 and 4.71 to 1.
Engine rpm at 30 mph in top gear, 1,830.

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Ignition: Lucas type K2F magneto with manual advance and retard.
Charging: Lucas 100-watt, 12-volt RM19 alternator to two Lucas six-volt, eight-amp-hour batteries through rectifier.
Headlamp: Lucas 7in-diameter with 50/40-watt main bulb.

FUEL CAPACITY: 3¾ gallons.

TYRES: Dunlop 3.50 x 18in rear; 3.25 x 18in ribbed front.

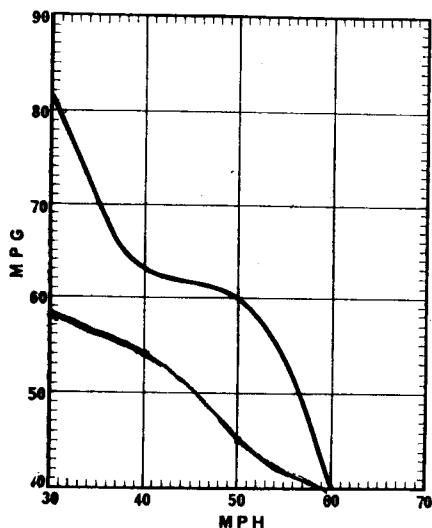
BRAKES: 8in-dia front; 7in-dia rear; both with finger adjusters.

SUSPENSION: Norton telescopic front fork with two-way hydraulic damping. Pivoted rear fork controlled by 150 lb Girling spring-and-hydraulic units; three-position adjustment for load.

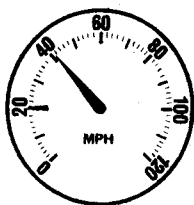
DIMENSIONS: Motor cycle.—wheelbase, 56in; ground clearance 5½in; seat height, 29½in. Outfit.—overall length, 90in; width, 57½in; track, 43in. All unladen.

WEIGHT OF OUTFIT: 616 lb, including one gallon of petrol.

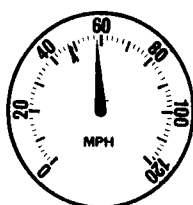
FUEL CONSUMPTION



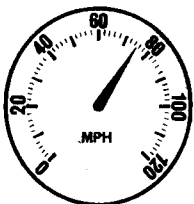
BOTTOM



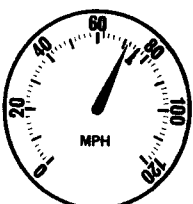
SECOND



THIRD



TOP



Bottom-, second- and third-gear speeds represent maximum-power revs, 6,200

SIDECAR

Model: Watsonian Monza Standard.

Chassis: Watsonian Super Silk tubular loop, with brazed lugs and four-point attachment. Bell-crank wheel suspension controlled by Armstrong spring-and-hydraulic unit. Disc wheel with 4.00 x 10in tyre. No brake. Ground clearance, 7in.

Body: Moulded in reinforced glass-fibre. Perspex screen; collapsible hood secured by press studs. Luggage compartment behind seat.

Dimensions: Overall length, 83in; seat back to nose, 56in; seat squab to hood, 29in; back rest, 24 x 17in; seat squab, 17 x 13in; luggage compartment (irregular shape), 28 x 17 x 10in.

Makers: Glass Fibre (Birmingham), Ltd, Albion Road, Birmingham, 11.

PRICE: £369, including British purchase tax, as supplied by George Clarke Motors, Ltd, 1 to 13, Morrish Road, Brixton, London, SW2.

EXTRAS: Sidecar luggage grid, £1 5s; tonneau, £1 5s.

ROAD TAX: £8 a year; £2 19s for four months.

PERFORMANCE

(Obtained by "Motor Cycle" staff at the Motor Industry Research Association's proving ground, Lindley, Leics.)

MEAN MAXIMUM AND HIGHEST ONE-WAY SPEEDS: 75 mph (13-stone rider wearing two-piece oversuit; 8½-stone sidecar passenger; no wind).

BRAKING: From 30 mph to rest on dry tarmac, 35ft 6in.

TURNING CIRCLE: left, 14ft 8in; right, 23ft 2in, between kerbs.

MINIMUM NON-SNATCH SPEED: 20 mph in top gear.

WEIGHT PER CC: 0.95 lb.

Below: This Watsonian Monza is a standard model—plain mudguard and no grab rail or tonneau. The sidecar luggage grid is an extra. The siamezed exhaust pipe gives a welcome reduction in noise for the sidecar passenger

