



YAM SLAM!

Merril Boulton hits the road
and the trail with
two purpose-built 50s

YAMAHA RD50

SAVE a fly today — ride a moped.

For nowadays there's more to a fly than meets the eye — they not only mean that summer's here but people seem to boost their ego's with them. To see a superbike inundated with all the custom goodies is one thing, but if it's splattered with flies it seems to add that certain 'je ne sais quoi' which suggests hacking and scratching and hot sunny days...

But that doesn't make the flies feel any better, which is why my conscience is clear. Cos I've been riding the DT50 and there's only one lonely fly splatted on the headlamp — and that was a rebound job from a milk float. Flies have time to get out of the way when they see a moped coming and avoid getting glued to their seats for a ride.

Not that that means you can't have fun unless your going fast but it does help on long straight roads and encouraged us to spend more time off the road with the DT50 than on it.

The DT50 is a moped trailster with big knobbly tyres, highrise mudguards and tucked in exhaust system with all the styling of its bigger trailster colleagues.

It serves well as a road bike with all the necessary trimmings such as lights and indicators, toolkit, hooter and handlebar mirror. Its sophistication even stretches to an autolube system — automatic oil and petrol mix — just like the bigger ones.

In fact the only thing it hasn't got the same is the power. It's necessary to work the 5-speed gearbox very quickly to keep up with the traffic when pulling away, but has no trouble reaching its top speed of an indicated 33mph. And like the RD50 maybe not so fast uphill but a good long moped-speed benefit type slope will get the wind blowing in your face. It's stable at slow speeds and with a good steering lock is just the job for nauseating traffic jams — particularly in this holiday-resorted neck of the woods in Dorset — when parking a bike of that size round a sand dune presents no problem.

Though it's only a trail bike we couldn't resist taking it for a rough beating on some nearby boggy land; and here we forgot it was a moped as it excelled itself through mud, and long puddles. It was bombarded over stoney bumps and holes, ridden through sand and bushes and muck and... never gave up. (Unlike the riders who became very exhausted and overheated). On the rough it had enough power for any novice to have a lot of fun with and even a few frights. For driving flat out along an extremely narrow horse trail, surrounded on either side by soggy gorse bushes, the back wheel bumped and slurped around (particularly where the horses had been) and never lost its grip even through its driver may have nearly lost his nerve.

First gear was probably the most often used for despite the four other gears which easily ran out of steam, first gear could always be relied upon to get out of trouble with. For example when stuck in a muddy puddle which was longer and deeper than you thought and you don't want to get your feet wet.

Handling on the whole was good, the damping at the front taking the brunt of any surface obstacles, but the rear suspension seemed lacking; not only on the rough where we probably pushed it too hard but also on the road where it felt much too soft and spongy.

Braking provided by drum brakes front and rear was good, for they were nicely bedded in with a lot of feel and could stop the bike safely and abruptly as they had to when a couple of birks stepped on to a zebra crossing without looking.

The DT50 is a good fun bike on the rough and with a fuel consumption in the region of 105mpg it's not a bad bike to go flying on either...

PRICE: £340 incl VAT.

Test machine supplied by: Mitsui Machinery Sales, Oakcroft Way, Chessington.

Engine: Air-cooled 2-stroke 49cc, kick starter. Bore & Stroke: 40 x 39.7 (1.57 x 1.56in.). Compression: 5.7:1. **Ignition:** Flywheel magneto. **Transmission:** 5-speed, constant mesh. **Lubrication:** Autolube. **Spark plug:** NGK B-7HS. **Clutch:** Wet, multi disc. **Overall Height:** 1060mm (41.7in.). **Overall Length:** 1885mm (74.2in.). **Seat Height:** 780mm (30.7in.). **Seat Width:** 805mm (31.7in.). **Overall Gear Ratios:** 1st: 48.65, 2nd: 29.94, 3rd: 21.38, 4th: 16.84, 5th: 14.40. **Tyres:** 2.50-19-4PR, 3.00-17-4PR. **Carburettor:** MIKUNI — VM16SH. **Fuel Tank Cap:** 6.0 lit. — 1.3 Imp Gall. **Oil Tank Cap:** 1.0 lit. (.91 Imp qts.). **Brakes:** Internal drum front and rear. **Battery:** TUASA 6v 4AH.

YAMAHA DT50

THERE I was, flat on the tank, feet over the indicators, screaming along in top gear, being pursued by a cop in a police Rover...

And there he was twiddling his thumbs, waiting to overtake me so he could change into second gear.

What a let down, I couldn't break the speed limit even in a built up area. No — "this isn't a race track sonny" for me, just a good view of his exhaust disappearing into the distance.

Not that I wanted to be stopped, of course, but it's the principle that I couldn't go any faster even if I wanted to — not even to escape being cut up by a slow moving double articulated lorry which insists on overtaking even though it's only going a few mph faster. You just have to sit tight avoiding the obstacles in the gutter and hope you don't get resonated off.

On the flat in top gear the RD50M will only rev to about 7,500rpm (even though its rev counter shows it to redline at 10,000) and this gives its maximum speed of an indicated 34mph. Which seems in some places to be just enough power to get stuck behind things.

Flat roads don't last forever though and we did have some fun trying to make it go. It's maybe a sad story on upward hills, but two-up with a ruck sack the RD50 once put a TR7 to shame coming down one. Amidst yelps and screams of amazement on a single lane of traffic hindered by a slow moving tractor we were the only vehicle able to get past. So we did — and beat the lot. All good things come to an end though and as the hill changed direction and went upwards we had to grit our teeth while everyone took revenge — especially the TR7.

While top speed — or lack of it can prove a bit hairy through not being able to keep ahead of average traffic, there is some consolation in its acceleration. For quick use of the well-spaced 5-speed gearbox means that you can 'keep up with the Jones's' away from the traffic lights without panicking. You don't open the throttle and have to sit back and wait while the power filters through as on some machines, but whatever power you have can be there as quickly as you need, which is important particu-

larly when pulling out across main roads.

On handling the RD50 behaved really well though the telescopic front forks and rear springing could easily cope with the effects of being thrown around a bit more. It even escorted the two-up ruck sack job safely round a roundabout when it was still suffering the effects of a long hill and about 45mph.

The hydraulic front disc and rear drum provide a more than adequate supply of brakes for a bike this size, but they both always worked well and the front disc does look smart.

Lights and indicators are easily operated by the handlebar switches on the left-hand side as is the perky hooter which managed to startle a few people.

A glass peephole in the side panel means you can keep an eye on the 2-stroke oil level without any trouble and when you do need to fill it, the seat opens up to reveal tool kit and handbook as well.

The RD50 with its sleek streamlined styling and mod cons such as speedo, rev counter, winker lights and autolube system still make it an attractive proposition to any sixteen-year old, not forgetting the fuel consumption which you might forget about when it does almost 100mpg.

And despite its painful speed restrictions which the law has impounded the RD50 is probably the nearest thing you'll get to those great old sports mopeds of yesteryear that whizzed about at 45mph frightening the Department of Transport... Price £370 incl VAT.

Test machine supplied by Mitsui Machinery Sales, Oakcroft Way, Chessington.

Engine: Air-cooled 2-stroke 49cc kickstarter. Bore & Stroke: 40 x 39.7mm (1.57 x 1.56in.). Compression: 5.9:1. **Ignition:** Flywheel magneto. **Transmission:** 5-speed, constant mesh. **Lubrication:** Autolube. **Spark plug:** NGK B-7HS. **Clutch:** Wet, multi disc. **Overall Height:** 975mm (38.4in.). **Overall Length:** 1,870mm (73.6in.). **Seat Height:** 760mm (29.9in.). **Seat Width:** 770mm (30.3in.). **Overall Gear Ratios:** 1st:50.77, 2nd: 31.24, 3rd: 22.31, 4th: 17.57, 5th: 15.01. **Tyres:** 2.50-18-4PR, 2.75-18-6PR. **Carburettor:** Mikuni — VM16SH. **Fuel Tank Cap:** 8.0lit. — 1.75 Imp Gall. **Oil Tank Cap:** 1.0lit. (0.9 Imp qts.). **Brakes:** Front hydraulic disc — 8in. rear drum. **Battery:** TUASA 6v 4AH.