

1925 799 cc AJS Model E1

There always had been a vee-twin engine in the AJS range — even before there were such things as AJS motorcycles! In the early 1900s the Stevens Motor Manufacturing Company had been established to manufacture proprietary engines for the infant motor cycle industry, and the Stevens range included a hefty vee-twin which was supplied to Clyno (a make we will meet a little later in this book).

But the four Stevens brothers — Harry, George, Jack and Joe — soon felt the urge to go into motorcycle making on their own account, and by 1911 the new firm of A. J. Stevens had been established abandoning the old Stevens name and, instead, using the new AJS trade mark. Legend has it that only Jack (actual name, Albert John Stevens) had three initials in his name, and the four brothers felt that a three-initial monogram looked better on a tank than just two initials.

The manufacturing rights of the earlier vee-twin engine were sold off to Clyno, along with the former Stevens factory at Pelham Street, Wolverhampton, and the new enterprise began in works at Retreat Street. For the first year, AJS concentrated on a single-cylinder side valve, but at the 1912 London Show the first AJS vee-twin appeared. This was the 698 cc Model D side valve, with the cylinders arranged at 50°.

From the start, chain drive was specified, and although the front wheel initially had a cycle-type stirrup brake, a drum rear brake was fitted. From 1915, interchangeable wheels were fitted, and by this time the company had moved to bigger premises at Graiseley Hill, Wolverhampton.

Post-war, the Model D returned, now fitted with a somewhat angular saddle tank and with engine capacity increased to 748 cc. One piece cylinder heads and barrels had also been replaced by detachable cylinder heads retained in place by a cross-strap and tie-bolts.

However, the AJS big twin did not reach its full flowering until 1925. It had now become the Model E, and engine size had gone up again, this time to 799 cc. For the

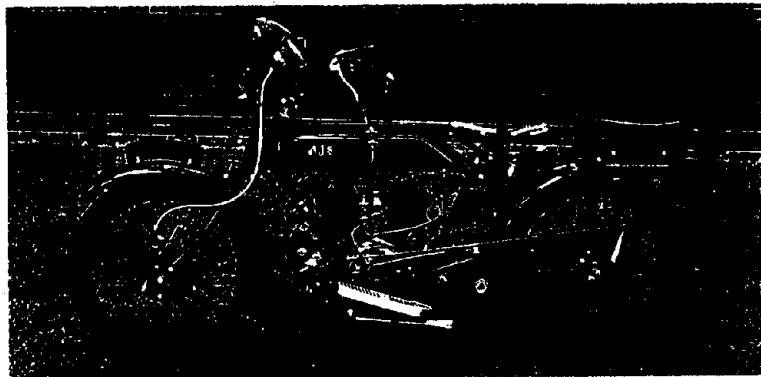
1925 season a completely new frame had been designed, with a dropped top tube to permit a low seating height, and a hefty forged-steel gearbox mounting bracket.

Internally, the engine now featured the latest type of roller big end bearings while, for 1925, light-alloy pistons were quite a novelty; each piston carried three narrow top rings, plus a scraper ring at the base of the skirt. The Model E came in standard and deluxe versions, the latter embodying totally-enclosed chains and a Lucas Magdyno electric lighting set, whereas the standard version made do with chain guards and no lights.

The twin was designed expressly for sidecar use and was in fact catalogued as a complete outfit with an extremely roomy single-seat touring sidecar of the maker's own construction. However, it was used also for commercial work. In the years ahead, the AJS twin would grow still more, eventually to 990 cc, production coming to an end on the outbreak of the Second World War. Well-loved, the machine possessed outstanding hard-wearing qualities, was particularly flexible in operation, and was regarded as one of the sweetest-running and quietest models on the market.

Specification

Make AJS **Model** Model E1 **Engine** 799 cc (74 × 93 mm bore and stroke) 50° side-valve vee-twin **Tyres** 700 × 800 mm braided edge, front and rear **Frame** Brazed lug tubular construction, unsprung at rear **Front forks** Brampton Biflex, with vertical and fore-and-aft movement **Brakes** 6 in diameter drums, front and rear **Weight** (solo) 326 lb **Wheelbase** 55 in **Manufacturer** A. J. Stevens (1914) Ltd, Graiseley Hill, Wolverhampton.



Above Total enclosure of the primary and final drive chains was a worthwhile luxury feature. Note the early Lucas Magdyno electrics.

Right Cast aluminum footboards and swept-back handlebars gave the rider a magnificently relaxed riding position. The speedometer is driven from a pinion on the front hub.

Far right The method of holding down the cylinders, by a strap over the head and tie-bolts, was AJS practice right through the '20s.

Below There was an air of supreme elegance about the big AJS range leader, a favourite with family sidecar enthusiasts. Note the imposing Ian Sad pillion seat.

