

OILING THE A.B.C.

Sir,—I do not think that Mr. Mortimer Batten's system of oiling an A.B.C. engine would prove very satisfactory, as separate drip feed glasses would have to be fitted on each cylinder, and it would be a continual nuisance adjusting the drip. By the way, I do not know whence your correspondent got his idea of an A.B.C. piston, which has a pronounced waist. The crank case suction idea does not work well, as the faster the engine goes the less oil is drawn into the crank case; the ball valves do not work quickly enough to form an effective vacuum. It is fatal to under-oil an aluminium pistoned engine, as seizures are so sudden, and the aluminium grooves the cylinders, even if seizure does not take place.

There is no lateral play in an A.B.C. spring frame at all. Why has someone not taken up the spring frame used on the old A.S.L. made by Air Springs, Ltd? I think this was nearer to perfection than any other. R.N. Haslar.

Sir,—I was interested to note the letter of your correspondent, Mr. H. Mortimer Batten, in your issue of December 25rd, 1920, wherein he commences, "I agree with 'Ixion' that Mr. Bradshaw might have arrived at a better system of oiling for his otherwise beautifully designed A.B.C."

Without wishing in any way to interfere with the very good feelings that have always existed between those responsible for the production of the A.B.C. and myself, and fully conscious of the difficult task they had in organising such production, I feel that, in justice to myself, it is not out of place to mention that the oiling system fitted to this machine was not the one designed by me.

The original one supplied with the designs has been in constant use by Emerson in all his track work with consistent success, and is a mechanical oil pump driven off the front of the camshaft. GRANVILLE BRADSHAW.

SNOW PLOUGHING.

Sir,—The following account of a trip from Portsmouth to Plymouth, carried out during the recent severe weather, might be of interest to your readers. The speedometer distance is 180 miles, and the machine used was an 8 h.p. New Imperial and sidecar (new in April).

I left Portsmouth at 9.30 a.m. on Monday, the 13th, with about 5in. of snow on the ground and a keen N.E. wind blowing. My sidecar was loaded with luggage to about the weight of a light person, so I had no qualms about its tipping up too easily. Needless to say, I wrapped myself up pretty well, and wore two pairs of socks, two pairs of gloves, and a thick sweater under my coat. Throughout the whole run I hardly felt the cold at all, except my feet, which got very dead at times.

To my surprise, on leaving Portsmouth the snow gradually thinned away, until, on arriving at Southampton, I found none lying at all. The roads were in excellent condition, hard and dry.

In the neighbourhood of Chard I ran into snow again, which had apparently only just fallen, but it was only a light powdering, and did not stop me in the least. This snow I had with me all the way into Exeter, where I arrived at 3.50 p.m. Here I stayed for tea and a warm up, and, after lighting my lamps, left at 4.30 to complete the last forty-four miles of my journey into Plymouth. Immediately on leaving Exeter the snow got appreciably deeper (about 3in.) and I had to go more carefully. After half an hour's riding I found my lamps beginning to give trouble, and after spending a little time in investigating, I found the water in both my generators frozen solid. I had to take off the generators and take them into a cottage to thaw before I could go on. On crossing Haldon Hill the snow got much deeper, and it was with great difficulty I got along at all. It was very dark, and the whole country under snow made it very difficult to stick to the road. However, by going slowly, and continually stopping to examine signposts, I made Chudleigh and then Ashburton at 6.40 p.m., so that it took me two hours to do twenty miles. I decided this was not good enough, especially as I was getting tired, so I put up here for the night.

Next morning I continued my journey at 9.15. The first five miles out of Ashburton the going was good, but after that the remainder of the journey had to be done entirely on second gear as far as Plympton. The snow round Ivybridge was up to the bottom of the sidecar, and

five times I was stopped dead in drifts, and had to clear away several yards of snow before I could get on. The skidding was tremendous, due to the slipping of the back wheel and the drag of the sidecar in the snow. I eventually had to lash rope round my back wheel to obtain road grip.

My machine ran simply splendidly the whole journey, and my average consumption was 53 m.p.g., which, I think, was good, considering that seventeen miles was done on second gear. Taking it all round, it was a most successful trip, but one I do not wish to do again under similar conditions.

JOHN D. A. MUSTERS, Lt. R.N.

RUNABOUTS AND SIDECARS.

Sir,—The three-wheeled runabout has been the Cinderella of the motor house. In the cycle car boom of 1913 some critics (including one of the most eminent, Mr. Massie Buist) denied that the three-wheeler had part or lot in that matter. All cars had four wheels, therefore the three-wheeler was not a cycle car. It was equally true, of course, that no cycle car had four wheels, therefore the four-wheeler was not a cycle car. Therefore, there was no such thing as a cycle car. Q.E.D. However, the boom passed, and the term "cycle car" became a reproach rather than a distinction, so the three-wheeler was admitted—not, I suppose, for its merits, but for its defects. We have changed all that, and to-day the three-wheeler appears to be coming into his own. Those who have retained faith in it are surprised at the kind things which are said of it. Unfortunately, only one maker remains to hear them—Mr. H. F. S. Morgan. The rest (they were many) are gone, or have exchanged three wheels for four.

But we must not be too sanguine. Even Mr. Morgan would not, I am sure, venture to say that, because the three-wheeler has attained a certain degree of popularity the days of the sidecar are numbered. It is quite possible that some manufacturers who turn from the sidecar to the three-wheeled runabout will find that they have made a mistake. In the first place, it is significant that only one machine out of many has survived ten years. Most have succumbed in two or three. Moreover, only one three-wheeler has as yet competed successfully against the sidecar. I do not say that there is not sufficient reason for this. I only state a fact. But until the runabout has competed successfully the position of the sidecar is secure. No doubt a certain number will make good in this respect this year, but it remains to be seen whether successes will outnumber failures, and every failure sets back the day of the runabout. Taking one consideration with another, it would seem that the runabout has still to fight its way, and the way to fight is successful competition. The road to success is the open road. To dethrone the sidecar is a great adventure, and "adventures are to the adventurous." That I think is the meaning of the much criticised criticism of the A.C.U. report.

Stoke Lacy.

H. GEORGE MORGAN.



TWO YOUNG ENTHUSIASTS.

Master and Miss Berry, of Crediton, whose mount is a Velocette fitted with the popular Tan-Sad seat. In this fashion they enjoy the sport, and are loud in praise of their economical and easily manipulated machine.