



Road Test No. 34/58

Make: Austin

Type: A40 de luxe

Makers: Austin Motor Co., Ltd., Longbridge, Birmingham.

Test Data

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CONDITIONS: Weather: Mild and dry, with 10 m.p.h. wind. (Temperature 48°-58°F., Barometer 29.9-30.1 in. Hg.). Surface: Smooth concrete and tarred macadam. Fuel: Intermediate-grade pump petrol (approx. 85-90 Research Method Octane Rating).

INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. accurate
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. 3% fast
 Distance recorder 1% fast

WEIGHT

Kerb weight, (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) 14½ cwt.
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight 55¼/44¼
 Weight laden as tested 18½ cwt.

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Flying Quarter Mile
 Mean of four opposite runs 70.2 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 72.0 m.p.h.

"Maximile" Speed (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest.)
 Mean of four opposite runs 66.8 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 67.7 m.p.h.

Speed in Gears
 Max. speed in 3rd gear 58 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in 2nd gear 35 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in 1st gear 23 m.p.h.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

51.0 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level
 45.5 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level
 40.0 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level
 34.0 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level

Overall Fuel Consumption for 1,199 miles, 33.9 gallons, equals 35.4 m.p.g. (8.0 litres/100 km.)

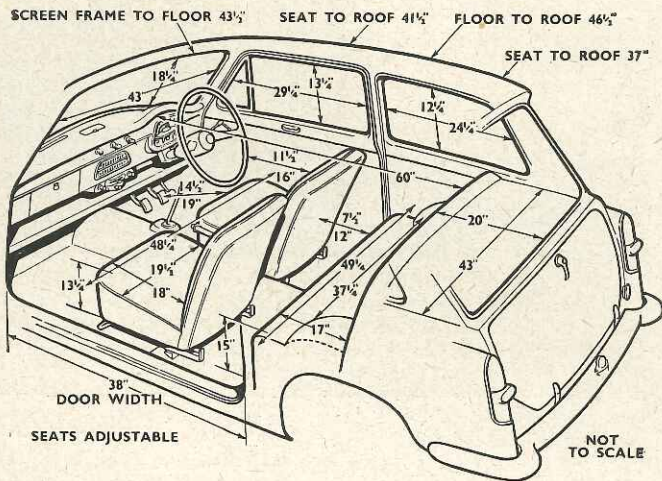
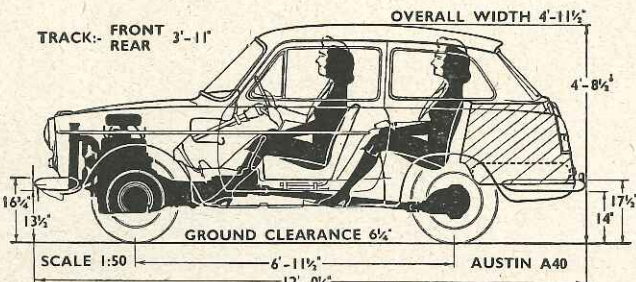
Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration). 38 m.p.g.
 Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure) 6 gallons.

STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:
 Left 33¼ feet
 Right 35¼ feet
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 2½

BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.99g retardation (equivalent to 30¼ ft. stopping distance) with 70 lb. pedal pressure.
 0.63g retardation (equivalent to 48 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure.
 0.27g retardation (equivalent to 111 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure.



ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill

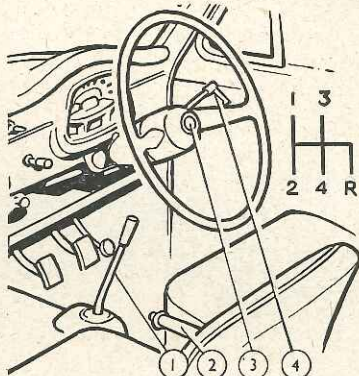
0-30 m.p.h. 7.7 sec.
 0-40 m.p.h. 12.3 sec.
 0-50 m.p.h. 19.5 sec.
 0-60 m.p.h. 35.4 sec.
 Standing quarter mile 24.5 sec.

ACCELERATION TIMES on Upper Ratios

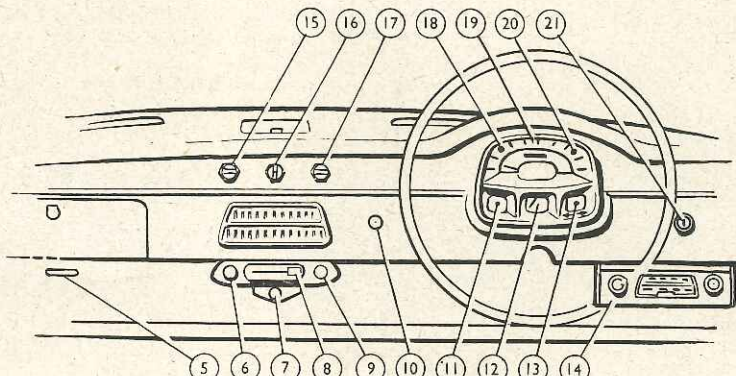
Speed Range	Top gear	3rd gear
10-30 m.p.h.	13.1 sec.	8.6 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.	13.7 sec.	9.3 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.	15.1 sec.	11.9 sec.
40-60 m.p.h.	22.2 sec.	—

HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds

Max. gradient on top gear .. 1 in 12.4 (Tapley 180 lb./ton)
 Max. gradient on 3rd gear .. 1 in 8.2 (Tapley 270 lb./ton)
 Max. gradient on 2nd gear .. 1 in 5.4 (Tapley 410 lb./ton)



1, Gear lever. 2, Handbrake. 3, Horn Button.
 4, Lights and dip switch. 5, Bonnet catch release.
 6, Heater air control and fan switch. 7, Choke control.
 8, Heater temperature control. 9,



Heater air distribution control. 10, Windscreen washer button. 11, Oil pressure warning light.
 12, Fuel contents gauge. 13, Direction indicator warning light. 14, Radio controls. 15, Panel light

switch. 16, Direction indicator switch. 17, Windscreen wipers switch. 18, Headlamp main beam indicator lamp. 19, Speedometer and distance recorder. 20, Dynamo charge warning light. 21, Ignition and starter switch.

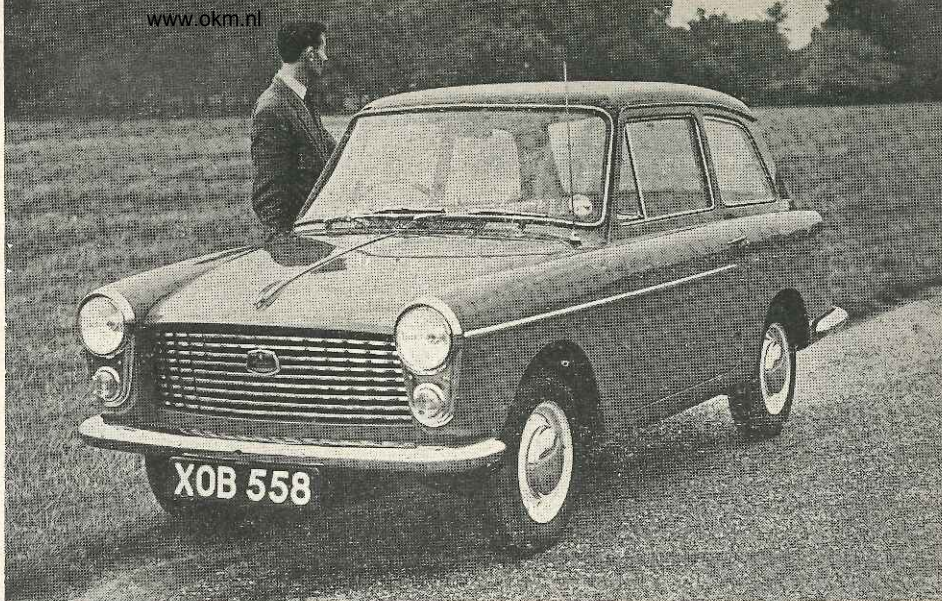
The AUSTIN A40

A New-look Small Car
of Considerable
All-round Merit

In its appearance the new Farina-styled Austin A40 is boldly unconventional, gaining from its unusual shape a very useful ability to carry big or awkward-shaped loads when need arises. But it is intended to spend most of its life doing the job of an ordinary saloon, and as such it has a generous measure of the orthodox merits which have come to be expected in a modern 1-litre car; the borrowing of useful estate car features such as a fold-away rear seat has not introduced any unwelcome characteristics.

Ideas about what performance can be expected from a car of this size have been moving upwards in recent years. Whilst extra roominess in comparison with the Austin A35 saloon (which uses the same power unit) involves the Austin A40 having slightly greater weight and frontal area, there is a top speed of 70 m.p.h. available and enterprising use of the four-speed gearbox allows 50 m.p.h. to be reached from a standstill in under 20 sec. There is no need to be exaggeratedly dependent upon the gearbox, however, as top-gear pulling power at low and medium speeds is comparable with many cars of larger engine size, and the overall fuel consumption of 35.4 m.p.g. which we recorded for more than 1,200 miles can be improved to over 40 m.p.g. by slightly gentler driving.

At a time when some quite moderately priced British cars need all of the anti-knock quality of Premium-grade petrols, and are happiest with the dearer 100-octane fuels which few economy-car owners wish to buy, the Austin's tolerant attitude to whatever fuel is put in its tank is note-



SCALED against a man 5 ft. 8 in. (173 cm.) tall standing on the grass behind it, the new Austin is neat in appearance yet shaped to give maximum internal space within its moderate overall size.

worthy. With Weslake-designed cylinder head giving a compression ratio of 8.3/1, it does pink somewhat if entirely undiluted commercial-grade petrol is in the tank, but the "mixture" grades of petrol which some companies supply at around 3d. per gallon above "pool" prices are more than adequate for the Austin's requirements. Instant in starting from cold after damp autumnal nights out of doors, the engine needed helping with the choke for a little while before it would pull quite normally, but thereafter proved extremely flexible, willing either to slog unprotestingly down to below 10 m.p.h. in top gear or to rev. up to well over 50 m.p.h. in third gear.

Versatile 3rd Gear

Like the engine, the smooth-acting clutch and the four-speed gearbox of this model have been inherited from the Austin A35. Finding first or second gear with the car at rest can be difficult if a driver pauses at all after depressing the clutch pedal, but at other times the sporting-style remote-control gear lever works easily. Most drivers will find the synchromesh on the upper three ratios amply effective, although extreme haste can defeat it. Fast drivers will probably be rather glad that the synchromesh does not force them to "wait for it" when changing gear and will find that the ratios provided allow quite good scope for enterprise—third gear is useful up to over 50 m.p.h. on occasion and up to well over 40 m.p.h. regularly, yet it gives lazier drivers the ability to climb very steep hills before needing to make another change down into third gear.

With rather flat steel body panels carrying little or no sound damping material, this car does not by any means conceal from its driver the fact that a hard-working engine is running at about 1,000 r.p.m. for every 14½

m.p.h. of car speed. Cruising speeds of 60-65 m.p.h. are very comfortably maintained, but to the accompaniment of rather a "busy" effect from under the bonnet. The remarkably complete disappearance of this effect if the gear lever is slipped into neutral on the way down a main-road hill confirms that neither wind nor road noise are in any way excessive, suggesting that private-enterprise sound-deadening treatment of the scuttle structure and bonnet top should allow those undeterred by a few extra pounds' weight and cost to quieten an A40 very usefully. Rather unfortunately, the speeds at which engine noise resonated most conspicuously on the test model were approximately 31 m.p.h. and 62 m.p.h.

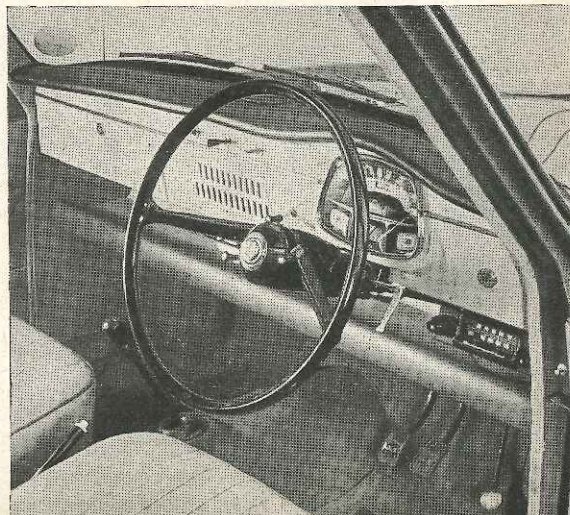
The Austin A35 has proved itself a remarkably well-sprung small car; the A40 which uses much the same components but has 3½ in. added to the wheelbase and 2½ in. added to the track is a little better still. There has been no attempt to get a "boulevard ride" of exaggerated softness in favourable conditions, but this car always behaves well and it copes with extremely bad surfaces in an unusually easy fashion. Our test model was by no means free from squeaks and rattles, but much of this effect may have been peculiar to a very early production example of a new design. The door lock which twice failed, due to an internal spring becoming displaced, should certainly represent no more than a "teething trouble."

Very light at all times, the steering of this new model seems at first acquaintance to be rather lacking in "feel," self-centering

In Brief

Price (de luxe saloon)	£458 10s. plus purchase tax	£230 12s. equals	£689 2s.
Price of Standard Saloon (including purchase tax),	£676 7s.		
Capacity	...	...	948 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	...	...	14½ cwt.
Acceleration:			
20-40 m.p.h. in top gear	...	...	13.7 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	...	...	19.5 sec.
Maximum direct top gear gradient	...	...	1 in 12.4
Maximum speed	...	...	70.2 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed	...	...	66.8 m.p.h.
Touring fuel consumption	...	...	38 m.p.g.
Gearing: 14.2 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m.; 28.4 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed.			

SIMPLICITY of the fascia panel, even with the optional additions of radio and a windscreen washing spray, is shown in this view which also reveals the neat non-reflecting trim used below the windscreen.





The AUSTIN A40

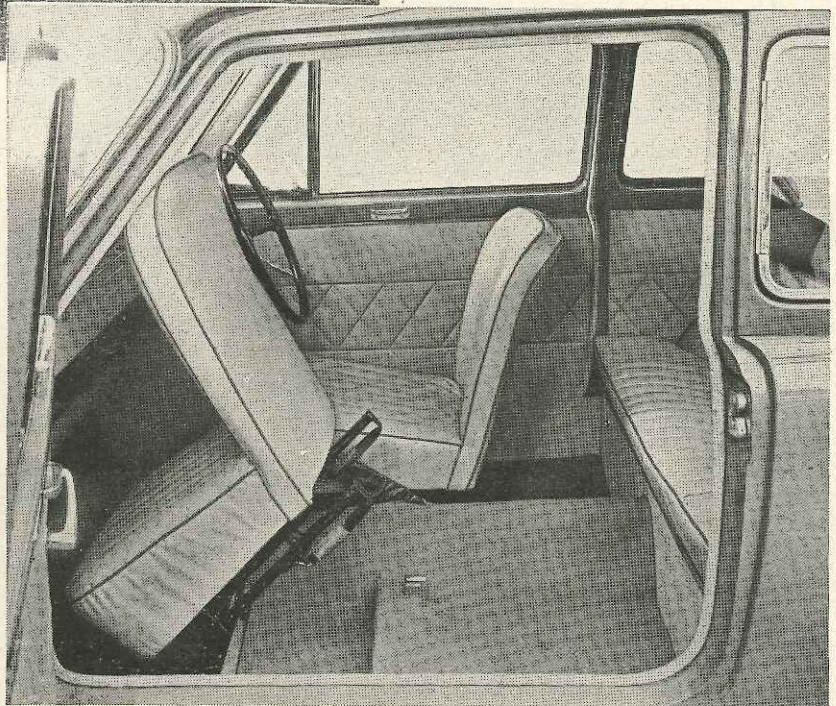
PRACTICAL aspects of the A40 are shown in these illustrations which show the neat rear view of the body (left) with tail-gate type luggage loading door; the interior of the luggage compartment (right) with the rear seat folded forward to extend the available space, showing the covered spare wheel on the floor; an interior view of the 4-seat body (below) with one of the separately adjustable front seats tilted to let a rear-seat passenger enter.

action after a corner being only quite gentle, and road shocks not reaching the driver's hands. Whilst the absolute precision of less kick-free rack-and-pinion steering gears is never quite reached, this car is soon found to be notably viceless even when given brutal treatment more appropriate to a sports model. A moderate and fairly consistent degree of understeer persists as it is experimentally cornered at higher and yet higher speeds until a slide gradually begins, only the use of power causing the tail to slide out at all prematurely. There is some body roll on corners which are negotiated fast, but not so much as to prevent the A40 being driven very quickly along a winding road even when passengers with non-sporting ideas about cornering speeds are being carried. The turning circle on full lock is reasonable, but less compact than with some other modern small cars.

Also very safe-seeming are the brakes, extra size as compared with the Austin A35 having given good fade resistance. Four successive stops from 60 m.p.h. down a long main-road hill, at the shortest intervals which downhill acceleration through the gears would allow, produced smoke from the brakes and a temporary increase in pedal travel, but the car still pulled up quickly and in a straight line. Like the steering, the brakes feel a little bit "soft" at first acquaintance but are not found wanting when tried more severely. The central handbrake is very comfortably able to hold the laden car on a 1-in-3 grade.

Two wide doors make entry to the front seats very easy: they are so wide for a small car that opening them in a crowded car park can become difficult, but there is the convenient possibility of unlocking the car from either side. Rear-seat accessibility depends upon somebody holding a front seat forward—the whole seat and not merely its back-rest tilting. Both front seats are adjustable for position, over a range which caters for quite wide variations of human size and shape, and they prove able to make most people pretty comfortable. A driver with a long body found his head rather high in relation to the windscreen, and there were comments about the steering wheel being low on the thighs of some people, but as most seat cushions settle to some extent these criticisms might disappear within a few thousand miles. The hanging-type pedals

BREADTH of the opening bonnet panel makes for easy access to the 948 c.c. overhead-valve engine and the auxiliaries which surround it. The bonnet is unlocked by means of a sturdy pull-rod from inside the car.

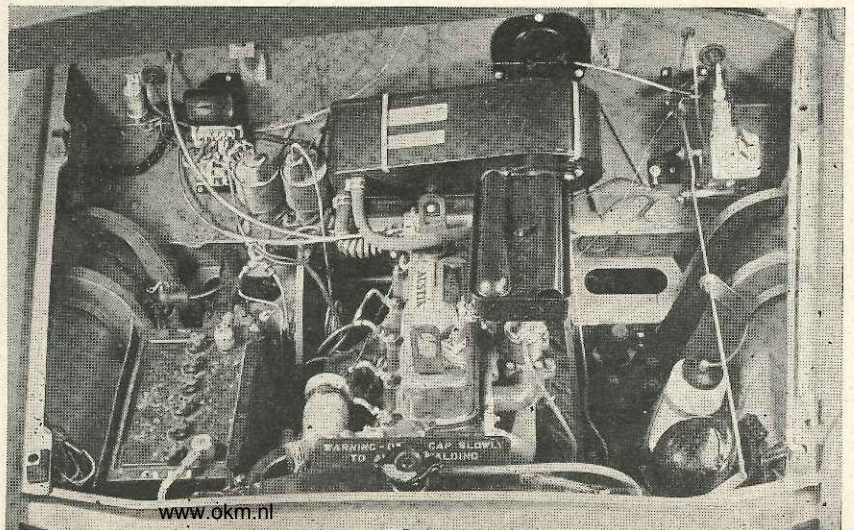


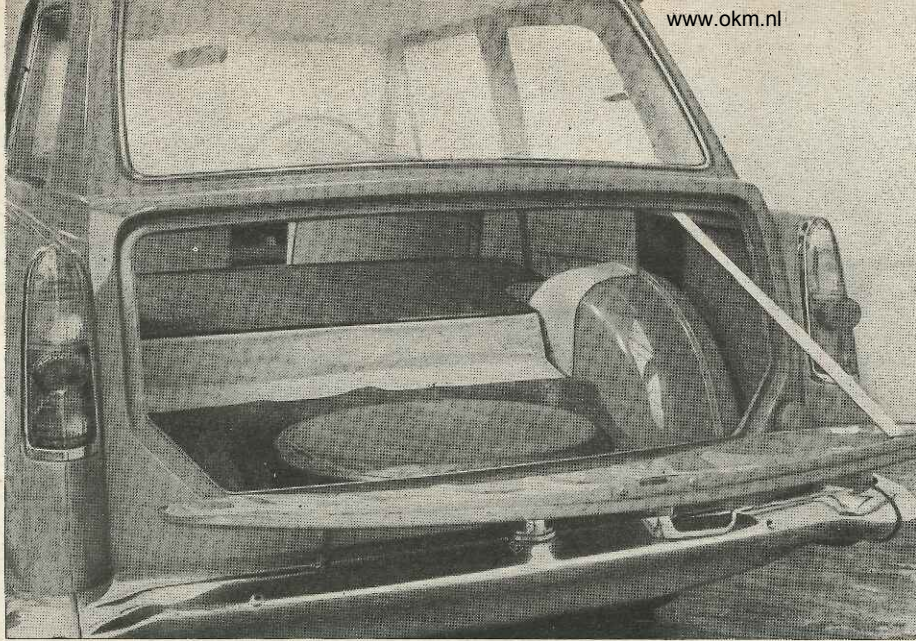
are initially noticed to be slightly nearer to the centre of the car than are the seats, front-wheel arches intruding appreciably into the toeboard, but generally the width and headroom of the front compartment are comfortably generous.

Behind a tall driver, another tall man will find that knee-room is somewhat limited, but despite intrusion of wheel arches into the rear-seat cushion there is ample width to let this limitation be overcome by sitting slightly sideways. It is a limitation which disappears when the driving seat is not adjusted to its farthest back position, and there is ample foot-room below the front seats. Rear-seat headroom

benefits most usefully from the extension of the roofline over the luggage space, neither roof nor rear window frame endangering passenger's heads on an unexpected hump-back bridge.

In its "utility" character, this car can have its rear seat backrest folded down flat (and held down by fastening the erstwhile parcel shelf to the floor) to give an extended clear space for bulky loads. Driven thus, the car is noisier but obviously has great load-carrying capacity. As the cushion of the rear seat is fixed, however, the extended luggage floor is far from flat, and no solid barrier prevents cargo sliding forward onto the front seat backrests during emergency





braking. This is a saloon car which can on occasion move an oversized load, rather than a true "station wagon."

In the rear baggage compartment as it will normally be used, there is quite a large amount of space—it proved possible to stand a 4½-gallon "jerrycan" upright on each side of the spare wheel, and then put a good deal of bulky luggage on top of the wheel. To emphasize that it is not a carrier, the let-down baggage compartment door is supported only by a single strap which looks dangerously flimsy—the instruction book warns that dangerous exhaust fumes may be sucked into the body if the car is driven with this lid open. Above the luggage compartment, a semi-stiff cover forms a shelf for light parcels, and also conceals the contents of the rear locker—it also protects them to some extent against theft if the car is left unlocked, as the fastenings for this cover are in the luggage compart-

ment rather than inside the car. For carrying tall loads of luggage, the rear seat remains secure without needing the "shelf" to hold it in position.

Generous expanses of glass make the A40 an easy car to see out of in good weather, a moderate degree of wrap-around on the windscreen bringing reasonably slim pillars well back out of the normal line of vision. In bad weather, the sloping rear window does not suck up vision-obscuring mud as do some estate car rear windows, but the wipers do not even attempt to clear the wrap-around sections at each side of the windscreen.

No winders are provided on the door windows, which are counterbalanced and provided with finger-grips, a tolerable but not very attractive simplification which makes them stiff to move and prevents them being lowered completely on fine days. It is possible to lock these windows

in a slightly open position, but necessary to remember first to lock the windows (by means of the inside door handles) when locking up the car from outside with its key. It is not easy to get generous ventilation without draught, the hinged panels on the front doors failing to provide this, and hinged rear windows introducing inward draughts from their lower edges when opened; the best results seemed to come from turning on the fresh-air heating and ventilation system, and lowering the door windows slightly. Whilst its control panel looks to some people like an afterthought, the heater with its fresh-air intake below the windscreen, two push-pull controls to regulate (and assist with a fan when necessary) the intake and distribution of air, and a quadrant temperature control, does a very good job of work.

Entirely simple, the fascia panel layout is neat despite its inheritance of a wierdly-shaped speedometer dial from the Austin A35. Switchgear is neat, although turn indicators which do not cancel themselves and have rather an inconspicuous warning light are surely an unwise choice. A welcome inheritance from the A35 model is the lighting switch located within fingertip reach of the steering wheel, and use of the ignition key to control the starter is a welcome refinement. Below the fascia panel, a parcel shelf with limited "headroom" extends across the full width of the body, and on it a foolscap-sized briefcase can be stowed.

Less unconventional in what it does than appearances might suggest, the Austin A40 is a fresh-looking newcomer which seems assured of success, offering as it does an extremely well-balanced combination of comfort, carrying capacity and safety with economy and speed.

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Specification

Engine

Cylinders	4
Bore	62.9 mm.
Stroke	76.2 mm.
Cubic capacity	948 c.c.
Piston area	19.3 sq. in.
Valves	Overhead (pushrods)
Compression ratio	8.3/1 (optional 7.2/1)
Carburettor	Zenith downdraught
Fuel pump	AC mechanical, type Y
Ignition timing control	Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter	Full-flow
Max power (net)	34 b.h.p. at 4,750 r.p.m.
(S.A.E. rating, 38½ b.h.p. at 5,000 r.p.m.)	
Piston speed at max. net b.h.p. 2,375 ft./min.	

Transmission

Clutch	Borg & Beck 6½ in. s.d.p.
Top gear (s/m)	4.55
3rd gear (s/m)	6.43
2nd gear (s/m)	10.80
1st gear	16.51
Reverse	21.22
Propeller shaft	Hardy Spicer open
Final drive	9/41 hypoid bevel
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.	14.2
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed	28.4

Chassis

Brakes	Lockheed hydraulic, 2-leading shoe front, hydraulically-operated mechanical rear
Brake drum internal dimensions:	
Front	8 in. x 1½ in.
Rear	7 in. x 1½ in.
Friction lining area	76.1 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front	Independent by coil springs and wishbones
Rear	Semi-elliptic
Shock absorbers	Armstrong lever-arm hydraulic
Steering gear	Cam and peg
Tyres	Dunlop 4-ply tubeless, 5.20-13

Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle	Yes
Battery mounting	Alongside engine on right
Jack	Smiths steady/lift
Jacking points	One external socket on each side of body
Standard tool kit: Jack, and combined jack handle, wheelbrace and starting handle, tyre pump, grease gun, sparking plug spanner, screwdriver/tommy bar, tappet gauge, contact breaker screwdriver/feeler, tyre valve key, plastic tool bag.	
Exterior lights: 2 sidelamps, 2 headlamps, 2 tail lamps, number plate lamp.	
Number of electrical fuses	2
Direction indicators	Amber flashers, non self-cancelling
Windscreen wipers	Electrical two-blade, non self-parking
Windscreen washers	Optional extra (Tudor)
Sun vizors	Two on de luxe saloon
Instruments: Speedometer with non-decimal non-trip distance recorder, fuel contents gauge.	
Warning lights: Dynamo charge, oil pressure, headlamp main beam, direction indicators.	

Locks:

With ignition key	Ignition/starter switch, luggage door and either car door
With other keys	None
Glove lockers	One on fascia panel, with lid
Map pockets	None
Parcel shelves: Full-width shelf below fascia panel. Folding luggage cover acts as shelf for light objects behind rear seat.	
Ashtrays	One on fascia panel
Cigar lighters	None
Interior lights: Courtesy light on fascia panel operated by opening either door (no manual switch).	
Interior heater	Optional extra, fresh air type with screen de-misters
Car radio	Optional extra (Radiomobile)
Extras available: Heater or fresh-air unit, radio, white-wall or Fort tyres, windscreen washer.	
Upholstery material	Vinyl-treated fabric
Floor covering	Rubber mats over felt
Exterior colours standardized	6
(some with choice of trim colours)	
Alternative body styles	Standard saloon

Maintenance

Sump 6 pints plus 1 pint in filter, S.A.E. 30 (below freezing, S.A.E. 20)	
Gearbox	2½ pints, S.A.E. 30 oil
Rear axle	1½ pints, S.A.E. 90 EP gear oil
Steering gear lubricant	S.A.E. 90 EP gear oil
Cooling system capacity	8½ pints (2 drain taps)
Chassis lubrication	By grease gun every 1,000 miles to 17 points
Ignition timing: 5° b.t.d.c. static (low-compression engine on commercial-grade fuel, 2° b.t.d.c.)	
Contact-breaker gap	0.014-0.016 in.
Sparkling plug type	Champion N5 long-reach 14 mm.

Sparkling plug gap	0.025 in.
Valve timing: Inlet opens 5° before t.d.c. and closes 45° after b.d.c.; exhaust opens 40° before b.d.c. and closes 10° after t.d.c.	
Tappet clearances (hot)	Inlet and exhaust 0.012 in.
Front wheel toe-in	¼ to ½ in.
Camber angle	1°
Castor angle	3°
Steering swivel pin inclination	6½°
Tyre pressures:	
Front	22 lb.
Rear	24 lb.
Brake fluid	Lockheed
Battery	Lucas BT7A, 12 volt, 43 amp. hr. at 20 hr. rate