

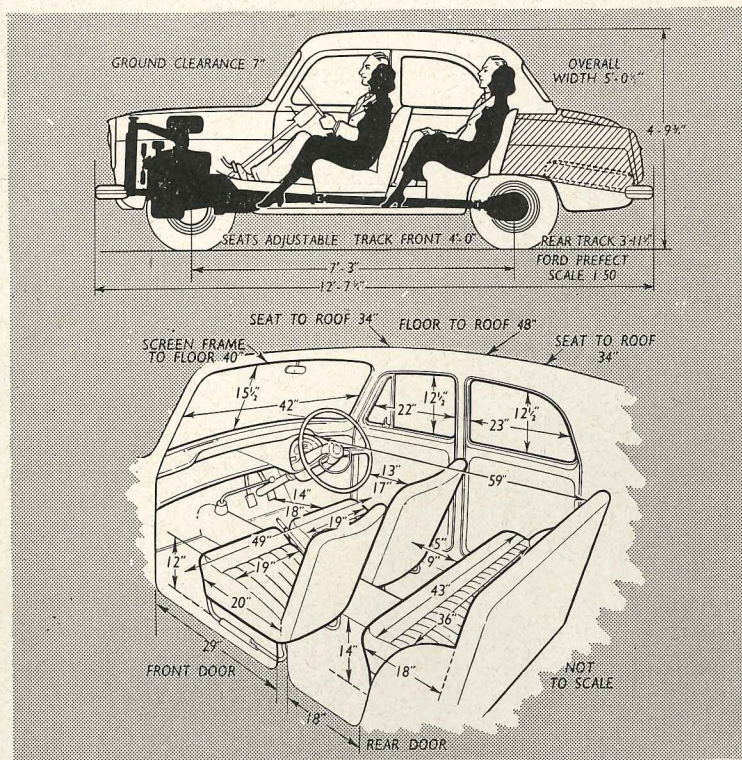
# The Motor Road Test No. 12/53

Make: Ford

Type: Prefect (Prototype)

Makers: Ford Motor Company Ltd., Dagenham, Essex

## Dimensions and Seating



## Test Conditions

Cool weather with little wind. Dry tarred surface. Standard-grade pump fuel.

## Test Data

### ACCELERATION TIMES on Two Upper Ratios

	Top	2nd
10-30 m.p.h.	13.6 sec.	6.4 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.	13.5 sec.	7.8 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.	15.6 sec.	—
40-60 m.p.h.	20.2 sec.	—

### ACCELERATION TIMES Through Gears

0-30 m.p.h.	6.5 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.	11.1 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.	18.7 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.	30.0 sec.
Standing Quarter Mile	23.5 sec.

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

43.5 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h.
40.5 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h.
34.5 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h.
28.0 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h.
Overall consumption for 747 miles, 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ gallons = 29.6 m.p.g.

### WEIGHT

Unladen kerb weight	15 $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt.
Front/rear weight distribution	55/45
Weight laden as tested	19 $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt.

### HILL CLIMBING (At steady speeds)

Max. top gear speed on 1 in 20	57 m.p.h.
Max. top gear speed on 1 in 15	50 m.p.h.
Max. gradient on top gear	1 in 10.9 (Tapley 205 lb./ton)
Max. gradient on 2nd gear	1 in 5.5 (Tapley 400 lb./ton)

### BRAKES at 30 m.p.h.

0.95 g retardation (= 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. stopping distance) with 125 lb. pedal pressure
0.84 g retardation (= 36 ft. stopping distance) with 100 lb. pedal pressure
0.72 g retardation (= 42 ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure
0.45 g retardation (= 67 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure
0.23 g retardation (= 131 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure

### MAXIMUM SPEEDS

#### Flying Quarter Mile

Mean of four opposite runs	70.7 m.p.h.
Best time equals	72.6 m.p.h.

#### Speed in Gears

Max. speed in 2nd gear	48 m.p.h.
Max. speed in 1st gear	26 m.p.h.

### INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h.	6% fast
Speedometer at 60 m.p.h.	5% fast
Distance recorder	1% fast

## In Brief

Price £395 plus purchase tax £165 14 2 equals £560 14 2.

Capacity	1,172 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	15 $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt.
Fuel consumption	29.6 m.p.g.
Maximum speed	70.7 m.p.h.
Maximum speed on 1 in 20 gradient	57 m.p.h.
Maximum top gear gradient	1 in 10.9
Acceleration:	
10-30 m.p.h. in top.	13.6 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	18.7 sec.

### Gearing:

14.6 m.p.h. in top at 1,000 r.p.m.
60.3 m.p.h. at 2,500 ft. per min. piston speed.

## Specification

### Engine

Cylinders	4
Bore	63.5 mm.
Stroke	92.5 mm.
Cubic capacity	1,172 c.c.
Piston area	19.64 sq. in.
Valves	Side
Compression ratio	7.0/1
Max Power	36 b.h.p. at 4,400 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p.	2,670 ft. per min.
Carburettor	Solex downdraught
Ignition	12-volt coil
Sparkling plugs	14 mm. Champion L10
Fuel pump	AC mechanical
Oil filter	AC by-pass

### Transmission

Clutch	Single Dry Plate (Hydraulic control)
Top gear (s/m)	4.429
2nd gear (s/m)	8.252
1st gear (—)	15.072
Propeller shaft	Hardy Spicer, open
Final drive	Spiral bevel

### Chassis

Brakes	Girling Hydraulic
Brake drum diameter	7 in.
Friction lining area	67.2 sq. in.
Suspension: Front	I.F.S. by direct-acting coil springs
Rear	Semi-elliptic
Shock absorbers: Front	Incorporated in I.F.S.
Rear	Telescopic
Tyres	5.20-13

### Steering

Steering gear	Burman worm and peg
Turning circle, Left and Right	33 feet
Turns of steering wheel, lock to lock	2

### Performance factors: (at laden weight as tested)

Piston area, sq. in. per ton	20.4
Brake lining area, sq. in. per ton	70
Specific displacement, litres per ton mile	2,510

Fully described in "The Motor," September 30, 1953

## Maintenance

Fuel tank: 7 gallons. Sump: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  pints (plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint for filter), S.A.E. 20 or 20W. Gearbox: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  pints, S.A.E. 80. Rear axle: 1 pint, S.A.E. 90. Steering gear: S.A.E. 90. Radiator: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  gallons. Chassis lubrication: By grease gun to 11 points every 1,000 miles. Ignition timing: 5° B.T.D.C. static. Spark plug gap: 0.025 in. Contact breaker gap 0.014-0.016 in. Valve timing: I.O., 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ° B.T.D.C. I.C., 50 $\frac{1}{2}$ ° A.B.D.C.; E.O., 53 $\frac{1}{2}$ ° B.B.D.C.; E.C., 64 $\frac{1}{2}$ ° A.T.D.C. Tappet clearances: 0.0115 to 0.0135 in. Front wheel toe in:  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. Camber angle: 1°. Castor angle: 3°. Tyre pressures: 24 lb. Front and Rear. Brake fluid: Enfo ME 3833c. Battery: 12 v. 40 a.h. at 20 hour rate. Lamp bulbs: 12 volt; headlamps 42/36 watt, side and front direction indicator 18/4 watt, rear and stop 18/4 watt, rear direction indicator 18 watt, panel lamps and panel warning lights 2.2 watt, number plate 6 watt.

# The FORD Prefect (Prototype)

A Preliminary Report  
Upon a Brisk and Economical New Car with  
Commendable Riding  
and Handling Qualities



FOUR DOORS give direct access to seats for four people, each front seat being separately adjustable. Self-cancelling trafficators of the flashing type, a horn ring in the lower half of the steering wheel, and instruments directly facing the driver may be seen in the photo on the left.

scale it is only above 60 m.p.h. that the power unit becomes at all conspicuous.

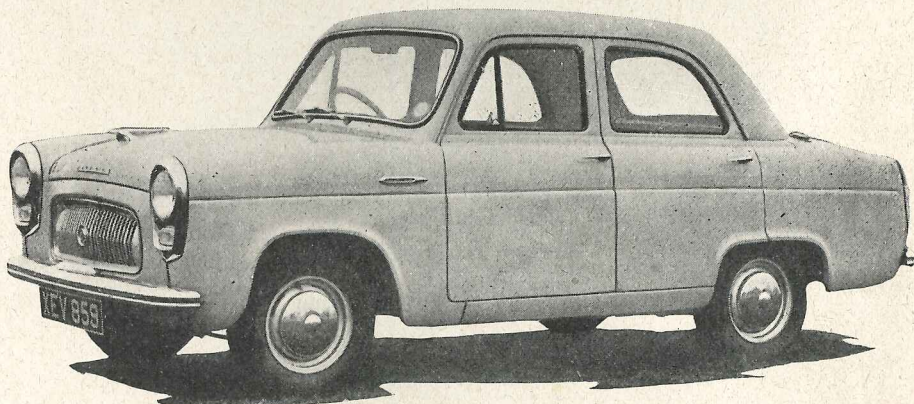
Although less lively at low speeds in top gear than its predecessors, this new and much smoother Prefect is certainly no sluggard—with the ignition and carburation set for Premium fuel it could no doubt show better acceleration still. The new rear axle ratio giving 8% fewer engine revolutions per mile explains some slight loss of top gear pulling power, but the car remains a very good performer in hilly country.

A new gearbox has been designed for this model, still with three speeds and a central control lever, but with smoother and more powerful synchromesh mechanism, a gearbox which makes it easy and pleasant to take advantage of the new engine's extra power output at medium and high r.p.m. The car has more than enough power to make three speeds ample for most purposes—it will be noted from the data page that with a 2-up load a gradient as steep as 1 in 5½ can be climbed in second gear. Inevitably, very slow traffic does sometimes call for engagement of the non-synchromesh first gear with the car on the move, while the more sporting drivers may long for an "overtaking" ratio which would be useful up to more than 40-45 m.p.h., but the excellent new three-speed gearbox

IF cars assembled on the production line are as attractive as the Ford Prefect which we have recently driven for a very substantial mileage, a car which had been built by hand but which conformed precisely to the finally agreed specification, then the production models which are due to appear at the start of 1954 will be in very great demand. This four-door, four-seater model showed a genuine 70 m.p.h. maximum speed, an overall fuel consumption of around 30 m.p.g., and a most notable combination of smooth riding and good cornering qualities, a grouping of characteristics which is unique amongst British cars of below £400 basic price.

Although this car inherits the name and the engine dimensions from previous Prefect models, it in fact bears very little resemblance to its predecessors. Dimensionally, it has more width but less internal and external length, and it has an enlarged luggage locker but loses the let-down lid which formerly gave room for oversize trunks. In performance, it has rather less top gear "snap" below 40 m.p.h. but much more above that speed, acceleration through the gears being much improved and the maximum speed going up by almost 10 m.p.h. Whereas the old Prefect was rugged rather than refined, however, this latest model offers exceptionally good springing, and has cornering power which approaches the standards expected of sports cars, as well as being quieter and much smarter in appearance.

Stiffened up internally and tuned to give a substantially greater power output, the latest 1,172 c.c. side-valve engine surprised us pleasantly by operating happily on "standard" rather than "premium" grades of petrol. Starting from cold after cool autumnal nights spent out of doors was instantaneous, and it was not necessary to use the choke for very long thereafter—perhaps fortunately, in view of the remoteness of the starter and choke controls (and also the switch for the ignition and lights) from the driver's reach! The flexibility of the engine is entirely satisfactory by four-cylinder standards, low-speed smoothness only being spoiled by "waggle" of the central gear lever at speeds below 12 m.p.h. in top gear, and at the opposite end of the



GOOD VISIBILITY is provided by the deep windscreen although the pillars are somewhat thick. Neat lines extending through the whole length of the body disguise very compact overall dimensions.

## The Ford Prefect (Prototype) - - - - - Contd.

is a happy compromise which most purchasers will fully approve.

In respect of fuel economy, it will be noted that our comparative tests at steady speeds show no really significant differences between "new" and "old" Prefect cars over the 30-60 m.p.h. speed range, despite the 20% greater power available with the latest car: tuned for "premium" fuel, the new engine with its higher compression ratio should show an appreciable advantage. Overall consumption figures recorded for the latest car are about 10% below those for its predecessor, this of course reflecting the higher average speeds which result naturally from increased performance and improved suspension: a gentle driver should have no difficulty in obtaining 40 m.p.g. from his car.

Unorthodox in layout, the Ford independent front-wheel suspension system gives this car exceptionally good road manners. On normally surfaced roads, riding comfort is excellent in either front or rear seats, and really rough cobbled or potholed surfaces are negotiated with a degree of smoothness which is quite surprising. With this very good riding there goes an ability to corner fast with an unusually small amount of body roll, a characteristic which of course further enhances passenger comfort during the negotiation of winding roads.

The steering is very light, but rather "dead" in feel with little self-centering action or reaction from bumps, and the presence of a little friction actually results in a just perceptible tendency to "wander" in slow-speed driving. At higher speeds, however, this tendency is in no way evident, the car steering very precisely with just sufficient of an under-steering characteristic to provide pleasing stability: only those who succumb to the temptation to drive this model as a sports car will note that bad bumps encountered when cornering vigorously invoke rather strange motions of the rear axle.

For ordinary use, the new hydraulic brakes are very pleasingly light and progressive in action, and they are well able to stop the car from its maximum speed. Repeated hard applications of the brakes do disclose the effect of rather small dimensions, it being possible to make the front brakes smoke, when they are inclined to judder slightly and pull sideways to a certain extent, although these symptoms did not seem to be accompanied by

**TOP ACCESS** to the power unit is provided through a front-hinged panel of considerable width, released from inside the car. A 12-volt starter battery is mounted alongside the engine.

any serious fade. Pedals hung from above prove comfortable, and leave good space beside them for the left foot, although it may be commented that, like many others, the "hanging" pedals are not ideal for women drivers wearing high-heeled shoes. The hand-brake, set horizontally between the two front seats, proved very convenient and quite adequately powerful.

Inexpensive saloon cars of all-steel construction are not expected to provide the highest standards of silence, but the pre-production example of the Prefect which was used for this test was quite free from any identifiable drumming. The pleasantest range of cruising speeds was between 15 and 50 m.p.h., but the car remained very reasonably quiet up to a true 60 m.p.h., beyond which pace the



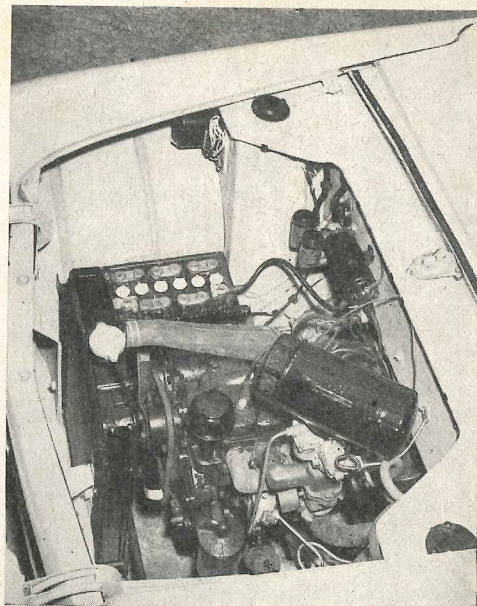
**MODEST HEIGHT** of the Prefect is indicated by comparison with a 5 ft. 8 in. tall driver. Twin rear lamps are supplemented by twin mirrors, a number-plate lamp being neatly concealed behind the rear bumper.

wind noise increased considerably and the speedometer suddenly began to exaggerate rather wildly.

Two individual and adjustable front seats are provided, with ample elbow room for two people, these seats having extremely upright backrests which keen drivers appreciated but which passengers found rather tiring on long journeys. The rear seat is entirely adequate for two adults, but does not provide them with extra space for the changes of position which so much enhance comfort on long journeys. A parcels shelf of magnificent spaciousness is mounted beneath the fascia panel, although some detail improvement is required to

**FLAT FLOOR** of sufficient extent to accommodate a large suitcase is provided in the capacious luggage locker, despite presence of the spare wheel on the floor at one side. The fuel tank behind the left-hand rear wheel is of 7 gallons

capacity  
www.okm.nl



prevent objects sliding about; there is another shelf behind the rear seat squab.

Rather thick windscreen pillars are an unfortunate inheritance from former Prefects, but are much less objectionable with the latest very wide curved windscreen. The screen is deep and the bonnet low so that both front "wings" are in full view, and two vacuum-driven wipers clear a really large area of glass. Rearward vision would also be good with a rather lower mounting for the driving mirror. Hinged ventilator panels on the front windows are effective as air extractors, but the test car was inclined to be rather draughty.

Although the speedometer is sensibly positioned directly above the steering column, a stumpy needle and colours which matched when they should have contrasted made this instrument difficult to read quickly, particularly at night. The radiator thermometer failed during our test, and the fuel contents gauge seemed to be strangely calibrated—but, for once, this is a car which permits a petrol pump attendant to look straight down a short vertical filler neck into the fuel tank. We considered that the catch provided for the luggage locker was rather clumsy to use, but the locker itself is usefully capacious despite the presence of the spare wheel on the floor at one side: if large cases are to be carried in the locker, however, they have to be lifted over a somewhat high rear bulkhead, and then slid forward into place below the rear parcels shelf.

Front hinged so that it could hardly fly open, the bonnet has a simple release catch inside the car, and its panel is large enough to give surprisingly good access to the starter battery and the side-valve engine. The low-set fuel pump is easily reached, for example, although proximity of the distributor makes access to the carburettor slow running adjustments unexpectedly awkward.

As was indicated in the opening paragraph, the Ford Prefect offers things which no other car (except the mechanically similar Ford Anglia two-door saloon) offers at the same price. With four seats of adequate if not especially generous roominess, it combines speed, economy, comfort of riding, and good cornering qualities in a manner which should earn it a huge circle of friends.

