

The Motor Road Test No. 32/58

Make: Humber

Type: Super Snipe (with automatic gearbox and power steering)

Makers: Humber Ltd., Ryton-on-Dunsmore, nr. Coventry

Test Data

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CONDITIONS: Warm and dry with little wind. (Temperature 57°-62°F., Barometer 29.8-30.1 in. Hg.) Surface: Smooth concrete and tarred macadam. Fuel: Premium-grade pump petrol (approx. 95 Research Method Octane Rating.)

INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. 6% fast
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. 2% fast
 Speedometer at 90 m.p.h. accurate
 Distance recorder 1/2% slow

WEIGHT

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) 31 1/2 cwt.
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight 61/39
 Weight laden as tested 35 1/2 cwt.

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Mean lap speed of banked circuit 94.5 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 95.2 m.p.h.

"Maximile" Speed. (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest)
 Mean of four opp site runs 91.5 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 92.3 m.p.h.

Speed in gears (automatic change-up speeds at full throttle)
 Max. speed in 2nd gear 59 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in 1st gear 30 m.p.h.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

29.5 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level.
 29.0 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level.
 25.0 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level.
 22.0 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level.
 19.5 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level.

Overall Fuel Consumption for 857 miles, 47.4 gallons, equals 18.1 m.p.g. (15.6 litres/100 km.)

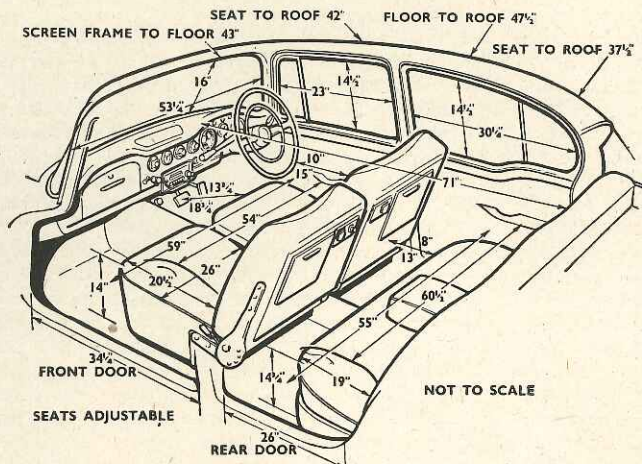
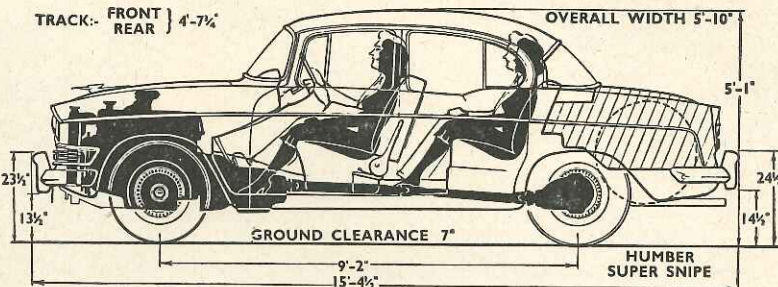
Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration) 20.3 m.p.g. Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure) 12 1/2 gallons.

STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs :
 Left 37 1/2 feet
 Right 37 1/2 feet
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 4 1/2

BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.85 g retardation (equivalent to 35 ft. stopping distance) with 150 lb. pedal pressure
 0.80 g retardation (equivalent to 37 1/2 ft. stopping distance) with 100 lb. pedal pressure
 0.74 g retardation (equivalent to 40 1/2 ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure
 0.58 g retardation (equivalent to 52 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure
 0.28 g retardation (equivalent to 107 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure

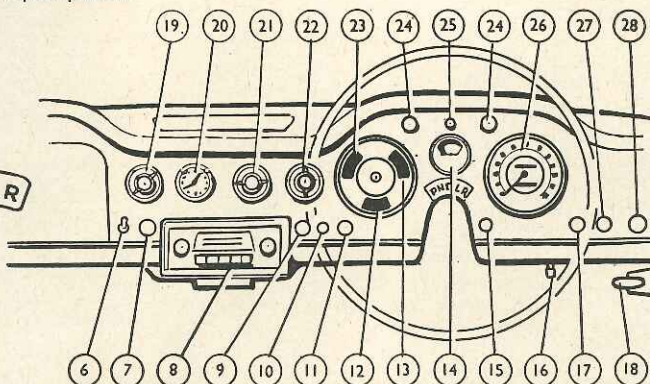
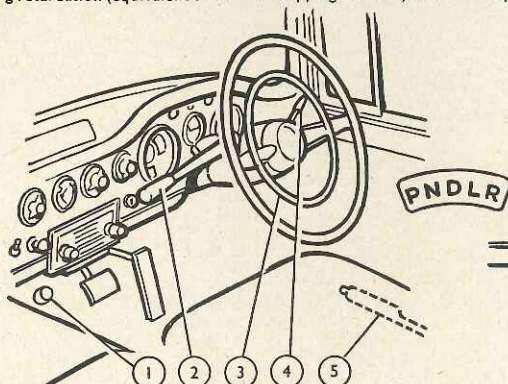


ACCELERATION TIMES from Rolling Start

	Direct Top Gear	"Kick-down"
0-30 m.p.h.	6.5 sec.	3.8 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.	9.4 sec.	4.8 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.	13.4 sec.	6.8 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.	18.3 sec.	7.5 sec.
0-70 m.p.h.	24.5 sec.	8.9 sec.
0-80 m.p.h.	34.0 sec.	10.9 sec.
0-90 m.p.h.	50.8 sec.	15.7 sec.
Standing quarter mile	21.5 sec.	26.3 sec.

HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds

Max. gradient on direct top gear 1 in 9.5 (Tapley 235 lb./ton)



1, Headlamp Dip Switch. 2, Transmission selector. 3, Horn ring. 4, Direction indicator switch. 5, Handbrake. 6, Heater fan switch. 7, Cigar lighter. 8, Radio controls. 9, Ignition and starter switch. 10, Dynamo charge warning light. 11,

Choke control. 12, Water thermometer. 13, Oil pressure gauge. 14, Fuel contents gauge. 15, Panel light switch (rheostat). 16, Trip re-setting knob. 17, Windscreen wipers switch. 18, Bonnet release. 19, Heater air control. 20, Clock. 21,

Lights switch. 22, Heater temperature control. 23, Ammeter. 24, Direction Indicator warning lights. 25, Main beam warning light. 26, Speedometer and distance recorder. 27, Windscreen washer button. 28, Intermediate gear hold switch.

The Humber Super Snipe

(With
Automatic
Transmission
and Power
Steering)

NEAT and modern in appearance without being flashy, this fast and refined new Humber is offered with a wide choice of extras.



A Luxurious New Six-cylinder Car for Town or Country

ANYONE who associates the name Humber with an especially solid and British kind of luxury will find the Company's latest product more than fully up to expectations. Anyone who associates the model name Super Snipe with the sort of almost brutally rapid acceleration from rest to 30 or 50 m.p.h. which a 4-litre engine used to provide may at first think the 2.6-litre heir to a famous name rather lacking in low-speed punch, but later experience will show that the acceleration is faster than the smooth and quiet behaviour of the engine at first suggests, and that a timed maximum speed of over 94 m.p.h. lets this latest Super Snipe keep very fast company on open roads.

Of the various options offered to Super Snipe buyers, the saloon submitted to us for test had a generous load, including automatic transmission, a hydraulic power steering system such as has not hitherto been offered on cars of such moderate

engine size, radio of excellent quality, and reclining-pattern individual front seats. Without these items it would be lighter and livelier, but with them it offers a degree of luxury inviting comparisons with the most highly priced cars.

As a five-seater with the individual front seats or as a six-seater when the lower-priced alternative of a bench seat is chosen, this is an exceptionally roomy car, less wide than the products of U.S.A. but excelling them in sheer comfort of furnishing. Without being too broad for use in the country lanes of Britain, or too long ever to find parking space in a city, this model makes big men extremely comfortable in either front or rear seat and has an easy-to-load luggage locker of very ample size. Front seats with deep upholstery recalling a club chair take up a lot of space, but there is still plenty of room behind them, and the only disadvantage of exceptionally high seat backs is a slight reduction in the usefulness of a wraparound rear window. The whole interior is beautifully designed, with high grade leather, polished walnut, and pile carpet

underlaid with sponge rubber as the materials used.

Only 17% greater in displacement than the 4-cylinder Humber Hawk engine, the new 6-cylinder Super Snipe unit which goes into the same steel body shell adds almost exactly 10 m.p.h. to the maximum speed and also offers much greater refinement. Liable to show just a trace of pinking if allowed to pull hard at 20 m.p.h. in top gear (unless 100-octane fuel is used) the engine is at other times quite remarkably inconspicuous, idling in smoothly inaudible fashion at traffic checks and pulling quietly over a wide range of car speeds. On occasion, a slight rhythmical vibration was felt in the car at speeds around 45 m.p.h., but this seemed to originate in the rubber-cushioned front subframe (which very effectively keeps road noise away from the body interior) rather than in the power unit.

To emphasize the smoothness and silence of this engine, the Borg-Warner automatic transmission has been adjusted to let the engine run at quite moderate r.p.m. when starting from rest and during

In Brief

Price (including automatic transmission and power steering, as tested) £1,165 plus purchase tax £583 17s. equals £1,748 17s.

Price with three-speed gearbox and normal steering (including purchase tax) £1,493 17s.

Capacity 2,651 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight 31½ cwt.

Acceleration:

20-40 m.p.h. in "kick down" gear 6.8 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears 13.4 sec.

Maximum direct top gear gradient 1 in 9.5

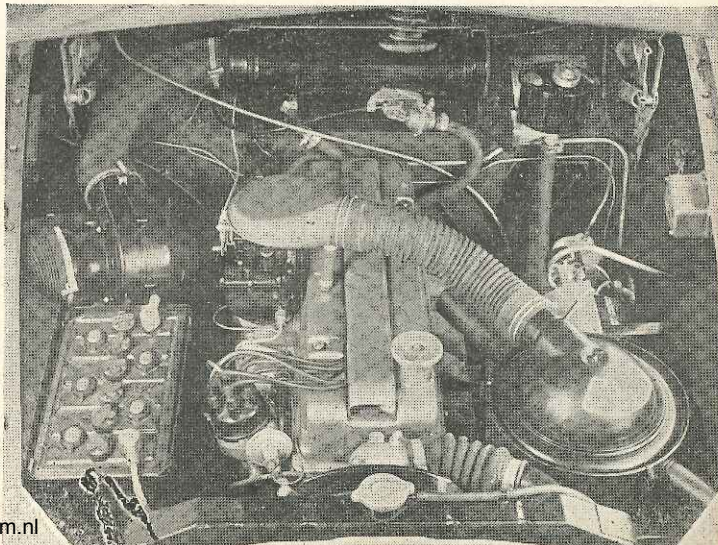
Maximum speed 94.5 m.p.h.

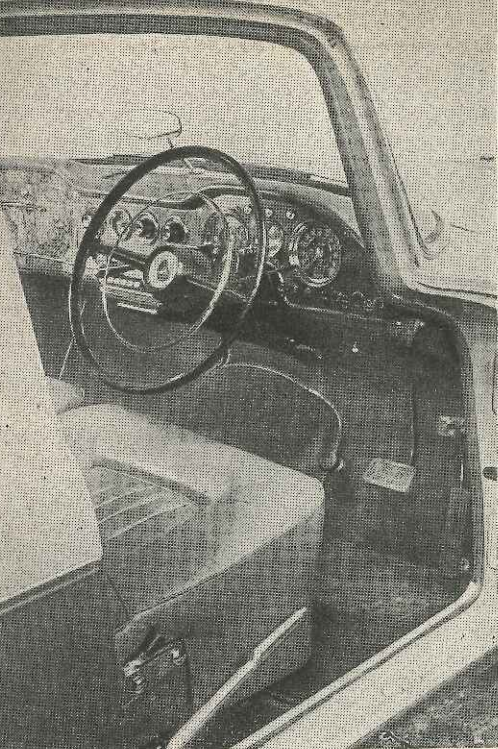
"Maximile" speed 91.5 m.p.h.

Touring fuel consumption 20.3 m.p.g.

Gearing: 17.3 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m.; 32.0 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed.

SMOOTH source of a top speed well in excess of 90 m.p.h. is this new 6-cylinder engine which well fills the Humber bonnet. Fuel pump and ignition distributor are high-mounted for accessibility.





TWO-PEDAL automatic transmission is an option which was fitted to the test model. Visible here are circular black-dial instruments, the powerful handbrake, and a control lever for adjusting the seat rake.

gearchange takes place automatically when 60 m.p.h. is attained, or sooner if the driver prefers to push in the control knob. Unfortunately, first gear will not engage automatically at any speed above 10 m.p.h. although when engaged it will give improved acceleration up to 30 m.p.h., so that town-speed acceleration from 20 m.p.h. is not as rapid as it might be.

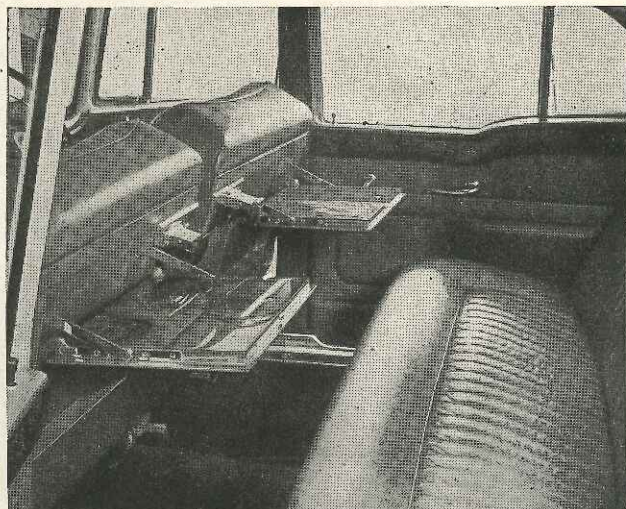
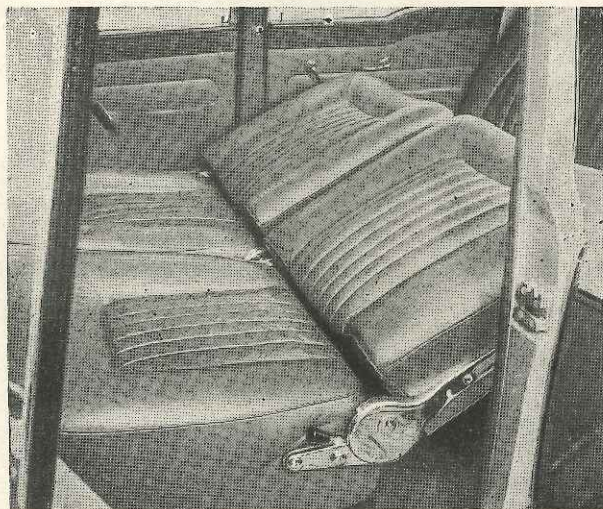
Once away from speed limits, the Super Snipe swings along any kind of road at a very effortless and rapid gait, top and intermediate gears providing well for whatever acceleration is needed. On British roads, the speed permitted by traffic conditions may not often exceed 75 m.p.h., but there was no fuss at an effortless 90 m.p.h. on the test track, nor in fact at the timed maximum of around 95 m.p.h. Wind noise is rather high if windows are opened at this sort of speed, but enough fresh air comes through the ventilation system to make open windows unnecessary at motorway speeds.

As part of its luxury character, the Super Snipe has been given a softness of riding such as is more often associated with American than with European cars. Too-rapid crossing of a hump-back bridge (it is very easy to underestimate speed in this car) is not followed by any bounce on the springs after the car has "landed,"

the shock absorbers checking their rebound very effectively, but at high cruising speeds there is a very slow and gentle rise and fall of the car on its springs which does not please everyone. There is a certain amount of body roll when a corner is negotiated quickly, although less than the softness of the springs might suggest, but this soft suspension does give a beautifully shock-free ride over good, bad or indifferent surfaces, whether the Super Snipe be well laden or carrying only a driver.

Widely favoured for the big cars of the U.S.A. and already adopted for some British cars of large size, power steering is a novelty on a 2.6-litre car and should prove a very popular option. In this application, power from an engine-driven hydraulic pump does all of the work all of the time, and the effort required from the driver scarcely amounts to more than finger pressure upon the wheel. Despite the power steering being so light and correspondingly shock-free it has a certain amount of castor action, straightening itself out after a main-road corner if released; we would have preferred rather stronger castor action, as the steering is "dead" for a small range on either side of the straight ahead position at 30 or 40 m.p.h. unless the steering swivels have very recently been greased, and does not self-centre without help from the driver after a full-lock turn has been made at a walking pace. Despite these comments however, we were highly appreciative of

most driving, the intermediate gear ratio on which 59-60 m.p.h. may be reached without fuss only engaging either if the car speed drops very low or the accelerator pedal is depressed a long way. Very welcome to the keen driver is an "intermediate gear hold" control which takes the form of a big pull-out knob placed conveniently to the right of the steering wheel, operation of this control just before the car is accelerated past slower traffic giving an earlier and smoother downward gear-change than does waiting for the fully-automatic system to operate; an upward

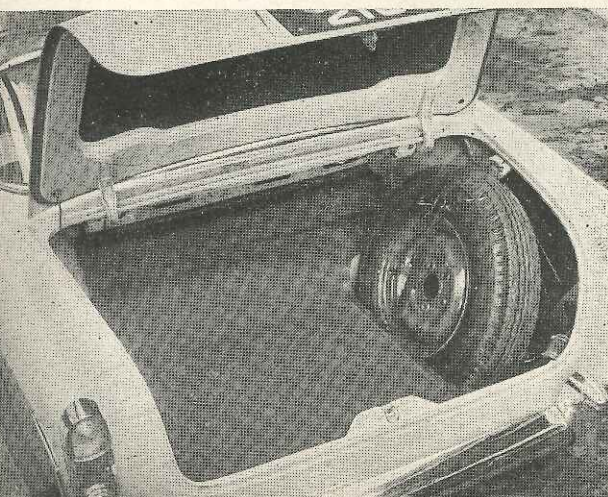


LUXURY features of the Super Snipe include deeply upholstered front seats (optionally of reclining pattern), and a spacious rear compartment fully equipped with folding tables, ashtrays and cigar lighters.

the elimination of all effort from the job of steering and manoeuvring a heavy car which, although still needing $4\frac{1}{4}$ turns from lock to lock, could be turned around in a confined space with astonishing rapidity and ease. On the open road and at high speeds, the abnormally light but normally geared steering gives accurate placing of the car.

AMPLE roomy for touring luggage, the rear locker has a flat floor covered with rubber matting, a neat side-mounting for the spare wheel having a quick-release strap.

High performance and a considerable fully-laden weight can together make severe demands upon a braking system, to meet which the Super Snipe has been equipped with large brake drums in which the shoes (two-trailing on the front wheels for fade resistance) are operated by an

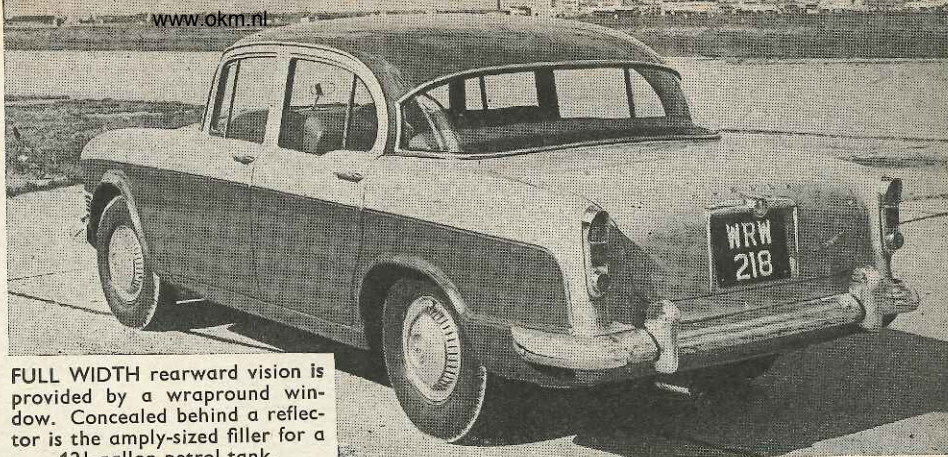


Super Snipe

instantly-responsive vacuum servo. The results obtained are appropriate to a luxurious fast-touring car, reassuring but never snatchy or fierce, the ultimate stopping power quite high and in strict response to graduated pedal pressures. Repeated hard applications which warm up the brakes may reduce their initial responsiveness to light pedal pressures, but do not seem to affect ultimate stopping power very severely, and whilst in "emergency stop" trials one rear wheel was apt to lock there was never any sideways pull on the steering.

Apart from its roominess and basic engineering, this car appeals as being very well planned in details. At first acquaintance the handsome veneer fascia panel seems to carry a rather awesome array of control knobs, but a little experience soon shows that the positionings, shapings and directions of movement of various controls make for sure operation of the most important ones after dark. From the steering wheel rim, the driver's right hand moves naturally past the direction indicator switch to the big push-pull control which forces engagement of intermediate gear or to the much smaller twist-action screen wiper switch: his left hand moves equally naturally past the forward-reverse gear selector control to the lighting switch. There is effective control over the "climate" inside the car by means of two progressive-action heater controls, our only criticism of the interior heating being that it was less quick than usual in taking effect after the engine had been started from cold.

After dark, the headlights proved very



FULL WIDTH rearward vision is provided by a wraparound window. Concealed behind a reflector is the amply-sized filler for a 12½-gallon petrol tank.

satisfactory, the main beam long enough for quite fast travel on an empty road yet not so narrow as to leave the driver "in blinkers" at a sharp corner, the dipped beam inoffensive to other traffic yet not unsatisfactory to the driver sitting behind it. A reversing lamp is automatically controlled by the gear selector lever, and there is lighting inside the glove and luggage lockers. Rheostat control is provided for the neat and comprehensive array of instruments, these having black dials of circular shape in front of the driver plus an accurate clock centrally placed where passengers also can read it.

In bad weather, the body proved draught- and water-proof, although it was wise to close the ventilator flaps on the side windows, rain traps on their lower front corners becoming ineffective in even a slight side wind. Two-speed wipers cleared forward vision effectively but did not follow around the curve of a wrap-around windscreen, and although the extensive de-mister air slots did not give a strong-feeling flow of air they would in fact keep the whole windscreen inner

surface clear in very damp weather. An optional Radiomobile car radio, with one speaker below the windscreen and another below the rear parcel shelf, was excellent in power and tonal quality.

A car as luxurious and solidly built as this new Super Snipe is not expected to give exceptionally high petrol m.p.g., but the 12½-gallon tank which has a good filler and a substantially accurate contents gauge provides a very useful non-stop cruising range. In comparison with our August 1956 Road Test Report on an automatic-gearbox Humber Super Snipe, this new model which has reduced acceleration but only 2½ m.p.h. less maximum speed shows valuable steady-speed petrol consumption improvements which, over the range of speeds from 30 to 70 m.p.h., vary from 4½ m.p.g. to 8 m.p.g. Both to buy and to run, it is a car which many successful business and professional people will regard as anything but extravagantly expensive, its merits as either a chauffeur-driven or owner-driven car being great, for smooth travel around town or for rapid progress in open country.

Specification

Engine	
Cylinders	6
Bore	82.55 mm.
Stroke	82.55 mm.
Cubic capacity	2,651 c.c.
Piston area	49.8 sq. in.
Valves	Inclined o.h.v. (pushrods)
Compression ratio	7.5/1
Carburettor	Stromberg D.I.V.42
Fuel pump	AC mechanical
Ignition timing control	Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter	AC full-flow
Max. power (gross)	112 b.h.p.
at	(105 b.h.p. net)
at	5,000 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p.	2,710 ft./min.
Transmission (Borg-Warner automatic)	
Clutch	Hydraulic torque converter
Top gear	4.55
2nd gear	6.51
1st gear	(with torque converter 13.67)
Reverse	(with torque converter 22.09)
Propeller shaft	Hardy Spicer
Final drive	divided open shaft
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.	Hypoid bevel
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed	17.3
	32.0
Chassis	
Brakes	Girling hydraulic (2 t.s. front) with vacuum servo assistance
Brake drum internal diameter	11 in.
Friction lining area	169 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front	I.F.S. by coil springs, wishbones and anti-roll torsion bar
Rear	Semi-elliptic
Shock absorbers	Armstrong telescopic
Steering gear	Hydrosteer power steering on test car
Tyres	Dunlop tubeless, 6.70—15

Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle	Yes
Battery mounting	Alongside engine on right
Jack	Bipod-type mechanical jack
Jacking points	Under sides of body, externally
Standard tool kit: Jack, wheelbrace, petrol funnel, tool roll containing five open-ended spanners, adjustable spanner, pliers, screwdriver, sparking plug spanner and tommy bar, distributor key and carburettor spanner, tyre valve key.	
Exterior lights: 2 headlamps, 2 side/flasher lamps, 2 stop/tail lamps, number plate lamp, reversing lamp.	
Number of electrical fuses	Two
Direction indicators	Self-cancelling flashers (white front, amber rear lenses)
Windscreen wipers	Electrical two-speed, two-blade, self-parking
Windscreen washers	Optional extra (Tudor or Lucas)
Sun vizors	Two
Instruments: Speedometer with decimal trip distance recorder, fuel contents gauge, coolant thermometer, oil pressure gauge, ammeter, clock.	
Warning lights: Dynamo charge, headlamp main beam, direction indicators.	

Locks:	
With ignition key	Either front door, ignition/starter/accessories switch
With other key	Glove box, luggage locker
Glove lockers	One on fascia panel with lockable lid
Map pockets	Two in front doors
Parcel shelves	One behind rear seat
Ashtrays	One on fascia panel, two behind front seats
Cigar lighters	One on fascia panel, one behind front seat
Interior lights: Roof lamp with four courtesy switches and manual switch, automatic glove box light, luggage locker light.	
Interior heater	Fresh-air type with screen de-misters (standard equipment)
Car radio	Optional extra, Radiomobile or Ekco (twin speakers)
Extras available: Automatic gearbox or over-drive, power steering, individual reclining-type seats, white-wall tyres, radio and full range of approved extras.	
Upholstery material	Leather for home market, Vynide plastic for export
Floor covering	Pile carpet with foam-rubber underlay
Exterior colours standardized: Five single colours or four two-colour combinations at standard price.	
Alternative body styles	Touring limousine, estate car

Maintenance

Sump (including filter)	15 pints, S.A.E. 20/20W or 10W/30 multigrade
Automatic gearbox and torque converter: 15 pints automatic transmission fluid.	
Rear axle	1½ pints, S.A.E. 90 hypoid gear oil
Steering gear lubricant	S.A.E. 140 EP gear oil
Cooling system capacity	26 pints (2 drain taps)
Chassis lubrication	By grease gun every 1,000 miles to 26 points
Ignition timing	5°-7° before t.d.c. static
Contact-breaker gap	0.014-0.016 in.
Sparking plug type	Champion N5
Sparking plug gap	0.025 in.

Valve timing: Inlet opens 20° before t.d.c. and closes 46° after b.d.c.; exhaust opens 50° before b.d.c. and closes 14° after t.d.c.	
Tappet clearances (hot)	Inlet and exhaust, 0.014 in.
Front wheel toe-in	¼ in.
Camber angle	30°-1°
Castor angle	½° negative
Steering swivel pin inclination	8¼°
Tyre pressures:	
Front	24 lb.
Rear	26-28 lb. according to load
Brake fluid	Girling or Lockheed (S.A.E. Spec. 70.R.1)
Battery type and capacity	12-volt, 51 amp. hr.