

The Motor Road Test No. 26/59

Make: Wolseley

Type: 6/99 (Overdrive transmission).

Makers: Wolseley Motors Ltd., Cowley, Oxford.

Test Data

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CONDITIONS: Weather: Warm and dry with moderate breeze. (Temperature 60°-67°F., Barometer 29.8-29.9 in. Hg.). Surface: Dry tar and concrete. Fuel: Premium-grade pump petrol (approx. 96 Research Method Octane Rating).

INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. 1% fast
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. Accurate
 Speedometer at 90 m.p.h. 4% fast
 Distance recorder Accurate

WEIGHT

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) 29½ cwt.
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight 56/44
 Weight laden as tested 33½ cwt.

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Direct Top Gear
 Mean lap speed around banked circuit 97.6 m.p.h.
 Best one-way ¼-mile on straight .. 102.3 m.p.h.

Overdrive top gear
 Mean lap speed around banked circuit 94.5 m.p.h.
 Best one-way ¼-mile on straight .. 97.8 m.p.h.

"Maximile" Speed (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest).
 Mean of opposite runs 94.4 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 95.7 m.p.h.

Speed in Gears
 Max. speed in overdrive 2nd gear, approx. 92 m.p.h.

Max. speed in direct 2nd gear .. 68 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in overdrive 1st gear .. 50 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in direct 1st gear .. 35 m.p.h.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

(Overdrive top gear)
 32.5 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level
 30.0 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level
 27.5 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level
 25.5 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level
 23.0 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level
 21.0 m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.h. on level
 18.0 m.p.g. at constant 90 m.p.h. on level
 (Direct top gear)
 28.0 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level
 26.0 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level
 24.0 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level
 22.5 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level
 21.0 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level
 19.0 m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.h. on level
 16.0 m.p.g. at constant 90 m.p.h. on level

Overall Fuel Consumption for 1,344 miles, 70.8 gallons, equals 19.0 m.p.g. (14.9 litres/100 km.)

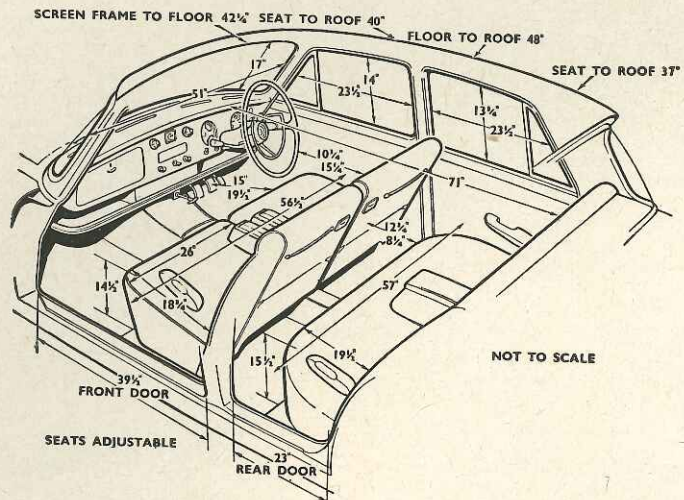
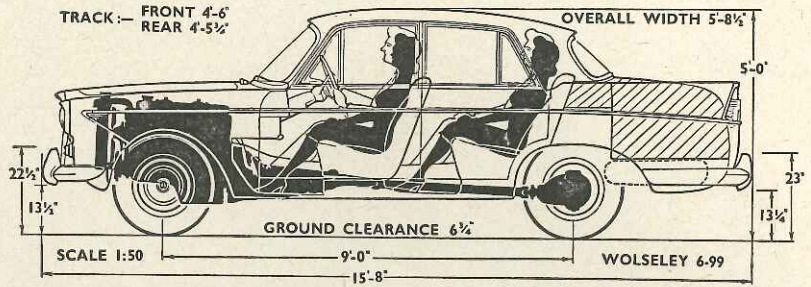
Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration) 23.6 m.p.g.
 Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure) 16 gallons.

STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:
 Left 36½ feet
 Right 37 feet
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 4½

BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.90g retardation (equivalent to 33½ ft. stopping distance) with 40 lb. pedal pressure
 0.60g retardation (equivalent to 50 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure



ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill

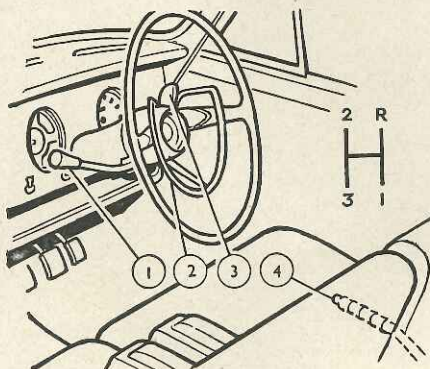
0-30 m.p.h.	4.3 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.	7.5 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.	10.7 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.	14.4 sec.
0-70 m.p.h.	19.7 sec.
0-80 m.p.h.	26.7 sec.
0-90 m.p.h.	39.4 sec.
Standing ¼-mile	20.4 sec.

ACCELERATION TIMES on upper ratios

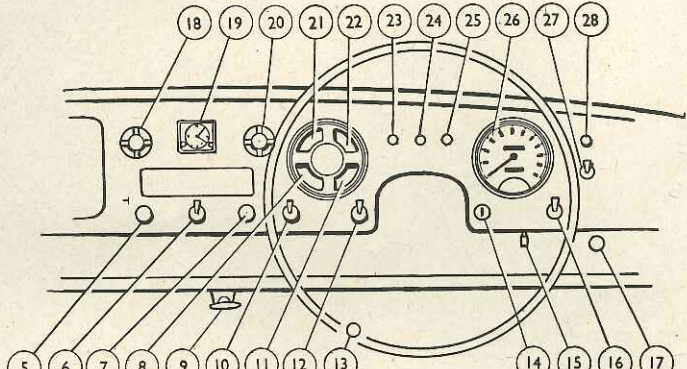
	Overdrive top gear	Direct top gear	Overdrive 2nd gear	Direct 2nd gear
10-30 m.p.h.	—	8.1 sec.	—	4.8 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.	—	7.9 sec.	—	4.7 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.	14.2 sec.	8.3 sec.	7.4 sec.	5.4 sec.
40-60 m.p.h.	15.2 sec.	9.3 sec.	8.3 sec.	6.9 sec.
50-70 m.p.h.	18.9 sec.	10.8 sec.	10.0 sec.	—
60-80 m.p.h.	25.5 sec.	13.3 sec.	12.4 sec.	—
70-90 m.p.h.	—	20.1 sec.	24.1 sec.	—

HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds

Max. gradient on overdrive top gear .. 1 in 13.5 (Tapley 165 lb./ton)
 Max. gradient on direct top gear .. 1 in 8.2 (Tapley 270 lb./ton)
 Max. gradient on overdrive 2nd gear .. 1 in 7.4 (Tapley 300 lb./ton)
 Max. gradient on direct 2nd gear .. 1 in 5.1 (Tapley 435 lb./ton)



1, Gear lever. 2, Horn ring. 3, Direction indicator switch and warning light. 4, Handbrake. 5, Cigar lighter. 6, Heater fan switch. 7, Choke control. 8, Oil pressure gauge. 9, Overdrive lock-out. 10, Panel light switch. 11, Fuel contents gauge.



12, Spotlamps switch. 13, Dip switch. 14, Ignition and starter switch. 15, Trip adjuster. 16, Lights switch. 17, Bonnet catch release. 18, Heater temperature control. 19, Clock. 20, Demister control. 21, Ammeter. 22, Water thermometer.

23, High beam indicator. 24, Brake servo warning light. 25, Dynamo charge warning light. 26, Speedometer and distance recorder. 27, Two-speed windscreen wipers switch. 28, Windscreen washer button.

The WOLSELEY 6/99 (with overdrive)

Refined and Effortless
Performance at a
Surprisingly Reasonable
Price

DURING our Road Test of the Wolseley 6/99, quite a number of the people who drove or rode in the car paid it a subtle but noteworthy compliment, by praising it as a car which they assumed to be beyond the financial reach of most people and then being astonished to learn that it is available, fully equipped and with purchase tax paid, for less than £1,255. Genuine roominess and luxurious seating, together with quietly impressive performance, make this new 2.9-litre model remarkably tempting value for money.

Unveiled in July as a completely new model, the 6/99 is nevertheless a recognizable if not a very close relative of the preceding 6/90 Wolseley, and whilst its design is thoroughly modern there are few striking technical novelties about it. Externally there is Farina styling as adopted earlier for the Fifteen-Sixty Wolseley, the fact that this larger model is longer and wider but only $\frac{3}{4}$ in. higher than the four-cylinder car notably enhancing its appearance. Power comes from an enlarged version of the well-known six-cylinder engine, which has also been strengthened to ensure continued durability, but this power is transmitted through a completely new gearbox and overdrive assembly. The suspension has been evolved from earlier British Motor Corporation layouts, but represents a very marked advance in performance. Stopping power for a car which can exceed 100 m.p.h. in very slightly favourable conditions is well provided by vacuum-assisted disc brakes on the front wheels in conjunction with pressure-controlled 10-in. drum rear brakes. Furnished in the quietly luxurious manner expected of a Wolseley, this is a model which has big-car virtues in quite generous measure yet suffers surprisingly little from the shortcomings which often accompany these virtues.

Within overall dimensions of 15 ft. 8 in. length and 5 ft. 8½ in. width, this car is genuinely able to seat six people: interior breadth is emphasized by the difficulty which a driver finds in reaching across to



A CAPITAL background appropriate to a dignified British car is provided by the Houses of Parliament.

open a nearside door for a passenger to enter. The individual front seats can be set level with one another to form a bench and the twin central arm-rests folded away; there is a large central hump over the gearbox, but with a 22-in. width of flat floor on either side of this hump footroom for a third passenger is not lacking. In the rear compartment there is only a narrow propeller shaft cover, and the rear wheel arches are evident merely as slightly curved ends to a very comfortable seat, which can be divided centrally (over a thin-spot in the cushion) by a folding arm-rest. Rear seat passengers enjoy plenty of knee-room and footroom, a natural slope on the toeboard contributing to their comfort, and the almost-flat roof-line extends far enough back for headroom also to be generous. The floor is recessed approximately 6 in. below the door sills, but the doors are wide enough for entry and exit to be really easy—so wide that the checks provided cannot hold them securely open unless the car is on perfectly level ground.

It is remarkably difficult to design a seat which will please everyone, but the Wolseley's seats come exceptionally close to achieving this objective. Upholstered in soft leather which is matched by leather-cloth on the doors, the seating looks as comfortable as it is. Other features of a pleasant looking interior include a simple fascia of polished wood which is matched by door fillets, and carpets with taped edges which really do fit properly.

There are a few disappointments inside the car, notably in discovering that the "parcel" shelves below the fascia are not deep enough even to let an A.A. handbook

lie flat, and that the big lockable glove-box lid opens to reveal a locker of even less depth. Slim map pockets are provided behind the front seats, but it is on the roomy shelf behind the rear seat that maps and guide books tend to be put. The comprehensive set of instruments is sensibly placed in front of the driver, but the minor controls which include five identical-looking tumbler switches without identification markings are not especially convenient in their layout. A partial horn-ring and the turn indicator switch above the steering wheel hub (with inbuilt pilot lamp) are quite convenient, but sharp edges on the latter somewhat offset the safety merits of a dished steering wheel and a padded-edge front parcel shelf.

Smooth Power

The 2.9-litre six-cylinder engine which propels this luxurious integral-construction steel body is well able to provide good performance without fuss, there being plenty of low-speed torque for top gear acceleration, yet also a pleasing willingness to attain quite high r.p.m. when the need arises. There is power enough to provide really good acceleration, 70 m.p.h. being attainable from rest within less than 20 seconds elapsed time and less than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of clear level road. Our timed maximum speed of 97.6 m.p.h. mean, rising to over 100 m.p.h. downwind, was recorded in the direct top gear ratio which also provides acceleration from 20 m.p.h. to 40 m.p.h. in less than 8 seconds.

A new gearbox has been designed to go with this 102½ b.h.p. engine, having only three forward ratios on all of which clash-

In Brief

Price (with overdrive transmission as tested)	£885 plus purchase tax	£369
17s. 6d., equals	£1,254	17s. 6d.
Capacity	...	2,912 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	...	29½ cwt.
Acceleration:		
20-40 m.p.h. in direct top gear	...	7.9 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	...	10.7 sec.
Maximum direct top gear gradient	...	1 in 8.2
Maximum speed (direct top gear)	...	97.6 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed	...	94.4 m.p.h.
Touring fuel consumption	...	23.6 m.p.g.
Gearing: 18.9 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m. (overdrive, 27.0 m.p.h.); 32.4 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed (overdrive, 46.3 m.p.h.).		



The Wolseley 6/99

SPACE for six people is provided by the Farina-styled body which has ample areas of flat floor between door sills and transmission tunnel. Grained woodwork and a full set of instruments set the tone for a quietly luxurious style of interior decoration.

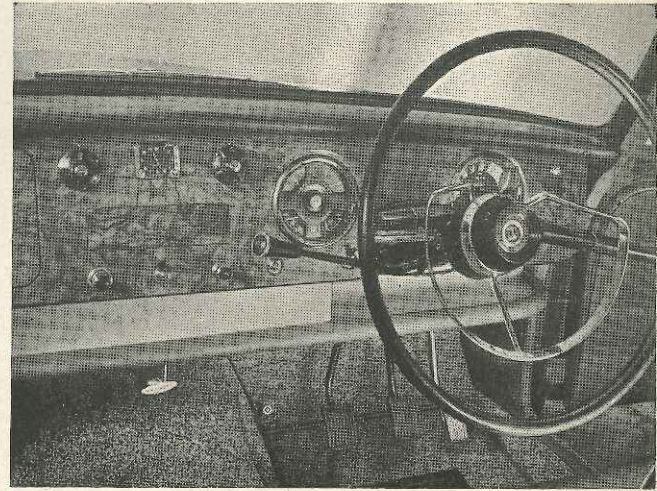
proof synchromesh is provided. In unit with this gearbox is a Borg-Warner overdrive, which unless locked out of action operates semi-automatically—releasing the accelerator at any speed over approximately 28 m.p.h. (in any gear) lets overdrive engage, and disengagement occurs either automatically if the car slows below 25 m.p.h., or instantly if the driver applies a "second pressure" to move the accelerator pedal slightly beyond its full-throttle position. We know that there are mixed views about this device, but 25,000 miles experience with it on one of the British Motor Corporation's smaller cars suggests that many people come to like it as an aid to easier and quieter driving. Locking the overdrive out of action increases fuel consumption by perhaps 10%, whilst leaving the engine audible instead of inaudible at main road cruising speeds.

Around town, this overdrive transmission lends itself to a very lazy driving technique, as there is enough engine torque for the car to be started reasonably briskly in second gear (a ratio on which 60 m.p.h. may be exceeded) and merely releasing the accelerator for a moment then engages overdrive second gear (a ratio on which 90 m.p.h. can just be reached) as quite a quiet town and suburban cruising ratio. Only a clutch pedal which is rather heavy to keep depressed tempts one ever to touch the gear lever when driving through London traffic—an unfortunately spongy linkage from steering-column gear lever to the gearbox certainly encouraged drivers

to stay in one ratio.

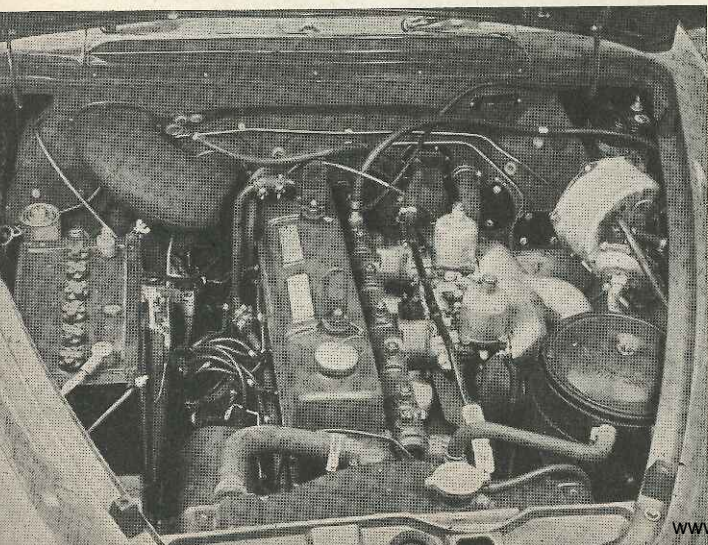
Overdrive top gear, which gives 27 m.p.h. per 1,000 engine r.p.m., is high enough for the car to cruise without strain at anything up to the 94½ m.p.h. which it can reach in this ratio at a mere 3,500 r.p.m. It is not a ratio which provides sparkling acceleration, as witness the 30 m.p.h. to 50 m.p.h. time of 14.2 seconds, but the "kick-down" change into direct top gear makes roughly 70% faster acceleration instantly available at any moment for overtaking other traffic, without any need to touch the gear lever. If the car is allowed to pull right down to below 30 m.p.h. in overdrive top gear, climbing a hill in town, for example, the engine at a mere 1,000 r.p.m. does begin to make individual firing impulses felt, but otherwise this is a very vibration-free power unit. With an engine which can slog in a very high gear or be revved in quite sporting fashion, m.p.g. figures can vary widely with conditions, our overall figure of 19.0 m.p.g. representing a preponderance of rather hard driving.

Very high praise goes to the new Lockheed brakes fitted to this car, which

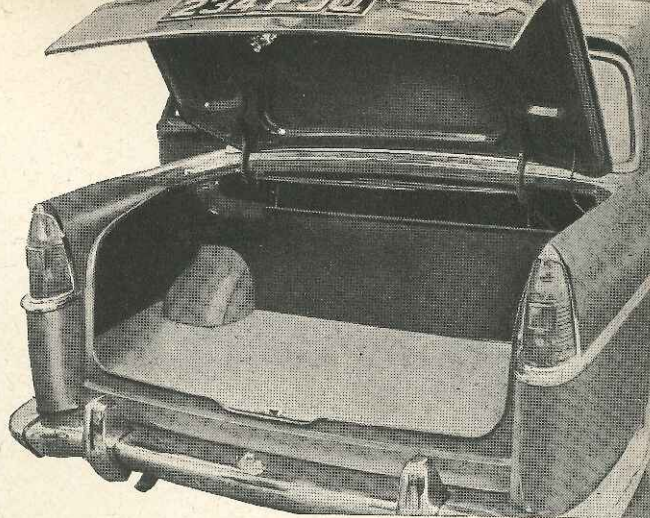
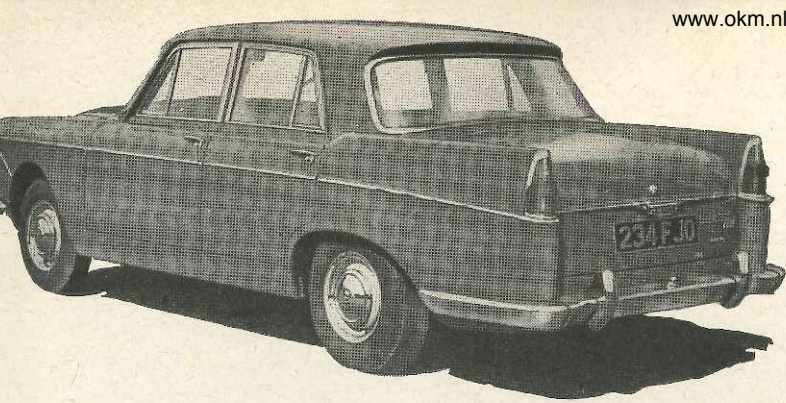


respond with smooth power to very moderate pressures on a pedal which is level with the accelerator and are notably free from fade or snatch. Maximum retardation required only 35-40 lb. pressure on the brake pedal, and a vacuum reservoir allows for at least eight brake applications with a "dead" engine before a warning light glows on the facia to indicate that full servo assistance is not available; tests along Cotswold by-ways never hinted at any need to obtain engine braking down a freak hill by using the overdrive lock-out control. Once when cornering on a loose surface we heard a sound suggesting that grit had got into one brake, but otherwise the only evident brake noise was slight squeal when a bare touch of retardation was being used. The pull-up hand-brake at first gave the impression of having a poor ratchet, but in fact proved well able to hold the car on a 1-in-3 test hill, whichever way it was pointing. A forward re-start up this grade was possible, and there was enough wheel-grip for the more difficult feat of re-starting in reverse to be performed on a 1-in-4 slope, the rigid rear axle (insulated from its semi-elliptic springs by rubber bushes) proving singularly free from any tendency to tramp, lift one wheel off the ground, or do any of the other undesirable things which are sometimes done by rigid axles used in conjunction with soft springs.

ENLARGED and reinforced, the six-cylinder B.M.C. engine with its twin S.U. carburettors provides speeds around the 100 m.p.h. mark without fuss or apparent effort.



On this car the road springs are decidedly



CLEAN pair of heels which the 6/99 can show to most European traffic features tail fins of restrained size. Easy access is provided to the flat carpeted floor of a capacious luggage locker, and there is a shelf for tools above the 16-gallon petrol tank.

soft, with static deflections equivalent to little short of 10 in., but the springs are well controlled by telescopic shock-absorbers and by anti-roll torsion bars at both front and rear. On the average modern road surface, both front and rear seat passengers praise the riding comfort very highly, a tendency for the fast-cruising car to rise and fall rather much over a single big hump in the road never getting to extremes. Body roll during fast cornering is certainly confined within exceptionally modest limits, and there is no sway going into or out of a corner. On really rough surfaces the unsprung weight of this orthodox suspension does begin to make itself felt, there being some body shake and a few rattles from such items as sun visors, especially if the tyre pressures have been raised from 24 lb. to 30 lb./sq. in. as recommended for sustained motorway cruising at over 85 m.p.h. Overall, however, the suspension and seat cushioning combine to make this a very comfortable car for the driver and all his or her passengers.

Geared at just over four turns of a large wheel from lock to lock, and giving the ability to turn round between kerbs 37 ft. apart, the steering of this car is light and

shock-free in ordinary driving, heavier for very acute corners, but never so heavy as to inconvenience a competent lady driver. This is not in any sense a sports model, but its natural pace along winding roads is surprisingly brisk, corners being taken very much more effortlessly than in other recent six-cylinder Wolseleys.

After dark, the Wolseley driver can switch on a good pair of wide-beam headlamps, and instrument lighting which is completely free from glare. The neat installation of two additional pencil-beam road lamps seems ill-considered, as failure to provide readily accessible adjustment of their aim restricts their usefulness as fog-lamps, and failure to make them go out when the headlamps are dipped restricts the use that can conveniently and legally be made of their long-range beams for fast driving in fine weather.

Warm weather during our tests did not give the standardized fresh-air heating system a severe trial, but it seems that an owner who learns all the possible ways of using two multi-position control knobs to get cool, warm or hot air on to his feet and/or on to the windscreen interior should never need to be uncomfortable.

A centrally-placed pair of jets provide effective windscreen washing sprays at any car speed, the wiper arcs overlap even if they do not reach to the curved edges of the windscreen, and there is a wide rear-view mirror excellently positioned. In the tail of the body, a vast luggage locker has a completely flat carpeted floor, but the opportunity to illuminate its interior from tail or number plate lamps has been missed.

Available also with a fully automatic transmission, the Wolseley 6/99 is a pleasantly furnished car which will appeal to men and women of widely varying tastes, being fast and stable for those who value performance, smooth and quietly comfortable for those who attach more importance to refinement. Very competitively priced, it should open up possibilities of quality-car motoring for people who have hitherto had to accept large cars of much less refined sort, yet by its excellence it may tempt some customers away from more expensive marques—it is in fact likely to prove the most popular big Wolseley ever built.

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Specification

Engine	
Cylinders	6
Bore	83.34 mm.
Stroke	88.9 mm.
Cubic capacity	2,912 c.c.
Piston area	50.74 sq. in.
Valves	o.h.v. (pushrods)
Compression ratio	8.3/1
Carburettor	Twin S.U. horizontal type H4
Fuel pump	Two S.U. electrical, type PD
Ignition timing control	Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter	Tecalemit or Purolator full-flow
Max. power (gross)	112 b.h.p. at 4,750 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p.	2,770 ft./min.
Transmission	
Clutch	10 in. single dry plate
Top gear (s/m)	3.91 (Overdrive, 2.74)
2nd gear (s/m)	6.45 (Overdrive, 4.52)
1st gear (s/m)	12.09 (Overdrive, 8.45)
Reverse	11.73
Overdrive	Borg-Warner semi-automatic fitted as standard equipment
Propeller shaft	Hardy Spicer single-piece open
Final drive	11/39 hypoid bevel
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.	18.9 (Overdrive, 27.0)
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed	32.4 (Overdrive, 46.3)
Chassis	
Brakes	Lockheed hydraulic; disc front, drum rear with pressure-limiting valve.
Brake diameters:	
Front discs	10½ in.
Rear drums	10 in.
Friction lining area	153 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front:	Independent by coil springs, wish-bones and anti-roll torsion bar.
Rear:	Rigid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs and anti-roll torsion bar.
Shock absorbers	Armstrong lever-arm hydraulic
Steering gear	Bishop cam and peg
Tyres	Dunlop tubeless, 7.00—14

Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle	Yes
Battery mounting	Alongside engine on right
Jack	Bevel-gear bipod pillar type
Jacking points	2 external sockets below front doors
Standard tool kit:	Jack, wheelbrace, starting handle, tyre pump, grease gun, sparking plug box spanner, rear axle drain plug key, Phillips screwdriver, ignition feeler/screwdriver, tappet feelers, tyre valve key.
Exterior lights:	2 headlamps, 2 sidelamps, 2 stop/tail lamps, 2 long-range lamps, reversing lamp.
Number of electrical fuses	2
Direction indicators	Self-cancelling amber flashers at front and rear
Windscreen wipers	Two-speed electrical two-blade, self parking
Windscreen washers	Yes
Sun visors	Two, universally pivoted
Instruments:	Speedometer with decimal trip and total distance recorder, fuel contents gauge, oil pressure gauge, coolant thermometer, ammeter, clock.
Warning lights:	Dynamo charge, headlamp main beam, turn indicators, brake servo vacuum.

Locks:	With ignition key: Ignition/starter switch, either front door, petrol filler cap.
	With other key: Glovebox and luggage locker.
Glove lockers	One on facia, with lockable lid
Map pockets	Behind front seat backrests
Parcel shelves	Below facia and behind rear seat
Ashtrays	2 in front doors, 2 behind front seats
Cigar lighters	1 on facia
Interior lights:	2 on centre door pillars; switches on lamps and courtesy switches on front doors.
Interior heater:	Smiths 3.9 Kw fresh-air heater and screen de-mister fitted as standard.
Car radio	Optional extra (Radiomobile)
Extras available:	Automatic transmission (Borg-Warner), radio, two-colour paintwork.
Upholstery material	Leather
Floor covering	Carpets
Exterior colours standardized:	Six single colours, six duotone colour schemes.
Alternative body styles:	None (Austin A99 has closely similar mechanical specification with simpler finish and equipment).

Maintenance

Sump:	11½ pints, including filter, S.A.E. 30 for tropical to temperate winter conditions. (Multigrade oils approved as alternative.)
Gearbox	5 pints plus 1½ pints in overdrive, S.A.E. 30
Rear axle	3½ pints, S.A.E. 90 hypoid gear oil
Steering gear and idler-arm lubricant	S.A.E. 90 hypoid gear oil
Cooling system capacity	20 pints (2 drain taps)
Chassis lubrication	By grease gun every 1,000 miles to 15 points
Ignition timing	1° before t.d.c., static
Contact-breaker gap	0.014-0.016 in.
Sparking plug type	14 mm. Champion N5
Sparking 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)	0.012 in.
Front wheel toe-in	½ in.
Camber angle	1°
Castor angle	1½°
Steering swivel pin inclination	7½°
Tyre pressures:	Front and rear, 24 lb. normal or 30 lb. for motorway cruising speeds.
Brake fluid	Lockheed (S.A.E. Spec. 70.R.1)
Battery type and capacity	Lucas BT.9A, 12 volt, 57 amp. hr.
Miscellaneous:	Top up carburettor dashpots with S.A.E. 20 engine oil approx. every 1,000 miles.