

# The Motor Road Test No. 28/58 (Continental)

**Make:** Wolseley. **Type:** 6/90 (Series III) with Automatic Gearbox.  
**Makers:** Wolseley Motors Ltd., Cowley, Oxford.

## Test Data

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**CONDITIONS:** Weather: Dry; wind 15-22 m.p.h. (Temperature 66°-70° F., Barometer 29.82 in. Hg.) Surface: Dry tarmac. Fuel: Premium grade pump fuel.

### INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. .. .. 2% fast  
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. .. .. 3% fast  
 Speedometer at 90 m.p.h. .. .. 5% fast  
 Distance recorder .. .. 1% fast

### WEIGHT

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) .. 31½ cwt.  
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight .. 55/45  
 Weight laden as tested .. .. 35½ cwt.

### MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Flying Lap of Banked Circuit  
 Mean of two laps .. .. 95 m.p.h.  
 Best one-way ¼ mile equals .. .. 100 m.p.h.

"Maximile" Speed (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest).  
 Mean of four opposite runs .. 90.9 m.p.h.  
 Best one-way time equals .. .. 94.2 m.p.h.

### Speed in Gears

Max. speed in 2nd gear .. .. 62 m.p.h.  
 Max. speed in 1st gear .. .. 32 m.p.h.

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

(Direct top gear)  
 25.5 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level  
 25.0 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level  
 25.0 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level  
 23.5 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level  
 22.5 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level  
 20.0 m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.h. on level

Overall Fuel Consumption for 2,090 miles, 108 gallons, equals 19.4 m.p.g. (14.6 litres/100 km.).

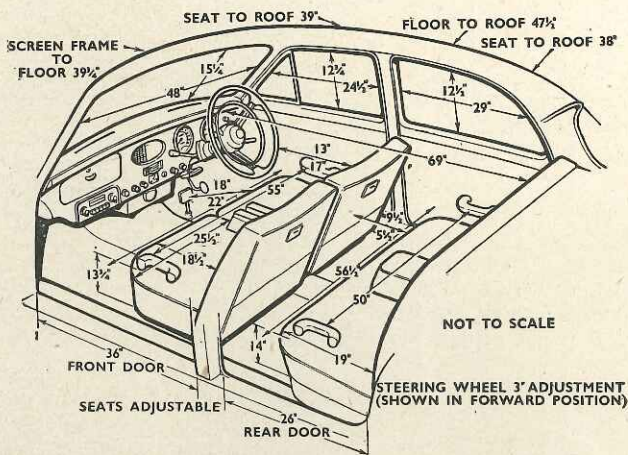
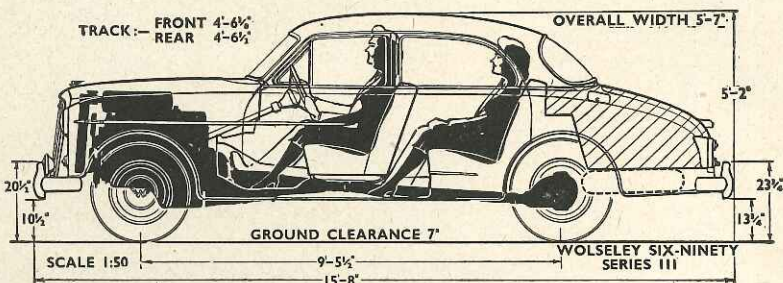
Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration). 22.1 m.p.g.  
 Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure) 13 gallons. (59 litres).

### STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:  
 Left .. .. 38½ ft.  
 Right .. .. 36½ ft.  
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 4½

### BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.90 g retardation (equivalent to 33½ ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure.  
 0.76 g retardation (equivalent to 39½ ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure.  
 0.44 g retardation (equivalent to 68 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure.



### ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill.

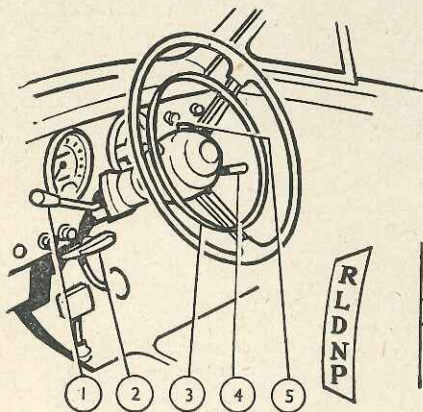
0-30 m.p.h. .. .. .	6.0 sec.
0-40 m.p.h. .. .. .	8.8 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. .. .. .	12.9 sec.
0-60 m.p.h. .. .. .	18.5 sec.
0-70 m.p.h. .. .. .	25.5 sec.
0-80 m.p.h. .. .. .	36.7 sec.
Standing quarter mile .. .. .	21.6 sec.

### ACCELERATION TIMES from rolling start.

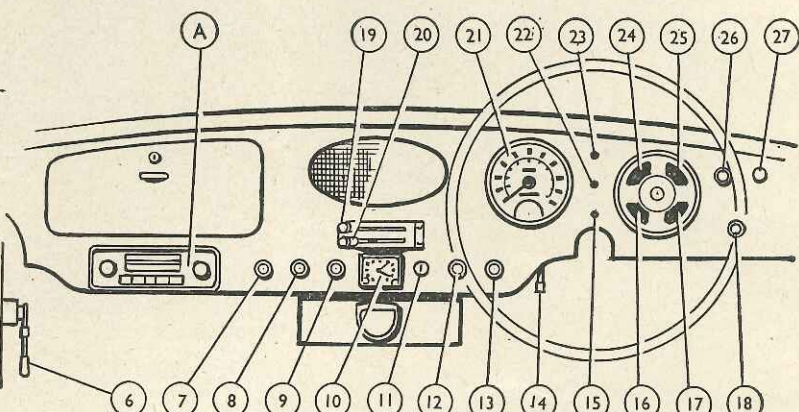
0-20 m.p.h. .. .. .	3.5 sec.
10-30 m.p.h. .. .. .	4.6 sec.
20-40 m.p.h. .. .. .	5.3 sec.
30-50 m.p.h. .. .. .	12.0 sec.
40-60 m.p.h. .. .. .	13.1 sec.
50-70 m.p.h. .. .. .	15.5 sec.
60-80 m.p.h. .. .. .	19.3 sec.
Top gear "Kick Down"	18.2 sec.

### HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds

Max. gradient on top gear .. .. 1 in 11.1 (Tapley 200 lb./ton)  
 Max. gradient on 2nd gear .. .. 1 in 7.1 (Tapley 310 lb./ton)



A, Optional radio. 1, Transmission selector. 2, Handbrake. 3, Horn ring. 4, Headlamp dip switch. 5, Trafficator switch. 6, Bonnet catch release. 7, Cigar lighter. 8, Panel light switch. 9, Fog lamp switch. 10, Clock. 11, Ignition switch. 12, Starter



switch. 13, Choke control. 14, Trip re-setting knob. 15, Oil pressure warning light. 16, Oil pressure gauge. 17, Fuel contents gauge. 18, Lights switch. 19, Demister control. 20, Heater control and fan switch. 21, Speedometer and

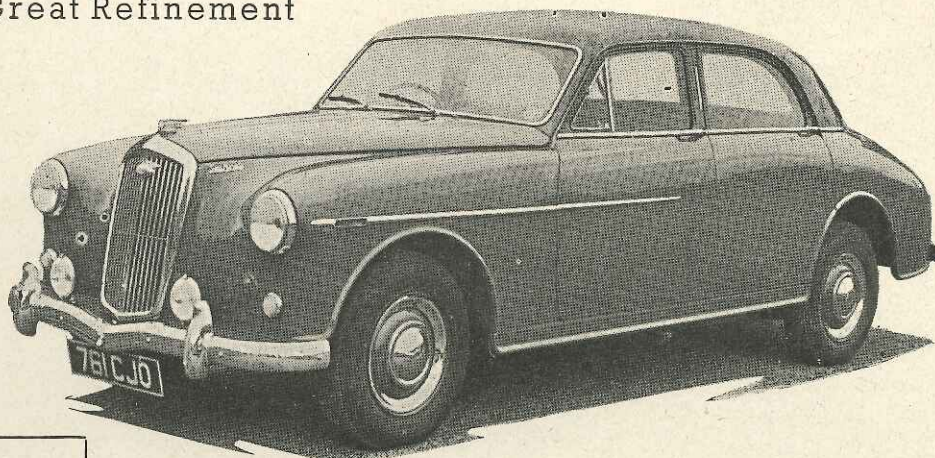
distance recorder. 22, Dynamo charge warning light. 23, Headlamp main beam warning light. 24, Ammeter. 25, Water thermostat. 26, Windscreen wipers switch. 27, Windscreen washer button.

# The WOLSELEY Six-Ninety

(With Automatic Transmission)

A Fast, Comfortable and Moderately-priced British Car of Great Refinement

**WELL BALANCED.**— The relationship of height (slightly exaggerated here owing to the absence of load) and length on the 6/90 is generally favourable and the lengths of the bonnet, side windows and tail produce, both in particular and in general, a highly pleasing impression.



## In Brief

Price (including automatic transmission as tested) £955 plus purchase tax £478 17s. equals £1,433 17s.

Price with synchromesh (including purchase tax) £1,276 7s.

Capacity ... .. 2,639.4 c.c.

Unladen kerb weight ... 31½ cwt.

Acceleration:

20-40 m.p.h. through gears 5.3 sec.

0-50 m.p.h. through gears 12.9 sec.

Maximum direct top gear

gradient ... .. 1 in 11.1

Maximum speed ... .. 95.0 m.p.h.

"Maximile" speed ... .. 90.9 m.p.h.

Touring fuel consumption ... 22.1 m.p.g.

Gearing: 19.9 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000

r.p.m.; 34.5 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min.

piston speed.

**B**Y European standards the six-cylinder 6/90 Wolseley (with automatic transmission) is, with an overall length of nearly 16 ft., a width in excess of 5½ ft., and an unladen weight of over 1½ tons, a big motorcar.

By any standards it is also a very good car and bearing in mind what it has to offer it is exceptional value for money with a basic price of £850 (or £955 with automatic transmission).

What, in brief, has it to offer?

Immediately obvious on the showroom floor, or outside the front door of the proud owner, are sleek lines; excellent proportion in the classic style, with a reasonably long bonnet balancing the capacious tail; a domed roof at a moderate height from the ground; and the traditional Wolseley radiator at the front end.

Opening the doors reveals upholstery in high quality hide, and individual front seats which have an inboard armrest which add to the comfort of the passenger and the stability of the driver in a manner which proves particularly effective.

The walnut woodwork is finely executed; the large diameter and plainly marked instruments in front of the driver with their pleasing circular dials are balanced by a fair-sized glove box in front of the pas-

senger, the ensemble being marred perhaps by the interpolation of a clock with a square face in the centre of the panel. As against this small criticism, the steering wheel is readily adjustable in the longitudinal plane and the driver is thereby provided not only with a comfortable seat but the means for obtaining the most effective driving position.

The windscreen is somewhat lacking in width and depth, and the latter deficiency is unfortunately coupled with a screen frame height less than 41 in. from the floor and thus approximately coincident with the eye level of a driver of normal height. This limitation on forward, and upward, visibility is one of the very few points which detract from the pleasure of driving the car long distances at home and abroad, a purpose for which it is in general admirably equipped and suited.

## Cruising at 80 m.p.h.

A recent journey of some 2,000 miles to and from Italy disclosed that the car has a comfortable cruising speed of 80 m.p.h. and that in a hurry 90 m.p.h. can be sustained with little effort as this is still some 5 m.p.h. below the mean maximum for the car, and the engine has therefore a power margin of 10%. As shown from the data panel the car is really fast in the sense that in favourable conditions it will reach the magic 100 m.p.h. mark and, perhaps more important, will exceed 90 m.p.h. within a mile of being started from rest.

In the upper speed ranges there is a marked absence of wind noise and mechanical sounds are very slight. Below, say, 65 m.p.h., they become almost non-existent and at 50 m.p.h., which represents a normal cruising speed for most of the motoring of many buyers, the car is overall as quiet as one could possibly wish.

In all circumstances the six-cylinder engine is exceptionally smooth and in torque characteristics it is the best match

with the fully automatic Borg-Warner transmission that we have yet experienced on a car of less than three litres. When the first version of the 6/90 was tested some three years ago, a lack of space for the left foot was an item of criticism but this, of course, has disappeared with the introduction of two-pedal control.

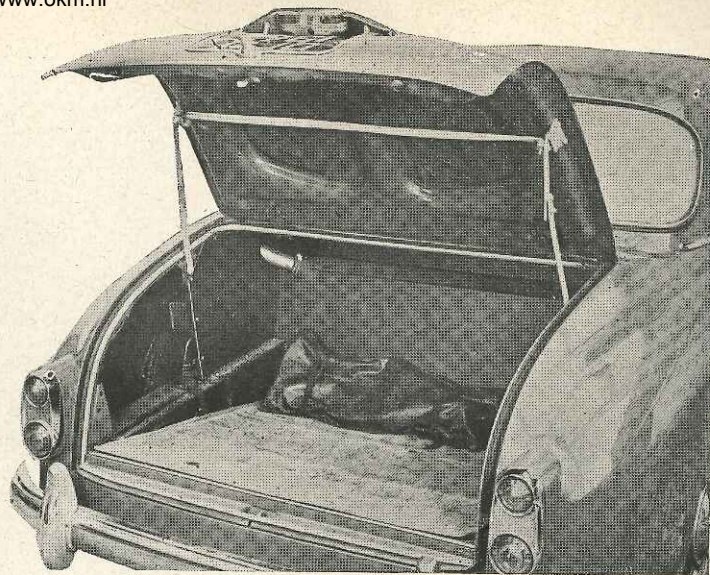
This, on full throttle, gives an automatic change up from first to second at a little over 30 m.p.h. and from second to direct top at slightly over 60 m.p.h., top being engaged on really light throttle openings at just over 20 m.p.h. From just under 30 m.p.h. onwards the careful driver can "stroke" the car away in top by judicious use of the throttle; by contrast, careless throttle opening can produce a perhaps unwanted plunge into second at higher speeds, this being particularly embarrassing at between 50/55 m.p.h. as it is almost immediately followed by the change up into top at the maximum governed speed.

## Practical Advantages

A further disadvantage of this transmission can be seen when tackling Alpine passes. On the ascent there is an unwanted change up into top every time the accelerator is released on the approach to a corner; when descending, the use of the engine as a brake is confined to first gear, and therefore to less than 30 m.p.h., second gear being unavailable for this purpose.

These are not difficulties which will be commonly experienced and against them must be set the considerable practical advantages of clutch-free motoring, the quietness of the box, the smoothness with which both upward and downward gear changes are effected, and the ability of the transmission to adapt itself automatically to given conditions of load and speed.

It is interesting to compare the acceleration figures realized by the car previously tested which had a conventional four-speed



## The WOLSELEY Six-Ninety

gearbox. Although this was manipulated with a skill sensibly superior to that of the average driver, the figures for acceleration from rest up to 50, and also to 70 m.p.h., are the same to within a bare half second with the three-speed Borg-Warner and the arguments are, therefore, with two exceptions, wholly in favour of the automatic installation.

In theory the absence of engine braking may be counted a disadvantage, especially as the earlier models were criticised for poor brakes. This has all been changed, the braking area having been stepped up by no less than 50% and a vacuum servo system introduced to lower pedal pressure—the effort needed to produce the minimum stopping distance having been cut down from 125 lb. to 75 lb., at the cost of some noise and snatch at low speeds.

### Stopping and Stability

These brakes are well capable of containing the high speed of the vehicle and even when heavily laden no noise, smell or fade was observed during mountainous descents. One can therefore completely dismiss any adverse consequences in the stopping system following from the use of the automatic transmission, but such cannot be said so far as the steering is concerned.

The Wolseley is a car with inherent understeer, and therefore natural straight-running characteristics; it is stable on cambered roads and in the presence of cross-winds and this combines with the very low noise level to give pleasing and relaxed driving on straight open roads. A strong self-centring action, combined

**HIGH QUALITY.**—The deeply dished steering wheel is adjustable on the column and the three spokes do not eclipse the clear circular instruments, which are mounted in a polished wood panel surmounted by a leather strip below the wind-screen.

with a front-wheel loading in excess of 1,900 lb., gives steering which demands substantial muscular effort despite low gearing which gives four turns from lock to lock. Such a set of circumstances, in such varied conditions as city parking, English winding country lanes, and Continental mountaineering taxes the physical resources of the driver, and if power steering could be offered as an additional option it would meet a genuine need, especially if steps were taken to improve the precision of response of the system.

A criticism which may be particular to the car offered for test was inability to

**OPTIMUM EMPLOYMENT.**—With the spare wheel mounted beneath the floor the tail of the Wolseley is wholly available for the carriage of baggage and the toolkit, the openings behind the wheel arches being particularly useful for small objects.

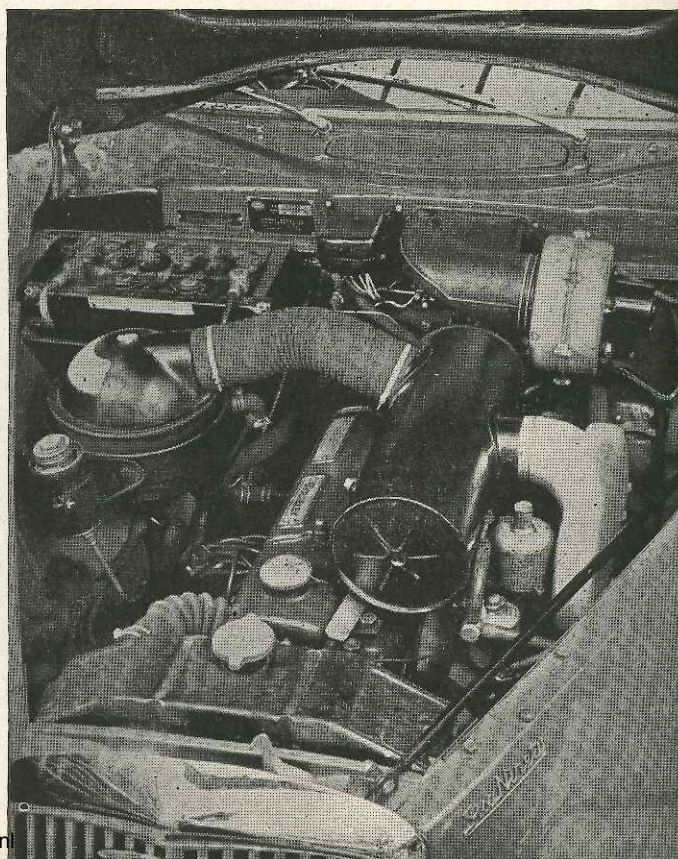
obtain cold air discharge through the ventilating system, due presumably to ineffective working of the hot water cut-off valve. In high summer no opportunities arose for testing the heating or de-frosting elements but they should be completely effective, and it is a not unimportant point that fresh air can be obtained through opened windows with only a modest increment of wind noise.

### Body and Chassis

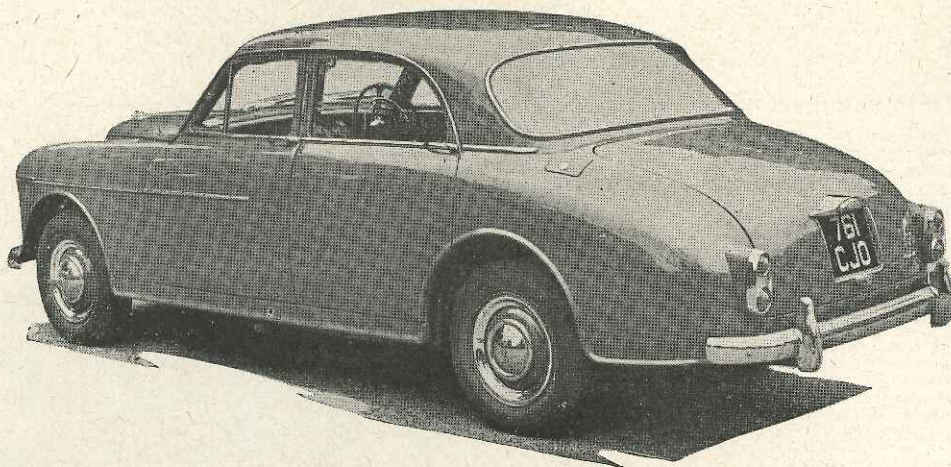
The Wolseley is one of the few European cars in which the body sits on a separate chassis frame and with somewhat firm independent front suspension, and a classic live rear axle mounted on leaf springs, there is an expectation of noticeable shake which will limit speeds over rough roads of the kind not normally encountered in

### FULL HOUSE.—

Although the engine compartment has little space to spare, the basic electrical components, master cylinder reservoir and carburettors are reasonably accessible for adjustment or replenishment when necessary. The intake to the heater system can be seen (closed) on the scuffle where it is well away from the contaminated air.



**GOING AWAY**—The Wolseley, with a maximum speed of 95 m.p.h. and a long-distance fuel economy of 20 m.p.g. is extremely suited to long-distance travel and many motorists will see it from this view as it passes them by.



England. In fact, the Wolseley rides rough, and even vile, road surfaces with exceptional aplomb, and can keep station with Continental vehicles fitted with independent rear suspension with no discomfort to the passengers and no visible movement in the structure. This was in no way a transient quality and during the course of our trials, which extended to nearly 3,000 miles, there was no change in the characteristics of the dampers, and they thus matched both the engine and the brakes, all the performance figures of the car being obtained after 2,500 miles of hard driving without adjustment.

Turning now from the performance of the car to the amenities of the body; the separate front seats at first seem somewhat flat and hard, but in practice 400 miles can be driven on successive days with negligible physical fatigue and the back seat passengers are not only supported in equal

comfort (with a wide armrest between them if only two are present) but have adequate leg room. Behind them the window ledge is fitted with a shallow leather bag with press studs which is an invaluable resting place for papers, maps and similar objects which might otherwise be blown about the interior of the car. Unfortunately there are no other map pockets in more accessible positions, nor is there a tray beneath the fascia panel.

#### A Big Boot

On the other hand, the boot is both large and unencumbered. Placing the petrol tank transversely behind the rear seat, which is forward of the wheel arch, makes it possible to sling the spare wheel beneath the floor of the luggage locker without impairing road clearance. As a consequence three large suitcases can readily be carried together with an abund-

ance of smaller articles, even the space directly behind the rear wheel arches being available for miscellaneous objects. Access to the fuel tank is now through a vertically-placed pillar protected by a lockable flap and really rapid rates of refuelling are possible.

A controversial point is the retention of semaphore-type indicators, but these in practice worked well and the arrangement is undoubtedly preferred by some. Courtesy light switches confined to the rear doors only is a detail which smacks somewhat of the chauffeur drive age, but whereas the 6/90 is a dignified business carriage, and in keeping with a paid driver, it is also a smooth but tough, fast yet reasonably economical, car which will give any owner pride in possession without too deep a raid on the purse, and pleasure to drive for many years in all kinds and conditions of motoring.

## Specification

<b>Engine</b>	
Cylinders ... ..	6
Bore ... ..	79.375
Stroke ... ..	88.9 mm.
Cubic capacity ... ..	2,639.4 c.c.
Piston area ... ..	47.58 sq. in.
Valves ... ..	Overhead (pushrods)
Compression ratio ... ..	8.3/1
(7.2/1 certain export markets only)	
Carburettor ... ..	2 S.U. H4
Fuel pump ... ..	S.U. high pressure
Ignition timing control ... ..	Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter ... ..	Tecalemit full flow
Max. power (gross/net) ... ..	101/94 b.h.p.
at ... ..	4,500 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p. ... ..	2,630 ft./min.
<b>Transmission</b>	
Clutch ... ..	Hydraulic torque converter
Top gear ... ..	3.9
2nd gear ... ..	5.6
1st gear ... ..	9.0
Torque converter bevel multiplication ... ..	2.16
Propeller shaft ... ..	Hardy Spicer
Final drive ... ..	Hypoid
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m. ... ..	19.9
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. ... ..	34.5
<b>Chassis</b>	
Brakes ... ..	Lockheed high stability, Servo assisted
Brake drum internal diameter:	
Front ... ..	11½ in.
Rear ... ..	11 in.
Friction lining area ... ..	168.5 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front ... ..	Torsion bars
Rear ... ..	Semi-elliptic leaf springs
Shock absorbers:	
Front Telescopic ... ..	Armstrong, Girling or Woodhead-Munro
Rear Telescopic ... ..	
Steering gear ... ..	Cam gears, cam and roller
Tyres ... ..	6.40—15 Dunlop tubeless

## Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle ... ..	Yes	Windscreen washers ... ..	Twin jet
Battery mounting ... ..	Scuttle	Sun visors ... ..	2
Jack ... ..	Bevelift Mk. VIII	Instruments: Speedometer, ammeter, oil pressure gauge, fuel gauge, water temperature gauge, clock.	
Jacking points ... ..	At each side	Warning lights: Dynamo charge, headlamp main beam.	
Standard tool kit: Starting handle, wheelbrace and hub cap lever, 3 d.e. box spanners, 2 d.e. spanners, tommy bar, screwdriver, oil can, 6 in. pliers, sparking plug spanner, tyre pump and adaptor, tappet feeler gauge, cylinder head nut spanner, Phillips screwdriver, grease gun, paint touch-up pencil, bevelift jack, Lockheed bleeder screw and drain tube, distributor screwdriver and gauge, tyre valve spanner, rear axle drain-plug key, tool bag.			
Exterior lights: 2 head, 2 fog, 2 side, 2 stop/tail, reverse, radiator badge, rear number plate.			
Number of electrical fuses ... ..	2	Locks:	
Direction indicators ... ..	Trafficators	With ignition key ... ..	Driver's door and petrol filler cap; boot lid
Windscreen wipers ... ..	Twin electric, self-parking	With other keys ... ..	Glove box
		Glove lockers ... ..	1 (with lock) in fascia
		Map pockets ... ..	Nil
		Parcel shelves ... ..	Behind rear seat squab
		Ashtrays ... ..	1 front, 2 rear
		Cigar lighters ... ..	1 front
		Interior lights ... ..	1 each side (auto switches)
		Interior heater ... ..	Fresh air heater and demister, standard
		Car radio ... ..	H.M.V. 200XA, optional extra

## Maintenance

Sump ... ..	11½ pints S.A.E. 30 s. and w.	Tappet clearances (hot):	
Gearbox ... ..	5 pints S.A.E. 30 s. and w.	Inlet ... ..	0.012 in.
Rear axle ... ..	3½ pints S.A.E. Hypoid 90 s. and w.	Exhaust ... ..	0.012 in.
Steering gear lubricant ... ..	Hypoid 90	Front wheel toe-in ... ..	Parallel
Cooling system capacity 20 pints (2 drain taps)		Camber angle ... ..	1°
Chassis lubrication: By grease gun every 1,000 miles to 16 points		Castor angle ... ..	3°
Ignition timing ... ..	2 b.t.d.c.	Steering swivel pin inclination ... ..	6°
Contact-breaker gap ... ..	0.014/0.016 in.	Tyre pressures:	
Sparking plug type ... ..	Champion N8	Front ... ..	28 lb. sq. in.
Sparking plug gap ... ..	0.025 in.	Rear ... ..	28 lb. sq. in.
Valve timing: 0.030 in. inlet opens 5° b.t.d.c., inlet closes, 45° a.b.d.c.; exhaust opens 40° b.b.d.c., exhaust closes 10° a.t.d.c.		Brake fluid ... ..	S.A.E. 70 RI
		Battery type and capacity ... ..	Lucas GTW 9A/2 57 amp. hr. at 20 hr. rate