

The Autocar ROAD TESTS



The M.G. saloon is one of the few small cars that retains a traditional four-door six-light body style. It also is fitted with a sunshine roof. Features such as separate head lamps and running boards are still retained.

DATA

PRICE (basic), with saloon body, £635.
British purchase tax, £354 5s 6d.
Total (in Great Britain), £989 5s 6d.
Extras: Radio £24 13s 2d.
Heater £10 17s 10d.

ENGINE: Capacity 1,250 c.c. (76.28 cu. in.).
Number of cylinders: 4.
Bore and stroke: 66.5 x 90 mm. (2.62 x 3.54 in.).
Valve gear: o.h.v., push rods and rockers.
Compression ratio: 7.2 to 1.
B.H.P.: 46 at 4,800 r.p.m. (37.5 B.H.P. per ton laden).
Torque: 58.5 lb ft at 2,400 r.p.m.
M.P.H. per 1,000 r.p.m. on top gear, 14.42.

WEIGHT (with 5 galls fuel), 21 cwt (2,341 lb).
Weight distribution (per cent): 49 F; 51 R.
Laden as tested: 24½ cwt (2,755 lb).
Lb. per c.c. (laden) 2.2.

TYRES: 5.50-15in.
Pressures (lb per sq in.): 23 F; 25 R.

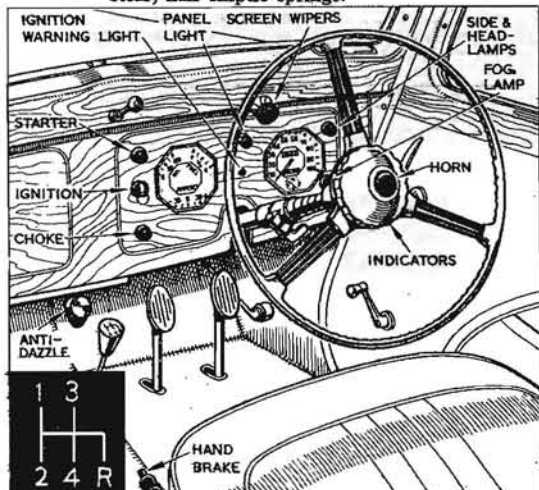
TANK CAPACITY: 8 Imperial gallons.
Oil sump, 9 pints.
Cooling system, 13½ pints.

TURNING CIRCLE: 33ft 6in (L and R).
Steering wheel turns (lock to lock): 2½.

DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase 8ft 3in.
Track: 3ft 11½in (F); 4ft 2in (R).
Length (overall): 13ft 8in.
Height: 4ft 9in.
Width: 4ft 11in.
Ground clearance: 5½in.
Frontal area: 18.7 sq ft (approx).

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM: 12-volt 52 ampère-hour battery.
Head lights: Double dip, 42-36 watt.

SUSPENSION: Front, independent with wishbones and coil springs.
Rear, half-elliptic springs.



No. 1461: 1½-LITRE M.G. SALOON

FOR many years the two letters M.G. have been dear to the hearts of a large number of enthusiasts. Through the years the company has produced a wide variety of models, ranging from a multiplicity of Midgets (Magic or otherwise) to saloons of up to 2.6 litres. At the moment production is concentrated on two models, the open two-seater known as the TD Midget and a four-seater saloon mechanically similar to the open car, known in its latest version as the YB. The saloon is one of the very few examples available in this country of a modern 1,250 c.c. engine and chassis fitted with traditional quality coachwork. It is of a size and performance that would suit the requirements of large numbers of motorists, yet it is compact and economical and very handy in congested areas, and can be housed in a quite small garage.

Few modifications have been made to this model since it was introduced about five years ago. However, two detail changes to the chassis have recently been made. A hypoid rear axle unit has replaced its spiral bevel counterpart, and an anti-roll bar is now fitted to the front suspension. It might be thought that an engine of only 1,250 c.c. in a fully equipped saloon body would produce only a very ordinary performance. But this is not the case. In part, perhaps, because of its sporting background, coupled with plenty of common sense on the part of its designers, the car does not protest at being driven hard. On the other hand, it is not in any way rough. In fact, it has in addition a number of qualities desirable in a small, smart town carriage.

On the open road some 40 miles can be put into an hour without working the willing horses unduly, while under favourable conditions a decidedly better average is possible if the driver is really trying. Although it is a quite flexible

PERFORMANCE

1½-LITRE M.G. SALOON

ACCELERATION: from constant speeds.
Speed, Gear Ratios and time in sec.

M.P.H.	5.125 to 1	7.098 to 1	10.609 to 1	17.938 to 1
10-30	15.4	10.5	7.1	—
20-40	15.3	10.4	8.4	—
30-50	16.0	11.8	—	—
40-60	22.0	—	—	—

From rest through gears to:

M.P.H.	sec.
30	6.9
50	18.4
60	30.4

Standing quarter mile, 24.5 sec.

SPEED ON GEARS:

Gear	M.P.H. (normal and max.)	K.P.H. (normal and max.)
Top	(mean) 71 (best) 75	114 121
3rd	54-59	87-95
2nd	30-40	48-64
1st	14-22	23-35

TRACTIVE RESISTANCE: 18 lb per ton at 10 M.P.H.

TRACTIVE EFFORT:

	Pull (lb per ton)	Equivalent Gradient
Top	154	1 in 15
Third	233	1 in 8.8
Second	320	1 in 6.5

BRAKES

Efficiency	Pedal Pressure (lb)
85 per cent	146
84 per cent	100
49 per cent	50

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

26.5 m.p.g. overall for 265 miles (10.66 litres per 100 km).
Approximate normal range 24-28 m.p.g. (11.8-10.1 litres per 100 km).
Fuel: British Pool.

WEATHER: Dry surface, wind fresh.

Air temperature 52 degrees F.

Acceleration figures are the means of several runs in opposite directions.

Tractive effort and resistance obtained by Tapley meter.

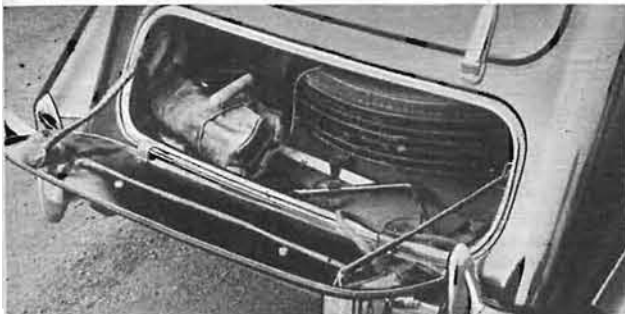
Model described in *The Autocar* of September 9, 1949, and January 4, 1952.

SPEEDOMETER CORRECTION: M.P.H.

Car speedometer	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	85
True speed	10	19	28	37	46	56	63	70	75

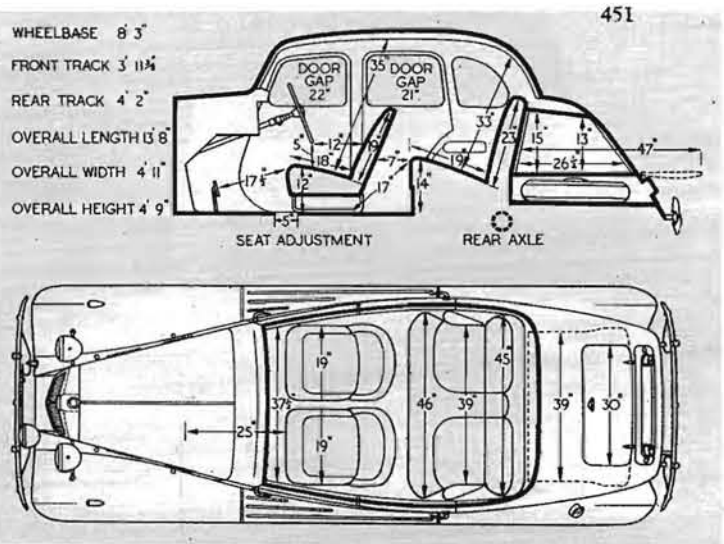
engine, it does not like to be allowed to slog, and to get the best out of it the gears should be freely used. Top gear will cope with normal main road gradients, yet third is often kinder if the car is well laden. On second gear it will climb most steeper hills, including a 1 in 5 test gradient.

Unlike the other cars produced by the Nuffield Organization, which use torsion bars for the front suspension, the M.G. employs coil springs at the front, in conjunction with half-elliptic springs for the rear suspension. This arrangement results in a very stable car and the firm, controlled ride inspires confidence. There is no marked pitching, nor is the suspension sufficiently hard to cause the ride to be rough or jerky when traversing bad surfaces. Cornering in the M.G. is particularly pleasant and the effect of the anti-roll bar is distinctly beneficial, there being very little roll on corners; also this addition appears to have eliminated the slight oversteer tendency mentioned when the car was last tested. Under normal conditions, with two up, the car now has a slight tendency to understeer, although in the fully laden condition a slight amount of oversteer was experienced. As it happened, the car was handled on snow-



The luggage locker has a platform type of lid which provides a useful addition to the carrying capacity. A separate lower compartment with detachable lid houses the spare wheel and tools.

Both front seats are adjustable for leg length by means of catches placed half way along the outer seat runners. Pockets are provided on the front doors, and the window winders are placed low down and to the front.



Measurements in these 1/2 in to 1 ft scale body diagrams are taken with the driving seat in the central position of fore and aft adjustment and with the rear cushions uncompressed.

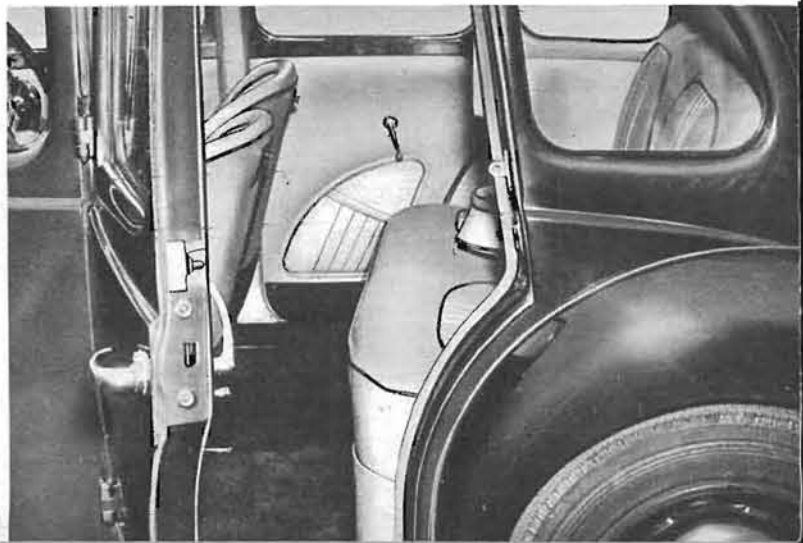
covered roads for an appreciable distance during the test. Under these conditions it inspired exceptional confidence and by its precise response made them almost enjoyable.

The rack and pinion steering, with 2 1/4 turns from lock to lock, is very positive, with no lost motion or any suspicion of "rubber rods" in the mechanism. It has a nice feel and a good self-centring action; it is reasonably light, yet quick and very responsive steering. A slight amount of road shock is transmitted back through the wheel at times, but this is not in any way excessive.

The gear change mechanism has a lever which can best be described as midway between the earlier conventional central lever and a remote control mechanism of the kind fitted to the M.G. Midget open two-seater. It is very rigid and positive in operation. The synchromesh has a nice feel and is sufficiently effective to prevent the mechanism being crashed or beaten unless particularly snappy changes are made. The clutch has a light and smooth action and is pleasant to operate.

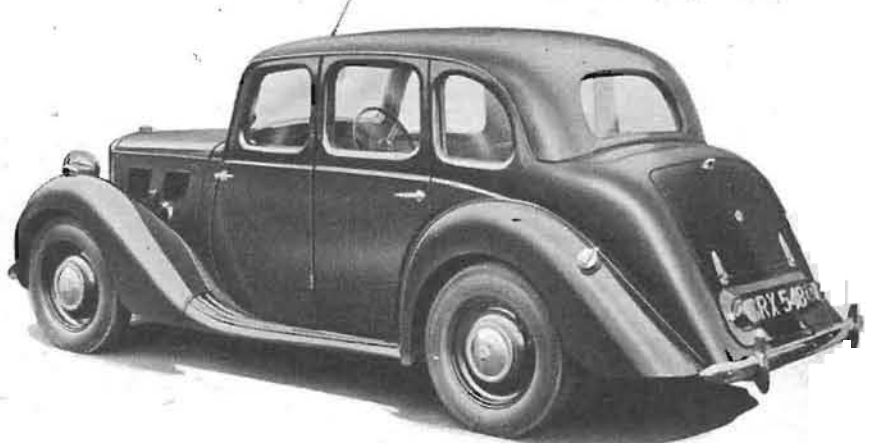
Hydraulically operated brakes working on the two-leading-shoe principle at the front are well up to their job. Pedal pressure required for maximum efficiency is fairly high, yet for normal road conditions very good results are obtained without pressing particularly hard. At all times the car stops in no uncertain manner and the brakes maintain perfect balance. Under the severe conditions imposed during performance testing no brake fade or judder was experienced, nor was there any noticeable increase in free pedal travel subsequently. The hand brake lever, located between the separate front seats, is in a very convenient position and one which enables a good leverage to be applied to it when necessary.

A folding central arm rest is fitted in the rear seat, and holding straps are attached to the rear pillars. The rear window winders are placed above the door pockets. There is a narrow shelf at the top of the rear seat backs.





From the front the familiar rectangular grille gives the car a neat, traditional appearance. The filler cap is genuine. Deep over-riders add a modern touch, and give useful protection.



A waist line starting at the bonnet runs to the back of the body, where it blends into the sweeping rear wing. The quick-action fuel filler cap protrudes through the left rear wing. A roller blind, driver-operated, serves the rear window.

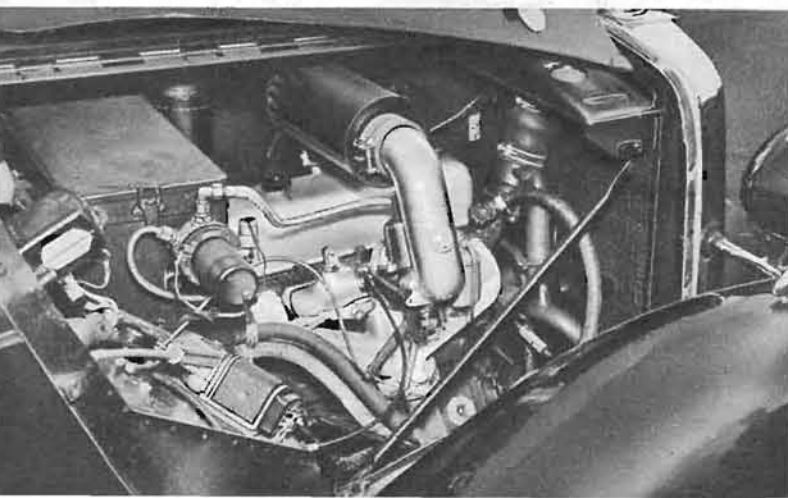
ROAD TEST . . . continued

Driving position in the 1½-litre is very good. From the driving seat both front wings are clearly visible. The wind-screen pillars are of average thickness, but the absence of a pivoted quarter light in the side windows improves three-quarter front visibility. The driving mirror, too, is well placed, and provides a clear view of what is going on behind. It would perhaps be better for some sizes of driver on long journeys if the curved backs of the front seats were higher to give more support to the shoulders, and also if the seat cushions were made a little longer to give more support to the leg muscles. Both front seats are adjustable for leg length, and the seat springing is comfortable and firm.

A thin-rimmed spring-spoked steering wheel mounted on a column which is particularly easily adjustable for length—and firmly locked in the required position—enables a useful variation of position to be made, and also the wheel is set at a comfortable angle. The clutch and brake pedals are quite small, but they are well positioned and comfortable to operate. There is also room between the tunnel over the gear box and the clutch pedal for the driver's left leg. This is not only advantageous in any case, but also is actually necessary with this car, because of the position of the dip switch, which is mounted fairly well forward on the toe board. The throttle pedal, too, is pleasant to operate and nicely positioned.

All the minor controls are mounted directly in front of the driver on the fascia panel. They are well spaced, so that there is no confusion when operating knobs of a similar

A longitudinally hinged bonnet is still used on the M.G. A single S.U. carburettor on this model is fitted with a light alloy intake duct coupled to the transverse air cleaner. In spite of appearances, it is possible to oil the carburettor piston damper without removing the air cleaner. The battery is completely enclosed in the case to which the electric petrol pump is attached. The windscreen wiper motor is mounted on the bulkhead. Owners of older models will note the additional hoses for the heater system.



size and shape in the dark. These include the switch for a fog lamp fitted as standard equipment.

Perhaps one of the things that is most impressive about the 1½-litre is that it is designed to carry only four people. The consequent compactness gives it a much more solid feel, and also allows it to be made more silent, than would be possible without a prohibitive increase in weight if a larger body were used.

Features seldom found on post-war cars are a sliding roof, an opening windscreen and a rear window blind. The M.G. has all three. The interior of this six-light saloon is very nicely finished. The fascia in particular deserves mention, as it is tastefully styled in polished wood. The left side is completely occupied by a large locker with a flush-fitting lid. Polished wood cappings are used on all the doors, which are trimmed to match the seats, while the floor is covered with very dark carpet. A full complement of ashtrays is fitted. The screenwiper blades are of a good length and well positioned, yet they could, with advantage, have a slightly larger arc of movement. Another useful feature seldom found on small or medium size cars is a built-in hydraulically operated jacking system. This enables all four wheels to be jacked up or, alternatively, either the front or the rear end. It is operated by means of a detachable lever carried in the spare wheel compartment, which is applied to the pump and control unit under the bonnet.

Lighting

The head lights are particularly good for a car of this size and cover an adequate range and also give a good spread of light. The interior light is well placed and is controlled by a switch fitted in the roof above the right-hand front door, where it is unusually convenient. The instrument lighting is good and does not cause reflection in the windscreen. A heater of recirculating type was fitted to the car tested, but is not arranged for direct windscreen demisting or defrosting.

Both the Trafficator switch, of the time delay type, and the horn button are on the steering wheel hub, a less usual arrangement when rack and pinion steering is used. The horn note is reasonably effective but does not seem to be quite in keeping with the general quality character of the rest of the car. On two mornings during the test the car, standing in the open overnight, had some three inches of snow on roof and bonnet, but the engine fired instantly. In chilly weather a slight amount of splutter was experienced during the warm-up period unless the mixture control was kept in part use initially.

Considered as a whole, the 1½-litre M.G. saloon is a very desirable car. It is light and lively, economical, handles well, has a good turn of speed and is handy in traffic and on narrow roads. It has a quality feel possessed by few small cars, and many desirable features found only on larger or more expensive products; it can carry four people and will hold a reasonable amount of luggage. It also has that air of a thoroughbred, brought about no doubt by its sporting ancestors that created the slogan "Safety Fast."