

NEW CARS DESCRIBED

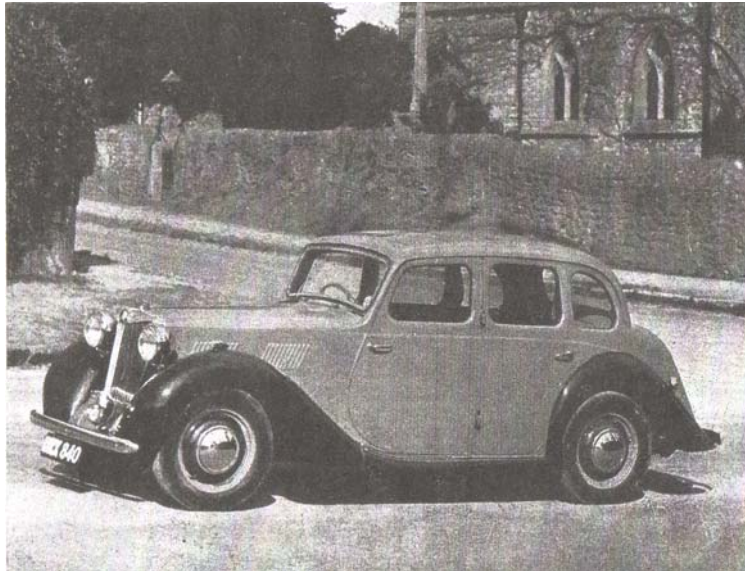
THE 1¼-LITRE M.G.

By J. EASON GIBSON

THE new 1¼-litre M.G. is a good example of that section of British cars which, although in the smallest capacity class, offers a degree of performance and refinement, without losing the advantages, common to all small cars, of handiness and inexpensive running costs. Earlier models from this factory were usually notable for their sporting characteristics, but this latest edition should be regarded as a small fast touring car for the family man. For the first time, other than on a racing car, this company employs independent suspension. In view of the likely market, the manufacturers have probably been wise in styling the car on conservative lines. Neither Continental nor American tendencies have been permitted to influence the appearance.

The most interesting feature of the specification, is, without doubt, the use of independent suspension. The system employed is that of utilising hydraulically damped coil springs and wishbones, thereby giving a much softer and more comfortable ride, without loss of stability, than is possible with the outmoded semi-elliptic laminated spring. The rack and pinion steering gives most positive directional control, yet is, at the same time, unusually light in operation. Particularly with independent suspension is it necessary for the chassis to be truly rigid, and to this end the framework consists of box-section side members, with tubular cross members at the points of greatest stress. The jacking-up of small cars, either for wheel-changing or essential maintenance, can become an irritating and extremely messy business; but on the M.G., thanks to the use of a permanent jacking system, this operation is child's play. The mechanism is carried under the near-side of the bonnet.

The four-cylinder overhead-valve engine delivers a maximum of 46 brake-horse-power, which, with a total car weight of just over one ton, guarantees a more than adequate performance. A full-flow oil filter is fitted in the lubrication circuit, giving 100 per cent. filtration at all times. The oil filler is sensibly mounted, which, unfortunately, is more than can be said for the dip-stick, which makes sure of frayed tempers—and shirt cuffs.



THE 1¼-LITRE M.G. INDEPENDENTLY SPRUNG SALOON

Braking is by the well-proven Lockheed hydraulic system and provides the ample brake-lining area of 104 sq. ins. There are only nine points on the chassis requiring periodic attention with a grease gun, many of the usual points having been replaced by rubber bushes.

When I took over the car submitted for testing I was surprised by the bodywork. The complete car gives such a noticeable impression of neatness and daintiness that I had qualms as to my comfort. The proportions of the doors are such, however, that entry and exit are equally easy, and in the seat there is ample room for even an outsize in driver; the pedals are well spaced, so that the clumsiest and most heavy footed need not fear the results of inadvertent operation of two pedals at once; there is comfortable room for the left foot beside the clutch pedal, within easy reach of the dipping switch, and it is pleasant to record that here is a car in which the window winder has been thoughtfully fitted well away from the driver's knee. All the instruments are fitted directly in front of the driver; the space in front of the passenger is devoted to a large cubby-hole.

Pockets are fitted to all four doors, and a useful shelf is found behind the rear seat squab. With the centre arm-rest in use in the back seat, the accommodation approximates closely to four arm-chairs.

For what is basically a small car the internal dimensions are exceptional. The distance across the rear seats is 46½ ins.; while across the separate front seats the measurement is 45 ins. From the floor to the roof is 44 ins., while from both front and rear seats to the roof is 36 ins. As both the driver's seat and

the steering-column length are adjustable, drivers of widely varying stature should find no difficulty in obtaining a comfortable and efficient driving position. The luggage space measures 38 by 28 by 12 ins., the only slight inconvenience being created by the relatively small aperture provided. The spare wheel is carried in a separate compartment under the luggage space. Items of equipment not found on all small cars include a fog-lamp and a reversing lamp—items which add greatly to a driver's peace of mind.

Partly owing to the smoothness of the engine, combined with effective sound-damping, one's first impression is that the car is lacking in performance. On reaching the open road, however, or on using the stop-watch, one very quickly realises that the deceptive smoothness conceals a very effective performance. The figures given in the panel speak for themselves; it is worth pointing out that, even when stressing the engine to its limit to obtain maximum effort, the effortless running was not sacrificed to an appreciable extent. While the top-gear performance is all that one would expect. I found myself constantly tempted by the willingness of the engine, and the handily placed gear lever, to drive in an enterprising manner. Little variation was found in the riding qualities of the car whether I was travelling alone or with a full load. On one occasion the car was used for a long run, with three passengers and a full load of luggage, and even on bad stretches of road the standard of comfort was high. The steering requires little effort, even on quite sharp corners. At maximum speed, however, particularly with a full load, much more concentration is required if the road be other than

very smooth.

In practice, the cruising speed can be almost any chosen by the driver, without causing apparent distress to the engine. During one long run I kept the car between 60 and 65 m.p.h. for mile after mile. Despite the small engine the average main-road hill can be taken without noticeable diminution of speed. In any case, gear changing can be carried out very easily, partly owing to an excellent synchromesh mechanism, and a quick change down at speeds below 30 m.p.h. on hills prevents any loss of speed. The petrol consumption figure obtained could probably be

improved with more normal driving. As will be seen, the figure worked out at 29 m.p.g. at an average speed of 45 m.p.h., but I found that when driving the car at a steady 40 m.p.h., the petrol consumption could be improved to 35 m.p.g.

I am told, but fail to understand why, that the sunshine roof is falling from favour. On the car tested I found the opening roof a blessing during the good weather, and it was at all times free from rattles and easy to operate. As there was no scuttle ventilator or ventilating panels it was difficult to control ventilation in such a way as to suit everyone in the car.

With the window sufficiently open to suit the driver, the rear passengers complained, and vice versa. One minor criticism refers to the front seats. The almost unpadded rim, surrounding the squab itself, came in just the wrong place for a driver of my height. It is only fair to say that people of more average size experienced no discomfort.

The smoothness and willingness of the engine, and the impression of breeding, combine to make the car equally pleasant to handle in town and at high speeds on the open road.

THE 1¼-LITRE M.G.

Makers:

The M.G. Car Co. Ltd., Abingdon, Berkshire

SPECIFICATION

Price .£671 11s.8d. (inc. pur. tax £146 11s.8d.)	Brakes Lockheed hydraulic
Cubic cap. 1,250	Suspension Independent (front)
B : S 66.5x90m.m	Wheelbase 8 ft. 3 ins.
Cylinders Four	Track (front) 3ft. 11 ³ / ₈ ins.
Valves Overhead	Track (rear) 4ft. 2 ins.
B.H.P. 46 at .4,800 r.p.m.	Overall length 13 ft. 5 ins.
Carb. .S.U.	Overall width 4 ft. 11 ins.
Ignition Lucas Coil	Overall height 4 ft. 10 ins.
Oil Filter Full-flow	Ground clearance 6 ins.
1st gear .18.0 to 1	Turning circle 35 ft.
2nd gear .10.65 to 1	Weight 20 ¹⁴ / ₁₀₀ cwt.
3rd gear .7.12 to 1	Fuel cap. 8 galls.
4th gear .5.143 to 1	Oil cap. 1 ¹ / ₈ galls.
Reverse .18.0 to 1	Water cap. 1 ³ / ₄ galls.
Final drive Spiral bevel	Tyres Dunlop 5.25 x 16

PERFORMANCE

Accelera- tion	secs.	secs.	Max. speed : 70.5 m.p.h.
10-30	Top 11	3rd 7.6	Petrol consumption, 29
20-40	Top 11	3rd 8.2	m.p.g. at average speed
0-60	All gears	28	of 45 m.p.h.

BRAKES: 30—0 in 35 ft. (86 per cent. efficiency).

RELIABLE CRUISING SPEED : 62 m.p.h.

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