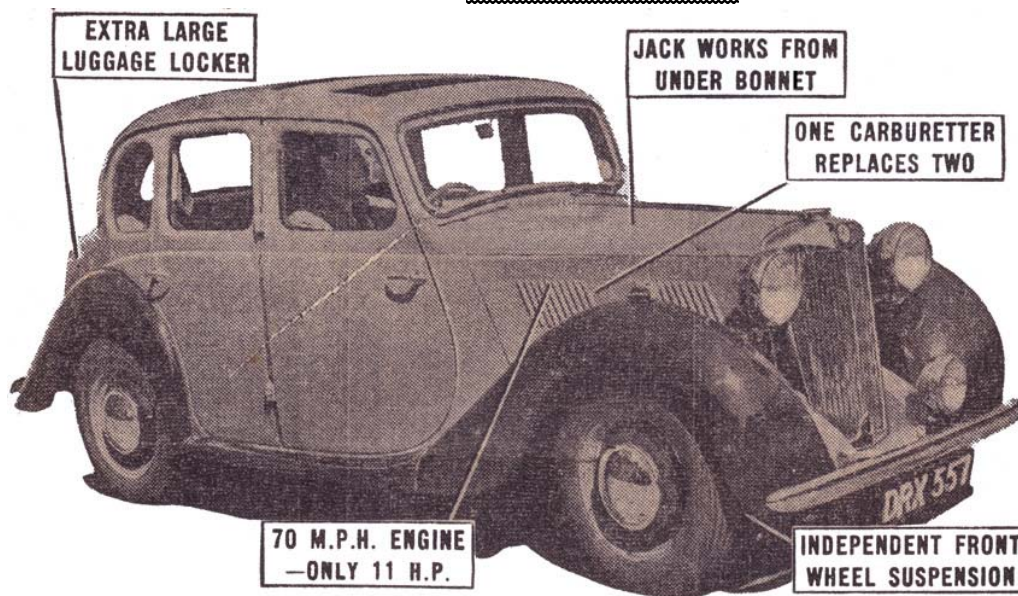


CAR TEST by

Basil Cardew



It puzzled a diplomat

It was a matter of awe and wonder for the diplomatic driver of the big horse-powered American car. We were on a fast road near London. It was very early morning.

He was travelling at 70 miles an hour. I was behind him piloting an 11 h.p. family saloon, made in Britain. The faster went the fellow in front, the faster went my car behind him.

How did I do it?

After about 20 miles the diplomat pulled up, pushed his Stetson to the back of his head and inquired: "What have you under the bonnet mister? I figure she goes like a scalded cat."

Now that must have been a diplomatic man, for his car was one of the new giant Wurlitzer types of motor-car shipped from the United States. Only diplomats can import them here. All American products are taboo for commercial sale in Britain.

"This," I said "is the new 1¼-litre M.G. – the firm who build them for safety-fast. And this is their first post-war essay at a family model with the guts of a sports machine."

I confirm that it can go like a scalded cat. For 400 miles we whizzed about Southern England in the neat little thoroughbred, holding 70 m.p.h. with comfort, cruising at 60 and finding plenty pep with a third gear that gives 50 miles per hour, plus.

Before we started I noted the independent front-wheel springing, which is new for small M.G.s, and I noted the single carburettor which takes the place of two in previous models.

My three passengers – I believe in testing with a fair load – were struck by the thick glossy finish of the car,

better, they said than anything they had seen since the war. We sat two in the front and two in the back, in splendid comfort, and there was room for an occasional fifth person.

TIGHT CORNERING

First we did some quick cornering with the spring-spoked steering wheel. Here the compromise between family car and sports machine came in. The M.G. still has the direct steering feel of a racing car. We cornered tightly and safely.

We shot up the long engine-wearying gradient of Hindhead, Surrey at a brisk 50 miles an hour, always in top. Roads battered by the Services and still unattended were smoothed by the first-class springing.

Congestion at the top of the Devil's Punch Bowl gave the sweet-lined saloon a chance to show its engine strength. With the single carburettor we jumped ahead from a standing start zero to 30 m.p.h. in seven seconds, and up to 50 in 10 seconds more. Goofers driving slowly in the middle of the road had no time to dither before we were past them.

Price – 1¼ litre saloon, £525 plus £146 11s. 8 d. purchase tax – total, £671 11s 8d.

Technical data – Rating 10.97 h.p.; 4 cylinders O.H.V.; 1,250 c.c. Weight without passengers – 20 cwt. 22 lb.

Ground clearance 5 ins. Dimensions – wheelbase, 8 ft. 3ins.; overall length, 13ft. 5 ins.; width 4ft. 9ins.; tax £10.

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