

# The Motor Road Test No. 10/47

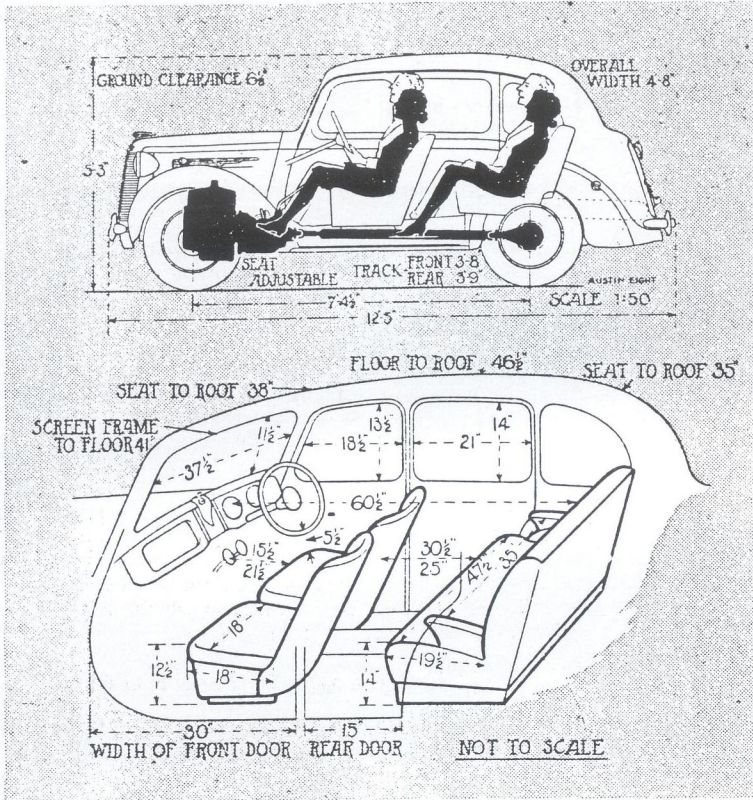
Make: Austin

Type: Eight Saloon

Makers: The Austin Motor Co. Ltd., Longbridge, Birmingham

## Dimensions and Seating

## In Brief



Price: £280. Plus Purchase Tax  
£78.10.6. = £358.10.6.

Capacity .. .. .	900 c.c.
Road weight unladen ..	15 1/2 cwt.
Laden weight as tested ..	18 1/2 cwt.
Consumption .. .. .	38.7 m.p.g.
Speed .. .. .	55.9 m.p.h. max. (mean both ways) 46 m.p.h. 3rd. 28 m.p.h. 2nd.
Acceleration .. 10-30 on top:	17.7 secs.
0-50 through gears,	40.5 secs.
Tapley lb. per ton and gradients:	
132 lb. max. on top=1 in 17	
220 lb. max. on 3rd=1 in 10.1	
330 lb. max. on 2nd=1 in 6.7	
Gearing .. 13.9 m.p.h. on top at 1,000	
r.p.m., 59.4 m.p.h. at	
2,500 feet per minute	
piston speed.	

## Specification

Cubic capacity .. .. .	900 c.c.
Cylinders .. .. .	4
Valve position .. .. .	Side
Bore .. .. .	56.77 mm.
Stroke .. .. .	89 mm.
Compression ratio .. .. .	6.8 to 1
Max. power .. .. .	24 b.h.p.
at .. .. .	4,400 r.p.m.
H.P. per sq. in piston area	1.53
H.P. per ton unladen ..	31.0
Piston area per ton unladen	20.3 sq. ins.
Litres per laden ton-mile ..	2.110
Fr./min. piston speed at	
max. h.p. .. .. .	2,580
Carburettor .. .. .	Zenith downdraught
Ignition .. .. .	Coil (6-volt)
Plugs, make and type ..	Champion L10 ; Lodge C.N., or K.I.G. F50X A.C. mechanical
Fuel pump .. .. .	
Oil filter make (by-pass, full flow) .. .. .	Nil
Clutch .. .. .	Borg and Beck
1st gear .. .. .	21.82
2nd gear .. .. .	13.22
3rd gear .. .. .	8.31
Top gear .. .. .	5.43
Propeller shaft .. .. .	Hardy-Spicer
Final drive .. .. .	Spiral bevel
Brakes .. .. .	Girling mechanical
Brake drum diameter ..	8 ins.
Friction lining area ..	69.6 sq. ins.
Brake area per ton unladen	89.8 sq. ins.
Steering gear .. .. .	Cam and lever
Tyre size .. .. .	4.50 by 17
Fully described in "The Motor," November 15, 1947.	

## Test Conditions

Hot day, fresh breeze, dry concrete, Pool petrol, natural rubber tyres.

## Test Data

### ACCELERATION TIMES on Two Upper Ratios

10-30 m.p.h. .. .. .	17.7 secs.	Top	10.7 secs.	3rd
20-40 m.p.h. .. .. .	22.8 secs.		15.2 secs.	
30-50 m.p.h. .. .. .	35.4 secs.			

### ACCELERATION TIMES through Gears

0-30 m.p.h. .. .. .	10.3 secs.	Mean of four opposite runs	55.9 m.p.h.
0-40 m.p.h. .. .. .	19.0 secs.	Best time equals	61.6 m.p.h.
0-50 m.p.h. .. .. .	40.5 secs.		
Standing quarter-mile ..	27.6 secs.		

### MAXIMUM SPEED: Flying Quarter-mile

### BRAKES at 30 m.p.h.

0.84 g. (=35.9 ft. stopping distance) with 135 lb. pedal pressure.  
0.71 g. (=42.5 ft. stopping distance) with 100 lb. pedal pressure.  
0.65 g. (=46.5 ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure.  
0.45 g. (=67.0 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure.  
0.30 g. (=100 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure.

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

Overall consumption for 619 miles, 38.7 m.p.g.  
50.0 m.p.g. at constant 20 m.p.h.  
48.9 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h.  
45.5 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h.  
36.1 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h.

### HILL CLIMBING

Max. top gear speed on 1 in 20 .. 33 m.p.h.

### STEERING

L.H. lock .. .. . 37 ft.  
R.H. lock .. .. . 37 ft.  
2 1/2 turns of steering wheel lock to lock.

## Maintenance

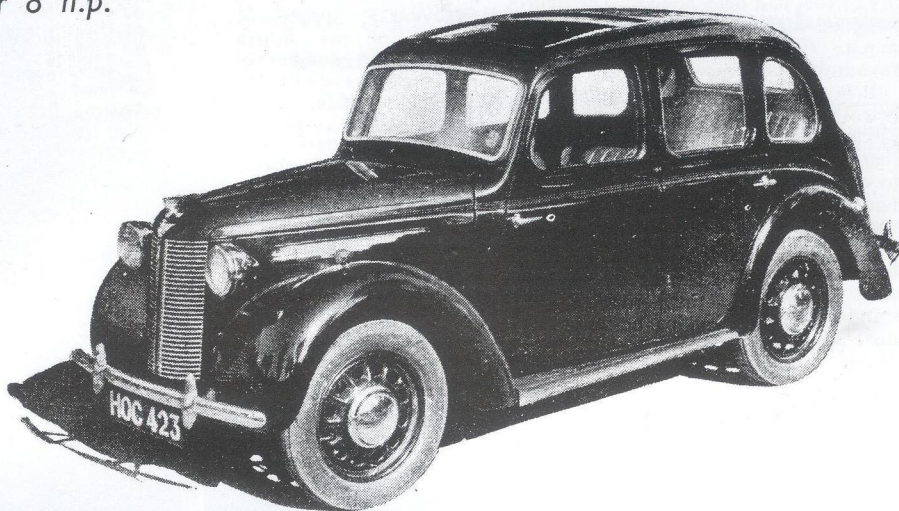
Fuel tank: 6 imp. gallons. Sump: 5 pints  
S.A.E. 30. Gearbox: 1 1/2 pints. Rear axle:  
1 1/2 pints. Radiator: 14 pints. Grease gun  
points: 23 oil and 4 grease. Spark timing:  
1/4 mark on flywheel at T.D.C. Plug gap: .017-  
.018 in. Contact gap: .012 in. Tappets:  
.012 in. (cold); inlet opens 5 degrees B.T.D.C.  
Front wheel toe-in: 0-1/4 in. Castor angle:  
3 degrees (forward at bottom). Damper fluid:  
Girling piston type thin fluid or Armstrong  
special shock-absorber oil (according to make of  
damper fitted). Tyre pressure: 24 lb. front,  
25 lb. rear. Air cleaner: Wash and re-oil at  
5,000 miles. Lights: Head lamp bulbs, 6 volt  
24 watt; S. and T., 6 volt 3 watts.



# The Austin Eight Saloon

*The Cheapest Four-door 8 h.p.  
Saloon on the Market  
Combines Capacity  
with Extreme  
Economy*

**LOOKING BIG.**—The modest overall dimensions of the Eight are belied by the general appearance which gives an impression of much greater size.



**BY** the very nature of things, every successful car possesses some outstanding quality or combination of qualities. In the case of the Austin Eight, the combination is not difficult to find—economy, coupled with full-scale accommodation.

At £280 (£358 10s. 6d. with tax), the Austin Eight is the cheapest 8 h.p. four-door saloon on the market. Its accommodation (which is entirely adequate for four adults) and its external appearance (which gives an impression of a car of higher horse-power) both belie its modest overall dimensions. These qualities alone, plus the name "Austin," would be sufficient to guarantee it a ready sale.

There is, however, a third outstanding feature, which is of the greatest importance in these days of severely rationed petrol, namely, its astonishing economy in fuel consumption.

In this respect, the Austin Eight

enjoys the distinction of putting up the best series of consumption figures so far recorded with post-war cars tested by "The Motor."

The figure of exactly 50 m.p.g. which was registered at 20 m.p.h. is, perhaps, of more academic than practical interest, since few drivers (if any) can plan their motoring for a constant 20 m.p.h. This reading does, however, show that those who liked to use some of their basic ration for evening and week-end runs pottering along the lanes of their local countryside, can, until October, enjoy many hours of motoring on a modest expenditure of basic coupons.

Of more general interest are the figures at 30 m.p.h. and 40 m.p.h., which represent a speed range quite extensively used both by the private owner and by the commercial user who realize that economy and speed are closely interlinked. As the figures in the data panel show, at 30 m.p.h. the consumption is

very nearly as good as at 20 m.p.h. with a recording of 48.9 m.p.g., whilst at 40 m.p.h. the consumption is still on the right side of 45 m.p.g.

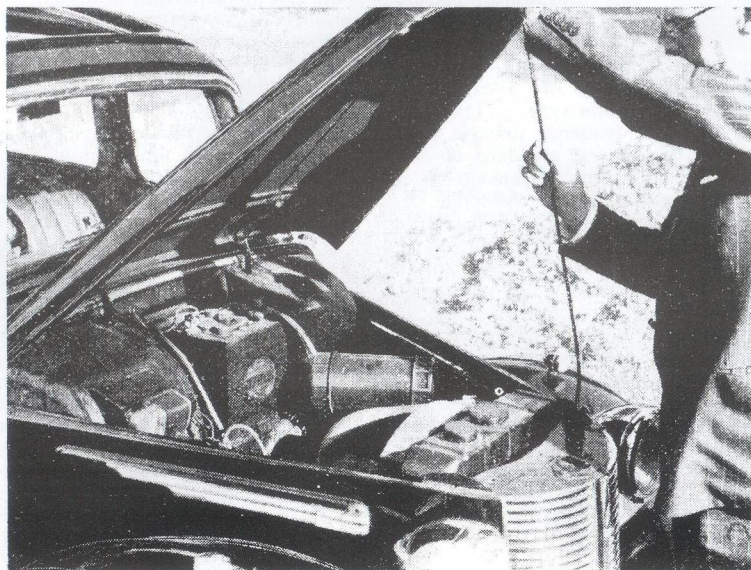
The final constant-speed reading taken during the test is also of the greatest interest. As will be observed from the figures, the consumption at 50 m.p.h., whilst still very creditable, had dropped to just over 36 m.p.g. This drop of 9 m.p.g. for a speed increase of 10 m.p.h. forms a most instructive example of the manner in which relatively high cruising speeds (bearing in mind the type of car) are productive of fuel wastage.

All these constant-speed readings, taken with a special test apparatus, are, as the reader will appreciate, an indication of the capabilities of the car under a series of ideal conditions seldom maintained for long over the winding, busy roads of this country. It remains to give an indication of how the ideal and the usual compare.

During the period of the test, the car was mostly driven hard, owing to other commitments, but the following consumptions were recorded. Over a distance of 260 miles, covered mainly over main roads where a cruising speed of 50 m.p.h. was maintained, exactly 7 gallons sufficed, giving a reading of 37.1 m.p.g. A second reading was taken over a further distance of 359 miles, including approximately 100 miles of performance tests. In spite of this, 9 gallons sufficed, giving a figure of 39.9 m.p.g. The overall result of the two observed distances (a total of 619 miles) works out at 38.7 m.p.g.—an extremely creditable figure for an Eight driven much faster than is usual for such cars.

### Independent Check

Whilst on this question of consumption, one further series of figures may be given, although they were not, in actual fact, recorded on the car tested, but on a 1939 example which has now covered over 70,000 miles. This particular car is used by a staff photographer, and at approximately 65,000 miles was fitted with a reconditioned engine. In this case a series of checks was recently



**ACCESS.**—The principal under-bonnet components which call for periodic attention are easy to get at by virtue of a wide-opening alligator bonnet.

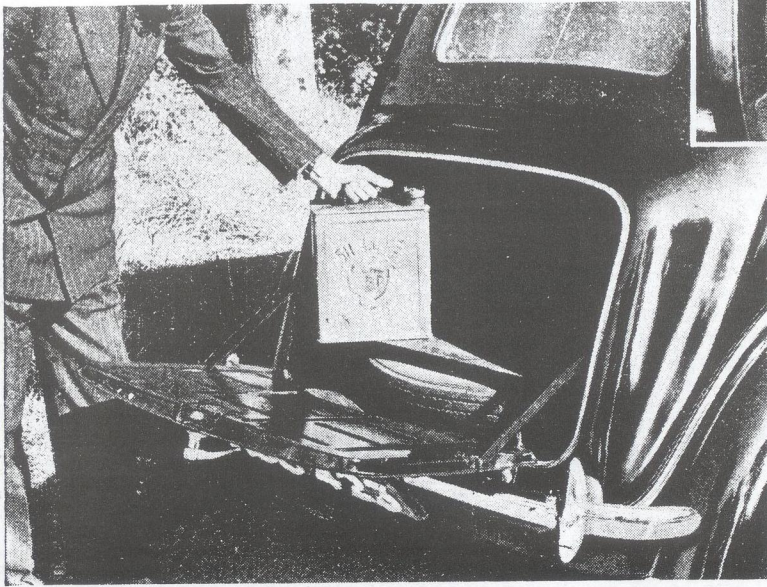


## The Austin Eight Saloon—Contd.

taken, the tank being allowed to run dry on each occasion after a known quantity of fuel had been added. The figures obtained varied from 43.3 m.p.g. to 49.6 m.p.g., the latter, admittedly, under favourable conditions.

It is, of course, well known that freak petrol consumptions can be obtained at the expense of performance, and it is, therefore, appropriate to pass straight to consideration of the speed and acceleration figures registered by the car tested. Reference to the data panel shows that, whilst the figures recorded for the Austin Eight were not in any way outstanding, they represent a standard of performance entirely adequate for the needs of users of this type of car

**STOWAGE SPACE.**—A feature of the Austin Eight is the amount of space provided for stowage. Inside, in addition to a capacious cubbyhole, there are wide pleated door pockets and capacious parcel lockers underneath the front seats. The size of the main luggage boot can be judged by comparison with the two-gallon petrol can shown in the photograph below.



rather drastically in the course of acceleration tests through the gears.

On the subject of general silence, the Austin Eight revealed a satisfactory standard for a car of its price, with the exception, however, of the rear axle, which was guilty of a rather pronounced hum on the over-run.

### Planned for Convenience

The car has obviously been planned to provide the maximum comfort and convenience possible at the price.

Examples of this are to be found in the use of real leather for the upholstery, in the fitting of a sliding seat for the front passenger as well as for the driver, in the provision of such details as a rear blind, a sun visor, an opening windscreen and very sensible provision for luggage and odds and ends. In the latter connection attention should be drawn to a very useful-sized cubbyhole (the left-hand portion of which is deep enough and wide enough to carry a large map or guide-book), pleated pockets in the doors, useful parcel compartments below the front seats, a parcel shelf behind the rear squab, and a large luggage locker which houses the spare wheel and tools below the suitcase platform and is provided with a let-down lid arranged for the carrying of excess luggage when required.

Other items include a sliding roof, a Stephenson jacking system, and a pair of head lamps which, despite the use of 6-volt 24-watt bulbs, proved to have a better long-range beam than some 12-volt systems we have tried.

We returned the Austin Eight to the manufacturers at the conclusion of some 750 miles of varied use with a very full appreciation of the reason for its popularity. With its modest price and outstanding economy, it offers surprisingly satisfactory motoring to that wide section of the public to whom first cost and running expenses are of paramount importance and yet offers accommodation, appearance and performance entirely adequate for family or business needs.

The mean maximum speed of just on 56 m.p.h. indicates that the driver who is in a hurry can, when necessary, maintain a fairly consistent 50 m.p.h., but, as the acceleration figures show, the margin of power between 40 m.p.h. and 50 m.p.h. is much less marked than at lower speeds, and the car shows to best advantage when the driver sets himself a cruising speed of 40-45 m.p.h.

It should, however, be emphasized that this statement implies no distress in the higher ranges. The car will carry on indefinitely very close to its maximum without any indication of overwork, such as overheating or pre-ignition, although some trace of vibration was discernible at 55-60 m.p.h. It was notable, however, that during the performance tests there was no trace whatsoever of "running-on" when the engine was switched off, despite the fact that the tests were carried out in very hot weather. In addition, pinking, whilst not entirely absent, was far less noticeable than one has come to expect in these days of poor-quality petrol.

Other aspects of performance can be summed up in a few words. The Girling brakes showed a very satisfactory maximum efficiency of 84 per cent., coupled with light pedal pressure, no tendency to build up disconcertingly in a "panic"

stop, and positive action in both forward and reverse direction. Steering proved light under all conditions, but reasonably high-g geared over the range normally used when travelling as opposed to manoeuvring.

On corners, the Austin behaved well, with no noticeable oversteering qualities and very little roll for a car of the small family saloon type. There was also no undue tendency towards pitching, and the general standard of comfort in so far as the suspension system is concerned may be considered very satisfactory without being outstanding.

The general layout of the controls and instruments is straightforward, and, in the main, well thought out, although a small point of criticism concerns the gear lever, the knob of which we found tended to come against the driver's thigh when the left foot was parked alongside the clutch pedal.

Another minor fault (which may have been due to the relative newness of the particular model tested) was a slight difficulty experienced in engaging first or second gears with the car at rest, it being necessary on many occasions to re-engage the clutch and try again. Otherwise, the gear change was above reproach and the synchromesh proved very positive in action, even when used