

## PRACTICAL MOTORIST ROAD TESTS OF NEW CARS

## The New Austin "Eight" Two-Door Saloon

WHEN this car was first introduced on February 25th we gave a full description of it, and also gave our impressions of a short test on the Brooklands track. At that time we did not take any figures for acceleration and maximum speed because the car placed at our disposal was not fully run-in, and because we prefer to obtain this data under normal road conditions. We have now had one of these cars—it was the two-door, sliding-roof model—for three days, and have covered a few hundred miles in it. During that time we put the car through our usual tests and made ourselves thoroughly familiar with its general behaviour.

## Sound Design

We can say right away that this is a very successful car, and that its performance is extremely good. It is designed on roomy lines, and there is more than usually good luggage accommodation. There is quite sufficient room for our people of normal stature to be accommodated comfortably, not only for short runs but on long journeys. The general stability of the car is good, this no doubt being due in no small measure to the use of "half-elliptic" springs all round, which are almost flat when under load. This arrangement gives a marked freedom from rolling on corners, and an absence of sway when travelling at full speed on uneven road surfaces. The top speed, by the way, was about 58 m.p.h., the speedometer reading slightly more than 60 m.p.h. at this timed speed.

It is evident as soon as the car is taken over that it has been well designed, for there is excellent visibility in all directions, the controls are conveniently placed and the driving seat is very comfortable. The four-speed gearbox, with synchromesh engagement for second, third and top, gives a remarkably quick change. This is shown by the fact that 30 m.p.h. can be reached from a standstill, using first, second and third gears, in 8 1/5 secs. Not only is the acceleration good, but this figure proves that no time is wasted in changing from one gear to the next. And when these very rapid changes are made there is no need to "force" the gears into mesh, nor to make other than a perfectly silent change.

In all positions the gearbox runs quietly, but there is a certain amount of engine noise, especially when accelerating. This, in fact, is our only real adverse criticism of a fine little car.

## Instruments and Controls

The instruments—speedometer, petrol gauge, oil gauge and ammeter—are grouped in a panel on the right-hand side of the dash, where they are directly in front of the driver. Controls on the panel are the combined ignition and lighting switch, the combined throttle and choke control, starter switch and instrument-light switch. There is also the usual ignition warning light.

Just above the instruments is the control for the screen wiper, which is driven from an under-bonnet motor, and in the centre of the dash is the winding handle for the screen.

Full marks must be accorded to the screen wiper which, although operating a single blade, covers such a wide sweep that the driver has a full range of vision in heavy rain. The opening screen also deserves praise, for it can be opened to an almost horizontal position, permitting an unrestricted view when driving in fog.

To the left of the instruments there is a very deep glove compartment, although that description does not do justice to a shelf which is deep enough to hold a lady's small umbrella.

The gear lever is long, and extends from a forward-placed box, so that it is not difficult for the driver to leave or enter the car through the nearside door. An unusual but convenient handbrake lever is fitted. This is set at an angle to the car and is placed between the two front seats, where it is well out of the way of the feet, but well within reach of the driver's left hand.

There are two other main controls; the switch for the self-cancelling direction indicators mounted on the steering wheel, and the dip switch for the headlights which is in the usual position beside and just above the clutch pedal.

## Wide Doors

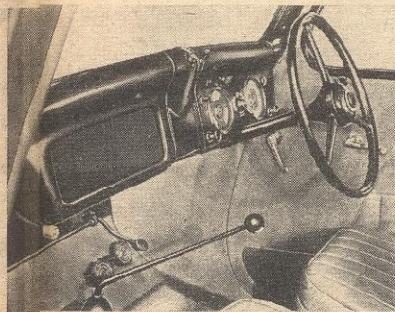
As mentioned above, it was the two-door model which we tested, and we found that the doors were sufficiently wide to permit

This New 8-h.p. Car Should Prove Extremely Successful In View Of The Roomy, Comfortable Body, Excellent Road-Holding And Smart Performance

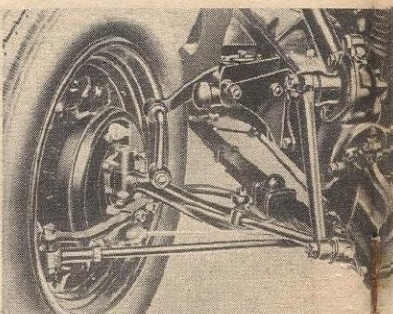
of entry to the rear seats without the occupants of the front bucket seats leaving theirs, provided that the bucket seats were set in their normal positions for people of average, or rather less than average, height.

We have two minor criticisms to make with regard to bodywork details of the car tested, although they would probably not apply to other cars produced. The rear blind was inclined to jam so that it could not easily be raised by means of the cord and ring fitter; to the side of the body just above the driver; the sliding roof did not operate very easily, so that it could not readily be opened by the driver without first stopping the car.

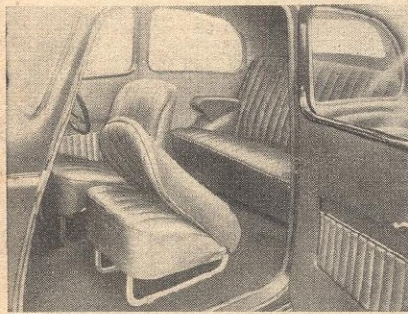
As most readers are no doubt aware, the bonnet is of the top-opening type. That is, the top portion is hinged at the scuttle and can be raised after turning the mascot through 90 degrees. Opening it thus gave access to the top of the engine, but other parts could not be reached without the



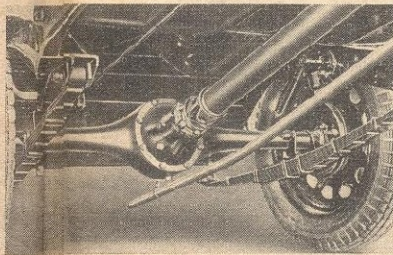
Instruments are easily seen by the driver. A very deep glove compartment is provided at the passenger side.



The forward-mounted steering gear. Thompson ball joints are used for steering connections.

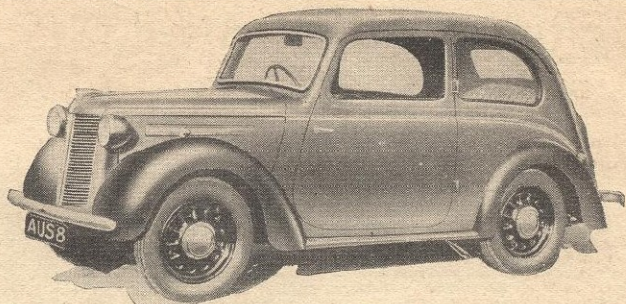


There is good accommodation for four people, and all seats are comfortable.



The floating rear axle has a welded pressed-steel casing for lightness. Note the long, almost flat semi-elliptic springs.

control fully, operate the starter switch, and then return the control to the intermediate position, in which the engine would continue to run at a quick tick-over speed. The car could then be driven away, and the control moved to the second—almost closed—position after travelling 100 yards or so; within about a quarter-mile from starting the control could be pushed right in and the car driven in the normal manner.



By using the car in this way the engine can be warmed up quickly without there being any risk of flooding the cylinders with petrol. This means, in effect, that cylinder life is preserved.

The Girling brakes were found to be completely satisfactory, giving a stopping distance of 32 ft. from 30 m.p.h. on a dry concrete road and not having any tendency to "pull" the car to either side. Additionally, although powerful, the brakes did not cause the car to "tip" when coming to rest from an "emergency stop."

## Performance

When we made tests of the maximum speeds to be attained in the various gears, it was found that 28 m.p.h. could be reached in second, 46 m.p.h. in third, and 61 m.p.h. in top. These are the speeds recorded by the speedometer, which was sensibly accurate at 30 m.p.h., under two m.p.h. "fast" at 50 m.p.h., and about three m.p.h. "fast" at 60 m.p.h. Optimum speeds, that is the speeds at which it was found best to make upward changes, were 17 to 22 m.p.h. in second and 30 to 35 m.p.h. in third. In top, speeds between 45 and 50 m.p.h. could be well held on normal main-road runs.

Acceleration tests gave an average figure of 8 1/5 secs. as the time required to reach 30 m.p.h. from a standstill, using first, second and third gears. Using second and third, 30 m.p.h. could be reached from a steady 10 m.p.h. in 6 2/5 secs.; in third the timelaten to accelerate from a steady 20 m.p.h. to 40 m.p.h. was 10 3/5 secs.; from 30 to 50 m.p.h. in top took 18 4/5 secs.; and from a standstill to 50 m.p.h., through all four gears, took 25 1/5 secs. These times are all averages of a number of two-way runs.

Maximum "pull" in top gear, as measured by our Tapley "Q" meter, was 160 lb. per ton. This is equivalent to a maximum climbable gradient in top gear of about one in 14. Brake tests with a Perodotapley brake efficiency meter gave a reading of 95 per-cent. from 30 m.p.h.,

which agrees with the stopping distance of 32 ft. previously mentioned.

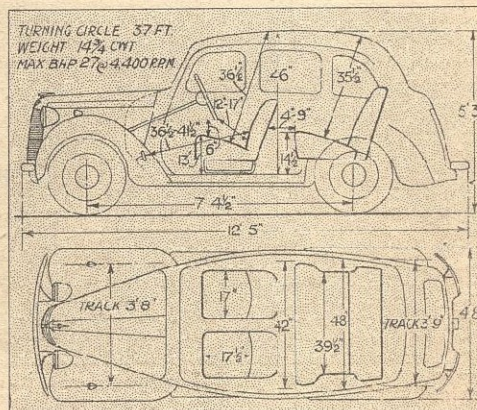
## Fuel Consumption

Throughout our tests the petrol consumption averaged 42 m.p.g., and as the test involved a good deal of "hard" driving, as well as the acceleration tests, the consumption in normal use should be somewhat higher than this. It should be mentioned that our tests were made with two top.

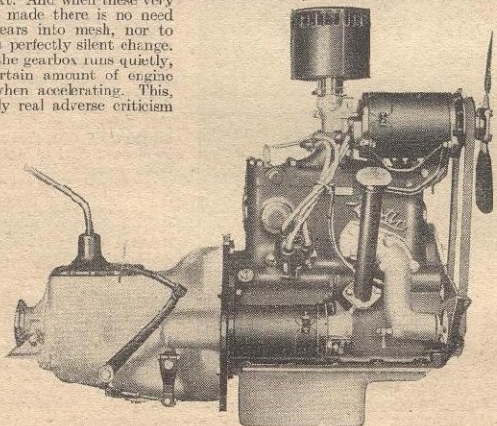
A fair amount of driving was done after dark, when the headlights were found to be as good as is normally expected on an "eight." They were, in fact, sufficiently good to permit of safe driving at speeds up to 45 m.p.h. on unlighted roads. The dipped beam was effective in lighting the nearside edge of the road for a good distance ahead, without dazzling the drivers of approaching vehicles. The charging rate is sufficiently high to ensure that the battery continued to receive a charge when the headlights are in use and the car is driven at normal speeds.

## Models And Prices

Our opinion is that this new "eight" will prove to be a worthy successor to the long-successful Austin "Seven" and also to the "Big Seven," both of which it superseded. At the price of £139 for the car tested, it is sound value. The prices of the other models are as follow: two-door fixed-head saloon, £128; four-door fixed-head saloon, £139; four-door sliding saloon, £149; open two-seater, £132 10s.; open four-seater, £135.



This view of the power unit shows the down-draught carburettor with large air filter and also the extended oil-filler pipe. The side-valve engine has a capacity of 900 c.c.



danger of dirtying the coat sleeves. But since both bonnet sides can easily be removed by taking out a couple of bolts, it could be said that the engine is inaccessible. It is, in fact, more conveniently accessible than is becoming usual.

## Good Starting

Throughout our tests, the engine started with commendable ease. This applied even when the car had been standing outdoors throughout on a very cold night is test which we always make. What is more, the car could be driven away almost immediately after starting, without any spluttering. This is due to the provision of two intermediate positions for the combined throttle-strangler control previously mentioned. Actually, our procedure in every case was to pull out the starting