
Morris Cars

Ten 1933-35

A steady increase in the number of cars registered in Britain in the 10hp class began to show itself in 1931 and all signs were that this trend would continue. As petrol tax had been increased twice in that year, then the reasons for a rapid development of the Morris Ten becomes apparent. The shift in demand continued and by 1935 the 10hp registration figures had risen from a 1931 total of 16,000 to 67,000; the Morris Ten had formed a substantial percentage of these new registrations, for it proved to be one of the most successful models of the early 'thirties.

The Morris Ten in perpendicular 'pre-Series' form was the first announced in August 1932 for the following season as a saloon (with fixed or sliding-head options) and as a special coupe. A tourer version was announced in December and was the subject of a special leaflet issued by Morris Motors Ltd about March 1933.

Although all Tens are generally referred to as the 'Ten-Four' by present day enthusiasts, the pedantic would be correct to point out that for the first model year they were simply known as the Morris Ten. 'Ten-Four' was the description given to the model for the 1934 and 1935 seasons to differentiate it from the 'Ten-Six', which by then was part of the range.

The new 10hp from Cowley, was powered by a side-valve engine of 63.5mm bore × 102mm stroke, which for taxation purposes was calculated by the RAC formula as 9.99hp. Although a flat head engine, at first glance it appears to be an overhead-valve unit to the 'Breather, Fume consumer, Air pre-heater and Filter' added above the cylinder head. Power was transmitted through a four-speed gearbox, with that the Morris publicity people called 'twin-top' ratios (6.9:1 and 4.7:1), and the well tried and tested cork insert clutch running in oil. The tubular propeller shaft, with fabric universal joints drove a spiral bevel back axle.

On the saloon version the seating was upholstered in a type of leathercloth called 'Karhyde', the coupe having real leather, and the interior woodwork was of dark oak with a matt finish. Winding windows were provided, as well as silk rope door pulls, remote control rear blind, illuminated instrument panel, scuttle ventilator and roof lamp. On the fixed-head version of the saloons a parcel net hung above the front seats. This, the cheapest of the Tens at £165, was devoid of bumpers and luggage grid.

Early production models of all Morris 1933 season cars, except the Minor, were equipped with a direction indication device known as the Wilcot Robot, made by Wilcot (Parent) Co Ltd, but this proved to be something of an expensive embarrassment for Morris Motors Ltd. Direction indicators drew much controversy about the time and as early as March 1929 the Ministry of Transport had arranged with the Royal Automobile Club to hold a demonstration in Richmond Park of the various devices in existence. The 'Trafficator' was a German invention for which Lucas had obtained patent rights from A.H. Hunt (Safetisigns) Ltd and as a consequence a royalty of 6d was payable (2½p) on every pair sold to car manufacturers as original equipment. William Morris, it appears, did not like this arrangement so the Wilcot indicators were chosen. In appearance the Wilcot Robots resembled a miniature set of road traffic lights; various positions of the operating switch caused the colour lights to flash different combinations. For example, the driver wishing to turn left would show a green light to the off side and a red and amber would flash on the near side. This operating switch had a built in timed return to the off position. Not surprisingly, criticism of the dangers that could be caused by confusion came from many quarters, including Sir Herbert Austin who said he

did not think that '... a complicated signalling device such as that recently introduced by a certain make of car is a step in the right direction'. Eventually the Minister of Transport refused to sanction their use and in March 1933 Morris Motors Ltd announced that in the future semaphore signals would be fitted and any existing vehicles modified free of charge.

The exercise had cost Morris £50,000 and it is said that many of the unused Wilcot indicators were dumped into a large pit behind one of the factories. (This appears to have been the normal way of disposing of unwanted components. It is on record that the left over parts, including chassis frames, of some 500 'F' type six cylinder cars were used to help fill in the lake behind the Osberton Radiator Co's premises at Bainton Road, Oxford. Elsewhere, a number of Wolseley 32/80 Straight Eight engines provided part of the infilling for the factory floor at Adderley Park). Another 2,000 sets were brought by Gamages of Holborn who resold them as novelties for 2s 6d per set – at the same time as the makers were advertising the units for £4 4s. Morris's loss would appear to have been Gamages' gain, but the ministerial decision affected the Holborn store in another way. They had been marketing their own version of Robot Indicators for 25s a set in 1932, a price later reduced to 5s. An amusing sequel is recorded by Robert Jackson in his book *The Nuffield Story*; apparently the brother of one of the Morris Motors Ltd directors (Hans Landstad) who, seeing the devices on sales at Gamages, bought a set and tried to interest the Morris concern in using them!

Noteworthy of the specialist coachbuilders of the day to use the Morris Ten chassis was the main Morris agency Stewart & Ardern, who subsidiary Cunard produced by the 'Calshot Drop-Head Coupe' version with two independently adjustable front seats and a special Cunard design of hammock seat in the rear which could be folded up to allow accommodation for luggage. This two door coupe with 'interior cabinet work in black walnut' and a folding head of enamelled leather sold at something like £47 10s more than the standard Morris special coupe.

Two new Ten-Four models added for the 1934 programme: a two seater with dickey seat (often wrongly described nowadays as the 'Doctor Coupe') and a Traveller's Saloon' which was basically a standard saloon with a side hinged door at the rear allowing removable back seat space to be used for goods and samples, an idea originally exploited by Stewart & Ardern on the Cowley chassis in 1929. Additionally, as already mentioned, a new 'Ten-Six' range was introduced. Although this was something of a misnomer, as the rating of the engine was twelve horsepower, the name is understandable as the six cylinder models used identical Ten-Four bodies on a longer wheelbase chassis, the extra 6in being absorbed in bonnet length to house the larger engine.

One other Ten-Six that did not make the early editions of the Morris catalogue for 1933 was the sports special four seater – car out of character for Cowley. The six-cylinder engine used in this model was a specially tuned version with twin linked SU carburettors and remote control gear change. Despite the single plate oil filled cork insert clutch (smooth, but hardly the clutch for tyre burning getaways) all efforts appear to have been made to promote the sports car image, such as a quick-filler cap on the petrol tank, a revolution counter on the dash along with other large diameter instruments, spring spoked steering wheel, louvred low side panels in lieu of running boards, Burgess straight through silencer, stoneguards to the radiator and headlamps, imitation knock on wire wheels, grab handle on the dash (which the catalogue described as a ('mechanic's grip'), and leather strap across the bonnet. (Centric Super Charges Ltd soon added to their range of standard superchargers one for the Morris Ten-Six, priced at £35 fitted.) These are all features one would associate more with Abingdon-on-Thames, and there perhaps lies the answer!

There was, apparently, no love lost between Leonard Percy Lord who had by 1933 been given the task of re-organising the Cowley Works, and Cecil Kimber who was managing director of the MG Car Company. According to Adolf Vonder Becke, who worked for Morris Motors Ltd at the time, Lord intended to show that MG did not have the exclusive know how on

sports car design within the Morris organisation, and this was his project. Unfortunately, for Lord, it was not a success. It may, or may not, be coincidental that the MG drawing office was transferred to Cowley in 1935, and that Lord Nuffield clamped down on all MG design enterprise.

If catalogues of the period are any guide, there was also a version of the sports special making use of the four cylinder engine which, like the six cylinder, had a high lift camshaft, twin SU carburettors and special manifolding, straight through silencer, etc. The 'ME' engine of this gave 36bhp at 4,100rpm against the ordinary unit's 28bhp rating at 3,500rpm. The writer has never seen such a model, nor contracted any one-time owner, but to substantiate its existence the catalogue of the Cunard Motor & Carriage Co Ltd issued in 1934 lists their 'International Type Four Seater' on both Ten-Six and Ten-Four special chassis. Cunard made their special sports models which reinstated running boards and combined 'a charming appearance with comfortable accommodation for four persons'. The finish offered was cream/black with black upholstery, or red, or green, with upholstery to match. Specification for the Cunard versions of these specials built on an ash frame with 18SWG aluminum panelling, including louvres on the bonnet top, Triplex folding windscreen with twin electric wipers and lower cut doors than those to be found on the lower priced Morris bodied versions. The Ten-Six special was £230 from Cowley and £249 10s from Stewart & Arden Ltd. Carbodies of Coventry also made use of the Ten-Six special chassis as a basis of a well proportioned fixed head coupe which was sponsored by W.Watson & Co (Liverpool) Ltd as the 'Watson Special Saloon'.

A Cumberland registered Ten-Six special (ARM64) was among the starters from John o'Groats to compete in the 1935 Monte Carlo Rally. Driven by G.F. Hobley and crew as entrant number 91, this car completed the event successfully if not spectacularly. What became of this car? Or, for that matter, does the Ten-Six sports engine that was presented to the Bradford Technical College for instructional purposes by Morris Motors Ltd in 1935, still exist?

The major changes to the Ten-Four for the 1934 season were not immediately apparent as they involved the use of a synchromesh gearbox and a new chassis frame described as an 'unusually sturdy deep sectioned down swept frame with generous cross stiffening and resilient engine mounting'. No doubt the need to provide a longer chassis for the six cylinder model made the incorporation of a stronger one viable for the four cylinder cars. Apparent changes were minor although the single blade chromium plated, black filled, bumper in place of the previous season's twin-blade type and the sloping radiator stoneguard altered the frontal appearance slightly. A design change to the handbrake lever put on moulded finger grips and a central button release, while under the bonnet the distributor was fitted with automatic advance/retard mechanism, even though the manual controls on the steering wheel centre remained. The larger seats provided were now upholstered in real leather, the exception being the dicky seat on the two-seater which was of Rexine. Except on the open models, the boxed Trafficators on outriggers (which were a legacy of the ill-fated Wilcot Robots) were replaced with concealed units between the doors. As the bodies were common to both Ten-Four and Ten-Six, these improvements applied to both series. From time to time the Morris Ten figured in news items. One instance was the presentation of a cheque by Haslemere Motor Co to a Mr F.K. King of London, the winner in an Evening News E100 competition in which the entrant had to write a brief description of a trial run in a Morris Ten. It is not clear if the condition of entry was the purchase of a car, but the press photographs of the time showed the winner posed with a Morris Ten registered BPB942. The Morris Ten is hardly the car one would expect Royalty to use, nevertheless, there was one occasion in early 1934 when Queen Mary (grandmother to the present Queen) was transported in a Morris Ten saloon when journeying back from Sandringham. Apparently Percy Titmouse came across the Royal car in trouble by the roadside and gave her a 'lift' into Cambridge. 'Her Majesty is reported as having remarked upon the comfort and roominess of the Ten.' Many firms in the 'thirties catered for Morris Ten owners who wished to personalise their car with special

bumpers and various other extras. Wilmot Breedon offered black enamelled metal spare wheel covers with a chromium plated band for 43s 6d, or in all chromium plate for an additional 20s. Wheel discs to cover the wire spokes of the Magna wheels were popular in either finish. From Manchester the firm of David Moseley & Sons could convert the seating in the Morris Ten to 'Float-on-Air' pneumatic, using the existing upholstery covers. Other firms such as Millers of Sparkbrook, Weathershields, and Fabram of Yorkshire sold tailored loose covers for the seats; Miller's set included door and side covers to 'harmonise with every colour scheme'. Car mats were another easily obtained extra with The Car-Mat Co of Portobello Road providing fibre, hair, pile, or sorbo rubber types specially designed for the Morris Ten. A special 'Super Easyfit' carrier in black enamel with rubber inserts to prevent damage to the luggage was the product of Frank Ashby & Sons, while at Willesden G Beaten & Sons Ltd assembled chromium-plated framed sun visors and window louvres fitted with safety glass. Weathershields Ltd of Birmingham, would even convert the complete roof of the Morris Ten to enable the top to fold right back in open tourer style.

Lord Nuffield bequeathed to Nuffield College, Oxford, an interesting example of the silversmith's craft, a model of the 1934 Morris Ten-Four saloon. This silver model is correct down to the smallest details including opening doors, winding windows, sliding roof, and even a toolbag and jack. Under the opening bonnet can be seen the engine complete with its external fittings, while the underside reveals a faithful reproduction of the silencer, exhaust pipes, hydraulic brake pipes and similar detail. On the plinth an engraved plate records that the model was presented to Lord Nuffield at a gathering of the major Morris Distributors held at Grosvenor House, London, in late 1934, to mark his elevation to the peerage earlier that year. There had been a precedent over a decade earlier when in July 1923 his original agents had presented him with a silver replica of the Morris Oxford car - on that occasion the illuminated address with the model expressed the congratulations of the agents to William Morris on attaining the position of premier light car manufacturer of the United Kingdom.

The third and last season for the Ten-Four was to prove a short one of nine months before the new look Series models made their appearance. The 1935 model saw the trend to standardise the accelerator pedal position, moved to the right hand side; other refinements were the new pull up handbrake lever with accessible adjustment, steel brake shoes replacing the earlier aluminium cast type, a round petrol tank to supersede the squarer section one, and an improved rear bumper which incorporated an insert section to fill the gap when the luggage grid was in its folded position. Tyres were increased in section, but reduced by 1in diameter to 4.75-18. The Lucas dynamo (Type C45A) was arranged to give switched 'summer' or 'winter' charging rates, with maximum output when the headlamps were in use at night.

Specifications

Morris Ten. Pre-Series models, 1933-35	
Model	Chassis Numbers
Ten, four cylinder, 1933	101-14280
Ten-Four, 1934	34/T14281-34/T35185
Ten-Four, 1935	35/TN35186-35/TN49338
Ten-Six, standard, 1934	34/TS14281-34/TS35185
Ten-Six, special, 1934	34/TS/SP14281-34/TS/SP35185
Ten-Six, standard, 1935	35/TS35186-35/TS49334
Ten-Six, special, 1935	35/TS/SP35186-35/TS/SP49334

Morris Ten. Four Cylinder Pre-series models. Body Colours and Upholstery			
	1933	1934	1935
Two seater, with dickey seat		Green or black cellulose with green leather. (Dickey seat in Rexine)	Green or black cellulose with green leather. Red cellulose with red leather.
Tourer, four seater	Black cellulose with brown Karhyde upholstery. Brown cellulose with brown Karhyde upholstery.	Green or black cellulose with green leather.	Green or black cellulose with green leather. Red cellulose with red leather.
Saloon, sliding-head & fixing-head	Hobar blue, lined cream, brown Karhyde upholstery. Willow green, lined cream, green Karhyde upholstery. Black, lined white, green Karhyde upholstery.	Green cellulose with green leather upholstery. Blue cellulose with blue leather upholstery. Black cellulose with brown leather upholstery.	Sliding-head only: Blue cellulose with blue leather. Sliding & Fixed-head only: Green & black or black cellulose with green leather. Red & black cellulose with red leather.
Special coupe	Green duotone cellulose with green leather. Red duotone cellulose with red leather. Grey duotone cellulose with blue leather. Black cellulose with brown leather.	Green duotone or cream & green with green leather. Brown duotone or black cellulose with brown leather.	Green duotone or cream & green with green leather. Brown duotone or black cellulose with brown leather.
Traveller's saloon		Black cellulose with brown leather.	
Duotone indicates a darker shade of colour for the superstructure.			

Morris Ten. Six Cylinder Pre-series models. Body Colours and Upholstery		
	1934	1935
Two seater, with dickey seat	Green cellulose.	Green or black cellulose with green leather. Red cellulose with red leather.
Tourer, four seater	Green or black cellulose with green leather.	Green or black cellulose with green leather. Red cellulose with red leather.
Saloon, sliding-head & fixing-head	Green cellulose with green leather upholstery. Blue cellulose with blue leather upholstery. Black cellulose with brown leather upholstery.	Blue cellulose with blue leather. Green & black or black cellulose with green leather. Red & black cellulose with red leather.
Special coupe	Green duotone or cream & green cellulose with green leather. Brown duotone or black cellulose with brown leather.	Green duotone or cream & green with green leather. Brown duotone or black cellulose with brown leather.
Traveller's saloon	Black cellulose with brown leather.	
Special sports, four seater	Red cellulose, black wings, red leather upholstery. Green cellulose, black wings, green leather upholstery. Saxe blue cellulose, dark blue wings and wheels, blue leather upholstery. Cream cellulose, green wings, green leather upholstery. All black with red leather upholstery.	Black or scarlet & black cellulose with red leather. Saxe blue & Oxford blue cellulose with blue leather. Cream & green or green duotone cellulose with green leather.
Duotone indicates a darker shade of colour for the superstructure.		

Morris Ten. Four Cylinder. Pre-Series models, 1933-35. Specification

Engine: type 'MA' 1933, 'MB' 1934, 'MF' 1935. Side-valve, 63.5mm × 102mm stroke. 1,292cc.
Cork-insert clutch running in oil. SU carburetter. Rear mounted petrol tank using SU Petrolift up to chassis 25088; later models fitted with SU petrol pump. Four speed gearbox Magna type wire wheels (except on some export models with disc wheels), 2.5in × 19in or 1933-34 models; 3.0in × 18in on 1935. Tyres on 1933-34 models 4.50-19; 1935 models 4.75-18 (export 5.75-16) Lockheed hydraulic brakes. Rear axle ratio 1933, 4:7:1; 1934-5, 5.22:1.

Morris Ten. Six Cylinder. Pre-Series models, 1933-35. Specification

Engine on standard chassis for 1934 season, type 'RA', 1935 chassis, 'RD'. On the special chassis for 1934, type 'RB'; 1935 models 'RF'. Side-valve, 57mm bore × 90mm stroke. 1,378cc. 12hp. Domed pistons. Cooling system by thermo-syphon except on 'RF' engine which had water pump.
Cork-insert clutch running in oil. Rear mounted petrol tank using SU Petrolift to chassis 24987; later models fitted with SU petrol pump. Four-speed gearbox with synchromesh on top and third (remote control lever on special models), SU carburetter (twin on special). Tyres for 1934 models were 4.50-19 on 2.5in × 19in Magna wire wheels (4.75-19 tyres on special). 1935 models had 4.75-18 tyres on 3.0in × 18in Magna wire wheels. (Except some export models with disc. Export size tyres 5.75-16 on 3.5in × 16in wheels.) Lockheed hydraulic brakes. Rear axle ratio 5.55:1.

For further details please refer to *The Morris Motor Car 1913-1983* by Harry Edwards
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