PRACTICAL MOTORIST ROAD TESTS OF NEW CARS

Morris "Ten" (Series M) Saloon

This Latest Model of the Morris "Ten" Has Remarkably Good Performance, Whilst Suspension and Road-Holding are Unusually Satisfactory

WHEN we described the latest o.h.v. Morris "Ten" in our issue dated September 10th, we remarked on the improved high-efficiency 1,140 c.c. engine and the reduced weight of the car, brought about by using integral body chassis construction. These modifcations, among many others, are fully justified by the performance of the car. Acceleration and useful maximum speeds in all gears are noticeably better than before, while the general "feel" of the car is greatly superior.

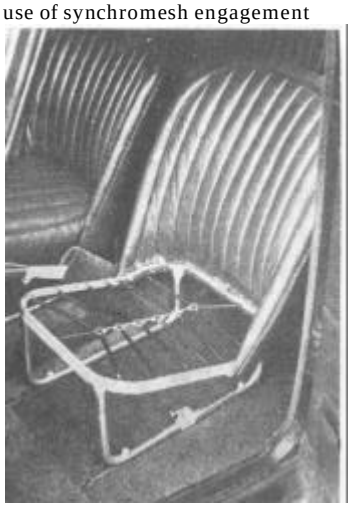
Suspension, road holding and steering are particularly pleasing, whilst there is ample accommodation for five people. Despite the large luggage compartment, which is now accessible from outside the car, legroom has not been reduced. But by bringing the rear seat further forward, comfort of the rear-seat passengers has been still further improved; and those who know the previous Morris "Ten" know that it was an extremely comfortable car.

Quick Starting

Starting was very good, the engine responding immediately and running evenly almost as soon as it had started. This was no doubt due to the provision of a thermostat in the upper cooling system. There was very little "spluttering" when the car was driven away as soon as the engine was started, nor was there any pronounced engine flutter, despite the effective flexible mountings.

One of the first impressions after sitting in the driving seat was that visibility was fully satisfactory, and that all instruments and controls were conveniently placed. One member of the PRACTICAL MOTORIST staff found that the accelerator pedal was not as comfortable to operate as might be wished; he suggested that it might have been better to use an organ-pedal control or to make the front bucket seats slightly deeper to give additional support to the knees. This criticism was not general however.

It was soon found that the clutch and gearbox were remarkably satisfactory, the clutch being very smooth and the change – due to the use of synchromesh engagement for second, third and top gears – perfectly easy and fairly quick. Whether changing up or down it was unnecessary to double de-clutch, except when dropping down into bottom. But bottom gear was not found to be essential at any time during our tests, re-starting on stiff main-road hills being easy and vibrationless when using second gear. Bottom gear is, in fact purely an emergency ratio, which would be useful in certain circumstances when carrying a full load of passengers and luggage.



Front bucket seats were built on tubular steel frames. They are well sprung and comfortable.

Luggage space, in the enclosed locker, is generous, the compartment being very convenient in use. Space wheel and tools are housed in a lower compartment, which is covered by the number plate.

Quiet Engine

Throughout the speed range we found the engine quiet and free from vibration; transmission and bodywork were also quiet. Even when the speed was pushed up to 50 m.p.h. in third gear there was little more than a slight engine "rattle" to remind the driver that he was not being quite fair to the power unit. In second, 32 m.p.h. could be attained before engine noise was noticeable. In normal fast driving, however, we found that the change was usually made from second to third at about 20 m.p.h., and from third to top at about 36 m.p.h. There would be little point in exceeding these speeds for the engine was found to be very flexible and to pull well at the lower revs. As an example of this, it would pull smoothly at well under 10 m.p.h. in top gear; in third the car could be driven at a mere crawl on a level road. Moreover, acceleration was reasonably smart from those

low speeds, although the good driver would not normally having on to top gear when the road speed fell below 15 m.p.h. The Lockheed hydraulic brakes were found to be very good as those on any car we have tested. Although the maximum braking efficiency did not quite reach 100 per cent. (the stopping distance from 30 m.p.h. was 31 ft. 6 in.), the absolute certainty and progressive operation, combined with the accurate balance made the braking completely safe in all circumstances. In one case we deliberately applied the brakes heavily on a greasy road surface; the wheels slipped very slightly, but the car did not deviate from its course. Many cars with brakes of higher "theoretical" efficiency would have skidded.

(above) Twin screen wipers operate effectively and quietly.

It was noticed that there was a slight screech from the brakes, but this was certainly not loud nor troublesome. In this respect it should be explained that the weather was damp and the roads wet during almost the whole period of our tests.

Performance in every respect was found to be unusually good. Acceleration from 0 to 30 m.p.h., using first and second gears, required 7-2/5 secs; when using second gear alone the corresponding time was 8 secs. Using second gear, it took 6-4/5 secs. to reach 30 m.p.h. from a steady 10 m.p.h. the time in third gear, the time required to reach 40 m.p.h. from a steady 20 m.p.h. was 9-4/5 secs. From 30 m.p.h. to 50 m.ph. in top gear took 15-3/5 secs., whilst 50 m.p.h. could be reached from a standstill, running through the gears, in 21-4/5 secs. These figures are all averages of several two-way timed runs, the speeds being those recorded by the speedometer, which was sensibly accurate.

"Q" Meter Tests

In top gear a maximum speed of 66 m.p.h. could be reached in normal conditions on a level road, whilst speeds between 50 and 55 m.p.h. coild be held for just as long as road conditions permitted. On cross-country runs it was easy to maintain average speeds quite as good as those normally made with larger cars up to 14h.p. or so. Another test made in top gear was for "pull" with our Tapley "Q" meter – the average figure for this 180 (lb. per ton). This means that the car would make a steady top-gear climb of a one-in-12.4 gradient. Throughout our tests, which included a number of fairly long runs as well as several cold starts and the burst of acceleration necessary in taking our figures, the fuel consumption averaged 36 m.p.g. The consumption in average owner-driver conditions could therefore be expected to be not more than this.

It would be difficult to criticise the style and finish of the bodywork other than favourably, windows are deep, pillars are narrow and the doors are wide. The windscreen is not as deep as on previous models, but gives a wide range of visibility. In one respect the lowering of the roof line in front helps to prevent dazzle, and obviates the need for a sun visor. Front seats are built on tubular frames with spring bases, and are thoroughly comfortable. The rear seat is equally comfortable and has an arm rest at each side.

The bonnet is of unorthodox design, the sides being held in place by means of five screws, so that only the top portion opens on the central hinges. It is locked by means of a square-ended key, for which there is a small pocket in the trimming under the dash on the near side. This arrangement ensures complete absence of bonnet rattle and is fully satisfactory unless the owner is of the meticulous kind who like to keep the engine as clean as the body work.

We found that the dipstick was not very easy of access while the bonnet sides were in position, especially if overalls were not being worn. On pointing out this to the makers, however, we were informed that a simple modification will probably be made in the near future.

Our general impressions were that the Morris "Ten" (Series M) is one of the best 10 h.p. cars on the market. In de-luxe for m, as tested, the price is £185, the fixed head saloon costing £175. Inbuilt Jackall hydraulic jacks cost £5 extra in both cases.

The five-stud pressed steel wheels carry Dunlop 5.00-16 E.L.P tyres.