

"THE AUTOCAR" ROAD TESTS

No. 72—THE HUMBER SNIPE SALOON.

Exceptional Hill-climbing, Power with Smoothness, and Flexibility at Low Speeds Provide an Attractive Combination.

WITHOUT question the performance of the new Humber Snipe is exceptionally good. The car has a splendid range of speed on top gear and revels in hills. Yet there is nothing coarse about it, no feeling that sheer power has been made the ultimate object. Indeed, the engine is remarkably smooth, and remains smooth up to the limit.

It is most fascinating, for the range of cruising speed lies between 40 and 65 m.p.h.; that is to say, on an average main road with little traffic about, the car appears to be touring along peaceably at any speed within these limits. The maximum is considerably higher, but not many people care to drive so fast continuously. Nevertheless, it must not be thought that the Snipe is intended only for fast driving; far from it.

The car can go along quietly at quite low speeds and without any necessity for gear changing. There is in this new Humber a remarkable combination, namely, that of a car with a very flexible performance on top gear and an unusual flexibility for hill-climbing on that ratio. But, further, it possesses a third speed which runs perfectly quietly, so that it is difficult to detect whether the car is on third or on top except by noticing the increased rate of revolutions of the engine.

In this way the needs of the "gear-shy" touring driver are completely met, while at the same time the driver who wishes to use every expedient available to maintain a really high average has at his disposal a really good acceleration on third, and also a gear ratio which will enable him to climb fast almost any hill he is likely to meet in a day's run in normal country. The attraction of this combination has to be experienced before it can really be fully appreciated—the silence and smoothness of a sweet-running and powerful six-cylinder engine and the crisp performance on third of a first-rate sports model.

The figures in the table give an idea of the capabilities of the car; it will be noticed that the acceleration both on top and on the indirect gears is unusually quick. Even when pulling hard between 10 and 30 m.p.h. the engine is without sense of

effort. It works with characteristic smoothness and at no point in the range does a tendency appear for the development of a periodic vibration or for sympathetic rattles to occur.

Mention has been made of the ability to climb hills, and some striking instances of this can be quoted. A hill rather over one-third of a mile in length, and having an average gradient of 1 in 10, was approached at a speed of 60 m.p.h., and at the top the speed of the car was 53 m.p.h. Then the same hill was tackled in a more orderly fashion; the speed at the foot was kept steady at 35 m.p.h. When once the car was on the slope the accelerator was depressed, with the result that the car actually gathered speed all the way up and went over the crest of the hill at 44 m.p.h. on top gear. This shows a remarkable range of flexibility and, translated into everyday language, indicates that

the timid driver can approach slopes and minor hills quite slowly and still climb them on top gear with something in hand.

On a longer hill, with a maximum gradient of 1 in $6\frac{1}{2}$, a climb was first made on top gear to within about fifty yards of the summit, when the speed had dropped to 14 or 15 m.p.h., and a change into third became necessary. In the experience of the member of *The Autocar* staff concerned this hill has not been ascended on top gear so far during any previous test of a touring car. When the car was put to the same hill, use being made of

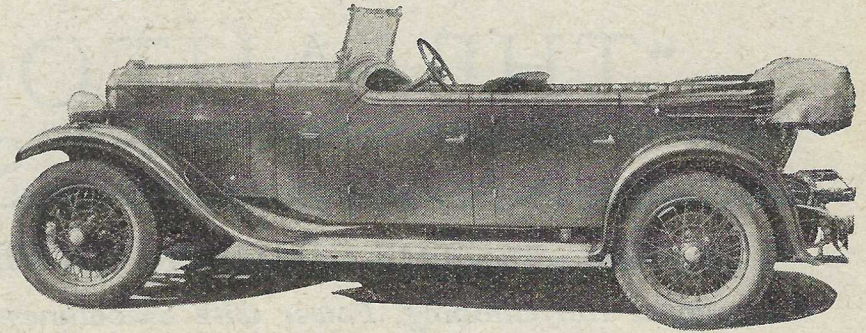


third speed being brought into operation by means of a sliding dog. Thus third gear is rendered practically noiseless. The helical gears for constant mesh and third are at opposite ends of the primary shaft line. The secondary shaft, or layshaft, is fixed, and carries a gear sleeve which rotates on Hyatt bearings. A trap in the floorboards gives access to the oil-filling orifice of the gear box, and a dipstick shows the lubricant level.

Drive from the gear box is taken to the rear axle through an open propeller-shaft of large diameter, with a Hardy-Spicer joint at either end.

The frame is of new design, with sides of deep section, and has in the middle an extra stiff and deep triangulated double cross-member, through the centre of which the propeller-shaft passes. On each side of the shaft is a metal cradle for carrying the batteries, which are divided into two units and are accessible from beneath the front seats.

Bendix-Perrot duo-servo brake shoes are used in the four wheel brake set. The pedal applies all four brakes, while the hand lever, which is practically horizontal when off, operates the rear wheel brakes only. The brake gear in general is cleanly and simply designed and well arranged



The new 16-50 h.p. model as an open tourer.

the new 16-50 h.p., which, besides having a smaller engine, has a lighter propeller-shaft. The 16-50 h.p. type, however, is not provided with radiator shutters. There is an adjustable thermostat in the header pipe, and this short-circuits the cylinder cooling water when the engine is cold and passes it through the induction pipe jacket so as to warm the latter rapidly. The starting motor does not have a 2 to 1 reduction gear.

The Pullman type 25-70 h.p. chassis is the same as the Snipe, but the wheelbase is longer, and the gear ratios are: first 18.5, second 12.35, third 7.33, and top 5 to 1. The tyre size is 32 x 6in.

The enclosed-drive six-light Pull-

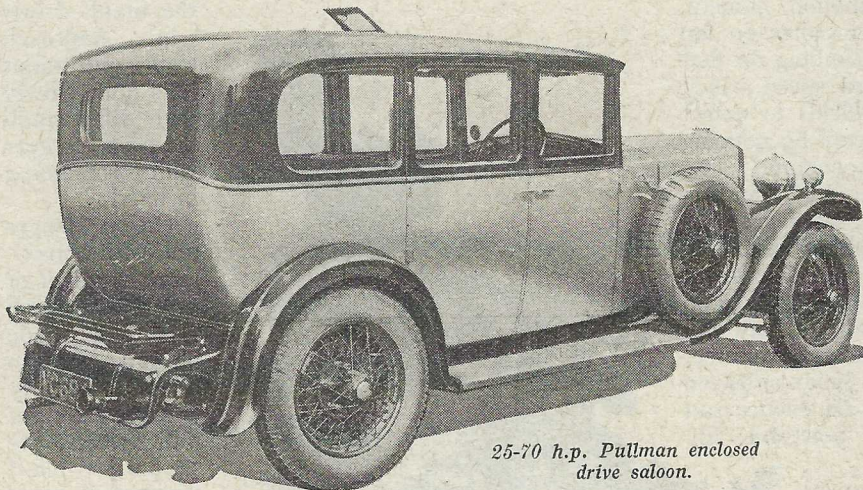
man saloon is a very handsome body with plenty of room in the back, and with particularly neat folding seats which practically vanish into the division. The glass in the division can be lowered, and disappears with a particularly neat action.

The main seat in the back compartment is most inviting because of its soft-looking cushions, and it is laid out in a very harmonious style. Unlike most enclosed-drive saloons, the front seats are particularly comfortable, the driving position is such that an owner may be at ease, and there is even a disappearing arm-rest to separate the occupants.

The sole world export rights for the new Humber cars are in the hands of Rootes, Ltd., who are convinced that there is a great future for a thoroughbred type of machine like these in countries overseas, the more so in that in designing these models the Humber Company has had that market no less constantly in mind than the tendency of the demands of home users.

The complete range of Humber cars and prices is as follows:—

- 9-28 h.p.—Touring car, £240; saloon, £295; fabric saloon, £280.
- 16-50 h.p.—Chassis, £340; Imperial touring car, £410; Imperial saloon, £435.
- 16-50 h.p.—Touring car, £425; saloon, £465; four-door Weymann coupé, £475; six-light Weymann saloon, £465; drop-head coupé, £495.
- 20-65 h.p.—Chassis, £400; dual-purpose car, £475; saloon, £525; limousine, £725; landaulet, £725.
- 25-70 h.p. Snipe.—Chassis, £410; touring car, £495; saloon, £535; four-door Weymann coupé, £545; six-light Weymann saloon, £535; drop-head coupé, £565.
- 25-70 h.p. Pullman.—Chassis, £495; limousine, £775; landaulet, £775; cabriolet de ville, £1,095.

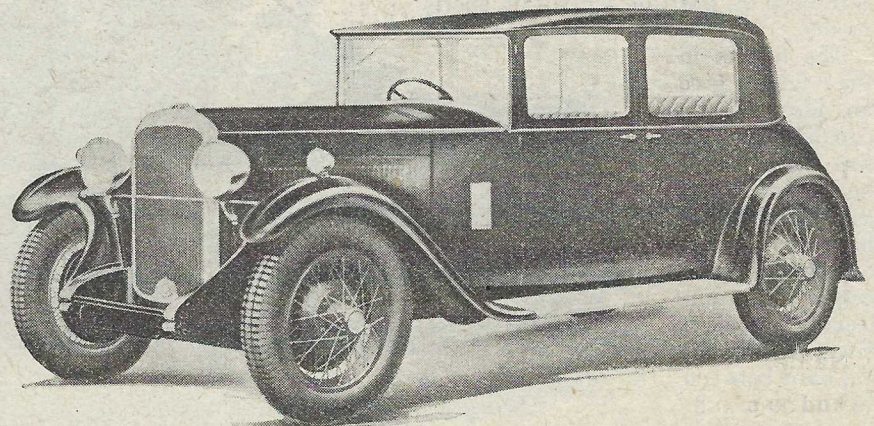


25-70 h.p. Pullman enclosed drive saloon.

for easy lubrication. Half-elliptic springs are used all round, and are provided with Silentbloc bushes which require no lubrication. The front springs are shackled at their forward ends. Incidentally, proper brackets are provided on the frame, fore and aft, for the attachment of buffers.

The steering gear is a Marles unit, and it may be mentioned that there are self-adjusting ball joints on the track rod. At the top of the steering column is a new type of wheel having a large disc centre which carries controls for the horn, the starter, the "dip and switch" lamp control, and throttle and ignition levers.

The foregoing description relates to the 25-70 h.p. Snipe, but it covers



The Snipe four-door Weymann coupé, one of the several forms in which the new model is being offered.

“THE AUTOCAR” ROAD TESTS—(continued).

the quiet third speed, it held a comfortable 40 m.p.h. all the way up, and, because of the silence and the ease of the engine on third, 1 in 6½ hardly seemed to be a hill at all.

Another similar hill, rising to a gradient of 1 in 6 and having a sharp turn in the middle, was ascended equally comfortably on third. Lastly, an ascent was made of a longish 1 in 10 hill having a sharp turn at the foot. This was climbed on top gear at 40 m.p.h. These performances on hills were of an outstanding nature in view of the speed, the absence of effort, and the quietness.

From the driver's point of view the controls are in keeping with the performance. For example, the gear box, besides being absolutely quiet on third and above the average for silence on first and second, provides a particularly easy change, and the gear lever moves without the application of much force.

The clutch takes up its work in the way that a plate clutch should do; it is not in any way fierce, but is perhaps a shade on the positive side. The pedal requires only light pressure for disengagement. Small controls are neatly grouped in a circular box at the centre of the steering wheel, there being a central button for the horn, which, when lifted, operates the starting motor, a switch for the “dip and switch” head lamp control, and ignition and throttle levers also.

THE HUMBER SNIPE.

DATA FOR THE DRIVER.

23.8 h.p., six cylinders, 80 × 116 mm. (3,948.5 c.c.).
 Tax, £24.
 Wheelbase 10ft., track 4ft. 8in.
 Overall length 14ft. 2in., width 5ft. 8in., height 5ft. 10in.
 Tyres: 29 × 5.5in. on detachable wire wheels.

Engine-rear axle gear ratios.	Maxima (m.p.h.).	Acceleration (10-30 m.p.h.).
16.82	—	—
11.23	32	5 sec.
6.66	55	6 sec.
4.54	75	9 sec.

Turning circle: 36ft.
 Tank capacity 12 gallons, fuel consumption 17 m.p.g.
 12-volt lighting set.
 Weight: 30 cwt 3 qr.
 Price, with saloon body, £535.

Engine temperature is taken care of automatically, for the thermostatic control, which, by the way, can be set to any desired figure to suit different conditions of climate, opens or closes the radiator shutters.

Because the smoothness of the car makes the speed deceptive, an impression was gained first of all that the four wheel brakes were not over powerful, but this impression was entirely revised directly a definite test was made, for the application of any heavy pressure to the pedal pulled the car up with a very sure grip, and the figure recorded as the stopping distance from 25 m.p.h. is distinctly praiseworthy.

The suspension is good, and the car holds the road quite well at speed, though this, of course, is very largely a matter of the adjustment of the shock absorbers; that is to say, the higher the speed the tighter the shock absorbers require to be. On the other hand, if the shock absorbers are tight the comfort at low speeds is reduced. Even at 60 m.p.h. a passenger on the

rear seat is not rendered uncomfortable or thrown about in any way.

Taking it as a whole, the new Humber Snipe is, from a modern point of view, by far the best car yet produced by the well-known factory, and its road performance brings it directly into the front rank of present-day productions.

MOTORISTS AT GOLF

A Very Close Fight Ends in Several Replays.

BY the courtesy of the Mid-Surrey Golf Club the Autumn meeting of the Automobile Golfing Society was held on Saturday last at the Old Deer Park, Richmond. The high standard of all-round excellence that prevailed, both in the morning's medal play for the Hobson Trophy and in the afternoon's foursomes for *The Motor Goblets*, resulted in no fewer than five players returning a score of 84 nett for the first event, and four couples tying at 4 up in the latter. May I take this opportunity to congratulate the Mid-Surrey Club on the way that its most excellent course has kept its end up during the trying summer, and even more trying autumn? The greens were perfect.

Major C. O. Hezlet, our particular star and, incidentally, amateur champion of Ireland once more, was not present, but Sir Alfred Mays-Smith, Sir William Letts, and most of the leaders of the movement from Coventry were amongst the company, a band that, as no other in all motoring, binds its early days with the present times, and stands as an instance of the inestimable value of combining pleasure with business. The final results were:—

- MEDAL PLAY.
 Winner: Robert J. Park, who beat Sir A. Mays-Smith after two replays.
 FOURSOMES.
 Winners: Sir A. Mays-Smith and R. J. Park, who finished 7 up on bogey.

OWEN JOHN.