Road Test No. 30/57 (Continental)

Make: M.G.  
Type: M.G. A Coupé
Makers: M.G. Car Co. Ltd., Abingdon-on-Thames, Berkshire

Test Data

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CONDITIONS: Windy - wind 10 to 15 m.p.h.;
clay; Air temperature 79°F., Barometer 29.56 in. Hg.;
Surface: Concrete - Monopoly Track; Fuel: British
and French Premium.

INSTRUMENTS
Speedometer at 30 m.p.h.: 3% max.
Speedometer at 60 m.p.h.: 3% max.
Speedometer at 90 m.p.h.: 4% max.
Speedometer at 100 m.p.h.: 7% max.
Distance recorder: accurate.

WEIGHT:
Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and
fuel for approx. 50 miles): 1,013 lb. m.m.;
Weight laden as tested: 2,023 lb. m.m.

MAXIMUM SPEEDS
Fitting Monopoly Laps: 102.7 m.p.h.
Best one-way lap/4.5m. time equals: 102.3 m.p.h.
"Maximile" Speed: (Timed quarter-mile after
one mile accelerating from rest.): 102.0 m.p.h.
Mean of four runs: 102.0 m.p.h.
Best one-way time equals: 94.9 m.p.h.
Speed in Gears at recommended limit of 5,500
r.p.m.: 87.4 m.p.h.
Max. speed in third: 87.9 m.p.h.
Max. speed in second: 68.5 m.p.h.
Max. speed in first: 47.5 m.p.h.

FUEL CONSUMPTION
0-30 m.p.h.: constant 40 m.p.g. on level.
35-50 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.g. on level.
55-55 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.g. on level.
20-55 m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.g. on level.
25-40 m.p.g. at constant 90 m.p.g. on level.
Overall Fuel Consumption for 142 miles, 26.9
gallons, equals: 27.6 m.p. (100.2 km./100 km.).
Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady
speed midway between 30 m.p.g. and maximum,
less 5% allowance for acceleration): 31.3 m.p.g.
Fuel Tank Capacity: (makers' fig.) 10 gallons.

ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill
0-30 m.p.h.: 5.0 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.: 7.2 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.: 10.6 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.: 15.7 sec.
0-70 m.p.h.: 21.4 sec.
0-80 m.p.h.: 31.2 sec.
Standing quarter mile: 19.8 sec.
Hill Climbing at sustained steady speeds.
Max. gradient on top: 1 in 5.7 (Taunton 210 lb. ton).
Max. gradient on third: 1 in 7.3 (Taunton 305 lb. ton).
Max. gradient on second: 1 in 4.75 (Taunton 472 lb. ton).

ACCELERATION TIMES on upper gears
1st. Gear: 3rd. Gear:
10-30 m.p.h.: 13.6 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.: 12.6 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.: 12.6 sec.
40-60 m.p.h.: 12.6 sec.
50-70 m.p.h.: 12.6 sec.
60-80 m.p.h.: 17.2 sec.
70-90 m.p.h.: 28.1 sec.

HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds.
Max. gradient on top: 1 in 5.7 (Taunton 210 lb. ton).
Max. gradient on third: 1 in 7.3 (Taunton 305 lb. ton).
Max. gradient on second: 1 in 4.75 (Taunton 472 lb. ton).

1. Headlamp dip switch. 2. Gear lever. 3. Hand
brake. 4. Door catch. 5. Fuel gauge. 6. Windscreen washer control.
7. Choke control. 8. Windscreen wiper control. 9. Tem-
distance recorder. 27. Direction indicator switch. 28. Direction indicator warning light.
The M.G. A Hardtop Coupé

An Economical 100 m.p.h. Car with Exceptional Roadworthiness

In the world of motoring there are many cars capable of exceeding 100 m.p.h.; indeed, most current American productions are capable of this feat. In contrast, the majority of European cars place an accent on economical running as exemplified by a fuel consumption of, say, better than 25 m.p.g. Standing between these two extremes there is a choice of four cars, all of European origin, which will beat by a useful margin both the 100 m.p.h. and the 25 m.p.g. mark, the latest recruit to this select company being the M.G. A model with the fixed-head coupé body.

Reference to our road test of the car in original form with open body but raised hood will show that the maximum speed on a flat and level road was 97.8 m.p.h., but with the coupé model recently tested on the banked Montlhéry track displayed a sensibly superior performance by returning an overall lap time equivalent to 101.2 m.p.h. with a fastest half kilometre at 103.8 m.p.h. There is therefore no question of the ability of this car to exceed the three figure mark and anyone who questions the utility of this fact in itself should consider the implications thereof upon acceleration in the upper speed ranges and in the ability to cruise with the engine running on a modest throttle opening.

So far as acceleration is concerned, the figures show that making full use of the gearbox the M.G. will run up to 80 m.p.h. within 25 sec. from a speed of 40 m.p.h. and even if the driver remains in top gear between these two speeds the time needed is only 30 sec. A speed of 80 m.p.h. is therefore readily within the compass of the car on any reasonable section of road and in this condition the piston speed is only slightly in excess of 2,500 ft./min. and the engine is delivering little more than half maximum power.

The high acceleration of the car is perhaps of particular value on British roads; the aspect of a comfortable 80 m.p.h. cruising is of especial value abroad and it is perhaps significant that an extremely high proportion of M.G. A. production is exported.

Road surfaces abroad are notoriously poorer than they are in England and for this reason we were particularly impressed by the robustness of the car and the entire absence of chassis shake or body shake even when speeds considerably greater than 80 m.p.h. were being sustained on Continental highways. This high stiffness factor not only ensures freedom from deterioration of door windows, window frames and other small items in the general structure but also gives the driver and passenger a psychological impression that high speeds can be maintained in safety, whereas some more flimsily built vehicles suffer not only from mechanical disabilities but also impose strain and anxiety upon the occupants.

The impression of safety engendered by the M.G. is, fortunately, founded on fact. Although with the recommended tyre pressures, squeal is somewhat prevalent with high-speed cornering, with the higher pressures adopted on Montlhéry circuit, this annoyance disappears, and cornering power comes up into the racing car class which is not particularly surprising in view of the 30 years' continuous competition experience which lies behind the car.

Although automobile engineering has reached the point where the maximum speed acceleration and fuel consumption of a new car will conform closely to predictions derived from the drawing board, this is by no means true in regard to steering and handling characteristics and the prototype M.G. A. models were developed on a special course to a point where the speed through a given series of corners was equal to the best obtainable irrespective of selling price.

The coupé displays almost neutral steering characteristics coupled with exceptional rapidity of response under the influence of the absolutely positive rack and pinion steering gear. The steering wheel itself might perhaps be placed farther from the driver for the benefit of those who prefer the modern straight-arm control position and over rough surfaces there is noticeable shake on the wheel which does not in any way affect the straight running of the vehicle. By the standards of the family car more than usual physical effort has to be exerted on the wheel, but this is a very small price to pay for that feeling of absolute mastery over the attitude of the vehicle which is one of the most desirable features a car
The M.G. A Hardtop Coupé

SEATS which are rather low-set in relation to the scuttle are nevertheless very comfortable and give good lateral support; there is a central armrest on the transmission tunnel and, on the car tested, an optionally extra ashtray. Just forward of this is the stubby gearlever which gives very pleasant, positive use of the gearbox.

happens reduced by the wire wheels fitted.

It is clear from the very good figures recorded in the data panel and the remarks which have been so far made that the M.G. coupé is a car of considerable merit. It is also one which quickly commands affection by reason of those qualities of pleasure in driving and comfort in travelling which are not necessarily the outcome of good engineering. The suspension is on the hard side and this fact is the more noticeable if the tyres are run on the higher limits of pressure. If, however, bumps are somewhat more than usually noticeable either pitch nor roll can normally be discerned and long high-speed journeys cause little physical and no mental fatigue.

Comfort could be further improved by raising the seats an inch or two which would at the same time give a better view over the rather high scuttle, as with the standard position a person of moderate height scarcely has both wings of the car in view. But the seats themselves are comfortable and give good support against side forces. A large fore and aft travel makes it possible to accommodate small packages or even suitcases in the well at the back of the cockpit. The inboard mounting of the spare wheel causes an intrusion which is particularly noticeable in the somewhat shallow rear locker and for serious touring it would certainly be necessary to fit the optionally offered external luggage rack. Other minor matters which justify criticism are the somewhat limited area swept by the windscreen wipers and a rather haphazard layout of instruments and switches, although the principal items of road and

can have and yet is so rarely experienced.

The clutch gives a firm take up and very rapid gear changes can be made, despite the rather wide gap between top and third gear, the speed on the latter being restricted to 70 m.p.h. unless the driver is prepared to take the tachometer needle past the 5,500 r.p.m. mark into the red section. When the acceleration figures were obtained the needle was kept below this area and if the maximum r.p.m. had been increased to the competition limit of 6,000 r.p.m. slightly better times might have been recorded.

As a counterpart to the somewhat wide gap between top and third gear the latter is an excellent ratio to use either in traffic or on country roads as it gives very vivid acceleration between 10 and 60 m.p.h., some pinking from the engine however being noticeable below 2,000 r.p.m. unless 100 octane fuel is used.

The engine cannot be called mechanically quiet. There is a rattle from the pushrod valvetrain which is an established characteristic of the type and does not denote mechanical defect but the gearbox and rear axle are free from objectionable noise. The attraction of the fully open car cannot be denied and the name M.G. is especially identified with this type. Nevertheless, from a strictly practical point of view it must be pointed out that despite the introduction of wind-chown windows and wraparound rear window the coupé M.G. went on the scales only 32 lb. heavier than the open type; it is 3 m.p.h. faster and returns a fuel consumption 1 m.p.g. better. Any resonant effects which may be introduced by the use of a closed body are more than offset by the reduced wind noise and buffeting which follow from the enclosure of the occupants and by reason of a well-designed and carefully positioned wraparound windscreen.

The overall fuel consumption was based upon hard driving (including some 50 laps of the Montlhéry circuit) but the M.G. by reason of the characteristics set out above encourages the driver to make full use of the performance available, this procedure being also wholly acceptable to the passenger.

Should it be necessary to drive really hard the brakes will be found equal to all demands made upon them, pedal pressures being reasonable, stopping consistent and free from the generation of smoke or smell, the drum temperatures being per-

TWO inclined S.U. carburettors feed mixture to the four-cylinder o.h.v. engine. Plugs, coil, advance and retard unit, dipstick, carburettors and oil filler are easy to reach.
EXCELLENT_rearward_visibility_follows_from_the_use_of_a_wraparound_rear_window_which_in_conjunction_with_big_door_windows_reduces_the__blind_quarters_to_a_near-minimum.

WITH_spares_wheel_and_tool_roll_carried_in_the_boot_little_room_is_left_for_luggage._there_is_also_additional_space_behind_the_seats_and_an_external_luggage_rack_is_available_as_an_extra.

Specification

**Engine**
- Cylinders: 4
- Bore: 73.025 mm
- Stroke: 99 mm
- Cubic capacity: 1,499 c.c.
- Piston area: 279.7 sq. in.
- Valves: 2,810 in.
- Compression ratio: 4.6:1
- Fuel: S.U. electrically-retractable
- Tanks: 72 b.h.p.
- Performance: 3,288 h/p.

**Transmissions**
- Clutch: Single dry plate
- Top gear (mph): 5.56
- 3rd gear (mph): 9.25
- 2nd gear (mph): 13.54
- 1st gear (mph): 45.62
- Reverse: 20.468
- Propeller shaft: Open
- Final drive ratio: Hypoid bevel 4:1

**Chassis**
- Wheels: 70 x 16
- Length: 101 in.
- Width: 60 in.
- Height: 23.4 in.
- Lock: Single dry plate
- Shock absorbers: Semi-elliptic
- Front: Armstrong double-acting
- Rear: Armstrong hydraulic
- Suspension: Independent
- Brakes: Drum
- Front: 12 in.
- Rear: 15 in.

**Starting**
- Battery: 12 volt
- Generator: Not fitted
- Ignition: Not fitted
- Spark plugs: 412

**Dimensions**
- Length: 101 in.
- Width: 60 in.
- Height: 23.4 in.

**Specifications**
- Weight: 2,660 lbs.
- Engine: 1,499 c.c.
- Top speed: 80 m.p.h.

**Coachwork and Equipment**
- Instrument panel: Speedometer with trip distance, rev. counter, oil pressure gauge, water temperature gauge
- Warning lights: Ignition, indicators
- Lights: Headlamp, main beam
- Luggage: 170 lbs.
- Windscreen wipers: Electric, self-sparking
- Smokers' kit: Cigarette lighter, ashtray
- Alternator: 12-v.
- Battery: 12-v.

**Maintenance**
- Tappet adjustments: 0.017 in.
- Front wheel bearings: 0.015 in.
- Engine oil: 60 lbs.
- Rear axle: 4 lbs.
- Gearbox: 2 lbs.
- Fuel: 200 lbs.
- Battery: 20 lbs.
- Brake fluid: 1 qt.
- Oil pressure: 60 lbs.
- Air filter: 5 lbs.
- Fuel filter: 5 lbs.

The engine is designed to give long life with minimum maintenance, but regular oil changes and filter replacements are necessary. The car is fitted with a Petrol filter and a manual oil pressure gauge. The battery is a 12-v. 20-ampere-hour type, and the alternator provides all the electrical power for the lights, radio, and other accessories.