



Only on loose dirt can you shake the Wolseley's rear properly loose. This mild opposite-lock position corrected itself automatically a fraction of a second later.

We drive two Anglo/Australian thoroughbreds

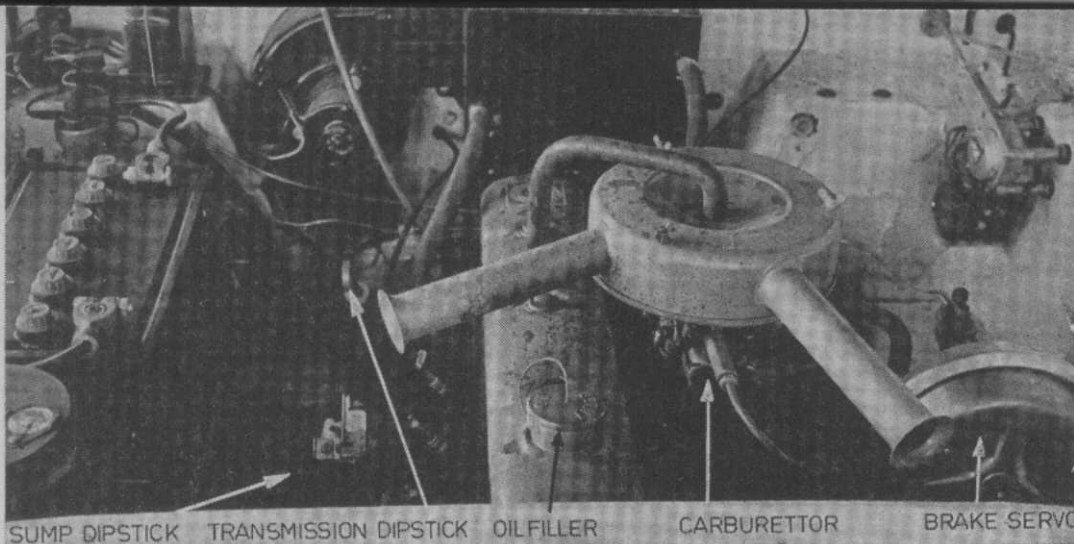
MORE PLUSH, MORE PUSH FOR THE BMC SIXES

A combined road test of the Wolseley/Freeway turns up two solid cars that are excellent value for money. If you don't believe us, ask the farmer who owns one.

ONE of the most interesting reasons for good sales figures for a car came from a BMC dealer in a NSW country town. He said that with the Wolseley/Freeway he outsold the local Holden dealer for one reason. That was that the local roads were always freely decorated with cow manure, which has a fairly corrosive effect on underbodies. The Freeway was more resistant than the Holden to attack by manure.

That was his story, and he's sticking to it. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the people who have bought either of the two BMC sixes since their introduction in 1962 have mostly been well satisfied with them. They have proven to be solid, well-made, dependable cars with fair fuel consumption, good rust resistance and low maintenance costs. The Freeway was touted as the answer to the Holden, but after a while the Wolseley became the better seller.

Now BMC has released MkII versions of both. We spent most time with the Wolseley, but decided to incorporate the Freeway in the same test report



The "Blue Streak" six occupies much of a fairly narrow engine bay, and some ancillaries are a little hard to reach. However, battery is in best possible position.

Right: Driving position is fairly good, although the wheel is too big and slightly too high. Foot and leg room is excellent, however. Note dark wood panelling on facia and sills.



because the two cars use identical running gear and general mechanicals. The performance figures are those from the Wolseley, because the Freeway proved only marginally different.

BMC has done a very good job of facelifting both, but the Wolseley, particularly, is impressive. Exterior restyling in both cases has been only slight, while the engine has been updated from 80/82 to 85 bhp and 123 lb/ft to 130 lb/ft of torque. This has been done by reshaping the cylinder head with larger valves and ports and raising compression to 8.2 to 1.

Both cars have acquired a vacuum servo in the braking system and accelerator linkages have been improved. The rear leaf springs have been lengthened, damper rates changed and bumpers and taillight assemblies remodelled.

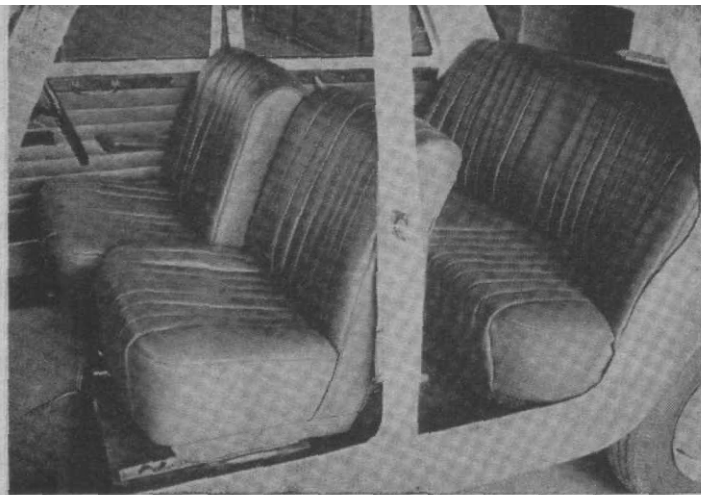
However, the interior treatment of the Wolseley is the highlight of both MkIIs. BMC has built foam-padded seats and covered them in an extremely high-grade pvc that looks and feels like leather. By retaining the carpeting and wood panelling of the old car, and building the seats to a high cost factor,

the company has made the Wolseley into one of the nicest and plushiest prestige sixes available.

The seats are separated buckets — although more like armchairs than buckets — and are extremely comfortable. The squabs come right up behind the shoulders in the Jaguar-Super Snipe fashion, and discreet shaping has given good thigh and sideways support. Both are separately adjustable, although not far enough to the rear, while the rear squab is shaped around the wheel arches and includes a pull-down armrest. There are armrests on all four doors, with the front two adjustable.

These seats are a hallmark for comfort at the price. Good tufted carpet, bound at the edges and with a rubber insert under the driver's feet, match the door trims. There is full dark wood panelling over the facia and along the door sills. The panelling is shaped around a central, lower radio speaker, and below it is a deep parcel shelf that is padded on its lower edge and provides two neat cubbyholes each side of the steering column.

There is a heavily-padded cowl over the facia



Wolseley interior is very well furnished, with perhaps the best seats of all the low-priced prestige sizes. Wood trim and carpeting is also a nice touch and of high quality. Entry and exit are good points.

with the cigar lighter set in a most peculiar place high on the left of the instrument nacelle and surrounding by padding. A lockable glovebox is at left, and in the centre of the fascia is a clock flanked by flanged controls for the heater/demister. Main instruments are contained in two big dials in front of the driver, with the left one devoted to speedometer with decimal odometer and trip mileage recorder and the right declaring oil pressure, temperature and the contents of the fuel tank. The instruments, however, are lettered in dark mauve on a cream background and besides looking old-fashioned are quite hard to read.

Controls, at the right of the column, are the main lights switch, washer button, choke knob, instrument lighting and ignition. The heater fan switch is to the left of the column and works a noiseless blower that is a great contrast to the bellowing bellows fitted to US cars.

This good, functional layout is spoiled a little by the steering wheel. Set a little too high, it is also an inch too big in diameter and the rim is slightly too thick. Reducing these dimensions would make the car feel a lot better on the road. Also, the hard, sharp sun visors are unworthy of such a well-furnished car, although the padded headlining and tinted rear vision mirror are very nice.

The Wolseley's window winders are nicely high-g geared at 1½ turns, but are placed so far forward low on the door that they are hard to reach when wearing a sash belt. However, the other controls are in easy reach and the stubby transmission control lever is nicely placed. The selector quadrant is brightly lit at night, unlike most other systems which make you feel in the dark in more ways than one.

On the floor are the organ-type throttle pedal and the pendant brake pedal, which ends in a big square pad. Most of our drivers would have preferred it to be extended a little more to the left to help left-foot braking, but how many people have learned this trick anyway? Interior lights are set over each centre pillar, right in the position where the driver and passenger's heads obscure them. Front ashtrays are in the doors and rear ones in the backs of the front seats.

However, the driver has a good view of his instruments over the half horn ring, and can see the tips of his rear wings. With the front wings clearly accented by the styling, the Wolseley/Freeway becomes very easy to place on the road.

The Freeway's interior has been less drastically modified, although trim materials are better. In both cases the driver is a little too close to the slightly too-big wheel. However, leg-room in both cars is exceptionally good and the Freeway seats also give good support where needed.

Both have an interior bonnet lock, but in both cases the bonnet props on one of those infernal BMC sliding rods, about which we have raged vainly many a time. There is not a lot of room around the engine. The boot operates via a press-catch, and the lid opens to reveal a deep, but not long boot, with the spare wheel set in a wind-down tray — an idea most other makers should have copied long ago. The boot will take the biggest suitcases comfortably either on edge or lying flat. It only falls short in the case of long loads.

The subtle improvements to suspension have made this MkII a far better car on most road surfaces. There is less wheel hop and axle tramp, and the car is far less inclined to "hang" a wheel and get sudden tyre screech when turning a right-angled bitumen corner or doing a U-turn. The steering still feels fairly heavy, particularly at parking speeds, but it lightens appreciable as speeds rise.

There is a much better feel to the brake pedal with the new servo system, but braking ability has not improved to any noticeable extent, although this is still one of the best-braked sixes around. We found only slight signs of fade. The handbrake, beside the driver's right hand, pulls up the car

TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE WOLSELEY 24/80

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE:
Cylinders six, in line
Bore and stroke 76.2 mm by 89.9 mm
Cubic Capacity 2433 cc
Compression ratio 8.2 to 1
Valves pushrod, overhead
Carburettor Zenith 34VN downdraft
Power at rpm 85 at 4400
Maximum torque 130 lb/ft at 1600 rpm
Piston speed at max bhp 2595 ft/min

TRANSMISSION:
Gearing 18.5 mph per 1000 rpm
Type Borg-Warner automatic
Gear lever location column
Ratios, overall:
First 9.35
Intermediate 5.66
Drive 3.91
Final drive 3.91 to 1

SUSPENSION:
Front coils and wishbone
Rear semi-elliptic leaf
Dampers telescopic

STEERING:
Type cam and peg
Ratio 15 to 1 and variable
Turns, 1 to 1 variable
Circle 36.5 ft

BRAKES:
Type drum, vacuum servo
Swept or rubbed area 149 sq ins.

DIMENSIONS:
Wheelbase 8 ft 4½ in.
Track, front 4 ft 2 in.
Track, rear 4 ft 3 in.
Length 14 ft 9 in.
Width 5 ft 2 in.

evenly and tidily.

Both cars were fitted with the excellent Borg-Warner Type 35 transmission, and this is probably their greatest asset. While the torque-converter system does absorb a deal of engine power, it more than makes up for it in flexibility. The quadrant is marked LDNRP: D stands for Drive, in which the car is normally used, but the L position will lock the transmission into either of the two gears right up to the point of valve crash. This is very handy when descending a long steep hill or when towing a van, for it completely eliminates the "hunting" from gear to gear so common to American transmissions in those circumstances.

If L is engaged at a standstill and the car hurried away it will rev out in first gear; moving the lever to D then pulls in Drive (third), but a quick snatch back to L gets second, which can then be revved out in the same way. The normal kickdown is still available through the throttle detent, but the intelligent driver will soon find himself revelling in the use of this small, stubby gear lever and the way the transmission responds immediately. The changes are quite smooth except for full-throttle manual

(Continued on page 66)



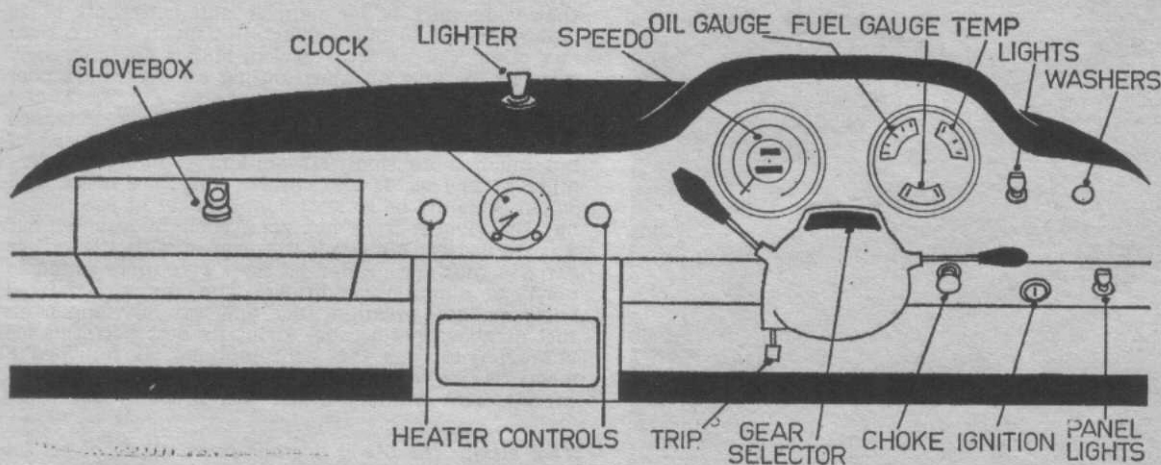
Big clue to the Mk II is the rear. Changes are reshaped tail-lights, trimmed-down fins, altered bumper bar, rewritten "automatic" emblem, and small "Mk II" bezel next to name. However, outline is unchanged.

Height	4 ft 10 in.
Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure)	10 gals
Boot capacity (maker's figure)	19 cu ft
TYRES:	
Size	5.90 by 14
Make on test car	Goodyear G8
WEIGHT:	
Kerb (with fuel and water)	2595 lbs
GROUND CLEARANCE:	
Unladen	7 1/2 in.

PERFORMANCE

TOP SPEED:	
Fastest run	83.8 mph
Average of all runs	82.0 mph
MAXIMUM SPEED IN GEARS:	
First	35 mph
Second	67 mph
Drive	82 mph
ACCELERATION:	
Standing quarter mile:	
Fastest run	20.6 sec
Average of all runs	21.4 sec
0 to 30 mph	6.3 sec
0 to 40 mph	8.4 sec
0 to 50 mph	15.1 sec
0 to 60 mph	22.8 sec
0 to 70 mph	NA

0 to 80 mph	NA
20 to 40 mph	6.8 sec
30 to 50 mph	NA
40 to 60 mph	21.4 sec
BRAKING:	
From 30 mph	41 feet (24 ft/sec/sec)
From 60 mph	170 feet (25 ft/sec/sec)
Handbrake from 20 mph	50 feet (9 ft/sec/sec)
GO-TO-WHOA:	
0-60-0 mph	NA
SPEEDO ERROR:	
Indicated	
30 mph	29.3 mph
40 mph	39.1 mph
50 mph	48.1 mph
60 mph	58.1 mph
70 mph	NA
80 mph	NA
90 mph	NA
FUEL CONSUMPTION:	
Overall for test	18.8 mpg
Normal cruising	20-22 mpg
Fuel used on test	Super, 95 octane
TEST CONDITIONS:	
Surface	dry, hot mix bitumen
Weather	cool, dry
Test load	two persons and gear
PRICE:	
Including tax	£1165 (basic)



REMARKABLE RENAULT R8

(Continued from page 29)

Length adjustment is above average and would accommodate all but the tallest drivers, while the backrest is adjustable by a round knurled knob at the side of the seat. The upholstery is a plastic-like leathercloth and does not let the occupants slip about. With the seats right back rear passengers have only a small amount of legroom.

The main interior changes to the 1100 have been confined to the fascia. On the left hand side of the panel there is a small glove and pipe lidded bin while below it there is a map and paraphernalia locker. In the centre of the fascia, but set low, are the controls for the fresh air heater, which gives an excellent blast of warm air. Beside this is the steering column, above which sits the rectangular instrument grouping. Ranging from 0-100mph is the speedometer which is a rectangular slit across which the needle sweeps; below this is the odometer with the fuel gauge to the left and the water temperature, indicator tell-tale, main beam, oil pressure and generator lights. Sadly lacking are good well defined gauges. On the far extremities of the fascia are two adjustable round vents which allow fresh air into the car.

The pedals for the clutch, brake and accelerator come through the floor and are easy to use. The diaphragm clutch did not require much pressure and the accelerator was highly responsive. Both the handbrake and gearlever are well located near the driver's left hand although in first and third the gearlever needs some stretching. On the steering column are the stalk controls for the trafficators, the parking, head and fascia lights. The headlights have a high beam switch in the stalk mechanism. An interior light works off both front doors and is

located in unit with the rear vision mirror at the top centre of the windscreen.

At the front the R8 has winding windows in the doors while at the rear there is a sliding system to allow the rear passengers more hip-room. All doors have neat pull-out interior door opening catches.

The ignition/starter/steering wheel lock switch on the side of the column takes the unusual Renault key and is difficult to operate in the dark. It can be a knuckle-scrubber. Another small fault that showed up was that unless the steering wheel was eased off the lock the key could not be turned, keeping the system locked.

The Cibie headlights gave an extremely good spread of light and in the Continental fashion the left hand light probed a long way down the left side/edge of the road while the right hand light had less depth but greater width coverage. For fast night driving this was ideal and speeds right up to the car's maximum could be used. Around the city and suburbs the dipped lights gave a good area of road coverage.

On test the car returned an excellent fuel consumption of more than 37mpg, and this included many miles of hard, high speed driving as well as using the maximum rpm in the gears during performance testing. At this rate the car had a cruising range of about 315 miles — two stops between Sydney and Brisbane or one between Melbourne and Sydney. With a lighter foot, fuel figures of better than 40mpg should be easily obtainable.

The Renault R8-1100 combines the chunky lines of its standard brother with vastly improved performance, better handling, superlative braking and the ever present driver and passenger comfort. The R8-1100 will not smash any sales records; it's not that type of car. But it will find a place in the hearts of many previous Renault owners and we feel create many more followers of the three-dimensional diamond. #

THE MAGAZINE YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR!



AUSTRALIAN HOT-RODDING REVIEW IS HERE! The best and most expert magazine ever published on the booming new Australian sport of hot-rodding is coming your way. Produced by the expert staff of WHEELS and SPORTS CAR WORLD, Australia's two top-selling magazines in their respective fields, this new publication is devoted entirely to hot-rods, dragsters, speedway, customising, modifying and all the other facets of this, the newest craze in modern motoring. Right from the brilliant cover colour portrait of Australia's top rod to the dramatic speedway shot of Johnny Stewart on the back cover, AUSTRALIAN HOT-RODDING REVIEW is packed with action.

FOR STREET — STRIP AND SHOW



Read about the fabulous world of Eddie Thomas and his dragster, the Ian Bell rail, a full pictorial of the November Sydney drags, and a test of the dynamic Pontiac GTO. Plus special articles on how to build a rod, the right customising techniques, engine swapovers, and Australia's top traffic light Q-ships. There are articles on speedway, Victorian dragging, Bill Warner's speed shop, and some great Fred Fowler hot-rod cartoons. You must read AUSTRALIAN HOT-RODDING REVIEW.

AVAILABLE AT ALL NEWSAGENTS—3/-

MORE PLUSH, MORE PUSH FOR BMC'S SIXES

(Continued from page 41)

shifts, which bring in quite a thump from the gearbox.

The car rides very well, with no marked pitching and fairly high spring rates limiting roll movement. Sharp-edged potholes do cause a thump, which is heard rather than felt, but no road shocks come up through the wheel. All in all, both the Freeway and Wolseley are very well insulated cars against road noise. The Wolseley particularly, because of its carpeting and other sound-proofing, is an exceptionally quiet car, befitting its air of quiet luxury.

The automatic versions are not particularly fast, as the Wolseley acceleration figures show, but they are surprisingly fast on a long trip.

There is some understeer, but it never becomes annoying. It is very hard to make the rear lose adhesion, even on wet roads, but this desirable habit has not been achieved by making the front understeer like Clancy's bull. The lights are quite adequate for 75mph cruising, and most of our drivers were openly surprised at the averages they could put up in both cars.

One of the mild annoyances about the car is that slightly inward-leaning centre pillars allow quite a bit of wind to clamber in the driver's window; this is not helped by quarter-vents which are quite narrow at the top. However, wind noise is low, despite a fair frontal area with the traditional upright Wolseley grille.

Most of our drivers liked the Wolseley, all in all, better than the Freeway, mainly for the very, very good seating and nice appointments (for want of a better word). But both cars are excellent value for money — despite our niggling little criticisms — and are living proof that you don't need 128bhp for happy family motoring. BMC has never looked for big volume sales with either car, and are content to sell as many as they make. They will easily do this with the MkIIs, but we feel they may even run short of supplies of the Wolseley. It's that nice. #