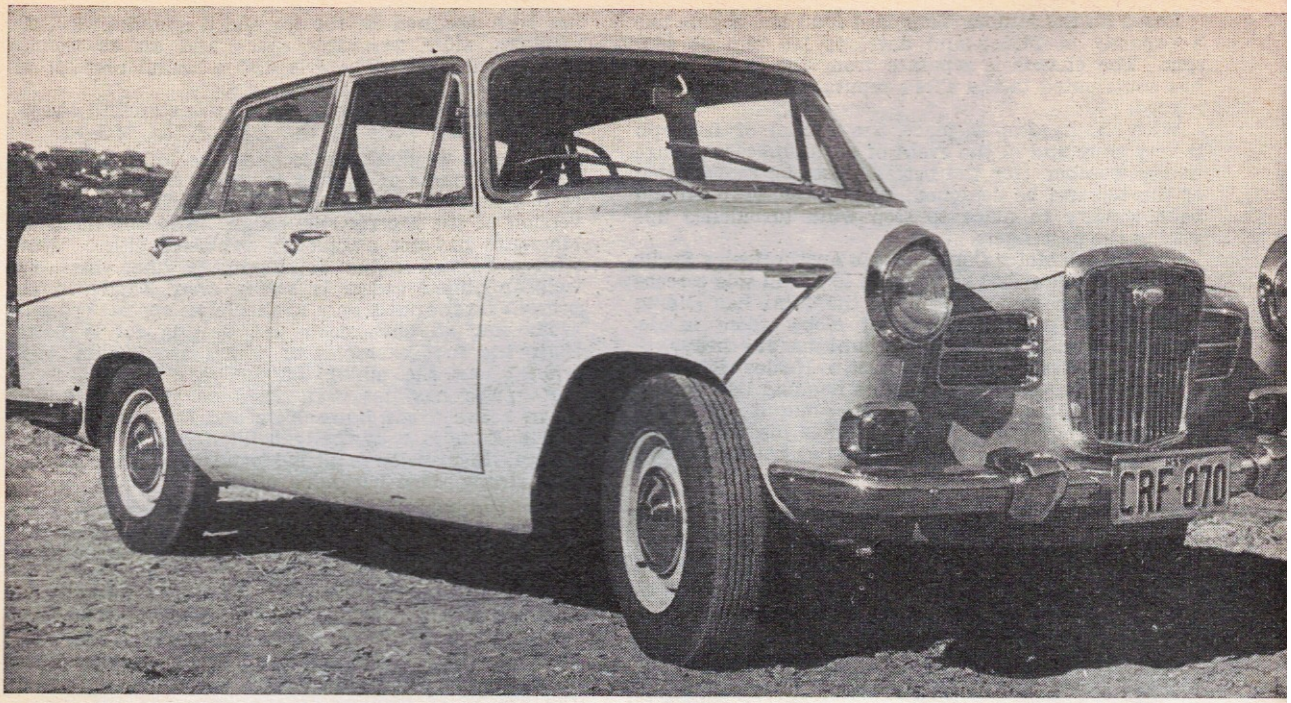


WOLSELEY 24'80: COMPARING TRANSMISSIONS

BM's sixes now have optional automatic transmissions. Here's how they compare in the Wolseley 24/80

WHEN the British Motor Corporation cut through its model range in the most potent rationalisation program seen in Australia, it was decided that Wolseley had to stay because of the justifiably good name it has earned itself over the years.

So, with BMC thinking mostly six and not four, it was natural that the Wolseley should supplement the Freeway as a luxury version.

However—a serious handicap that gave both Holden and Ford a healthy start—was the Wolseley's lack of an optional automatic transmission.

Not that they were not available; but BMC's engineering department decided to wait for Borg-Warner's type-35 before breaking out in two-pedal motoring. The wisdom of this decision is obvious once you have been behind the wheel of an automatic 24/80.

The difficulty was that although there were several types of transmissions available, they took too much power from the engine which, in the case of the BMC sixes, would have meant unsatisfactory performance.

As is soundly verified by the performance figures, the type-35 sucks up very little power, thus making it eminently suitable for engines of small to medium power outputs. It is worth noting that the same transmission is now being offered in England in the 1622cc Austin A/60, which is what BMC would be producing now if Australians had been less dogmatic about having six cylinders.

Basically, of course, the Wolseley is the same as the Austin Freeway, which is also offered with automatic transmission. The main differences occur in grille treatment and tail fins externally. There is no similarity between the two cars internally, however.

To start with, the seats are upholstered in leather with matching vinyl material covering the less important parts of the interior.

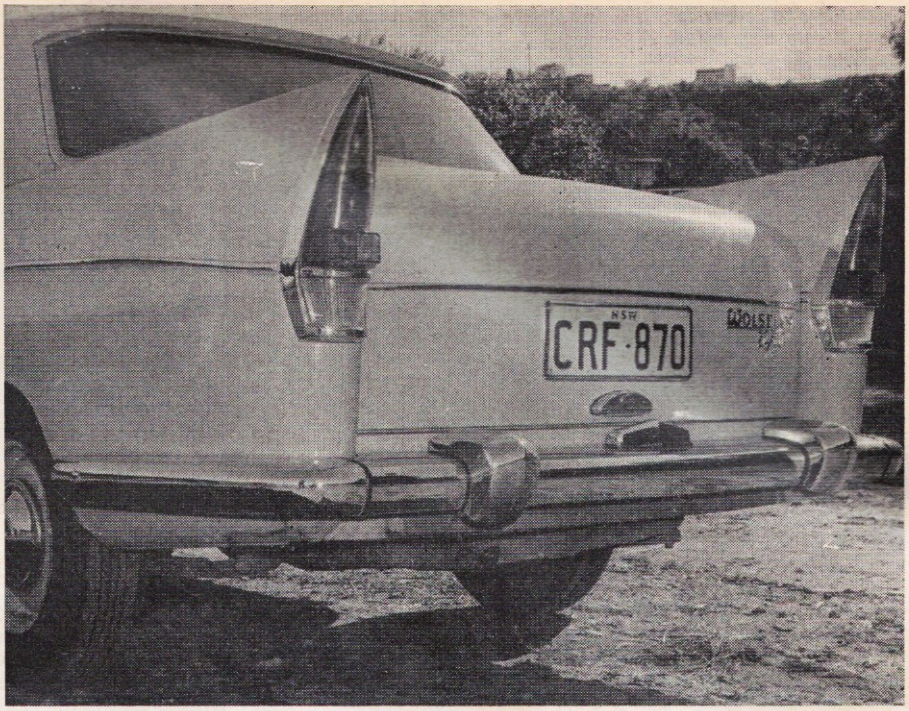
In keeping with Wolseley tradition the car is tasteful and that is one's immediate impression inside. Good quality hide has been used for the seats and extensive use has been made of polished wood for the dash and door cappings. The mottled carpets back and front seemed out of keeping. They would have been better plain.

Although individual, the front seats are not buckets.

WHEELS FULL ROAD TEST

Left: Wolseley 24/80 supplements the Austin Freeway as a luxury car. Appeal has now been widened with the addition of automatic transmission.

by IAN FRASER



Right: High tail fins, of typical Pininfarina design can easily be seen from the driving seat to assist in parking. Overriders could be bigger.

They have a rather upright squabs and their rearward travel is restricted, making it difficult for tall drivers to find a really comfortable position behind the wheel for long trips.

Hard cornering emphasises the lack of lateral support and the occupants are inclined to slide bodily from side to side over the slippery leather.

The window winders are placed low down and far forward on the doors, making them difficult to reach if a diagonal safety harness is being worn.

A reduction in the size of the steering wheel would be an advantage since little effort is required to turn it and it does have the effect of reducing available interior space.

Armrests on the front doors would make for greater comfort and are actually a surprising omission from a car of this type.

Instrumentation is very complete and well arranged. The speedometer has both total and trip distance recorders and the matching dial contains gauges for water temperature, oil pressure and fuel contents. At night the panel is softly illuminated, but no rheostat is fitted.

Neat, efficient working toggles do all the switch work, but none of them is labelled, which is confusing since they are spread over the panel.

The standard equipment heating and demisting is very neatly installed and works efficiently. It will deliver a large quantity of hot air very soon after starting the engine from cold and a booster fan helps provide continuity of supply in traffic conditions.

Vacuum windscreen washers are standard equipment also, and supplement the single speed, self-parking electric wipers.

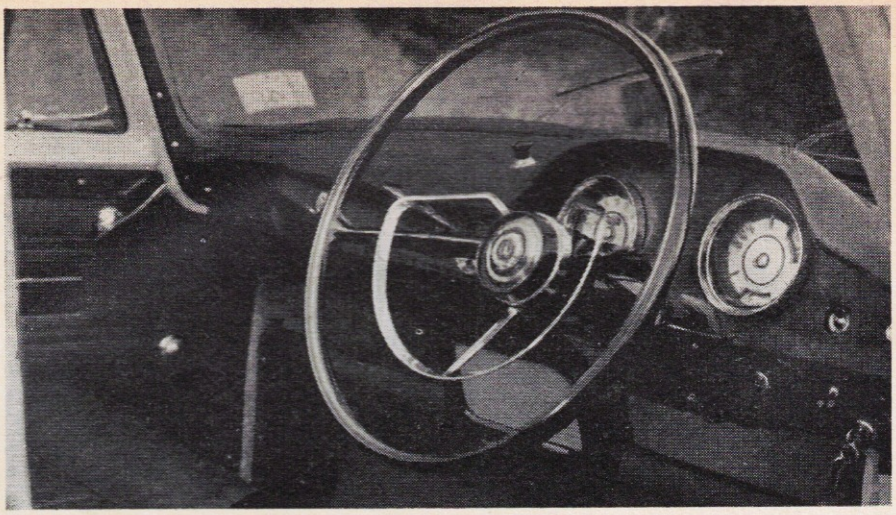
Wolseley travellers sit higher than they would in rival products (Holden Premier, Ford Futura), but on the credit side there is ample headroom and access to the compartment is notably easy, with the exception of the driver's side where the right hand, floor-mounted handbrake represents some kind of hazard for the careless.

Both the manual and automatic models have their transmission controls placed in about the same positions on the steering column.

The manual change car has three speeds with synchromesh on the upper two and a dog engage-

Although not particularly powerful, the Blue Streak engine provides the Wolseley with adequate performance in both manual and automatic forms.

Interior of the car is very nicely appointed, includes heating system as standard. Trim is in leather and the dash panel top is crash padded.



WOLSELEY 24/80 Continued

ment on first which allows it to be silently selected while there is still four or five mph on the clock. It is also particularly easy to double declutch and engage first at any speed up to its 30 mph maximum. Inclined towards the heavy side, the gearshift is positive and smooth and has the usual positions. Once top has been engaged it is rarely necessary to go to a lower ratio because of the extreme flexibility of the engine.

The automatic 24/80 is one of the smoothest two-pedal cars available. There is never a trace of thump and very little slippage with the transmission.

With light throttle openings the gear changes occur at eight and 25 mph and they are hardly perceptible.

If Low is elected with the car moving briskly, the type 35 downshifts to second and will remain there until eight mph when it engages first. From then on first is held until the lever is moved back to drive. Thus, for maximum speeds in the gears you take first to its maximum of 33 mph, select drive to get the box into second, then move the lever back to Low which will hold second. Of course, this kind of thing is more of academic interest than anything else since the majority of Wolseley drivers would simply select Drive and leave it there with the occasional move to Low to help steady the car on long down gradients.

Drum brakes are fitted and will not fade unless really abused. Even then, recovery is rapid and complete. The floor mounted handbrake is solid and efficient.

Visibility is good in all directions and the curved windscreen's pillars are thin enough not to cause serious blind spots. For parking, both the rear fins are easily seen from the driving position so there is hardly an excuse to bump the car behind. Bumper over-riders of bigger proportions than those fitted would help protect the car from the more careless drivers.

Access to the engine compartment is good and the bonnet can only be opened after releasing an interior catch.

Luggage space is big and unobstructed and the boot lid gives large, lip-free opening. It is self-supporting, as is the bonnet.

BMC has put a great deal of research into the suspension of the Blue Streak-engined cars with the result that they are very good on rough surfaces. We encountered no bottoming troubles at all during test, but, like so many cars with solid rear axles, the tail likes to dance on joggy surfaces. This can result in considerable loss of traction, particularly when climbing hard up rough mountain roads.

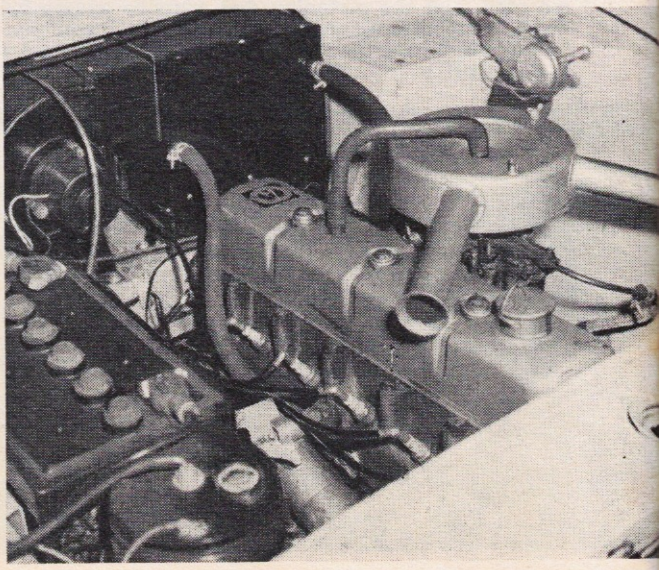
On normal surfaces, the 24/80 has good sedan car type handling. Naturally, it understeers, but not to the point where it is difficult to control. The tail can be broken loose with a reasonable amount of trying, but it is always very controllable.

Even when driven abnormally in hot conditions, the Wolseley's engine shows no signs of overheating or fuss. The higher compression of the automatic car does not demand anything more than straight premium petrol and there is no trace of pinging.

The performance figures of the 24/80 speak for themselves. There is little difference between the manual change and automatic transmissions in this regard, apart from a falling off in fuel consumption which must be expected in any two-pedal car.

In terms of actual figures, the Wolseley is not particularly rapid, but does have adequate power for the jobs asked of it.

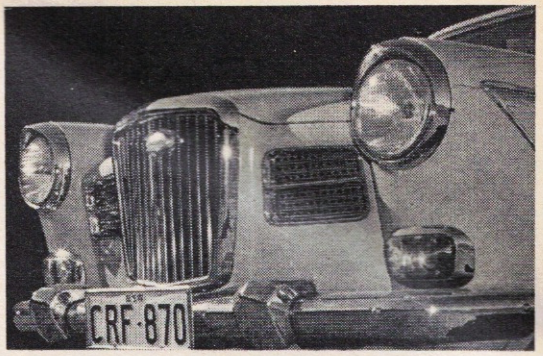
Almost certainly the automatic will outsell the manual change car, at least in the Wolseley line, if not in the Freeway. #



Designated BMC B-series, the engine is an extension of the well known four. It is smooth with good torque characteristics.

wheels ROAD TEST

TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE WOLSELEY 24/80



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE:

Cylinders	Six, in line
Bore and stroke	76.2 mm by 88.9 mm
Cubic capacity	2433 cc
Compression ratio	7.7 to 1 (Automatic 8.2 to 1)
Valves	Pushrod overhead
Carburettor	Zenith
Power at rpm	80 (gross) at 4350 rpm (Automatic 82 (gross) at 4300 rpm
Maximum torque	123 ft/lbs at 1650 rpm (Automatic 129 ft/lbs at 1750 rpm

TRANSMISSION:

First	12.08
Second	6.32
Top	3.91
Rear axle	3.91

SUSPENSION:

Front	Independent coils
Rear	Semi-elliptic
Shockers	Piston

STEERING:

Type	Cam and peg
Turns, 1 to 1	Variable
Circle	37 ft

BRAKES:

Type	Drum

DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase	8 ft 4½ in
Track, front	4 ft 2 in
Track, rear	4 ft 3 in
Length	14 ft 6 in
Width	5 ft 3 in
Heiht	4 ft 10 in

TYRES:

Size	5.90 by 14

WEIGHT:

Dry	23½ cwt

PERFORMANCE

TOP SPEED:

	Manual	Automatic
Fastest run	83.7 mph	84.1 mph
Average of all runs	82.4 mph	83.2 mph

MAXIMUM SPEED IN GEARS:

First	31 mph	33 mph
Second	63 mph	64 mph
Top	83.7 mph	84.1 mph

ACCELERATION:

Standing Quarter Mile:		
Fastest run	20.9 secs	21.5 secs
Average for all runs	21.4 secs	21.9 secs
0 to 30 mph	5.4secs	5.8 secs
0 to 40 mph	8.9 secs	9 secs
0 to 50 mph	12.4 secs	13.4 secs
0 to 60 mph	18.2 secs	19.2 secs
0 to 70 mph	25.7 secs	29 secs
0 to 80 mph	NA	NA
20 to 40 mph	8.5 secs	5.6 secs
30 to 50 mph	9.8 secs	8.2 secs
40 to 60 mph	11.0 secs	10.8 secs

GO-TO-WHOA:

0-60-mph	21.1 secs	22.6 secs

SPEEDO ERROR:

Indicated	Actual
30 mph	28 mph
40 mph	38 mph
50 mph	49 mph
60 mph	59 mph
70 mph	69 mph
80 mph	N.A.

FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Cruising speeds	28 mpg	23 mpg
Overall for test	23 mpg	20.8 mpg