

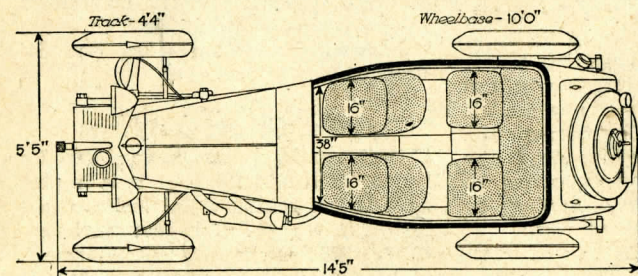
different treatment from those made when travelling faster, but there is a great satisfaction in achieving mastery over the movements.

The upward changes are made quickly, except between first and second, which relatively is a slow one if it is to be made silently; second to third, and third to top are practically straight-through movements. The gears are more audible than is now the rule, but it is not a noise which jars, being altogether individual.

There are few other cars even nearly as good as the "Aston" in roadholding and cornering. The driver instantly feels at home, he has no real work to do in keeping on the required course, for little more than bearing on the steering wheel takes the car round curves, and fast speeds may be held on suitably open corners with a wonderful feeling of rock-steadiness and safety. At speed there is absolute confidence in the car; on the right kind of road it feels as happy—and so do those riding in it—at 70 as at 40 m.p.h.

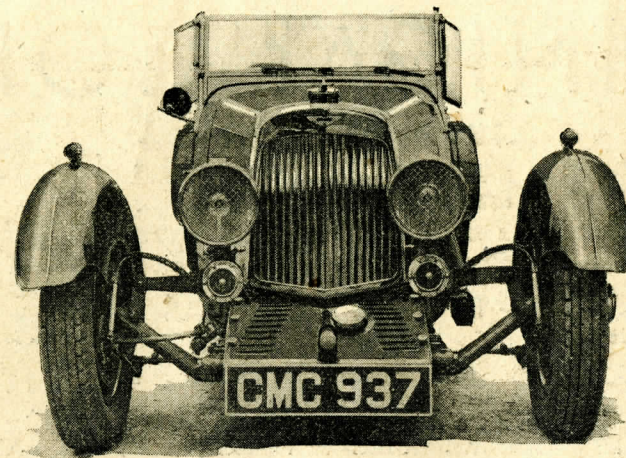
Much of the Aston Martin's roadworthiness lies in the braking, which has always had a fine reputation. Large drums that nearly "fill" the wheels give great power, but not a power which can be applied with dangerous ease to produce snaking and reactions on the steering. The steering seems lighter and lower geared than on earlier models, so that manoeuvring and taking sharp turns are relieved of effort, but it retains its accuracy in the directional sense, with enough caster action.

This is not actually the fastest of the Aston Martin models—there are the Le Mans two-four-seater and the



Ulster two-seater for those who want more; but it has plenty of speed and an all-round fine performance that comparatively few cars can come up to on the road.

The big spring-spoked steering wheel is beautifully placed, and the driving position is excellent, giving latitude for a tall driver; the separate seat holds one securely, and at the same time comfortably. There is a full view of both cycle-type mudguards, which turn, of course, with the steering.



A trim, impressive front view.

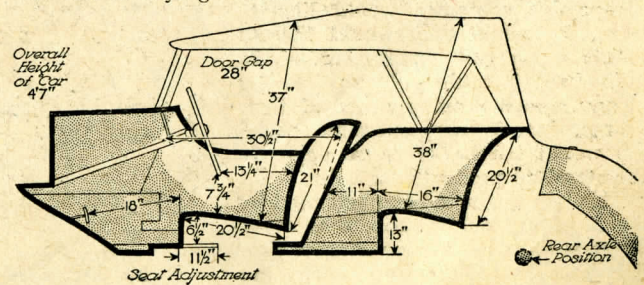
ACCELERATION		SPEED	
Overall gear ratios	From steady m.p.h. of	Mean maximum timed speed over 1/4 mile	m.p.h.
10 to 30	20 to 40	...	80.72
14 1/2 to 18	30 to 40	...	82.57
11 1/2 to 15 1/2	40 to 50
8 1/2 to 12 1/2	50 to 60
5 1/2 to 9 1/2	60 to 70
3 1/2 to 5 1/2	70 to 80
From rest to 50 m.p.h. through gears, 17 1/2 sec.		Speeds attainable on indirect gears—	
From rest to 60 m.p.h. through gears, 25 1/2 sec.		1st 31	
25 yards of 1 in 5 gradient from rest, 9 1/2 sec.		2nd 47-51	
Performance figures of acceleration and maximum speed are the means of several runs in opposite directions.		3rd 67	
(Chassis described in "The Autocar" of September 7th, 1934.)		Speed from rest up 1 in 5 Test Hill (on 1st gear) 16.92	

Glass side flaps attached to the windscreen stop back-draught effectively, or they can be used as aero screens.

The Ki-Gass mixture-enriching pump was not needed for starting even when, on one occasion, the car stood all night in a practically open shed in the country. Incidentally, the engine temperature was never above 75 deg. C.

With nearly three gallons of oil in circulation through the dry-sump engine lubrication system, adequate warming up from cold is desirable. The track test was carried out on normal filling station fuels, and with ballast representing a heavy passenger.

The speedometer proved nearly accurate up to 60 m.p.h. At 60 it became 1.75 m.p.h. high; whilst during the best timed run over a quarter-mile with the main windscreen lowered and the aero screens in position, at 82.57 m.p.h., the highest reading was 89, with approximately 4,900 r.p.m. showing. With the main screen up a best timed run at 81.82 m.p.h. was made, and a mean of 80.36 recorded. A soul-satisfying machine to handle.



"The Autocar" Road Tests

Flaps are usually fitted at the bottom of these wings, and are desirable.

Too much exhaust note has not been allowed—there is no blatant burble or attention-attracting crackle, but a dignified drone, chiefly noticeable on the overrun, which somehow suggests the right kind of car. Hardly ever is the engine apparent as a four-cylinder; its whole behaviour makes it unimportant how many cylinders are beneath the bonnet. At certain engine speeds a little fine vibration is detectable, but it amounts to nothing.

The suspension, to give the roadholding which has been referred to, is firm—on the hard side at some speeds and over some surfaces, but not to the extent of that undesirable harshness described as "teeth chattering." Passengers sit well down in the back seats, and there is ample leg room for them, so as to make the extra accommodation definitely more than "occasional," which is the purpose of this model. The hood goes up and down easily, and is neat, whilst there are rigid side screens, carried in the lid of a locker formed in the tail.

THE AUTOCAR ROAD TESTS



The Aston Martin on Middledown, near Shaftesbury, at one time included as an observed hill in the "London-Exeter" night run.

No. 973 (Post-War Series) 12 h.p. ASTON MARTIN FOUR-SEATER

A Fine Car, with a Remarkable Performance for One of 12 h.p.

TO renew acquaintance with the Aston Martin is to fall once again beneath the spell of a machine—it is more than just a car—which has the power to fascinate any driver who can regard motoring and the means thereto as something far above mere conveyance from one place to another. This, coldly analysed, calls for a reference to road-holding, brakes, steering, and performance which are much above the ordinary; but any such dissection fails to do justice to the car—to adopt the normal term.

It is a combination of features which puts the "Aston" where it is among the world's finer high-performance cars. Just as a work of art stands or falls as a whole, so does this piece of machinery appeal as a unit. Each feature which a really good high-performance car must have is right, and the merging of them results in something exceptional; and it is so undeniably efficient for its size.

The model now tested is the full four-seater on the roof, long wheel-base chassis—almost a family model Aston Martin; but what a "family car"! This is to meet the undoubted demand which exists for a full sports four-seater. As regards the engine, however, an overhead camshaft twin-carburettor Le Mans unit is used, so there is plenty of power. This, indeed, is instantly felt; the engine, in fact the whole design, is the closest possible relative of the successful racing machines.

If there is one impression of this car in its latest form which stands out above another it is the remarkable sense of ease about its whole running—the ready acceleration, top-gear

pulling, and high cruising speed without any kind of fuss, altogether belying the nominal rating of 12 h.p.

On an open stretch of road, early in one's experience of the car, it is surprising to glance at the speedometer and find a reading of 60 showing without any deliberate attempt, beyond mildly opening the throttle, having been made to travel fast. Right up to a thoroughly usable maximum above 75 m.p.h. a similar impression persists; the engine feels well inside its powers, and there is no sense of its being overdriven even when putting forty-five miles and more into the hour. Excellent averages are obtained, indeed, without trying, for the car's natural

gait is between 50 and 70, uphill almost as easily as on the level.

Low-speed pulling is entirely satisfactory, too. In town traffic there is not the need for continual dropping down to the lower gears that might be expected from a top ratio of 4.6 to 1, and an engine compression of 7 1/2 to 1. It is a car which can be driven in leisurely fashion when desired; few drivers wish to hurry all the time, even when free from 30 m.p.h. limits.

Response to the throttle on top gear is satisfying. This does not mean that the performance cannot often be made more vivid by use of the gear box; with the high, close ratios of third and second, naturally a great deal can be done by a driver so inclined.

The gear change, a plain remote control working in a visible central gate, is one that needs accurate judgment in the speeding-up process for entirely quiet downward changes. Changes at low speeds need quite

