

The Motor Road Test No. 18/57

Make: Daimler

Type: Century saloon

Makers: The Daimler Co., Ltd., Coventry.

Test Data

CONDITIONS: Weather: Cold, dry, light wind. (Temperature 38°-46° F., Barometer 30.1 in. Hg.) Surface: Smooth dry tar macadam. Fuel: Premium grade pump petrol, approx. 95 Research Method Octane Rating.

INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. 3% slow
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. accurate
 Speedometer at 80 m.p.h. 2% fast
 Distance recorder accurate

WEIGHT

Kerb weight, (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) 29 cwt.
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight 52/48
 Weight laden as tested 32½ cwt

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Flying Quarter Mile

Mean of two flying laps of banked circuit 90.4 m.p.h.
 Best one-way timed ¼-mile on straight 92.8 m.p.h.

"Maximile" Speed. (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest)

Mean 88.2 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 90.0 m.p.h.

Speed in Gear

Max. speed in intermediate gear .. 60 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in low gear 35 m.p.h.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

35.0 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level.
 31.5 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level.
 29.0 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level.
 25.5 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level.
 21.5 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level.
 18.5 m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.h. on level.

Overall Fuel Consumption for 826 miles, 35.2 gallons, equals 23.5 m.p.g. (12.0 litres/100 km.).

Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration). 24.1 m.p.g.

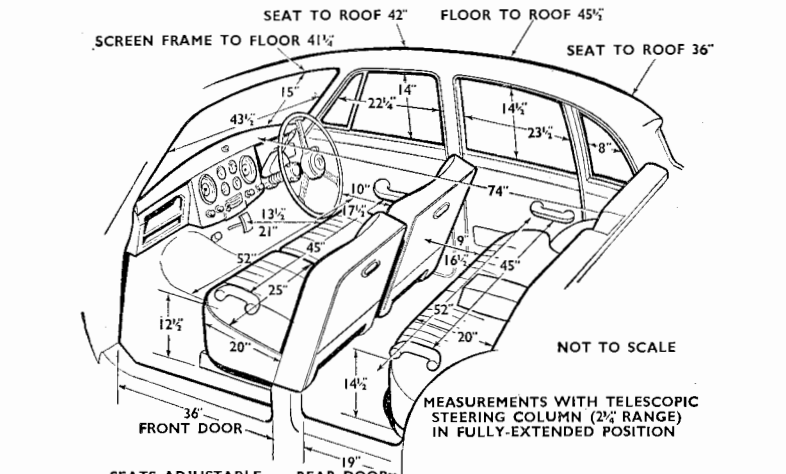
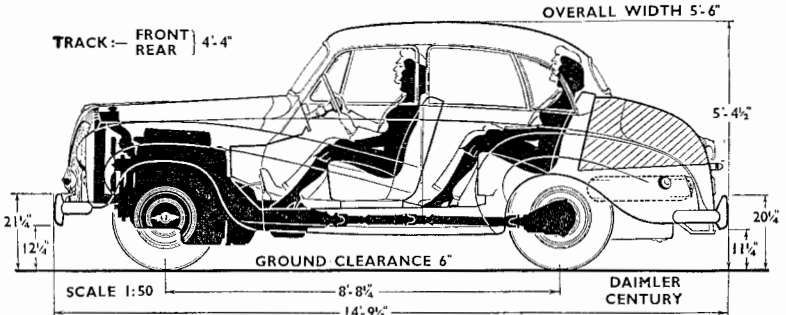
Fuel Tank Capacity (maker's figure) 15 gallons. (Incl 1½ gall. reserve).

STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:
 Left 34 ft.
 Right 31 ft.
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 3½

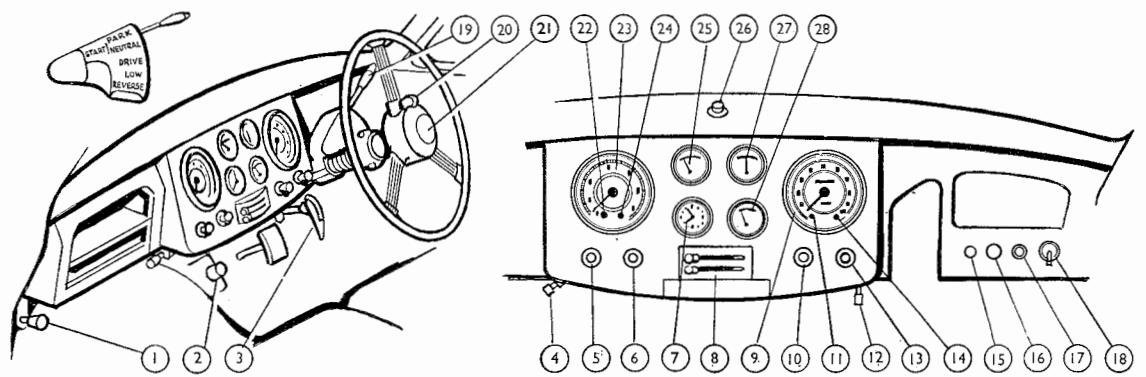
BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.92g retardation (equivalent to 33 ft. stopping distance) with 90 lb. pedal pressure
 0.89g retardation (equivalent to 34 ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure
 0.66g retardation (equivalent to 60 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure
 0.30g retardation (equivalent to 100 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure



ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill (Kick-down condition).		ACCELERATION TIMES in Drive Range	
		Top-Gear	Kick-down condition
0-30 m.p.h.	6.4 sec	0-20 m.p.h.	4.1 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.	9.1 sec	10-30 m.p.h.	4.5 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.	12.8 sec	20-40 m.p.h.	5.1 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.	17.7 sec	30-50 m.p.h.	10.6 sec.
0-70 m.p.h.	25.8 sec	40-60 m.p.h.	12.1 sec.
0-80 m.p.h.	39.1 sec	50-70 m.p.h.	15.0 sec.
Standing quarter mile	21.8 sec	60-80 m.p.h.	21.4 sec.

HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds
 Max. gradient on top gear 1 in 10.6 (Tapley 210 lb./ton)
 Max. gradient on intermediate gear 1 in 6.7 (Tapley 330 lb./ton)



- 1, Bonnet catch release. 2, Headlamp dip switch. 3, Handbrake. 4, Clock adjuster. 5, Petrol reserve control. 6, Panel light switch. 7, Clock. 8, Heater and demister controls. 9, Speedometer with distance recorder and trip. 10, Mixture control. 11, Direction indicator warning light. 12, Trip re-setting knob. 13, Hand throttle. 14, Main beam indicator light. 15, Fog lamp switch. 16, Windscreen wipers control. 17, Ignition and starter switch. 18, Lights switch. 19, Transmission selector lever. 20, Direction indicator switch. 21, Horn button. 22, Oil pressure warning light. 23, Tachometer. 24, Dynamo charge warning light. 25, Fuel contents gauge. 26, Windscreen washers control. 27, Ammeter. 28, Coolant thermometer.

The DAIMLER Century saloon

(with automatic transmission)



AS the founders of the Motor Industry, the Daimler company have a long and distinguished tradition, which is strongly evident in the Century saloon. Although a completely post-war design, it carries the unmistakable stamp of a car in which a strong belief in what is best has nowhere been submerged by what is most expedient (or cheap) to produce.

One member of the staff who tried the Century described it succinctly as vintage motoring with modern amenities—and if the word vintage is interpreted in its best sense that is no inapt description. Certainly the Century is a car which appeals strongly to the connoisseur on the grounds of sound engineering, refined behaviour and high quality of detail and finish; but that is not all. The Century offers, in addition, an honest 90 m.p.h. maximum speed and acceleration which is much brisker than the unobtrusive manner of its production might suggest. A stop watch time of 12.8 seconds to reach 50 m.p.h. from rest places it easily in the faster category of touring cars.

The model tested was equipped with Borg-Warner fully-automatic transmission

A Fast 2½-litre Saloon in which Tradition is Pleasantly Blended with Modern Amenities

which is now offered (at an extra cost of £185 inclusive of tax) as an alternative to the fluid flywheel and pre-selector gearbox which have been exclusive Daimler features for 25 years. The choice seems a logical one because the two systems have a certain amount in common, but the Borg-Warner system has the additional refinement of a torque converter and fully automatic operation.

Fluid Transmission

Thus, apart from its general merits—which are notable—the Borg-Warner system will prove particularly attractive to previous Daimler owners who have strong leanings towards a fluid flywheel or its equivalent and would not, in many cases, consider a car without one. To such, the Borg-Warner system represents a natural step forward and one with which they will immediately feel at home. It is a system, moreover, which suits the Century particularly well in its refined and unobtrusive behaviour.

To most readers of *The Motor* the Borg-Warner transmission is already familiar. In brief, it consists of a torque converter working in conjunction with automatically operated epicyclic gearing. The converter serves to take care of starts from rest (there is no clutch pedal, of course) and also augments the effect of the two lower gears by a torque multiplication which virtually gives a variable ratio for low and intermediate gears. In top gear, a special clutch by-passes the converter to give a direct drive in the interests of fuel economy.

Engagement of the appropriate gear for

any given conditions takes place quite automatically when the small control lever is placed in "Drive," and varies according to the speed and load. Thus, a very leisurely start from rest with minimum throttle opening will result in intermediate gear being engaged at approximately 10 m.p.h. and top at approximately 20 m.p.h., but if the throttle is fully opened, these changing speeds are delayed in the case of the Daimler to approximately 25 m.p.h. and 48 m.p.h. In addition, the throttle is provided with a kick-down action by which it can be held beyond the normal fully-open position for utmost acceleration or power, this either delaying the change to the maximum speed predetermined by the manufacturers for the gear concerned or causing the appropriate lower gear to be engaged if the car is travelling appreciably below that speed. The actual maxima for the Century are 35 m.p.h. in bottom gear and 60 m.p.h. in intermediate.

In practice, this transmission works extremely well, being notably smooth, quiet and restful in operation. It can, in fact, be criticized on only two counts, neither of them serious. One is the slight bound forward which occurs as a result of engine inertia when a higher gear is engaged; this is satisfying rather than otherwise when acceleration is being continued, but slightly irritating when the higher gear goes home as one eases the throttle to tuck into a gap in traffic.

The other minor disadvantage is that, by the very nature of things, engine tick-over speeds must be strictly limited if the car is not to creep in gear. With a warm engine, no difficulties arise but, after an

In Brief

Price (including Borg-Warner automatic transmission, as tested):	£1,119 2s. plus purchase tax £460 18s., equals £1,680.
Price with fluid flywheel and pre-selector gearbox (inc. purchase tax):	£1,495.
Capacity	2,433 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	29 cwt.
Acceleration:	
20-40 m.p.h. in drive range	5.1 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	12.8 sec.
Maximum direct top gear gradient	1 in 10.6
Maximum speed	90.4 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed	88.2 m.p.h.
Touring fuel consumption	24.1 m.p.g.
Gearing: 19.4 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m.; 25 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed.	



LARGE swivelling quarter windows make the Century virtually a six-light saloon. The bulged boot lid has a very practical virtue in permitting really bulky luggage to be carried.

grip type, the handbrake is reasonably accessible and well capable of holding the car on a severe gradient.

Interior planning of the driving compartment is suggestive of designers who are themselves keen drivers and is perhaps one of the reasons why this car is so easy to drive in traffic. The large thin-rimmed spring wheel is at a comfortable angle and possesses that now-rare refinement of an extending column, whilst the pedals move through natural arcs and are well spaced. The facia board houses a comprehensive array of good quality instruments, sensibly but tastefully laid out on a beautifully-finished walnut veneer centre panel flanked by cubby holes. Logical circular dials are used, with the equally logical choice of white figures and hands against a black background, and variable illumination is provided.

Minor Controls

Refinements include a large-dial rev. counter, a hand-throttle, a reserve petrol control (which is deliberately obtrusive when in the reserve position) and a screen washer. The lighting switch, incidentally, also controls the fog lamps when turned to beyond the "head" position, but a separate switch is provided so that one or both may be used, this controlling the offside auxiliary lamp which is of the pencil-beam type capable of being set to pick out either kerb or cats-eyes according to the driver's own particular technique in fog.

The deep screen and large window area provide a good all-round view, although the somewhat high bonnet hides the near-side wing for a driver of normal stature.

initial start in cold weather, a rather tricky balance has to be struck between an over-fast tick-over and over-richness which would cause stalling. The fact that the Century engine is not so quick as some to warm up rather emphasizes this minor dilemma which can, however, be overcome by allowing the engine to idle with the gear in neutral for a short time before starting off.

Starting itself is particularly sure and the modern type of ignition-cum-starter switch a convenience. At all times, the engine is particularly unobtrusive and has that pleasant feeling of an inherently well-balanced unit rather than one which gains its effect of sweetness from flexible mountings. There is a subtle difference between the two.

So far as actual performance is concerned

the figures may largely be left to tell their own story showing, as they do, the Century to be a very lively but economical example of a 2½-litre saloon. In particular, the performance at the top end of the range is good.

Judged by touring car standards—and it is as a luxurious medium-powered family or professional car rather than as a sports car that the Century must be regarded—the suspension and handling qualities are good. The suspension is by means of laminated torsion bars at the front and a pleasantly-firm but very comfortable ride is provided, that bugbear of so many modern cars, road-noise, being almost entirely absent.

On corners, the Century normally displays a degree of understeer, but this is most pronounced at low speeds and can be changed to the opposite characteristic by hard acceleration. There is no pitching and comparatively little roll, whilst the car follows a straight course with little attention on the part of the driver.

On the model tried, however, a slight front-end dither could be detected through the wheel at high speeds and, although this never reached serious proportions, it did detract somewhat from the pleasure of fast driving. The steering itself is moderately geared and slightly on the heavy side when manoeuvring in confined spaces, but an outstandingly good point is the excellent lock provided for a car of this size. The brakes, too, are good and more than normally light in operation. Of the pistol-



LEATHER and polished woodwork give the car an air of sober quality. The photograph above shows how the control for the Borg-Warner automatic transmission fits naturally into the place normally occupied by the pre-selector quadrant. Instruments are clear and well calibrated.



Century saloon

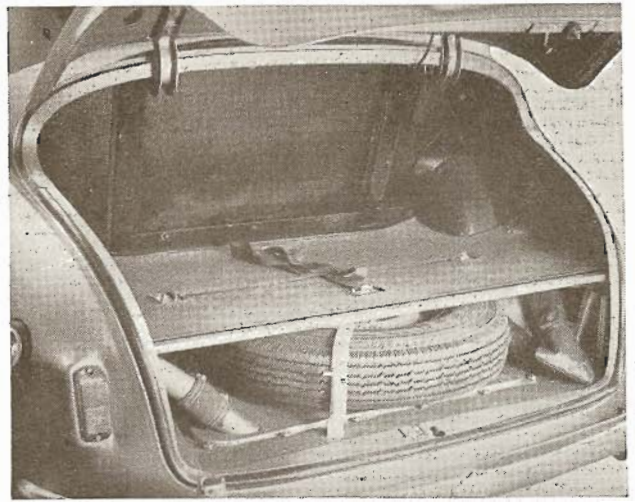
A praiseworthy minor point is that the rear-view mirror is efficient without forming an obstruction to forward vision, whilst another good mark is earned by the excellent side vision through the rear quarters. The latter are arranged to open for ventilation as well as the normal ventilating panels on the front doors; these latter, however, have only one ideal open position; at small openings they are apt to cause a whistle and at wide openings a wind-roar, either of which disturbs the silence of an otherwise outstandingly quiet car.

A fresh-air type of heater and demister is provided as standard and not only supplies an adequate degree of heat, but also has the advantage of directing it on the occupants' feet.

Comfortable seating is a Daimler tradition and the Century is no exception. The separately adjustable front seats have that firm but well-shaped upholstery which permits long occupation without fatigue and the high slightly curved squabs give plenty of lateral support without cramping. Much the same applies to the rear, where the car is notable for the unusually generous knee-room. The Century is, however, primarily a four-seater although it will, of course, take five on occasion. Nicely placed arm-rests are provided on all the doors and ease of entry is an outstanding feature, but lack of courtesy switches on the doors is an unexpected omission.

In the matter of luggage, the boot comes as a surprise as, owing to the curvature of

A FLAT floor to the boot has straps built-in to provide anchorage for single items of luggage; the boot lid is counterbalanced, but there is no interior illumination.



the top-hinged counterbalanced lid, it gives much more room than a casual glance suggests. The fact that a sizeable cabin trunk was accommodated at one stage gives a good idea of its capacity. The luggage floor (above the spare wheel) is perfectly flat and a typical refinement is the provision of straps, with hooked ends engaging in flush staples so that a single object can be positively located. Rather surprisingly, no boot illumination is provided.

Walnut and Leather

As will already have been gathered, the finish and furnishing of this Daimler are in the best traditions. Not only is the fascia board of polished walnut, but the same wood is provided for the door capings whilst the entire upholstery trim is carried out in high-grade leather which gives a sober suggestion of luxury as well as being very hard-wearing. There are,

moreover, no crude corners such as one finds on many popular cars, whilst detail refinements include flush-fitting valves (slightly too deep for tall occupants, however) and spring-up arm slings in the rear. In accordance with Daimler practice, it is the nearside door which locks with a key and although some prefer this arrangement, the more conventional plan of the driver's door locking is generally to be preferred. Typically Daimler is a really comprehensive set of high-grade tools and another most important mechanical feature is an automatic chassis lubrication system.

In short, the Century is a car which will appeal strongly to the man who likes good things for what they are as well as for their functional merit. Providing a degree of luxury which is less common now than it was, coupled with quiet and above all restful motoring, the Century nevertheless boasts of a performance well in keeping with other cars of its class.

Specification

Engine	
Cylinders	6
Bore	76.2 mm.
Stroke	88.9 mm.
Cubic capacity	2,433 c.c.
Piston area	42.4 sq. in.
Valves	Overhead (push-rod)
Compression ratio	7.75/1
Carburettors	Two S.U. (horizontal)
Fuel pump	AC mechanical
Ignition timing control	Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter	Tecalemit full-flow
Max. power (gross)	100 b.h.p. at 4,400 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p.	2,570 ft./min.
Transmission	
Borg-Warner automatic transmission (incorporating torque converter).	
Top gear	4.09 (direct drive)
Intermediate	5.869 (11.74 with max. torque multiplication)
Low	9.44 (18.88 with max. torque multiplication)
Reverse	8.217 (16.43 with max. torque multiplication)
Propeller shaft	Open, divided Hardy Spicer
Final drive	Hypoid bevel
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.	19.4
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed	25.0
Chassis	
Brakes	Girling hydro-mechanical (2LS on front)
Brake drum internal diameter	11 in.
Friction lining area	184 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front	Independent (laminated torsion bars)
Rear	Semi-elliptic
Shock absorbers	Girling telescopic
Steering gear	High-efficiency Bishop cam
Tyres	Dunlop 6.70—15 (tubeless)

Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle	Yes
Battery mounting	Under rear seat (l.h. side)
Jack	Bevalift, screw type
Jacking points	Two front, two rear on chassis frame
Standard tool kit:	Three double-ended spanners, plug box spanner and tommy bar, hub cap spanner, adjustable spanner, pair pliers, screwdriver, distributor screwdriver and feeler gauge, hub cap remover, oil gun, grease gun, wheelbrace, bleeder tube and container for brakes, tool roll and tool bag for jack.
Exterior lights:	Two headlamps, two fog lamps, two side lamps, two tail/stop lamps, rear number plate lamp and reversing light.
Number of electrical fuses	Two
Direction indicators	Semaphore arm type
Windscreen wipers	Electric, self-parking
Windscreen washers	Electric
Sun visors	Two
Instruments:	Speedometer (with trip), rev. counter, fuel gauge, ammeter, thermometer, clock.
Sump	10 pints, S.A.E. 10/30 multi-viscosity
Gearbox:	15 pints, Esso Automatic Transmission Fluid 55, Mobililift 200, Shell Donax T6 or Castrol T.Q.
Rear axle	2½ pints, S.A.E. 90
Steering gear lubricant	S.A.E. 90
Cooling system capacity	18 pints (two drain taps and one plug)
Chassis lubrication:	By automatic thermal system to front suspension and steering; by grease gun to water pump and propeller shaft universals every 1,000 miles.
Ignition timing	9° b.t.d.c. static
Contact-breaker gap	0.014-0.016 in.
Spark plug type	Lodge CLNH
Spark plug gap	0.025 in.

Warning lights:	Oil, ignition, trafficators, head-lamp main beam.
Locks:	With ignition key ... Front passenger's door, boot and petrol filler cap
With other keys	None
Glove lockers:	Two (without lids); one for front passenger (with sub-division for instruction book) and one for driver.
Pockets	Four (one in each door)
Parcel shelves	One (behind rear squab)
Ashtreys	Four (one in each front door and one in back of each front squab)
Cigar lighters	None
Interior lights	One (in roof)
Interior heater	Smith's FHF 3503, 3½ k/w. heater and demister (fresh-air type)
Extras available	Radio
Upholstery material	Leather
Floor covering	Felt-backed pile carpets
Number of exterior colours standardized:	Three duo-tone finishes and five single colours.
Alternative body styles	Drop-head coupe

Maintenance

Valve timing:	Inlet opens 13° b.t.d.c. and closes 65° a.b.d.c.; exhaust opens 55° b.b.d.c. and closes 23° a.t.d.c.
Topset clearances (hot):	
Inlet	0.013 in.
Exhaust	0.013 in.
Front wheel toe-in	¼ in.
Camber angle	1½°
Castor angle	0°
Steering swivel pin inclination	8°
Tyre pressures:	
Front	24 lb.
Rear	26 lb.
Brake fluid	Girling Crimson
Battery type and capacity	Lucas G.T.W. 9A, 51 amp./hr.
Miscellaneous	Ton up automatic chassis lubrication reservoir monthly