65 years ago...

I was searching online for a small filler for the Humberette when I discovered the following intriguing article in the NLA Trove digitised newspapers: http://trove.nla.gov.au/

Naturally it piqued my interest and prompted a quest to learn more.

There were quite a few articles from the 1952 test, and by sheer chance I found an earlier article from 1936 - so it wasn't a new idea by any means.

An article in The Horsham Times 12 September 1952 said, in part:

"An experimental super Snipe Diesel saloon car, attracted much interest when it was shown by Wilson Bolton and Co., in Horsham this week.

The company which manufactured the car, made four of them. The other three are in the United States of America, South Africa and India."

The last paragraph on P13 says "Australia, Canada, South Africa and India". As a member of the Commonwealth, Canada makes more sense for the trial than the USA.

It would be wonderful to know what happened to the four vehicles mentioned. Were they ever put into commercial production?

Have any survived? *Lotte*

MOTORING

News and Views

The South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus

Feature Section

29 September 1952

This photograph shows, from left to right, Mr Doug Harrigan (local Rootes Distributor), Mr K Nobell (representing Perkins Diesel Pty Ltd), and Mr E Whiting (representing Rootes, England), examining the power plant in the test car.

Specifications

Bore: 3.5"
Stroke: 5"
No. of Cylinders: 6.
Max Brake H.P.: 92 at 3000 rpm.
Rated H.P.: 29.4.
Max. Torque: 213 lbs. ft. at 1350 rpm.
Max speed: 86 m.p.h.
Rear axle ratio: 3.154 : 1.
Average Fuel consumption 28/32 per gallon.
Estimated cost: £200-£240 over standard petrol model.
Tyres: 650 x 16.00.
Acceleration (1) 10/30 m.p.h. 11 secs. (2) 20/40 11 secs. (3) 30/50 m.p.h. 12.5 secs. (4) 40/60 m.p.h. 14.5 secs.
Fuel costs: Saving £7/5/0 per 1000 miles.
Registration: Double. Eliminated over 1500-1800 miles.

A Diesel Powered Humber Super Snipe!

Recently a "Times" representative had the unique experience of examining and road testing a stock model Humber Super Snipe sedan .... powered by a Perkins diesel engine, model P6.

The car, a prototype, has been brought to Australia for testing under Australian conditions and was exclusively tested at the invitation of Mr. Doug Harrigan, Manager of H. E. Harrigan and Sons, Wollongong, local distributors of Rootes products.

The Humber, externally, was no different to the petrol driven model, except for the wording "Perkins Diesel" affixed to the sides of the bonnet.

This particular car showed 8,750 miles travelled since its arrival in this country three weeks ago and it certainly has a most amazing performance under normal driving conditions.

With five people in the Perkins powered Snipe was indistinguishable from a petrol driven Snipe once 25 m.p.h. was reached. Below that speed in top gear the engine could be heard and sounded rather rougher than a petrol engine, although it could not be faulted for smooth running.

The characteristic diesel "knock" was far less noticeable than was expected.

No "surge" was present, and the car was surprisingly free from vibration even when idling at intersections.

ROAD TEST SURPRISE

The car was driven from Harrigan's Crown Street garage, up Crown Lane, starting in first. The first noteworthy surprise was the very rapid pick-up to 20 m.p.h. then into second when more surprising acceleration brought the car to the top of Crown Lane, and so on up Mangerton Road, which was easily negotiated in third.

The Snipe was then taken to open country where it was stopped and started off in the normal manner without any "speeding tactics".

Speeds attained through the gears were — first gear 20 m.p.h.; second 40; third 65 and top 80 m.p.h.

These speeds were not the maximum obtainable as the Snipe was not allowed to "wind up" on this occasion.

On one recent trip however in the west of N.S.W. the car is claimed to have recorded 31 miles in 22 minutes which works out at an average speed of 84 m.p.h.

Fuel economy would be the main factor of the Diesel powered Snipe, 28-32 m.p.g. is claimed to be the consumption range recorded in Australia.

Although Diesel operated vehicles are subject to double rates on registration this expense would be nullified in the first 1500 to 1700 miles. As an instance a petrol driven car uses approximately £10 worth of petrol for a given distance whereas this car could cover the same distance for a cost of £3.

Another strong factor in favour of Diesel operated cars is the long life, low maintenance angle. This fact has been already proven by experienced diesel vehicle operators.

In the car there was complete freedom from diesel fuel odour.

It is also interesting to note that although the fan blades had been removed from the car (necessitated through the size and shape of the engine), the engine is reported to have remained quite cool throughout and operated on an average temperature of 75 degrees centigrade. The engine in the past has, however, boiled when the car was caused to idle for a long period in heavy city traffic.

The weight of the Super Snipe is increased approximately 2½ cwts. with the Perkins engine and this was noticeable when the car was braked heavily at one time. However the car manufacturers well know of this fact and if or when the car is put into mass production, Rootes Ltd. will alter the front suspension to suit the added weight.

A question one may ask is "what of the road clearance with the larger engine being fitted." To this we can say that with this new Perkins diesel engine road clearance is certainly no less than that of a stock model Snipe.

It is believed that this is the first time a British make of car has been sent to this country for test before actual mass production is undertaken.

As stated by Mr. Whiting (representing Rootes England), "Australians have so many times criticised British car manufacturers for sending out cars which are not absolutely suited to our conditions that this company had decided to give us a chance of passing judgment on the car before it is produced in quantity."

Mr. Whiting added: "The eventual marketing of this car and engine will depend entirely upon opinions he receives from the people of Australia, Canada South Africa and India, where similar prototypes have also been sent."

Adelaide News 25 August 1952

MOTOR NEWS By C. J. Hoskyns

HUMBER DIESEL CAR ARRIVES

The first Humber car with a Diesel engine reached Adelaide on Wednesday from the United Kingdom.

It is a Humber Snipe, powered by a Perkins P6 Diesel engine.

On Tuesday the manager of Flinders Motors Ltd. (Mr. A. H. Fearn), accompanied by the general sales manager of the Rootes group in Australia (Mr. W. H. Anderson) will leave Adelaide on a four and a half days' tour of SA and Victoria to test the car under Australian conditions.

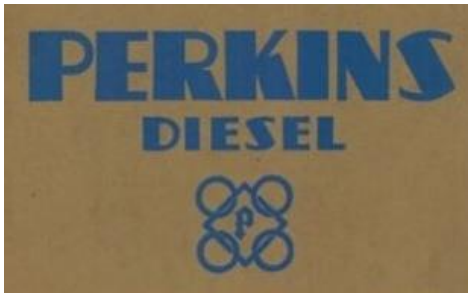
Mr. Fearn said 15 gallons of Diesel fuel would take them between 400 and 450 miles.

He said Rootes had sent the car to Australia to test the reaction of distributors.

It had no fan. When you turned the ignition off, the engine continued to run. A lever had to be pulled to stop the flow of fuel.

The noise of the engine was slightly louder than a petrol engine when stationary, but it became softer when the car was moving.

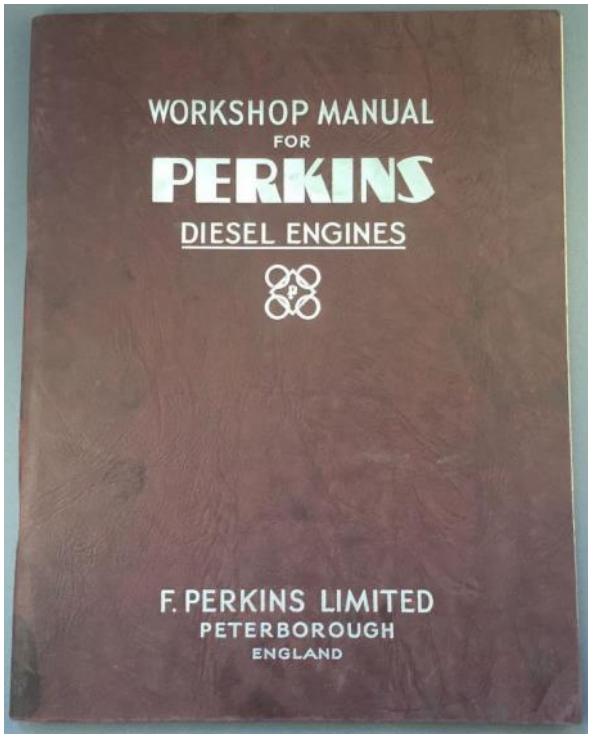
It is understood that Rootes are considering the marketing of a Diesel car as an additional line to their already comprehensive range of vehicles.



Spare Parts List July 1955

Excerpt from an article in The Argus (Melb) 20 June 1956:

Perkins conversion engines are also available in Australia for Humber Super Snipe cars.



1964 Humber Sceptre with the Perkins grille badge, at the Burlingford Classic Car Show 2003

'Guinea Pig' Diesel Snipe Here

A "guinea pig" diesel-engined Humber Super Snipe reached Melbourne yesterday on the first leg of a 14,000-mile research tour of Australia.

The Rootes group has cars in other countries also. They are exploring possibilities of a world market for such an alternative engine.

The engine is a Perkins P.6V 29.4 h.p. 4.73 litres unit, with a maximum output of 92 b.h.p., at 3000 r.p.m.

Rootes and Perkins experts are taking it into all cities and over all types of roads between Adelaide and Brisbane, tabulating performance as well as impressions by motoring experts.

A close examination and trial run yesterday left a good impression. Because of its economy (28-30 m.p.g., at 2/1 to 2/4 a gallon for oil fuel) it seems as though such an engine would meet the needs of quite a few motorists who do regular long trips.

Starting was instantaneous, and the same as for a petrol engine; it did not need "warming up" for full performance, but the customary diesel noise was gently apparent when idling.

Acceleration at low speeds, as expected, was not quite as good as in a compression ignition engine, but between 25-30 m.p.h. the high torque (213 lb. ft., at 1350 r.p.m.) gave comparable acceleration, although at 38 cwt. the Diesel Snipe is 3 cwt. heavier.

Despite a much higher final drive ratio (3.154/1, compared with 4.09/1) traffic manœvrability was quite good for such a big car.

The pulling power of the oil engine is most noticeable on gradients.

Estimated cost is £2353 (£350 more) and maximum speed 86 m.p.h.

Will Cause Eye Strain

A dirty or scratched windscreen will blur vision and cause eye strain.

Daily cleaning of the screen—or more often if necessary—will improve vision, but only if a clean rag or piece of paper is used.

It will also prevent the screen being scratched by dust abrasives when the wiper is operating.

Improved Chevrolet

An even smoother Chevrolet for 1952 was announced by General Motors-Holden's this week.

The new model has the usual distinctive, clean styling, but with a new grille design and wide parking lamps.

Front wheel suspension is said to be even better this year, but mechanically the car is unchanged.

The Age, 5 September 1952

An article from Truth Sydney, 28 September 1952:

Humber Snipe tested with diesel engine.

A novel trial was the recent interstate tour made by a Humber Snipe fitted with a six cylinder Perkins Diesel engine instead of the normal petrol unit.

Remarkable fuel economy was recorded during the trip which included three States; the average varying between 28 and 32 miles per gallon.

Only major alteration to the chassis was the substitution of a higher rear axle ratio of about 3 to 1, to suit the power range of the diesel which develops 92 h.p. at its governed maximum rate of 3000 r.p.m.

The test which was undertaken by officials of Rootes Ltd. showed that top gear speed of almost 90 m.p.h. was obtainable while flexibility, acceleration and hill-climbing were exceptional.

...and then I found this!

Humber Super Snipe 1951

Auction 28 July 2017

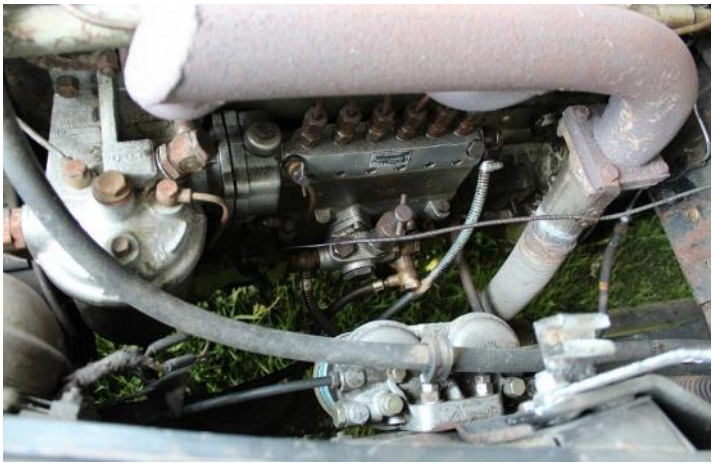
Mileage 64,393

Chassis No: A8002593HS0

Engine No: 323008

Estimated sale price: £4,900 - 5,900

Sold for: £9,450.00 + buyers premium (AUD $15,360)



This is a very rare Humber being a diesel. It is believed the company made 17 for a chauffeuring company, they were made by Humber and Perkins of Peterborough. The vendor has owned the car for 7 years and is now selling due to ill health. The small history file has a letter from the Post Vintage Humber Car Club confirming the above.

Auctioneers notes: The hire company was in fact Rootes Chauffeur Hire, Rootes being the parent company of Humber. This car is in very usable condition and the body and interior are in good order. The Perkins engine produces 90BHP

More photos can be seen here:
https://www.swva.co.uk/classic-car/humber-super-snipe-1951/

(Note the Perkins logo on the Grille)

Early Years of Diesel Humber - Perkins Engines

I searched on "Perkins Diesel" and was delighted to learn that in the 1930s, Frank Perkins bought a Humber and turned it into what is believed to be the world's first diesel-powered car! The diesel Humber performed beautifully (of course), but the second engine installed in a Commer lorry didn't as it lacked power. Upgrades followed, first the Fox and then the successful Wolf engine.

Read this story here: https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-courier-advertiser-angus-and-the-mearns-edition/20121121/282166468467125

On the Perkins website is a production timeline:

https://www.perkins.com/en_GB/company/heritage/products.html

Here are the first two entries, referencing Humber and the P6 engine mentioned in the previous article:

1933: The Wolf

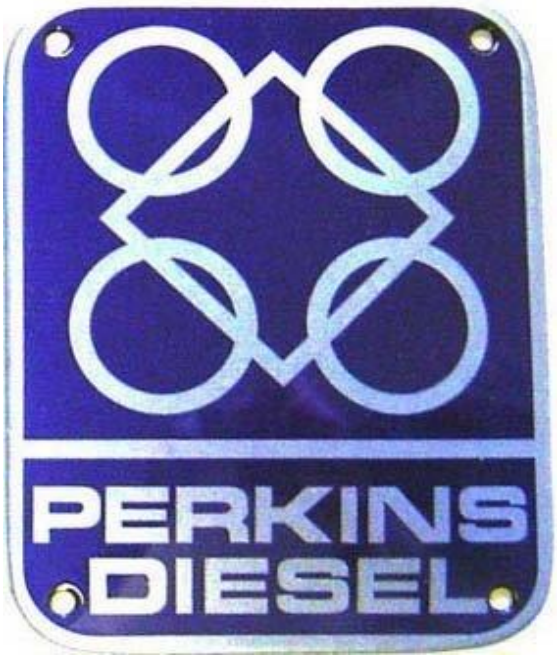
The engine that started it all. Developed from an earlier model, the Vixen, the Wolf was offered as an alternative to the petrol engine in Humber's Commer vehicles in 1933, making Humber our first Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM).

1937: P4/P6 Series

The P4 and P6 engines, designed by Charles Chapman, the company's original technical director, were launched at the 1937 Commercial Motor Show. They were compact and lightweight engines that established Perkins as a major supplier. The P6, producing 63 kW (85 hp) at 2600 rpm, and advertised as "The world's lightest diesel engine" was an immediate sensation. The P4 and P6 were the platforms for many future award-winning engines.

Perkins®

Diesel Power



The Perkins' logo represents a "Square Deal All Round".

Humber Diesels in the 1930s

It was a surprise when I started seeing earlier references to Humber Diesels dating to the mid-1930s, albeit with a Gardner engine in lieu of the later Perkins engine. While there are many articles at the time in different papers across Australia, they all contain essentially the same information - this one from Queensland Country Life appeared to be the most detailed and comprehensive...

HUMBER HAS DIESEL-TYPE ENGINE

A subject of considerable discussion in automotive circles, is whether the compression-ignition Diesel type engine, which is now being adopted in many overseas countries as power plant in heavy duty motor trucks, will ever find general use in private cars.

ISOLATED instances have been reported where a fuel oil C.I. engine has been substituted for the petrol unit in private cars, for experimental purposes.

In this connection, a Humber Snipe which has been fitted with a Diesel type engine in England, is of particular interest because of a series of comparative performance figures registered before and after the conversion, and the fact that the vehicle is coming to Australia for a year's road test of 35,000 miles.

The Motorist Pays

Australian motor owners have contributed £31,556,692 in petrol duty and excise during the past six years. Of that amount only £12,407,850 was passed on to the respective States toward road improvement, the balance of £19,148,842, being used to finance general Federal expenditure.

The C.I. engine substituted for the usual 3489 c.c. six-cylinder power unit in the Snipe is a standard lightweight four-cylinder Gardner engine of 3800 c.c. capacity, which weighs only about eight lb. per h.p. and develops 83 b.h.p. at 3200 r.p.m. The English rating is 22.5 h.p. The installation was effected with very little modification of the chassis, and the total increase in weight of the whole vehicle only a matter of 98 lb. Owing to the high torque and increased maximum B.h.p. of the C.I. engine, the final drive ratio was raised from 4.5 to 1 to 3.5 to 1.

When demonstrating, the Snipe, even with engine idling at 400 r.p.m., is stated to be quiet, vibration being no worse than in a four-cylinder petrol engine of the same cylinder capacity.

The maximum speed attained was 86 m.p.h. as against 80.3 m.p.h. with the petrol engine. Taking into consideration the higher gear ratios, the acceleration was not substantially less than when the original six-cylinder petrol engine was providing the propelling power.

Queensland Country Life - 30 April 1936

Here is a Perkins Diesel Mk IV Humber, as posted on the Sunbeam Car Owners of Qld FB page in December 2021.

Note the Perkins logo on the front bumper.

From April 2016 Humberette

Roy Welling’s Super Snipe with the Perkins diesel engine

PERKINS POWERED HUMBER

The next two pages is an article I have kept concerning a Series V Super Snipe which was fitted with a Perkins Diesel. The car was running around the Geelong area for years before being taken off the road. The engine and transmission were taken out and a Club member, Kevin McGee bought the remains. I bought the differential off it and still have it in my shed.

Kevin McGee used a lot of panels from the vehicle when he made up a V8 powered Super Snipe which currently resides in Western Australia. Bill Holmes and I were involved in the transformation of the Series VA to V8 power.

Should anyone wish to convert their Series V Humber to a diesel or V8 power system, it can be done.

Yours

Bob Bloody Kennedy again

FIG 1
Humber Snipe Series V Car

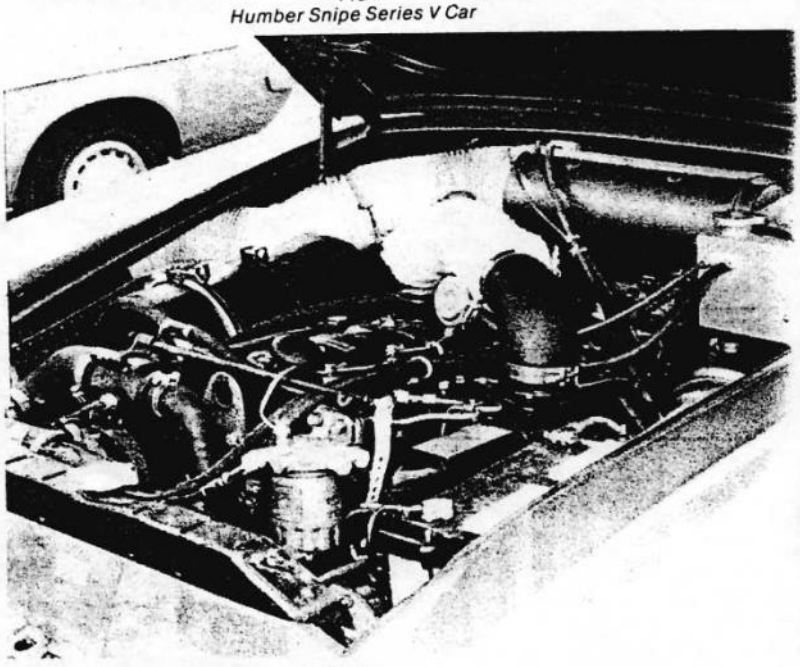


FIG 2
The Perkins 6-247 Diesel snugly installed in the Humber Super Snipe.

Submitted by . . .

Mr E. HATTON

Corio Diesel Injection

10-12 Holmes Street
North Geelong, Vic 3215

Mr Hatton is also a member of the Victorian Division Committee.

A Diesel car was the ambition but prices on production cars deter all but the very affluent if a reasonably big car is desired. The vehicle chosen for conversion was the final decision after carefully considering the options available. The very modern car is virtually ruled out by either not having enough engine room space to accommodate a 6 cylinder engine, or too low a bonnet line, or just not robust enough. If a 6 cylinder engine is desired there is very little choice being limited to the 3.5 litre Toyota (although the 5 cylinder 3 litre Mercedes could be considered) or the final selection which was the 4.1 litre Perkins-Mazda.

The Humber Snipe Series V selected was a carefully maintained one owner car and the original petrol engine was in perfect order after 125,000 miles. Indeed 6 months good service was obtained mainly to gauge performance and economy before engine removal. Petrol consumption was approximately 14 mpg with the best being 19.6 mpg on a trip to Adelaide. Fig 1.

The petrol engine after removal was sold and after that there was no turning back. An adaptor housing was fabricated in the Douro Street workshops of Bob Johnson who has ample experience and machinery to tackle a project of this nature. The original cast iron B/W auto transmission was retained.

When the diesel engine was offered into the car the results were discouraging to say the least. The Humber is fitted with a massive front cross-member and sat directly under the front mounted oil pump. Various options were considered, leaving the sump intact and mutilating the cross-member, or not touching the cross-member and shortening the sump and externally mounting the oil pump with a twin V belt drive. The latter course was favoured and almost completed. This course reduced oil capacity which would not be desirable. At this point Keith Cameron of Camerons Diesel Service in Belmont was consulted.

His experience and participation turned the project from a hash up to a complete success. Keith came to the conclusion that the engine in its original configuration might just squeeze in. This meant the purchase of new sump and oil pump to restore the engine. By removing some metal from the thermostat housing we had top and bottom clearance.

Other major items included passing the tie rod through a tube in the sump, deletion of cooling fan, a specially drilled block to relocate the oil filter, and an expansion tank with constant bleed off from the water manifold. Fig 2.

The result is a car with original bonnet line retained and undistinguishable from as before appearance. No beefing of front springs has been necessary. Fig 1.

Performance characteristics are good, a maximum road speed is possible with original transmission and diff ratio in the order of 75 mph. Fuel consumption varies from 33.4 mpg at 40 mph to 27.2 mpg at 60 mph on a trip. Tank range was approx 240 miles on petrol but now 400 miles can be covered without refuelling. Acceleration is quite adequate when pulling from a standstill and at speeds over 45 mph is excellent. Cooling on normal days presents no problems even though no fan is fitted although ambient temperatures of 35 and over require that engine RPM be kept to a maximum of 3200 to keep coolant temperature to a reasonable degree.

TECHNICAL DATA 6-247 DIESEL ENGINE

BASIC TECHNICAL DATA

BORE	3.622 in (92.0 mm)
STROKE	4.000 in (101.6 mm)
SWEPT VOLUME	247 in³ (4.05 litres)
NUMBER OF CYLINDERS	6
CYLINDER ARRANGEMENT	Vertical, in line
CYCLE	4 Stroke
COMPRESSION RATIO	21:1
COMBUSTION SYSTEM	Indirect injection
FIRING ORDER	1, 5, 3, 6, 2, 4
ROTATION	
Clockwise viewed from front	
BASIC THREAD FORM	Unified
DRY WEIGHT	609 lb (276.5 kg)
OVERALL DIMENSIONS:	
Height	39.93 in (811 mm)
Length	35.91 in (912 mm)
Width	23.82 in (605 mm)

PERFORMANCE DATA

MAXIMUM RATING	
BS Au 141a: 1971	101 bhp at 3600 rev/min
SAE J.270 1.3.4	98 bhp at 3600 rev/min
DIN 70020	93 PS at 3600 rev/min
Governing category	V. regulation 12% ± 2%
Power to weight ratio	0.16 bhp/lb (0.26kW/kg)

CERTIFICATION

The 6.247 has successfully completed a USA Federal Heavy Duty Vehicle Engine 1000 hour test and been granted a certificate. The test results were as follows:

	Legal Level	6.247 Test
Smoke, % opacity		
Acceleration	20	10.40
Lugging	15	7.60
Peak	50	16.55
Emissions. g/bhp h		
HC + NO.	16	6.55
CO	40	4.65

HUMBER VOGUE DIESEL SERIES IV

An interesting conversion to Club member Robert Buttery's pride and joy;

It is with fear of excommunucation that I report the heretical act of transplanting a diesel engine, let alone a japanese motor, into my Humber Vogue. Let me hastily add that it would only take the flick of a spanner to restore the car to original condition. No major structural change has been made. From the outside there is that unmistakable and aristocratic look of a fine English motor car,only now it sounds a little different.

With rising oil consumption and declining fuel economy the time had come for a checkup. The diagnosis; "Terminal heart disease". So,into the body of a 21 year old was transplanted the heart of a lion, an ISUZU C240-60 horsepower repowering motor.

The biggest problem with the conversion has been trying to convince service station attendants that yes, you really do want diesel fuel. There were other minor problems like the motor not being an easy fit. This being solved by canting the engine to one side by ten degrees,remounting the oil filter,resiting the oil cooler along with new oil lines,realignment of the radiator hoses,resiting the brake booster etc..... These trivial hurdles overcome allowed effort to be directed toward the problem of aligning the Vogue gearbox to within two thou. of the motor. Fourteen trips to the local brake and clutch centre finally produced a compatible clutch plate and throw-out bearing. Tidy up jobs (air filter,glow plugs, fuel lines bigger battery,stopping device,heater connections,exhaust pipe,engine mounts.....) then followed.

Seven weeks in intensive care over, it was with much jubillation that my Vogue emerged with a new lease on life. Convalescence has been essentially uneventfull. Longer legs (if any-body out there in Humber land has a Sceptre overdrive gearbox for sale I would be gratefull to hear from them) would make open road cruising a little easier. Short strolls are a delight. So far there is complete satisfaction with the operation.

Passers-by are not alarmed with blue smoke eminating from a British car but I have a devil of a job trying to explain why a British car makes so much noise; "It's just the tappets".

Robert Buttery.

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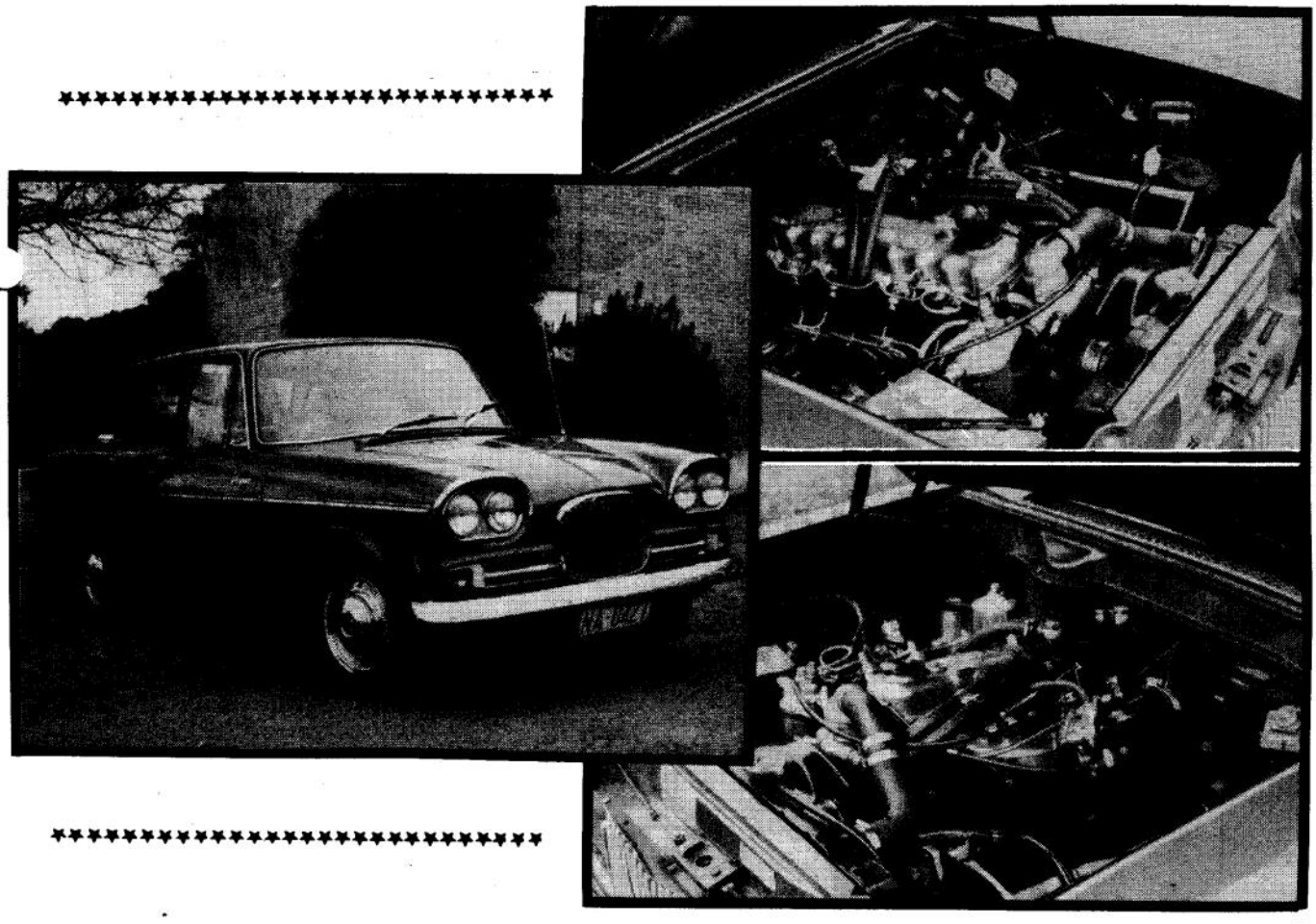

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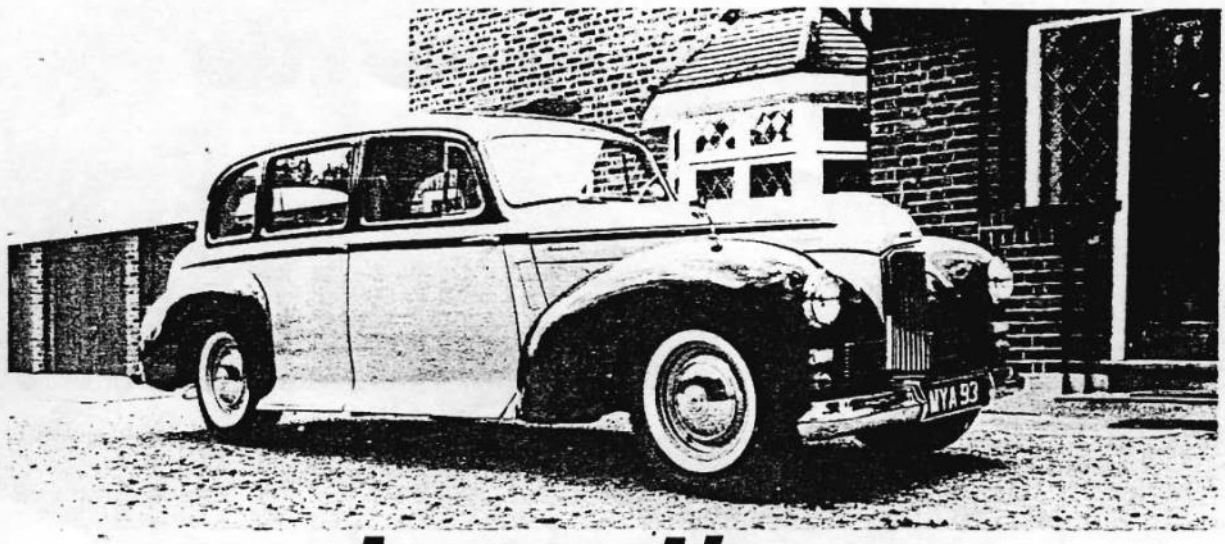


Luxury Liner

There's something unusual about this immaculate Humber Pullman Limousine; the answer lies under the bonnet as Peter Nunn found out

WHEN members of the Post Vintage Humber Car Club gathered together at Knebworth House in August last year, they did not expect to see the black and silver Humber Pullman limousine belonging to Stephen Liddard. The reason is quite simple, up until then the car had been a complete 'unknown' and had never appeared at a PVHCC rally before. But by the end of the meeting, just about every Humber enthusiast at Knebworth knew about MYA 93 for this was, quite definitely, no ordinary Humber.

Owner Stephen Liddard is one of those people one hires when the time comes to knock down a house. He runs his own demolition business and has an impressive fleet of trucks finished in his own livery. His hobby, though, is buying and restoring off-beat cars. So far a '35 Buick, a '57 Buick Connelly special, a '59 Chevrolet Impala, a '68 Buick Le Sabre, a 1950s Wolseley 4/44 and a 1960s Austin Westminster have all passed through his hands. Not an outstanding collection of 'classic' machinery perhaps but HCVC members might like to know that he is soon to put the final touches to the rebuild of a 1945 Scammell tractor unit.

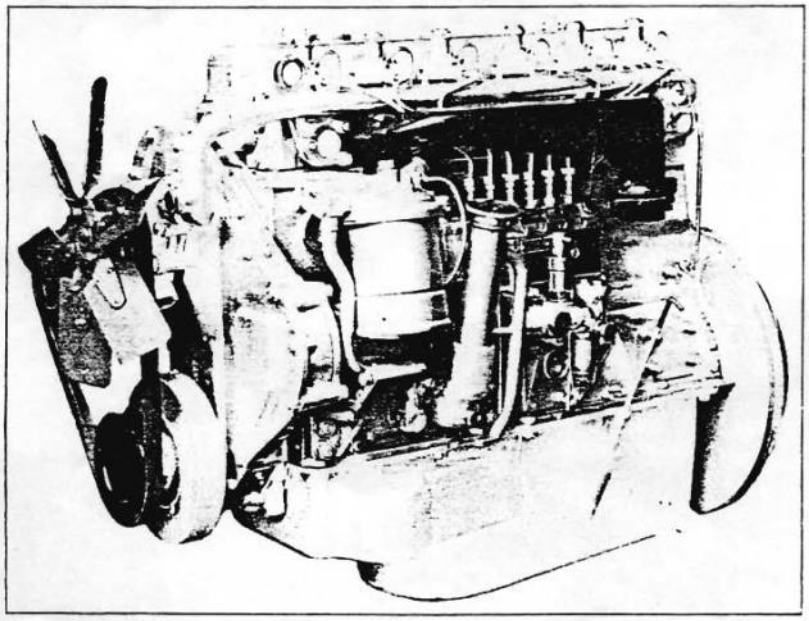
Just over three years ago, he spotted a very sad-looking Humber Pullman, abandoned in a transport yard in Barking. It transpired that the car belonged to the ex-transport manager who had left it parked in a corner for some two years with the windows left open. The upholstery was completely ruined, the wood in the boot was rotten and the body – especially the front and rear wings – was badly rusted. Undeterred, Stephen parted with a small sum of money and towed his new acquisition home.

This is where the story becomes interesting for MYA 93 has a Perkins P6 diesel engine as its powerplant. The vast majority of Humbers of the late 1940s and early 1950s were fitted with conventional petrol engines of course but some, like Stephen's 1950 limousine, were sold with 93bhp 4.7-litre straight 6 units. These were Humber-approved conversions and were also available on the Super Snipe and Pullman models.

These conversions were carried out because of the low cost of diesel fuel and to give both longer life and an improved fuel consumption figure (a 90mph cruising speed was theoretically possible with a much improved fuel consumption figure over a comparative petrol equivalent. Stephen Liddard claims he is getting 25mpg as opposed to 10/12mpg from the 4086cc Humber side-valve 'six' which would normally power the Pullman Limousine). Strength, reliability and simplicity are other well-known diesel advantages; noise, expense, weight and overall performance were not! The Perkins conversion, incidentally, also included a crown wheel and pinion set which gave a ratio of 3.154:1.

A brief description of the P6 engine would seem appropriate at this point. Briefly, it is a 4.73-litre 'six' with a cast iron block and removable dry liners. Aluminium alloy pistons match up to a seven bearing crank and the chain driven camshaft operates overhead valves. This direct injection engine is fed from an inline injector pump mounted on the nearside of the engine and the pump is fitted with a pneumatic governor. Comprehensive cold start equipment is included and when an indirect brake servo is fitted (MYA 93 has one, for example) a

The heart of the Humber: mighty Perkins P6 diesel



sliding vane exhauster is required. Two power ratings are quoted by Perkins for the P6; the versions fitted to the post war Humbers developed 93bhp at 3000rpm but lesser versions of this redoubtable unit turned out 74bhp at 2400rpm. Maximum torque for the latter version is quoted at 184 lb ft.

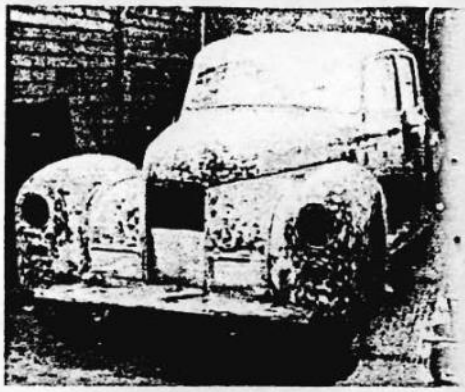
To be fair, the fact that Stephen's Pullman is Perkins-powered is not the main reason for the admiring crowds at the Knebworth rally. Instead, take a look at the colour page. Apart from the engine bay, the Humber has been completely restored both inside and out and must be arguably the most valuable post war Humber in the UK at present. Although MYA 93 was originally finished in black, its eight-seat Thrupp & Maberly coachwork is now a most attractive combination of silver and black. When you add in the skinny Michelin white-wall tyres, the overall effect is even more impressive. Elegance without garishness would be an apt description, a car that has obviously been rebuilt but not 'over' restored.

It's the rear compartment of the car that makes this car stand out, though. Opening one of the large, rear-hinged doors reveals a spacious, light and luxurious interior that has been beautifully retrimmed by Dean Weller of Station Road, Ware. In original form, the upholstery was trimmed in a high quality beige cloth material and MYA 93's rear compartment has returned to exactly this specification. The comfortable rear seats have a centre armrest which folds down and at either ends of the rear 'settee' there are deep and generous arm rests.

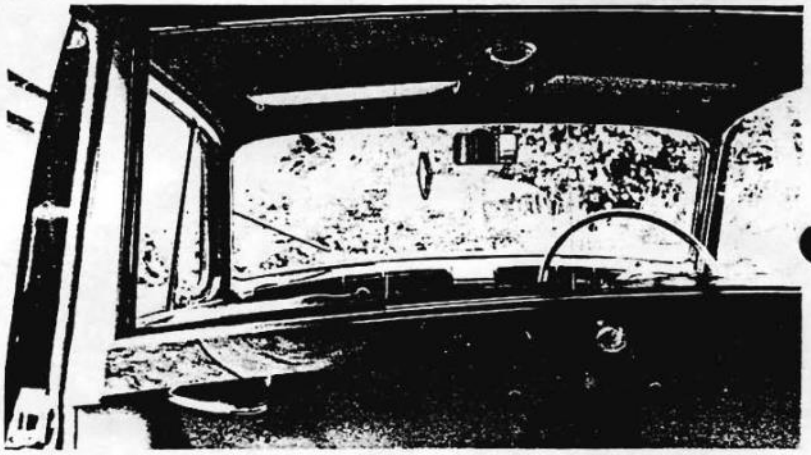
As befitting a car intended originally for aristocracy or perhaps high-ranking officials, the rear compartment has a division with two sliding windows. Directly in front of this division there are two occasional seats which fold flat when not in use. Like the rear seats, these are beautifully finished and at a pinch, can take three people.

The front compartment is slightly spartan but due to the column-mounted gear lever, can seat three people without a squash. So, thanks to the special coachwork (mounted on a chassis with a wheelbase 3¼in longer than previous models) eight people – or perhaps nine, if the local dignitary didn't object to three across the back – could travel in comfort and not a little style.

So far, I haven't mentioned two of MYA's more appealing features, the air conditioning and the built-in push button radio. Let's take the air conditioning first. Housed under the front seats are two compact heater units which receive heat via the engine water supply. These serve the rear compartment via two small vents situated at the foot of both ends of the division. The vents also have another function, when the sidelamps are switched on, they act as courtesy lights – or to be more accurate, step lights. By judicious use of the various heating controls, it's possible to vary the air supply to either side of the compartment (the front and rear compartments have their own heating arrangements). The driver, meanwhile, had to be content with a massive Smiths fan heater.



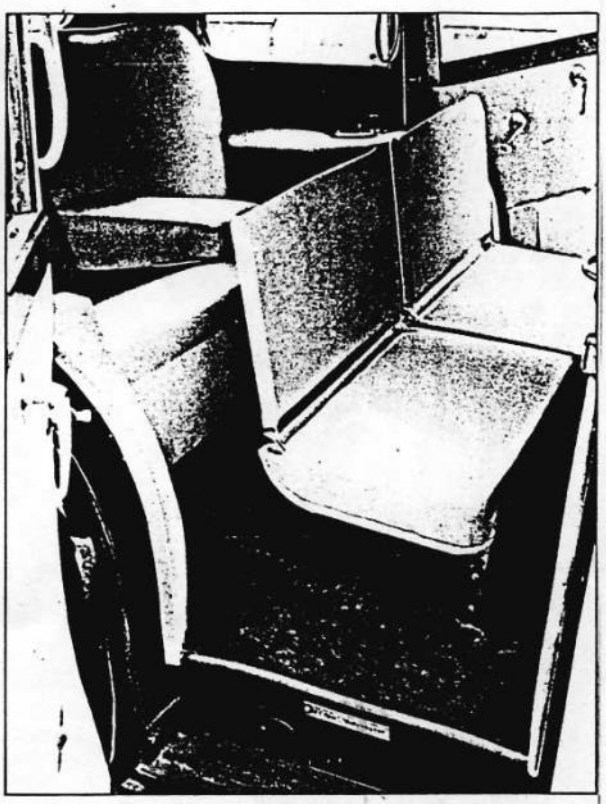
MYA 93 undergoing restoration, right: a real 'family affair'

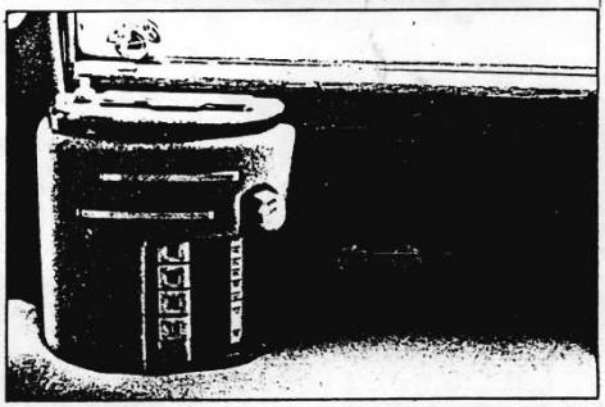


A substantial division complete with sliding windows and radio speaker forms part of the sumptuous rear quarters. Below the power pack for the push-button radio lives under the boot floor

While his 'man' was toiling away behind the wheel, the occupants in the back could pass the time away by listening to the neat push button/manual radio situated on one of the armrests. In Stephen Liddard's car, this splendid accessory was a Radiomobile ("Tudor Rees of the Vintage Wireless Co offered me £100 without even seeing it") but other Pullmans were fitted with an HMV set. The difference, however, was slight since they both received Long and Medium waves. The speaker grille for the radio can be found on the central division, just above the fold-away division for the occasional seats. Surrounding this grille are controls for radio tone and volume, plus two knobs for varying the speed of the rear compartment heater fans. The power pack for the radio is housed in the boot. On the other side of the opulent rear quarters, opposite the radio set, there's a cigarette lighter – the front compartment has one too.

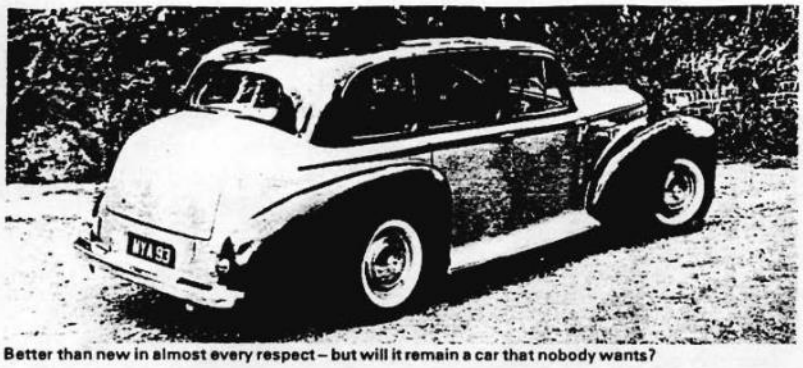
A reminder of former glories?





Clockwise from top right: beautifully restored interior, complete with occasional seats which fold flat; push-button Radiomobile wireless which came as standard; owner Stephen Liddard behind the wheel, out for a spin; MYA 93 was originally finished in black but its new silver and black paintwork looks very smart; during restoration, this wing was one of several panels which required considerable surgery; MYA 93 is surprisingly nimble for such a large car but 'steady as she goes' could be an apt maxim

CONTRIBUTED BY FRED PIETERSON



Better than new in almost every respect – but will it remain a car that nobody wants?

MYA's 'office' has plenty of legroom but a cramped driving position

MYA 93 was lucky; it happened to be in the right place at the right time. If Stephen Liddard hadn't been about his business in the Barking area three years ago, the car might still be rotting away in that yard. "I was half seriously looking for a car to do up. I'm not really a Humber enthusiast – that Pullman could have been any car as far as I was concerned," he explained.

One of the rear compartment's intriguing air conditioning vents

Nevertheless his brother Richard was called in to carry out the panel beating and spraying while brother-in-law Stephen 'Big foot' Greenhill took care of the mechanicals. Stephen himself was the financial backer and provided the necessary new parts. "Real backyard technology" as he succinctly describes it.

Restoring the car, it seems, wasn't particularly difficult. Brother Richard cut out the rusty metal and used an argon arc welder to weld in the new. A '53 Pullman was used for spares and provided the wood veneer window surrounds, the door handles and patterns for the seats. A new exhaust was made up and in an effort to try and cure brake shudder, new brake linings, wheel cylinders and master cylinder were fitted. Brake parts came from Hertford Brake and Clutch Co while the clutch came from Cape Automotive Ltd ("we searched through the stores to find the right parts; eventually we found them – they came from a 2 ton Commer lorry") while king pins and sills were acquired from R. J. Grimes of Coulsdon, Surrey, who can supply a wide range of obsolete Humber parts. Rechroming was carried out by Barwoods of Tottenham. The engine, however, has hardly been touched. Apart from an oil and filter change, it stands as Stephen bought it.

With the car came one of the old style log books and the Rt. Hon Earl Poulett of Hinton St George, Somerset is listed as being the first owner (Stephen is now the fifth). For the record, MYA 93 was registered on June 1 1950, carries engine no 3205231 and chassis no. 9801252. Not unnaturally, Stephen has tried to trace the Rt. Hon Earl Poulett who, by all accounts, was something of a character (the car used to carry his crest); so far, Stephen has managed to establish that his last wife is living in Jersey but little else.

In the 1950s, some Super Snipes were also Perkins-converted; note the grille motif

Driving this car is quite an experience. The front seats are not adjustable, the steering wheel is enormous (the gear lever is tiny by comparison) and the view out along the massive bonnet is awe inspiring. To start the engine, turn the key on the sparse facia, then press the pre-heat button for 30sec. A slight pressure on the starter button and the engine rumbles into life. By diesel standards, the engine is not noisy or smelly but to hear the characteristic compression ignition 'knock' coming from this dignified motor carriage seems incongruous at first.

Stephen drives at first while I enjoy the luxury and wide open space of the back seat. Once under way, this 18ft motor car is surprisingly nimble, and inside, everything is quiet with little or no 'diesel roar' from up for'ard. What an enjoyable way to travel! After all, if things become *too* noisy, one can always turn up the radio ...

Soon it's my turn to take the wheel. Into gear, slight pressure on the right hand pedal, ease off the Rover P4-positioned handbrake lever, and off we chug. I hope Stephen won't be offended but I'm going to use some sailing analogies now, for MYA really behaves like a large dinghy that's been let loose on the road. Press down on the accelerator while the car's pointing in a straight line and the effect is immediate and surprisingly responsive. For such a large car it *does* get under way with commendable alacrity but things start to get slightly out of hand when MYA has to go around corners. Turn the monstrously heavy steering wheel too far, too sharply and the whole car lurches so far over that you begin to wonder whether there's time to tack before you pull in all the sheets.

The driving position doesn't help much either. One sits, bolt upright, so close to the huge steering wheel that the inverted boat-shaped bonnet soon becomes uncomfortably appropriate. Until one begins to get the hang of cornering this car, any accelerator movements have to be carefully planned. Any indecision in the middle of a corner and it could well be Goodnight Vienna ....

The foregoing, incidentally, is not in any way intended to be a harsh condemnation of this spendid motor car for its overall charm and appeal far outweigh its deficiencies on the road. Yes, it's a real head-turner and a real credit to the workmanship of its restorers. It's just a shame that it suffers from 'Rootes malaise' and by that I mean depressed prices and general lack of enthusiasm on the part of the majority of so-called 'classic car' followers. If this Pullman Limousine was say, a Packard or a Buick, then I would be very surprised if there wasn't a lengthy queue of people wanting to buy it. As it happens, MYA 93 *is* for sale and Stephen Liddard is open to offers. Now what am I bid for this rare and (in its own way) desirable limousine ...? □

From March 2014 Humberette.

However, in response to the Editor's Note on the rumour of a Perkins engine Mark IV, I re-ceived the following from Keith Willimott:

Dear Lotte and Ray,

I read with interest your comments about a Mark IV Snipe with a Perkins diesel engine. The one you mentioned was at the Humber National Rally in Wirrina, South Australia, in 1982. I have enclosed a report on the rally with a photo of it. It was at the time owned by John Powell of SA. Who was a builder and used it to pull a 4 wheel trailer on his building jobs. Apparently some years later it was sold and Bob K missed out. It was bought by a SA club member Brian Beadsmore who at one time belonged to our club. His wife April was at one time our club social secretary. I don't know where it is now.

Kind Regards, Keith Willimott