Humber Sceptre II Automatic 1,725 c.c.

RATING: sales success in the first three years has long since confirmed the right thinking behind the original design concept of the Humber Sceptre—a fully equipped £1,000 car making an unusual combination of refinement with compactness. Many who can afford comfort do not necessarily want a big car with its associated problems of parking and running costs, and they find the Sceptre—still with few rivals in its immediate price range—an obvious answer.

Improvements have been made at intervals, culminating in the Series II introduced for last year’s London Show. As well as having the new 1,725 c.c. engine with five main bearings, Borg-Warner automatic transmission became available for the first time. With the standard four-speed gearbox, of course, a Laycock overdrive is standard equipment, and as you cannot have both overdrive and automatic transmission the cost of this unit is saved. The extra total cost for a Sceptre with automatic is thus only £42.5s.10d.

Because a torque converter absorbs any engine harshness, which a dry clutch might reveal, automatic cars always seem a little smoother and more refined, but with the Sceptre this advantage is added to a marked gain in engine smoothness anyway from the extra bearing support. As a result, this new Sceptre automatic really does qualify for that sometimes overworked expression that “it could be a six.” It is also very quiet, thanks to extensive use of sound-damping materials in the engine compartment, including a deadening blanket on the underside of the bonnet panel.

An increase of 133 c.c. in engine capacity, obtained by extending the piston stroke from 76.2 to 82.6 mm, and a fractional increase in compression ratio from 9.1 to 9.2, have raised net power output from 80 to 85 b.h.p.; and there is a useful increase in torque. These compensate for the slight power losses of automatic transmission, and the standing start acceleration figures are much the same as those we measured in June 1963 with the twin-Zenith-carburettor model (manual gearbox and overdrive). From rest, the Sceptre now accelerates to 80 m.p.h. in 37.9 sec—quite a fair time for a medium size saloon. In ordinary use on the road, the performance seems adequate without being at all sprightly, but a great deal depends on the method of driving. In theory, at least, the transmission can be left to select its own gears and change points, but it does help tremendously to use the Lock-up control, which gives an immediate change down to the lower ratio.

AT A GLANCE: Performance no more than adequate, and fuel consumption fairly heavy for size of car. Quiet and very comfortable 5-seater given extra refinement by a very smooth engine and automatic transmission. First-class visibility and accurate steering, but nose-heavy cornering. Good, fully adjustable driving position. Efficient servo-assisted disc brakes and effective handbrake.

MANUFACTURER
Humber Ltd., Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry, Warwickshire.

PRICES
Basic ..... £650 0s 0d
Purchase Tax ..... £178 12s 11d
Total (in G.B.) ..... £1,028 12s 11d

EXTRAS (inc. P.T.)
Automatic transmission ..... £42 5s 10d
Whitewall tyres ..... £7 14s 1d
Cibie auxiliary lamps (each) ..... £5 5s 0d
Safety belts (each) ..... £5 0s 0d

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY
Mean maximum speed ..... 90 m.p.h.
Standing start ¼-mile ..... 21.3 sec
0-60 m.p.h. ..... 16.9 sec
30-70 m.p.h. (through gears) ..... 17.9 sec
Overall fuel consumption ..... 20.9 m.p.g.
Miles per tankful ..... 220
Autocar Road Test 2072

MAKE: HUMBER

TYPE: Sceptre II
Automatic

WEIGHT
Kerb weight (with oil, water and half-full fuel tank): 21-3 cwt (2,387lb, 1,082kg)
Front rear distribution, per cent: F, 55-4; R, 44-6
Laden as tested: 24-3 cwt (2,723lb, 1,234kg)

TURNING CIRCLES
Between kerbs: L, 38ft 3in.; R, 34ft 11in.
Between walls: L, 40ft 2in.; R, 36ft 10in.
Steering wheel turns lock to lock: 4-1

PERFORMANCE DATA
Top gear m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m.: 17-81
Mean piston speed at max. power: 2,980ft/min
Engine revs at mean max. speed: 5,050 r.p.m.
B.h.p. per ton laden (net): 70

OIL CONSUMPTION
Miles per pint (SAE 20): 400

FUEL CONSUMPTION
At constant speeds:
30 m.p.h.: 34-2 m.p.g.
40 m.p.h.: 33-3 m.p.g.
50 m.p.h.: 30-3 m.p.g.
Overall m.p.g.: 20-9 (13-5 litres/100km)

Normal range m.p.g.: 19-30 (14-9-9-4 litres/100km)
Test distance (corrected): 1,659 miles
Estimated (DIN) m.p.g.: 20-5 (13-8 litres/100km)

Grade: Premium (96-2-98-6 RM)

TEST CONDITIONS
Weather: Dry, sunny with 10-15 m.p.h. wind
Temperature: 7 deg.C (45 deg.F.)
Barometer: 29-8in. Hg.
Surfaces: Dry concrete and asphalt

Speed range, overall gear ratios and time in seconds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m.p.h.</th>
<th>Top (3-89-7-56)</th>
<th>Inter (5-64-10-96)</th>
<th>Low (9-3-18-9)</th>
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<td>21-9</td>
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Brakes

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<th>Pedal load</th>
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<th>Equiv. distance</th>
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<td>(from 30 m.p.h. in neutral)</td>
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<td>25lb</td>
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<td>50lb</td>
<td>0-68g</td>
<td>44ft</td>
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<tr>
<td>75lb</td>
<td>0-90g</td>
<td>33-4ft</td>
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<td>100lb</td>
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Handbrake: 0-36g, 84ft
For ultimate performance, the Lock-up control is used to hold low and intermediate to maximum revs, marked by the start of the red sector on the rev counter at 5,900 r.p.m. (on the previous engine the limit was lower, at 5,500 r.p.m.). The alternative method is to use full throttle with D selected, and rely on the kick-down which holds each gear up to 4,600 r.p.m., but this adds over 5 sec to the 0 to 80 m.p.h. time.

Transmission Gate

Mounted centrally in the same position as the gear lever on the manual model, the selector for the automatic transmission works in a to-and-fro gate with clearly defined notches. It is conveniently sited where the driver’s left hand falls straight from the steering wheel to the lever when in D or L, and it has a pleasantly smooth and precise action without any notchiness. When braking for a roundabout or other obstruction which involves slowing without actually stopping it usually pays to slip the lever to L when intermediate engages almost at once and extremely smoothly. The car will then accelerate away more responsively and with less need for wide throttle openings. If neither Lock-up nor the kickdown switch under the throttle is used, the car simply stays in top gear, and acceleration is comparatively leisurely. Maximum speeds at which the full-throttle kickdown will work are 48 m.p.h. into intermediate, and 25 m.p.h. to low. Yet using the Lock-up intermediate can be held to more than 70 m.p.h.

If the car is baulked when the lever is in Lock-up, and speed drops below 5 m.p.h., low is automatically engaged and held. On these occasions it is quite easy and even satisfying to slip the lever momentarily back into Drive and then back to Lock-up at once, with a quick double-flick of the wrist. The effect is an immediate and smooth change-up to Intermediate which is then held in turn until the car speed is ready for top. Because of the excellence of the positive over-riding control, the keen driver is as much in command as if he had a conventional gearchange, yet there is all the advantage of fully automatic control for traffic work. It is only at high speed that one might prefer the overdrive model, with its substantially higher gearing. At the lower speeds, the Sceptre is outstandingly quiet, but a subdued roar with periodic "hush" to it begins to be increasingly noticeable above about 75 m.p.h., and one could not really say that the cruising speed is any higher than 80 m.p.h. as the extra noise level of engine, transmission and exhaust are then beginning to be obtrusive and the engine is turning at some 4,500 r.p.m. The final drive ratio is higher for the automatic model—3:898 to 1 instead of 4:22, but the engine speed per 1,000 r.p.m. is still substantially lower, at 17-8 m.p.h., than the manual models 20-2.

It was not long after the original introduction of the Sceptre that the twin-carburettor set-up was replaced by a Solex compound carburettor with a progressive double choke. It is very satisfactory for both economy and progressive power, and there is no surge to indicate the point at which the second throttle begins to open. There is, however, a slight dip in the fuel consumption curve at steady speeds, with an increase of 5 m.p.g. between 60 and 70 m.p.h. Because of this and the effect of using the extra choke in prolonged driving this is probably the best of the series for economy.
Humber Sceptre II Automatic . . .

hard driving, fuel consumption is influenced more than usual by our testing methods. The 20.9 m.p.g. overall consumption figure is understandably a little lower than the 22.8 m.p.g. of the original model with smaller engine, different carburation, and overdrive; and it is a figure which is very easily improved towards 30 m.p.g. in quiet driving. The fuel tank capacity is 10% gallons. The accuracy of the fuel gauge, criticized in the previous test, has now been greatly improved by recalibration of the instrument; it is helpful that the gauge is marked in gallons and litres. With compression of 9:2 to 1, premium fuel is necessary; experiments with a 50-50 mixture of premium and regular gave slight pinking and caused running-on.

Starting is seldom instantaneous; there is no fear that the engine will actually fail to start, but it usually takes several turns of the starter whether hot or cold, and when hot the engine usually starts best if the driver slowly opens the throttle wide before using the starter. Choke is needed for cold starting, and in the reasonably mild weather of the test the engine showed no tendency to stall on first selecting Drive—a rather common failing of many automatics.

As well as the underbonnet sound-damping, thick felt is fitted under the carpets, and the underbody and wings are treated with a rubberized sealing and anti-corrosion compound before assembly. The result is, again, a very low level of road noise even when running on coarse tarmac, and the feeling of quality and solidity which this produces is backed up by a very comfortable ride with excellent insulation from the ordinary irregularities of British road surfaces.

Comfort is taken a stage further by first-class seating in the Sceptre. The front bucket seats have reclining backrests, allowing fine adjustment in notches over more than 90 deg. They are both well shaped, giving support in the small of the back and ample lateral location, and are softly padded with foam rubber. The upholstery is stretch p.v.c. with an imitation weave pattern on the fluted surfaces, perforated to "breathe." A quick twist of the steering wheel boss frees the centre part of the column for adjustment over nearly 360 deg, enabling the driver to find just the right position. The wheel itself is attractively styled and of only 16in. dia.; a full horn ring is a good safety measure, but its upper half does tend to obscure the instrument for some drivers.

Although slightly "springy," the steering is positive and the car responds to small movements of the
轮。一个晚上，狂风大作，汽车被吹得几乎侧翻，但方向盘的准确性和便利性让驾驶者能够保持方向。千钧一发之际，汽车的重力帮助驾驶者保持稳定。

Sceptre II 汽车的标准配置包括冷气、自动变速器、电子点火、电控燃油供应、ABS 防抱死系统和防滚翻。该车的外形设计也在当时非常具有标志性。

**性能数据**

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**最大速度**

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**站立启动 1/4 英里**

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**0-60 M.P.H. 秒数**

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**燃油经济性**

- M.P.G.：20
- Overall：30

**结论**

Sceptre II 汽车在当时被认为是一款豪华车型，其性能和舒适性在同级别车型中处于领先地位。该车的出现标志着豪华汽车市场的一个重要时期，也为后来的汽车设计和制造奠定了基础。
spoil at all by intrusion of the steering wheel rim nor by unduly thick screen pillars. Two-speed wipers clear the screen well, but only if the arms are so positioned on the spines that the blades lie well above the base of the screen when parked.

Not only is the heater powerful and responsive to delicate adjustments of its temperature control, it has outlets in the sides of the console which direct air beneath the front seats and into the rear compartment. The arrangement is remarkably effective and there are separate levers each side under the facia to switch off these outlets when not needed. The console, which carries the ashtray, panel lamps switch and two-speed switch for the very quiet heater fan, makes it less easy for the driver to slide across and get out on the passenger side, but it is not too difficult.

Small points which are appreciated are that opening any of the four doors turns on the interior roof lamp, and roof grab handles above the rear doors. Quarter vents open front and rear and all doors have childproof catches. There are no grease points at all, and an oil change is necessary only at 6,000-mile intervals.

The controls and handling of the Sceptre are a little too "soft" for it to be considered a sports saloon. Instead it has the character of a very refined and comfortable four-five-seater family car, for which the new more doctile engine and the silkiness of automatic transmission are particularly appropriate.

**SPECIFICATION: HUMBER SCEPTRE II AUTOMATIC, FRONT ENGINE, REAR-WHEEL DRIVE**

**ENGINE**
- Cylinders: 4, in line
- Cooling system: Water; pump, fan and thermostat
- Bore: 81.5-mm (3-21/32 in.)
- Stroke: 85.5-mm (3.35 in.)
- Displacement: 1,725 c.c. (105.2 cu.in.)
- Valve gear: Overhead, pushrods and rockers
- Compression ratio: 9.2:1-o-o; optional 9-4
- Carburettor: One downdraught Solex B32 PAFS compound

**TRANSMISSION**
- Gearbox: Borg-Warner Type 35 automatic with torque converter
- Gear ratios: Top: 1-6:1-94
- Inter: 1-45:1-94
- Low: 2-29:4-63
- Reverse: 2-09:1-66
- Final drive: Hypoid bevel, 3-89 to 1

**CHASSIS AND BODY**
- Construction: Integral with steel body
- Suspension: Front - Independent; semi-trailing wishbones and coil springs, telescopic dampers and anti-roll bar

**STEERING**
- Type: Bursman recirculating ball
- Wheel dia.: 15-in.

**BRAKES**
- Make and type: Lockheed, discs front, drums rear
- Servo: Lockheed vacuum
- Diameter: 10.5-in.
- Total swept area: 298 sq. in. (245 sq. in.) per ton laden

**WHEELS**
- Type: Pressed steel disc, 4 studly 4-5-in.

**EQUIPMENT**
- Battery: 12-volt 38-amp hr. Negative earth
- Alternator: 60/55 amp
- Headlamps: Four-lamp system, 60/375-watt
- Reversing lamp: 2 standard
- Electric items: 2
- Screen wipers: 2-speed, self-parking
- Screen washer: Standard, manual plunger

**MAINTENANCE**
- Fuel tank: 18-5 Imp. gallons (no reserve)
- Cooling system: 12-5 pints (including heater)
- Engine oil: 17 litres
- Automatic transmission fluid: 5-5 pints Donax T6. No oil change necessary
- Final drive: 1-75 pints SAE 90 EP. Change every 6,000 miles
- Grease: None required
- Tyre pressures: F. 35; R. 25 p.s.i. (normal driving). F. 28; R. 28 p.s.i. (fast driving)