

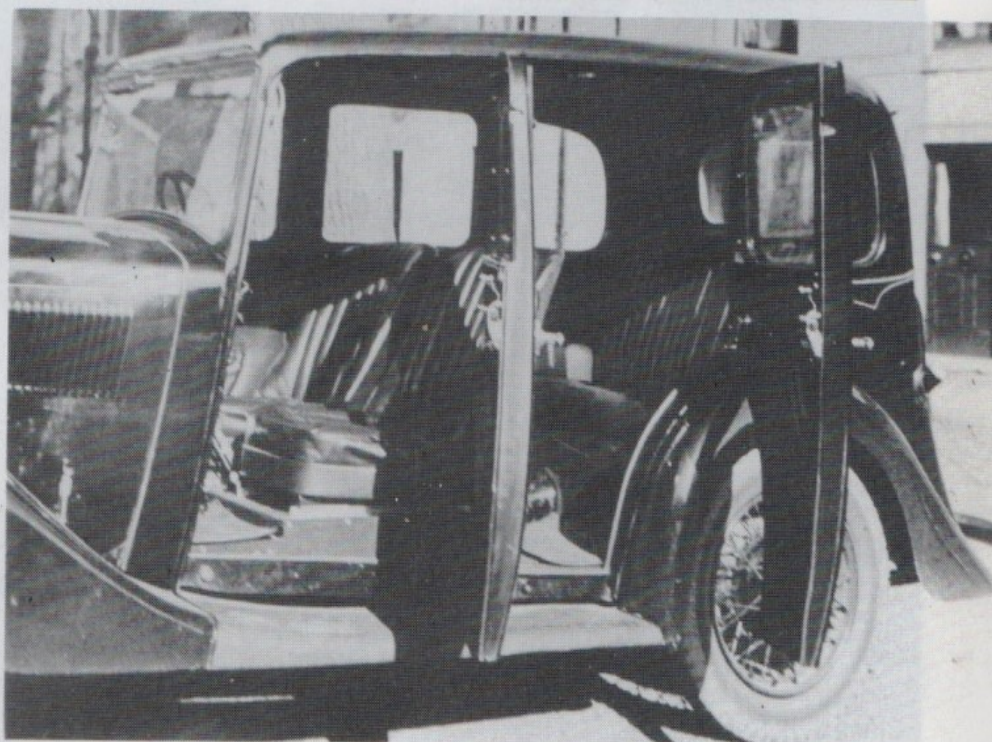
Non-Stop Engine Trial for 1,811 miles

By HARRY EDWARDS

(While the subject of this article is Wolseley rather than Morris, the writer feels that the close connection between the two makes its such that Morris owners will find it of interest).

After the purchase of Wolseley Motor Company by Lord Nuffield in October 1926, it was operated as his own personal property, until in 1935 he decided to transfer the ownership to Morris Motors on the 1st July 1935. Coincident with this change there was a consolidation of manufacturing facilities throughout the organisation. An immediate result of these

Guildford Park Garage, Madrid Road in 1935.



*Predecessor of the Wolseley Wasp was the 1934 Wolseley Nine shown here,
(Photo: Graham Bushnell).*

changes was that the production of Wolseley engines was moved to Morris Engines of Coventry and those Morris engines that Wolseley had hitherto been making (eg. the overhead camshaft Minor engine) came to an end.

All subsequent Wolseley engines were push-rod overhead valve units. In the same season, 1935, the Wolseley Nine was replaced with a new version called the Wolseley Wasp, introduced in April 1935. In practically all respects the four-cylinder engine of the Wasp was the same as the Nine but the bore was increased from 60 to 61.5mm giving it a 10hp. rating. It was



also at that time that the wire wheels, which had been used for many years, gave way to pressed steel "Easiclean" versions and the now well known illuminated badge on the radiator was introduced.

It was a garage owner and Wolseley agent, R. J. Hughes of Guildford Park Garage Ltd., who decided to organise a novel non-stop trial using the new Wolseley Wasp saloon, starting from the Guildford premises in Madrid Road to Land's End and thence to John O' Groats and back to Guildford. "Le Jog" with a difference.

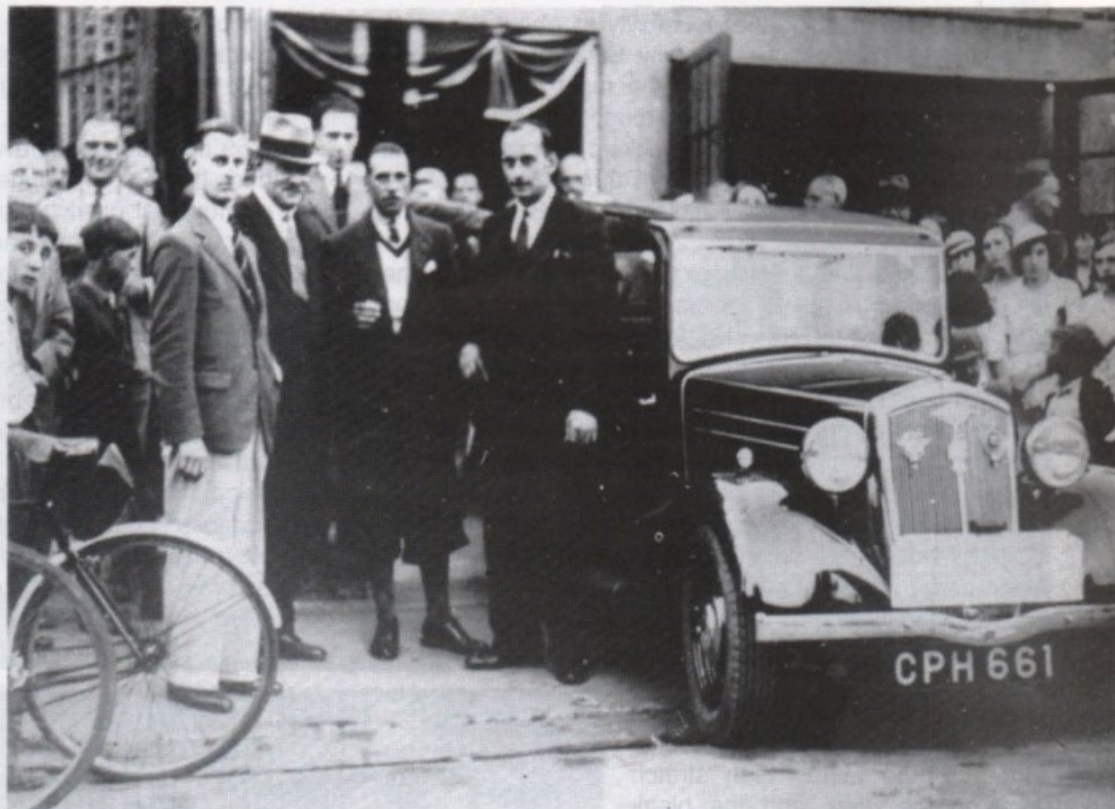
The crew of the Wolseley for the feat of endurance were Mr. Hughes himself, his foreman mechanic H. W. Plant and James Skinner who was the Financial Times motoring correspondent. All the various component parts of the engine - distributor, coil, cut-out fuses, carburetter, petrol pump, sparking plugs, tappet cover,

speedometer, starter button, dynamo, starting handle cover - were sealed with pink tape before the start, and in the presence of the Mayor of Guildford W. G. L. Sheppard, the Wolseley set off at 9pm on Monday 24th June 1935.

During the first night's running there was a heavy mist between Exeter and Truro which they reached at quarter to five on the Tuesday morning and Land's End came in sight some 80 minutes later. The milometer registered 265 miles. At each stage the log was signed by someone of note, usually the mayor or councillor.

Alternating the driving, Hughes and Plant did four hour shifts, and leaving Land's End the long trek northwards to John O' Groats, some 800 miles away, began. By the time Bodmin Moor was reached the sun had begun to break through and good going was made through Okehampton, Taunton and Bridgewater to Bristol which was reached at

1935 Wolseley Wasp. The badges on the radiator include the R.A.C. and the Junior Car Club.



Ready for the start outside Guildford Park Garage. The crew comprising James Skinner (observer), H. V. Plant and R. J. Hughes (right).

mid-day on Tuesday, where the City Treasurer signed the log and a telegram was sent to Guildford to report progress.

From here the course lay by Gloucester, Worcester, Kidderminster and Wolverhampton to Stafford, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Knutsford and Lancaster. Touching, it was recorded, an easy 60mph. on the open stretches en route. With 644 miles on the clock and having been signed in by the Mayor of Lancaster, W. M. Simpson, the Wolseley was heading for the Lake District and then beyond Kendal the long steep climb of Shap the famous Westmorland hill that rises five mile with a gradient of 1 in 5 over the fells towards Carlisle.

Describing this part of the journey, James Skinner wrote "This slope was surmounted by the car in remarkably easy style, third gear carrying it at a steady 20-25m.p.h. up most of the rise, accelerating to 30m.p.h. near the summit on this ratio. Top gear was then sufficient for a space and, finally, third gear brought the vehicle and its load of three occupants and full compliment of luggage, over the crest at 25m.p.h".

At Carlisle, where they arrived about 10pm. on Tuesday, Probably Land's End on the first leg of the journey.



there was fog which reduced visibility to about 30 yards entailing slow going but eventually Stirling was reached and then it was onward during the night traversing the Highland stretch between Crieff through the famous Sma' Glen. The route continued from Dunkeld with its woodland scenery on the River Tay and then through some of the wildest stretches in the Highlands to Ballinluig and Pitlochry.

As the Wolseley headlights picked out the road on the densely-wooded pass of Killcrankie then they traversed Blair Atholl, along the picturesque valley of the River Garry to the hamlet of Calvine before shortly starting the long ascent across the Grampian ridge of Drumalbain.

A suggestion of the dawn as the Wolseley was nearing Dalmospidal and the waters of Loch Garry could be seen glistening among the hills on their left and then, from the summit of the pass, the road gradually wound into Glen Truim for Dalwhinnie, where are the Mountain lands of Ben Alder, under whose slopes Prince Charlie lay hidden after the tragedy of Culloden.

Newtonmore, Kingussie, Kincaig, Aviemore, Carbridge, Tomatin, Moy, Craggie, Daviot and Culcabrook - where panorama of the dark blue waters of the Moray Firth stretch away to the right, and the bleak mountain lands of Sutherlandshire and the giant peak of Ben Nevis rise steeply from the opposite shores of the Firth, while to the left the valley of Loch Ness, known as the "Great Glen" winds into the hills. It was Wednesday morning and the trio reached Inverness at 7am. to be met by Mr. Macrae of the main Morris distributors, Macrae & Dick Ltd.

At this stage the Wolseley Wasp engine had been running continuously for over 34 hours and had travelled 970 miles but there was no time to stop. Heavy mist was encountered as they continued the route of Dingwall, Bonar Bridge, and Helmsdale, which was somewhat hazardous at times owing to the sharp bends on the precipice edge high above the sea. From Helmsdale the road gradually winds by a long stiff climb to the summit of the "Ord of Caithness" with gradients varying from 1-in-9 to 1-in-15. Then came the long descent to Berriedale to be followed by an ascent from the basin-shaped valley up the ridge again, 1,600 feet up with hairpin bends and gradients of 1-in-6 en route.

Latheron, Lybster and Wick were next, and then finally came John O' Groats which the car reached at 12.30pm. on Wednesday to be signed-in by D. Mackenzie at John O' Groats House, having now covered 1,109 miles since it left Guildford.

Pointing the Wasp southwards for the return journey, the drivers

encountered heavy fog which reduced the speed for some distance, then at Dingwall came heavy rain with something of a cloudburst at Kingussie over the wild moorland and mountain stretch back to Crieff, which was reached by 9.59 on Wednesday evening. Carlisle was reached in the early hours of 27th June and then followed the long stretch of industrial districts between Lancaster and Preston, by which time daybreak had again arrived.

The final stage of the journey lay through Leamington and Oxford where, at Morris Garages Ltd. they were met by Bertram W. Crease, manager of Clarendon Depot, to be checked in, then Reading, back to Guildford - which was reached exactly 1 o'clock on the Thursday afternoon. The Mayor of Guildford, Alderman W. G. L. Sheppard, was present to welcome the tired travellers who, with very little sleep, had covered a total distance of 1,811 miles.

(Editor's note. Thanks to Raymond Burgess of the Wolseley Register who kindly provided the photographs, records and log, without which this article could not have been written.)

The engine still running as the log is signed at one of the stops en route.



The location of this photograph was not recorded but the locals, were quite interested in the Wolseley saloon. In the background Stent Clarke & Co. Ltd. have their bookshop.

