

MORRIS CARS 1948 to 1984 – A Pictorial History



First and last Morris cars: an Ital and a Bullnose photographed on the occasion of the centenary of Morris in 2013 in Oxford.

available. Towards the end of production they were simply known as Metrovans. So far as car production was concerned the Ital models were the last to carry the Morris name. Production ended in 1984.

William Richard Morris was a high profile figure during his lifetime. Apart from his success with the companies which bore his name, he secured a well-deserved reputation as a philanthropist, giving generously to science, medicine, education and social care. He was given a peerage in 1934 and took the title Lord Nuffield. In 1938 he became a Viscount. He died in 1963 aged 85. It is estimated that in his lifetime his bequests totalled £30,000,000. As Nuffield his name will be familiar to many who visit hospitals and other institutions which benefitted from his generosity, and for those with an interest in things automotive, Morris remains a well-respected British marque.

One can only speculate on what Lord Nuffield would make of the latest proposals linking his name to a new 21st century vehicle. In 2019/2020 the Morris name once more came to prominence, and if planned developments continue it will feature on a



William Morris (Lord Nuffield) pictured in the grounds of Nuffield Place.

technologically advanced electric commercial vehicle by 2021. The Morris Commercial trade name was acquired by the state-owned Chinese car maker SAIC in 2007. Pre-production vehicles based on the iconic 1949 Morris J type van were unveiled in 2019. Production of the Morris Commercial JE van will be based in Worcestershire,

England. Initially this will focus on the JE type van, but pick-up and minibus versions may follow depending on the success of the venture. The essential features of the original J type are inherent in the design of the new JE model which will feature a lightweight modular chassis, carbon fibre panels, and will be powered by British produced lithium ion batteries. Its existence offers the prospect of a range of Morris-badged commercial vehicles suited to 21st century motoring returning to the road.

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2019 Morris JE van. A Morris for the 21st century.

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The Morris Oxford Series MO Travellers' Car pre-dated its Morris Minor counterpart by a year.

Car represented a departure from the monocoque body design of the Morris Oxford Series MO saloon. Although identical in terms of the body forward of the 'B' posts, a rear chassis frame supported an ash frame on to which weight saving aluminium sections were fitted to the sides and the lower sections of the two rear doors. A full-length aluminium roof panel was affixed rearward of the 'B' posts. Provision was also made for sliding windows on both sides of the ash frame.

The result was a roomy, multi-purpose vehicle officially designated as a Travellers' Car. However, it was also referred to as a 'Shooting Brake,' and in literature designed for the American market was classed as a 'Station Wagon.'

At launch the early models sported the earlier-type Mazak front grille, but this was soon dispensed with in favour of the stainless-steel version used on the saloon models. From 1953 the Travellers' Car was jointly marketed with the smaller Morris Minor version of the same model. Mechanically, the specification mirrored that of the saloon models. The main



attraction of the vehicle was its capacious load-carrying potential. The option to pull the rear seat base forward, and then to push the split back squabs forward to create an enlarged flat floor area, was a real boon to commercial business travellers and family members alike. As if to stress the functionality of the vehicle, a durable floor covering in the form of a one-piece rubber mat was fitted to the passenger area. Standard and deluxe models were available. Deluxe models in 1953 benefitted from leather-covered seat cushions and squabs, and a 3½ kilowatt heating and ventilation system. Production continued until



Compact rear light unit and prominent Oxford badging.



the use of a protective rubber strip along the bottom of the rear wings.

The Series II Morris Oxford remained in production until October 1956 during which time relatively few modifications were made to the model specification. Changes in 1954 included revised bonnet stay arrangements and the fitting of a drip shield to the fuel pump, while in 1955 the steering column was lengthened and a modified gearchange and bracket added.

The Series II saloon was also assembled

in India under licence by the Hindustan Motor Company and was marketed as the Hindustan Landmaster. Standard equipment included temperature and oil pressure gauges, ammeter, clock, heater, anti-dazzle driver's mirror, driver and passenger sun visors, leather seats, pile carpet, and front and rear over-riders. Traveller models had the seat arrangement described as above, along with rear windows with opening panels, and quarter rear bumpers instead of full width. Optional extras included a radio.

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Other changes introduced at the same time included changes to the gearbox, a new clutch, improved front brakes, and the introduction of a combined ignition key and starter switch to replace the floor-mounted starter button.

Automatic transmission became available as an option in 1965. By this time, it was estimated that 5600 'Minis' of all types were being built each week, and, in February 1965 the millionth Mini was built at Longbridge. Mk I versions of the Morris Mini Minor continued in production until October 1967 when further upgrades resulted in the Mk II models being announced.

Standard equipment for the 1962 Basic saloon models included large front door bins, cubby box with ashtray either side of rear seat, cloth trimmed seats, Deluxe added heater, windscreen washers, passenger sun visor, opening rear quarter lights, vinyl treated fabric trim, vinyl covered dashboard, door kick plates, bumper over-riders, wheel trims and bright finish for sills and windows and chrome plated petrol cap and rear number plate surround, Super specification featured water temperature and oil pressure gauges, roof-mounted interior light, chromed lever-type interior door handles instead of pull strings, over riders with 'nudge bars,' stainless steel window surrounds and sill finishers, duo-tone paint scheme with roof in white or black and front grille with vertical bars in addition to the horizontal bars of the Basic and Deluxe. Optional equipment included



Mk II Morris Mini Cooper and Morris Mini Cooper S models.



The motorsport potential of the Mini Cooper models was promoted in period brochures.

cooling fan from late 1961. Price. Cooper saloon 1961 £697

ENGINE: Bore 62.43mm, stroke 81.28mm, 997cc (60.86in³), maximum bhp 55 at 6000rpm, two SU HS2 carburettors.

GEARBOX: Floor-mounted remote control gearchange lever. Ratios: top 3.765, third 5.11, second 7.21, first 12.05, reverse 12.05. Final drive ratio 3.765 with the option of 3.44:1 (see 1071 model).

BRAKES: Front 7in discs, rear 7in drums.

DIMENSIONS: **Track:** front 3ft 11.75in (1.213m); **weight:** 12cwt 2qtr (636kg).

998 model: January 1964 to 1969. Note Mark II model introduced in October 1967 had new rear lights, enlarged rear window and revised shape front grille. Price 1964 £590.

ENGINE: Bore 64.6mm, stroke 76.2mm, 998cc (60.86in³), maximum bhp 55 at 5800rpm. Two SU HS2 carburettors.

GEARBOX: As 997cc model but with new type

Mini-Minor, Cooper and Moke

of glassfibre panels which allowed for an all enclosed body with doors and rear quarter side windows to be fitted.

The Mini Moke remained in production in

Austin and Morris versions of the Mini Moke were produced (see text). Ultimately, though, the Moke was more suited to the beach than the military.





The Marina carried on the conventional rear-wheel drive tradition that had been adopted in the Morris Minor and Morris Oxford Series VI models that it replaced. It also bucked the badge engineering trend prevalent in BMC and British Leyland. Apart from American, Canadian and South African Austin-badged models, the Marina was marketed solely as a Morris throughout its production run in the UK.

When introduced the range consisted of four-door saloons and two-door coupés, with 1.3 Deluxe, 1.3 Super Deluxe, 1.8 Deluxe, 1.8 Super Deluxe and 1.8 TC options. In 1972 a 1.8 Super Deluxe four-door estate joined the model line-up.

Interestingly, the coupé used the same front doors as the saloon. Normally, a two-door car would have wider front doors than a four-door to make access to the rear of the car easier, but this convention was dispensed with in the case of the Marina.

Standard equipment included water temperature gauge, heater/demister with single-speed fan, front and rear full width parcel shelves, a rubber floor covering, interior bonnet release, two-speed wipers with flick wipe and electric windscreen washers controlled by a lever on the left side of the steering column. A lever on the right side controlled the horn, headlight flasher, dip switch and indicators, and there was a

Morris car-derived commercial vehicles



The Ital 440 and 575 were the last Morris models.



passenger seat, carpeting in the cab, courtesy light switches and a locking fuel cap. Established L trim items such as soft trimmed front door panels with armrests and door bins, inertia seatbelts and a cigarette lighter were all retained.

Following the end of saloon and estate car production of the Morris Ital in April 1984 production of the Morris Ital 440 and 575 vans and pick-ups continued for a time thus making them the last vehicles to carry the Morris name. No vehicles, commercial or otherwise, carried the Morris name beyond 1985.

COST 1983: 440 van £4248, 440L van £4424, van 575 £4610 ,van 575L £ 4782, pick-up 575L £4681 (all with 1275cc engine).

COLOURS 1983: Arum White, Champagne Beige, Cinnabar Red, Monza Red, Emberglow Red, Primula Yellow, Clove Brown, Eclipse Blue, Black.