



Triumph Owners Club

## Triumph Mayflower

The Triumph Mayflower was an attempt to place luxury in the Post-war small car market, but sales did not meet company expectations. The scaled-down razor edge styling which may just have fitted the Renown, looked out of place on an even smaller car. A side-valve motor of only 1247cc mated to a three-speed column change gearbox didn't suggest great performance, but the Mayflower did have independent front suspension and it can claim to being the first unitary construction car to carry the Triumph name. Over 34,000 were made between 1949 and 1953.

When Triumph failed in 1939, it was bought by Thomas Ward Ltd, a company with origins in ship-breaking and scrap metal dealing. That company on-sold the Triumph assets to Sir John Black of Standards, who amalgamated the two car companies. Sir John had an eye on the post-war American market; . . . hence the name Mayflower after the ship with its Pilgrim Fathers association. This "gimmick" of marketing even extended to an emblem of the ship being designed into the casting of the car's bonnet catch.

Mechanically the Mayflower's motor is a modified version of that fitted to the Standard Ten but with an aluminium cylinder head. With a single Solex carburetor, it developed 38 bhp. The gearbox is derived from the Standard Vanguard, and with synchromesh on all three forward ratios. Coil springs with telescopic dampers serve the independent front suspension, with Vanguard type semi-elliptic leaf springs and conventional live-axle at the rear. Brakes are hydraulic with an "umbrella handle" type pull-on handbrake under the dashboard.

The Mayflower's performance was never startling. When tested by "The Motor" in 1950, it was found to have a top speed nudging 63mph, and took over 26 seconds to accelerate from 0 – 50 mph. It returned a fuel consumption of 28.3 miles per gallon.

The Mayflower was unveiled at the 1949 British International Motor Show at Earls Court and despite its modest performance attracted favourable reviews. Deliveries did not begin until the middle of 1950 and home market sales did not reach expectations, although significant numbers did reach New Zealand. In Australia a utility version was produced, and it would be interesting to know if any crossed the Tasman to survive in New Zealand. Of the total Mayflower production of just over 34,000, some sources suggest as few as 100 may survive worldwide. Though never common in their day in New Zealand, they were not rare, which suggests there must be a few small razor-edge saloons to be found languishing in barns for restoration. To date they have not been sought after, so when they appear they are cheap despite their present rarity.

### Buying a Mayflower

There was no development or changes to the Mayflower over its four-year production span, so there's nothing to separate one car from another in terms of specification. This means condition and originality are the focus when purchasing.

- » Bodywork: The Body panels tend to be of good steel and are durable. Check for rust along mudguard seams, the bottom of doors, sills and wheel-arches, also the front inner mudguards, boot floor and bottom edge of the boot lid. Corrosion around the beading below the rear window suggests much worse rust hidden out of sight

- » Engine: The 1247cc side-valve engine is working hard to propel the car via a three-speed transmission. Under such conditions engines are not long-lived and wear relatively quickly. The classic sign of wear is blue smoke from the exhaust, betraying bore or valve guide wear, or broken or worn piston rings. The Alloy cylinder head can be internally corroded if the engine has been operated for periods without adequate anti-freeze in the coolant. This applies particularly to cars that have been left standing for years without water being drained from the cooling system. A clattery top end and burnt valves are common due to neglect of awkward to get at tappets.
- » Steering: Steering boxes are weak and rebuilds expensive. Lost motion (play) at the steering wheel may indicate this, but may also indicate wear in idler arms or other parts of the steering geometry. Some reconditioned items are available.
- » Suspension: The front suspension king-pins wear if lubrication has been neglected. However, these are the same as fitted to the TR2 sportscar and sourcing replacements is not difficult.
- » Trim: In common with many cars of the period, matching trim materials and interior and exterior fittings are now very hard to find.

It is worth restating then that condition is everything with a Mayflower simply because it is not a high-value car, and is unlikely to reflect the full costs of restoration when work is completed.



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