

Standard and Triumph Registration Statistics

Part 5 – Triumph Mayflower

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The Mayflower was intended as an upmarket small sedan and used 'razor edge' styling similar to the larger Renown and some other English cars of the 1940s. The name came from the ship Mayflower which transported the Pilgrims to North America in 1620. It was chosen because Standard had high hopes the car would be successful on the North American market.

The Mayflower was first shown to the UK public at the Earls Court Motor Show in October 1949. However the car was not to go on sale in the UK until June 1950. CKD kits became available for overseas assembly shortly after.

While the unitary body was all new, the 1277cc 4 cyl side valve engine was derived from that used in the pre-war Standard Flying 10. It was of long stroke design, a consequence of the then UK taxing system which taxed vehicles according to the RAC horsepower rating of the engine. There is more on this in the Footnote.

To give some perspective to the Mayflower's small size, the 84 inch wheelbase is 10 inches shorter than the VW beetle.

The Mayflower did not sell in the numbers hoped on either the UK or overseas markets. Reasons included a comparatively high selling price, lack of performance from the elderly side valve engine and the American market's preference for much larger cars. Less than 1,000 cars were exported to North America.

I have been unable to ascertain when the first registrations of Mayflowers occurred in Australia due to the limited statistics available prior to July 1951. Some registrations may have occurred in late 1950 but I suspect volume sales did not commence until the first half of 1951.

Ten Mayflower drop head coupes (convertibles) were built in the UK by the coachbuilder Mulliners. Australia was to see a more numerous and interesting variation, the Mayflower utility. The utility was unique to Australia.

My guess is Standard in Australia made the utility because of the popularity of utilities in Australia and they found it comparatively easy to make from the CKD sedan kits. To my eye the cabin rear, utility sides, rear bumper bar, lights and tailgate all appear to be sedan derived components rather than new pressings.

The first registrations of utilities occurred in July 1952.

An interesting aspect of the utility is the folklore it was made by Standard in Australia without the knowledge of its UK parent. Readers may have heard stories of Sir John Black from Standard UK visiting Australia and being surprised on seeing the Mayflower utility. The story goes he ordered production be stopped. I don't know if any of this was true but two things suggest it was not.

Firstly any directive to cease production had no noticeable impact on the utility's availability to customers. Registrations of utilities and sedans continued in parallel with both ceasing by mid-1954 by which time production of all Mayflowers had stopped to make way for the replacement Standard 8.

Secondly, if Standard in Australia had kept the Mayflower Utility secret from their UK parent it was news to their advertising department. Advertising from the time stated the Mayflower Coupe Utility was 'a product of Standard Motor Company Coventry in association with Standard Motor Company (Australia) Limited'.

There is uncertainty over how many Mayflower utilities were made. The internet contains many references to the number being 150. I don't know the source of this figure but ABS registration statistics show the number was more than double this at 361.

The following table shows the number of Mayflower sedans and utilities registered by year in Australia :

Body Type	1951	1952	1953	1954	Total
Sedan	2026	1846	709	6	4,587
Utility	0	131	217	13	361
Total	2026	1977	926	19	4,948

A number of Mayflower sedans are owned by Club members. Unfortunately few utilities survive today. I've heard about 11 that are known to exist with one owned by Club member Arthur Moorehouse.

One part of the Mayflower was to live on. The front suspension design was adopted for the Triumph TR2 to 6 range of sports cars.

Footnote.

I mentioned in an earlier article on the Standard 8 and Cadet/10 range the Standard 10 was 9 hp as far as registration authorities were concerned. Graham Johnson in his article in the Triumphant Standard of November 2016 wondered why I thought this. The context of these articles is to summarise registration data as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The ABS data lists these cars as 9hp. I should have explained that the difference was due to rounding. As explained by Grahame the actual RAC hp rating was 9.6 or 9.8 depending on which formula is used. Naturally Standard rounded this up to 10. However the registration authorities take a different view and round down. The same situation applies to the Mayflower which had an identical 63mm bore – advertised as 10hp but always shown as 9hp in ABS data.

Readers will have noticed from Grahame's article the RAC horsepower rating is not a true measurement of power produced by an engine. It's a mathematical calculation based on the bore and number of cylinders. The stroke of the engine does not come into the calculation. Therefore manufacturers could increase the power of an engine by increasing the stroke without moving the car into a higher tax category. This led to UK cars of the time having small bores and long strokes. The Mayflower engine was an example with bore of 63mm and stroke of 100mm.