

# HUMBER SUPER SNIPE

**FIRST WITH ————— FOUR EYES**

*Starting the British craze for four head-lighted cars, the Humber Super Snipe has many improvements not as obvious as its bold-looking front end.*

**O**VER the past couple of years, Rootes Australia Ltd has done its best to impress people that it has been giving them very good value for money.

The accent has been on better and better finish and the lowest price possible.

Its claims have been well justified with most models in its wide range, but none more so than the Humber Super Snipe.

Basically a conventional design that was introduced four years ago, the Snipe has been gradually improved and modified. The Series Two was rightly regarded by many as one of the best values, pound for pound, on the whole market.

There was not anything startling in its shape and most of its features were conventional. Its greatest virtue was probably its lack of radical fea-

tures. Its engineers and designers had clearly gone so thoroughly into every aspect of the car, and had had the experience of a generation of motor cars based on the same principles to guide them, that they were long past the stage of making any mistakes.

It was difficult to foresee Rootes making a new model out of the Super Snipe in 1961, short of a brand new design, so thoroughly competent was the 1960 model.

But they did manage to make a new model of it, and one that startled the London Motor Show when it was released there at the end of 1960 and will undoubtedly startle many Australians as it gets about here.

To pinch a line from one series of Rootes' own advertisements, there was a touch of genius about the way

they decided to make it a new model.

They made the Humber into the first British car to feature four headlights.

When American makers, almost to a man, decided to do the same thing three years ago, most critics sneered and said it was just another Yankee styling gimmick.

The same was said of the new Humber. But after giving one of the first double-double Snipes off the Australian production line a thorough test, I am inclined to take issue with these critics.

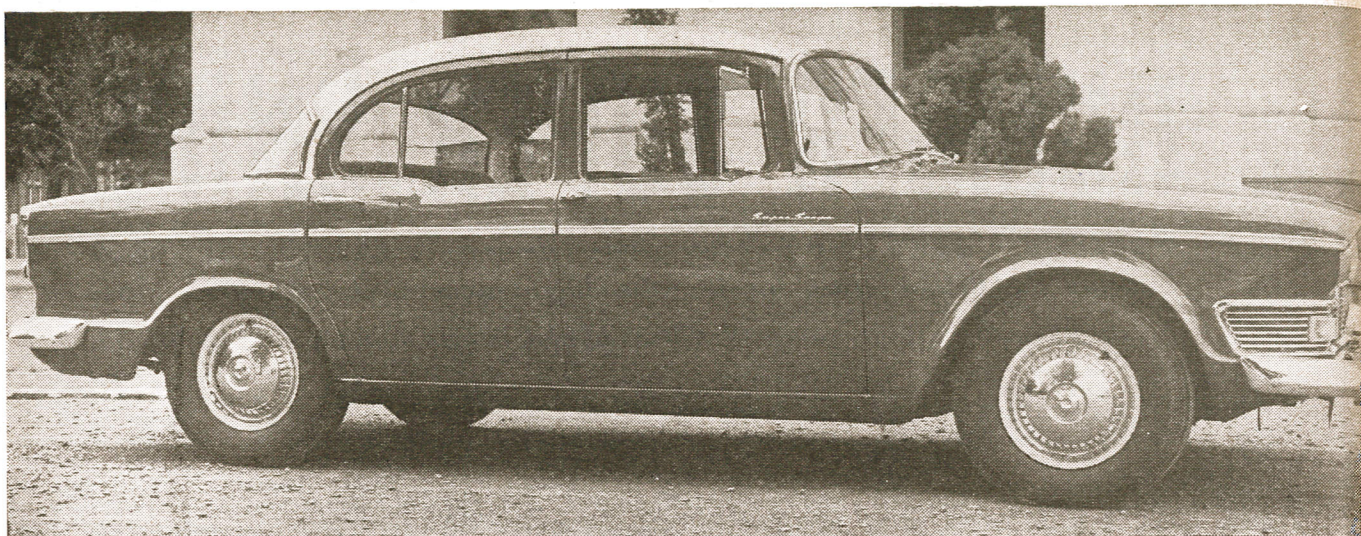
In the flesh, the new front treatment of the Snipe looks just fine. The double-double headlights fit in well with the new, broader fenders, the heavy "sterling grin" radiator grille and the sweeping, flattened bonnet.

The treatment has extended the

*Bold, four-light front of the Humber blends well with therest of the car. Grille is much wider than before.*







*Although not greatly different in profile from the previous model, the current Super Snipe has a longer nose, less side ornamentation.*

length of the Humber by nearly four inches, although there is no change in the wheelbase, or the body back of the windscreen.

The car now has a much lower look, a massive, almost leering appearance that means business.

And this is a car that does mean business.

The three-litre six-cylinder engine is a fine piece of engineering that helps to give this 30 cwt sedan an impressive performance that will keep it ahead of all but a few cars available out here.

There is no nonsense about this smooth six. It has hemispherical combustion chambers and an oversquare cylinder pattern.

With the lower of alternative compression ratios available for the Snipe that is chosen for Australian conditions and our comparatively low octane fuel (7.5 instead of 8.0 to 1) the engine develops 125 bhp. Its performance would indicate that the 125 are pretty honest horses, unlike those under the bonnets of some cars.

Despite several attempts I was unable to get a better top speed than 94.7 mph — a fair way off the claimed 100 mph.

Perhaps the lower compression ratio makes the Australian Snipe a slightly slower vehicle than its British parent. But the test car's low mileage—1200—and the fact that I gave it no more run-up (about two and a half hour miles) than every other car gets on my test track, probably had more to do with a top speed figure that is probably disappointing to Rootes.

However, the company has little cause for disappointment. There are very few cars sold in Australia capable in standard form of a genuine ton, despite what their speedos and advertising blurb claim and having a genuine maximum speed well into the nineties puts the Humber into pretty exclusive company anyway.

Acceleration was particularly good for a big car equipped with automatic transmission.

But the Humber's greatest virtues

were shown cruising on the open road. A cruising speed of 75 to 80 mph was well within its capabilities and allowed driver and passengers to relax completely.

The body sat down well on the road and the suspension was untroubled by rough patches or tight corners.

The suspension actually contained the most important of several detail changes in the Super Snipe that are not immediately obvious.

The front coil springs have been given a higher flexing rate and the leaf springs at the back are wider. Combined with a slight change in shocker settings, these relatively minor alterations have helped to make a noticeable improvement in the car's riding qualities.

But the ride on the new model is firmer, smoother and more satisfying to the keen driver who likes to push this very willing car along fairly hard. The tendency of the old model to pitch in some conditions has gone and body roll on corners has been reduced considerably.

One old Humber fault has not been corrected. The tyres still squeal on corners like a bunch of Presley fans.

It may have been the fault of the particular tyres on the test car, but I rather think it was their design—big, fat and low pressure.

However, if you can stand the noise, you will find the Humber will corner with zest and polish.

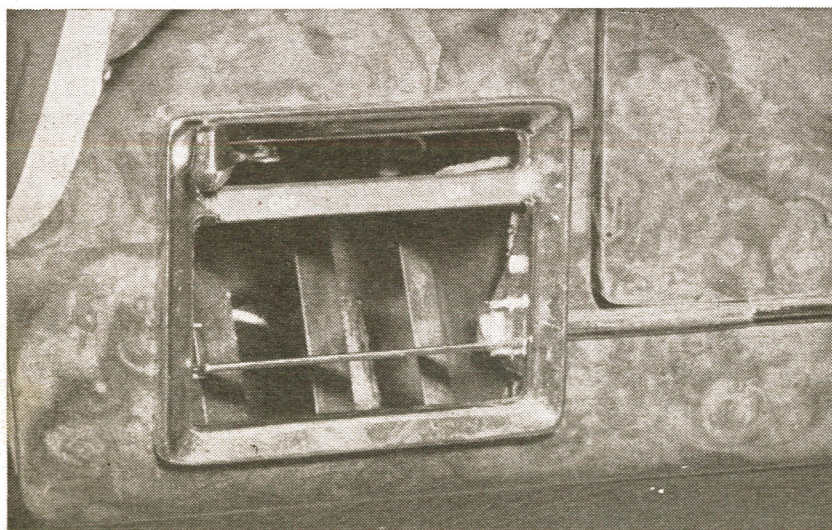
Other detail changes are mainly in the fittings department.

The dashboard has been slightly rearranged and reorganised—for the better.

The heater controls are simpler and the fresh air ventilation greatly improved. Now, two fresh air vents are provided—one on each end of the dashboard and they can be individually controlled; à la Mercedes-Benz. Unfortunately, they operate independently of the heater, which still effectively pumps out its comforting blasts through ducts under the dashboard, for the passengers' benefit and through demisters to keep the windscreen from clouding over.

*(Continued on page 46)*

*Modifications internally include new position for ventilation system outlets on sides of dashboard.*





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The choke control has been altered, too. For some reason, Super Snipe chokes in the past have always seemed stiff and hard to operate.

The new model has a sliding lever to control the choke, and it works like a charm. The choke opening can be varied as with the conventional push-pull button, but the Humber's lever has three positions marked — cold start, warm up and normal running.

When the choke is operating, a bright white light shines — a commendable reminder for those who tend to forget they have left the choke fully or partly operating.

The rear vision mirror has been redesigned, too, but it is still far from perfect. The Super Snipe has a very broad, but comparatively shallow back window. The mirror, however is very deep and quite narrow. Through it, the driver can see through only about a third to one half of the rear window.

Rootes never seems to have made up its mind about Humber rear vision mirrors. They have had them on the

dashboard, dangling from the ceiling; they have had them broad and they have had them narrow. Last year, the mirror was curved and although it gave comprehensive rear vision, the view was quite distorted. This year, the matter still seems unsolved.

From the driver's point of view, the best detail change has been the repositioning of the intermediate hold switch.

The switch is now incorporated in the automatic transmission selector lever. You just push the lever towards the dashboard—at right angles to its normal travel plane and, voila, you are in intermediate. A simple and very effective arrangement.

Of course, intermediate can also be obtained by flooring the accelerator and it will stay in that ratio until the car is doing 60 mph, when a safety switch will automatically move the transmission back to top—to prevent any possibility of over-revving.

In normal drive, the Borg-Warner three speed unit starts off in second and changes into top as soon as the driver's attitude to the accelerator

permits it. Of course, low ratio can be obtained by moving the selector to L.

A very high degree of driver and passenger comfort is provided in the Humber. There are arm rests on all doors and in the centre of both seats. Carpet covers the floor and highly polished walnut figures on the dashboard and doors.

A heater, a complete range of instruments, windscreen washers, two-speed electric wipers, quick-action window winders and a lockable glove-box with a light inside that can also be used as a map light are among its many creature comforts.

And the twin headlights more than prove their worth in operation. On full beam, when all four headlights stab the darkness ahead, the whole road seems to be floodlit for several hundred yards. It is well possible with them to drive the Humber at its normal daytime cruising speed.

Rootes has definitely improved the breed with its latest Humber Super Snipe. At its price of twenty shillings under £2000, it is one of the best big car values on the Australian market.

## Technical details:

### HUMBER SUPER SNIPE

#### SPECIFICATIONS

##### ENGINE:

Cylinders .....	six, in line
Bore and stroke .....	87.3 by 82.55 mm
Cubic capacity .....	2965 cc
Compression ratio .....	7.5
Power at rpm .....	125 at 4800
Maximum Torque .....	161 ft/lbs at 1800 rpm

##### TRANSMISSION:

Type .....	three-speed Borg Warner automatic
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##### SUSPENSION:

Front .....	independent coils
rear .....	semi-elliptic

##### STEERING:

Turns, 1 to 1 .....	4.2 turns
Circle .....	38 ft 11 in

##### DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase .....	9 ft 2 in
Track, front .....	4 ft 8 in
Track, rear .....	4 ft 7 in
Length .....	15 ft 8 in
Height .....	5 ft 1 in

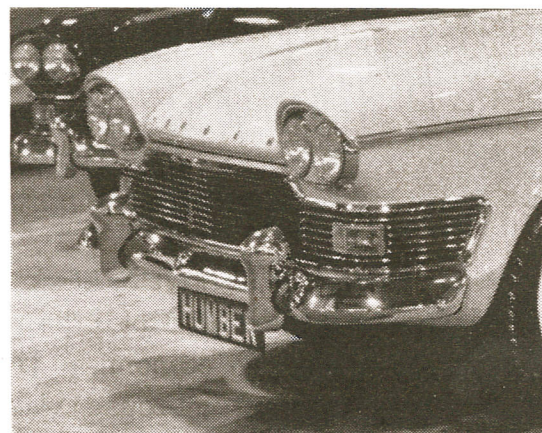
##### WEIGHT:

Dry .....	28 cwt
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#### PERFORMANCE

##### MAXIMUM SPEED IN GEARS:

First .....	46 mph
Second .....	60 mph
Top .....	94.7 mph



##### ACCELERATION:

Standing Quarter-mile:	
Fastest run .....	21 sec
0 to 30 mph .....	4.9 sec
0 to 40 mph .....	7.5 sec
0 to 50 mph .....	11.7 sec
0 to 60 mph .....	15.8 sec
0 to 70 mph .....	22.9 sec
20 to 40 mph .....	5.8 sec
40 to 60 mph .....	9.2 sec

##### GO-TO-WHOA:

0-60-0 mph .....	20 sec
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##### FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Overall for test .....	17 mpg
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