

1938 – 1940 Flying 8A & 1945 - 1948 4/8A Buyers Guide

Buying Guide Pre-war Standard Flying 8A (2 door) 1938 - 1940 & Post-war 4/8A 1945 - 1948

Introduction

This is one of a series of buyer's guides on Standard cars for those who are looking at a prospective purchase.

This guide assumes all the normal checks will be done, such as such as oil pressure, compression or lack of it, oil in water, noises, rattles, state of electrics, etc, etc. It is intended to identify the good and bad points of the Pre & Post-war models in particular. This is version 1 and it may be updated over time.

Major Differences between Pre & Post-war Models

1. Pre-war cars have horizontal louvre's in the both sides of the bonnet; the post-war cars do not.
2. Pre-war cars have a three-speed gearbox and the post-war a four-speed gearbox.
3. Pre-war cars are 1021cc and post-war 1009cc. (See engine section for more details)
4. Pre-war clutch plate has three damper springs. The post-war has four damper springs and the clutch housing is separate.
5. The prop shaft is shorter on the post-war cars to allow for the four-speed gearbox and has extra grease nipples.
6. A modified brake countershaft is fitted to the post-war cars to give a greater front wheel braking ratio and the operating cables are a different length.
7. The chassis cross member is moved further towards the rear axle to allow for the four-speed gearbox.
8. The transverse front spring is secured in the centre with four nuts on pre-war cars and with six nuts on post-war cars.
9. The shackles and shackle pins were modified. (see more details in the Steering & Suspension Section.)

Commission Numbers

1938-1940

To be found under the bonnet on a plate on the bulkhead (firewall).

July 1938	8A	N1 on
January 1940	8A	N23069 on
August 1940	8A	N33101 on De Luxe
August 1940	8A	N34601 Standard

1945-1948

To be found under the bonnet on a plate on the bulkhead (firewall)

July 1945 NA 1

January 1946 NA 1711

January 1947 NA 19344

January 1948 NA 42063

Background and Model History

The Standard Flying 8A Saloon, Saloon De-Luxe and Tourer were introduced in September 1938 and the Drophead Coupe was introduced in April 1939. A four-door version was planned but never went into full production; only a few pre-production models were ever made and are very rare.

After the war Standard officially dropped the 'Flying' part of the name but early post-war advertising retained the Flying name. Owners still referred to them as Flying Eights.

The Standard 4/8A Saloon, Tourer & Coupe were re-introduced in July 1945; externally, the only thing that distinguished pre & post war Saloon cars was the lack of louvres in the bonnet side of the post-war cars. The Tourer had a completely new body but at a first look it was difficult to see the difference apart from the lack of louvres in the bonnet side.

The cars were very unusual for small cars of the time in having independent front suspension.

The cars all featured the waterfall style grille.

Chassis Description:

All the cars have a separate chassis with C Section side rails and cruciform bracing in the centre of the car. There are ladder rails at the rear near the petrol tank and in front of the engine. The chassis is underslung at rear. Rear axle with conventional differential and half shafts. Propshaft with front and rear Hardy Spicer universal joints. The chassis are robustly built and have no particular weaknesses.

Engine:

All pre-war models are fitted with a Standard-designed and built four-cylinder side valve engine of 1021cc with cylinders of 57mm bore and 100mm stroke. Post-war cars have a resized engine of 1009cc with cylinders of 56.7mm. Engines are sited North-South and are of conventional design with an iron block and aluminium cylinder head. The car is fed by a Solex 26 AIC downdraught carburettor

Due to the lower vaporisation point of modern fuels a common problem is vaporisation of the fuel, causing the engine to stall when hot. There are two solutions to this:

1. Lag all the fuel pipes with exhaust lagging and route them as far away from the engine as practicable and fit a heat deflector shield between the exhaust manifold and fuel pump.

2. Replace the mechanical fuel pump with an electric pump that can be mounted away from the engine and lag the pipes with exhaust lagging.

The camshaft opens the valves via tappets that are held in two removable blocks. The camshaft in the block is turned by a Reynolds chain from the crank wheel. The distributor is driven by a shaft geared to the centre of the camshaft, the distributor being situated at the top of the shaft on the cylinder head while the other end of the shaft turns the oil pump in the sump. These cars are not fitted with a water pump and water circulation is achieved by thermo-syphon. There is a cooling fan. The engine is robustly built with no particular weak points, though the aluminium head can be very difficult to remove if it has been on the car a long time.

Clutch and Gearbox.

Pre-war cars

A conventional Borg and Beck dry clutch drives a three-speed and reverse gearbox of Standard's own design, mounted on the back of the engine by means of a bell-housing. Synchromesh is provided on the top two gears. The clutch is lever operated. The gearchange should be light and precise. The most common problem on these cars is jumping out of gear; this is most common on high mileage cars due to general wear.

First gear can be very noisy. Spare parts or complete second-hand gearboxes are available from the club.

Post-war cars

A conventional Borg and Beck dry clutch drives a four-speed and reverse gearbox of Standard's own design, mounted on the back of the engine in its own clutch housing. Synchromesh is provided on the top three gears. The clutch is lever operated. The gear change should be light and precise. These gearboxes are very reliable and are more than capable of handling the engine power. Spare parts or complete second-hand gearboxes are available from the club.

It is important to note that pre & post war gearboxes are NOT interchangeable.

Steering & Suspension

The cars use Burman Douglas steering boxes; these do suffer from wear in the steering nut and pin. Replacement nuts are sometimes available and these easily remove about 50% of the wear in the box, but further improvement requires a costly rebuild of the box.

Early cars up to 1946 had an adjustable top outer bush; this was to adjust the camber angle. This adjustment was deleted on the later cars.

The Club has most parts, including new wishbones, plus this adjustable bush - these can sometimes work loose.

The shackle pins for the front suspension were changed after the first 5000 cars were produced in 1945/6 from 1/2" to 9/16".

For later cars there is a limited supply of complete kits containing all the necessary pins, bushes & thrush washers etc. We also have the shackle pins early & late 1/2" & 9/16".

All the cars have independent front suspension. On pre-war cars the transverse mounted spring is secured by four nuts in the centre while on the post-war car there are six nuts in the centre.

Ignition and Electrics

A Lucas six-volt system is used, with the battery under the bonnet on the left (nearside) bulkhead. Two types of six-volt dynamo are fitted to the cars. On early pre-war cars (up to commission number N8168 for Saloons and N10370 for Tourers) the three-brush-controlled type with a cut-out is fitted, with two charging rates controlled by the ignition switch on the dashboard. On later pre-war and all post-war cars a two-brush dynamo with a fully-automatic external voltage regulator is fitted.

The club carries both types of reconditioned dynamos, plus cut-outs & voltage regulators. These are on an exchange basis, subject to the old units being suitable for repair.

The starter is mounted alongside the engine and throws the Bendix dog into mesh with the starter ring on flywheel. A starter switch mounted on the end of the starter is operated by a piano wire from the dash.

There are separate sidelights and headlights at front; a dipping solenoid extinguishes the offside light when operating on dipped beam. (See *Headlights* below.) A single rear light and stop light were original fitments. Trafficators fitted in centre pillars

Brakes, Wheels and Tyres

All cars have cable Bendix Brakes operating on all four wheels. The centre-mounted handbrake also acts on all four wheels. The cars have developed a reputation for poor braking, particularly in later life. In all cases this can be remedied by ensuring that new linings are fitted and that all brakes are correctly and accurately adjusted according to specific instructions available. The Club can supply a CD with instructions on how to adjust these brakes correctly.

Wheels on the pre-war cars are the pressed steel type with three-stud fixing and on the post-war cars are the pressed steel type with four-stud fixing.

The Saloon and Coupe were fitted with 4.75 X 16" tyres and the Tourer had 4.5 X 16" tyres. These are available from most classic car tyre suppliers but are expensive; 500/525 X 16 can be fitted and are cheaper but the spare wheel cover on the Tourer does not then fit. Visit the club WebShop where you can obtain a special members-only discount from one of our suppliers. .

Body Construction

The body is of welded pressed steel with separate bolted-on front inner and outer wings and separate rear outer wings.

Mechanicals

Fortunately, the prospects are quite bright. The cars are over-engineered and very robust. Engine, gearboxes and transmissions are virtually unburstable unless they have done very high mileages. A high mileage car may be burning quite a lot of oil but still running fine. Many mechanical items are usually available from Club stores though it may be necessary to accept good second-hand spares in non-critical applications.

Interior

Whilst it would be good to find a car with a nice interior, chances are that it may be worn. All the materials required to restore the interior are available for DIY use. Professional re-trims, however, can be very expensive, so always get a number of quotes from reputable restorers and inspect examples of their work

Other potential weak points

Wood rot: Front floor kick-panels driver and passenger side.

Rust spots: Sills and door bottoms are the most easily attacked, followed by inner wings at the front and rear, then floor and boot corners. In bad cases the outer wing edges will rot, as will the panel joints between the inner and outer wings and between the inner wings and the chassis.

Unfortunately, no new panels are available and second-hand ones may have suffered as above. The moral is look for a car with bodywork as good as possible. A good metal worker should be able to repair or replicate panels.

It is very important that the sills, particularly on the Tourer & Coupe, are in good condition, as they are vital to the integrity of the car and the front will part company with the rear. The club can supply over sills to members via the WebShop.

Headlights

On dipped beam the offside headlight is extinguished while the nearside has a solenoid-operated dipping mechanism in the headlight shell. Ideally this dipping mechanism should be replicated on the other headlight to achieve double dipping. This will require a relay in the operating circuit as the dip switch is not designed to carry sufficient current; an optional extra on post-war cars was double-dipping front lights.

Alternatively, double filament bulbs should be used, this requiring another lighting circuit.

Tail lights/stop lights

Original fitment was only one of each. The wiring can be simply extended and a duplicate light fitted on the nearside, if that has not already been done

Sunroofs

All saloons have a sunroof and these should be checked for leaks. Staining on the headlining is an obvious clue. The most common cause is holes in one or more of the four drainpipes extending from the corners. Make sure that the drain tubes are not blocked and that the rubber tubes under the wings are not perished or missing. A good way to clear the drains is to use a curtain wire to push out

the debris. If leaking, the drains are relatively easily remedied in themselves but require the disturbance and replacement of the headlining to get at them.

Further Information

The Standard Motor Club has a Comprehensive Spares Scheme for its members. The following is a list of some of the spares held by the club for these cars.

Engine

Pre-war Pistons - All sizes, Post-war Pistons - Most sizes, Inlet and exhaust valves, Valve Guides and springs, Valve Tappets and screws, Main Bearings, Big end Bearings, Thrust Washers, Distributor Drive and Gear, Distributor Shaft, Hoses, Fan belts, Core Plugs, Gaskets Sets and Individual Gaskets, Petrol Pumps - s/h, Petrol Pump Kits

Engine and Gearbox Mountings

Pre-and Post-war

Ignition Parts

Early and Late D Cap, Early and Late Condensers, Early and Late Points, Rotor Arms, Plugs, Six-volt Coils

Electrical

Exchange Dynamos, Dynamo Pulleys, Exchange Starters, Starter Switches, Bulbs, Trafficator Arms and covers, Headlamp Glass, Side lamp Glass, Rear Lamps -s/h, Wiper Motors

Brakes

Linings, Shoes Exchange, Cables - Pre-war, Cables - Post-war, Backplates, Brakeband, Brake Drums - s/h

Clutches

Kits - Plates, Covers and Carbon Thrust bearings, Clutch Rods

Steering and Suspension

Kits - Early and late, Shacklepins - Early and late, H/Pieces, King Pin sets, Stub Axles, Track rods -s/h, Track rod ends, Steering Nuts - r/h and l/h drive, Steering box - s/h , Steering box parts, levers, Shock Absorbers - Front and rear, Shock Absorber seals and links, Rear Springs s/h, Silentbloc bushes, Rear Shackles and pins, Rear Axles,

Axle shaft - complete, Axle shafts, Crown Wheel and pinions, Diff units and parts

Instruments

Speedo heads - mph and kph, Gauges, Speedo Cables

Body Parts

Tourer Doors, Bonnet - Pre-war, Front Wings, Front inner wings, Rear Wings, Rad Surrounds (no bars)

General

Exhaust Systems, Exhaust Pipes, silencers, hangers, Head and Manifold Studs, Head and Manifold Nuts, Radiator, Radiator Hoses

Oil Seals

Front Hubs, Rear Hubs, Axle Shafts, Gearbox, Pinions

Bearings

For front hubs, rear hubs, gearbox, axles

Many other parts including three and four speed gearboxes, complete engines and loose parts.

Please note that this buyer's guide only highlights certain facts and is not exhaustive. If you intend to buy a Standard car, whether as a running vehicle or a restoration project, always ensure that it is inspected by a qualified person before driving it on the road.

Written by Richard Hyde with special thanks to Brian Parkes & Phil Homer for spare parts information and additional technical information.

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