

MEMORY LANE



By COLM O'NEILL

Photo: Bord Fáilte/Irish Tourist Board

This view of O'Connell Street, Dublin dates from 1958. Close scrutiny shows many Morris Minors, Volkswagen 1200 models and the small Fords, the Anglia and Prefect models, both the "upright" pre-1954 models which were a mild reworking of the original 1937 design, and the 100E models which succeeded them.

Looking at the two rows of vehicles parked in the centre of the street, in the left row where a flatbed truck is passing, is a pale two-tone Hillman Minx Californian. The Californian was a two-door hardtop coupe of the contemporary side-valve engined Minx Mk. VII, and was only produced from 1953 to 1955. To the right of the Hillman is a Ford or Fordson 5 cwt van, derived from the "upright" Ford Anglia. A few cars up the line is a two-tone Morris Oxford Ser. III, a car which survives today in India as the Hindustan Ambassador. Just a little further along the line is a little Fiat 500 Topolino with its central fabric roof rolled back. The van at the top of the row is a Commer Express, based on the Mark-type Hillman Minx model; this commercial was a best seller in Fifties Ireland. Just above the Commer are possibly a Morris 10 and a Vauxhall 10 Model H, both of the early post-war years. Crossing at the junction is an Austin A40 or A50 Cambridge, then a two-tone Vauxhall Wyvern or Velox Model E with, on its immediate left, another Commer Express.

Keeping in the left row but above the junction, is another Model E

Vauxhall, this one with a white roof, then a Singer Hunter SM, probably a British tourist's car, as Singers were not marketed in Ireland in the Fifties. Visible too is a Bedford CA minibus or camper van with a contrasting upper body colour. Moving further up to beyond the tree is a Ford Custom V8 saloon of the 1949-51 era. Moving back downwards, at about a 45° to the traffic flow, is a Chevrolet Styleline saloon of about 1950-52. In the traffic is another American vehicle, a Dodge truck of the late Forties, with a box body and the word "Brookfield" sign-written at the front and sides. Ahead of it is a Morris LD van with a larger than usual box body. In front is a pale coloured Ford Consul Mk. II, as launched in 1956. It is following a Ford Prefect 100E and one of CIE's many Leyland Titan OPD2/1 double-decker buses.

Returning to the parked cars, notable at the top of the row is a brightly coloured Vauxhall Victor F Model, having been introduced the previous year. Moving down two cars is a bulky 1957 Chevrolet Bel-Air saloon. These were imported and assembled in small numbers by McCairn's Motors, which also handed the Vauxhall and Bedford franchises. Further down and beyond the two pale coloured VW Beetles, are an Austin A40 Devon and a Fiat 1100. Three cars further on is a light coloured Hillman Minx, Series I or II from 1956-58 with a GB touring plaque on the rear bumper. Finally the model next to it is an Austin A40 Somerset of the 1952-4 period.

