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1924 Vauxhall 23/60 OD Malvern Tourer

Sold for £45,000

(including buyers premium)

Lot details

Registration No: TC 7583

Chassis No: OD853

Mot Expiry: July 2009

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Fate can be unkind, and these days it is unfair that the 23-60 Vauxhall has to endure constant upstaging on the part of its dashing and charismatic sports stablemate, the 30-98. But the more touring chassis was built and equipped to exactly the same standards as was the 30-98, and in fact was produced in far greater quantities, outnumbering the 30-98s that left the factory by some five to one. And anyone seeking a spacious, high-quality well-engineered vintage touring car with above average performance, handsome and fully-appointed, would be hard pressed indeed to find anything better and more satisfying than a good 23-60 Vauxhall.

An expensive car when new, the 23-60 Vauxhall had evolved from the 25hp D-type, a pure Laurence Pomeroy Snr. design that made its first appearance at the Olympia Show of October 1912. It represented the best of good practice in four-cylinder touring car chassis and engine design at that time, and, along with its 20hp and six-cylinder 30hp companions, immediately achieved significant sales in a crowded marketplace. The D-type's evident strength, reliability and simplicity, backed by a substantial production, made the model a natural choice for the military authorities for service as WD staff cars, and as war clouds loomed, the company was awarded the first of several government contracts. The D-type's reputation was further enhanced by its contribution to the war effort, and it continued in production until 1922, with about 4000 of the side-valve chassis being made in all.

Pomeroy having left Vauxhall, a new designer, C E King, was employed by the company, and his first brief was to update both the 25hp D-type and E-type 30-98 models with overhead valve engines. In fact, apart from the engine, only the most minor changes were deemed necessary to either chassis, and the OHV conversion of the existing engine was little more than one of substituting pushrods for the direct activation of the valves by the camshaft, and a detachable cylinder head carrying a conventional rocker assembly on top of a new cylinder block. The bore and stroke of the D-type remained unchanged at 95 x 140mm (3969ccs) for the new 23-60 model, designated the 'OD', and to complete the 23-60 story, Vauxhall's own design of front wheel braking became available in 1923, and thereafter the 23-60 continued to be produced without major change until late in 1926.

The specification of the 23-60 includes a monobloc engine with separate crankcase supporting the crankshaft in five main bearings. Cooling was pump-assisted, a Watford magneto was fitted, and a Zenith carburettor fed by an Autovac. A multiplate clutch took the drive to a separate four-speed gearbox with a substantial right-hand sliding gate gearchange. The bevel rear axle gave a top gear ratio of 3.6 to 1. The four wheel (as this case) braking system featured Vauxhall's 'kidney box' compensator mounted in front of the radiator. 880 x 120mm beaded edge tyres were fitted on Rudge Whitworth detachable wheels: the track was 4ft 8in and wheelbase 10ft 10in.

The vendor acquired this UK-supplied example with Vauxhall's own 'Malvern' 7-seater touring coachwork in 2002 as a 'barn find', and has extensively restored it, paying meticulous attention to preserving its originality wherever that was possible. Detail examination will bear this out, and the vendor describes the car as being in "A1 overall" condition. The car has a MOT certificate current until July 27 2009. Documentation with the car includes its RB60 registration document covering the period from 1951 to 1970 giving much of the history of this car, and records that it first was registered on April 29 1924.

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Features of especial interest include its Vauxhall gryphon radiator mascot, and the tool tray built into the running board, containing some appropriate tools. The correct square socket-headed

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woodscrews as used by Vauxhall at this period are in evidence, and Wefco leather spring gaiters have been fitted. The car has been reupholstered in leather in Vauxhall's characteristic style, and steel-framed occasional seats fold away into the back of the front passenger seat. The correct lighting set, instruments and controls include a Jaeger-Paris 0-75mph speedometer, and twin side-mounted spare wheels are fitted. Flashing direction indicators have been discreetly incorporated, with duplicated 'divers' helmet'-pattern rear lights, and armoured cable has been used for visible electrical connections. An outstanding vintage touring car in every way.

PLEASE NOTE: The Vauxhall 23/60 and 30/98 models both had five-bearing crankshafts and not three-bearing ones as stated in the original catalogue description.

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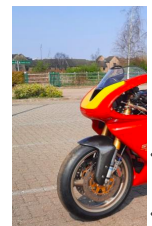
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