

# A - D VAUXHALL REGISTER

## AUSTRALIAN NEWSLETTER

### JUNE 2021

Hello Everyone.

Euan Coutts OD793 from Orange N.S.W. found the steering in his 23-60 was getting heavier in his twilight years and the dreaded wheel wobble had also paid him a visit. He first toyed with the idea of having a new worm and wheel made for the steering box with a ratio that would give him a lighter turn lock to lock however the price of this got out of hand. Being a resourceful old retired bank manager who is handy with his lathe and mill he set about making himself a new shortened drop arm for the 23-60.

The photos below show the end result as well as the fitment of a steering damper to the track rod. I drove his 23-60 whilst Mary and I visited them just before Christmas and can report the steering is considerably lighter with no sign of wheel wobble on rough roads.



*The first photo is the trial fit up with the the drop arm in embryo state.*



*The second is the clearance from spring.*



*The third and fourth are the completed and painted home made drop arm*



*The fifth one is showing the difference in length from the original. b) the home made drop arm. C) the Ford A*



*The steering damper.*

**I must say I envy guys who can do this sort of work on their cars themselves and like Euan are self taught. Euan tells me he was fortunate when living in Sydney as he was close to Harry McBeth an old Everleigh Loco Yard (Sydney) trained fitter and turner who used to do all the repair work to the parts we broke on our Vauxhalls. Harry never had a failure with any of his repairs and guys like me owe him a lot for keeping our Vauxhalls on the road. Euan recalls Harry always encouraged him to try the job himself and would happily advise Euan how to go about it.**

**Leigh Whitfield sent me the article below written by Ian Coomber of the UK. It is an interesting read on the history of the movements of the Vauxhall factory as well as the design and development of the radiator badge depicting the Griffin.**

### **When did Vauxhall Move from London to Luton?**

Hands up everyone who correctly said 1905. But when Martin Rüegger from Switzerland recently asked me this he was referring to the article I wrote about Harry Varley.

In 1913 Vauxhall Chief Engineer Lawrence Pomeroy put up a two guinea prize for the best design of a new radiator badge to replace the existing intertwined V & M motif. Harry studied the origins of the Vauxhall name and came up with the Griffin, the armorial bearings of Fulk Le Breant (or Fawkes de Breauté) from whom the Vauxhall area of Lambeth in South London got its name and where the Vauxhall Iron Works had been founded in 1857 in an old brewery. I was fortunate to meet Harry's son Jim who proudly showed me what he claimed was the first griffin badge designed by his father and mounted on a wooden plinth. This first



of a series of circular griffin badges which appeared over the next seventeen years was designed to be fixed to the radiator shell by three rivets: at 2, 6 and 10 o'clock. The griffin was in gold on a blue background, the griffin's feathers being beautifully detailed in high relief. Curiously her tail (yes, its female) does not seem attached, emerging mysteriously out of the white "bridge" she stands on, thought to be a reference to the

River Lea which flowed through Luton adjacent to the factory (and pretty well under AJ



Block/Griffin House when that was built). The griffin carries a white flag pole outlined in gold with a V in white on the flag. However, it's the gold coloured wording in the black ring encircling the griffin where Martin's question comes in. Also in high relief, it says VAUXHALL at the top between the two fixing holes, MOTORS Ltd. on the lower left and LONDON on the lower right. It is unarguably a beautiful piece of work. So if 1905 is the correct answer to the question of when manufacturing moved to Luton, why London on the badge in 1913 and when exactly did it change to Luton, as it did on later badges?

It was part of a subtle redesign to a lower relief enamelled specification with the fixing holes inverted, at 12, 4 and 8 o'clock. The flag pole became thinner and all gold and the wording changed to VAUXHALL at the top left, MOTORS LTD top right and LUTON ENGLAND at the bottom, the latter in a smaller typeface to fit between the two fixing brass rivets. By looking at photographs of cars of known age it's possible to date this change to late 1920 or early 1921. This isn't as difficult as it seems as the brass rivets stand proud and years of polishing make them prominent in even poor quality photos – they either form an upside-down triangle in the early badges or the correct way up on the later ones.



The Griffin changed too. Not only was she flatter (and cheaper?) but the blue background enamel got to areas which effectively made islands out of parts of her body, most notably



the right wing which is totally detached. However, the tail did migrate to a more expected position. On the 1927 14-40 badge (above), the detail of the griffin is very poor, perhaps indicating that the die was very worn but not replaced because of another imminent change with the introduction of the R-Type 20-60 in late 1927 which eliminated the fixing holes, the badge being rear mounted by studs. The spacing between the words was preserved by the addition of gold enamel dots at 4 and 8 o'clock. The quality of the badge was certainly improved in this edition, as seen on this 1930 20-60. This type of badge was last seen on the T-80 model, the 1931 Cadet having a restyled griffin in a lozenge shaped surround.

To return to Martin's question, I have answered the when but it begs the further question why? After 1905 and throughout this period Vauxhall had a London office at a prestige address, principally to handle export sales. In the early years after the move of production to Luton, an unremarkable small town noted only for straw plaiting and the associated hat making industry, it would have made marketing sense to use the internationally known city of London on the badge. It appears such concerns were overcome by the early 1920s and fifteen years after the company moved to Luton the badge did the same.

Ian Coomber

**Photographs below shows different badges I have.**



*A - OD494*



*B - Spare radiator*



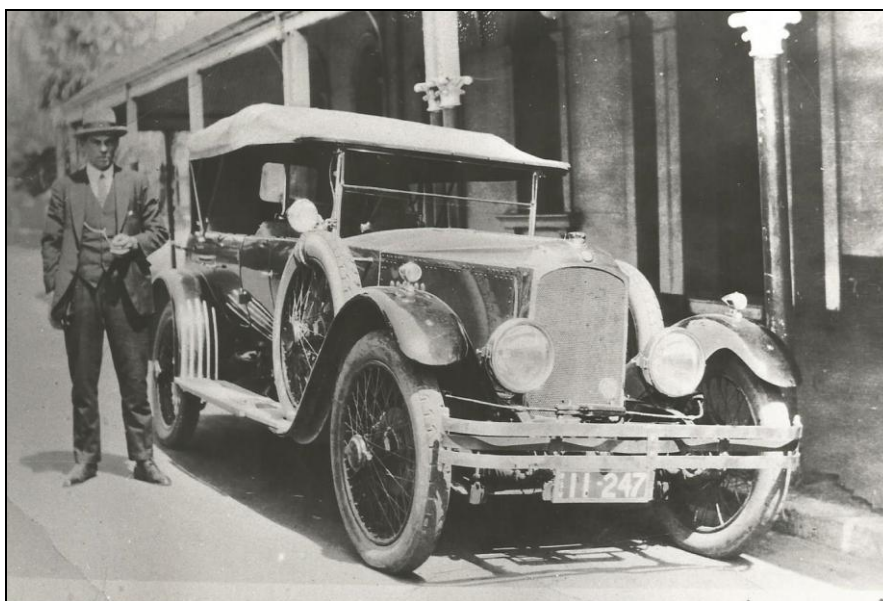
*C - Spare radiator*



*D - Thought to be 20-60 badge*

The Cureton family lived in the Sydney suburb of Ashfield in the 1920's and owned a four wheel braked 23-60. The chassis number or whereabouts of this car is unknown however note though it was fitted with four wheel brakes it had beaded edge rims and 880 x 120 tyres.

Below are some period photographs of the 23-60.



*Cureton 23-60 at Ashfield*



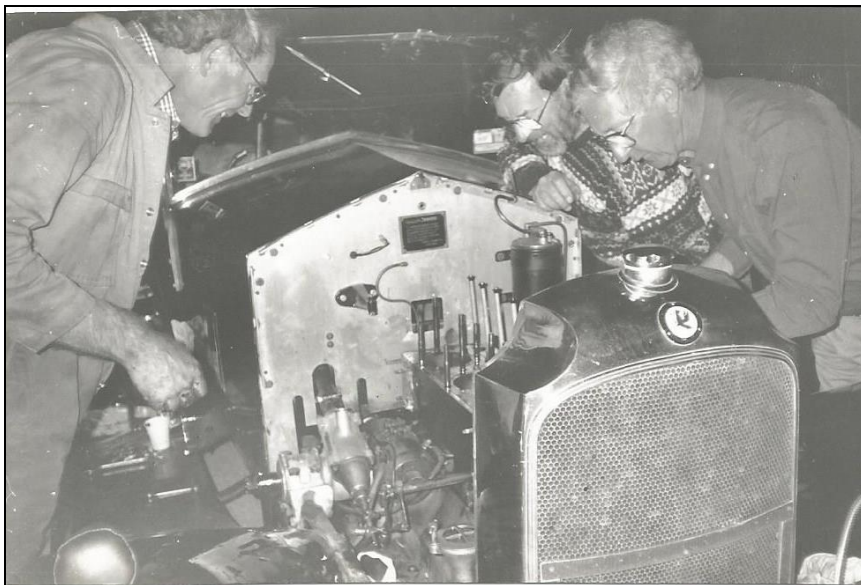
*Stopped for a picnic lunch*





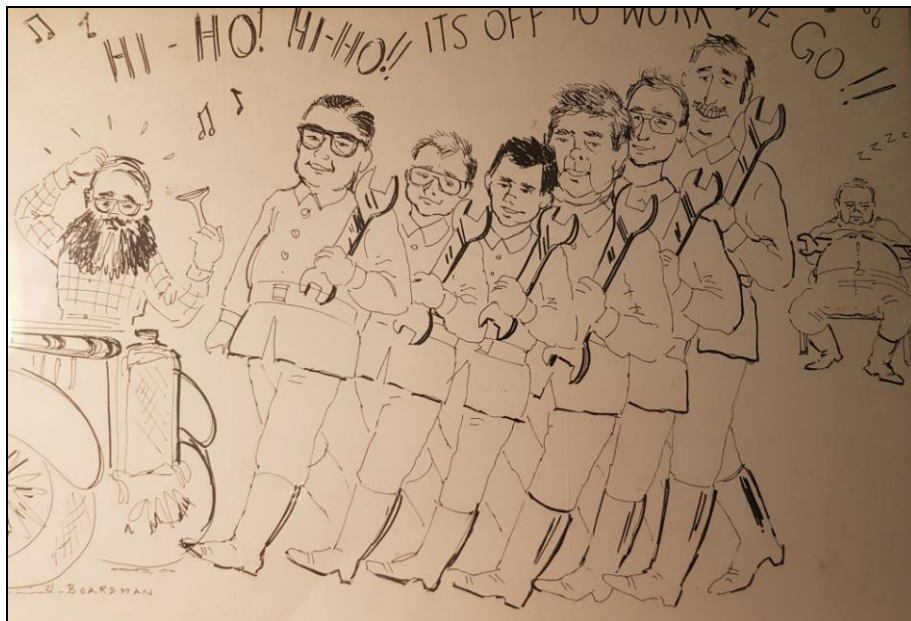
*Cureton 23-60 with the hood up*

In 2004 the V.S.C.C.A. celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday with a rally that from memory commenced in Parramatta and finished a week later at a rather flash hotel in Bankstown. The rally took us out to Forbes and it was on the way into Forbes that Damian O'Doherty had the misfortune of burning out an exhaust valve in his 30-98 OE166. We stayed at the Golf Club's motel that night and had the head removed before dinner and back on the following morning with a borrowed exhaust valve from Alan Wilson OE216 of Drougalbie.



*Richard Walton, Reg Rhook and Jim Weir with OE166*

The following morning Norma Boardman presented the rally with the below drawing she prepared. It shows Damian scratching head with the offending valve in hand. Coming out in the morning the repair team was lead by Don Wright OE121, Greg Mackie E366, John Kent OE22, yours truly OD233, Richard Walton OD689, Murray McDonogh OE265 and the team's backup, the snoozing Laurie Ogle OD966 who was catching up after another heavy night of entertaining.



*OE166's repair team - by Norma Boardman*

*L to R - Damian O'Doherty, Don Wright, Greg Mackie, John Kent, Dave Stuart Richard Walton, Murray McDonogh and Laurie Ogle.*

Under the experienced eye of Don Wright the team had head fitted with the borrowed valve, it bolted down securely to the block and OE166 ready for the road before breakfast. Damian and Reg Rhook were able to complete the rally to our final night of festivities in Bankstown.





**Boyd Edkin's daughter Gillian Bunning joined us on the rally driving her Mercedes 250S. The photo above shows Gillian with Richard Walton, yours truly, Greg Mackie and Damian O'Doherty at the final dinner of the rally held in Bankstown Mercure Hotel. We became good friends with Gillian who lived at Darling Point in Sydney and was always keen to catch up with us and attend any of the Vauxhall events at a moment's call. She was more interested in motor cars than her elder sister who lived in the USA and was a concert pianist. Gillian was always ready to tell us stories of her father and travelled frequently in the Presentation 30-98 when a small girl.**

**Ian Irwin from Canberra sent me the below photograph which shows a 20-70 Vauxhall Saloon bodied by Grosvenor similar to other bodies by that coachbuilder with two piece top windscreen glass. This model Vauxhall was fitted with a six cylinder 3.8 litre sleeve valve engine. The 25/70 replaced the 23-60 in 1925 however not immediately.**

**I recall Geoff Collins telling me he did see one travelling up William Street in Sydney in the 30's and that it was blowing smoke. It looks as though it was a big heavy car and weighed somewhere near 2 tons.**



*20-70 Vauxhall*

**Not Vauxhall however close enough and I thought the attached photographs would be of interest to you. Towards the end of last year I went to one of the late Andrew Liddon's auctions at Mittagong with Doctor Hugh Lindsay from Wollalong near where I live. Hugh was interested in a 1922 14hp Sunbeam. This car was an absolute barn find and was so complete it was a delight to see it had survived for so long and in such original condition though at some time the running boards had been removed. However in the rear of the car we found the metal wheel well for the off side running board as well as to support brackets for the spare wheel.**

**The photographs below are of the car which Hugh is to recommission mechanically only and is leaving the exterior and upholstery as is. The fan is still fitted with the original whittle belt.**

**If only you could find a Vauxhall in this condition.**







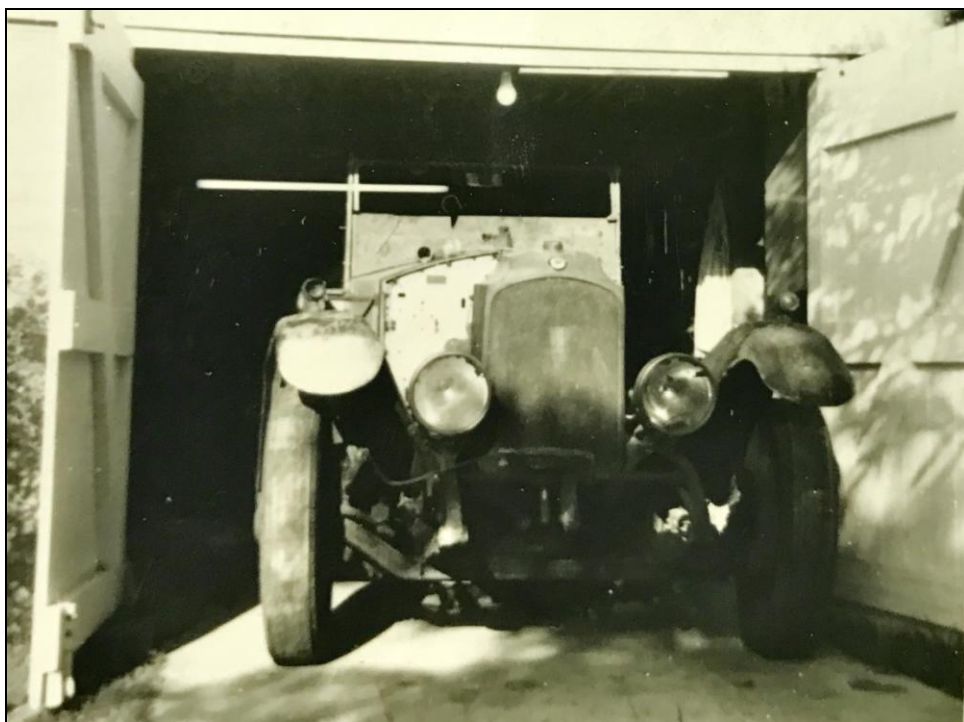
**The hood is made by Rotax and has the same spring blade clamps to hold it down when folded that as used on the later Vauxhalls.**

**By the way, Hugh was the successful bidder at the auction and the Sunbeam now lives at Wallalong. It will be my pleasure to help Hugh service the car and hopefully get it running and back on the road.**

**There is nothing known of any previous owners of the car and according to Peter Ransom and Wendy Muddell of the Sunbeam Talbot Register, the Sunbeam is a sleeper. If any reader can help with any information as to the history of the Sunbeam please call me and I will pass the information on to Hugh.**



*Similar model 14/40 Sunbeam in the UK*



*OD1303 prior to restoration.*



*OD1303 at Ingleburn ready for the 2018 Vauxhall Rally at Merimbula*

The two photographs above are of OD1303 (now owned by Alex Hayward in the UK) prior to its restoration by Dave Manhart of Ingleburn. The car lived at Summer Hill a suburb of Sydney and I recall sometime in the 60's John Giddy taking me there to see the car which he had purchased. He gave me the 23" straight sided wheels that were fitted to the car for my 23-60 OD842. In the top photograph it is fitted with the 20" well base wheels that were fitted to my 23-60 prior to John giving me the 23" wheels. I bought new 600 x 20 Dunlop Super 90's for OD842 when I owned it and these tyres and wheels were still fitted to the car when Dave Manhart restored it. The car was to be later fitted again with 23" straight sided wheels that it now wears.

The photograph above was taken by me outside my factory at Ingleburn when I had Antique Tyres and Penrite. Alex Hayward at the time owned the car and I had prepared it for Dave and Tracey Kirke of the UK to use on the 2018 Vauxhall Rally in Merimbula.

Alex took OD1303 back to the UK when he left Australia and it now lives with Alex and Rosie in Shropshire. It's a small world you know as John and Marion Giddy with Mary and I stayed at a B & B in Shropshire when we were in England in 1988, it's a lovely part of the country and from all reports, OD1303 is still going strongly and being enjoyed by Alex and Rosie in and around Shropshire. Also some more Shropshire trivia, I recall my father telling me that he was on the troop ship H.M.A.S. Kanimbla when the heavy cruiser H.M.A.S. Shropshire shelled a Japanese gun emplacement prior to him landing at Balikpapan in Borneo during the second world war. Google tells me that the heavy cruiser Shropshire was transferred from the Royal Navy to the Royal Australian Navy in 1942.

So as you can see, the word Shropshire rings a few nostalgic bells for me. Sorry to drift away from Vauxhall things however I will now move on.



**Joe Wilson from Queensland sent me a current photograph of his 14-40 Vauxhall aero engine special which is now running and has just been fitted with a new bonnet. I imagine all the 30-98 heavy peddlers will have their time cut out keeping up with Joe and Bev on the Vauxhall Rally next year.**



## **FOR SALES**

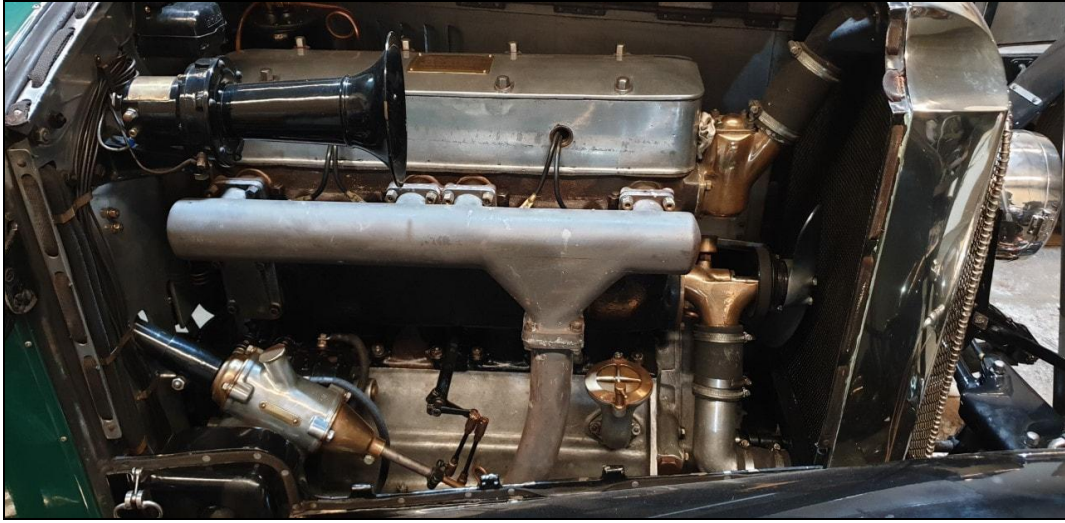
**Glyn Farrell's 30-98 OE235 is still for sale, please ring Glyn on 0408584829 if you would like to purchase an original Grosvenor bodied roadster with matching numbers and in excellent condition.**











**Vyvian Hirons emailed me with the parts below he has for sale.**

Hi Dave.

Can I please put some items for sale in your next newsletter, they are as follows.

Vauxhall 23/60 Project complete with timber frame and a huge selection of new parts  
\$22,500

30/98 Julian Gosh repro chassis Ideal for a special or someone's kit of parts. \$18,000 OBO

30/98 John Kent Alloy cylinder head \$12,000 OBO

30/98 Brand new set of clutch plates \$250

23/60 Unbraked front axle with hubs, Make an Offer

Please contact Vyvian 0417 583 730 or [vyvian@artonwheels.com.au](mailto:vyvian@artonwheels.com.au)

**A non Vauxhall owner from Geelong in Victoria by the name of Paul Fullard has contacted Leigh Whitfield and myself to let us know that he purchased a 14-40 diff so it wouldn't go to Sims Metal and will pass it own to anyone that rings him with a reasonable offer.**

As you can see from the photographs there are some usable parts on it and it should be purchased by a 14-40 owner out there as someone might find the parts valuable in a rebuild of their car.

Paul can be contacted on 0417390027 or [thetradys@outlook.com](mailto:thetradys@outlook.com)



No more news to tell you so that's it for this issue.

*Dave Stuart.*

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