

Lot 362: 1924 Vauxhall 23/60 OD Kington Tourer Registration Number: TC 7583 Chassis Number: OD 853 Engine Number: OD 853 Like the ongoing chicken and egg debate, there seems little chance that the discussion as to the relative merits of the Vauxhall 30/98 OE

Auction House: Cheffins

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Auction Date: 2002

Description: 1924 Vauxhall 23/60 OD Kington Tourer Registration Number: TC 7583 Chassis Number: OD 853 Engine Number: OD 853 Like the ongoing chicken and egg debate, there seems little chance that the discussion as to the relative merits of the Vauxhall 30/98 OE and the Bentley 4« litre will ever have a satisfactory conclusion. In many ways the 30/98's most 'natural' competitor is the incredibly rare and correspondingly valuable short wheelbase 4« litre cars of which only nine were made (though they have been copied by subsequent generations of enthusiasts in the form of 3/4« Specials with a 9' 9«" wheelbase to match the Vauxhall). On paper, it may be argued that the Bentley 4« litre's true rival within the Vauxhall range was the 23/60 OD as both share similar dimensions, a 10' 10" wheelbase etc and were aimed at the same target audience. The 23/60 was designed as a highly capable tourer, leaving the sports car role to the 30/98. Likewise, the original impetus behind the Bentley's increase in cylinder capacity was to allow heavier saloon and tourer coachwork to be carried without hampering performance. Introduced in 1922, the OD Type or 23/60 was a revision of the D-Type, which had done such sterling service as the British Army's staff car of choice in World War I (its mix of speed, reliability and passenger capacity proving invaluable). Its engine like that of the 30/98 was a development of the famous Prince Henry Vauxhall, one of the first true performance cars. Like its predecessor the OD sold well among Britain's upper middle classes and aristocracy At the time Vauxhalls were perceived as premium products, a status at odds with that that their takeover by General Motors in 1925 would engender. As such the 23/60 was one of the last purely British Vauxhalls. In common with the Bentley 4«, the 23/60 used a large capacity four cylinder, four litre overhead valve engine. Thus, it was capable of producing a sound every bit as bombastic as the Bentley's 'bloody thump'. This particular example built in 1924 has the advantage of four wheel drum brakes (with front mounted Bendix 'kidney box' mechanism). It retains the four speed, right hand change, crash gearbox and in theory will cruise very happily at 60-70mph. In the same ownership since the early 1960s, it has been laid-up on blocks in a barn for around the last fifteen years. However, upon a recent inspection the engine was run by highly respected Vintage mechanic Larry O'Connor who reported that during its brief awakening it had sounded 'as sweet as a nut'. Its original factory aluminium Kington tourer coachwork (near identical to the 30/98 Velox body) seems very sound, as does the underlying wooden framework. The green-grey over black paintwork has a great patina to it though the black leather interior would benefit from some refurbishment. It retains its occasional seats, hood and twin side mounted spare wheels (only one being in situ). The exhaust system has corroded but the leaf sprung chassis as a whole is in fine condition. In its day despite a weight advantage, the 23/60 could not quite match the Bentley 4«'s top speed. However, today with the 30/98 being so revered and imitated the technology and parts exist to boost the mechanically similar 23/60's performance to levels unthought of in the 1920s. Even in standard tune there are very few large Vintage tourers that can match a well fettled 23/60. Always a more imposing car than its 30/98 sibling, the 23/60 has long been overshadowed with the result that it is now the scarcer of the two. English as opposed to Australian market cars such as TC 7583 are rarer still (especially those that have not been 'got at'). This 23/60 represents a rare opportunity to acquire a much underrated and still palpably highly original proper Vauxhall that has been in the same hands for forty or so years. Estimate: