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VAUXHALL GRIFFIN GREATS 7 PRESS KIT

- Seventh 'Griffin Greats' event; first to be held on UK roads...
- Some of the most important and newsworthy Vauxhalls from 1904 onwards...
- ...plus the all-new Insignia Sports Tourer and the notorious VXR8 Maloo

There are few car companies that can put you in one of their 1904 models, with 6 horsepower, tiller steering and chain drive, closely followed by a ute with 600 horsepower and, er... no chain drive.

But here at Vauxhall we can. And today we are bringing together the family jewels from both our famous Heritage Collection and most recent press fleet.

Each of the cars has a story to tell, an anniversary this year or has not been released from the collection for many years. In the case of the new Insignia Sports Tourer, it's fresh off launch. Either way, our gathering of 17 vehicles offers multiple, fresh news stories and fascinating technical comparisons between old and new.

And the venue? Situated in the heart of Oxfordshire, surrounded by glorious driving roads, Bicester Heritage (<http://bicesterheritage.co.uk/>) is Britain's newest Centre of Excellence for the rapidly growing classic car industry, with over 30 related businesses housed on site in an automotive hub for skills and enterprise.

1904 6HP – Rare, original London-built Vauxhall

JNM400, Vauxhall Heritage's 6HP model was one of 70 cars produced by the company in 1904. Costing £150 when new, the 6HP is a London to Brighton regular and like the 5HP features a 1-litre engine, tiller steering and chain-drive to the rear wheels. Vauxhall Heritage has owned the car for around 40 years.

One of only two cars in the collection to be built on Vauxhall's original site...

- ...and one of only 44 produced in 1904
- Single-cylinder, 1029cc, trembler coil, Vauxhall spray carb, 2-bearing crank
- 2-spdc epicyclic 'box, no reverse, chain drive to rear axle
- Chassis integrated with body – remarkably prescient
- Top speed around 25mph – but lack of dampers makes it feel far faster!
- JNM 400 is L2B regular; 53 runs under its belt

1909 B TYPE – First model to signal Vauxhall's motorsport aspirations

About 150 Sporty B-types were built in Luton between 1908 and 1910, and here is what is widely believed to be the sole survivor. The 16hp, 2.3-litre, four-cylinder side-valve-engines



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machine cost £360 new. Transmission comprises three forward speeds plus reverse, while the footbrake operates on the transmission and the handbrake on the rear wheels. In 1959, Motor magazine recorded the then 50-year-old B-type's maximum speed as 50.1 mph in 29.1 seconds and posted 17 mpg.

1910 C10 'Prince Henry' Vauxhall – *World's first sportscar*

Originally built to compete in the 1910 Prince Henry Trophy, a German trial designed to discover the world's best all-round touring car, the C10 3-litre Vauxhall has since been acknowledged as Britain's first true sports car. Laurence Pomeroy, Vauxhall's Chief Engineer, entered three C10s in the 1910 event, each with tuned versions of the company's 3054cc side-valve engine. The cars were driven by Vauxhall's MD, Percy Kidner, and co-directors, AJ Hancock and Rudolf Selz, all of whom finished the 1230-mile event, but alas without collecting any awards. However, due the cars' speed and durability, a legend had been created and later the same year a road version, known as the 'Prince Henry Type' was shown to the press. *The Autocar* noted that the new car was, '...a particularly fast, light car for road work', with Vauxhall guaranteeing that the Prince Henry could achieve 'more than 90mph' when fitted with a single seat body.

This 1910 car has been owned by Vauxhall Motors since 1946 and is thought to be a pre-production example, one of only nine surviving cars in the world. It is fitted with the earlier 3-litre, 60hp engine, a lightweight chassis and low front axle. EI 641 was originally registered in Sligo, Ireland.

1926 30-98 OE-TYPE VELOX TOURER – *Britain's first 100mph car*

Built from 1923 to 1927, the OE-Type 30/98 was, in its day, the fastest catalogued production car in Great Britain, with a factory-warranted top speed of 100mph, when fitted with a high axle ratio. Almost every 30/98 was sold as a Tourer (our car sports one made by Velox), but the most dramatic-looking was made by Wensum with no doors, no hood, flared wings and a £150 premium – a sizeable increase when a standard Tourer cost around £1200. During its production life, around 600 30-98s were built, and it says much for its legacy that today around 170 still survive, many of which are still in regular use. The 30-98 had exceptional performance in its day, producing around 120bhp from its four-cylinder, 4224cc engine. But a centre throttle, extremely heavy flywheel and weak brakes by today's standards make this a challenging – if very fast - car to drive on modern roads.

1930 T-TYPE MELTON GOLFER'S COUPÉ – *First GM-developed Vauxhall*

The T-type (and the R-type, on which it is based) is significant as the first wholly-engineered car under General Motors' ownership. Vauxhall had been purchased by GM in 1925 – the US company's first overseas acquisition – and it became immediately clear to the new parent that profitability was to be found in the mainstream, rather than vying with the likes of Bentley and Rolls Royce.



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While £585 for the T-type's rolling chassis (the coach-built body was charged separately) was hardly within the grasp of an average working man in 1930, it broadened Vauxhall's appeal considerably. Always a robust, substantially-engineered car, the T-type was powered by a 2,916cc, in-line six-cylinder engine, with aluminium pistons, a seven-bearing crank and overhead valves. The engine and four-speed gearbox sat together in a unitary structure.

Performance was acceptable, rather than swift, thanks to the T's not inconsiderable 1,524kg kerbweight. But it would reach 70mph - 55mph being a happy cruising speed - and unlike many large Vauxhalls from the 1920s, would actually stop well with its four-wheel cable brakes, which were operated by a centre-pedal, rather than one positioned to the right of the driver.

Vauxhall's Heritage Centre car is an early T-type (the T continued until '32) and is fitted with a Melton Golfer's coupé body by Grosvenor. Why 'Golfer's'? Well, if you look on the passenger side, just in front of the rear wheel, you'll see a neat little hatch which allows access for a set of clubs to be stored across the width of the body. The car also has a Dickey seat, allowing a further two passengers to join the driver at the range!

1937 H-TYPE – Britain's first monocoque car

This year, Vauxhall's H-type 'Ten-Four' model celebrates its 80th anniversary. It was the first British unitary construction car, and the first mainstream British car to have synchromesh gears. It also had hydraulic brakes and independent front suspension, so quite a technical *tour de force* in its day. In fact *The Motor* was moved to say: 'No exaggeration...the Vauxhall Ten is one of the most brilliant pieces of design that has been seen in Britain for ten years.'

The H's technological advances proved instantly popular with British drivers, and in the first five months after launch 10,000 models were sold. In addition, Vauxhall priced the car from a highly competitive £159, making it a default purchase for many buyers. By 1940, when production ceased due to the start of hostilities, the little 'H' found its way in to the over 42,000 British households.

This Deluxe model was restored to its original specification, including polychromatic cellulose paint equivalent to modern metallic finishes.

1949 L-TYPE WYVERN – Vauxhall's first post-war model

This Vauxhall Wyvern, which rolled off the Luton production line in 1949, put its wheels back on to British soil for the first time in 66 years last year when it drove from the Netherlands to become the most recent addition to Vauxhall's ever-growing Heritage collection.

Manufactured at the famous Kimpton Road plant, the black Wyvern formed part of Vauxhall's response to the Government's 'Export or Die' drive, where car makers were ordered to send at least half of their production overseas. The left-hand-drive Wyvern was initially sent to Portugal, where it was registered BE-15-95 by the General Motors Overseas Corp in Lisbon.



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After passing through numerous owners in Portugal, by the 1980s the Wyvern was in a sorry state until it was discovered by a member of the Vauxhall Owners Club Holland. The car was returned to the Netherlands where it underwent a comprehensive restoration over a number of years, and re-registered AL-74-81.

Two decades later, after the death of its saviour, the Wyvern passed into the hands of the VOCH's Treasurer, Reyer Gerritsen, who maintained the car in its current state for ten years. Reyer finally offered the car to Vauxhall Heritage due to a shortage of space after a house-move.

The L-type Wyvern was made between 1948 and 1951. While much of its architecture was based on the pre-war H-type, its unitary construction – which Vauxhall pioneered in the UK – was a key to its light weight, giving it around 1cc per 1lb of running weight. Handling was improved greatly, with different spring and damper rates, and while power wasn't in abundance, the Wyvern was the liveliest and roomiest car in its class.

1951 E-TYPE WYVERN – Major thrust behind Vauxhall's 'Export or die' strategy

Great success and a long production run lay in store for the E-Type, launched in 1951. The 2.25-litre, six-cylinder Velox and £475 1.5-litre, four-cylinder Wyvern - our Heritage car - featured curved windscreens and novel side-opening bonnets. In 1952, a new 'square' engine was introduced – 2,262cc for Velox, 1,507cc for Wyvern. In Vauxhall's Golden Jubilee year, Vauxhall's output topped 100,000 vehicles a year for the first time, and the company produced its millionth vehicle.

1957 F-TYPE VICTOR – 60th anniversary of first car to wear the 'Victor' badge

A very big seller, with 390,745 made between 1957 and 1961, the Victor F-type quickly became Britain's top export Car. The F-type was launched in February 1957 as Victor and Victor Super 1.5-litre models. In 1958, a two-pedal variant with Newtondrive clutchless gearchange was offered, as was the Victor Estate Car, the first factory-built example of this bodyshape. Also in 1958, the 100,000th Victor was built, just over 15 months after production began.

1959 PA VELOX – The height of GM's design influence

The 2.25-litre, six-cylinder PA Velox and Cresta arrived in 1957 and were produced, with minor styling changes, until 1962. This model cost £998. The well proven GM Hydromatic Auto-transmission had become an option in 1959, as had an overdrive unit. The same year also saw an interesting estate-car version of the PA being produced by Friary Motors. It also marked another milestone, too, as Vauxhall produced its two-millionth vehicle – a PA Cresta.

1965 FC VICTOR 101 SUPER – 60 Years of Victor

The FC Victor or 101 Victor was produced from October 1964 until August 1967. Three trims were available – Standard, Deluxe and Super – and two body styles, four-door saloon or five-



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door estate. The 101 was marketed as a car that made the best of its interior space with three-abreast seating front and rear. Option included individual front seats, four-speed floor-shift transmission and a two-speed automatic. The car cost £718 2s 1d new, and 219,814 were produced.

1970 VIVA GT – *Drive-debut of most recent Vauxhall Heritage resto*

Restored on and off over a two-year period by Andy Boddy and Terry Forder from Vauxhall Heritage Centre (with assistance from their apprentice, Chris Smith) this 1970 Mark 1 ½ GT is believed to have been registered by Vauxhall as one of its company cars back in the day (its 'YXE' prefix makes this likely) and was purchased by Vauxhall from the partner of its late owner, Steve Walton, in June 2014.

Remarkably, the GT had just one other owner before Steve bought the car, making its history relatively easy to plot. Originally painted Sebring Silver, the team opted for a more vibrant hue and settled on Monza Red, which would have been available when the car was new. But before painting, the surprisingly sound body was stripped and acid-dipped at Enviro Strip in Tamworth, after which it was returned to Luton for some sheet metal work.

In the meantime, back at the Heritage Centre, the GT's 2.0-litre engine was being overhauled by Andy and the team, ready to be reunited with the rest of the car.

Using the two-door Viva HB shell, the GT model was produced between 1968 and 1970. It was fitted with Vauxhall's 'slant-four' 2.0-litre OHC engine, producing 112bhp, plucked from the FD VX4/90. Compared with the stock Viva, the GT had larger front discs as standard, stiffer suspension and lower profile radial tyres.

Two versions of the GT were built, the Series 1 having a matt black bonnet, four exhaust tail pipes and air scoops, and bright wheel trims. The Series 2 had a body-coloured bonnet, bold side-stripes and Rostyle wheels.

At launch the Viva GT cost £1,021 and when production ended, more than 13,500 had been sold.

1971 PC VISCOUNT – *Faster than a Roller, the largest post-war Vauxhall at the time*

The PC Viscount had been introduced in June 1966 as the flagship luxury model of the Vauxhall line-up. Included on the comprehensive standard equipment list were automatic transmission, leather upholstery, a wood veneer instrument panel, rear-passenger reading lights, a carpeted boot and safety features such as an energy-absorbing steering wheel. It was voted The Sunday Times British Car of the Year 1966. The vehicle cost £1,457 when new. Over 60,000 PC models were produced.



1975 FE VICTOR 2300S – 60 Years of Victor

The last in the line of Victors was launched in 1972. The FE models used 1.8-litre and 2.3-litre overhead-cam, twin-carburettor VX 4/90 engines, but the flagship Ventora used a 3.3 litre powerplant. The FE was followed in 1976 by the VX series, which used the bodyshell of the FE Victor/Ventora but marked the demise of the Victor badge after nearly 20 years of use. This immaculate example has never been restored.

1993 VAUXHALL LOTUS CARLTON – World's fastest four-door production car

How times change. Nearly 70 years before Vauxhall's Lotus Carlton was launched, Messrs. Pomeroy and Kidner were being lauded for their achievement in bringing the 100mph 30/98 to market. But in 1989, Paul Tosch – Vauxhall's then Chairman and MD – was thrown on the defensive with the mainstream press when the Lotus Carlton became the UK's fastest four-door saloon car, with a top speed of 176mph. But those in the know realised what a technological *tour de force* Vauxhall had developed.

Using GM's 3.6-litre straight-six, on to which Vauxhall grafted two Garrett T25 turbochargers with twin water-cooled intercoolers, the Lotus Carlton produced a quite shocking (even by today's standards) 377bhp and 419lb ft of torque, enough for it to attain the controversial top speed, along with a 0-62mph time of just 5.4 seconds. Lotus Engineering, after failing to shoehorn their own version of the Corvette ZR1's V8 into the car, was responsible for developing the LC's MacPherson strut front suspension and multi-link rear set-up, by lowering it, stiffening it and increasing wheel travel. The result was a superbly assured and blindingly fast GT of the highest order. Our event car once took pride of place on Vauxhall's press fleet, one of only 286 UK examples built. It's cost when new? £48,000.

ENDS

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