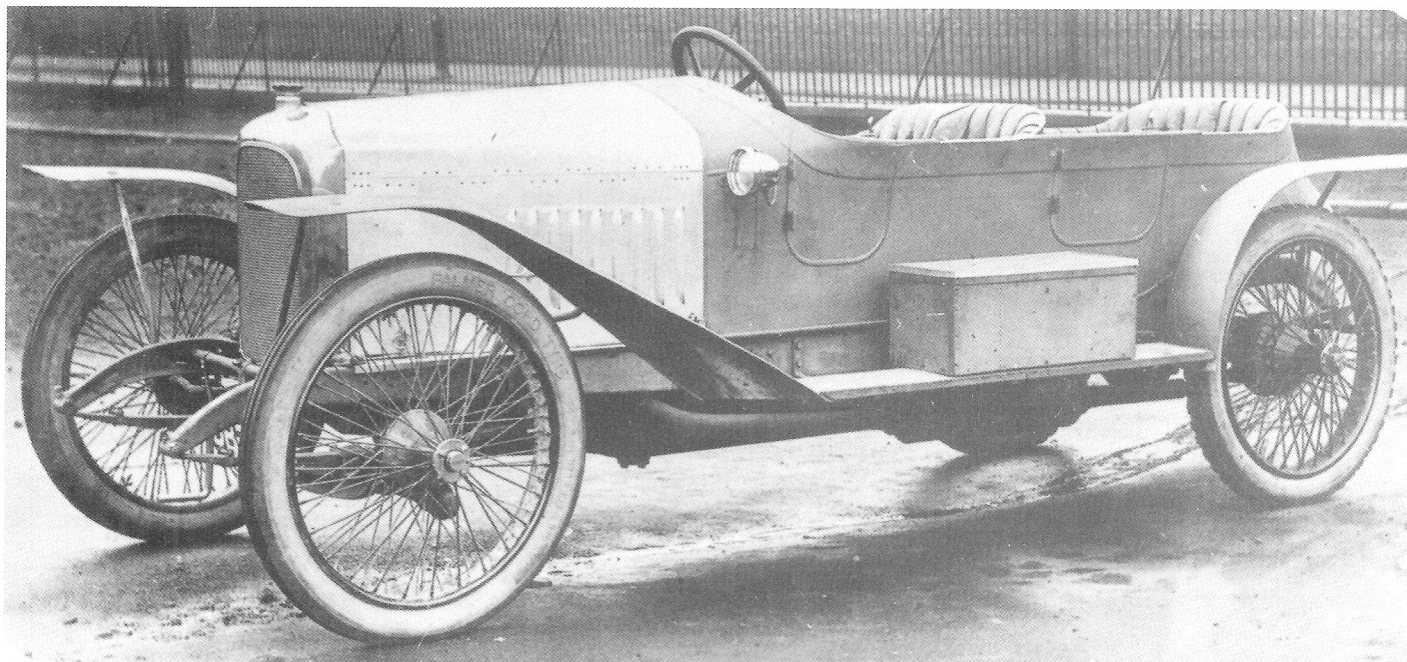


From hydroplanes to hills

How Vauxhall thrived in exciting times



It is well known that the first 30-98 was created in only four months, so how did this come about?

Vauxhall Motors took great advantage during the splendid Edwardian period when large amounts of money were held by a relatively small percentage of the population. The result was an era of uncompromised excellence in terms of quality engineering and materials which allowed its youthful Chief Engineer, Laurence Pomeroy, to indulge his most advanced ideas in motor car design. However the board sought out further markets for his talents, since around 1911 the rich had discovered hydroplane racing. Its exotically constructed stepped hulls required the best and latest in power units. Vauxhall was not alone in accommodating this demand, but history shows that it played a particularly important part in their future. By 1912 the Vauxhall sales catalogue listed two sizes of marine engine for racing hydroplanes, these

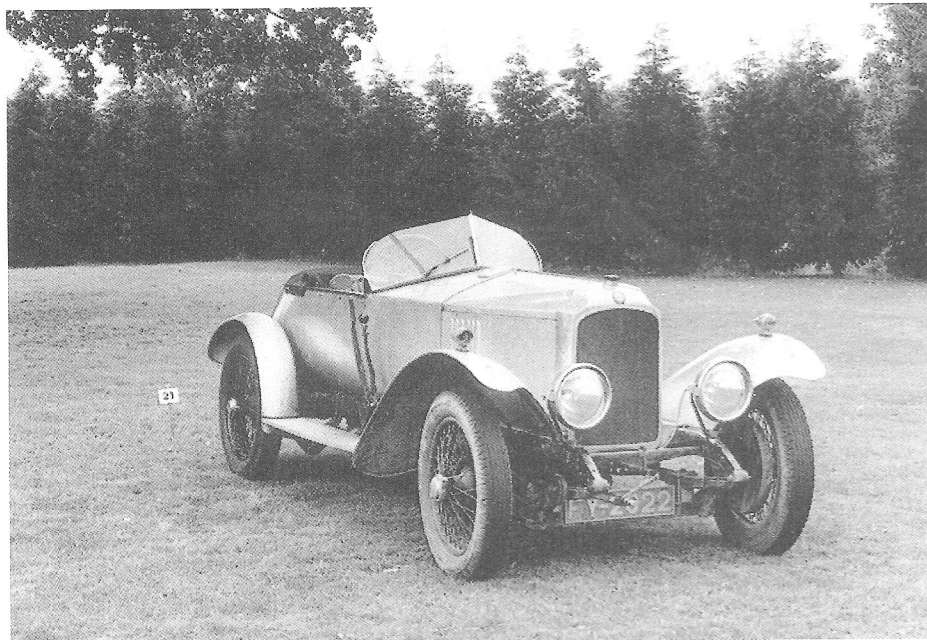
being four-cylinder units of 90 x 98mm and 93 x 146mm respectively.

By 1913 the company was seriously contemplating Grand Prix racing, albeit at the shareholders' expense, but as a first step entered for the Coupe de l'Auto which dictated engines of 3-litre capacity. Meanwhile, on home soil there was the matter of the Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb record held by Holder's Daimler but seriously challenged by one Joseph Higginson, patenter of the Autovac Fuel Supply System, in his La Buire. Suffice to say Mr Higginson persuaded the directors that Vauxhall should attempt to take on the Shelsley title, with a car of about 4-litres in the lightest of chassis.

Pomeroy's task was relatively simple because his two sizes of hydroplane racing engine suited each application exactly. The two projects obviously ran concurrently because the Higginson car, known as Works Order 2007, did indeed claim the Shelsley Walsh

The first 30-98 Vauxhall. This car was delivered to Joseph Higginson in May 1913. Higginson climbed the hill at Shelsley Walsh in 55.2 seconds on June 7th 1913, a time which remarkably remained unbeaten until September 1921

'Mr Higginson persuaded the directors that Vauxhall should attempt to take on the Shelsley title with a car of about 4 litres in the lightest of chassis'



An example of an OE with Wensum-style coachwork. This and the Velox were the two standard bodies that were produced by the factory

We know very little about the car in this attractive photo other than what can be deduced from the picture. The car is one of the first 60 OEs, with standard Velox body. Can anybody identify the driver, or tell us anything about the car?

record in June 1913 and a detailed technical appraisal of the Coupe de l'Auto car appeared in *The Autocar* that September. Unfortunately, there are no known photographs of the engine fitted to 2007 which was believed to have been known as the A10, itself a development of a previous engine of the same title. Two A10 hydroplane engines have survived and are identical in general appearance to the Coupe de l'Auto engines described by *The Autocar* but slightly longer, the Coupe de l'Auto engine still having to use an external water pump.

The chassis of 2007 was derived from the C10 competition car having a greater upsweep over the rear axle than seen previously in Vauxhall designs. The axle itself was a very light affair with a bevel gear differential and hollow axle shafts with an amazing ratio of 2.23:1. These 1913 competition cars were probably the first Vauxhalls to use this type of differential superseding the older spur gear design.

Clad with a handsome new radiator shape, thus was created a legend called the 30-98. An obscure one at that since there is no accepted explanation of that designation.

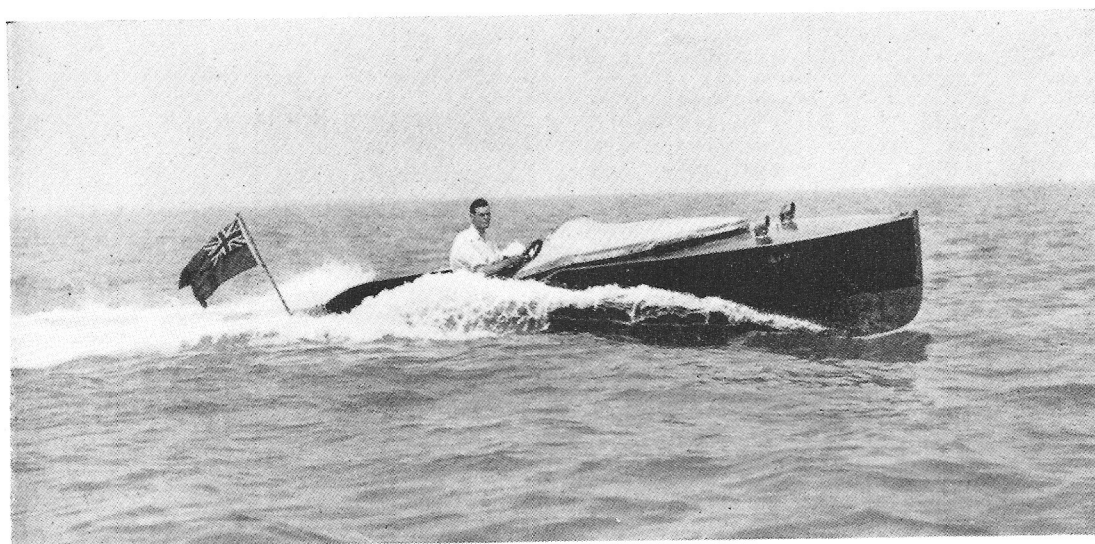
Unsurprisingly maybe, the 30-98 proved to be a sensation and versions



Vauxhall Marine Sets

FOR DISPLACEMENT BOATS AND HYDROPLANES

The proven efficiency and economy of running of Vauxhall engines, and their known ability to give satisfactory service with the least attention, render them particularly suitable for marine work.



The illustration shows the "Rip" motor launch, fitted with a four-cylindere Vauxhall engine. The "Rip" was the fastest "displacement" boat of its size racing during 1911, and won two silver cups and other prizes. It was particularly successful at meetings of the Royal Yacht Club.

SPECIFICATIONS OF VAUXHALL MARINE ENGINES.

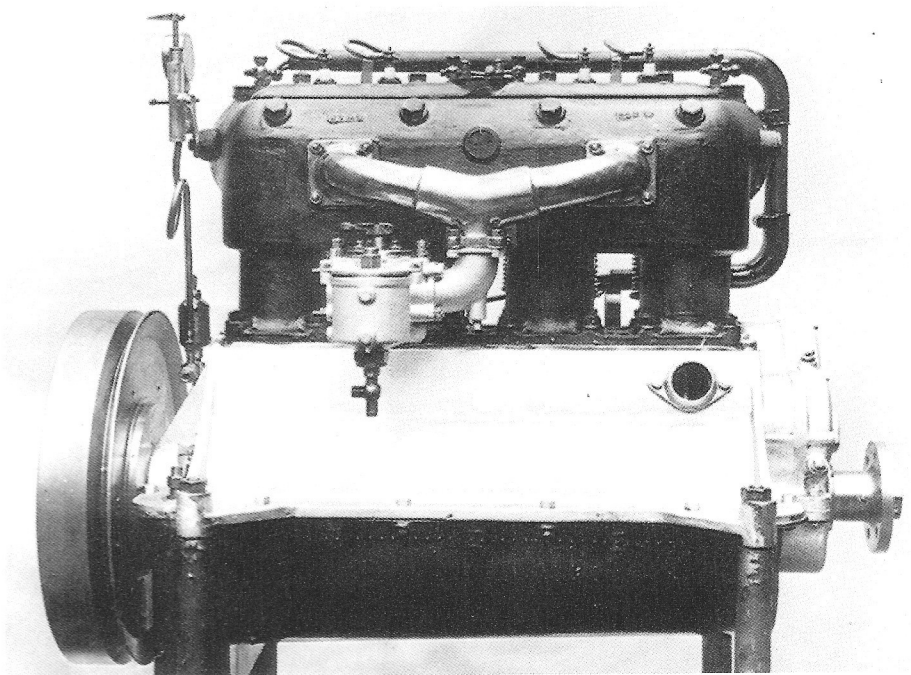
Displacement boats, B.M.B.C., 21-ft. class.		Yacht Club Class hydroplanes.	
ENGINE	Four cylinders, 90 m/m. x 98 m/m. (150 cubic inches cylinder capacity), cast <i>en bloc</i> , with mechanically-operated valves, all on one side.	ENGINE	Four cylinders, 93 m/m. x 146 m/m. (245 cubic inches cylinder capacity), cast <i>en bloc</i> , with mechanically-operated valves, all on one side.
CARBURETTOR	Automatic in action at all speeds, requiring no attention.	CARBURETTOR	Automatic in action at all speeds, requiring no attention.
LUBRICATION	By pump forcing oil through main bearings and hollow crankshaft to connecting rod big-ends, copper oil sump.	LUBRICATION	By pump forcing oil through main bearings and hollow crankshaft to connecting rod big-ends, copper oil sump.
IGNITION.. ..	Bosch dual (magneto and accumulators).	IGNITION.. ..	Bosch double system, comprising high-tension magneto and coil-and-accumulator with switch starting.
STARTING HANDLE ..	At after end of engine with chain and free wheel to crankshaft. This engine develops 16 b.h.p. at 1,000 r.p.m., 27 b.h.p. at 1,500, 36 b.h.p. at 2,000, and 45 b.h.p. at 2,500 r.p.m.	STARTING HANDLE ..	The ordinary type of starting handle, as used with road cars, is provided for starting the engine when cold, but afterwards the engine is started with the switch. This engine develops 24 b.h.p. at 1,000 r.p.m., 36 b.h.p. at 1,500, and 55 b.h.p. at 2,100 r.p.m.
PRICE	£150	PRICE	£160

of the engine were put into other chassis including a Coupe de l'Auto car thus pre-empting a minor run of some 15 cars prior to The Great War.

Vauxhall's racing activities moved on though and in 1914 a team was entered for the Grand Prix. Unfortunately not one of these machines has survived, so maybe it will never be known how great their potential was since their debut was inauspicious for a variety of reasons.

The relaxation of hostilities in 1918 spawned a serious rethink of the 30-98 to enable the use of existing components to achieve the same purpose. The result, known as the 'E type', used the scantlings of the 'D type' engine with camshaft and valve gear altered, installed in a chassis drawing on the best elements of 2007 combined with the C type Prince Henry. In all, some 300-odd examples were made and to have seen one on the road in the early post-war period was quite something.

Challenged soon after by such cars as the Bentley, the 30-98 needed a prompt update which, by 1923, may have been too late financially. The

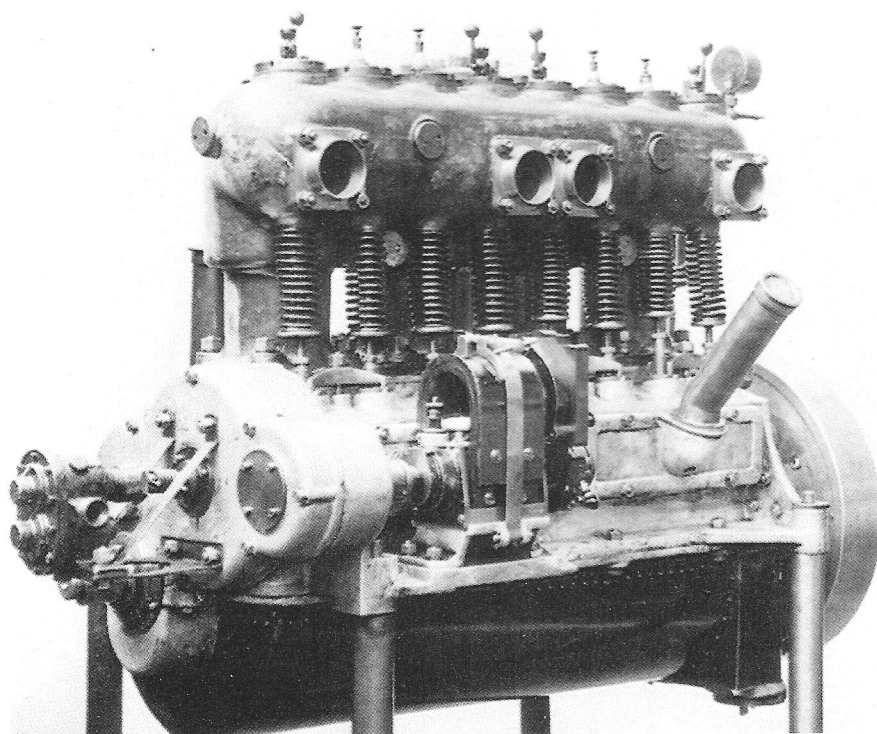


4-cylinder engine (A10 marine) inlet

resulting OE (overhead valve E type) was nevertheless one of the world's greatest cars and, as may tritely be said, produced the V in VSCC. The survival rate of OE 30-98s far outstrips the E type and currently hot versions are capable of 100mph with the screen up! Brakes? Well that's another matter, but the appeal of the 30-98 has endured because its performance results from its light weight.

Some 180 of the total 600 or so cars have survived, but sadly not 2007 which only appears to have been used by Higginson for one summer before being rebuilt and sold to ER Foden only to then disappear.

Shelsley Walsh plays host to the 30-98 in Vauxhall's Centenary Year for the very good reason that it is 90 years since Higginson established the hill record at 55.2 seconds.



A10 marine engine – 3/4 front – exhaust