

The Motor Road Test No. 7/59

Make: Vauxhall

Type: Victor Series 2 De Luxe

Makers: Vauxhall Motors, Ltd., Luton, Beds.

Test Data

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CONDITIONS: Weather: Dry, little wind. (Temperature 38°-46° F., Barometer 30.1 in. Hg.). Surface: Dry tarmac. Fuel: British premium grade pump petrol (approx. 95 Research Method Octane Rating).

INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. 9% fast
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. 4% fast
 Distance recorder 2½% fast

WEIGHT

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) 20 cwt.
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight 56/44
 Weight laden as tested 23½ cwt.

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

Flying Quarter Mile
 Mean of four opposite runs 75.3 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 78.2 m.p.h.

"Maximile" Speed. (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest.)

Mean of four opposite runs 74.4 m.p.h.
 Best one-way time equals 76.3 m.p.h.

Speed in gears

Max. speed in 2nd gear 52 m.p.h.
 Max. speed in 1st gear 28 m.p.h.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

41½ m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level.
 36½ m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level.
 31½ m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level.
 28 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level.
 23 m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level.

Overall Fuel Consumption for 1,306 miles, 49.6 gallons, equals 26.3 m.p.g. (10.75 litres/100 km.)

Touring Fuel Consumption (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration) 29.1 m.p.g.

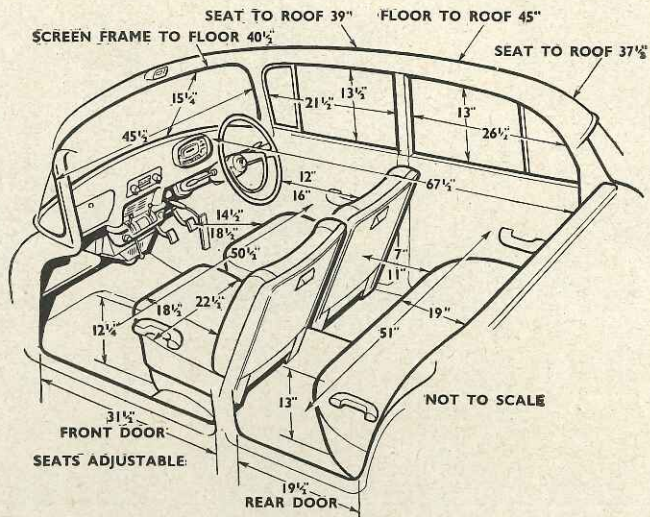
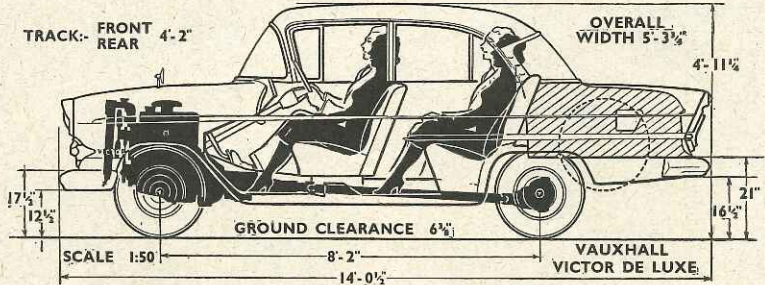
Fuel Tank Capacity (maker's figure) 8 gallons.

STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:
 Left 31½ feet
 Right 31 feet
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 3½

BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.90 g retardation (equivalent to 33½ ft. stopping distance) with 85 lb. pedal pressure.
 0.87 g retardation (equivalent to 34½ ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure.
 0.62 g retardation (equivalent to 48½ ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure.
 0.28 g retardation (equivalent to 107½ ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure.



ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill

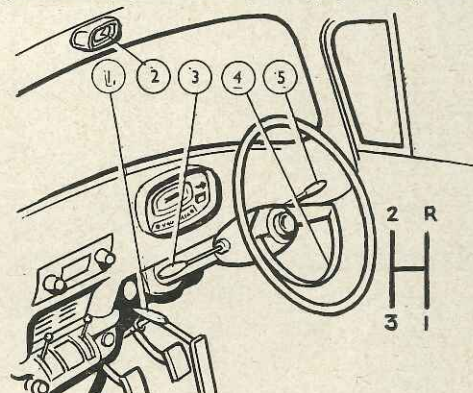
0-30 m.p.h.	5.9 sec.
0-40 m.p.h.	9.4 sec.
0-50 m.p.h.	16.0 sec.
0-60 m.p.h.	24.8 sec.
0-70 m.p.h.	40.6 sec.
Standing quarter mile	22.7 sec.

ACCELERATION TIMES on upper ratios

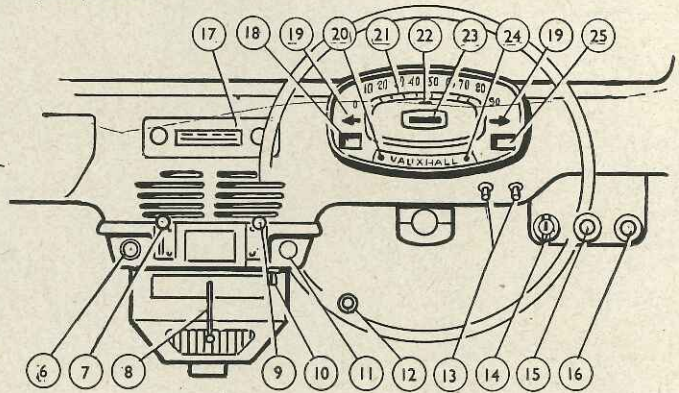
	Top gear	2nd gear
10-30 m.p.h.	10.3 sec.	5.7 sec.
20-40 m.p.h.	10.1 sec.	6.6 sec.
30-50 m.p.h.	12.6 sec.	8.9 sec.
40-60 m.p.h.	16.3 sec.	—
50-70 m.p.h.	22.9 sec.	—

HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds

Max. gradient on top gear 1 in 10.6 (Tapley 190 lb./ton)
 Max. gradient on 2nd gear 1 in 6.3 (Tapley 350 lb./ton)



1, Handbrake. 2, Clock. 3, Gear lever. 4, Horn ring. 5, Direction indicator switch. 6, Choke control. 7, Heater and ventilator air intake control. 8, Cold air intake control. 9, Heater temperature control. 10, Heater fan switch. 11, Cigar lighter (optional extra). 12, Headlamp



dip switch. 13, Switches for auxiliary lamps (when fitted). 14, Ignition, starter and auxiliary circuit switch. 15, Windscreen wipers and washers switch. 16, Lights, fascia rheostat and interior light switch. 17, Radio controls. 18, Water

thermometer. 19, Direction indicator warning light. 20, Dynamo charge warning light. 21, Speedometer. 22, Main beam indicator light. 23, Distance recorder. 24, Oil pressure warning light. 25, Fuel contents gauge.

The Vauxhall Victor Series 2

De Luxe

Simplified

Styling Matched

by Much

Improved Quality
and Performance



COMMENTS on styling are ordinarily out of place in a road test report, in which fact must take precedence over opinion. In the case of the Series 2 Vauxhall Victor some reference to styling is inevitable, for there can be little doubt that the Victor as it was first revealed two years ago was so controversial in appearance that many people never even attempted to try its good qualities. By comparison the latest model looks more "ordinary"; a change which should have the beneficial result of introducing to a wider public a car that has been improved at the same time in a large number of minor ways with a major overall result.

The de luxe model which is the subject of this report is an addition to the Victor range. Costing £90 more than the cheapest of the three variants, including British purchase tax, it offers a dual colour scheme, refinements of trim and the more significant luxury of well-shaped individual front seats. The sound sense of this last item—the Victor being in all respects a four-

Clean-lined and less adorned, the Victor retains all its useful dimensions. The luggage shown (right) left plenty of space in the boot; only a matter of an inch or so prevented another of the large cases being installed.

seater without compromise—underlines a thoughtful approach which may come as a surprise to those who imagine designers and stylists unable to work in harmony. First impressions of the new Victor suggest a sensible, lightly-handling family saloon. Further acquaintance not only reinforces these impressions but reveals many of the practical details which spring from hard thinking and hard development work.

Cars from the Luton factory have been described, sometimes a little unkindly, as the nearest thing to "painless" motoring. The latest example can claim with justification to have eliminated the pain without removing the pleasure, re-establishing a Vauxhall standard of silence and easy performance in a 1½-litre saloon which is at the same time unusually responsive to the demands of a keen driver. To consider the comfortable aspect first, it should go on record that the Victor was one of the most untiring of orthodox cars to drive on a long journey which has come the way of *The Motor* for some time. How much of the credit for this should go to the suspension and how much to the seats is not easy to decide. Conventional on paper, the suspension with its very long, asymmetric



leaf rear springs is better at absorbing really bad bumps of the semi-colonial road type than it is at concealing altogether the small imperfections of an English main road. The damping is excellent in avoiding the floating ride characteristic of some softly sprung cars, while quite pronounced cornering roll which is exaggerated by a high driving position and a high bonnet is made less troublesome by seats providing good lateral support. On the other hand even a sponge rubber overlay on the upholstery does not prevent lightweight passengers from being bounced up and down if the car is hustled over minor roads.

Dimensions tell some of the story but not all. Without being exceptionally large in any direction internally, the Victor uses the space to the best advantage of its allotted four occupants. Six-foot drivers will appreciate a seat which can be slid

In Brief

Price	£565 plus purchase tax	£283 17s.	
			equals £848 17s.
Capacity	...	...	1,507 c.c.
Unladen kerb weight	...	...	20½ cwt.
Acceleration:			
20-40 m.p.h. in top gear	...	...	10.1 sec.
0-50 m.p.h. through gears	...	...	16.0 sec.
Maximum direct top gear gradient	...	...	1 in 10.6
Maximum speed	...	...	75.3 m.p.h.
"Maximile" speed	...	...	74.4 m.p.h.
Touring fuel consumption	...	...	29.1 m.p.g.
Gearing: 16.3 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m.; 32.6 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed.			



The Vauxhall Victor Series 2 De Luxe

The de luxe model is distinguished by leather upholstery, special trim and two very comfortable separate front seats. The heater, radio and parcel shelf shown in this picture are optional extras.

back to an almost straight-legged position, and provision for altering both height and angle by means of pads. There is an elbow-rest for everybody, including the driver who can make use of it when he wants to without being obstructed at critical moments.

Equally important for long-distance comfort is a rare combination of silence and ventilation which makes it possible, at 65 m.p.h., to listen without straining to a radio of only middling quality, yet stay warm and well provided with fresh air. Heaters are so much a *sine qua non* of today's motoring that no excuse is offered for mentioning an optional accessory; controlled by two sliding knobs and a two-speed fan switch, it allows instant mixing of hot and cold fresh air in any proportion (but without differentiating between the demisting and heater outlets), or can be used with a very noisy booster fan to recirculate air when the atmosphere outside contains fumes or dust. Presumably through maladjustment, the unit on the test car would not produce completely cold air. Hinged flaps in the front windows ventilate without draught once force or ingenuity has been applied to open them, and in the half-open position create very little wind noise. Great pains have obviously been taken to ensure silence, the engine being exceptionally quiet for a car of this class, while drumming in the body is not apparent until just above the 65 m.p.h. cruising speed quoted previously.

Visibility is an awkward quantity to measure. The full wrap-around windscreen is a design which is apt to arouse prejudice, but it is probably fair to say that for most people the forward view from the driving seat of most objects which affect safety—that is anything from the level of the driver's eyes downwards—is better than normal. Conversely, an overhanging roof causes such things as treetops and close-up traffic lights to disappear from sight earlier, while the best compromise achieved by

two windscreen wiper blades swinging in opposition leaves blind triangles at both ends and in the middle of the screen. A three-bladed wiper might offer the solution—its use is not unknown. Sideways and to the rear the visibility is good, including a view of all four wings for parking.

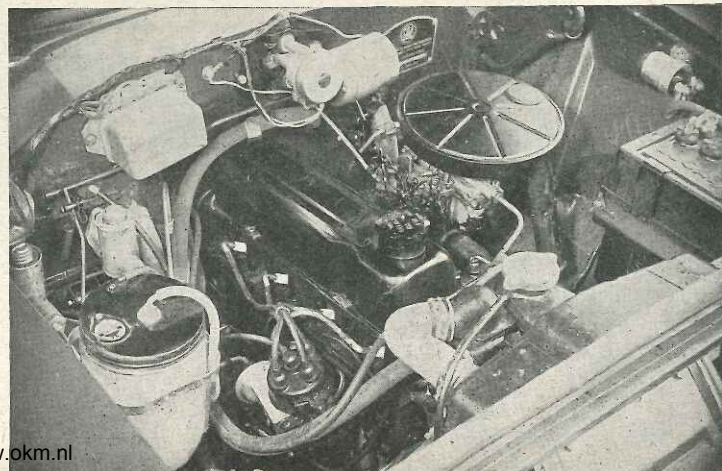
Some of *The Motor's* staff struck the corner of the windscreen pillar with their knee occasionally when getting in, some did it always and some never. Once installed, the driver is well set up to take advantage of the Victor's dual personality, driving lazily with infrequent changes of gear or using positive controls and good road-holding to enjoy himself. Modest peak power output and the quite high final drive ratio go with a flat torque curve that is characteristic of Vauxhall, and vindicated by above-average acceleration in top gear at speeds from 10 m.p.h. upwards. There has, incidentally, been a substantial improvement right through the range since the first Victor saloon was tested by *The Motor*. Inevitably, sporting driving habits are restricted by a three-speed gearbox with a maximum usable speed in second gear of about 50 m.p.h., and the engine although good at pulling is unresponsive to the accelerator, the more so on account of a rather vague linkage associated with the new organ-type pedal. A

little surprisingly, this car with its obvious North American influence still retains a manual choke control (still superior on grounds of economy in town driving), and the handbook's claim that the engine will be ready to give its best within half a mile of starting from cold seems to be not far from the truth. (It is necessary to go rather further before much warmth comes through the interior heater.) British premium petrol, undiluted by even intermediate grades, proved necessary to avoid pinking when making full use of the engine's flexibility.

Restrictive in its choice of ratios, the gearbox nevertheless has a steering column gear change that is good by any standard and very good compared with some Vauxhalls in the past. The synchromesh—on all three forward gears—is of baulk-ring type which ensures perfectly silent engagement, but positive linkage makes it possible to snatch a change very quickly in emergency. The clutch is smooth and non-slipping but could be lighter.

The Victor's quality which is certain to please the enthusiast most is its handling. Again the fruit of painstaking research is evident in roadholding and steering which, if not in the sports-car class, stand at any rate half-way between those of sports cars and many run-of-the-mill family saloons. Using a conventional layout, without even

The engine has been made more accessible by increasing the bonnet opening. The bonnet is released by an external catch.



such semi-sporting components as rack and pinion steering gear, the car has been endowed with steering that is both light and responsive, retaining plenty of feel for slippery road conditions but free from reaction. The anti-roll bar which is a part of the front suspension is clearly there more for its effect on steering characteristics than actually to limit the angle of heel, which is considerable. In spite of this rolling tendency the understeer is both moderate and consistent. Sticking to the road rather more effectively than an enthusiastic driver is able to stick to his seat without a firm hold on the wheel (although the separate seats are a big help), the Victor is not perhaps an ideal car with which to play tricks of the wiggle-wobble variety, but in compensation it plays no tricks back under normal conditions.

A glance at the technical specification is apt to cause slight apprehension amongst those who are accustomed to predict brake performance on the basis of friction lining area. At a mere 91.5 sq. in. per ton of unladen weight the Vauxhall should by these standards be suspect for mountain roads or fast driving. In practice an unusual design of composite brake drum, employing a cast-iron periphery on a light steel back plate, produces fade only after severe provocation, with fairly quick recovery and no increase in pedal travel through drum expansion. The hand-brake is of pull-out type under the fascia, better than some in holding power.

Undoubtedly the stylists were given a fairly free hand with the original Victor, and their bolder creations have been to some extent toned down, as in the substitution of paint for chromium on the

The tail exhibits less chromium and a neater bumper than hitherto. It is necessary to use the ignition key to open the boot.



panel holding the heater controls and ashtray. Closer inspection shows that items like the speedometer, housed in a dial of unrelated shape, are more readable than many which conform to the circular tradition. Similarly the rather glossy row of switches turns out to be practical in operation. A two-position pull-out switch for the side and headlights is combined with a rheostat for the instrument panel illumination and a switch for the roof lamp, which has a lens throwing a bright narrow beam for reading as well as the normal diffused interior light. Alongside that is a combined two-speed windscreen wiper switch and button for the windscreen washers, and beside that an ignition and starter switch which allows the car to be left driveable if necessary in a garage with the boot locked and the key removed. Intelligent doubling-up of controls in this way makes for less confusion, especially in the dark. By contrast the tumbler switches for a pair of optional auxiliary driving lamps appear to have been an afterthought, hard to find and to reach, while there is a half-ring only for the horn.

The list of optional accessories is long—longer, perhaps, than one might expect on the most expensive model, which does not include in its purchase price such items as the interior heater, clock or even the useful parcel shelf supplementing a deep but narrow glove box. The luggage locker is unusually large for a 1½-litre saloon, openable only by key and possessing torsion bar springs for the lid which could be damaging to luggage if the boot were well filled.

A descriptive article on pages 167-169 gives details of some of the less apparent changes which have occurred in the Victor, some with the latest model and some gradually over the last two years. Many of the latter are associated with new methods of production and illustrate the meaning of the often unappreciated term "development." They confirm the findings of practical experience, that the latest of the Vauxhall line is a sound and sensible motorcar worth the attention of any four-seat-family motorist.

Specification

Engine	
Cylinders	4
Bore	79.4 mm.
Stroke	76.2 mm.
Cubic capacity	1,507 c.c.
Piston area	30.7 sq. in.
Valves	pushrod o.h.v.
Compression ratio	7.8/1 (6.8 optional)
Carburetter	Zenith 34 VN downdraught
Fuel pump	AC mechanical
Ignition timing control	Centrifugal and vacuum
Oil filter	AC By-pass
Max power (gross)	54.8 b.h.p.
at	4,200 r.p.m.
Piston speed at max. b.h.p.	2,100 ft./min.
Transmission	
Clutch	Borg and Beck s.d.p. 7½ in.
Top gear (s/m)	4.125
2nd gear (s/m)	6.75
1st gear (s/m)	13.14
Reverse	12.6
Propeller shaft	Ha dy Spicer open
Final drive	Hypoid
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.	16.3
Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed	32.6
Chassis	
Brakes	Lockheed hydraulic (2 l.s. front)
Brake drum internal diameter	8 in.
Friction lining area	92 sq. in.
Suspension:	
Front	Wishbones and coil springs
Rear	Semi-elliptic leaf
Shock absorbers:	
Front and rear	Vauxhall telescope
Steering gear	Burman recirculating ball
Tyres	5.60—13 tubeless

Coachwork and Equipment

Starting handle	No
Battery mounting	Beside engine
Jack	Scissor type
Jacking points	Two each side, under door sills
Standard tool kit: Wheelnut spanner, jack, sparking plug spanner, tommy bar, screw-driver, 2 O/E spanners, adjustable spanner, brake adjustment spanner.	
Exterior lights: 2 head, 2 side/indicator, 2 tail/stop, 2 rear indicator, number plate.	
Number of electrical fuses	2 with thermal interrupter for lights
Direction indicators	Flashing, self-cancelling (amber rear)
Windscreen wipers	2-speed electric, self-parking
Windscreen washers	Optional
Sun visors	Two
Instruments: Speedometer with non-trip, decimal distance recorder, water thermometer, fuel gauge.	
Warning lights: Oil pressure, dynamo charge, headlamp main beam, indicators.	

Locks:	
With ignition key	Ignition, boot, either front door
With other keys	None
Glove lockers	One
Map pockets	None
Parcel shelves	Optional
Ashtrays	One front, two rear
Cigar lighters	Optional
Interior lights	One in roof
Interior heater: Optional, combined fresh air and recirculating type with demister.	
Car radio	Optional, Plessey V.R.V.
Extras available: Radio, heater, windscreen washers, wing mirrors, parcel shelf, fog lamps, exterior sun visor, roof rack, floor mats, reversing lights, seat covers, electric clock, etc.	
Upholstery material	Leather
Floor covering	Carpet
Exterior colours standardized	
Five single, four two-tone	
Alternative body styles	Estate car

Maintenance

Sump	7.5 pints, S.A.E. 20
Gearbox	2.1 pints, S.A.E. 90
Rear axle	2.5 pints, S.A.E. 90
Steering gear lubricant	S.A.E. 90
Cooling system capacity	10½ pints (2 drain taps)
Chassis lubrication: By grease gun every 1,000 miles to 17 points.	
Ignition timing	9° b.t.d.c. static
Contact-breaker gap	0.019-0.021 in.
Sparking plug type	AC 44/5V
Sparking plug gap	0.028-0.030 in.
Valve timing: Inlet opens 19½° b.t.d.c.; inlet closes 60½° a.b.d.c.; exhaust opens 51½° b.t.d.c.; exhaust closes 28½° a.t.d.c.	

Tappet clearances (hot):	
Inlet	0.013 in.
Exhaust	0.013 in.
Front wheel toe-in	0.125 in.
Camber angle	0° 38' laden
Castor angle	1° 30' laden
Steering swivel pin inclination	4°
Tyre pressures:	
Front	24 lb.
Rear	24 lb.
Brake fluid	Lockheed SAE 70 RZ
Battery type and capacity: Exide 6-XNF 7R, 43 amp. hr.	