



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk

Early Standard Vanguards brought together...

Published: September 3, 2019

Author: Kim Henson

Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/early-standard-vanguards-brought-together/>



Kim Henson was there:...

(All words and photos by Kim).

During the late 1930s the Standard Motor Company produced a very wide range of 'Flying Standard' models that proved to be popular with buyers and it is no exaggeration to say that these cars helped the firm to survive and prosper. Indeed, as a result it became one of the 'big six' top motor manufacturers in Britain.

After World War II, as a stop-gap measure and in order to quickly re-start car production,



Standard re-introduced a reduced range of mildly revised cars based very much on the pre-War 'Flyers'.

These post-War Flying Standard derivative models – worthy but by now considered to be somewhat old-fashioned – were replaced by the all-new Standard Vanguard. Under the guidance of Sir John Black, the firm had decided to embark on a bold but possibly risky 'one model' policy.

The Vanguard that resulted (retrospectively dubbed 'Phase I') was an up-to-the-minute family saloon, with modern styling reminiscent of contemporary American cars, but on a smaller scale and with more typically British treatment of the interior, facia etc.

Under the bonnet, in all but the very earliest examples, was an overhead valve four cylinder 2088cc wet liner engine, developing 68 bhp and endowing the new model with impressive performance for its time. The car was also notable for its independent front suspension, contributing to a comfortable ride and good handling characteristics for the 1940s.

During the next few years the spacious Vanguard was produced in estate car, van and pick-up versions, as well as in saloon form, and was sold around the world, helping to earn valuable export currency for Britain. It proved to be a reliable vehicle, even in tough operating environments, and was well-liked by buyers.

'Phase IA' versions arrived in 1952, identifiable by their revised frontal appearance including a new grille incorporating three horizontal bars, in place of the earlier multi-slat design. The rear window was enlarged and other aspects were also revised.

The Phase II of 1953 was restyled, with notchback bodywork (including a larger capacity boot and a bigger rear window) replacing the previous 'beetle back' design.

In 1955/6 the new, redesigned Phase III Vanguards ousted the Phase IIs, with some initial overlap in sales terms, between the new and old models.



Vanguards Galore

Recently a group of Vanguard owners and enthusiasts enjoyed a Sunday get-together in north Hampshire. Although attendees were members of the Standard Motor Club, the event was not an official Club outing, but arranged privately by Vanguard enthusiast extraordinaire Mark Denton. He organised his first such event in 2018, celebrating 70 years of Vanguards, and it was so successful that he decided to arrange a second get-together this year, reaching out to all Vanguard Phase I and II enthusiasts within a reasonable travelling distance, and inviting them to attend.

On the appointed day the weather was fine and a great selection of Vanguard models (and their owners!) turned up to enjoy chatting together (over coffee and sausage rolls...) about the cars and swapping notes, then to partake of lunch at a local pub, before finishing off the day with tea and a slice of a specially-made Vanguard cake, beautifully made by a friend of Mark and his wife Nicky, and in the form of a Vanguard pick-up.

In date order, attending Standard vehicles included:

A 1947 'Flying' Eight Drophead Coupé (pictured below), owned by Mick Harvey and restored from a 'scrapyard find' wreck. (This was one of the post-War Standard models replaced by the Vanguard in 1948).



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk



A 1948 '20S' (first series) Vanguard saloon, owned and restored by Mark Denton in 1992 to superb original condition, and believed to be THE car that stood proudly on Standard's London Motor Show stand in October 1948, and awakened the world to the merits of the Vanguard...



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk



A green 1949 Phase I saloon; just lovely.



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk



A blue/white Phase I van, dating from 1949 and driven to the get-together from Tunbridge Wells in Kent.



A deliberately unrestored 1950 Phase I Vanguard van (pictured on the right in the last photograph in this article), owned by Mark.

A 'mint' condition metallic green 1952 Phase IA saloon, purchased from a motor museum and with fewer than 40,000 miles behind it (pictured below).



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk





A contrast in frontal styling... On the left is a 1947 4/8A Drophead, and on the right is the front end of a 1952 ex-RAF Vanguard Phase IA Pick-up (driven to the Hampshire event from Tunbridge Wells in Kent).

In attendance too were a fantastic-looking 1952 ex-RAF Phase IA Pick-up (included on the left in the three-car photograph below), driven to and from the event on the day from Tunbridge Wells in Kent, plus Mark's own pick-up (not shown), for which restoration is planned to start early in 2020. Mark's 1952 Phase IA estate car, and Peter Lockley's similar car (seen below), both dating from 1952 were also at the event ("You can wait for 67 years for a Vanguard Phase IA estate to come along, then two turn up together!").



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk



At the front of this lovely trio is a Phase IA estate owned (and driven enthusiastically) for many years by Standard Motor Club Chairman Peter Lockley. In this shot the estate is closely followed by a 1952 Phase IA saloon and an ex-RAF pick-up version.



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk



Vanguards everywhere... At the front of this line (above) is Mark Denton's 1952 Phase IA estate car.



A superb cake depicting a Vanguard pick-up was enjoyed by all attendees at this Vanguard get-together.

VERDICT

Summing up the happy day, Mark expressed his delight that these early Vandards are still being enjoyed and celebrated, some 71 years after their introduction.



Three rare Vanguards in the same photograph. From left to right, a Phase IA saloon, centre (in the background) a 1949 Phase I van, and on the right is Mark Denton's unrestored 1950 Phase I van.

THANKS

Grateful thanks to Mark and Nicky Denton and all the Standard owners and enthusiasts attending for making so welcome my wife, my Austin A60 (my own Standard is undergoing work and not currently on the road) and myself, and for further educating me about the Vanguards, so important in Britain's automotive history.

INTERESTED IN VANGUARDS (OR ANY VEHICLE PRODUCED BY THE STANDARD MOTOR COMPANY)? THE CLUB CAN HELP YOU...



WHEELS-ALIVE!

www.wheels-alive.co.uk

The Standard Motor Club caters for all Standard models, including the Vikings:

<https://www.standardmotorclub.org.uk/>