

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## The Final Vanquish S Ultimate Edition Rolls Off the Production Line at Newport Pagnell



**After some 13,000 vehicles produced at the famous Buckinghamshire town it was, fittingly, down to a long-serving member of the production staff - Kenny Clarke - to drive the last ever car off the 'line'.**

The celebration of more than fifty years of manufacturing history at Newport Pagnell was an emotional one, as Astons had invited members of staff from over the years who'd seen good times and bad, a variety of models (from the **DB4** to the **Vanquish S**, all mould-breaking cars for the company) and dramatically different production techniques; the famous hammer and rolling wheels giving way to the hi-tech bonded chassis of the very last model.

Present at the lunchtime event were craftsmen who had worked on **Vanquish**, **V8**, **Lagonda**, **Virage** and earlier models, as well as the office workers and management from that period including one-time owner of the company **Peter Sprague**, local dignitaries such the **Mayor of Newport Pagnell**, and many current and past chairmen of the **Aston Martin Owners Club**.

The all-black **Vanquish S Ultimate Edition**, chassis 502593, will be retained by the factory, the limited edition run of final cars selling out very quickly and bringing total Vanquish production to around 2,500 examples.



**Works Service** will continue to operate on the other side of **Tickford Street**, carrying out service, vehicle improvement, restoration and accident repair work, while plans for a re-development of the historic site as residential housing and offices are with the relevant local authorities. The famous '**Sunnyside**', and two- and three-storey buildings are understood to be core to any development and it is expected that they will be retained in some form.

As **Kingsley Riding-Felce**, Director - Works Service, was keen to emphasise in his short speech when unveiling the final car, it was the people that matter. Aston Martin has always been an emotional brand with

a strong connection between the customers and the men and women who hand-crafted them. The closure of Newport Pagnell as a manufacturing centre is truly a historic moment, but one that the company will cope with, as it has the other vicissitudes of the last 93 years.

*Text: Steve Wakefield*

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