

Carmen: There are almost 200 classic cars here at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, in Hampshire; including 1930s motors to modern-day racers.

So what makes a car a classic? And why are there so many British classic cars? Well, this is a great place to find out more about Britain's motoring history. The motor industry played a central part in Britain's industrial past.

Bentleys, Aston Martins and Rolls Royces, like this one, are just some of the classic cars to have been built in the UK.

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Carmen: Hi, Stephen.

Stephen: Hi, Carmen.

Carmen: Stephen Vokins is a classic car expert. He works at the museum, and sometimes gets to drive these cars. What a great job you have!

Stephen: It is a great, great job!

Carmen: So tell me about this car.

Stephen: This car is a 1914 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost Alpine Eagle, known at the time as probably the finest motor car in the world.

Carmen: What makes it so special?

Stephen: Well, it was made by traditional craftsmen, handmade using the finest materials available regardless of cost.

Carmen: Well, can we go for a spin?

Stephen: Yes, let's.

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Carmen: For many years only the rich could afford a motor car. Then manufacturers found cheaper ways of making cars. Motoring broke through the class barrier. Mass motoring was here for good.

Britain is where much of motoring started. Famous car manufacturers like Rover, Austin and Morris made some of the best cars of the period. There were cars for driving trips in the country, families and sporty two-seaters.

The British car industry has been in decline for many years, but there are some more-recent classics like the Mini. This car was built in 1959 and soon became an icon. And it's still being manufactured.

Cars are a popular hobby in the UK. Motor enthusiasts can belong to owners clubs, or take part in motor shows, like the Super Car event here at Beaulieu.

For some these motors are dream cars! But is there a future for these petrol-guzzling classics?

People are beginning to think about more eco-friendly cars. The Citroen Evie is the UK's first four-seater, all-electric, ready-to-buy car. And Rachel Osborne is a proud owner.

Rachel: I bought an electric car because I wanted to help the environment. There's less pollution, there's no petrol, there's no fumes. I also wanted to save money. I don't have to pay for petrol, I don't have to pay for road tax and I get free parking around town.

Carmen: For those of us who might like something a little faster, this is the Tesla Roadster 2.5 – the latest electric car and the only one of its type. It can do an amazing zero to 100 kilometres an hour in 3.7 seconds and can travel on a full battery for 340 kilometres.

Electric cars come in all shapes and sizes. Perhaps, the Tesla and the Evie will be the classic cars of the future.