


CLASSIC DRIVER



1900 Cleveland Electric Sperry System

Lot sold	USD 61 136 - 66 230 GBP 48 000 - 52 000 (listed)	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1900	Condition	Used
Number of seats	2	Location	
Drivetrain	2wd	Fuel type	Petrol
Lot number	216	Exterior colour	Other

Description

The people's choice at The LBVCR Regent Street Concours 2005
1900 Cleveland Sperry System Electric Three-Seater Stanhope
Registration no. (Irish) NI 3

Elmer A. Sperry arrived in Cleveland in the later years of the nineteenth century to assist in setting up an electric street railway company. His credentials had already been established as he had previously invented electric arc lamps and he had been at the forefront of design of advanced electrically-driven mining equipment. Intrigued by the new fangled horseless carriage, he saw the future not in steam engines or the internal combustion engine but in electrically powered vehicles he may yet be proved right! His Sperry Engineering Company built its first electric carriage in 1898 and, joining forces with the Cleveland Machine Screw Company in 1899, Sperry entered motor car production. Coachwork, chassis design and suspension followed closely horsedrawn vehicle principles but here was a state-of-the-art, self-propelled vehicle, running almost in silence, that was capable, allegedly, of 18mph. Also it was simplicity itself to drive with one multi-functional lever taking care of steering, acceleration, braking and isolating the electric current a far cry from the complexity of driving many of its steam and internal combustion engined competitors. Initially marketed as Cleveland, Sperry System cars, later models were simply known as Sperry and in 1900, venturing into Europe, the Sperry won a gold medal at the Paris Exposition. Sperry patents were sold in 1901 to the American Bicycle Company and from 1902 to 1904 the Cleveland Machine Screw Company was

to build a short-lived petrol-engined car.

This is one of two known surviving Cleveland electric vehicles listed in the Veteran Car Club of Great Britain Handbook, the other car residing unused in The Hull Museum, having arrived there on the dispersal of Edmund Dangerfield's The Motor museum at Crystal Palace in 1914.

This car was acquired at auction in London some 25 years ago, becoming part of a small collection of cars in Ireland from whom the present owner acquired the car in 1991. It has been the subject of an ongoing restoration during the 1980s and 1990s. The original electric motor has been replaced by another period motor and during its lifetime chain drive has replaced the direct gear transmission. The stop voltage controller has been replaced by a solid state controller however the owner advises that the dismantled original control box available for inspection - is offered with the car. The car carries a distinctive Irish registration number, NI 3, which was first owned by Sir Horace Plunkett an ancestor of the present owner, founder of The Irish Agricultural Coop and son of Lord Dunsaney of County Meath.

Since restoration this car has taken part in many shows and rallies including the IVCC Gordon Bennett Rallies, the RIAC Pioneer Run, and has successfully completed the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run on no less than four occasions. In 2005 it was selected for the prestigious award, the Peoples Choice, at the Regent Street Concours d'Elegance, preceding the run that year. In 2002 the car was awarded a Certificate of Eligibility by Veteran Car Services Ltd., attributing a date of 1900 see correspondence on file. The car is currently registered in The Republic of Ireland and is offered with an accepted entry for the 2014 London to Brighton Veteran Car Run as well as the prestigious Regent Street Concours. The vendor will be happy to assist the successful purchaser with technical advice and driving instructions prior to the run.

Bonhams 1793



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