
1938 Brough Superior SS100

Stafford , 23 April

Lot sold	USD 82 168 - 109 557 GBP 60 000 - 80 000 (listed)	Condition	Used
Year of manufacture	1938	Location	
Engine number	BS/X2 1038	Motorcycle type	Street
		Colour	Other

Description

From the estate of the late Frank Vague
1938 Brough Superior 982cc SS100 Project
Registration no. GPH 697
Frame no. M1/1687
Engine no. BS/X2 1038

Single ownership for circa 50 years
Matching numbers
Offered for restoration

Legendary superbike of motorcycling's between-the-wars 'Golden Age', Brough Superior 'The Rolls-Royce of Motorcycles' - was synonymous with high performance, engineering excellence and quality of finish. That such a formidable reputation was forged by a motorcycle constructed almost entirely from bought-in components says much for the publicity skills of George Brough. But if ever a machine was more than the sum of its parts, it was the Brough Superior.

W E Brough's machines had been innovative and well engineered, and his son's continued the family tradition but with an added ingredient - style. The very first Brough Superior Mk1 of 1919 featured a saddle tank - an innovation not adopted by the rest of the British industry until 1928 - and the latter's broad-nosed, wedge-profiled outline would be a hallmark of the Nottingham-built machines from then on. Always the perfectionist, Brough bought only the best available components for his bikes, reasoning that if the product was right, a lofty price tag would be no handicap. And in the 'Roaring

Twenties' there were sufficient wealthy connoisseurs around to prove him right. One such was T E Lawrence 'Lawrence of Arabia' who owned several Broughs and was killed riding an SS100.

First shown to the public in 1924, the SS100 employed an entirely new overhead-valve 980cc JAP v-twin engine. A frame of duplex cradle type was devised for the newcomer, which soon after its launch became available with the distinctive, Harley-Davidson-influenced, Castle front fork patented by George Brough and Harold 'Oily' Karslake. And just in case prospective customers had any doubts about the SS100's performance, each machine came with a written guarantee that it had been timed at over 100mph for a quarter of a mile - a staggering achievement at a time when very few road vehicles of any sort were capable of reaching three-figure speeds.

Brough entered the 1930s with an entirely JAP-powered range and then in 1936 the SS100 was redesigned with an overhead-valve Matchless engine built by Associated Motor Cycles exclusively for Brough. By the time manufacture ceased in 1940, a total of 102 Matchless-engined examples had been built, making this the rarest of the SS100s and by far the most user-friendly and reliable. Survivors number approximately 71 worldwide.

This Matchless-engined SS100 was supplied new on 25th May 1938 to Messrs Jackson's Garage in Surrey, and is the only Brough Superior ever supplied to them. The frame dates from 1936 and the engine from 1938. Nevertheless, this machine has matching numbers; whether or not the frame lay on a shelf at the factory between 1936 and 1938, or Brough reused an old frame, is not known. The numbers of the frame, engine, gearbox and oil tank all match those on the accompanying copy Works Record Card, which refers to this machine as a '1937 End of Season' model. Interestingly, the WRC shows that this machine left the factory with a left-hand spout for the oil tank, a unique feature. It still has its original Amal 6/200 carburettor and split, rather than hinged, rear mudguard.

The SS100 was first registered as 'GPH 697' but nothing is known of its history prior to December 1963 when it was advertised for sale in the BS Club newsletter by a Mr S F Knapp of Bucklebury Common, Berkshire. The Brough was described as accident damaged with frame twisted, gearbox cracked, petrol and oil tanks damaged, also exhaust - but with recently overhauled engine. The asking price was £40. It is assumed that the Brough was sold to Frank Vague soon afterwards. The machine comes with two boxes of spares to include tool boxes, seat unit, spare front wheel and brake plate, and the rear mudguard's rear section.

Bonhams 1793

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