

CLASSIC DRIVER

1935 AC 2-Litre

- Lot sold
USD 237 569 - 296 962
GBP 200 000 - 250 000 (listed)
Year of manufacture 1935
- **Chassis number** L364
- **Number of seats** 2
- **Drivetrain** 2wd
- **Lot number** 589
- **Drive** LHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Fuel type** Petrol
- **Exterior colour** Other
-

Description

1935 AC 2-Litre 16/80hp Competition 'Slab-tank' Sports

Registration no. CPL 211
Chassis no. L364

Having abandoned plans to produce a 20hp touring car, John Weller turned his not inconsiderable design talents to something more mundane - a three-wheeled commercial delivery vehicle. Introduced in 1904, the Auto-Carrier was an immediate success and a passenger version - the Sociable - followed in 1907, at which time the company name was abbreviated to 'AC'. The firm's first four-cylinder car arrived in 1913 and fours would be catalogued until 1928, whereafter the company offered sixes only.

AC's famous Weller-designed, overhead-camshaft six entered production in 1922, by which time Weller and his financial backer John Portwine had been ousted by new owner S F Edge. A prominent racing driver of the Edwardian era, Edge believed fervently in the publicity value of competition successes and pursued this policy enthusiastically during his stewardship of AC. In 1922 an AC became the first 1,500cc car to cover the mile at over 100mph and in 1926 the marque's place in motoring history was assured when a 2-litre model became the first British car to win the Monte Carlo Rally.

Financial difficulties saw AC taken over by the Hurlock brothers in 1930 and from then on the firm concentrated on sporting cars aimed at the discerning enthusiast. Successful motor dealers, the Hurlocks had bought AC as a means of expanding their existing business and only restarted the manufacturing side in response to customer demand. Existing stocks of spares were used at first but when these began to run out the brothers had no option but to make a fresh start. This they did using a bought-in chassis from Standard, into which went Weller's six and a conventional ENV gearbox, replacing AC's traditional three-speed transaxle. The marque's reputation for producing well engineered and equally well finished cars continued under the Hurlocks' ownership, enabling AC to prosper despite the higher asking prices that these exemplary standards necessitated.

An improved, under-slung chassis of 9' 7" wheelbase was adopted for AC's 1934 range, which was first displayed at the London Motor Show in October 1933. By 1935 a flat radiator with mesh grille had replaced the previous rounded type, only to be superseded for the following season by the classic slatted version. A synchromesh gearbox was standard by this time, while other noteworthy features included automatic chassis lubrication, built-in jacks and Telecontrol shock absorbers, all of which were incorporated in the 16/60hp and 16/70hp models launched in 1936. In 1935 a two-seater sports model on a shorter (8' 10") chassis was announced - the 16/80 - which came with 80bhp on tap courtesy of a new cylinder head incorporating bigger valves. Including the supercharged 16/90hp model, only 44 of these delightful AC sports cars were produced.

Originally registered as 'CGW 2', this rare AC 16/80 was taken off the road circa 1963 and reregistered as '373 PPO' in 1972. It was used, rallied, and trialed between 1972 and 1998 before being rebuilt, and was back on the road again in 2012, now registered as 'XWG 497'. The car was refurbished again between 2013 and 2016, and has been registered as 'CPL 21' since 2016. In 2018 the exterior colour was changed from cream to grey, as per the factory records. During the aforementioned rebuilds the engine and gearbox were overhauled, the interior re-trimmed, various frame members replaced with new timber, and the electrics rewired. A few items remain unfinished: the front horns are not connected (the internal horn is still working); the fuel gauge is erratic; and the Armstrong Telecontrol dampers have not been re-commissioned recently. Noteworthy features include triple SU carburettors, a 7.5:1 compression ratio, tulip valves, and the much sought-after ENV 'sport' gearbox.

We are advised by the private vendor that the car runs well, displaying steady oil pressure of 60psi, while no water was used during recent 200-mile journey. Finished in grey with blue-green interior, this example of a rare and exciting AC sports car is offered with an old-style logbook, sundry restoration invoices, and a V5 registration document. A quantity of spare parts to include a cylinder head, cylinder block, rear springs (new), etc is included in the sale.

Bonhams 1793

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