

1926/27 ARAB LOW CHASSIS SUPER SPORTS 2.0 LITRE BY REID RAILTON

Registration No. MN7930 (Previously PK 7930 – Retrieval of original UK registration number should be possible through the DVLA)

Chassis No. 5 Engine No. EA 20

Specification: 12.8 HP, four cylinders inline 70 x 127mm, (1960cc), water cooled monobloc detachable head with overhead valves. Four speed Moss gearbox, single plate clutch, spiral bevel finial drive suspension, half-elliptic springs front and rear. Brakes on four wheels, wheelbase 9ft 5 ins. Track 4ft 4 ins. Paintwork grey.

During the 1920's/30's Reid Railton, an engineer of great distinction, designed some of the great record breaking cars of the time for outstanding racing drivers such as Sir Malcolm Campbell and John Cobb. The list includes Campbell's two Bluebirds of 1931 and 1935 and Cobb's 1938 Railton which took the land speed record at 394.7 mph in 1947 and held it until 1963. Railton in consultation with J. G. Parry Thomas designed this rare Arab sports car in 1926.

This is the first low chassis Super Sports Arab car to be built. The factory quoted a guaranteed speed of 90 mph for this model. This car was assembled at Thompson & Taylor's at Brooklands after the demise of Railton's Arab factory at Letchworth, Hertfordshire, following Parry Thomas's death at Pendine in 1927. It was originally fitted with engine No. EA12 but in 1936 it was fitted with its present engine No. EA20 from Railton's own pre-prototype known as the S.R. (Spurrier Railton). Railton had raced this car at the Brooklands Easter Meeting in 1924, competing in the 75 mph Short Handicap and the 90 mph Long Handicap. He, and also Spurrier, Parker and Shorrocks raced this car at Southport and elsewhere.

The most interesting feature of the design is Railton's modification of the Thomas valve gear. The Thomas Leyland Eight and Leyland-Thomas cars used one cam per cylinder and leaf valve springs. On the Arab engine Railton retained the leaf valve springs but used two cams per cylinder, off-setting the rockers so that each rocker was engaged by its own cam, thus giving the engine the benefit of overlap which was almost impossible on the Thomas layout (see Motor Sport April 1984).

According to an article in an old Classic Car magazine, "from November 1924 until 1941 this car was owned and used by a succession of Leyland premium apprentices, two of whom have been contacted in the past and have confirmed the history of the car. A casting date of 1923 on the engine and a photograph from the albums of the late Sir Henry Spurrier of the S.R. in the late summer of 1923 confirm the origins of the S.R. engine. From 1941 to 1974 the car had few owners including the Stratford Upon Avon Museum, until its purchase by Brian Demaus (a well-known motor historian). In his hands, it was restored as near as possible to its condition when first registered in March

1929. The Arab has attended a number of vintage events, competed in one VSCC event and also attended three Brooklands reunions.

During Brian Demaus ownership, the engine was completely stripped down and rebuilt by Ron Footitt of Cleobury Garages Ltd., and the new gears and splines for the gearbox were made by Templeton Engineering of Woodmancote, Cheltenham. Since its rebuild, the car has covered only 6-7,000 miles on the road. Only one other low-chassis Arab survives with the consecutive chassis No. 6. Of the dozen or so thought to have been made, no high-chassis Arab is known to survive”.

The present owner purchased the Arab at auction in 1992 and has improved the restoration works of the previous owner, presenting this unique motor car in full running order ready to top the 90 mph barrier. The car has been stored in a de-humidified garage and maintained by a Rolls Royce trained mechanic.

The Arab Super Sports PK 7930 has featured in many automotive periodicals including ‘The Autocar’ 19.11.1926, ‘Motor Sport’ Oct 1958, Dec 1958, Feb 1959, Dec 1983, ‘Mobil News’ Sept 1983, and ‘The Automobile’ March 1984.

It is offered for sale with Isle of Man registration documents and some service history. The Arab Super Sports has a great pedigree and is one of the rarest car in the world. The opportunity to obtain a piece of automotive history of this calibre rarely presents itself, so to all enthusiasts, the time has come.