1903 CLÉMENT AC4R 12/16 HP REAR-ENTRANCE TONNEAU

With the world-famous RM Sotheby's London to Brighton Veteran Car Run just weeks away, excitement is building for one of motoring's most celebrated spectacles. More than 400 pre-1905 vehicles will steam, crank and rumble their way from Hyde Park to Brighton, bringing the pioneering spirit of early motoring vividly back to life.

To mark the countdown, we are showcasing a remarkable veteran car with enviable London to Brighton pedigree: this 1903 Clément 12/16 HP.

Built by one of the great visionaries of the French motor industry, Adolphe Clément, the car represents the cutting edge of automotive engineering at the turn of the 20th century. Clément began his career manufacturing bicycles before joining forces with fellow pioneer Alexandre Darracq. By 1901 the company was producing advanced four-cylinder motor cars and the 12/16 HP quickly gained a reputation as one of the most powerful vehicles of the era, renowned for its sophisticated engineering.

This particular example boasts an extraordinary history. Delivered new to France, it crossed to Britain in 1905 before spending nearly 25 years tucked away in a coach house. Rediscovered in 1933, it became a familiar sight on the Veteran Car Run, competing regularly before and after the Second World War and continuing to appear on selected Runs for decades thereafter.

More recently, the Clément spent over ten years in California before returning to the UK, where it was sympathetically refreshed for continued use, including the addition of LED lights for safety in future Runs. Combining remarkable originality with proven reliability, it stands today as a fascinating survivor from motoring's earliest days.

The car will be offered for sale at RM Sotheby's London Sale during London Motor Week on Saturday 31 October at The Peninsula London, a short walk from here at the Club.

Brief Technical Specification

Engine: four-cylinder, 2,121 cc

Maximum power: 12 bhp

Top speed: 40 mph approx

Price when new: £450 approx

On display Tuesday 13 October to Monday 26 October, courtesy of RM Sotheby's.
For more information, please see the cabinet outisde the library on the first floor.