

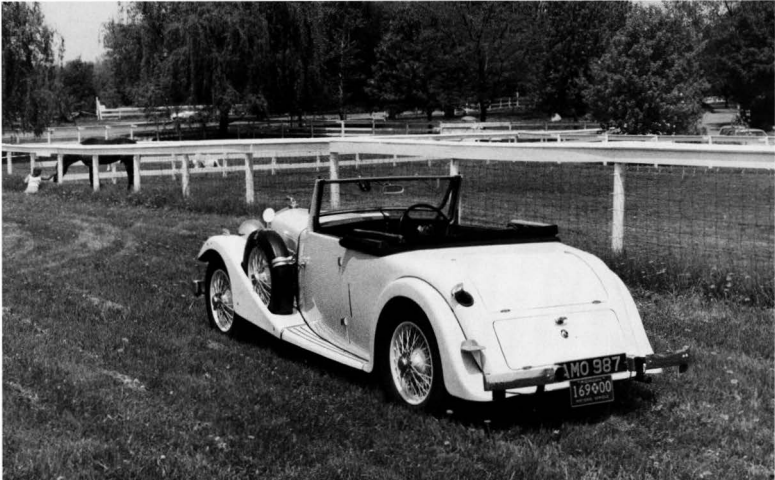
1936 A.C. Type 16/80 Sports Two-Seater
Owner: Jean Gorjat of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania



The initials remained the same—for AutoCarriers, the little three-wheeled commercial vehicles the company had begun producing prior to the First World War. And the factory remained in Thames Ditton, outside London in Surrey. But, with the Armistice, A.C. history took a memorable turn because company founder John Weller was ready with a new two-liter wet-liner single-overhead-cam engine. The A.C. Six was introduced in 1919. Production began in 1920. In 1921 the legendary Selwyn Francis Edge (of Napier fame) joined the firm, changing its name to A.C. Cars Ltd. and irritating Weller sufficiently to cause him to leave. Edge himself took leave in 1929 as A.C. went into voluntary liquidation. In 1930 the Hurlock brothers—Charles and William—acquired the company, initially to use its factory for other purposes but, upon examining the product, decided they'd rather be carmakers after all. For the A.C. that John Weller had engineered and S. F. Edge had taken racing and record-breaking with considerable success was a very worthy automobile. Just a few chassis changes (the prickly Edge didn't accept criticism well) would make it exemplary. And so it was. By the mid-thirties, the four-speed crash box had been replaced by an E.N.V. synchromesh (with a Wilson pre-selector available optionally) and three carburetors were fitted to the engine which was available in three stages of tune, the 16/60 standard with 70 hp and 80 hp for those desiring more performance. All this from a mere 1991 cc.

"The grandfather of the famous A. C. Cobra and one of the best British sporting cars of the period," says Jean Gorjat of his 1936 Type 16/80. "The roadability is excellent, and the A.C. is comfortable, which cannot be said of similarly-configured cars like the SS 100."

David Hill is similarly enthusiastic about his Type 16/60: "I purchased this car in London in 1976 and learned from previous owner Alan L. Peer that it had been found under a pile of lumber where it had been hidden away during the Second World War to avoid its being pressed into service or condemned as scrap for the war effort. The car was draped in canvas and the junk carefully piled around it. Thus entombed it slept until 1973. Most of



1937 A.C. Type 16/60 Greyhound Drophead Coupe

Owner: David L. Hill of Fenton, Michigan

the leather upholstery survived intact. Mr. Peer was responsible for a new top, carpeting and paint. He also overhauled the engine. I toured Great Britain for three weeks after purchasing the car. It likes to cruise along at 50 to 60 mph, with a characteristic hum at those speeds that seems to say 'all is well, thank you.' Other than its personality, I am fondest of the car's styling. The fenders retain the classic sweep, and yet the body is channeled over the frame, giving it a low, road-hugging appearance. Everything seems to be in proper proportion, with the hood length being about half the total of the car. A.C. has remained a small marque throughout its nearly ninety-year history. The company has resisted being absorbed by larger automotive manufacturers. Like the more prestigious Rolls-Royce, the Thames Ditton factory has a large service facility where owners' cars can be serviced routinely or even rebuilt. Also, cars are made to individual order, with each being handwritten into a large leather-bound ledger. The engine of my car was produced with little change from 1919 until 1962. A production run of forty-three years has to be an industry record." Indeed.

