



ECURIE BERTELLI

PRE-WAR ASTON-MARTINS



Chassis D40/725/U is one of only 23 Speed Models; the most advanced and best-performing pre-war Aston-Martin model, designed to incorporate significant improvements over the previous MkII and Ulster models as well as boasting a bigger more powerful 2 litre engine.

Built jointly by Lockheed and Aston-Martin, the hydraulic brakes were both innovative and extremely effective; it was not until the advent of the disc brake that they were equalled. The front axle was a new and patented design which allowed the whole unit to pivot, controlled by an adjustable radius arm allowing the caster angle to be set quickly. The front axle unit provided significantly improved handling compared to earlier models. There was also a new and improved gearbox - still a crash-type - but stronger and capable of handling 200bhp with a greatly improved selector mechanism. The gearbox was light too, with the casing made of Elektron, a magnesium alloy. The chassis was wider and stronger than the Ulster with a slightly shorter wheelbase. Aston-Martin equipped the Speed Model to the very highest standards including Scintilla electrical equipment throughout. Although 25 chassis numbers were assigned for these cars, only 23 were produced. This shortfall is likely due to their very high production costs with the brakes alone said to have accounted for 15% of the total cost!





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Chassis D40/725/U was originally built with one of the 'Type C' aerodynamic bodies. Astonishingly, although only 23 Speed Models were built the Works offered a choice of 5 basic body styles. However, the last few were clothed in this very advanced aerodynamic styling which was supported on a metal frame rather than the traditional wooden one. The 'Type C' body fell out of favour compared to other styles. Much of the history of this particular car is little documented and it is likely it languished, unused, for much of its life until it was eventually rescued by David Taylor. David originally began working on pre-war Astons as a hobby before turning it into a profession that lasted 50 years and was very well known for his expertise on the 2 litre cars. In the late 1990s, he completely restored this car to the very highest standards and fitted the Ulster-style body you see today and is true to the design originally fitted by the Works to two of the Speed Models. One of these, known as 'The Black Car', is referenced in the current film *Operation Mincemeat* and was extremely successful in the hands of Jock Horsfall, with which he chalked up a win at the Belgium Grand Prix in 1946 as well as numerous Brooklands victories prior to the war.

Despite the Works withdrawal from racing just as the Speed Model went into production, these cars were designed for the track and were arguably the most successful of all the pre-war designs. They raced at Brooklands, Le Mans, Spa, on the 1000 Miglia, won Grand Prix, and even raced successfully at Goodwood immediately after WWII. The Speed Models are not only successful, but welcomed and competitive, at all the World class motoring events including: the 1000 Miglia, Le Mans, Monaco and Goodwood.

D40/725/U retains all the Speed Model components including: the high-performing brakes, the substantial Speed Model differential, as well as the Elektron castings used for the gearbox, bellhousings and many other castings. This car raced successfully for many years, is well-proven and in very good order, requiring only a little minor work to put it back into first class condition. It is very rare indeed for a Speed Model to be offered for sale and very few ever come onto the open market. This is an amazing opportunity not to be missed! Please contact Robert Blakemore for full details and to book a test drive.

