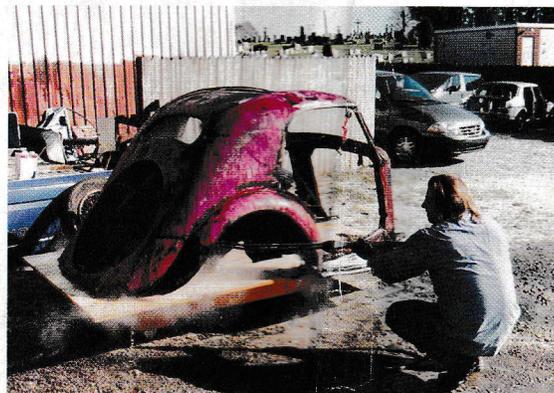
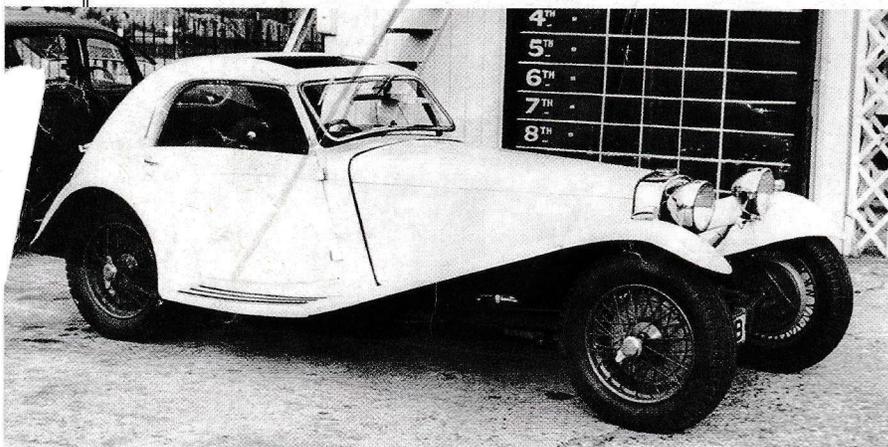


Richard Heseltine and Michael Ware scour the globe to track down classic treasures

# Long-lost HRG resurfaces in USA



Left: HRG with Airline coupé body on display at Brooklands in 1938. Above: Pennsylvania's Bill Hahn at work on 'Hurg'

This fabulous HRG coupé, long thought to have been broken up, is being restored in the USA. Basis for this distinctive machine was the Halford Cross Rotary Special – an HRG chassis clothed in a single-seater body – that competed in a handful of races and speed events in 1937 with little success. The highlight was a class win at that year's Backwell Hillclimb in Somerset, driven by Joan Richmond and Ted Halford (the H of HRG). Halford claimed he won a half-pint tankard for his efforts, saying that

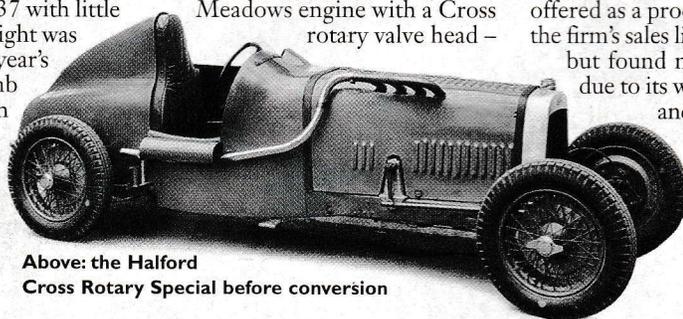
the prize "wasn't really an awfully good return on investment".

Fellow HRG driver Peter Clark was reputedly even more dismissive: "Cross but not very rotary. Went like stink over the flying inch." After the general lack of results – largely attributed to the Meadows engine with a Cross rotary valve head –

the works widened the chassis and converted it into roadgoing coupé using the rear of an MG Airline body, the troublesome engine being replaced with a 1770cc Triumph. Painted ivory, it made its debut at the August '38 meeting at Brooklands and was briefly offered as a production model in the firm's sales literature for £475 but found no takers, largely due to its wayward handling and body flex which caused the doors to open under hard cornering. The one and only example, by then dubbed the

White Elephant, was registered HPL 776 the following year and, after no luck offloading the car, it was part exchanged for a Riley. Nothing more was heard for decades.

Marque authority Ian Dussek formed the HRG Association in 1960 and, four years later, Bob Affleck of Sheffield contacted him, saying that he had the car. He joined the association but no member ever saw it. Both the HRG and its owner went to ground until last year when Affleck contacted Dussek once again, this time from Pennsylvania. The ex-pat still had the car and has since entrusted its restoration to Bill Hahn.



Above: the Halford Cross Rotary Special before conversion

## Eno to produce Florida cab's handsome rebuild

Black cabs have often been bought by American tourists as souvenirs, such as this Strachans-bodied 1936 Austin LL that's now in Beverly Hills, Florida.

James Eno spotted it being used as a gimmick outside an antique

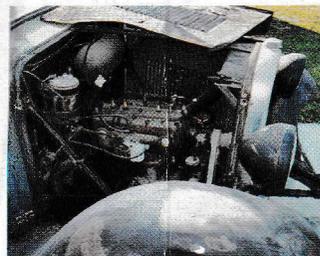
dealer's shop, and, despite having no prior interest in old cars, was immediately attracted to the Austin. "It was love at first sight," he said. Eno is now researching the car's history before rebuilding it.

Several photographs came with the car, but little written history. CUL 892 was known to have been owned by Phill Baumgarten of Jackson, Michigan in 1963 and was unrestored then. Six years later, it was owned by New Jersey's John Hansen.

Under the paint can be seen the signwritten words 'The Motel on the Mountain'. Eno discovered that this was once a celebrated resort hotel in New York state. From his research, he presumes that this establishment owned it

prior to 1970, possibly before the '60s and could have imported it originally. Eno explained: "My wife and I are presently restoring a 1910 cracker-style house for our flower and gift shop. The car will be on the property in a barn and, as it is being restored, patrons can watch and observe our progress."

If anyone can shed more light on this intriguing Austin's history, Eno can be contacted via C&SC.



Above: four-banger will fire again soon. Below: Austin as seen in '68



Eno will totally restore '36 Austin LL taxi, which is largely complete

