

## **Collection of eight rare Brough Superior motorcycles made famous by Lawrence of Arabia could fetch up to £3m after being discovered in a barn where they had been gathering dust for 50 years**

- **For many years motorcycle fans and enthusiasts talked about the 'urban myth' of the Brough Superiors**
- **But now a fleet of eight bikes have been located in Bodmin, Cornwall after gathering dust in a barn for 50 years**
- **Experts are calling the find one of the greatest motorcycle discoveries in decades. Brough Superior bikes, built from 1924 until 1940, are the most sought-after two-wheel transport in the world** By [Anthony Joseph](#) and [Katie Louise Davies For Mailonline](#)

Published: 02:52 EST, 15 December 2015 | Updated: 06:50 EST, 15 December 2015

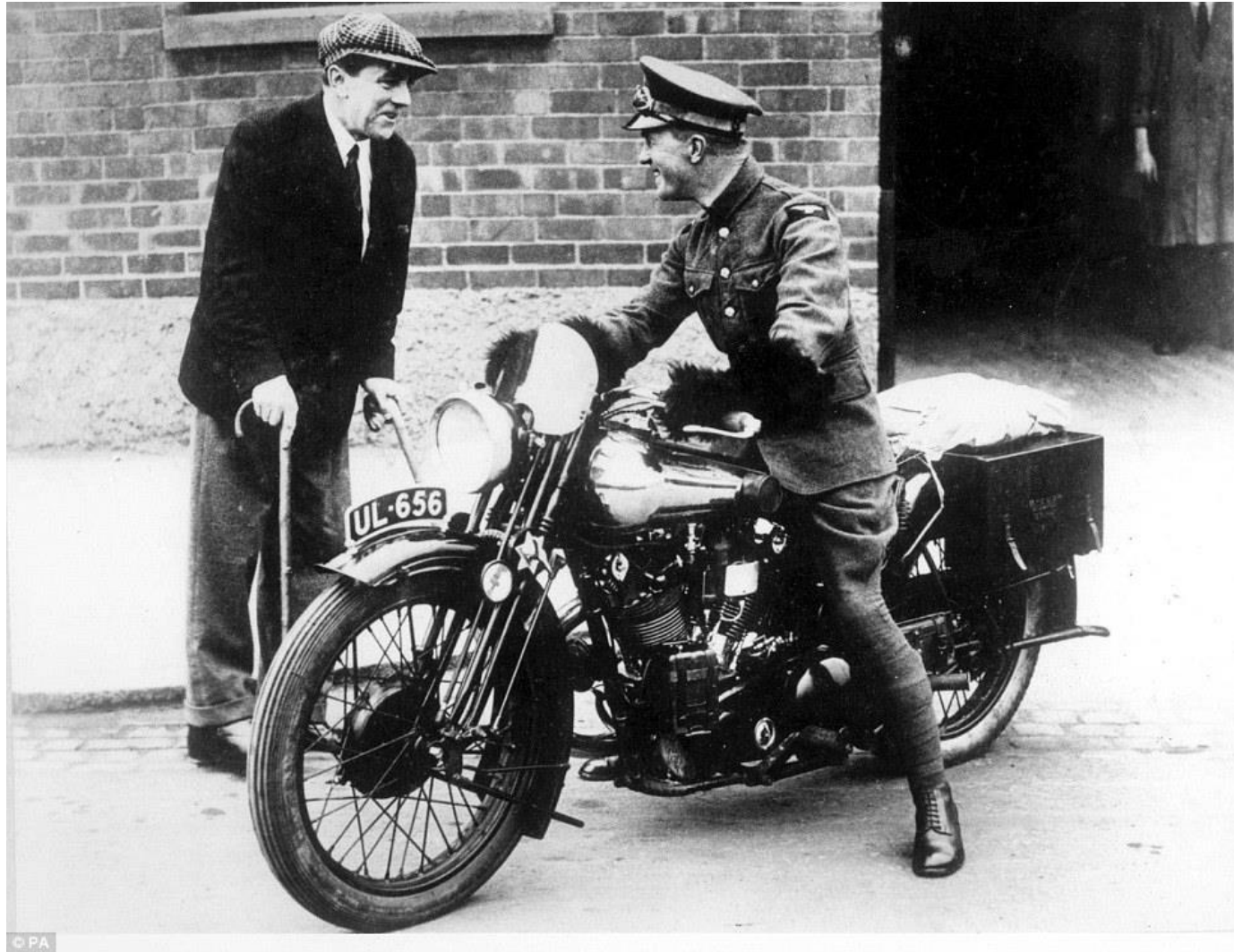
A collection of the 'Rolls-Royces of the motorbike world' which were made famous by Lawrence of Arabia has been discovered in a barn where they had been gathering dust for 50 years.

For many years motorcycle fans talked about the 'urban myth' of the Brough Superiors. But now a fleet of eight bikes have been located in Cornwall, in what experts are calling one of the greatest biking discoveries in decades.

Brough Superior bikes, built from 1924 until 1940, are the most sought-after two-wheel transport in the world. Just 380 of the motorcycles were built with TE Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, a famous owner. Lawrence died when he crashed his SS in 1935.



A collection of the Rolls-Royces of the motorbike world which were made famous by Lawrence of Arabia has been discovered in a barn where they had been gathering dust for 50 years



Just 380 of the motorcycles were built with TE Lawrence (pictured on the bike talking to George Brough), better known as Lawrence of Arabia, who died when he crashed his SS in 1935.





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Brough Superior bikes, built from 1924 until 1940, are the most sought-after two-wheel transport in the world



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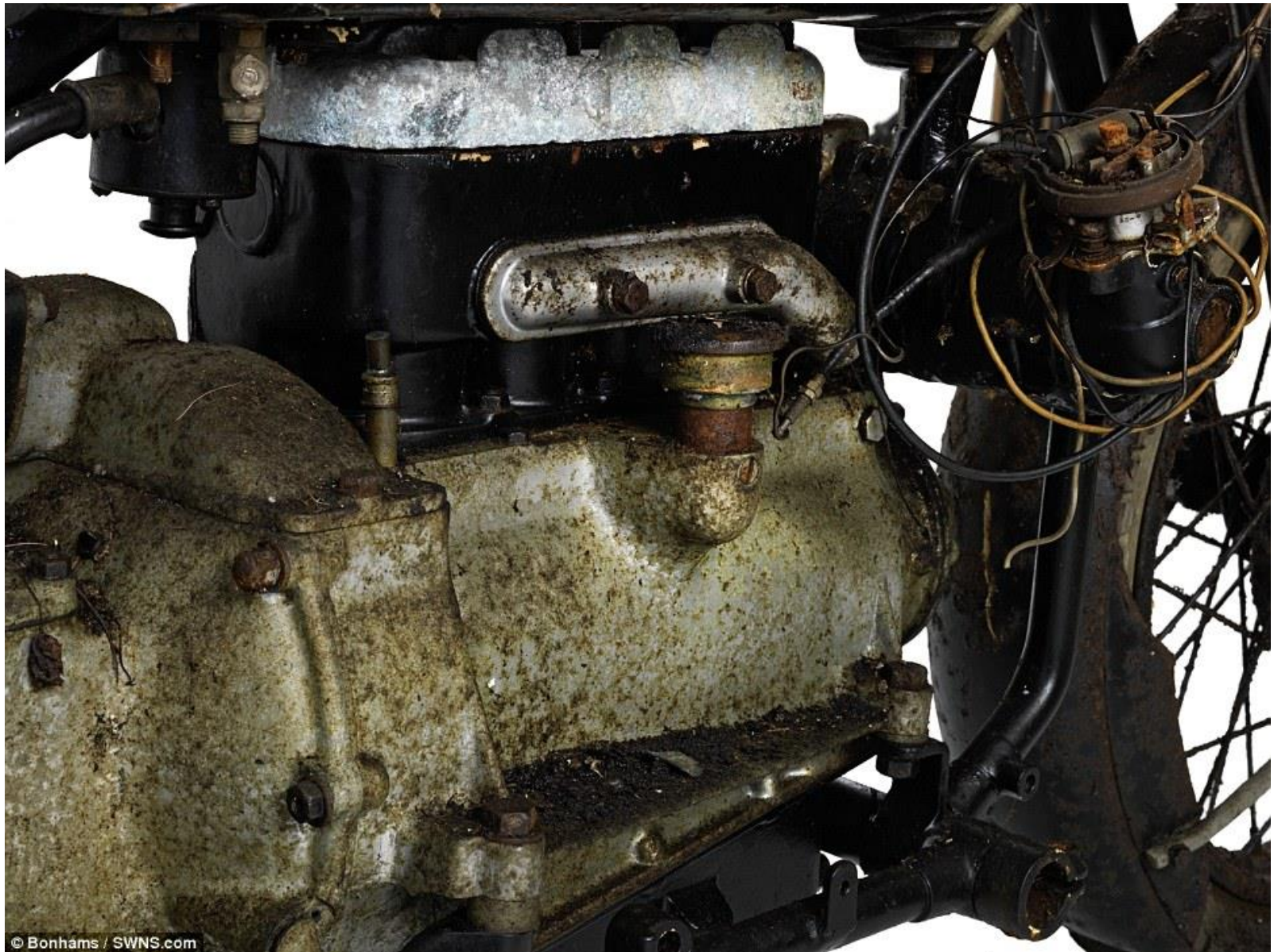
Parts from the 1937 Brough Superior 982cc SS80 Project are pictured here and are among the treasure trove of motorbikes and collections that were found



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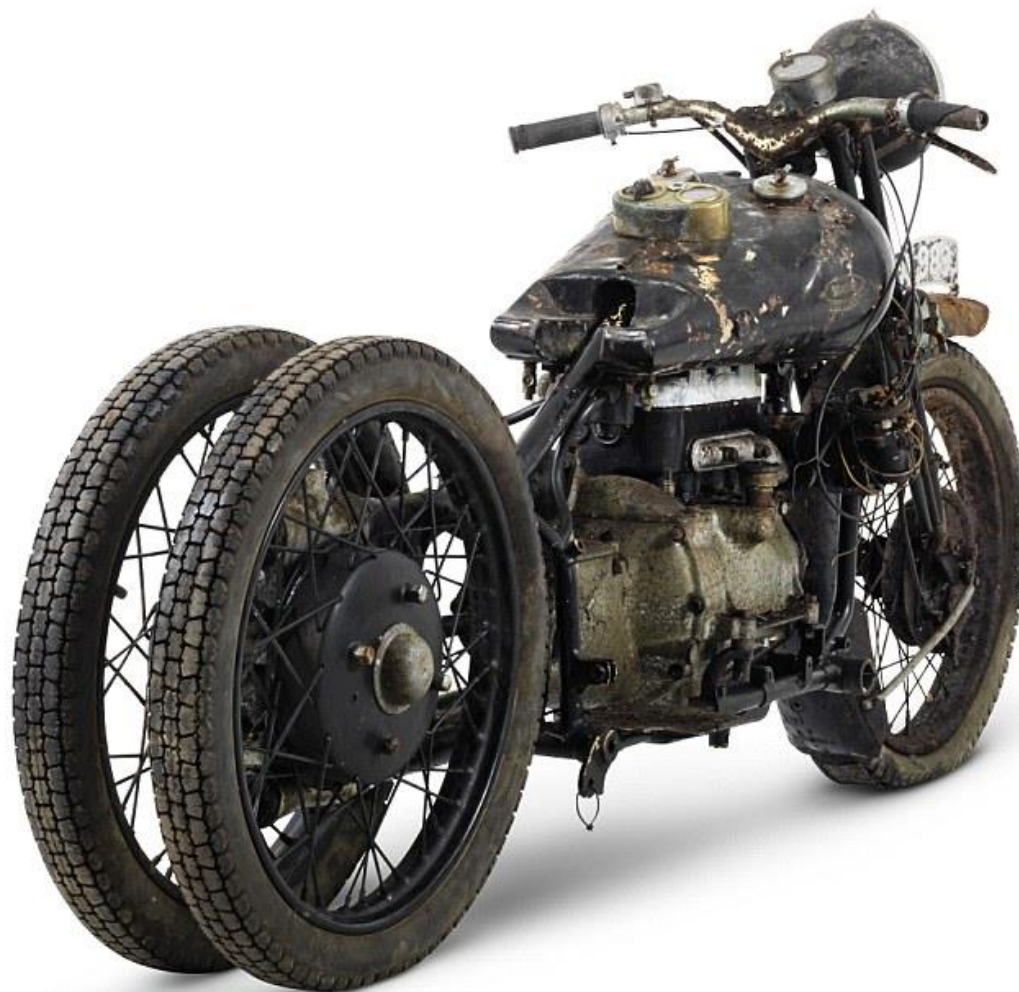
Brough Superior bikes are the most sought-after two-wheel transport in the world. A decaying 1939 Brough Superior 982cc is pictured here





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A close-up of the decaying conditions of the ex- Hubert Chantrey, Brough Superior 750cc BS4 is pictured here - one of the bikes that have been discovered



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The ex- Hubert Chantrey, Brough Superior 750cc BS4 is one of the highly sought after Brough bikes which were found in a barn in Bodmin, Devon



These bikes were owned by Frank Vague, an avid member of the Brough Superior Club, who recently passed away.

Mr Vague, from a village near Bodmin, Cornwall, acquired the majority of the collection in the early 1960s and they have remained unused for 50 years.

Many enthusiasts and collectors had heard about Mr Vague's bikes, but most people thought it was an urban myth.

In good condition, these bikes are now selling for upwards of £300,000 each - although the bikes would sell for a fraction of the figure in their current condition because of the amount of work needed.

The motorcycles were built in Nottingham, at founder George Brough's factory in Haydn Road.



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These bikes were owned by Frank Vague, an avid member of the Brough Superior Club, who recently passed away. Pictured is the headlight at the front of the ex-Hubert Chantrey, Brough Superior 750cc BS4





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Pictured is a Brough Superior 982cc SS80 Project with a Petrol Tube Sidecar. Mr Vague, from a village near Bodmin, Cornwall, acquired the majority of the collection in the early 1960s and they have remained unused for 50 years



© Bonhams / SWNS.com

The bikes are now selling for upwards of £300,000 each - although the bikes would sell for a fraction of the figure in their current condition because of the amount of work needed. Here is a 1938 Brough Superior 982cc SS80 Project with Petrol Tube Sidecar







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Some of the parts of a 1936 Brough Superior SS80 which were found in a bard in Bodmin, Cornwall





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Pictured are some of the parts of a 1926 Brough Superior SS100. A treasure trove of the motorcycles were found in Cornwall



Brough Superior SS100 (Super Sport) motorbikes were made by George Brough in his 'Brough Superior' works on Haydn Road in Nottingham, from 1925 to 1940





A rusty-looking Brough Superior logo on one of the motorbikes which were discovered in a barn in Bodmin, Cornwall





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The bikes were called the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles - with permission from the British car maker. One of the bikes discovered was the Brough Superior 982cc SS100 Project



© Bonhams / SWNS.com

The ex- Hubert Chantrey, Brough Superior 750cc BS - one of the highly sought after Brough bikes which were found in a barn in Cornwall



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Ben Walker, international director for Bonhams collectors' motorcycle department, said: 'This is one of the greatest motorcycle discoveries of recent times.' Pictured here is a 1939 Brough Superior 982cc SS80 Project





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The director said that very few people knew the bikes still existed, many thinking it was an urban myth. Parts and the remaining 1938 Brough Superior 1,096cc 11-50HP Project are pictured here



© Bonhams / SWNS.com

The discovered collection is the last known of unrestored Brough Superiors and includes the 1938 Brough Superior 982cc SS80 Project with a petrol tube sidecar, pictured here





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For many years motorcycle fans talked about the 'urban myth' of the Brough Superiors. But now a fleet of eight bikes have been located in Cornwall, in what experts are calling one of the greatest biking discoveries in decades





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The treasure trove of motorcycles regarded as the Rolls-Royces of bikes were discovered after being left in a barn to rot. Pictured is a rusty 1938 Brough Superior 1,096cc 11-50HP

George Brough called them the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles - with permission from the British car maker.

Bonhams will be selling 'The Broughs of Bodmin Moor' at its Sale of Important Collectors' Motorcycles at Stafford on April 24 next year.

Ben Walker, international director for Bonhams collectors' motorcycle department, said: 'This is one of the greatest motorcycle discoveries of recent times.

'A lot of mystery surrounds these motorcycles, as very few people knew that they still existed, many believing them to be an urban myth.

'There was a theory that they still existed somewhere in the West Country, but few knew where, until now.

'Stored in barns for more than 50 years, the motorcycles were discovered whole, in parts, and some were partially submerged under decades of dust, old machinery parts and household clutter.'

'This is the last known collection of unrestored Brough Superiors. There will not be another opportunity like this.'



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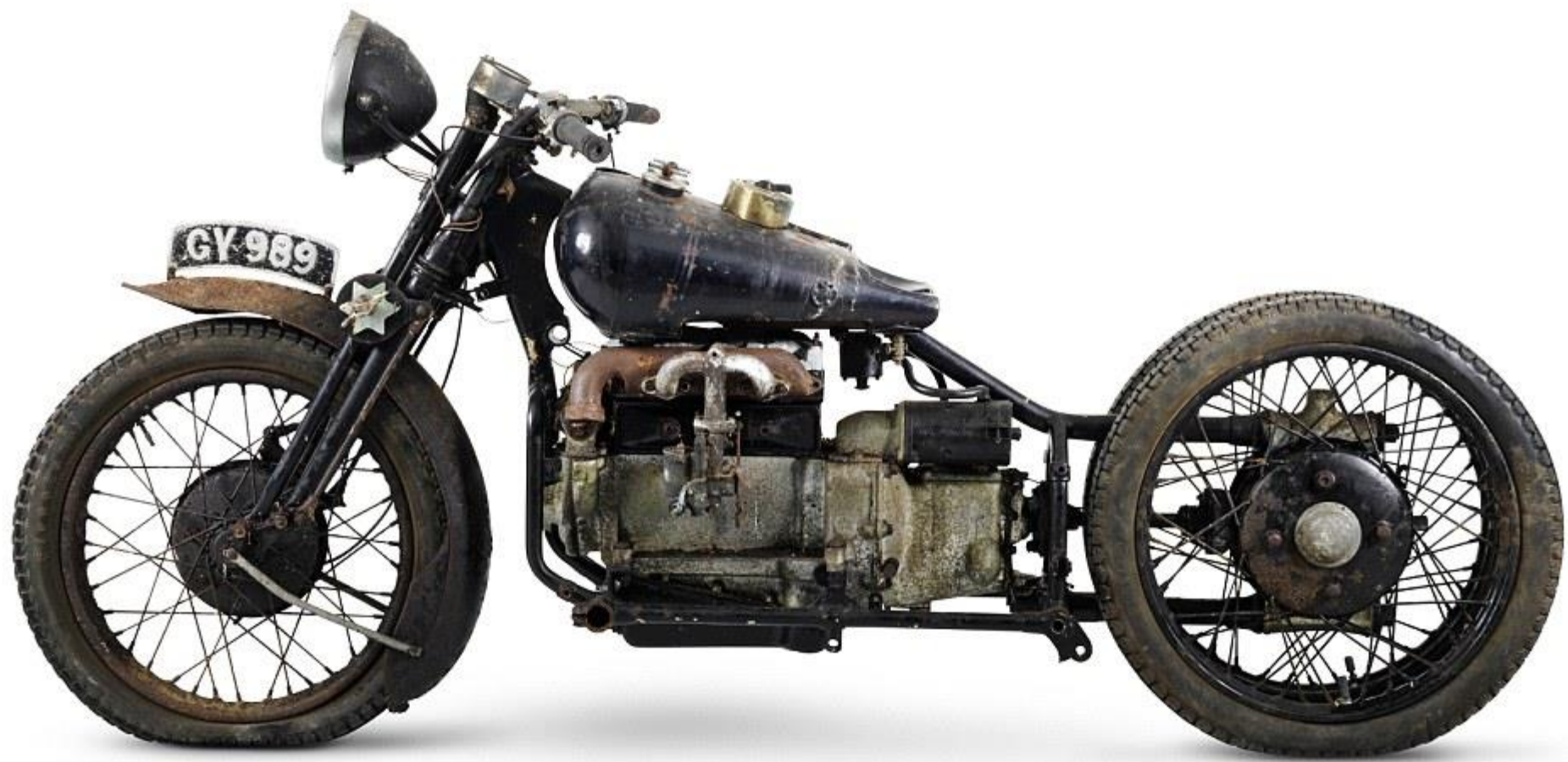
There was a theory that the bikes, including the ex- Hubert Chantrey, Brough Superior 750cc BS4 (pictured), still existed somewhere in the West Country, but few knew where, until now





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Jonathan Vickers, Bonhams West Country motoring specialist, said the discovery of these Brough Motorcycles in Cornwall is historically significant. Pictured here is a rusting 1938 Brough Superior 982cc SS100 Project with a flat front tyre



© Bonhams / SWNS.com

The ex-Hubert Chantrey Brough Superior 750cc BS4 is one of the bikes that have been found and is pictured in a good condition

## **THE CUSTOM BRITISH BUILT 'ROLLS-ROYCE OF MOTORBIKES' WHICH ONLY THE WEALTHIEST PEOPLE COULD AFFORD**

Brough Superior SS100 (Super Sport) motorbikes were made by George Brough in his 'Brough Superior' works on Haydn Road in Nottingham, from 1925 to 1940.

He named his company Brough Superior to out-do his father who was also a motorcycle manufacturer. Dubbed the 'Rolls-Royce of Motorcycles', around 3,050 were made before the outbreak of war ground production to a halt.

Back then, they were such a luxury item that only the very wealthy could afford one. It is understood that around a third of those made still exist today.

Brough Superior motorcycles were produced using British-made parts and were coveted by the rich and famous, including playwright George Bernard Shaw.

They were first of its kind with components chosen from many different suppliers. The first engine (between 1924 and 1936) was the twin-cam KTOR JAP (made by J. A. Prestwich) V twin.

It upgraded to a Matchless engine from 1936. Gearboxes were the four-stud three-speed from Sturmey-Archer.

The bikes developed the features of the Harley-Davidson forks but had its own version to combine light weight with strength.





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Brough Superior motorcycles were produced using British-made parts and were coveted by the rich and famous, including playwright George Bernard Shaw

Each motorcycle was assembled twice. It was put together first to ensure all the components fitted properly before it was taken apart, repainted and individually styled.

Only then would it be reassembled before being test driven and then personally certified by George Brough.

The SS100 model would be tested at 100mph or more before being driven and if it did not meet specifications, would be returned to the workshop.

At the time, they were the most expensive road-going motorbikes in the world with 1920s and 30s prices ranging from £130 to £180.

Today, a fully-restored period SS100 can sell for upwards of £300,000.

TE Lawrence owned eight bikes - he named one Boa and the other seven George. In 1923, he paid £150 for George I, which cost more than a house at the time.

He died after crashing a SS100 in Dorset in 1935, near the cottage where he lived. He swerved to avoid two cyclists and lost control, going over his handlebars. He wasn't wearing a helmet and suffered severe head injuries, which put him into a coma. He died in hospital six days later.

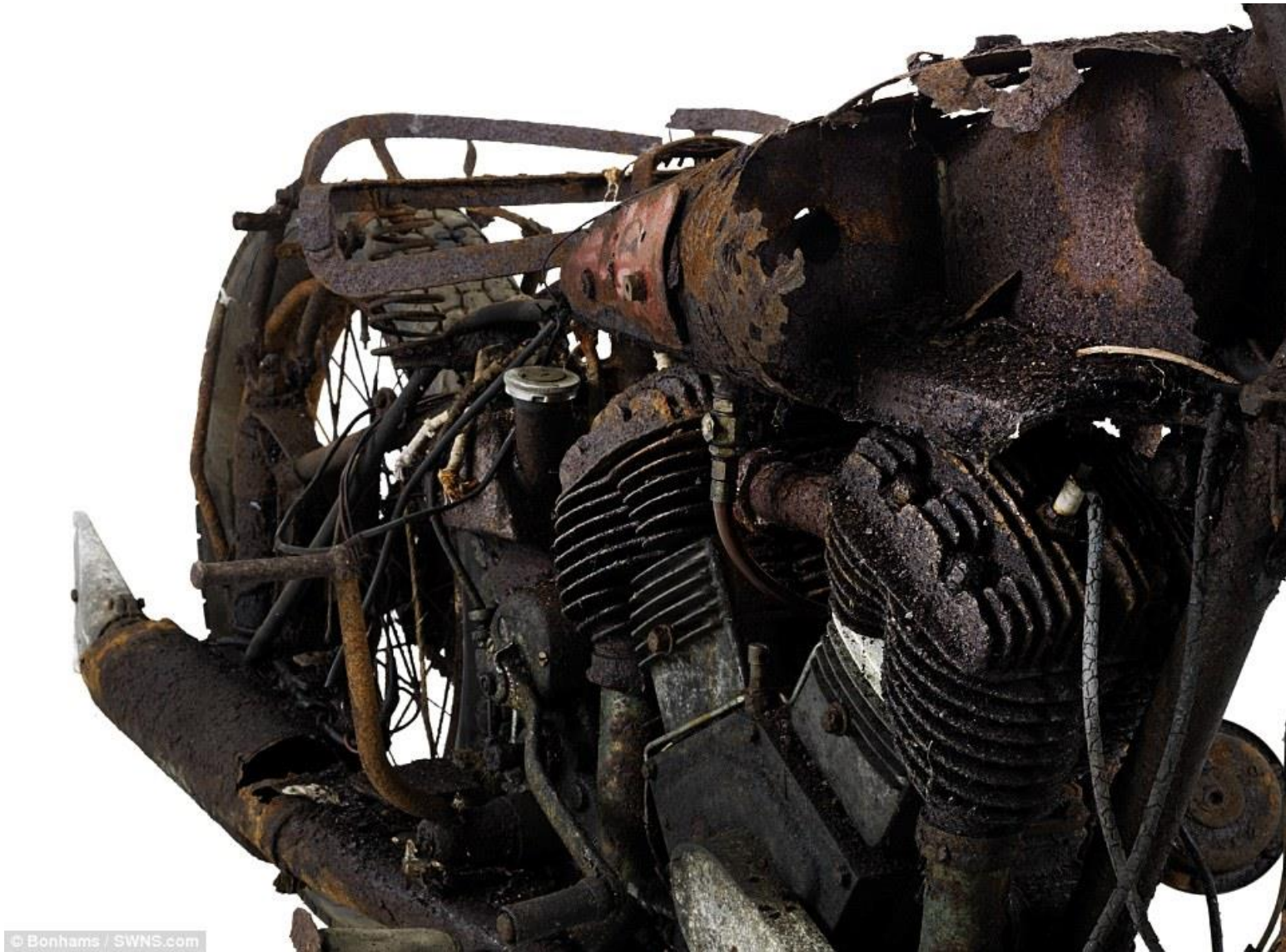
A 1938 model which was owned by Hubert Chantry, a friend of George Brough, is expected to sell for around £120,000 despite requiring a full restoration.

An SS100 model, also from 1938, has been valued at £80,000.

In total, the eight bikes - some of which are in bits - are expected to sell for around £350,000. When they are back on the road they will be worth more than £3 million combined.

Jonathan Vickers, Bonhams West Country motoring specialist, added, 'The discovery of these Brough Motorcycles in Cornwall is historically significant.

'We're delighted that these machines will now be offered for sale on an international platform for the first time in more than half a century.'



Just 380 Brough Superiors were built with TE Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, a famous owner, including the 1938 Brough Superior 1,096cc 11-50HP Project. The side of the model is pictured here





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When the bikes are back on the road they will be worth more than £3 million combined and will be offered on an international platform



© Bonhams / SWNS.com

Here a 1939 Brough Superior 982cc SS80 Project is pictured side on. The Sale of Important Collectors' Motorcycles will take place at Stafford on April 24 next year





© Bonhams / SWNS.com

A rusting 1938 Brough Superior 1,096cc 11-50HP Project is pictured and is one of the bikes which will go up for sale





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The collection of bikes, some which were discovered in bits, gathered dust for around 50 years after they were finally discovered