



ANTIQUE MOTORCYCLES - ACCESSORIES AND RELATED ITEMS

GLADIATOR 1912 4½HP 500CC 2 CYL SV 2706



SOLD





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PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Gladiator 1912 4HP 495 cc MAG side valve v-twin frame # M 11024 engine # 2CVII 30495

Adolphe Clément was born in 1855. In 1876 he started to take part in cycle races and set up a small cycle manufacture.

He decided to move to Paris and in 1880 he established a cycle business at the Rue Brunel under the brand name of "Clément".

This business was successful and pretty soon he had 150 labourers working on the manufacture of his bicycles.

In 1889 he visited the cycle exhibition in London and witnessed a demonstration of the Dunlop pneumatic tyre. One of his companions advised him to secure the manufacturing rights for France of this new invention.

Adolphe was rather hesitant, but finally agreed.

The Dunlop tyre became a huge success and were sold in fantastic numbers in France: Clément soon became a millionaire.

He formed a huge bicycle factory by combining the companies of Clément, Gladiator and Humber-France. From 1895 on he started to focus on motorized vehicles: first tricycles, quadricycles and cars and in 1902 he successfully entered the field of motorized bicycles with a small engine of 125 cc capacity.

Already in the 1890s British investors had acquired an important financial interest in the Clément, Gladiator and Humber-France conglomerate, that operated under the "Clediaber" trade name.

In October 1903 it was announced that Adolphe Clément had parted from the Clément-Gladiator company; from then on the company was fully controlled by British investors.

After 1905 motorcycle production was suspended for a number of years but by the end of 1911 new models were introduced that generated considerable interest.

Lightweight v-twins were becoming popular in Britain, especially the Motosacoche-powered Royal Enfields were in great demand.

The Clediaber firm decided to bring out 2 ¾ HP and 4 HP Clément and Gladiator v-twins that were very much designed along British lines and were more luxurious than the average French motorcycle.

The new Cléments were very successful in races.

A notable feat was the victory in the 350 cc class of the 1913 French Grand Prix.

The race was won by Greame Fenton, an Englishman who had lived for many years in France because his father was a manager of the Clément-Gladiator company.

Fenton was faster than a number of 500 cc machines but lost the chain of his high speed gear 5 miles before the finish.

He went ahead on low gear, which still gave a top speed of 45 mph.

This graceful and well-designed machine is fitted with a practical Enfield-type two speed gear and is in unrestored condition.



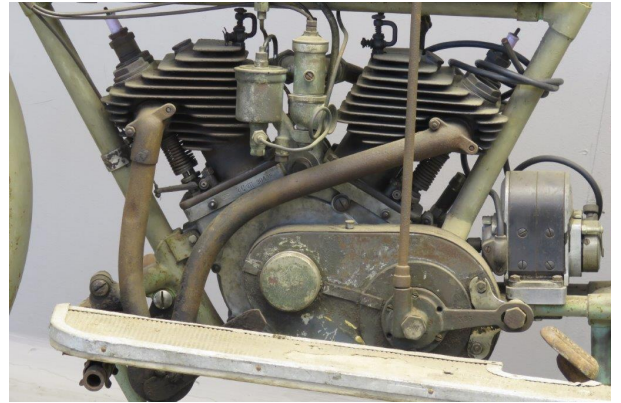
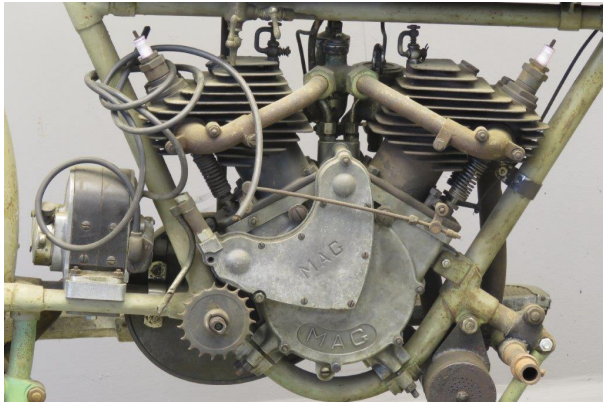
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It is fitted with the well-designed famous Swiss MAG engine and is virtually complete; main missing parts are the chainguard and the offside footboard.

The engine number refers to late 1911 so we think this is an early 1912 model.



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