

GREAT ARROW news

The Pierce-Arrow Museum Newsletter



Pierce-Arrow Foundation's
1931 Model 41 LeBaron Club Sedan
Serial #3050216 | Engine #325677
| Body #156-3

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In 1931,

Pierce-Arrow wanted to revise some of the custom body offerings to better accommodate customer driven, rather than chauffeur driven, cars. According to Ralph Roberts, LeBaron's salesman, Pierce chose LeBaron because the company was "equipped to do things in a series". At the time, a lot of custom body companies were better equipped to do one-off bodies. Roberts met with Arthur Chanter, Pierce-Arrow President, and reviewed and revised the proposed offerings. Pierce ordered 120 of the five body styles, with 25 of those being the club sedan. However, those numbers were never met in production nor delivery.

The Model 41 was the top of the line offering in 1931. With a 147-inch wheelbase and a powerful 385 cubic inch 132 horsepower straight eight, it was the perfect platform for custom bodies. The LeBaron-bodied cars were introduced at the annual coachbuilder's show, the Automobile Salon at Chicago's Drake Hotel on November 8, 1930. There were five LeBaron body styles offered in 1931 - a convertible sedan, a convertible Victoria, a coupe, a limousine, and a club sedan. Customers would visit a Pierce-

Arrow showroom and choose paint, interior, and accessories for their personal car. Soon after, the finished car would appear at the dealership and be delivered to the customer.

The Model 41 had a different single bar bumper, a deeper radiator shell, and more brightwork than other models offered that year. There were more than three hundred trim parts made of polished stainless steel on and in the LeBaron body. The engine was quite impressive, being dynamically balanced, tested on a dynamometer, and then analyzed closely for unwelcome noises. The engine was counterweighted, had nine main bearings, and used a special Lanchester balancer to eliminate vibration. The end result was a smooth, powerful engine which coupled to a free-wheeling transmission, allowing for shifting in higher gears without using the clutch. The Club Sedan was quite beautiful with split windshield, close-coupled passenger compartment (though still quite spacious on the long wheelbase), and built-in trunk.

continued on page 4

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PIERCE-ARROW FOUNDATION

Operating the Pierce-Arrow Museum on the Campus of the Gilmore Car Museum

July 2022

Dear Pierce-Arrow Friends:

In spite of the lingering effects of the Covid Pandemic, we are beginning to return to the normalcy of driving our cars and enjoying our friends at Pierce-Arrow Society events.

A Mega "Thank You" to Darren Farnesi, Linnea and Ben Oaks and the Southern California Region for a very successful 2022 Annual Summer Meet. Congratulations to Pierce-Arrow Foundation Trustee, Rich Lange, for receiving the Pierce-Arrow Society's distinguished service award, the prestigious *Otto Klausmeyer Award!* Also welcome on board to the newest Trustee of the Pierce-Arrow Foundation, Karl Krouch.

All is well with our Museum, however, two substantial problems face us in the future. While our endowment and building fund has steadily increased, much more is needed to realize our hope of a significant endowment fund, as well as the much-needed museum addition. All of our long-range planning and fundraising efforts are focused in this direction. Therefore please take every opportunity to join us in our quest to preserve the Pierce-Arrow legacy!

Please go to the Museum's website, www.Pierce-ArrowMuseum.org, to renew your museum membership AND donate at whatever level you find comfortable. There is no better way to show your appreciation for our hobby than to insure that Pierce-Arrow Motor Company history will be passed on to future generations!

Three years ago I happened to be at the Museum when a grammar school class visited. A little boy caught my attention while the teacher gave a brief but well-prepared explanation of Pierce-Arrow history. The boy's big eyes roamed from one car to another, his mouth wide open all the while. I remember thinking to myself, "I'm probably looking at a future Pierce-Arrow car owner and Foundation Trustee fifty or so years from now."

Very cordially yours,

Merlin B. Smith

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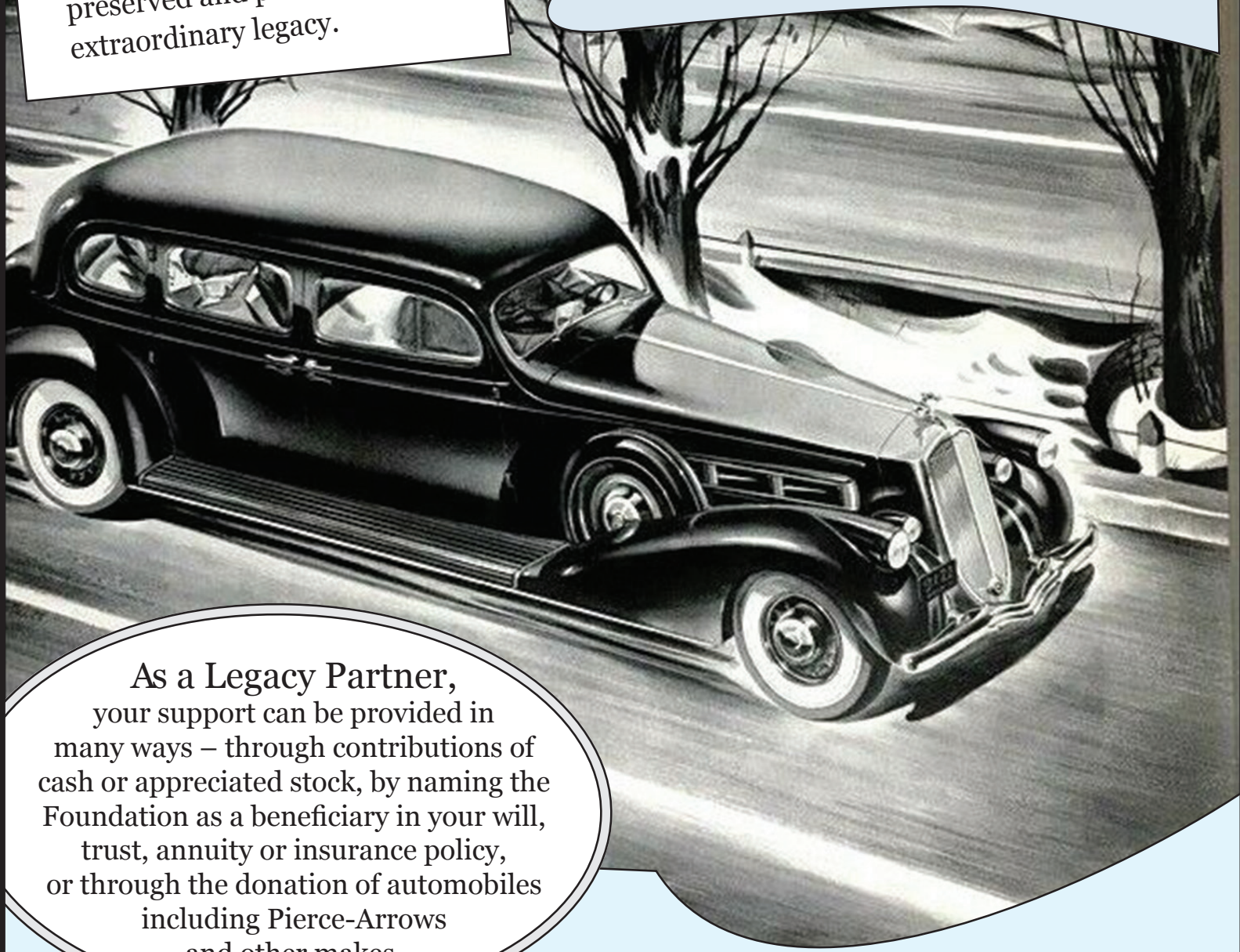
For more than a century, Pierce-Arrow, America's Finest Built Car, has represented the absolute highest quality automobile produced.

For more than a quarter-century, the Pierce-Arrow Foundation, through its Gilmore Museum, has preserved and promoted this extraordinary legacy.

Partner with us to support this legacy and continued positive impact on current and future Pierce-Arrow enthusiasts.

Our Museum's outreach now favorably impacts more than 150,000 Gilmore visitors each year ~ many are motivated to learn more about the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company. Help us continue the Pierce-Arrow legacy!

Please Join Us As A Pierce-Arrow Foundation Legacy Partner



As a Legacy Partner, your support can be provided in many ways – through contributions of cash or appreciated stock, by naming the Foundation as a beneficiary in your will, trust, annuity or insurance policy, or through the donation of automobiles including Pierce-Arrows and other makes.

Pierce-Arrow Museum
at Gilmore

For more information contact

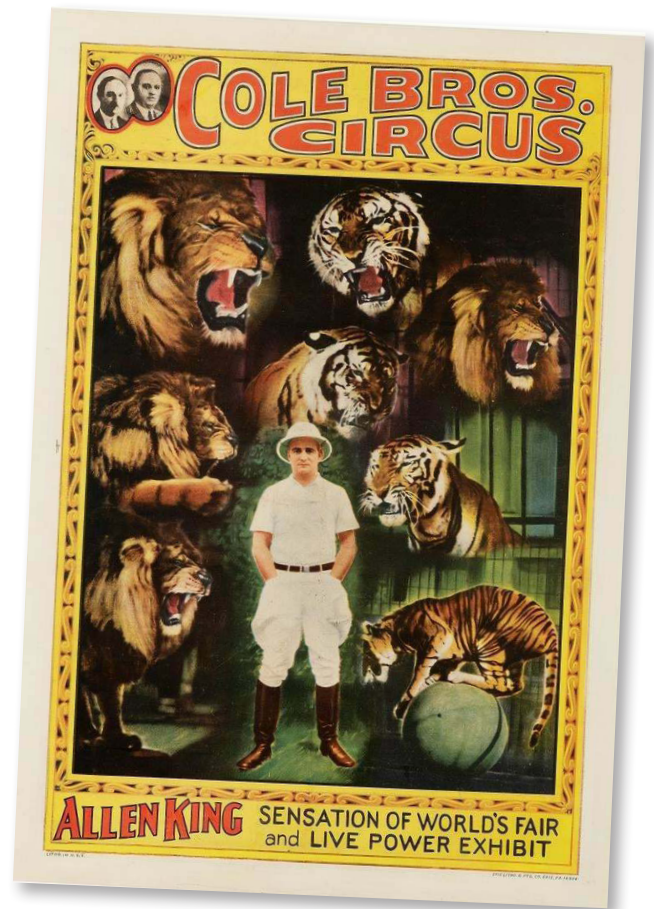
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NO. 1 A GOOD CHOICE FOR A CIRCUS CAR

The Pierce-Arrow Foundation Museum at Gilmore is proud to be the caretaker of a 1931 Model 41 LeBaron Club Sedan ~ Serial #3050216, Engine #325677, and Body #156-3 shown on the front page. This car was donated to the Museum along with two other Pierce-Arrows by the late Jim Weston of California. The car had previously been owned by the Cole Brothers Circus and is in excellent restored condition.

Although there were plans to build 25 of this one body style, only ten club sedan bodies were delivered to Pierce during 1931 in primer, or "in the white". When the bodies were ready to be placed on a chassis, Pierce factory employees would paint and upholster the custom bodies as requested by either customer or management. Six were placed on Model 41 chassis, one was placed on a 1933 Model 1247 chassis, and one was placed on a 1934 1248A chassis. There were two bodies not used, and the management of Pierce-Arrow decided they were surplus to their needs in 1936. The two bodies were then destroyed. All eight of the cars known to be built with the club sedan bodies are still in existence.



*Lucile
with a
LeBaron?*



Pictured with one of the 1931 LeBaron Club Sedans is Lucile Vasconcellos Langanke, in an obvious advertising campaign for Pennzoil. Oh, don't recognize her name? You probably know her better by her stage name, Mary Aster. Despite her beauty and acting ability, she led quite a tumultuous life, and her trials and tribulations are quite the read if one cares to investigate further.

NO. 2 RITA'S FIND



Serial #3050335 | Engine # 325671 | Body # 156-6

By Rita and Terry Ernest (MI)

Our 1931 Model 41 LeBaron Club Sedan is finished in a dark Royal Blue with a medium-blue broadcloth interior, accessorized handsomely with a dark wood trim. Walnut was commonly used in the period and adorns the tops of doors and the recessed dashboard. The rear seat has an armrest on both sides and a folding armrest in the middle. A tall passenger can stretch out and still not touch the front seat back. Another beautiful - yet functional - LeBaron design feature is the split windshield that tilts outward for those drives on those warm, sunny days.

Rita discovered the car on the internet and made me aware that the car was for sale. Rita also made the initial call regarding the car's information and that pesky detail regarding the price. Since the car was for sale at the Imperial Palace in Las Vegas, we decided to jump on a jet and go out for the just the day to look at it. We booked an early flight, went to the IP, viewed, then inspected the car and took it for a test drive in the heat of Las Vegas. We quickly flew back home again. The car ran fine, shifted correctly, and braked well - important considerations for any car.

We do not know who the original owner was, unfortunately, as we only have the ownership history back a short period in time. In the 1970s or 1980s it was purchased by the Matt and Barbara Browning family in Utah, where it joined other LeBaron bodied Pierce-Arrows in that collection. The Browning family later sold the car to Tom Crook of Washington, who placed it in an auction. Don Williams of California then purchased the car and placed it in the Imperial Palace Auto Collection, where we purchased it. Rita and I consider this to be our favorite closed car of the Classic era. We are thrilled to have this car in our collection.



A striking LeBaron design feature was the split windshield, at a time when virtually all standard cars built (with 1931 Chrysler CG and third series CD Deluxe being notable exceptions) had single pane flat windshields.



The interior was quite luxurious with deep pleated cushions and both side and middle armrests.

NO. 3 THANK YOU, CHARLOTTE!



Serial #3050355 | Engine # 326050 | Body # 18-156-19

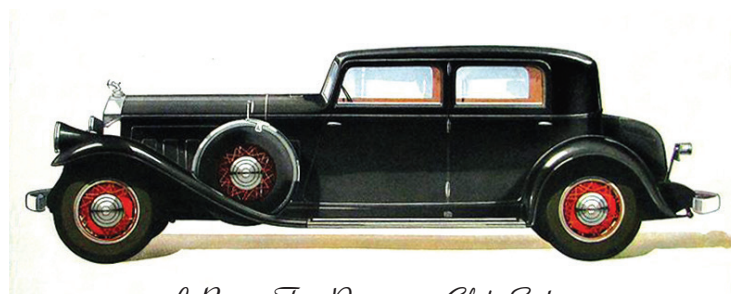
Owned by Marc Hamburger of Atlanta, Georgia. Marc visited Harrah's collection in Reno, Nevada, in 1969. There, he fell in love not only with Classic cars, but in particular with Pierce-Arrows.

His saga of the LeBaron club sedan began in Toledo, Ohio, in 1958, when 34-year-old Charlotte Bolton spotted the car on a used car lot. She bought it on the spot for \$900, owning it for the next forty-one years. In 1986, she needed parts for the car, and, consulting the Pierce-Arrow Society roster, noted Marc was not too far away from Greenwood, S.C., where she then lived. He went to see the car, telling Charlotte "Call me if and when you're ready to part with her".

In 1999, the call finally came and he finalized the purchase. The car had black fenders and maroon body, with a 1950s upholstery job, but was complete and in mostly original condition.

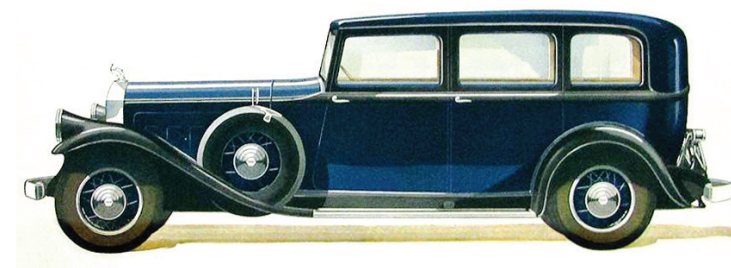
The restoration soon started, but tragedy struck when the owner of the restoration shop, Arlo Boe, passed away in 2004 before completing the car. With the assistance of Greg Loftness and Phil Marshall, Marc packed up the disassembled car and took it to Fawcett Motor Carriage Company in Ontario. In November of 2006 the restoration was completed.

Marc has stated that his "Love at First Sight" for the car has continued unabated. His 1931 Pierce is now known affectionately as "Scarlet" (after the color, not Gone With the Wind!). It shares a garage with "Percy", a 1936 Pierce-Arrow sedan that he's owned for over five decades. *Editor's note: to see the entire story of the car and restoration, see CCCA's magazine, The Classic Car, Fall 2013.*



LeBaron Five-Passenger Club Sedan

ON PIERCE-ARROW CHASSIS



LeBaron Seven-Passenger Enclosed-Drive Limousine

ON PIERCE-ARROW CHASSIS

NO. 4 BILL HARRAH'S LEBARON



Serial # 3050212 | Engine # 325676 | Body # 156-1

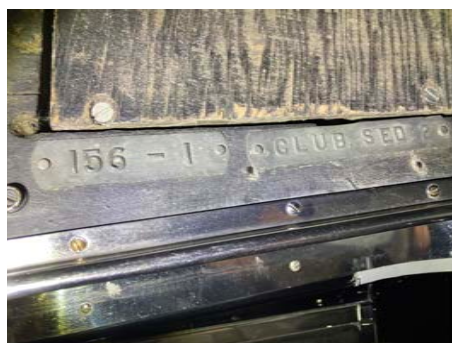
Once owned and restored by Bill Harrah. Any explanation of Harrah's influence on our hobby seems meaningless, as few in the antique car hobby haven't heard his name. He was collecting cars before numerous of the enthusiasts reading this were born. His involvement with the gaming business in Reno, Nevada, made him both influential in that arena and wealthy.

As a young man, William F. Harrah had a car his father had bought him. It was stolen, stripped, and abandoned. He promised his sister that one day he'd own one of every automobile his family had ever owned. He made good on that promise, and then some. At one time in the 1980s, he owned over 1500 cars. Many of them were one-of-a-kind examples, and many of them the best of the best Classics and early cars.

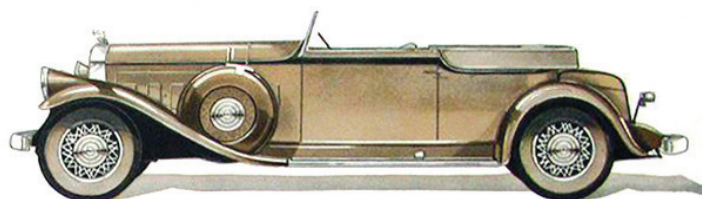
In 1958 and 1959, his good friend J.B. Nethercutt won Best of Show at Pebble Beach with a duPont Model G Merrimac town car and a 1939 Bugatti Type 57C Atalante Coupe, respectively. Harrah, in the spirit of competition, set on a mission to compete with J.B. Harrah chose one of his cars and won Best of Show in 1963

with the 1931 Pierce-Arrow LeBaron club sedan pictured here. It was beautifully restored by Harrah's own restoration shop.

The car now resides in a private collection in California and is in excellent condition.

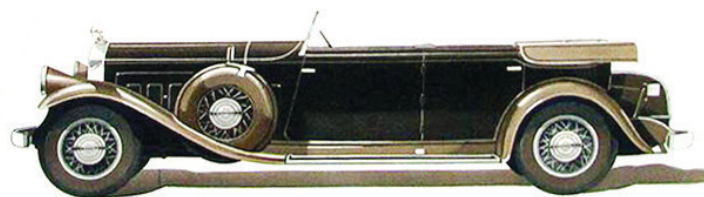


#156-1's body tag remains in place



LeBaron Five-Passenger Victoria Convertible Coupe

WITH TOP DOWN



LeBaron Five-Passenger Convertible Sedan

WITH TOP DOWN

NO. 5 THE MUSIC MEN



Serial #3050344 | Engine # 325964

Indications are that this LeBaron was first sold to a Chicago notable who was well connected on the...shall we say...shady side of the street. It was originally outfitted with a pistol holster attached to the interior forward of the passenger side front door. That detail was faithfully copied during restoration.

The car was purchased by the Browning family collection in 1973 from fellow Classic car enthusiast, Mr. Dennis McGowan. An off frame restoration was undertaken, and the finished car later won a Blue Ribbon at the Pebble Beach Concours, scoring 100 points in judging. The car features dark Brewster green body with black fenders, completed by a tan cloth interior.

Mr. McGowan and his brothers (Frank, Bob, and Jack) were not only excellent restoration specialists later in life, but early on toured in the 1960s as an Irish-folk musical group - The Fabulous Farquahr.

The car now resides in the collection of John Mozart in California, having been bought out of the Browning collection at auction in August of 2000.

Thanks to the Mozart Collection for providing picture and information on their lovely LeBaron.

The four McGowan brothers - Frank, Bob, and Dennis are well known in the world of vintage automobiles for their Branford, CT-based auto restoration business, C. Farquahr Company, but they did not start out in the automotive industry. In the 1960's they comprised an Irish-folk musical group, the Fabulous Farquahrs, performing along the east coast to a cult following and even traveling with Hubert Humphrey's presidential campaign in 1968. It wasn't until the 1960's ended and folk music lost its momentum that the McGowans turned their longtime interest in classic cars into a business. The brothers restored hundreds of automobiles as the proprietors of the C. Farquahr Company, each one carefully selected and then restored to its original state.

John (Jack) McGowan, though not involved in his brothers' music or car business, was nonetheless an integral part of their lives, vacationing with them at Hershey and keeping an eye on things so they were free to venture out and take care of business.

The McGowan brothers were honored at the 2016 Klingberg Vintage Motorcar Festival by their longtime friend Richie Clyne.



NO. 6 ALMOST A 1932 - THE ONLY BERLINE



During the 1960s Bill Harrah was actively collecting antique cars, and at one point there were two 1931 Pierce-Arrow LeBaron club sedans in his collection. One would be fully restored and end up as a Pebble Beach winner and is now in a collection on the west coast. The other LeBaron, pictured here, is now owned by Allen Strong in Illinois. The car was given by Harrah to the Gilmore Museum in Kalamazoo, Michigan..

The Gilmore later deaccessioned the car, selling it to Edmund Burchman in California. The car was placed in the restoration shop of Harry Andrews in Long Beach, California. It languished there for a while, until Edmund retrieved the car. In the interim, the engine, hood, and grill shell went missing. They apparently were sold as parts when Andrew's shop went bankrupt.

In 2012 Allen became aware of the car being for sale and acquired it, sans the parts mentioned above. Some good detective work on his part found the missing components, from that very car, in Canton, Ohio.

This particular LeBaron has two distinctive features none of the other 1931 club sedans have. One is a divider window, making the car a Berline. The other interesting feature is a 1932 dash, possibly indicating that this vehicle was of very late 1931 production.

The car is now whole again, in fair condition, and a full restoration is planned in the near future.



Shown are the unique features of this 1931 Berline, a 1932 style dash and a division window



NO. 7 REYNOLDS WRAPS UP A CAR DEAL



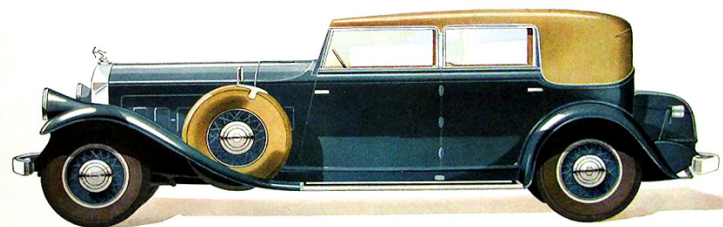
This 1933 Pierce-Arrow 1247 LeBaron Club Sedan was the only car built that year using a left over 1931 manufactured body, owned by the late George Slankard.

This LeBaron was originally purchased by the Reynolds family of tobacco fame. While the exact connection is unsure, it possibly was bought by Richard Joshua Reynolds, Jr. (1906-1964), son of the founder of the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. Junior had two sisters, Mary (1908-1953) and Nancy (1910-1985). Since they were of an age to buy a custom car in 1933, they are a possibility also.

One feature that putting the earlier body on the long 12-cylinder wheelbase allowed was a larger trunk than the 1931 examples. In 1962 it was in the hands of a collector in Easton, Maryland, and that year it was bought sight unseen by Henry Austin Clark. Austie, as he was know by his friends, sold it to George in 1967.

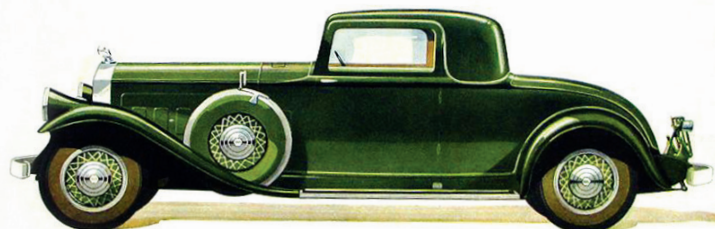
The car was restored in the early 1980s by Bill Spoerle, the head of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum shop for years. The car was shown at a few Pierce-Arrow Society meets soon after restoration. It did not show up again until our own Dave Stevens took it to New Hampshire in 1999 and Texas in 2000. In 2001 George himself took it to the 100th anniversary meet in Buffalo.

It is now under the care of a Slankard family member.



LeBaron Five-Passenger Convertible Sedan

ON PIERCE-ARROW CHASSIS



LeBaron Two or Four-Passenger Coupe

ON PIERCE-ARROW CHASSIS

NO. 8

1934 ~ A VERY GOOD YEAR



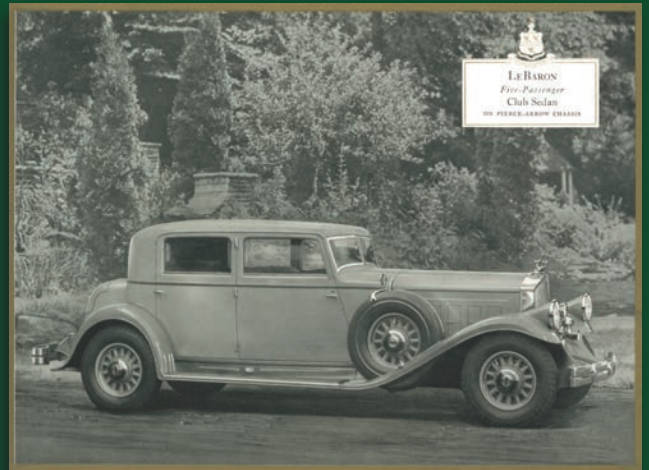
Serial #400149 | Engine # 3560026

This was the only 1931-produced LeBaron club sedan body installed on a 1934 V-12 chassis. There were two V-12 series offered by Pierce-Arrow in 1934, the 1240 Salon Twelve and the longer 147-inch wheelbase 1248 Custom Twelve. This car is the latter, and like the 1933 also featured in this issue, the longer wheelbase allowed for a slightly larger trunk to be part of the design. The 1931 body seamlessly blended with the later design and, again like the 1933, produced an extremely handsome custom vehicle.

The car was owned by Neil Austin of Winter Garden Florida, in the 1960s and 1970s, having acquired it in 1958 from a W.D. Martin. In 1980, the late Ernest (Ernie) Follis bought the car. A complete off frame restoration was completed late in the first decade of this century, and it was shown at Pebble Beach in 2010, taking a second place in its class.

The car has stayed in the family, and since late 2019 this LeBaron has been owned by Jim Follis of Vista, California. It remains in excellent restored condition.

Editor's Note: In this issue we are attempting to document the eight cars which were built using a 1931 LeBaron built Club Sedan custom body. All eight still exist and each has a good caretaker. We have attempted to present information as accurately as possible, but make no guarantee of same.



THE 1932 LEBARON CLUB SEDAN WHICH WASN'T...

In 1932, Pierce-Arrow was struggling to sell custom bodied cars, particularly the closed car offerings. There were still four LeBaron club sedan bodies in the factory inventory, but no orders forthcoming for that body style in 1932. The LeBaron catalog shows a "picture" of that year's offering, but no such car was ever built. The catalog was illustrated by Ralph Roberts, apparently a master of realism in his work. At first glance, it appears to be an actual photograph. Closer study and one sees some retouch work, such as accent lines around lights and grille. This was probably a picture of a 1931 LeBaron, retouched to show it as a 1932



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