

news

Restoring record-breaking vehicle to its former glory... by the book!

An amazing restoration project on an important automotive record breaker is nearing completion in Germany – thanks to a little help from *motorsnorth*.

The “rebirth” of a car that held the world record for diesel-powered cars on the eve of World War Two is on track for the end of this year.

The restoration team for the historically important Hanomag coupé that achieved 103.125mph on a German autobahn in late 1939 has already spent almost £100,000 on the car, but needs around £25,000 to finish the project.

As part of its fund-raising effort, the team has produced a German language commemorative book that includes articles *motorsnorth* carried after editor David Morgan stumbled on the vehicle in a car park when visiting the 2013 Frankfurt Motor Show.

Here he recalls that first encounter and brings the story up to date.

STRAPPED to a rusty trailer with a panel-less steel body framework bolted on to a heavy-looking chassis was an odd-looking but interestingly aerodynamic car dating quite clearly from a time before I was born – so at least six decades!

Up front was a 75-year-old normally aspirated 1.9-litre diesel engine developing a modest 35bhp driving a conventional four-speed manual gearbox.

The chassis was supported on leaf rear springs and the front sported tubular wishbones.

It was an odd mix of sleek as yet unapplied aluminium bodywork, brass windscreen surrounds and a basic two-seat cabin with non-existent instruments drawn on to an aluminium dash in marker pen.

But what was it? I found a winged badge at the back that said Hanomag – a name I recognised from Germany’s motor industry past.

Hanomag’s car production was brief and extremely unsuccessful.

It was best known for building railway locomotives, tractors, trucks and military vehicles – and gave up cars in the late 1930s, some 10 years after its first venture into private motoring.

But before the company reverted to heavy machinery, it had one last try to make its mark in the car world. That was what I found on the trailer... one of a kind.

As I crawled over this unlikely showstopper, a German technical type called Dieter Gorg approached.

I guessed he and the Hanomag were connected



and that was confirmed when he launched into a flood of technical German.

Managing to explain I was a Scot, he reverted to English and told me that several years previously he and a team of enthusiasts had rescued the remains of the Hanomag that had been a world record

breaker for diesel cars in the dark days of 1939.

Just seven months before the outbreak of World War Two it had achieved 165kmph (103.125mph).

It is a world class car survivor – but remains uncelebrated, even in its native Germany.

Dieter and his colleagues have spent years and a lot of money restoring the car and hope to run it, complete with its instruments and aerodynamic aluminium bodywork, some time this summer.

I hope they succeed and can hardly wait to see the

completed car. I made a modest contribution to the restoration and you can do the same by emailing h.dieter.goerg@t-online.de

The German language Hanomag book ISBN number is 978-3-923976-97-3 Its authors are Holger Eggers and Horst-Dieter Gorg.

