



Antique Ensign Carbine No.6 Tropical Folding Bellows Camera. England 1926



195 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Length : 7,5 cm (2,95 pouces)

Height : 16 cm (6,30 pouces)

Description

Folding bellows camera Ensign Carbine No.6 "Tropen" (Tropical), made in England by The Houghton Butcher Mfg. Co. Ltd., London, between 1926 and 1931. It belongs to the series of tropical cameras intended for hot and humid climates, which included models No.4, No.6, No.7 and No.12. This example corresponds to the 2¼ × 3¼ inch format (type 120 roll film), highly appreciated for its compact size and its ability to produce professional quality negatives.

The body is constructed in lacquered metal with a wood-grain imitation finish, specially treated to resist ambient humidity, with nickel-plated metal reinforcements and a top handle covered in natural leather. The brown leather bellows shows an elegant square pattern typical of the tropical

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versions, retaining its flexibility and without appreciable light leaks. The folding design allows compact closure with a metal locking system, ensuring portability and protection of the optical assembly during transport.

Equipped with a German precision Compur central shutter (marked D.R.P. no. 258646 / D.R.G.M.), it incorporates speed scales ranging approximately from 1 second to 1/250 s, plus Bulb and Time settings. The shutter is operational and responds uniformly to the different speeds, although it has not been tested with film.

The optical assembly features a British manufactured anastigmatic lens mounted on the Compur, with front focusing adjustment by bellows extension. The side folding viewfinder and wire frame allow quick and accurate framing, while the base integrates a distance indicator graduated in feet and meters. The frontal metal frame retains its original patina with discreet wear consistent with age, without relevant corrosion or structural deformation.

The interior of the back retains the original orange Ensign 2¼B Speedy Film paper label, a distinctive detail that enhances the historical value of the piece. The rear door opens with a side hinge and secure latch, and the inscriptions "Made in England" and "The Houghton Butcher Mfg. Co. Ltd. London" are crisply engraved.

The camera shows an excellent level of structural and mechanical integrity, with all functional elements coherent with its period. A representative piece of British interwar photographic engineering, designed for traveling photographers and technical users in tropical conditions. An ideal example for collection, technical exhibition or museum of photographic history.

A piece that invites one to travel back in time,

preserving intact the adventurous spirit of classic photography. Its technical beauty and impeccable mechanics make it a camera capable of captivating any discerning collector. An icon of British engineering that adds character and authenticity to any historical camera collection.

Dimensions: 16 × 7.5 cm (6.30 × 2.95 in).

History of the Ensign Carbine Tropical

The Ensign Carbine Tropical, manufactured by The Houghton Butcher Mfg. Co. Ltd., is one of the most refined cameras in the Ensign line developed during the interwar period. After the merger of Houghton Ltd. and Butcher & Sons in 1926, the new company combined the mechanical precision of the English tradition with high quality German optical and shutter components such as the Compur shutters made by Friedrich Deckel.

The tropical versions, identified by their wood-grain imitation finish and light brown bellows, were conceived to withstand harsh humidity and heat conditions in British colonial territories and scientific expeditions. The Carbine No.6 offered an exceptional balance between size, robustness and reliability, becoming a favorite among travelers and professionals who required a portable camera with serious performance.

The series was produced in several sizes (No.4, No.6, No.7 and No.12) for different film formats, all designed to operate with Ensign Speedy Film roll film, a proprietary format prior to the full standardization of 120 film.

The quality of the Compur shutter and the precision of the front focusing system gave it a reputation for durability, while the tropical treatment distinguishes it today among collectors for its rarity and excellent preservation. After the

incorporation of Houghton Butcher into Ensign Ltd. in 1930, these models marked the end of a golden era of English photographic manufacturing before the Second World War.

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