JAGUAR
MEMORIES

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

JAGUAR

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

THE SS STORY

LAUNCHING THE XK

ROYAL CONNECTIONS

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Jaguar's future as outlined by its current leadership may be as an exclusive high-end luxury marque, but for most of its history it has been a decidedly more accessible proposition; an aspirational brand, yes, but one which was within reach of the merely successful rather than the super-rich.

Indeed, when the company was established a century ago by an enthusiastic William Lyons and his business partner William Walmsley, its first products were motorcycle sidecars and even when the fledgling Swallow company branched out into the car business it was with rebodied Austin Sevens rather than exotic racers.

All that changed of course when the entrepreneurial Lyons made the bold move from Blackpool to Coventry, then the hub of the British motor industry. Sidecars were rapidly forgotten as the young company made the jump from restyling other makers' products to producing its own vehicles and a postwar name change saw the now controversial SS badge dropped, the company adopting the Jaguar branding we all know and love.

It was in the immediate postwar period that Jaguar became a force to be reckoned with, moving from a maker of pleasant saloon cars to a credible sports car maker with the country's first postwar motor show in 1948 which saw the wraps come off the incredible XK120. Its name proclaiming its top speed, it debuted the sensational new XK engine which would power all Jaguars until the early 1990s and offered supercar performance at a price tag which was tantalisingly affordable.

Motorsport success followed with the C and D-Types, which gave the Jaguar brand sufficient credibility to stand alongside the cream of European car makers from Mercedes to Ferrari, while the firm's road cars gained an enviable reputation living up to the famous advertising slogan of "grace, space and pace".

In issue seven of Jaguar Memories, we trace the history of Jaguar the brand from its humble beginnings in Blackpool to the last of the old-style separate-chassis cars before the launch of the ground-breaking XJ saloon. If you've always wondered where Jaguar came from before the British Leyland years, then you'll find out here just what created such enduring appeal.

Enjoy the issue everyone, and keep safe.

Paul Sander
Editor, Jaguar Memories

JAGUAR MEMORIES

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

A look at the cars that started the Jaguar story

JAGUAR MEMORIES

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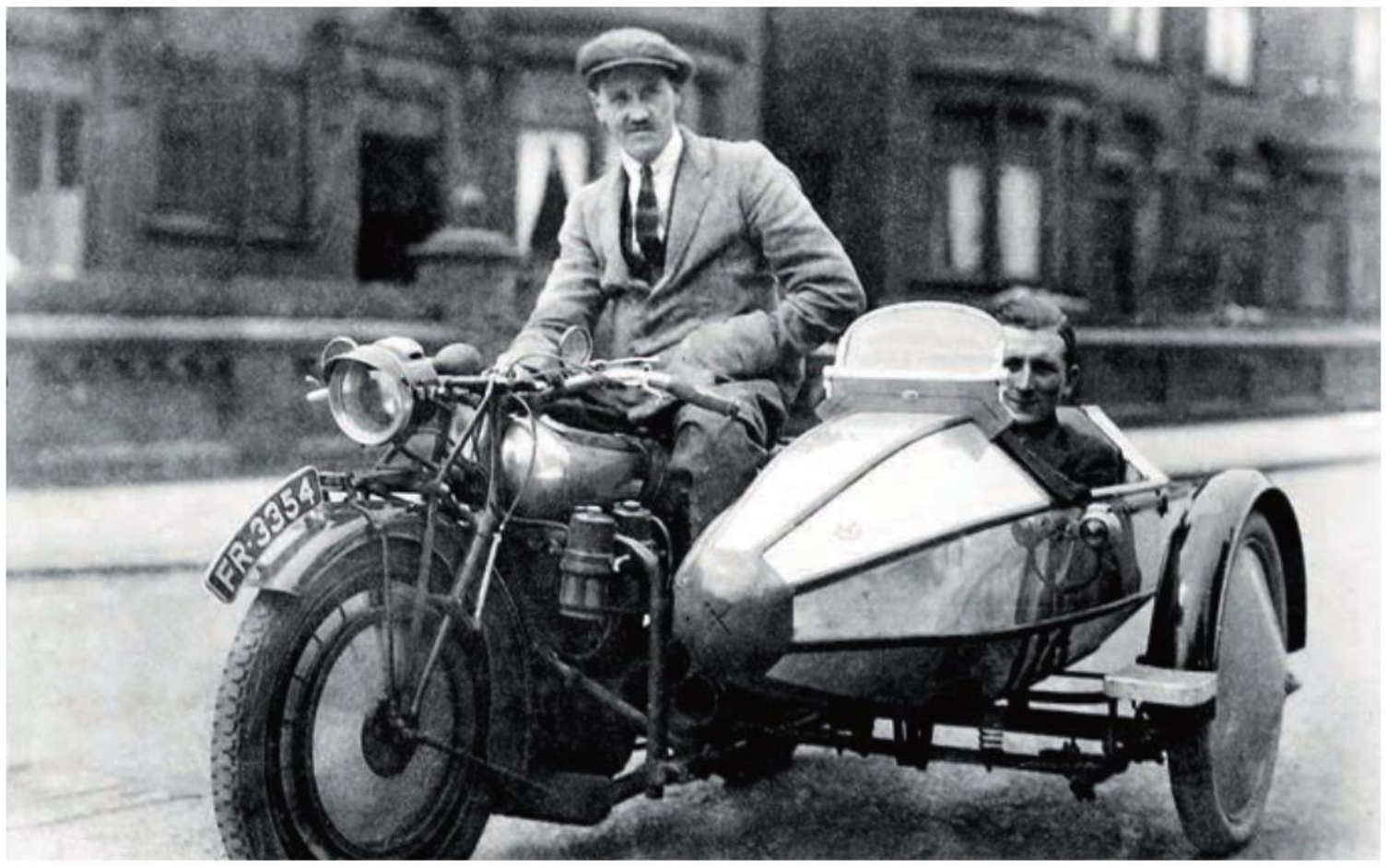
History of Jaguar

We look at Jaguar's history from the Twenties through to the Fifties: from the company's motorcycle sidecar origins to success on the international motorsport scene and a beautiful range of sports cars that bought fame to William Lyons' prospering firm.

Words: Ray Hutton

There was always a little intrigue surrounding how and why Jaguar became the name of one of Britain's most famous cars. Some think that the inspiration was a mascot sculpture that SS Cars Limited had acquired and which may, or may not, have depicted a Jaguar. But 34 years after the introduction of the first Jaguar, Sir William Lyons explained in the Lord Wakefield Gold Medal Paper presented to the Institute of the Motor Industry in 1969, that the truth was simpler. "I asked our publicity people to let me have a list of animals, fish and birds. I immediately pounced on Jaguar for it had an exciting sound to me and it brought back memories of stories told to me towards the end of the 1914-1918 war by an old school friend who worked as a mechanic on the Armstrong-Siddeley Jaguar aero engine," he said.

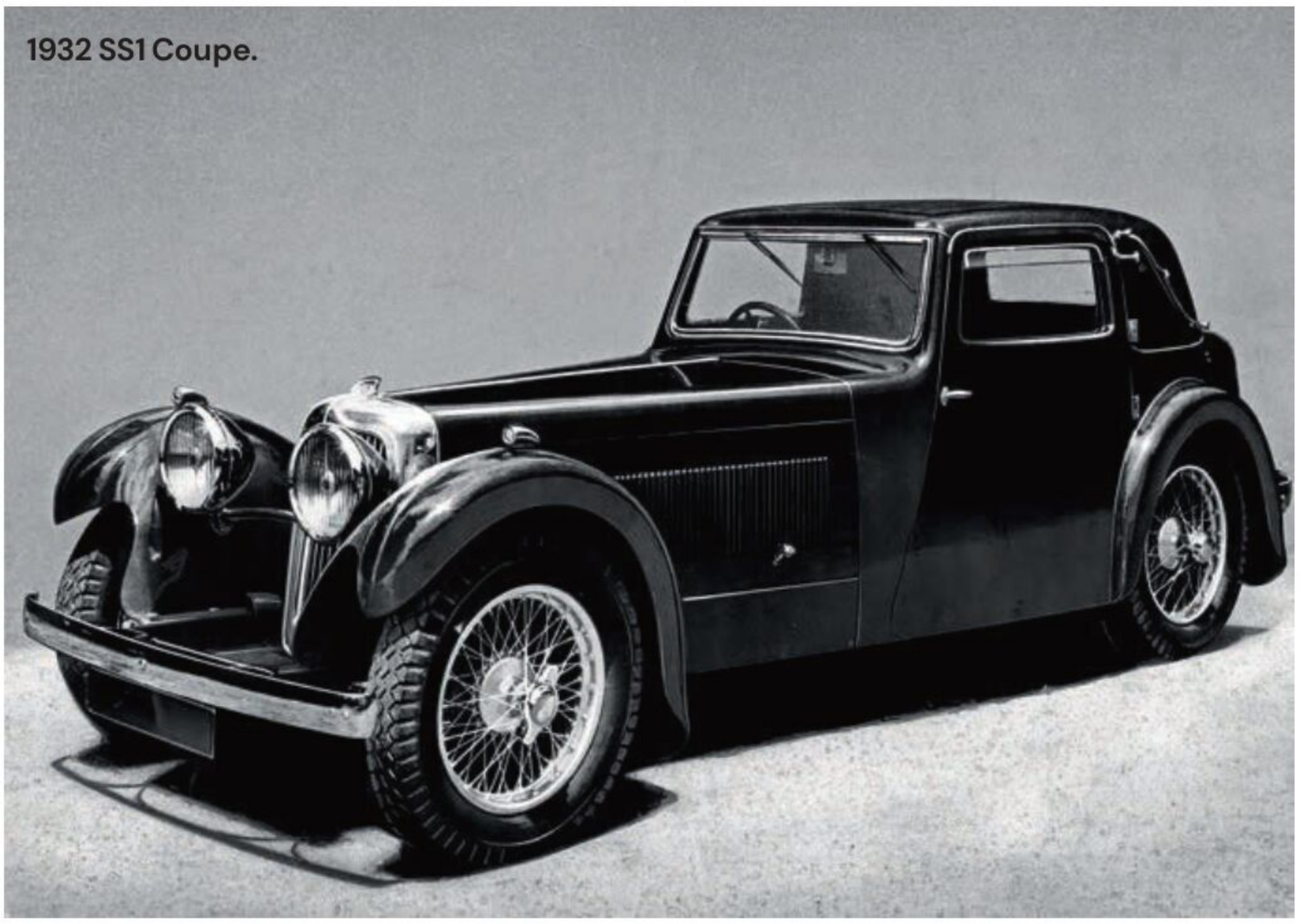


1923 Walmsley & Lyons King Edward Avenue Blackpool.

Lyons adopted the name because he wanted to establish SS as a fully-fledged carmaker, rather than a provider of snazzy coachbuilt bodies for other people's chassis. The first SS Jaguar, a four-door sports saloon with the look of a Park Ward Bentley (that cost four times as much), was presented on September 21, 1935 at a motor trade lunch in London's Mayfair Hotel. Thereafter, all new SS models would be called Jaguar and symbolised by the leaping cat mascot. It was another 10 years however, before the company changed its name to Jaguar Cars Limited.

Swallow Sidecar.

There was not much debate about whether to change the company name because, in March 1945, at the end of six years of war in Europe against Nazi Germany, a mention of SS was more likely to recall Hitler's hated special forces than the Swallow Sidecar company. When the company restarted car production after the war work of making sidecars



1932 SS1 Coupe.

and trailers, and maintaining aircraft, it was becoming a truly independent carmaker, producing its own engines for the first time. Jaguar could, and should, stand alone.

Swallow Sidecars started trading in Blackpool in 1922, a partnership of William Lyons and William Walmsley, but diversified away from making motorcycle sidecars to produce coachbuilt bodies, at first on an Austin Seven chassis. By 1927, it was producing 50 two-seater and saloon Austin Swallows a week and by 1928, had outgrown its Blackpool premises and moved to the Foleshill district of Coventry.

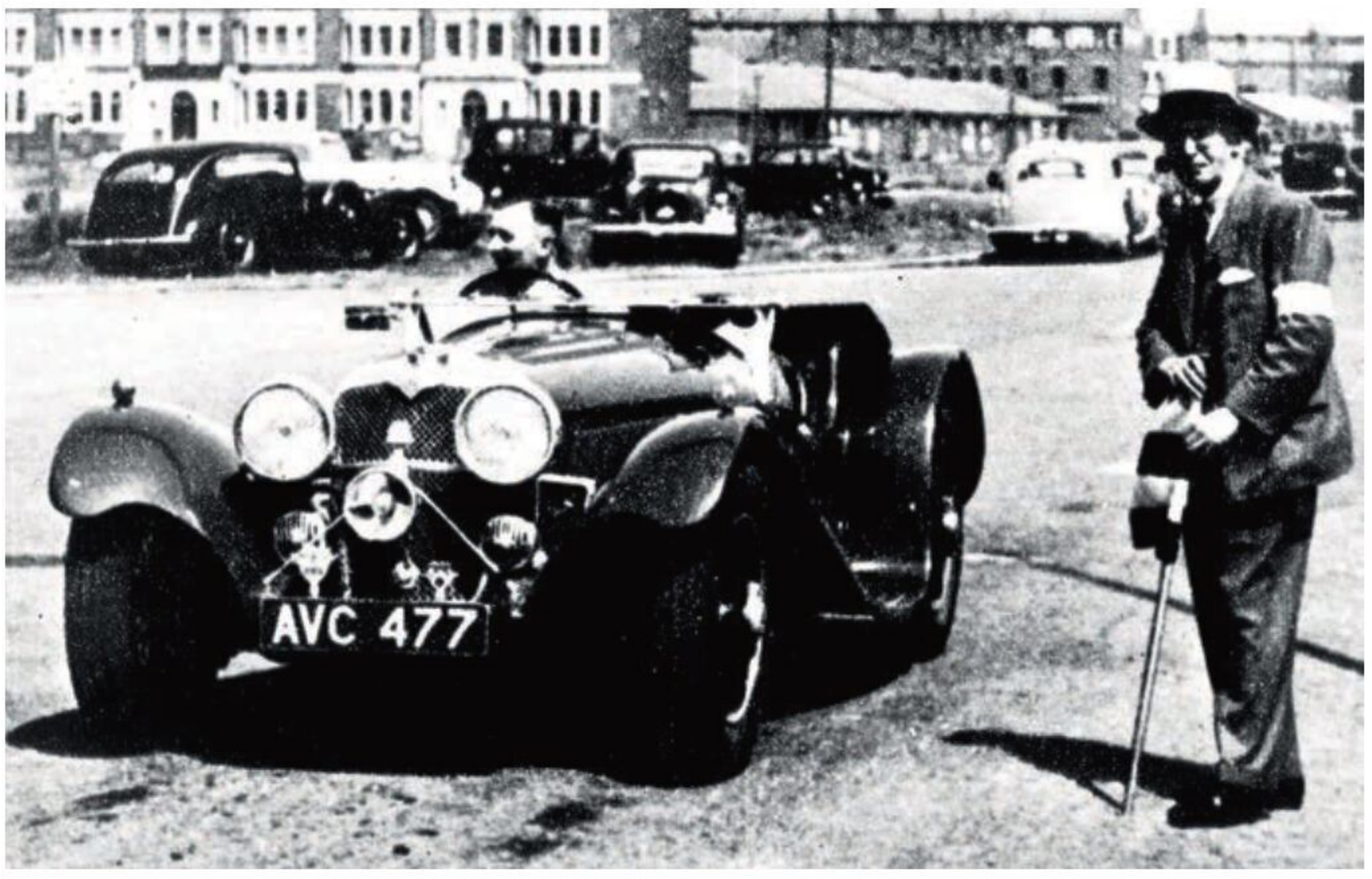
In addition to the Austins, its stylish low-line bodies were fitted to a chassis from other sources – Standard, Fiat, Swift and Wolseley. The turning point was a manufacturer agreement with the Standard Motor Company. The first SS1 and SS2 models were Standard Swallows, using chassis and engines supplied by Standard, but with new bodywork, a distinctive radiator style, and SS badging.

In 1931, advertisements proclaimed, 'SS is the name of a new car to thrill the hearts of the motoring public.' The SS1, which had Standard 16 components fitted to a purpose-built, low-slung chassis, was a rakish two-door coupe with an extraordinarily long bonnet. It cost £310, but the Daily Express said it had a '£1,000 look'. Lyons established a reputation for tempting styling combined with unrivalled value-for-money.

However, the first SS models looked good but didn't perform. They became known as 'cad's cars', suggesting that their owners were also more style than substance. But sales were good – more than 1,700 cars in 1933 – and William Lyons had more ambitious plans. In January 1935, SS Cars Ltd was floated as a public company. William Walmsley resigned and Lyons took sole charge of running the business that he was to head for another 37 years.

Lyons was determined his cars should be more than just spectacular designs and he recruited William Heynes, a young draughtsman from Humber, to head the company's own engineering department. The first job was to produce an overhead-valve cylinderhead for the side-valve Standard engine, developed by engine wizard Harry Weslake. This 2.7-litre OHV six-cylinder is regarded as the first Jaguar engine (although still produced for SS by Standard), because it powered the SS Jaguar cars introduced at the 1935 London Motor Show and was exclusive to the company.

The SS Jaguar range included a four-seat open tourer as well as the four-door saloon and, more significantly in view of what was to follow, the SS Jaguar 100 two-seater sports car that soon achieved success in racing and rallying. It gained the reputation for speed and performance that the earlier SS cars had lacked. In 1938, the OHV engine was enlarged to 3.5 litres, increasing maximum power from 102bhp to 125bhp and making the 100 two-seater a 100mph car – a rare thing at the time.



1935 William Lyons SS Car Club Rally Test SS90.

HISTORY: JAGUAR 1922–1960

A coupe version of the 3.5-litre 100 was the star of the 1938 London Motor Show. Inspired by extravagant French grand tourers like the Bugatti Atalante, this design, with its rounded wings and covered rear wheels, did not progress beyond the prototype shown at Earls Court, but in hindsight can be seen as a link to Jaguar's first post-war masterpiece, the XK120.

By the time war broke out in 1939, SS Jaguar was producing 5,000 cars a year and had, with some pain, converted from hand-worked coachbuilding to pressed-steel bodywork, welded on a production line. It also assembled its own chassis, although still using engines and transmissions supplied by Standard.

Towards the end of the war, SS purchased the tooling for the six-cylinder engines and moved from the Standard works in Canley to Foleshill. It was here on the factory roof, while fire watching at the height of the German campaign to bomb Coventry, that engineers William Heynes, Wally Hassan and Claude Baily dreamt up an engine to put the post-war Jaguars in a class of their own.

Jaguar Cars Limited was already registered as a company when, in March 1945, Lyons and his fellow directors decided to drop SS and use the single word Jaguar. It restarted production of a range of pre-war saloons in autumn 1945, with the 1.5-litre (which, confusingly, had a 1.8-litre OHV four-cylinder engine still supplied by Standard), and the 2.5 (actually 2.7) and 3.5-litre models with six-cylinder engines, then made in-house. Only the badges identified the new from the old – showing a J instead of the italic SS – although there were some detail technical improvements.

The first new Jaguar, when it came in 1948, wasn't entirely new. It is not clear why it was called Mark V, but it was an evolution of the 2.5 litre/3.5-litre that had been produced as a saloon and a drophead coupe – and which retrospectively became known as the MkIV.

1950 Earls Court Motor Show.

The MkV was always intended to be an interim model as the more thoroughly modern MkVII was well into development (there was no MkVI but, again, nobody knows why). The MkV, with its flowing but still separate wings, running boards and sloping tail was a link between the pre-war SS Jaguars and the all-enveloping bodywork that was still to come. It had a new and much stiffer chassis with independent front suspension (using torsion bar springs) and hydraulic brakes – both features new to Jaguar – but continued with the pushrod OHV six-cylinder engines.

This was the period of austerity when the British motor industry was advised by the Labour Government to 'export or die'. Steel and other

essential materials were allocated on the basis of estimates of overseas sales. The MkV, the drophead coupe version in particular, was produced with an eye to the American market, and Jaguar made its first post-war shipment there in 1947.

With sales channels in mainland Europe already established, exports soon accounted for more than 50 percent of Jaguar's output. That meant a shortage of cars for the home market, but there were several disincentives to car buying in Britain, not least petrol rationing, which lasted until 1950.

There was, however, plenty of enthusiasm for performance cars and motor sport. The newsreels captured John Cobb setting a new Land Speed Record at Bonneville and exceeding 400mph for the first time; crowds flocked to the 1948 British Grand Prix at Silverstone; and Jaguar was developing an engine that would be superior to any in the mainstream car market: the twin overhead camshaft XK. It would be launched in the XK120, an equally advanced sports car, at the first post-war London Motor Show, in October 1948.

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The idea might have been born during the long nights of watching for enemy aircraft, but some serious work on the XK was already being done in the drawing office towards the end of the war. The new engine wasn't ready for the Mark V, but Lyons was keen to demonstrate its potential before the XK120 appeared. A four-cylinder version of the engine was provided to Lt Col 'Goldie' Gardner to fit into what had been the MG Ex135 streamliner and, in September 1948, he took it to the Jabbeke autoroute in Belgium and established a new 2.0-litre speed record of 176.69mph.

Lyons' flair for publicity prepared the ground for the XK120's sensational debut at Earls Court. Its sheer beauty and the promise of a 120mph performance captivated commentators. The original plan for what was known internally as the Super Sports had been that there would be two models (an XK100 with the four-cylinder and a six-cylinder XK120), and that both would be limited editions designed more to generate publicity than for profitable sales. However, when Lyons saw the reaction to the show car he quickly sanctioned a full-scale production run, with steel body panels replacing the hand-formed aluminium of the

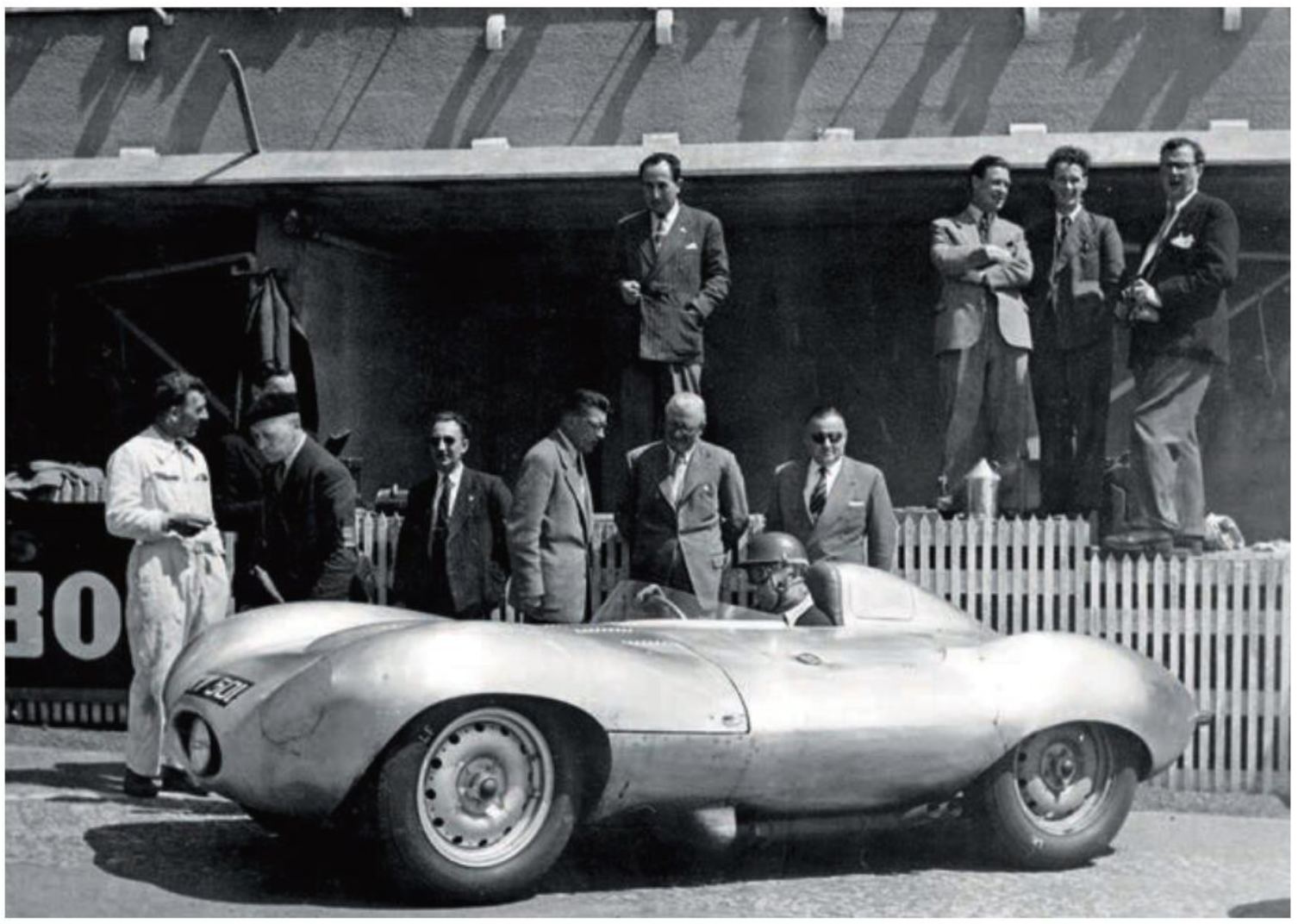
1951 Stirling Moss setting a lap record at Le Mans.

prototypes. The four-cylinder engine was dropped, never to be used in a production model, and the six-cylinder XK with a displacement of 3,442cc became the definitive Jaguar engine for the next 35 years.

The XK120 was admired wherever it went and that included the important New York Auto Show early in 1949. But Jaguar needed to prove that it was more than a pretty face, so it was back to the Jabbeke autoroute. There, witnessed by a group of invited journalists, test driver Ron 'Soapy' Sutton achieved 132.5mph in a timed run. This achievement was followed by entering three XK120s in the one-hour production car race at the Daily Express International Trophy meeting at Silverstone, where they finished first and second. Jaguar's reputation – still tinged with memories of the flashy pre-war under-achievers – then soared.

A serious works racing programme does not seem to have been William Lyons' intention – he was concentrating on getting the XK-powered MkVII into production – but it gradually became inevitable. In 1950, XK120s not only took part but also showed winning potential in the Targa Florio, Mille Miglia and Le Mans 24-Hour classics, and in September, a young Stirling Moss scored a decisive victory in the Tourist Trophy race at Dundrod. A competitions department evolved, headed by service manager FRW 'Lofty' England (later to become Jaguar's managing director) and started to develop the XK120 as a proper race car. The competition version, which was actually a completely different car with a tubular chassis frame, was called the XK120C, but somewhere along the way it became known as the C-Type.

1952 Mille Miglia, Dewis/Moss.



1954 Le Mans Test XKD401 Tony Rolt in first D-Type.

The C-Type was the first Jaguar to benefit from the expertise of Malcolm Sayer, an aerodynamicist who had come from Bristol Cars and would influence the shape of all subsequent Jaguars up to and including the E-Type.

The racing history of the C-Type is well known and exhaustively documented. Suffice to say that it won outright in its debut at Le Mans in 1951 (driven by Peter Whitehead and Peter Walker, at record speed), then failed in the 24-Hours race the following year because of engine overheating (a miscalculation about the effect of a lower, more streamlined nose on the cooling system), before returning to Le Mans in 1953, with the original body shape and disc brakes, to achieve the glorious result of first, second and fourth places.

The prestige of two Le Mans wins, and many other race victories by private owners all over the world, played particularly well in America, which was the prime target for

1956 Reims Bueb Jaguar D-Type 393RW.

the MkVII launched at the 1950 London Motor Show.

Lyons wanted the Mark VII to represent the new spirit of Jaguar. With the XK engine, it could offer the 100mph performance of a sports car in a substantial saloon that was stylishly modern in appearance, and at the same time stately and luxurious. Add to that a UK price of £988, before tax, and it was clear that Jaguar had a winner in the marketplace as well as on the track.

It took some time to get the MkVII into full production, in part due to the time that Jaguar moved from Foleshill to Browns Lane because it had run out of space at its first Coventry home. In 1950, Jaguar acquired an extensive wartime 'shadow factory' near Allesley, then operated by Daimler, but it wasn't until autumn 1952 that the move was finally completed.

By then, more than 80 percent of Jaguar's output went for export and was Britain's biggest dollar-earner. The company had settled with two distinct model lines – the big saloon (MkVII) and the sports cars (XK120 and the C-Type) and factory records show that in 1953 production exceeded 10,000 for the first time.

The C-Type was replaced by the now-legendary D-Type in 1954; it was so-named simply because it was the next letter in the alphabet and unwittingly started a convention that continues to this day. As is well-known, the D-Type enjoyed a terrific racing career, finishing second in its first outing at Le Mans and going on to win the 24-Hours three years in a row: in a works car in the 1955 race (when the rival Mercedes team was withdrawn after a crash that killed its driver Pierre Levegh and 80 spectators), and in 1956 and 1957, with cars run by the Ecurie Ecosse team.

Over this period, the XK120 became the XK140, with bigger bumpers and more accurate rack-and-pinion steering, and then the XK150, while the MkVII morphed

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1956 Le Mans.

into the more elaborately furnished Mark VIII. But the big story – and the one that was to have the furthest-reaching consequences – was the return of a smaller Jaguar saloon. The 2.4, announced in 1955 and powered by a short-stroke version of the XK engine, can retrospectively be viewed as the first 'executive' car, a class that BMW developed to become the world's best-selling premium carmaker 50 years later.

The 2.4 was the first Jaguar with unitary body-chassis construction, and in less than two years it was joined by the 3.4 which, with 210bhp instead of the 2.4's 112bhp, turned the 'compact' Jaguar into a serious sports saloon with a maximum speed of 120mph. That, too, was a marker for the future.

Racing cars rarely stay competitive for more than two or three years, and by 1957 the D-Type had ceased to be a regular front-runner (even if it did win at Le Mans for a third time). Besides, the rules for international sports car racing were to apply a 3.0-litre engine limit from 1958, which made the D-Type ineligible. Jaguar still had a number of unused D-Type chassis and hit on the idea of building a version with full road equipment. It was given the heritage name of XK-SS and is, arguably, the forerunner of today's road-going supercars.

We can't be sure if the XK-SS was just to use up expensive racing components or whether there was a plan for continuing production, because in February 1957 fire broke out in the Browns Lane plant in the area where the first cars were being assembled. The jigs and tools were destroyed in the fire and production of the XK-SS was abandoned. Just 16 had been built, guaranteeing its place as a collector's car of the future.

At that point, Jaguar was already working on a successor to the D-Type and XK-SS, but the project was the subject of conjecture and confusion: was it to be a racer or a sports touring car? Jaguar was happy to keep its fans guessing. In fact, there were two different prototypes: E1A had the shape of what was to become the E-Type, and was primarily to test the independent rear suspension assembly that would later be used throughout the Jaguar range, while E2A looked similar but was a 3.0-litre race car, which Briggs Cunningham took to Le Mans in 1960.

Early the following year, all became clear. The E-Type was announced as a road-going two-seater sports car, coupe and convertible – gorgeous to behold and unassailable in performance for its price. It was to become the automotive symbol of the Swinging Sixties.

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The Jaguar Collector's Resource

The Swallow years

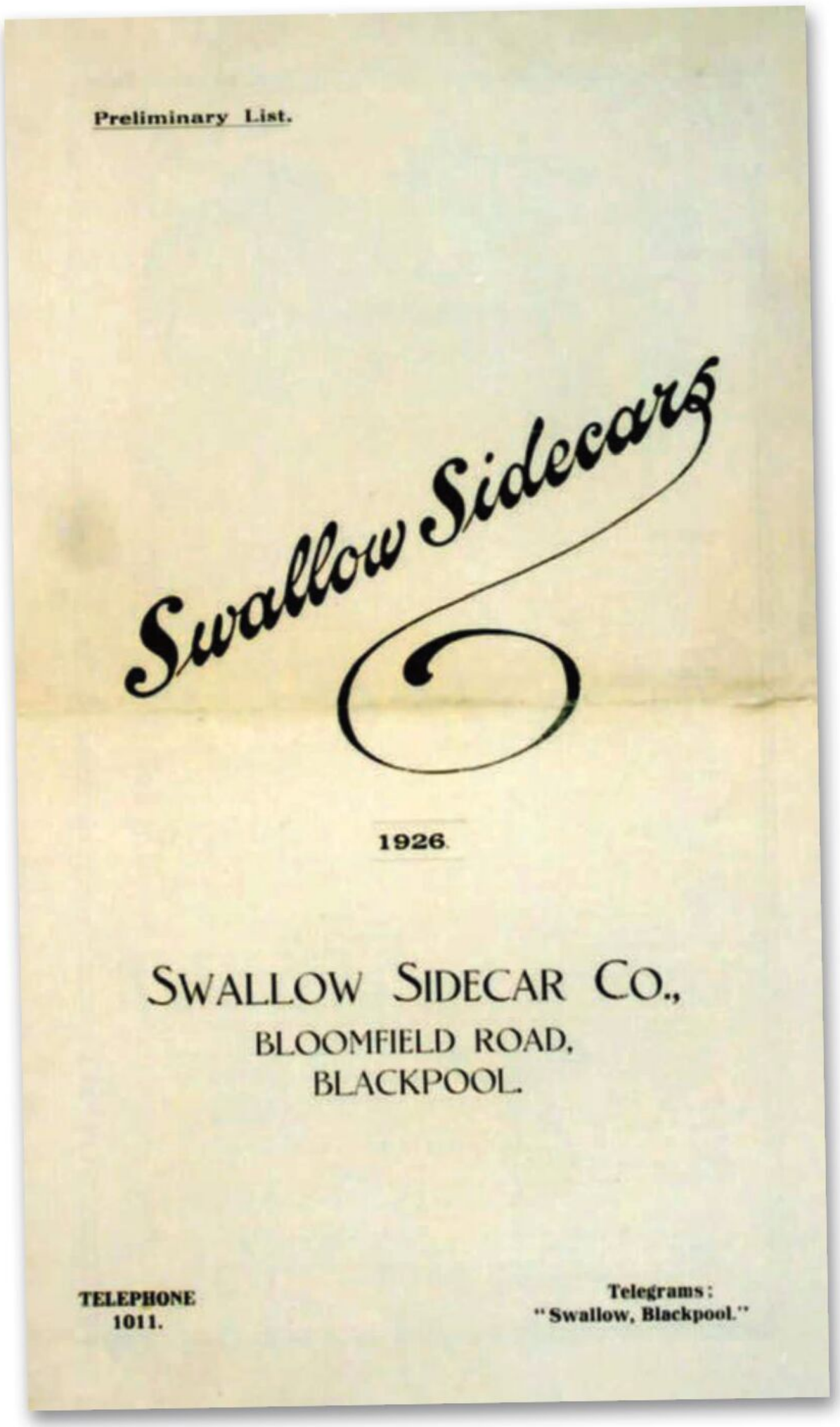
We take a trawl through the early years of the Swallow Sidecar & Coachbuilding company, though Ian Cooling's impressive collection of automobilia.

Words: Ian Cooling

Jaguar's early days have always fascinated me. William Lyons setting up a sidecar business with William Walmsley in a Blackpool back street in 1921, with his father having to stand surety for a loan to move into new premises and to counter-sign company cheques, because his son was still under 21. Then fast expansion and move into bigger premises just two years later, with a key moment in 1925 when the company moved into the coach building business.

Initially, the coach building mainly involved routine modifications of existing cars but before very long, they started building their own Swallow bodies on the chassis and running gear of the established manufacturers. The catalyst was the Austin 7. In 1927 Lyons had secured a chassis from Parkers of Manchester and Bolton and the resulting Austin Swallow was a very stylish creation indeed compared with the rather staid original.

As ever, Lyons' fertile mind was already powering ahead. He saw significant potential for the Austin Swallow and had a steady but limited supply of the chassis and running gear. An early approach to Austin themselves was abortive and Lyons turns to other makers with 1927 seeing the launch of the Morris Cowley Swallow. This year also saw the game-changing deal with Henlys for 500 Austin Swallows. These were for saloons rather than the original two-seaters. All this activity had made clear that another move to larger premises was needed and this was the catalyst for a very significant watershed, with 1928 became a defining year in Jaguar's history.

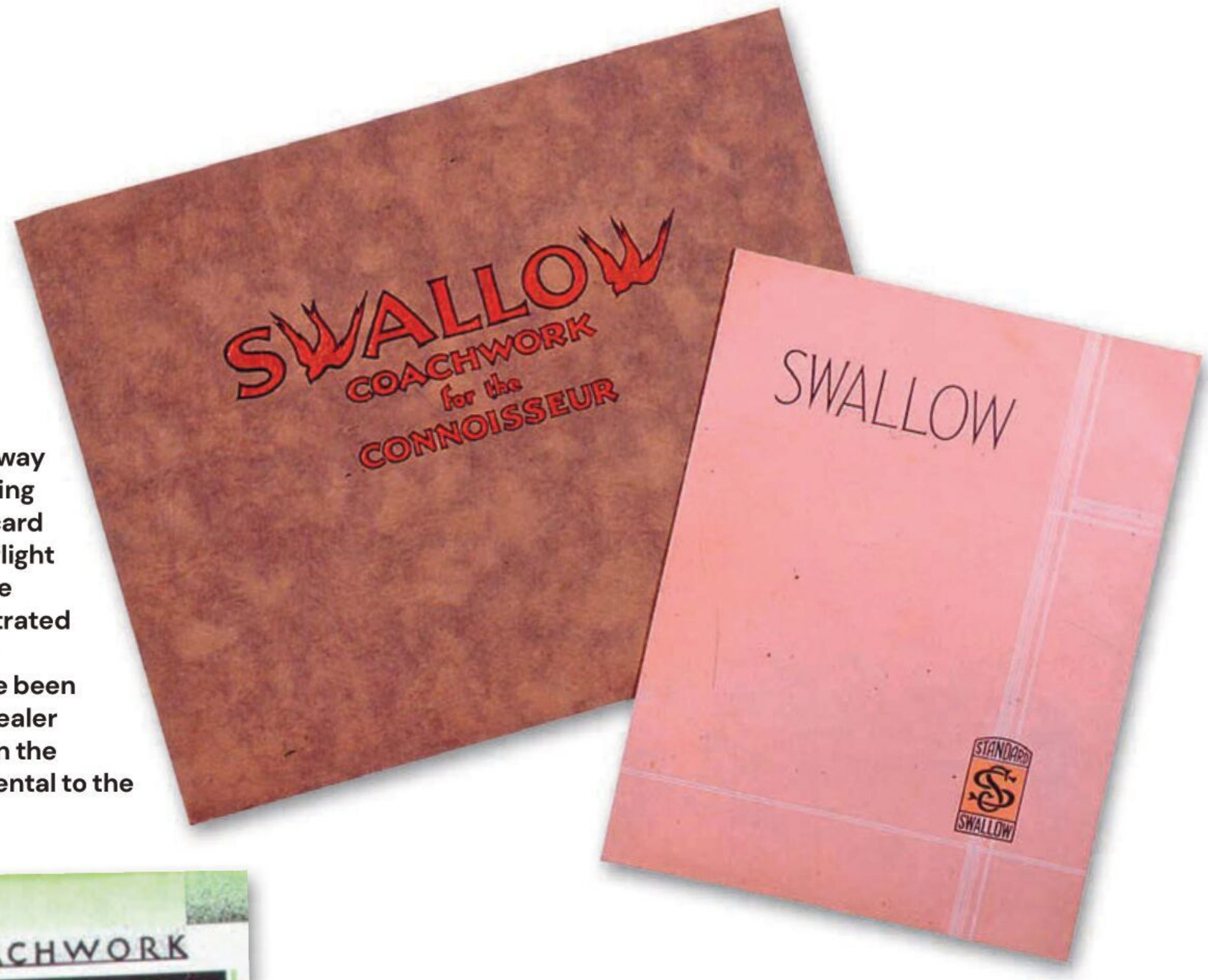


SENT TO COVENTRY

Lyons decided not to move within Blackpool again but to move the whole business into the Midlands, the heart of the British motor industry – and this only seven years since the company was formed in a neighbour's garage! Lyons vision, confidence and relentless energy

Left: I have included this Swallow Sidecar folder as it takes a step back in time before the Swallow coachbuilt cars I major on in this article. It is dated 1926 and is from the period when the company, then called "Swallow Sidecars", was still based in their original premises in Bloomfield Road, Blackpool. It is the oldest Swallow brochure I have held in my hands although a 1924 brochure is shown on page 27 of the 1980 edition of Andrew Whyte's seminal work "Jaguar. The history of a great British car". It's worth remembering that although production of the Swallow cars ended in 1933 as production of the SS1 and SS2 moved into top gear, the company continued to produce sidecars right through to and including the Second World War when nearly 10,000 Swallow sidecars were produced for the Armed Forces. In 1944, with the war entering its final stages, Lyons made the decision to concentrate on car production and the Swallow side of the business was sold off.

Right: These two brochures are from 1930. The Standard Swallow on the right was the first fruit of Lyons' growing relationship with Captain John Black, the Standard boss. This did not run entirely smoothly but did result in the supply of Standard engines and other parts for the SS1 and SS2. The sumptuous brochure – "Swallow. Coachwork for the Connoisseur" – is just one example of the way in which Lyons had up-graded the marketing operation. The cover is heavy embossed card and a neat touch is the use of swallows in flight as the two "Ws" in "Swallow". The brochure features the full Swallow range and is illustrated by specially-commissioned water-colour paintings. Brochures like these would have been a key tool in Lyons' efforts to expand his dealer network that was so important to maintain the steady increase in sales that was fundamental to the commercial success of the company.



The Austin Swallow, which was produced from 1927 to 1932, was the backbone of Swallow Coach Building's business. This brochure shows the two main bodywork options. The two-seater at the top and the four-seater saloon below. Design and production of the four-seater was triggered by Henlys order for 500 of them in 1927. That order and all the additional work involved was also the catalyst for the move from Blackpool to Coventry in 1928. By this time, the name of the company had been changed to reflect the new line of business – "Swallow Sidecar and Coach Building Co".

The Fiat Swallow was built on Fiat 509A chassis and running gear acquired by William Lyons when that car went out of production at their assembly plant in Kent. This was another coup (of many!) by Lyons as the price was a bargain and meant he was able to start expanding the Swallow range beyond the original Austin Swallow.

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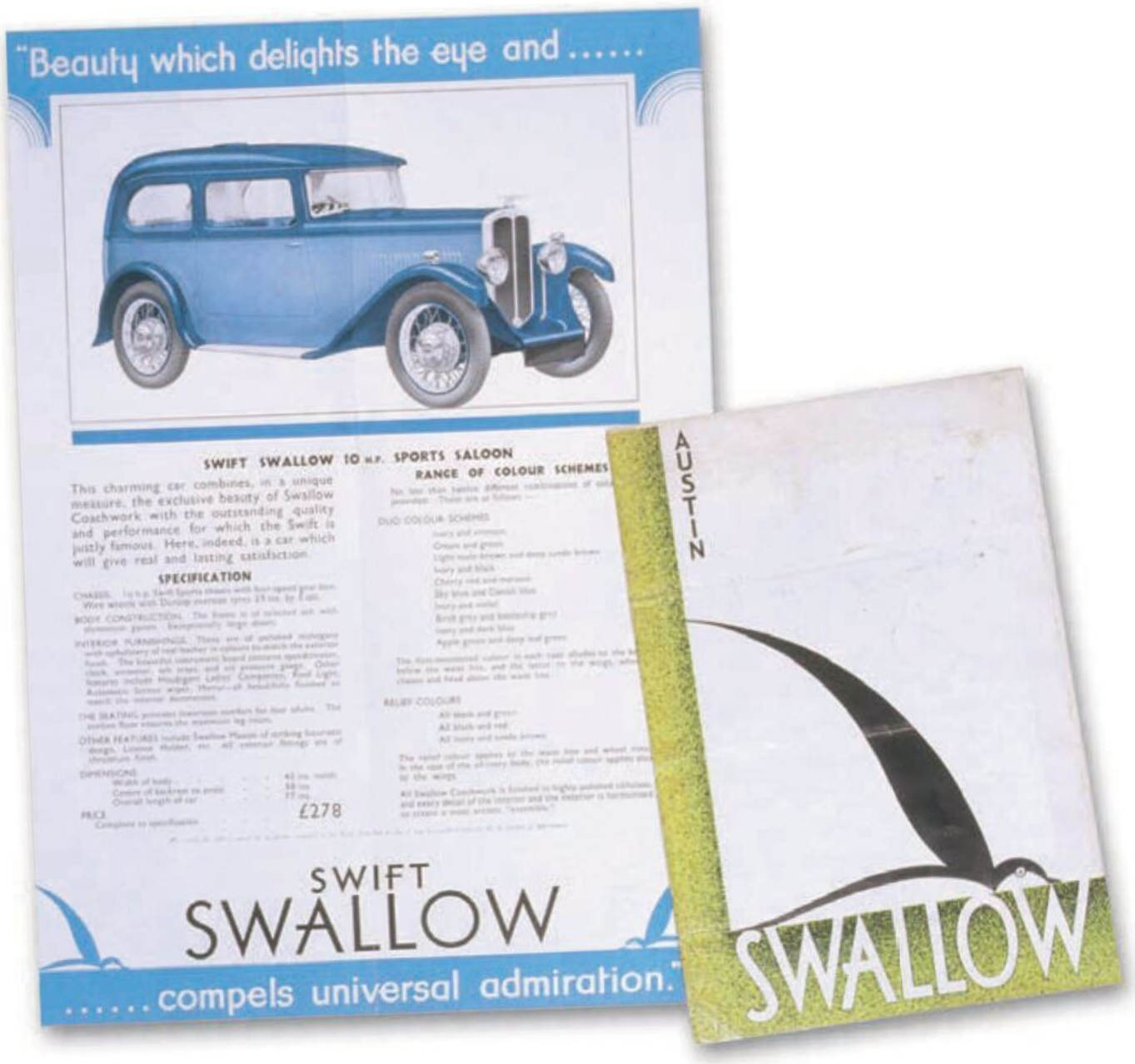
was and still is pretty awe-inspiring. The main reason for the move was that he was finding it increasingly difficult to recruit new workers locally in Blackpool with the necessary skills. If the workers would not come to the company in sufficient numbers, then the company would move to the workers.

New cars emerged soon after the move to Coventry. The Fiat 509A had become obsolete and Lyons was able to secure a batch of chassis and running-gear from their assembly works in Kent. In 1929, the Fiat Swallow duly appeared to be followed in quick succession by the Standard Swallow and the Swift Swallow. 1930 saw the launch of the very sporty Wolseley Hornet Swallow.

The link with Standard proved to be another key event. Lyons had a dream of creating his own cars and to move on from re-bodying the cars of others. The Fiat Swallow and Swift Swallow had ended their short production runs and in



The Swift Swallow was relatively short-lived with production beginning in 1930 and discontinued after Swift collapsed in April 1931, cutting off supplies. A pity as the specification of the car was high and as the illustration on the blue folder shows, the underpinnings lent themselves to a typically Swallow style of coachwork. The characteristic "eyebrows" above the windscreen are noticeable.

This contemporary ad for the Hornet Swallow shows the younger market these very sporty cars were aimed at. Note that "Sidecar" had been dropped from the company title which was now "Swallow Coachbuilding Co". Launched as a two-seater in 1930, the four-seater Hornet Swallow soon followed. The Hornet Swallow Special, which features in this ad, appeared in 1933. The Hornets were the first six-cylinder cars in the Swallow range and their extra power increased their popularity. Production ceased at the end of the same year as the SS1 and SS2 absorbed manufacturing space.

This colourful enamel badge used to sit in the centre of the rear bumpers fitted to several Swallow models. It is not actually a Swallow badge but a Wilmot Breeden badge. They were suppliers of bumpers to Swallow for many years. This is a reproduction of a very rare badge. In over 40 years in business as a collector, dealer and auctioneer, I have only seen two originals offered for sale.

A shift now from the literature to the hardware. Not too easy to see at this size, but this is another rare and historic piece of automobilia. It is a sill plate for the Swallow Sidecar and Coachbuilding Company in its second premises at the corner of Cocker Street and Exchange Street in Blackpool. As you will have seen from my introduction, the company only occupied these premises for two years before moving to Coventry. This plate will therefore probably have come from an Austin Swallow of that era, or possibly a Morris Swallow as they too were made at the premises, but in much smaller numbers.

You will have seen from my introduction that 1931 was a crucial cross-over year for the company. The Austin, Standard and Hornet Swallows were all still in production as were the sidecars. But the future had arrived with the launch of the SS1 and SS2. This fine spread shows that all the sales brochures for the full line of products shared the same common design and colour scheme.

Another piece of hardware that tells a story. These sill plates were fitted to an SS1 from (probably) 1934. Note that although the SS Cars Ltd brand has now emerged, complete with the distinctive hexagon logo, the coachwork was still made by Swallow. The SS hexagon was originally designed for use on letter-head, sales brochures and similar literature, its potential for other uses was soon spotted as shown here.

HISTORY: THE SWALLOW YEARS

Right: There is no way I can fail to include a swallow mascot in an article about Swallow automobilia! There were four mascots fitted to the cars by the company and this is the first, designated "Type 1" by Gil Mond, historian of the Swallow Register. It was most frequently fitted to the Austin Swallows and is the easiest to find today. The Type 2 was fitted in 1929/30; the Type 3 from 1930/31 and the Type 4 from 1931/33. However, there is some photographic evidence that owners swapped the mascots round if the one that was originally fitted to their car did not appeal. Also, the inter-War years were the heyday of mascots and a wide range were produced by a variety of manufacturers and owners often fitted these too. These waters are therefore well and truly muddied!

Top right: An example of the high-grade water-colour illustrations in the large brochure mentioned earlier. This is the four-seater Austin Swallow Sports Saloon and features the very fashionable "pen nib" paintwork on the bonnet. The green paint starts the full width of the windscreen and then narrows to a point at the swallow mascot on the radiator cap. Not too easy to see here but this sort of paint job was an important marketing ploy of the era.

spite of several face-lifts, Austin Swallow production was also coming to an end. The relationship Lyons formed with Captain John Black of Standard sowed the seeds of another watershed in the life of the company and at the 1931 Motor Show, the SS1 and SS2 cars were launched.

Five years after the move from Blackpool, William Lyons had achieved his dream by assembling his own cars with Standard engines and under-pinnings. By the end of 1932, production of the Standard Swallow had ceased and the Hornet Swallow followed by the end of 1933. The SS cars were to be the future and car production has been a continuous strand through SS Cars to the Jaguar company we know today.

This (very) brief canter through the early years of the company gives a framework for the accompanying photos and captions. They introduce automobilia as a way of expanding and extending this story. You may well ask "Exactly what is automobilia?" My definition is simple "automobilia is everything to do with cars – except cars." That gives me lots of scope. In this article I have focused on brochures, adverts, and included some example of the sort of hardware associated with the cars. Future articles will expand the scope much wider.

Another rare survivor and a piece with a nice story attached it. "Works Outings" to the coast or other festive destinations were very much a feature of company life in the 1930s, especially among the industrial companies. This little booklet was issued for the Swallow outing to Brighton on Saturday, 17th June 1933. It was a packed day! The train left Coventry at 6.30, arriving in Brighton at 09.55 with breakfast served on the train. Lunch was served in the Hotel Metropole at 1.00pm "By kind invitation of the Directors of Swallow Coachbuilding Company". It offered soup, cold salmon, a choice of lamb or chicken casserole, raspberry charlotte and cheese and biscuits. Supper was served on the train for the return journey, which left Brighton at 11pm, arriving back in Coventry at 3am on the Sunday morning. The supper was pretty good too – a choice of beef, lamb or veal & ham pie with salad and new potatoes, fruit salad, cheese and biscuits. Doubtless there was much jollification between the meals! I wonder what Jaguar offers today?

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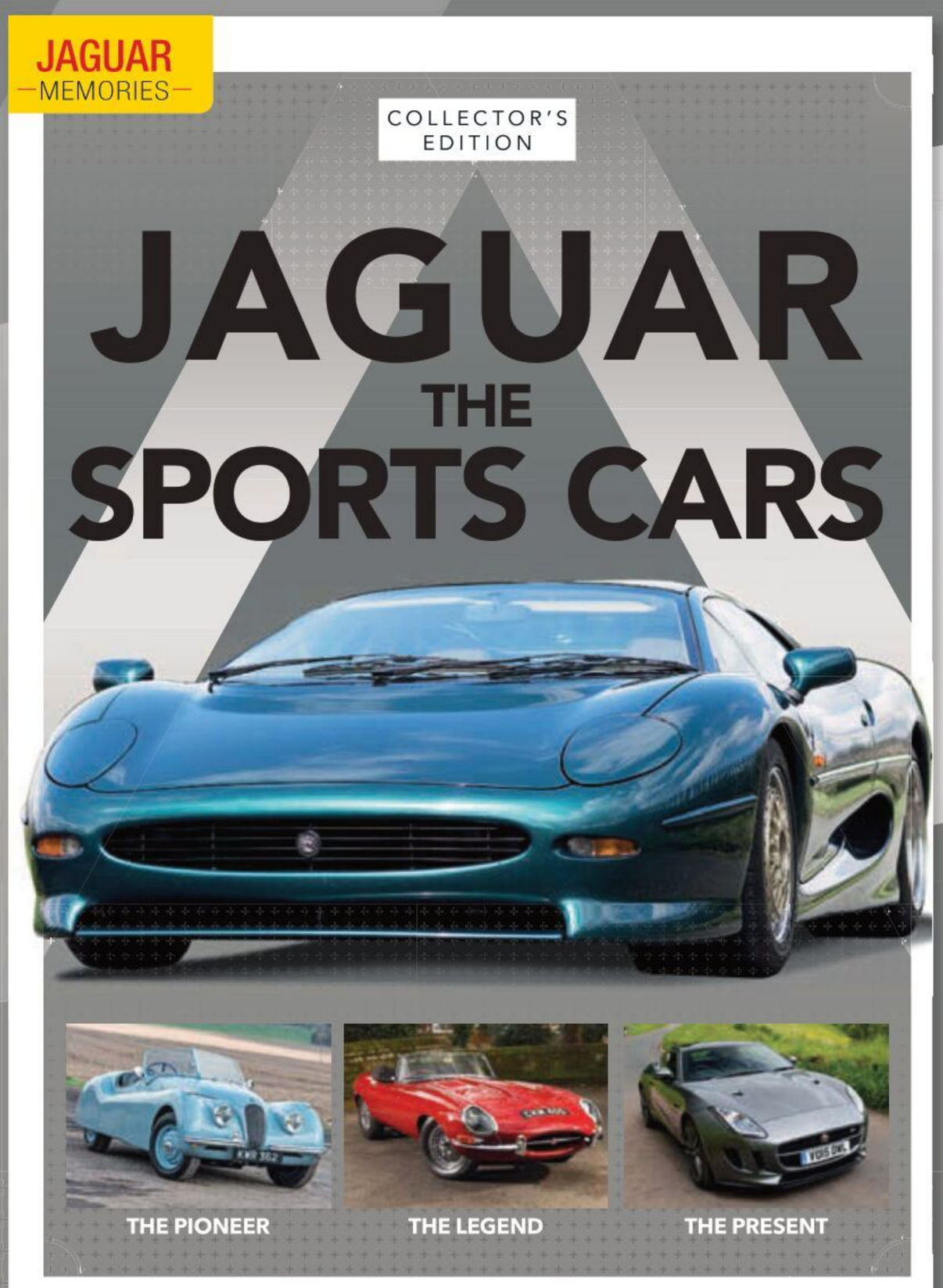

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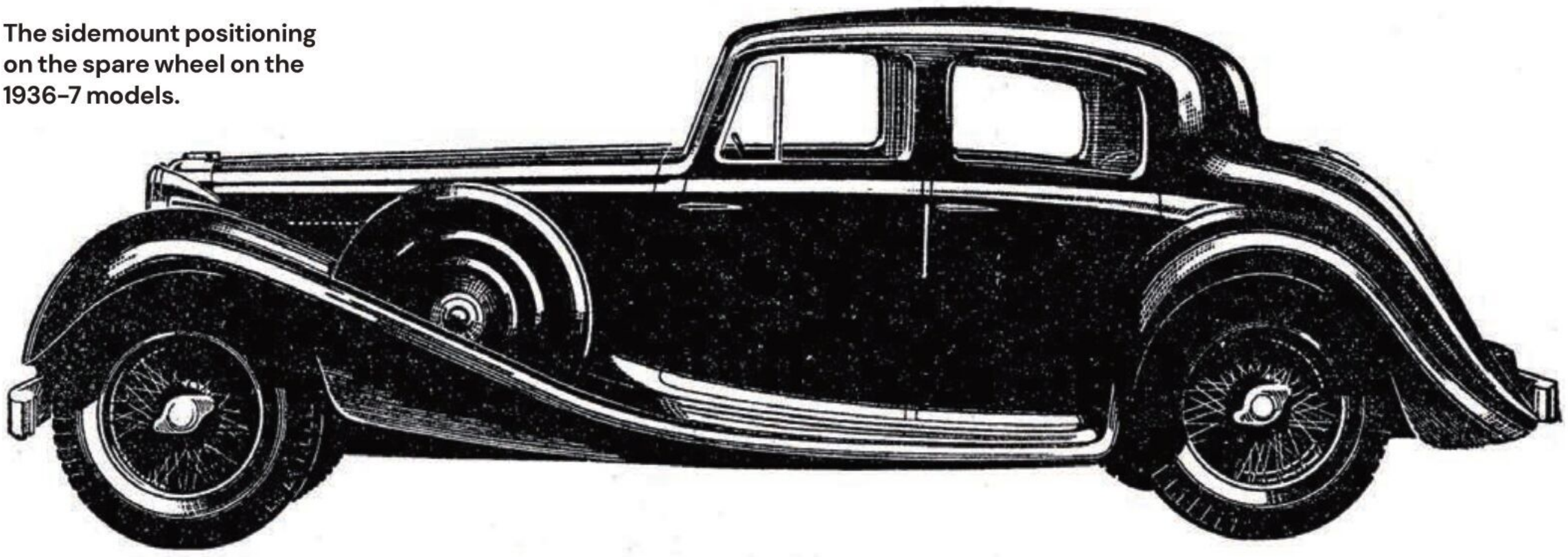


The sidemount positioning on the spare wheel on the 1936-7 models.

"Handsome, Dignified and Workmanlike"

That was the verdict of the Hon Maynard Greville when he tested an SS Jaguar 2½-litre for Country Life in 1937; to which could be added the famous question: "How did Lyons do it for the money?"

Words: Jeremy Satherley

"Sit down, dear, in case Mr Whiteside has to stop suddenly". Back then, merely knee-high to a knock-off hubcap on those tall, skinny wire wheels, my first experience of a Jaguar 3½-litre was in 1954 while living in Belgium, when the English family of a six-year-old friend residing opposite included me in an outing to Antwerp Zoo. Puffing away on his pipe, Mr W. had just twirled a large central knob to open the windscreen. Standing up in the back, against adult advice, to gaze over that lovely long bonnet and the chromed backs of those magnificent Lucas P100 headlamps, it was a view never forgotten as this baroque motor car swanned its way along a wide, tree-lined boulevard among whitewalled Chryslers, Renault Frégates and Peugeot 203s. By Gad sir – it was good to be an Englishman abroad in a Jaguar, even at that tender age!

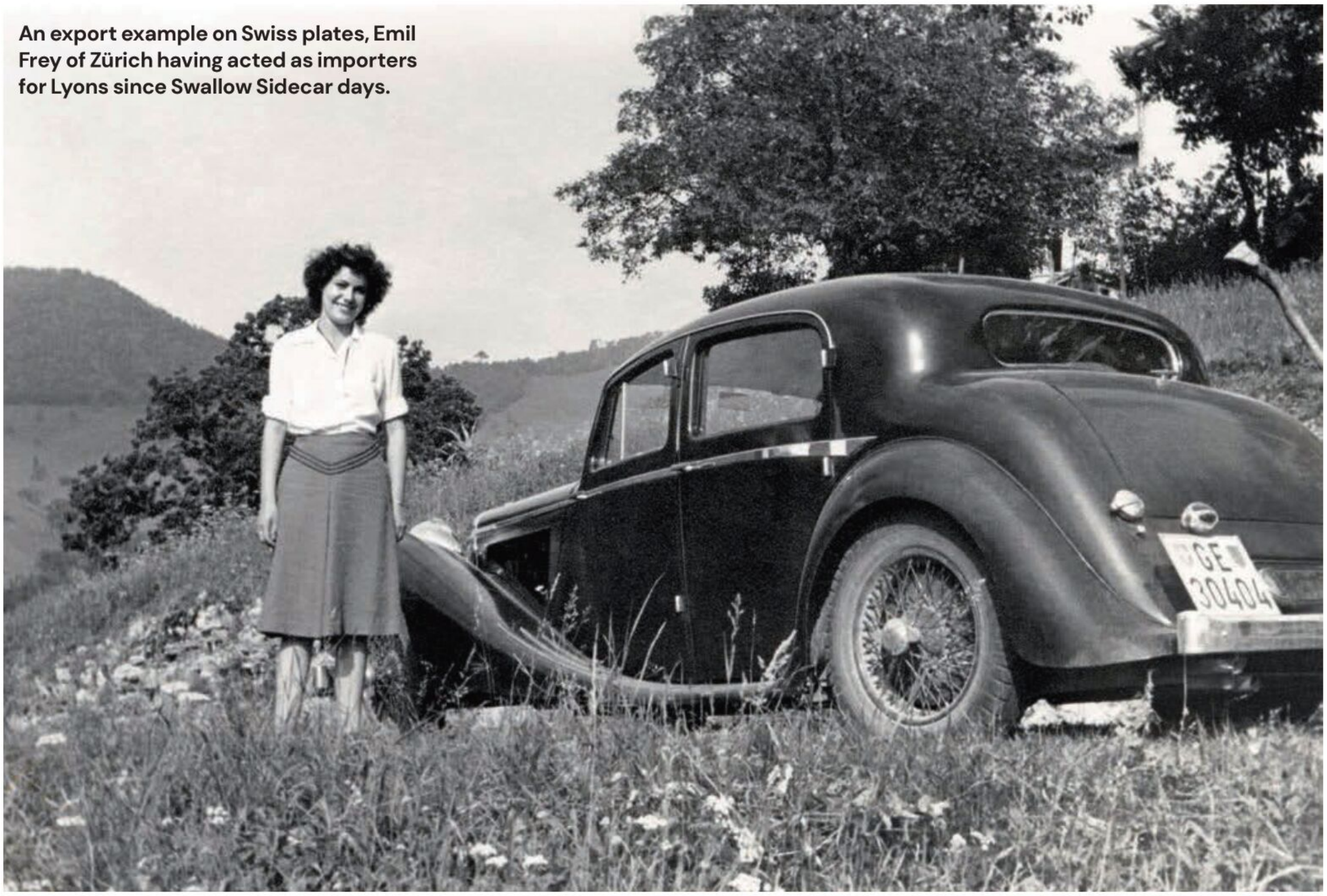
ALL CHANGE

The adoption of the Jaguar title as an adjunct to the SS name in 1935 marked a change of direction in the type of products William Lyons intended to market. After the incorporation of SS Cars Ltd in October 1933, its flotation as a public company the following January and – departing with a sizeable cash settlement – the retirement of his partner from Swallow Sidecar days, William Walmsley, the way was now clear for Lyons to pursue his ambition of producing 'one of the world's finest luxury cars' at his Foleshill, Coventry works, aided by newly-recruited chief engineer, Bill Heynes, and styling interpreter, Cyril Holland.

In doing so, Lyons steered away from the restricting, close-coupled two-door coupé, saloon and tourer niche market typified by his SSI and SSII cars of the 1931-36 period. Well constructed, thanks to their Swallow Sidecar coachbuilding heritage and totally reliant on chassis and engines supplied by the Standard Motor Company seven miles away at Canley, their long bonnets, 'dog-kennel' passenger areas and dummy hood irons had established them, like the later Kinks' song, as dedicated followers of fashion.

But they were unremarkable in the performance stakes – particularly the smaller SSII with a 1-litre Little Nine engine – a state of affairs that prompted engineer Harry Weslake to annoy Lyons with the jibe: "Your car reminds me of an overdressed lady with no brains – there's nothing under the bonnet!"

With few in-house facilities at SS, there was no alternative to Standard's continued supply of engines and chassis frames to fulfil future plans. But disregarding Weslake's insult, Lyons gave him the job of developing an overhead-valve cylinder head



An export example on Swiss plates, Emil Frey of Zürich having acted as importers for Lyons since Swallow Sidecar days.

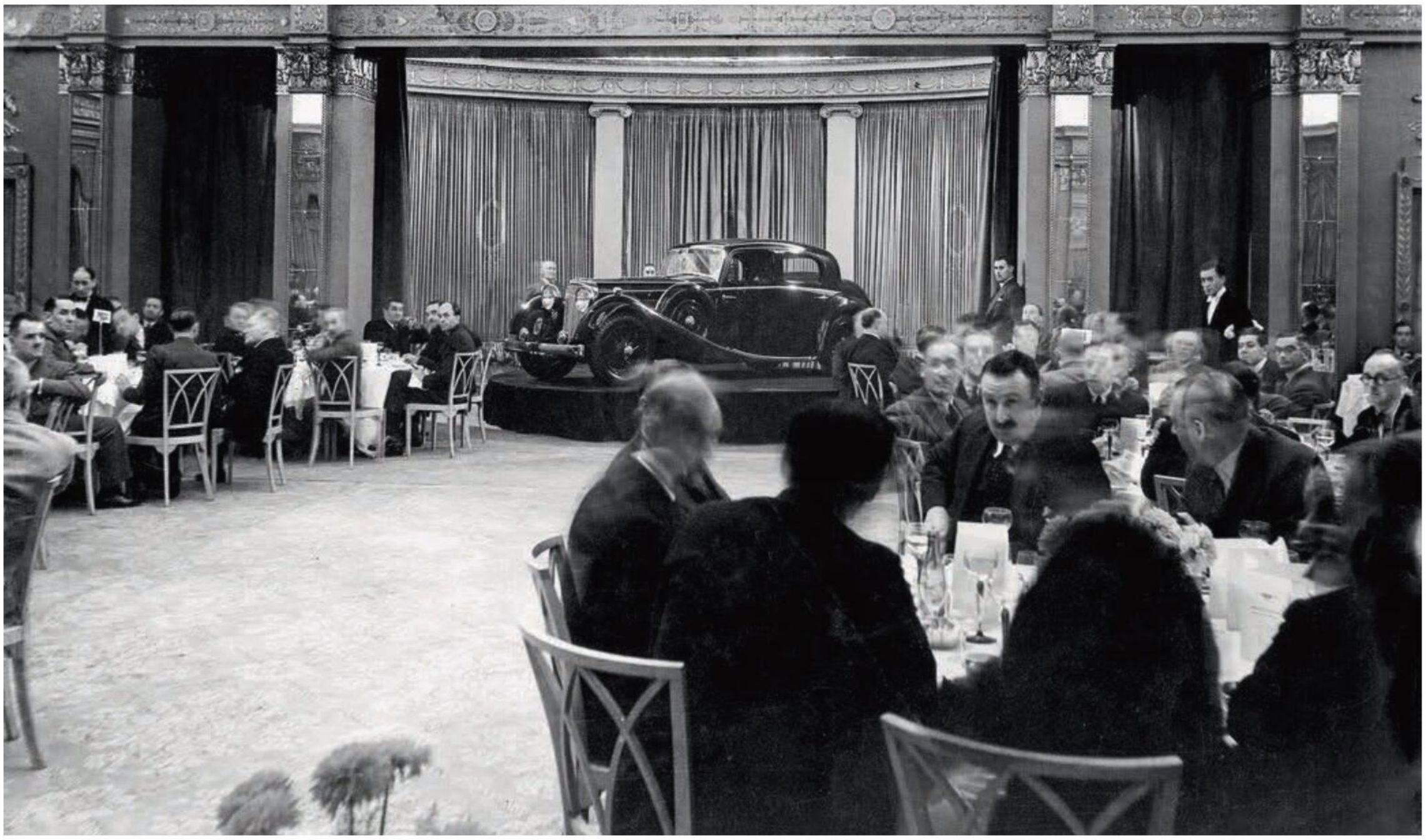
for the existing 2663cc six-cylinder engine. Weslake's magic extracted 102bhp – a whole 32 more horses than the original, and by gentleman's agreement Standard's John Black produced this special engine exclusively for SS from his own resources, although Lyons had the arrangement confirmed in writing, just in case rivals came sniffing at Standard's door. The reworked unit was to give the proposed 2½-litre model near-90mph potential, and achieve 0-60 in under 17½ seconds.

The styling of the new SS 1½ and 2½-litre saloons was certainly tasteful and owed nothing to outside consultants or designers, although during 1935 Lyons had uncharacteristically put out feelers, which drew a response from French coachbuilders Figoni et Falaschi, known irreverently to some in the trade as 'Phoney and Flashy'. Figoni offered to direct SS's styling and coachbuilding operations for a trifling annual fee, monsieur, of £15,000. But that was nearly half SS Cars' annual profit, so not surprisingly it was "Non merci". No matter: SS's own Cyril Holland, assisted by the bluff Fred Gardner, went on to create a scaled-down Bentley look and set the Jaguar precedent for decades to come of a low roofline curling down to the boot area, with a wide, squashed-oval rear window. Front wings, with a metal-covered spare wheel mounted on the port side, flowed smoothly into running boards and a luxuriant chromed spear spanned the bonnet sides to the tops of the rear wings. Inside were soft hides on generously-contoured seats, polished walnut veneer for the facia and door cappings and a full complement of instruments. If you'd been impressed by SS interiors before, with their characteristic 1930s sunburst-patterned door cards, this was something else.

GUESS THE PRICE!

For the launch, Lyons booked a conference room for 21st September at London's swish May Fair Hotel in Berkeley Street, where maître d'hotel Bologna welcomed you to the house speciality of Terrine May Fair at 12/6 a portion (£80-worth now) – and unveiled the 2½-litre saloon prototype before an admiring dealer convention. Asking them to guess the purchase price, the assembled company came up with an average of £632 – mid-range Alvis or Railton straight-eight money – when in fact the true figure was £385, which wouldn't even have bought you a Humber Snipe or range-topping Wolseley. Yet here was something that looked over twice the price and could outperform not only Rootes' and Ward End's finest, but several of the more powerful American cars on sale in Britain at the time. The '2½'s' engine also went into a 95mph

HISTORY: THE SS JAGUAR SALOONS



The launch of the new SS Jaguar at the May Fair Hotel, London in 1935.

two-seater sports derivative with an excellent power-to-weight ratio: the first of the legendary SS100s, made in very small numbers. But that's another story.

Not on display, yet also launched at the same time, was the 1½-litre, with a very similar body and interior appointments, but riding on a shorter wheelbase. This also caused astonishment with its low purchase price of £285 and although its 1608cc, four-cylinder Standard 12 engine rendered it underpowered, it could still manage a competitive 70mph. To begin with it didn't sell as plentifully as the six-cylinder cars, but that would change, and meanwhile two of these earlier 1½s were considered glamorous enough to appear in the film Sweet Devil, starring song-and-dance light comedian Bobby Howes.

Significantly the new 1½- and 2½-litres included the Jaguar name in their titles for the first time, after Lyons had briefed his publicity team to come up with something exciting from a list of exotic fish and fauna. Less well known is the story that the cars could have ended up being called Sunbeams after Lyons expressed a serious interest in acquiring the failed Wolverhampton company in 1935. But he was beaten to the draw by Rootes.

GROWING PAINS AND PLEASURES

As a sensation of the 1935 Olympia show, the new models created an unprecedented demand; orders in 1936 showing an increase of 124 percent over the previous year. The installation of a new moving assembly line undoubtedly helped, but the cars' steel body panels relied on timber frames and by 1937 SS's traditional woodworking methods could hardly keep up. The decision was therefore made to switch to all-steel construction and develop new chassis frames to replace the old SS1-derived underpinnings, without changing the cars' outward appearance. Heynes reworked the chassis to give wider tracks, mounted the rear springs inboard, and lengthened the wheelbases: by 4½in on the 1½-litre and by 1in to 10ft on the 2½ – a dimension that would stay the same on big Jaguars until the XJ6. Door openings were now wider, there was more room inside, and the spare wheel disappeared into a compartment under the boot floor. The new chassis also allowed for the introduction of an attractive drophead coupé body on all versions, broadening the marque's appeal even further.

Joining the range for 1938 was the identically-bodied 3½-litre, arrived at by boring and stroking-out the tough old seven-bearing Standard 20 unit as far as it could go and applying a Weslake OHV head and twin SUs to achieve 125bhp. It sold for only £445 – £50 more than the 2½ – placing it in the very special (for the period) 90 mph-plus category and boasting a 0-60mph time of 16.8 seconds, with a maximum 80mph in 3rd. It was a performance that soon knocked far costlier rivals off their comfort levels, particularly those who'd gone the

A 1939 2½-Litre, now with standard-fit heater. Very unusual for the time.

'easy' route of dropping-in American engines, such as Jensen, Lammas and Railton, and only bettered in its own range by the SS100, now available with the same engine to make it a 105mph sportster. Meanwhile the 1½-litre now benefited from an OHV version of the Standard 14's 1776cc engine. With over 75mph possible from 65bhp, it was a more attractive proposition and became the most popular model in the range, helped by its cheaper road tax and insurance rating.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The company's keen pricing remained a regular talking point. Commenting on the high standard of finish inside and out and attention to detail, such as lead-coating the leaf springs against rust, The Motor of March 14 1939 commented: "How all these and many other features can be combined...and sold at the price they are...remains a mystery...If an explanation is insisted upon it will probably be found in a consideration of the almost ideal conditions under which these cars are built".

MkIV production at Foleshill in 1946, by which time this was Jaguar Cars Ltd.

HISTORY: THE SS JAGUAR SALOONS

A MkV in more modern times. This has become almost a forgotten Jaguar.

This last statement was borne out by Rolls-Royce when, intrigued, they conducted a costing exercise on the 3½-litre. Against the latter's all-in price of £445, the Bentley chassis cost £1150, or £1510 with Park Ward bodywork added. But Rolls was forced to admit that only 30 percent of the Bentley's chassis price was justifiable in terms of better quality, and put this down to SS Cars' 'good manufacturing technique, backed up by sound purchasing of fabricated parts'.

Lyons was also more principled than some other manufacturers. He insisted on selling his cars "for a fair price, not for what we think we can get" and was once quoted as saying, "We don't try, like Alvis, to get as much as we can for our cars; we price according to costs... Alvis calculate they are getting so much profit per car, but they fail to get the necessary production to make the job worthwhile. You have got to have quantity". Quantity was everything with Lyons. So much so that he produced his most popular model, the 1½-litre, at cost, thus generating a high volume which reduced the unit costs of parts shared with the bigger cars – the ones that brought in the real profits.

Against the odds of a worsening international situation, 1939 proved a good year for SS, with 200 cars a week leaving the factory, helped by the optimistic announcement of its 1940 range as early as July. Little change was made to the cars themselves beyond piston-type shock absorbers, small trim and chassis alterations. But grandly-titled 'Air Conditioning' became a standard fitting on the 3½, 2½, and 'Special Equipment' 1½-litre. Although this was no more than a rather indifferent fresh-air and heating system fed respectively by a scuttle vent and hot-water valve, SS made history by being the only British make at the time to offer a standard-fit heater – a distinction not even shared by Rolls-Royce.

1940-49: FROM SS TO JAGUAR CARS LTD

By 1940 the company was preoccupied with war contracts and car production was inevitably wound down, although a late order from Henlys distributors kept things going for as long as the parts stock held out. Then an unexpected step forward occurred in 1942, when John Black of Standard offered to sell SS his special engine plant for the 2½ and 3½-litre. As a golden opportunity for greater self-sufficiency (only the 1½ unit was to stay with Standard until the end in 1949), Lyons jumped at the chance, haggled the price down to £6000 and stuck fast with his decision after Black later regretted it and wanted to go back to the old arrangement.

Black's next overture to Lyons followed in 1944 when the bankrupt Triumph company came up for sale. He was interested in buying it, but told Lyons he wouldn't do so if they were to join forces with their

A 1949 MkV, so one of the last, posing outside Wappenbury Hall – Lyons home from 1937.

existing companies. When Lyons refused, Black retaliated by buying Triumph, threatening to inflict a level of competition on SS post-war that it would not survive. In the event nothing of the sort happened, despite the fact that from 1945, the Jaguar 1½-litre, Triumph 1800 saloon and Triumph 1800 Roadster all shared the same engine. By then Lyons and his team were in a different league anyway, with a new OHC engine on the stocks owing nothing to Black, and a certain XK120 about to burst upon the scene. As for the two men themselves, Lyons treated the situation as just another of Black's aberrations, and they remained on good terms ever after.

Immediately post-war it was business as usual to begin with, as the Jaguar production lines restarted in July 1945 in readiness for the models' October reappearance. Unchanged except for hypoid rear axles and water-heated induction manifolds, the obvious difference lay in their radiator badges and hub caps, which omitted the 'SS' initials now rendered ominous by wartime allusions. Referring laconically to the Nazi SS as "a sector not highly regarded", Lyons and his board had promptly dealt with the matter by officially simplifying the company name to Jaguar Cars Ltd, on April 9 1945.

With American-influenced full-width bodies becoming the norm in the 1940s, the essentially pre-war Jaguars were now looking somewhat antique. The styling was a decade old and they remained wedded to all-round semi-elliptics when even conservative Daimler had adopted independent front suspension in the late 1930s. But with a still above-average performance and impeccable presentation – right down to fully-adjustable steering columns and beautifully finished luggage boot interiors, plentiful tools neatly housed in the lids – the cars were welcomed by those customers resisting the new bulbous or slab-sided look for as long as they could. That even included Hollywood actor Clark Gable, who took delivery of the first 3½-Litre drophead coupé once US exports had got underway. During the same period, Australia took the most Jaguars (517 cars), followed by Belgium (389) and Switzerland (191).

Eventually of course, the old cars would have to bow out. For by now, the XK sports car apart, another important objective loomed – a new 100mph saloon, to become the MkVII. This time the body was to come from Pressed Steel. But there was such a delay in negotiations that the MkV was created to play a stop-gap role, using the chassis and independent front suspension intended for the MkVII under a smoothed-over SS-style body, and employing the same 2½ and 3½-litre engines. The MkV appeared in October 1948, but there was still enough demand for the older cars –retrospectively referred to as MkIVs – to be kept on until October 1949.

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Survival of the fittest

Our resident contributor in Australia pays a visit to the glorious Lindner Collection, to see a rather special SS1 with a fascinating history.

Words: Richard Holdsworth

The Barossa Valley region of South Australia proved to be my destination once again in 2021, as I revisited the Lindner Collection of priceless Jaguars that I'd previously reported on in Jaguar Memories' sister title, Classic Jaguar. This time, however, it was to get up close with the SS1 you see here, a machine that's survived a voyage across the world on the deck of a cargo ship, has had ten different owners, and has traversed one of the planet's most inhospitable places without mishap. It's led anything but a cossetted existence, having covered an impressive 300,000 kilometres during its first 86 years.

Any Jaguar historian will be aware of the story of the Swallow Sidecar Company, which came about when William Lyons and William Walmsley joined forces, building high-quality sidecars at the company's premises in Blackpool. When the two Williams then turned their attention to making car bodies – the first being based around the Austin Seven chassis – it was inevitable that their plans would soon become more ambitious. Indeed,

when the very first SS1 was displayed at the 1931 London Motor Show, it set a trend that would be followed by just about every Jaguar of later years, incorporating a long and sleek bonnet, low-slung bodywork and rakish good looks. One leading motoring magazine of the day summed up the appeal of the SS1 just perfectly: "The most modern lines and the effect is of a powerful sports coupé costing £1000, although the actual price is less than a third of that figure..."

The original SS1 was a handsome coupé based around an under-slung chassis designed by Lyons and supplied by the Standard Motor Company, which also provided the six-cylinder sidevalve engine and four-speed gearbox. Lyons' design for the bodywork was certainly eye-catching, with the SS1's unusually long bonnet, compact passenger compartment and helmet-type front wings giving the impression of high performance even before the car turned a wheel. Production of Swallow-bodied cars ceased in 1933, with the creation of SS Cars Ltd (initially as a subsidiary of the Swallow sidecar-building business) showing the intended future direction of the company.

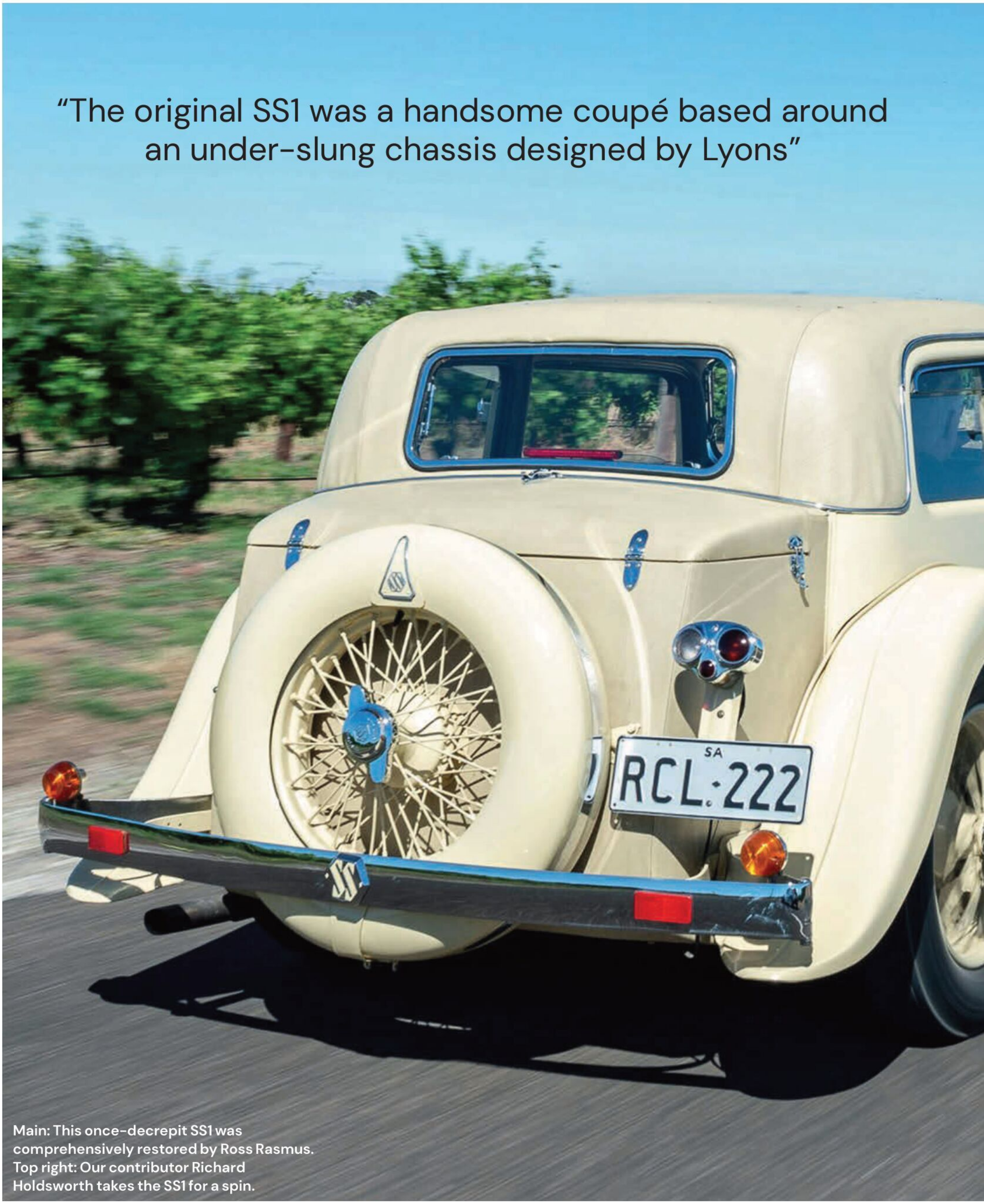
The SS1 body style was revised that same year, while the engines were uprated with alloy cylinder heads and redesigned manifolds, helping to raise the car's top speed to 75mph. Then in 1934, the SS1 gained a new wide-track chassis and slightly enlarged Standard engines of 2143cc and 2663cc, while the body – now available in four different configurations – underwent yet another restyle. In this final form, the SS1 remained in production through to 1936.

CHANGE OF PLAN

The car I'm experiencing courtesy of the Lindner Collection was built on April 16th 1934, with records showing a factory dispatch date of May 8th. It was given chassis number 247766 and body number 3480. The car was originally intended for a customer in Austria and was therefore fitted with an odometer in kilometres, although in the end it was purchased by a Mrs N.C. De Andria, who gave her address as 'c/o The National Provincial Bank, London'.

After just two years, however, this SS1 did get to leave its country of origin, following a visit to London by

1934 SS1 IN AUSTRALIA



Main: This once-decrepit SS1 was comprehensively restored by Ross Rasmus. Top right: Our contributor Richard Holdsworth takes the SS1 for a spin.

Eric Hamilton of Hamilton Wines, whose vineyard was based in South Australia. It must have been a successful trip, as he came across the SS1 for sale and immediately took a fancy; a deal was struck and later that year the car arrived in Australia, where it was issued with the registration number 6771 – which it carried until joining the Lindner Collection. The car still sported it original cream paintwork at that time (the official name was Buttercup), but over subsequent decades it was treated to various different colour schemes.

Hamilton sold the SS1 to a Dr Cliff Downing after a few years, and in 1942 it was acquired by Don Grant, who operated a small engineering company in Kent Town, Adelaide. It was he who then painted the car dark blue, as the original factory colour wasn't available during the war years. He replaced the car's mechanical brakes with hydraulics in 1952, using a Ford V8 one-and-one-eighth-inch master cylinder and Humber Hawk wheel cylinders, and a full-flow oil filter was also fitted.

ENGINE ISSUES

The SS1 was bought by one Philip Atkinson in 1959, by which time it had covered in excess of 200,000 kilometres – an impressive achievement for any pre-war model, let alone one offering such spectacular value within its market sector. When two conrods failed, however, Atkinson wrote to Jaguar in England, only to be told that the original conrods were aluminium and should have been replaced every 100,000 miles, as they were likely to suffer metal fatigue. He went on to buy a Standard engine from a breaker's yard and had it rebuilt with machined pistons, rings, conrods and the crankshaft, along with new bearings, valves and springs. Unfortunately though, the rebuilt engine had a consistent oil leak

1934 SS1 IN AUSTRALIA

that was traced to the back main bearing, Philip's theory being that the machine shop had grooved the crankshaft or had ground off an oil throwing ring.

Atkinson also had the SS1 reupholstered at that stage, as the original leather was well past its best, and the car's floor was replaced. Following a repaint in British Racing Green and with the car running well, he then set out on a drive that most people (even Australians) would think twice about: a 3500-mile round trip to Cairns in Queensland. For readers who aren't well versed in the geography of Australia, this expedition is from the south of the country's mainland to virtually the top – think of it as four trips from London to Edinburgh – without a single motorway and not much tarmac either, as many country roads of the 1960s were 'dirt' affairs with potholes being a constant hazard. Not surprisingly, the SS1's front suspension suffered and its intrepid owner had to resort to welding the steering drop arm as a temporary measure in order to get back home.

As he was heading overseas in 1961, Philip Atkinson put the SS1 on blocks and covered its entire bodywork with a layer of grease – not the most elegant way of preventing rust but one that seems to have worked. He left the car in the custodianship of his father, who subsequently sold it (with agreement from Philip) to a Mr R. O'Malley. Just a year later, however, it changed hands once again, this time selling to a Mrs Mary Jervis, who lived in the small township of Kadina on the Yorke Peninsula, again in South Australia. The intention was for her husband, Bob, to totally refurbish the Jaguar but the task was never completed, and so in 1982 he advertised it as a restoration project. This caught the attention of Ross Rasmus, and the car returned – albeit in bits and pieces and on two trailers – back to the city of Adelaide.

MAJOR RENOVATION

Ross recalls how he presented the SS1 to his wife, who was not impressed. "You've bought that?" In fact, the car wasn't as bad as it might have appeared at first. The bodywork was fairly sound, as was much of the woodwork; and the engine and most of the running gear were also in surprisingly good condition for a survivor of this vintage. And so Ross set to work, booking himself on to a panel-beating course and buying an industrial sewing machine once he'd been to night school to learn reupholstery skills. He was determined to complete the restoration with minimal outside help, and remarkably he managed the entire process – working mostly weekends – in just five years. Ross says: "I did the whole project from start to finish, apart from the last coat of paint." As for the upholstery and headlining, Ross located another SS1, took all the necessary dimensions, studied how it was put together and copied it exactly when he got home.

Having completed the work to his satisfaction, and spurred on by the car's apparent ability to take on long

1934 SS1 IN AUSTRALIA

journeys, Ross calculated that a trip to Coonawarra – some 200 miles south-east of Adelaide – would be perfectly achievable. And indeed, apart from water ingress caused by heavy rain, the trip went smoothly enough for the SS1's latest owner to consider more of a challenge, deciding to head to Darwin – the capital city of the Northern Territory – some 1881 miles away. The idea was to mark the anniversary of a Jaguar XK averaging 100mph in a timed run, a milestone that was to be celebrated along with other Jaguar owners and friends – Don Evans in a 1948 MkIV drop-head coupé, Graham Butler in a similar car and Jim Temby in a 1950 MkV.

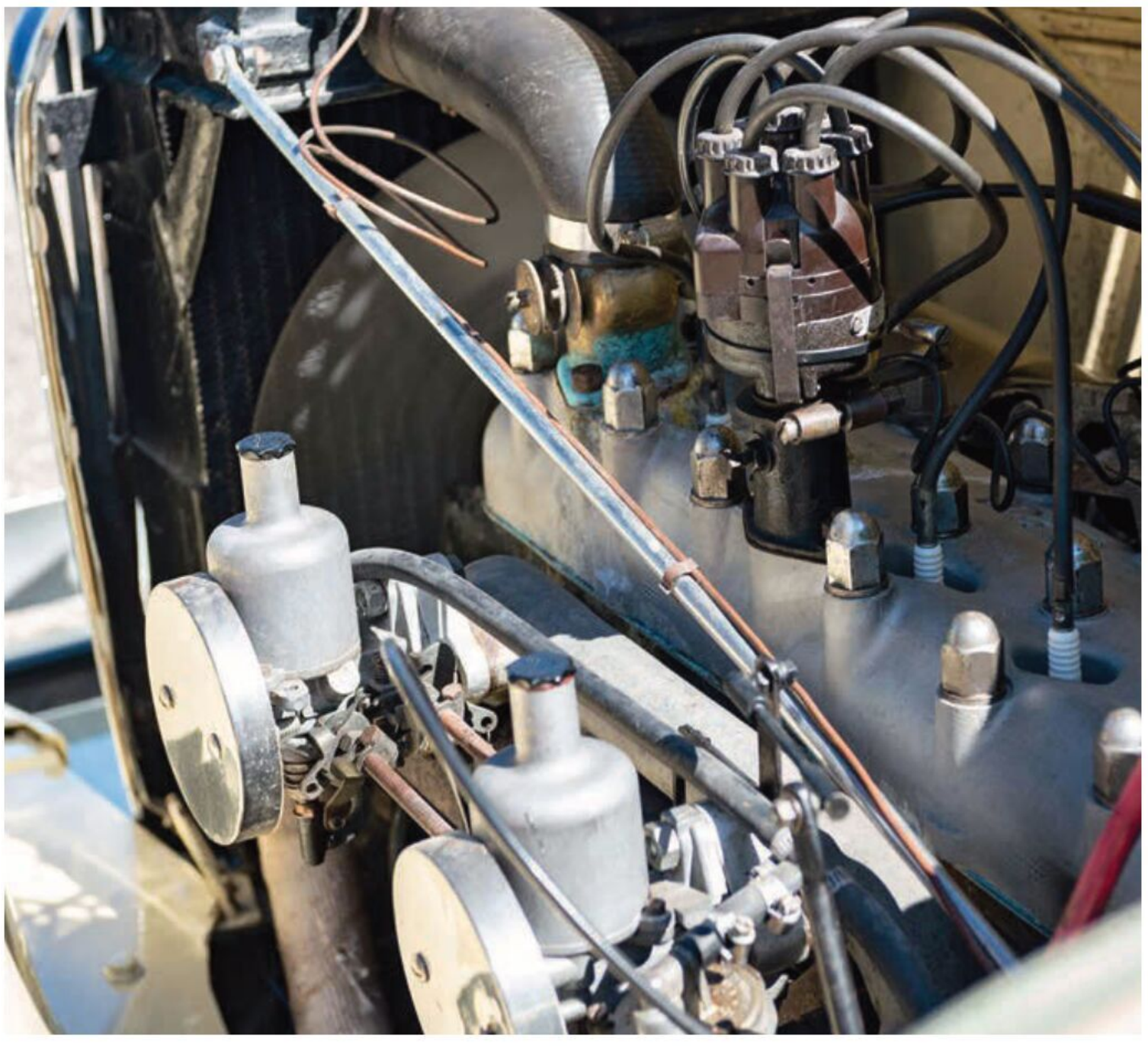
The road from Adelaide, through Alice Springs and on to Darwin had been laid to bitumen by this time, but the heat can be searing – and, of course, you won't find a service station around every corner. Even today the authorities warn the intrepid driver to take a good tool kit and spares, such as tyres, fan belt, spark plugs and other items that are likely to be needed in such inhospitable conditions. Oh, and water – not only for the driver and his passengers but also for their thirsty car. Then when you finally get to Alice Springs, you're only halfway there... and the difficult bit is yet to come.

Some 400 miles out of Alice Springs, heading north – and still with over 500 miles to Darwin – a distinct 'knock' was heard emanating from the SS1's engine, and Ross was forced to stop. The initial examination provided little information, and it wasn't until the sump was subsequently removed and the cylinder head and gearbox were out that the source of the problem was found. A bolt that secures the clutch pressure plate had become loose, striking the bell housing on every rotation! The errant bolt was duly tightened, reinforcing the importance to Ross of bringing along a comprehensive tool kit. No other problems were encountered and Darwin was reached a few days later, while the trip back home proved to be problem-free.

When Ross heard that the Jaguar National Rally was to be held in Perth the following year, he reckoned that a mere 3000-mile round trip – some 400 miles shorter than the Darwin experience – would be little more than a hop, skip and a jump. This time there was a larger group of Jaguar owners taking part, all camping beside their cars in desert conditions, cooking meals and sleeping in the tents they'd brought with them. None of the cars in the group encountered any mechanical problems, a tribute to Jaguar if ever there was one.

Back to 2021, meanwhile, and my first experience with this well-travelled SS1. Just as Ross Rasmus and the car's numerous previous owners found, it's a well-behaved machine out on the road. And although there's no power-assisted steering (and up front is a heavy six-cylinder engine), there's no need

“The SS1 was in the hands of Philip Atkinson by 1959, by which time it had covered in excess of 200,000 kilometres”



The SS1’s six-cylinder engine still endows the car with sprightly performance.

for undue effort when pointing the nose of the car into a tight corner. The clutch also feels relatively light and the gears are smooth and easy to engage. With an estimated 75-80bhp (at 4000rpm) when new, this SS1 even feels quick off the mark. My brief but memorable experience with this special survivor was one I’ll remember for a long time to come.

These days, of course, the SS1 is part of the outstanding collection of Jaguars put together by the late Carl Lindner, a man of vision who spent much of his adult life seeking out rare and wonderful examples of the marque. Ross sold this particular car to Carl in 2014, since then it has continued to be cherished and maintained impeccably, as well as being on permanent display in the museum. With such an exciting career having been enjoyed over many decades, it’s good to know this SS1’s future is assured.

Buying Grandad's Jaguar

A personal connection turns a lovely MkIV Jaguar into something a whole lot more special. We took a closer look, and took it for a drive.

Words: Ian Seabrook

On the walls of Jaguar Land Rover's new Classic Works building is Sir William Lyons' own quote "The car is the closest thing we will ever create, to something that is alive."

We all know this to be true. Cars are much more than mere conveyances. They transport us to another time, and we become fascinated with a car's history. How did it get to be the cherished classic of today? Who were the original owners? Sometimes, the connection runs deeper, a personal link that is unique. This adds an extra frisson of enjoyment, and that's exactly what we have here. For, not a million miles away from Jaguar's Coventry home, Mick and Lucy own the very Jaguar that Lucy's grandfather owned when it was brand new, way back in 1948.

The story gets more interesting though, as that first owner was Arthur Whittaker. That's a name that'll only ring bells with a few confirmed Jaguar history buffs, but it is an important one. Whittaker, never really one for fame, was no less that Lyons' right-hand man for much of Jaguar's history, right back to the Swallow Sidecar days in Blackpool up to Whittaker's retirement in the British Leyland era of 1969.

Whittaker began as a salesman in 1923, terrifying his family by setting off on great adventures to promote the sidecars around the UK. Of course, this meant jumping onto his motorbike and taking a demonstrator sidecar to be viewed and admired where potential sales were thought to be lurking. In time, he moved to more of a purchasing role, where his prowess at getting value for money would certainly have been appreciated by Lyons!

In 1927, Whittaker became chief assistant to Lyons, with the company now branching out into building bodies for cars. When SS moved to Coventry in 1928, Whittaker came with it. There were regular trips back north, which meant Whittaker was often something of a taxi for other employees and their families, charging ten shillings a trip in his Bullnose Morris according to Andrew Whyte's book on Jaguar. Whittaker joined the board in 1935

By 1947, Whittaker was general manager, and this allowed him to order a top-of-the-range 3.5-litre saloon. His order seems to have been placed in December 1947, with the new car delivered on 12th January. Lucy states, "Buying the car made me dig through all the old notes and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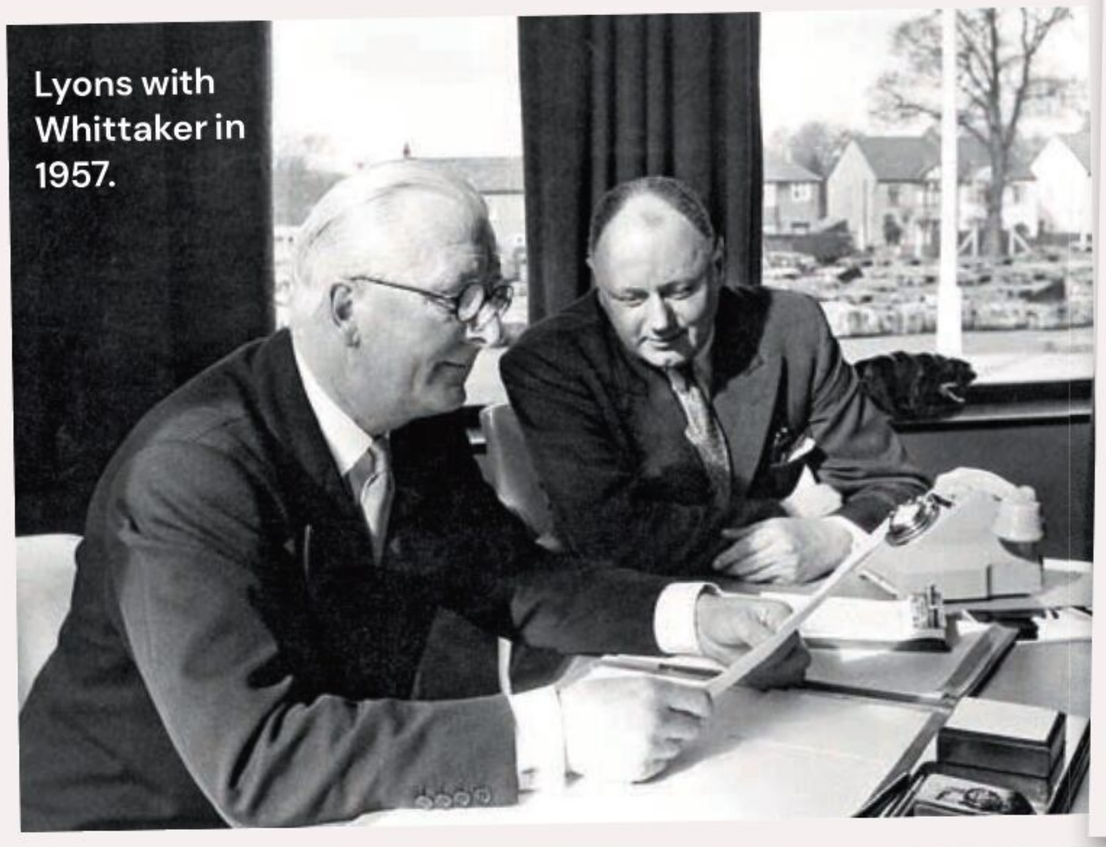
JAGUAR MKIV



Lyons with Whittaker in 1957.

The Jaguar board in 1961. Whittaker third left, next to Lyons.

letters that have been passed down to me. Grandad alludes to a special Christmas present in 1947. It's lovely to think the car might have been it."

Not that Mary would necessarily have been too enthralled by it. "She did drive, and drove ambulances during the war. But an old family friend told me she wasn't very impressed by it, and found it too large."

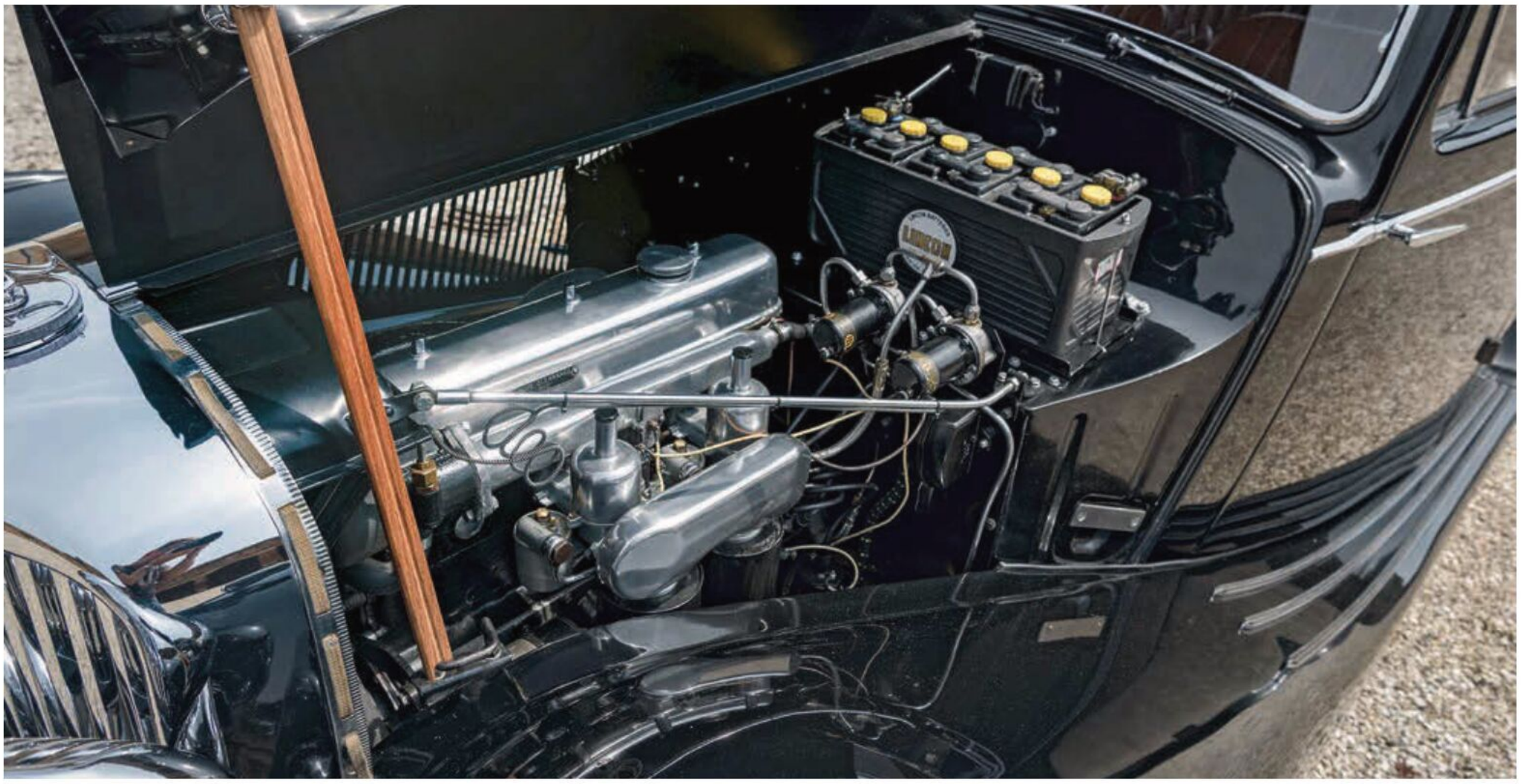
As was the nature of company vehicles, Whittaker only owned the car for two years, which was then sold on. Standard practice. It travelled greatly, including a spell on the Isle of Wight, before ending up in Oxford by the early 1970s. Roll forward another decade and the car was in dire need of restoration. The then owner gamely made a start, but was forced to concede that it was rather more than he could realistically take on. After 20 years with little progress, it was decided to send the car away for restoration

The 3.5-Litre was therefore entrusted to David Davenport, an early SS/Jaguar specialist who carried out a thorough restoration. This was completed in 2004, with the owner collecting it from Bedfordshire, before driving it up to his new home in Edinburgh. That's quite a shakedown run.

Having covered little mileage, the car passed through more hands before coming up for sale at Historics of Brooklands.

FAMILY HISTORY

Whittaker's only child, Tom, enjoyed the sort of childhood we all dream about. He would always travel in the



3.5-litre engine still a warmed-over Standard unit, but with automatic chokes. Wood bonnet stay a recent, and useful addition.

Below: Bill Heynes (left) and Whittaker flank American actor Randolph Scott in his new XK120.

Above: Tom Whittaker's Le Mans photo from 1953. 'Lofty' England holds out the pit board, while Whittaker consults Lyons.

finest Jaguars, fresh from the factory, and enjoyed trips to Le Mans – he took some fabulous photos of the 1953 race, when he was just 19 years old. We're grateful to be able to reproduce one of them here.

By late 1949, the 3.5-Litre had been replaced, possibly by a MkV judging by family photos. Move on a few years and Tom himself had married, with three daughters from his first marriage (and a subsequent daughter from his second marriage further down the line). Lucy recalls, "Our grandparents doted on us. We were the daughters they never had themselves. I remember being picked up from school in these lovely Jaguars. I wasn't very interested, but I do remember the excitement when grandad brought home some drawings of the new XJ saloon. I was only about ten, but I remember them being spread out on the dining room table, and my father was very excited." Lucy's father would not go into the motor trade however, being drawn into law instead, and being one of the founding members of what would become the Green Party – somewhat at odds with thirsty Jaguars!

Arthur Whittaker became deputy chairman in 1961, but poor health led to his retirement in 1969. He died in 1977. "His sixty-a-day habit can't have helped," admits Lucy. "In most of the photos we have, he seems to have a cigarette in his hand." That includes a fascinating set of photographs from Whittaker's retirement party, where this quiet man seems rather uncomfortable with all the attention. Lyons summed up Whittaker nicely, describing his contribution to the company as 'immeasurable.'

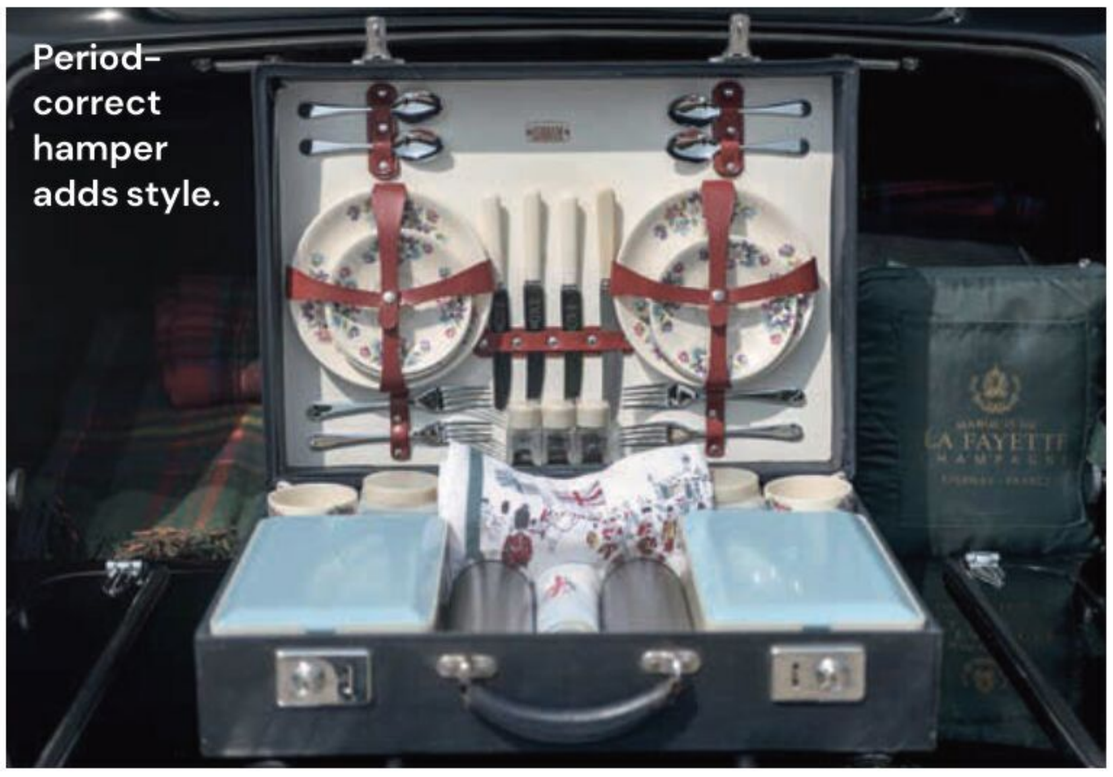
The link with Jaguar was lost, until a chance encounter at a party. "We met someone at a neighbour's gathering who was interested in our family's link with Jaguar. I thought I'd better do some research, so did an online search for "Arthur Whittaker Jaguar." I was amazed when his old car came up as the first result, as it was being sold by auction."

Lucy contacted Historics, who invited Lucy and her sisters to see the car. "It was wonderful to actually see my grandad's car," recalls Lucy. "We had our photos taken with the car, so it was great publicity for Historics. It was just so beautiful and a plan began to form with the idea of buying it. That didn't last long, as Mick

Lucy with her grandad's MkIV.

3.5-Litre simply oozes style, like the best coachbuilders, but all done in-house.

Author Ian Seabrook enjoys a spell at the wheel..



Period-correct hamper adds style.

measured up our garage, and there was no way the car would fit."

Lucy's husband Mick, who had not travelled down to the auction, gave the problem some thought. "If I took a few inches off all of the cupboards, I thought the car would just fit. Lucy called later that day, and told me how gorgeous the car was, and how much she loved it. I told her she'd better buy it then."

Lucy had never bid in an auction before, and was kept on tenterhooks all day. "It was lot 203, I'll always remember that. It was one of the last lots, so it was after half-past three by the time it came up. We had been sussed, so several people knew what the car meant to us. I think the bidding started at around £56,000, but quietened down at £60,000. I bid £61,000, then £63,000. I think I was against a telephone bidder though, so it was all so slow with large pauses between the bids. Eventually, the hammer fell at £69,440, with the premium on top of course. Other bidders congratulated us. I just said, "she's coming home."

With the car purchased, there was now the small matter of getting it home. Mick takes up the narrative. "The car was shipped up to Northampton, and we thought we'd drive it home from there. It was terrifying. I've not driven a car this old before, and I thought there was something wrong with the steering. Trying to drive through the roadworks on the M1, with the narrow lanes, was scary stuff."

Thankfully, all went well, and Mick has now covered a happy 300 or so miles in the car. Lucy says she is waiting to have a go herself, although

"Gorgeous woodwork is backed up by brown leather to create that unforgettable old car smell"

New in 1935, the famous Jaguar was fast gaining a reputation for pace and style.

Rear seat retains its original leather.

she understandably has some trepidation. This is a family heirloom, so there is certainly some pressure to keep it in fine fettle.

Rightly so, for as soon as photographer Chris Frosin and I set eyes upon it, we involuntarily burst into huge grins. The 3.5-Litre is so well proportioned that its sheer scale isn't immediately apparent. It really does only just fit in the garage. It's a good job Lucy hadn't traced a MkVII!

We take the car to the former stable block at Stoneleigh Abbey, where the owners kindly gave us permission to shoot. Here, the car looks perfectly at home. It is stately, and classy, but also undeniably beautiful. For a design rooted in 1930s thinking, it's remarkably low-slung, with those purposeful haunches adding some proper menace, though not at the cost of grace. It looks built for speed, and the 3.5-Litre could deliver it – more than 90mph was possible.

What's most extraordinary is that these beautiful Jaguars were styled in-house. They easily rivalled some of the most beautiful bodies fitted to Bentley 3.5-Litre sports saloons, but the experience of the established coachbuilders was not required. This was the start of Jaguar's unrivalled prowess in the art of the sport saloon. No-one did it better, yet the SS Jaguars were not horrendously expensive either.

As Chris takes the photos, we have plenty of time to simply take in those lines. It just gets more attractive the more you look at it. Black suits it perfectly, setting off the brightwork in a truly delightful manner. Photos done, it's time for a drive.

JAGUAR MKIV

DRIVING THE BLACK BEAUTY

Just like Mick in his first drive, I'm certainly feeling the pressure as I swing the suicide door rearward and slide myself into the cosy driving position. As with most pre-war designs, the body sweeps inwards to cramp the footwell. There's more space in the rear for sure. The enormous steering wheel is thrust at your chest, with the spindly gearlever a bit of a stretch away. But, the ambience in here is just majestic. Gorgeous woodwork is backed up by brown leather to create that unforgettable old car smell. "It takes me right back," says Lucy, even though she never knew this exact car as a child. It is the aroma of the past.

The speedometer sits to the left of the steering wheel, and is easy to keep an eye on. Further left, the tachometer swings the 'wrong' way, and redlines at 4500rpm. I turn the ignition on and give the starter button a prod, which enourages the Standard-derived straight-six to quickly fire up. A quick 'brum' and she's alive, with a stunningly smooth tickover.

The Moss gearbox has a typical long throw into first, the handbrake is dropped and we're away. The large steering wheel is very necessary, for the steering has great weight to it, even with low gearing. My arms are twirling as we drive over a narrow bridge. Mick really is keen to repeat the fear of his first drive! Thankfully, I judge it correctly, for the low driving position leaves you entirely unable to see the extremities of this car.

Speed builds as I make my way through the gears, which is a sweet, precise change. For a Moss gearbox. It's surprisingly quiet too, without undue noise in first gear, just a gentle whine from 'box and axle as we accelerate. 50mph comes up briskly, even without unruly throttle behaviour, and the car will sit at 60mph very happily indeed. That said, it feels like an overdrive would be handy, even though the tachometer shows a mere 2500rpm. This engine is all about torque, pulling smoothly from as little as 600rpm in a way modern engines just don't.

I can see how the steering would have caused terror for Mick. To those unused to older cars, it is a touch vague, and needs a gentle hand to maintain a straight course. It gently tugs and pulls this way and that, but you soon learn to keep your movements smooth. It doesn't turn in with the alacrity of an XK120, but then these cars retain simple beam axles front and rear. The Jaguar handling revolution was still on the drawing board when this car was built. That's fine though. We've got the windscreen open, the sunroof back and my three passengers seem to be enjoying a more gentle pace. There's no sense in testing the grip of the tyres.

The brakes are reassuring, responding well to a gentle push. That's handy when Mick points out a humpback bridge approaching. Best not test those leaf springs too harshly. I adore the trafficators, which have been allied to flashing indicators at each corner. Cleverly, the lamps within the trafficators also manage to flash, though most people these days probably won't spot them anyway.

Overall, there's a nice level of performance. You won't be getting in anyone's way, but you can enjoy the engine's power without being anti-social. This feels a very fine way to travel indeed, and I'm truly grateful for the experience.

But, for all my experiences, that's nothing compared to Lucy's personal connection with this car. I can say what I like about the driving experience, but the real magic comes when you see Lucy's enjoyment of this car, exacerbated by the knowledge that her grandad owned this car when it was brand new, almost 70 years ago, and her own father would have caressed the unrestored leather of the rear bench. It's truly lovely to see, and this link has encouraged a couple who wouldn't have previously considered owning such an elderly car that there's real enjoyment to be had with a classic Jaguar. Beautiful.

“It doesn't turn with the alacrity of an XK120, but then these cars retain simple beam axles front and rear”

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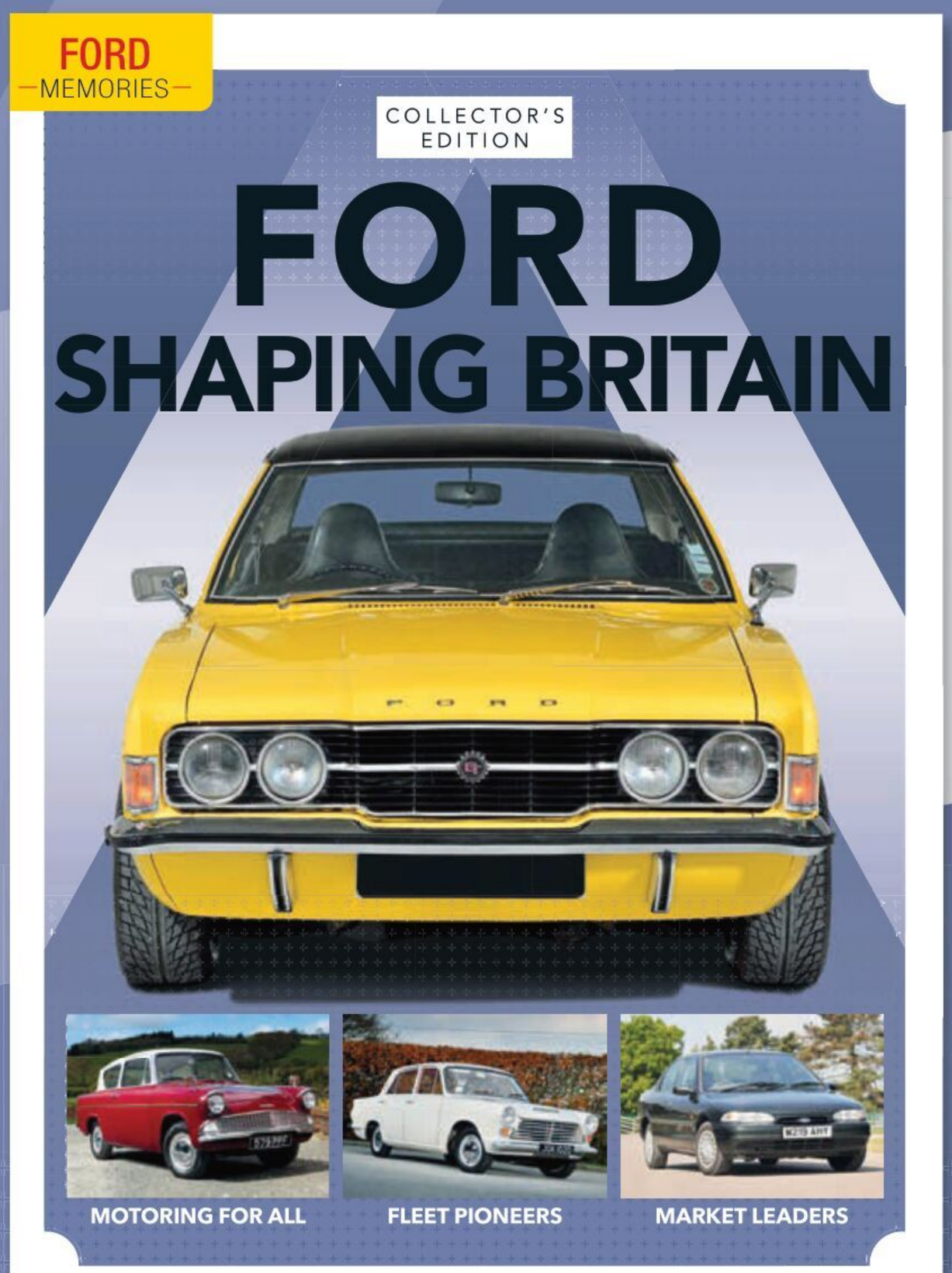

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XK120–150

The story of a sporting legend

During its thirteen-year career, the original XK became the proverbial classic in its own lifetime, famed for offering class-leading power and performance at a highly competitive price. We chart the history of this all-time sporting great.

Words: Paul Wager

Anyone who has experienced a sobering moment in the ruins of the old cathedral will agree that not much good came from the Coventry Blitz. Amidst the chaos of war, however, were planted the seeds of what would become the very foundation of the modern Jaguar brand. As with so many car factories, the war years had seen Jaguar's manufacturing facilities turned over to military contracts, making sidecars, trailers and aeroplane parts. The constant risk of aerial bombardment, however, meant that staff were required to spend one night a week on fire-watching duties to raise the alarm should bombs be seen to drop on the Jaguar factory or surrounding houses, and the ever-efficient William Lyons ensured that the time was made productive.

"He turned these sessions into a kind of 'design seminar' for what SS would do when car production could be resumed after the war," recalled former chief development engineer Walter Hassan in his autobiography.

With camp beds set up in a small office, Claude Bailey, William Heynes, Hassan and Lyons would discuss engine requirements for the post-war cars Lyons was already sketching out and mocking up in spare moments.

At that time, the engines used in SS Jaguars were a mixture of four- and six-cylinder units all supplied by Standard, fitted with the firm's own overhead-valve conversion. Unsurprisingly, Lyons' love-hate relationship with Standard boss Sir John Black made him keen to produce his own engines and it was this that was discussed during the night-time sessions. Hassan recalled in his autobiography that although Lyons was keen on the more prestigious six-cylinder design, the team was concerned that fuel prices and vehicle taxation would be crippling in the post-war period and so a four-cylinder engine would be the volume seller.

The taxation system used at the time still related to cylinder bore size, and initially it was thought that 2.5 litres would be the maximum that customers would be able to afford. Regardless of size though, Hassan recalled that Lyons was insistent the new engine would have to look the part when the bonnet was opened.

The difficulties of getting non-essential engineering work done during the period meant that it was some time before the first prototypes could be constructed, and it was the four-cylinder units which were worked up first. Hedging his bets, Lyons meanwhile nipped round the corner to Standard and bought the tooling for the six-cylinder engines from Black, so that post-war production of existing cars could continue.

Jaguar's 'X' for experimental codes began at this time, with the first prototype engines developed under code names XA to XE before the XF emerged, which was closest in spirit to the engine that would see production, including the chain-driven twin-cam layout and

THE 'XK100'

The XK engine had originally been envisaged as a family of four- and six-cylinder units due to predictions of heavy taxation on fuel and car ownership in the post-war years. Indeed, the first running prototypes were four-cylinder versions, but when the XK120 received such a positive reception, Lyons realised that a four-cylinder car was unnecessary.

This was no doubt a relief to the engineering team, with Walter Hassan recounting in his autobiography that although a four-cylinder version was developed for intended production, refinement was an issue. Hassan describes problems with the secondary vibration inherent in a big four-cylinder engine, creating harshness throughout the structure; but since the four-cylinder car was unlikely to sell in sufficient numbers to make a useful profit, the idea was dropped.

Prototype examples of the engine that would have powered an 'XK100' still exist. Hassan recalled a 2.0-litre version that was tuned to a reliable 146bhp to achieve 176.69mph in the Gardner Special.

XK120-150

hemispherical combustion chambers. The XJ came next, with prototypes running in 1946, and was regarded by Hassan as being essentially a pre-production version of what would become the XK. Sensibly, the engine had been designed as one of the world's first 'modular' units, so that four- and six-cylinder versions of the same design could be produced on the same tooling and with many shared components.

The first of the XK engines was run in October 1945, with a capacity of 1790cc, which eventually produced a worthy 83bhp. The six-cylinder version followed, initially at 3182cc and then the production capacity of 3442cc, in which form it produced 142bhp.

Developing an all-new engine at a time when company finances had been hit hard by the war years didn't leave abundant resources for other activities, and so development of the all-new car which Lyons had wanted to debut after the war had to be side-lined. This explains why the MkV that was launched in 1948 still used a body-on-frame design and the old Standard engine, although underneath it had the new torsion bar suspension that the firm had been working on for a decade and which would underpin later sports cars.

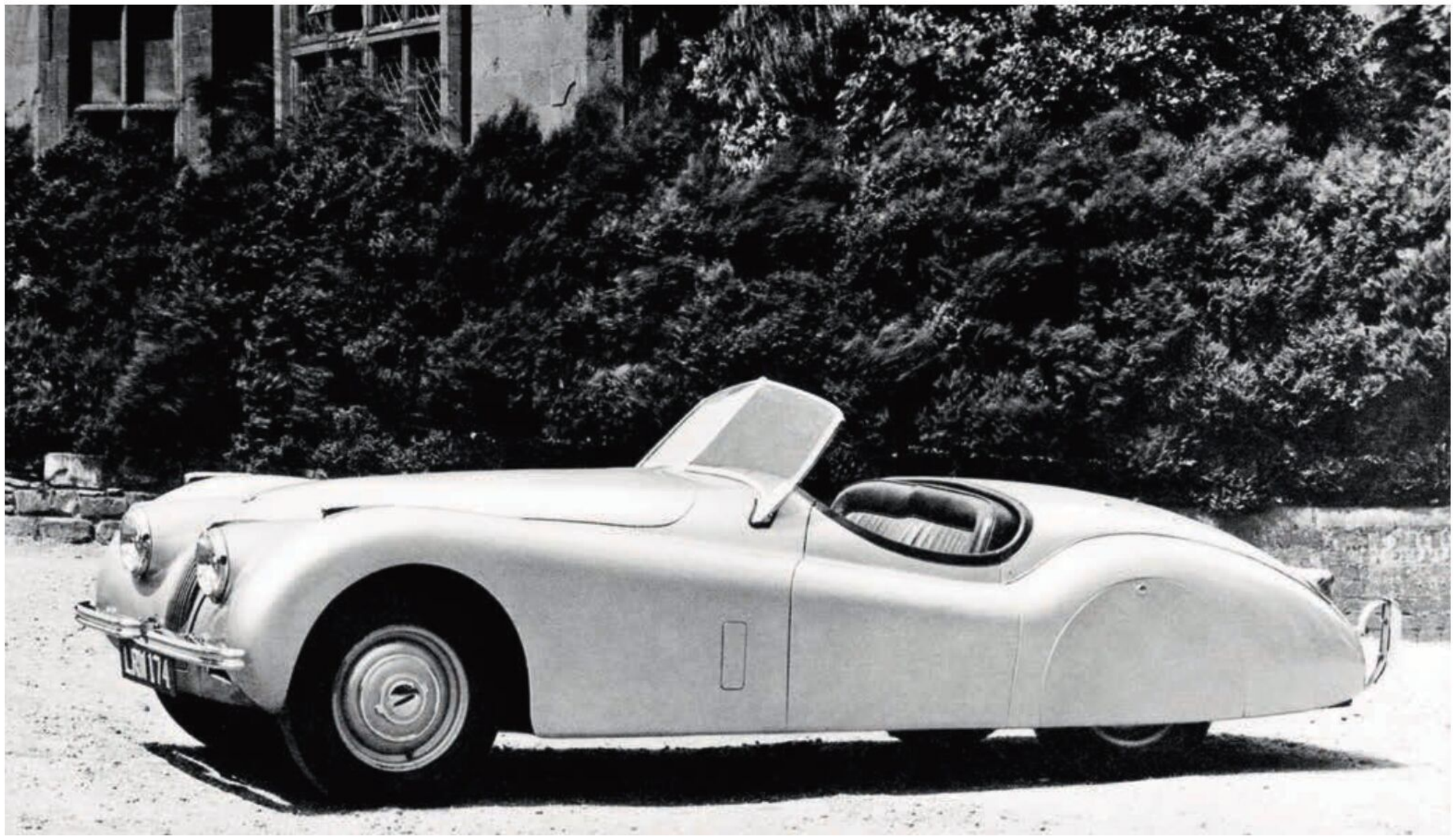
The all-new car that Lyons had in mind was a big, imposing saloon; but although the so-called MkVII was already in development, it wouldn't be ready for production until 1950. He was unwilling to tarnish the glamour of his new high-tech engine by fitting it into the relatively old-fashioned MkV, but didn't want to miss the chance to promote the hi-tech new engine.

The first post-war British motor show was scheduled for Earl's Court in October 1948 and Lyons was keen to have something glamorous to exhibit. The solution was to create a new sports car, the company's first since the demise of the SS100 a decade earlier. Lyons would later claim that the basic body shape was arrived at within just a couple of weeks and that it would remain little altered from that first attempt. Using a shortened MkV chassis and Lyons' mock-up, the first body was constructed by hand in aluminium at Abbey Panels; with the new XK engine fitted, the sportster was previewed to the press on October 20th before making its motor show debut at Earl's Court a week later. Incredibly, the new Jaguar sports car had taken less than six weeks to complete.

"The newcomer went by the name of XK120 Super Sports, the XK referring to the engine and the '120' its supposed top speed"

The XK120 made its public debut at the 1948 Earl's Court Motor Show.

XK120–150



The sleek new car went by the name of XK120 Super Sports, the XK referring to the engine and the '120' its supposed top speed. For the 90,000 visitors to the first motor show in many years, the XK120 was a sensation, providing racing car performance to buyers in the real world: at £998 plus tax, the XK120 was pitched at successful professionals rather than millionaires.

MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Rather unusually, the normally prescient Lyons was taken entirely by surprise at the rapturous reception the new car received, with the firm's newly-appointed US importer offering there and then to take all of the initial production cars. Since the XK120 had been worked up largely as a kind of show concept, however, the idea of large-scale production hadn't been properly considered; indeed, a run of just 200 cars had been envisaged. This explains why even as the show was still in full swing at Earl's Court, Lyons was already in Cowley negotiating with Pressed Steel

RECORD BREAKER

The XK120 gained its name from Jaguar's claim that it was good for 120mph straight out of the showroom – an impressive boast for the late 1940s. In order to justify the marketing hype, however, the firm needed to perform an independently timed run – and in those pre-motorway days, there were few stretches of tarmac in Britain that were long enough and straight enough.

The solution was to ship a car over to Belgium, where a newly opened stretch of motorway between Jabbeke and Aalter was ideal for the job and had already been used by other makers for top speed runs. Curiously, the Belgian authorities seemed happy to close the public road for such events.

The car used was the second left-hand drive XK120 off the line, essentially standard (allegedly) but with a higher 3.27:1 rear axle, full-length undertray and spats over the rear wheels. It had

been decided that development engineer Walter Hasan would drive the car, but he fell ill on the day and so Jaguar test driver, Ron Sutton, was substituted. With Sutton taking a 2.5-mile run-up before tripping the timing gear by breaking a thread stretched across the road, the Royal Belgian Automobile Club timed the car at 126.448mph. With a tonneau cover added over the passenger seat and the windscreen and side screens replaced by a small metal deflector in front of the driver, this improved to 132.596mph – making it the fastest production vehicle in the world.

The XK140 offered an array of useful upgrades over its predecessor.

to produce a steel version of the aluminium body. When the XK120 was displayed at New York's 1949 motor show, demand only increased further, yet cars were leaving the Foleshill factory at the rate of just six a week.

Moving from hand-formed aluminium panels over a wooden frame to a production-ready steel body was an involved process, and the final aluminium-bodied car wouldn't be produced until May 1st, 1950. The first of the steel-bodied cars was produced in April 1950, and it's at this point that the XK120 production story can be considered to start. The bodyshell was heavily re-engineered for steel construction, using a stronger aluminium bonnet but retaining an ash frame for the boot lid.

Where the show car had used a cut-down version of the MkV chassis, the production cars used a more sophisticated development of it. The lighter weight of the XK120 meant that the heavy cross-bracing of the saloon car's chassis could be removed, while the chassis also tapered towards the seating area before being raised over the rear axle. By this time, a metal-roofed version of the XK120 was also being developed, with the first prototype completed by April 1950. The coupé was launched at the 1951 Geneva show, at which point the stark interior of the original was livened up with a walnut veneer dashboard. Despite the XK120's sensational speed, Jaguar was well aware that there were potential owners who didn't want the discomfort of an open car and so the coupé was altogether more civilised, offering features such as proper wind-up windows in place of the original's crude side screens.

Meanwhile, as the poor quality post-war 'pool' petrol was being phased out and higher-octane fuel was becoming available once more, the potential for even higher performance from the XK engine became apparent, with Jaguar keen to offer suitable modifications. High-compression pistons took compression up to 8:1 and 9:1, while a revised distributor and carburation – as well as a higher-lift camshaft and twin exhausts – were also offered. In Europe this package of upgrades was marketed as the XK120 SE ('Special Equipment'), in which form the car was good for 180bhp, while in America it was called the 'M'. The engine upgrades could be complemented by stiffer front torsion bars and seven-leaf rear springs which reduced body roll by 20 per cent, as well as a range of revised axle rations, aero screens, racing-style bucket seats and an undershield and tonneau cover in the style of the 120mph Jabbeke car.

The success of the coupé encouraged the development of a so-called drop-head coupé (DHC) as a more luxurious version of the open two-seater (OTS) original. The lower half of the body was shared with the fixed-head coupé, with the DHC using pivoted winding windows and a more luxurious padded and lined hood than the basic fabric cover of the OTS.

XK EVOLUTION

In modern car industry terms, the XK140 of 1954 would be regarded as

XK120–150

the mid-life facelift, debuting some five years after the original car. By then the competition had started to catch up, especially in the crucial US market, where Chevrolet had launched its Corvette in 1953. Although the XK140 may appear at first glance very similar to the XK120, substantial changes were made to the body structure. Chief among these was the requirement for increased legroom inside the cabin, which involved moving the engine and bulkhead three inches forward, while a universal joint was used in the steering column to present the wheel at a less awkward angle. That wheel was also now connected to a steering rack rather than the box of the earlier car.

As with the XK120, the XK140 was offered in two-seater, coupé and drophead coupé body styles, but the fixed-head coupé received more substantial alterations than

the open cars. The bulkhead was moved even further forwards (by five inches), allowing the front seats to be positioned forward enough for the car to accommodate a pair of small '+2' rear seats. A surprisingly modern touch was the addition of a load-through panel from the boot area, something that would today be marketed as a ski-hatch. The entire roofline was also revised, being raised slightly and taken further back into the rear deck area, while the B-post was made more upright and the windscreen also moved forwards by three inches. With wider doors – resulting in shorter wings – the result was a much more practical car which offered seating for four (well, two adults and two children) as well as easier access.

The drop-head coupé also gained the two small rear seats, with a revised hood shape to accommodate rear passengers and a counterbalancing spring arrangement supposedly allowing the hood to be raised with a single hand.

Elsewhere, the car received further styling alterations in the transition from 120 to 140: the boot lid was shortened and a new rear panel added to carry the number plate, while new lights were also fitted to comply with the latest legislation. The bigger headlamps were accompanied by flashing orange indicators, which would become a requirement in the UK from 1954. A die-cast alloy grille was also used, which would mirror the style of the Mk1 saloon, while larger tail lamps were mounted on chrome plinths to meet UK requirements for all cars to carry two stop/tail lamps and two reflectors at the rear.

More chrome was added, including a medallion celebrating Jaguar's Le Mans wins and external handles were also revised. Larger bumpers were fitted following feedback from US owners clearly bothered by the limited protection offered against Detroit's land yachts by the flimsy but elegant originals.

On the mechanical front, moving the engine forwards allowed an overdrive to be added as well as an automatic option. The engine range was revised too, with the basic 3.4-litre powerplant being essentially the old SE specification offered on the XK120, now good for 190bhp. The SE's uprated torsion bars were also adopted, while the lever arm dampers at the rear were replaced with telescopic items. A new-spec SE option was available on the XK140, using the cylinder head from the C-Type and twin SUs, pushing power to 210bhp.

The XK140 was a useful improvement over the XK120, although the repositioned engine was reckoned by some testers to increase understeer in spite of its improved straight-line stability. It was destined to be a short-lived model though, as in 1957 it would be replaced by the XK150. By then, the split windscreen style of the XK was looking old-fashioned, while even more cabin space was required in order to keep the car competitive.

XK150 ARRIVAL

Extensive work was performed to ascertain how much space could be liberated without altering the inner structure of the bodyshell or chassis, and it was decided that the upper body – the 'glasshouse' – could be widened by four inches, while a raised scuttle would create the perception of increased interior space as well as a better heater. The wider upper body was matched by a wider bonnet, which gained a raised centre filler very similar to the Morris Minor's (which was famously widened the same way at the last minute), while the wings were also reshaped

"An exciting addition to the XK150 range was made with the announcement of an 'S' model, which was good for 250bhp"

and raised to meet the higher scuttle. The revised upper edge of the wings was then reshaped to run horizontally into the door before sweeping up over the rear wheels to create the haunched look that would become such a feature of later Jaguars.

Slimmer pillars and a larger glass area allowed the changes to work well to create a car that felt far more spacious internally, and which from the outside looked more modern and streamlined. It was naturally the heaviest of all the traditional XK line, even though aluminium doors and bonnet were retained. To counter this, a revised cylinder head – the 'A Type' – was fitted to DHC and FHC version to boost power to 210bhp.

A drop-head coupé was launched at the same time as the fixed-head coupé and shared the majority of its panels, while the open two-seater – generally referred to simply as the roadster – wasn't finalised until March 1958. Part of the reason for this was the fire which famously swept through the Jaguar factory in February 1957, stretching resources to the limit.

The roadster was surprisingly quite different from the other two models, with the screen set further back, while the seats were moved backwards by four inches and – with no back seats – the rear deck extended to suit. For the first time, wind-up windows were fitted to the OTS, although it did use a simpler hood mechanism than the DHC. Inside, the dashboard was restyled, with a leathercloth covering and a padded top roll in a nod to safety considerations.

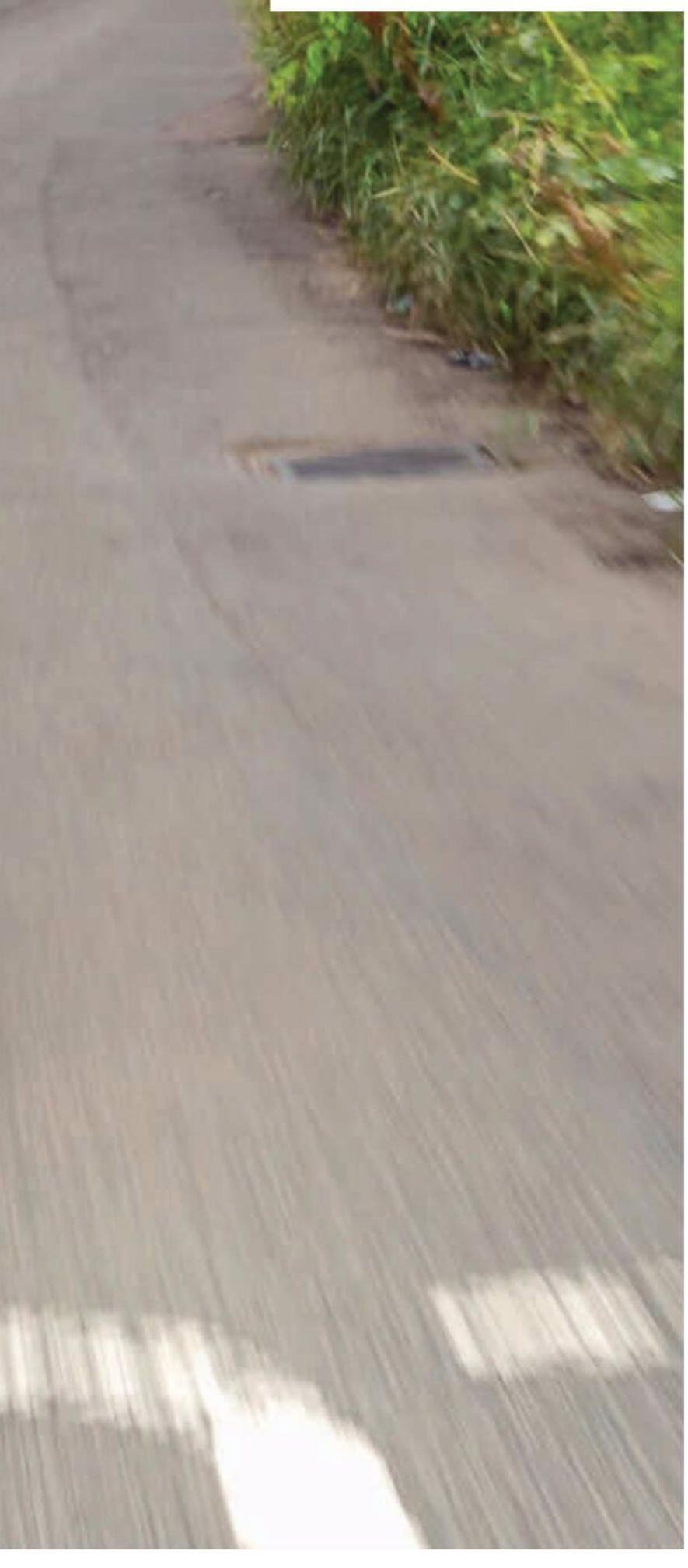
Mechanically, the big news with the XK150 was the fitment of disc brakes all round, the technology having been developed with the C-Type racers and adopted as a Jaguar signature.

In 1959, an exciting addition to the XK150 range was made with the announcement of an 'S' model, which added straight inlet ports to the cylinder head and, aided by triple SUs, was good for 250bhp. The ageing XK had suddenly gained new-found vigour, with the XK150S becoming overnight one of the fastest sports cars on the market.

By October of that year, the 3.8-litre version of the engine would be offered alongside the 3.4, with the bigger unit being available in both standard and 'S' spec. With 265bhp on tap, the performance figures were very modern: a 140mph top speed, with 60mph from standstill in just seven seconds.

All of this was impressive, of course, but the XK was by then in the autumn of its career. Indeed, by 1961 the XK150 would be eclipsed by its radically different successor, with the sensational new E-Type marking a completely new direction for Jaguar sports car style, embracing the future just as heartily as that original XK120 had done at Earl's Court in 1948.

JAGUAR C-TYPE RECREATION



Built to order

Fashioned from Jaguar's original blueprints, this highly authentic C-Type recreation boasts a fascinating past – and a successful racing career in recent years.

Words: Paul Guinness

Continuation cars are big business right now, with some of the world's most revered marques successfully reintroducing an array of famous models, albeit in strictly limited numbers. It's why Bentley is currently building twelve examples of the iconic 'Blower' of the 1920s, and why Aston Martin decided to offer a handful of brand new DB4 Zagatos. It's also why Jaguar Classic has treated us to continuation examples of the Lightweight E-Type, the XKSS and – most recently – the D-Type. And it's easy to see the appeal, with continuation cars usually costing significantly less than the real deal, despite each one having a six- or even seven-figure price tag.

The car you're looking at here isn't an official continuation model, of course. Jaguar Classic hasn't reintroduced the C-Type, and probably doesn't have plans to do so anytime soon. It is, however, far more than a replica, of which there's no shortage around the world. You see, this is something different – a car that was built using the factory's original blueprints, and therefore correct in just about every important detail. It is, if you like, a one-off continuation special that just happens to have been created by an individual craftsman rather than the original manufacturer.

The story behind this authentic C-Type starts in the late 1960s, when a senior member of the Jaguar management team offered the company's official C-Type blueprints to a close friend, who was evidently interested in such things. The company had no use for them (which seems remarkable all these years later), and so they changed hands. Fast-forward to the early '80s and the owner of the blueprints finally decided to put them to good use, instructing his friend and automotive engineering

JAGUAR C-TYPE RECREATION

guru Cyril Lynstone (former owner of Emeryson Racing Cars) to use them to build him a brand new C-Type of 1951 drum-brake spec.

It turned out to be a long-term project, with plenty of interruptions along the way – not helped by the car's owner getting divorced part-way through and suffering strained finances as a result. An agreement was reached whereby Cyril would take over the part-completed project as well as ownership of the blueprints, and would go on to finish the car for himself. In the end, this faithful C-Type recreation wasn't fully completed until 2013, when it was registered for the road as well as being given its FIA Historic Technical Passport papers to enable it to compete in racing events around the world.

CHANGE OF OWNER

For the next couple of years, the 'new' C-Type was exhibited at various shows and events – where it inevitably attracted a great deal of interest – but didn't take to the track until Cyril decided it was time to sell, at which point John Brown enters the story. A keen racer and classic sports car aficionado, it's the C-Type that makes John most proud, having provided him with some real success out on the track.

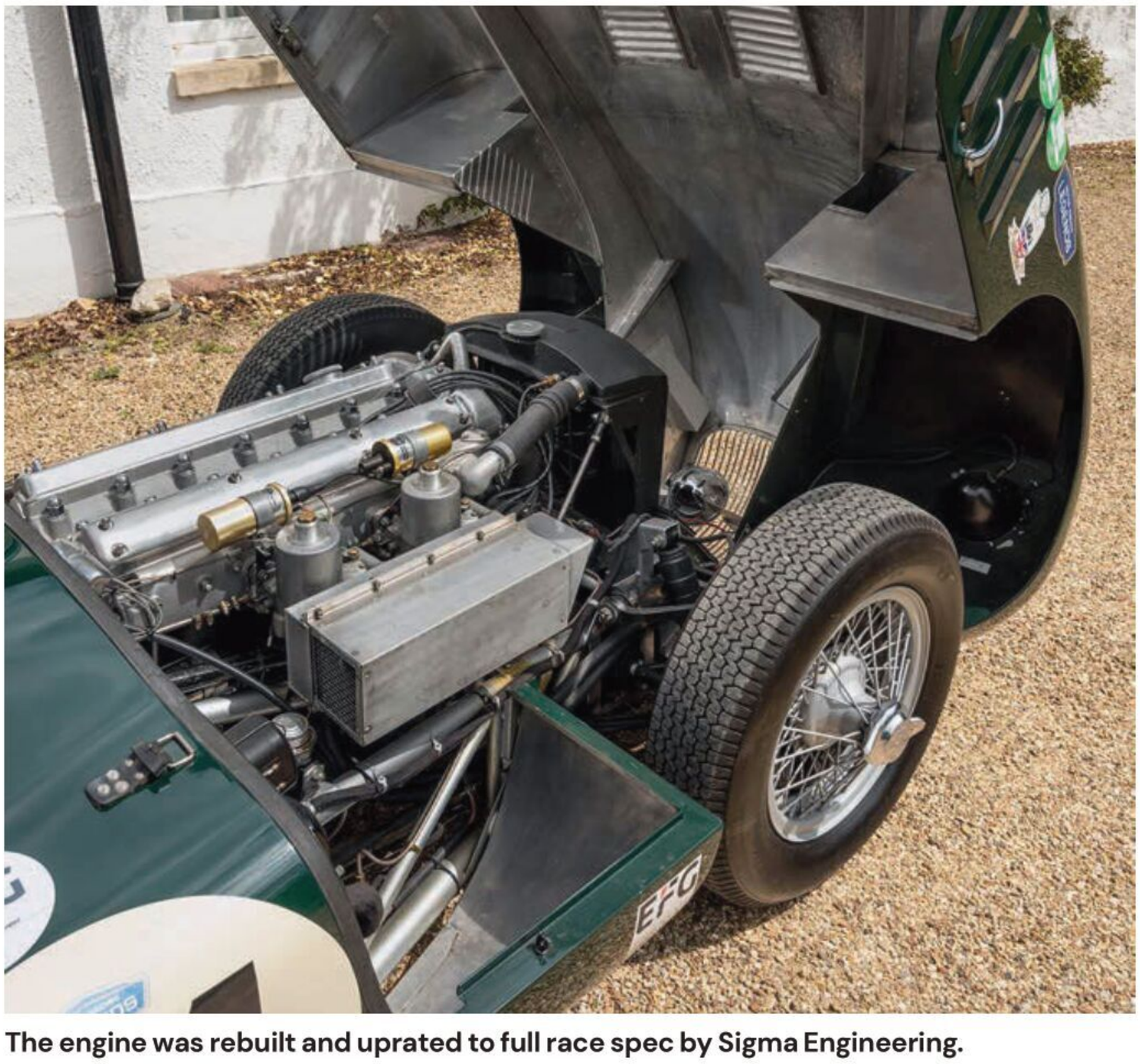
"It's a really exciting car to race," grins John, as he positions his Jaguar on the day of our photo shoot. "I bought it for my son Charlie and me to compete in, and it hasn't disappointed." To get the C-Type to class-winning spec, however, John had to make sure it was race-ready, and has invested time and money into improving the car since buying it over three years ago.

It was built to match the 1951 spec of the original C-Type, with the hand-crafted aluminium bodywork (of single-door, big-vent design) and tubular frame beneath being to the exact specification provided in the official blueprints. The same approach was adopted with the mechanicals, which is why this one-off creation uses an in-period 3.4-litre XK engine linked to a Moss gearbox, as well as correct-spec drum brakes – which provided something of a challenge when it came to the car's first race: "We decided to take part in a one-hour change-driver event," recalls John, "and I went out first. By the time I came in for Charlie to take over, the brakes were pretty much non-existent. There was smoke from all the wheels where the brakes had overheated, so poor Charlie had to go out there with virtually no braking capability."

Since then, the brakes have been improved via drilled drums and back plates, overcoming the previous overheating issue. But was John tempted to go further and carry out a disc brake upgrade? "No, the idea all along was to keep the drum brake set-up, as it means we're competing

"Fast-forward to the early '80s and the owner of the blueprints finally decided to put them to good use"

JAGUAR C-TYPE RECREATION



The engine was rebuilt and uprated to full race spec by Sigma Engineering.

John has many class wins with his C-Type.

against similar-spec cars. Our first success was winning the drum brake category of the Motor Racing Legends Woodcote Trophy, and since then we've had a lot of other wins. It's now a highly competitive car."

MORE UPGRADES

The C-Type's competitiveness has been enhanced by other upgrades carried out during John's period of ownership, including having the engine stripped and rebuilt (along with a spare engine) by Peter Lander of Sigma Engineering: "We had the engine built to full race spec," explains John, "with properly ported and balanced crank, pistons and so on. Basically, everything was done to make the car as quick as we could possibly make it, right down to a racing magneto and other essentials. We've also invested in two diffs, to give us some choice depending on the event we're competing in – with a lower-gear diff for sprint-type events and a higher-gear one for circuits like Le Mans."

One of John's most memorable races at the wheel of his C-Type was his most recent, which took place at the Portimão circuit in Portugal: "It was a real challenge. The race was due to finish in the dark, which isn't usually a problem – but one of the Jaguar's headlamps became detached and fell back into its bucket, which meant I was driving with one headlamp in tough conditions. I couldn't see much at all, which isn't ideal when you're reaching speeds of 140mph, and I'd completely lost track of which lap I was on. I was intending to come into the pits and call it a day, but kept pushing myself to do one more lap, then another. In the end, I kept on going and managed to get the class win!"

Unlike many of the official continuation cars of recent years, John's C-Type is fully road legal – and he gets as much use from it as he can, reveling in its surging acceleration and dynamic all-round

"Unlike many of the official continuation cars of recent years, John's C-Type is fully road legal"

performance. Being an authentic replica of a pure competition car, it's as raw as they come – but of course, that's all part of this hand-built machine's no-nonsense approach.

Our photo shoot provided the ideal opportunity to inspect the car close-up, giving us time to appreciate the incredible attention to detail throughout. This unique machine is as close to a new C-Type as you're likely to find anywhere, aside from any future continuation special from the company itself. The fact that it was essentially hand-built by one man over such a long period simply adds to its intrigue.

What really sets this car apart, however, is that it still has with it the original C-Type blueprints that were acquired from Jaguar in the 1960s – which can be transferred to whoever owns the car in the future.

"Those blueprints really are an invaluable piece of Jaguar history," confirms John, "and it's only right that they stay with the car that used them for its build process. I'm reducing the size of my collection, and so the C-Type has to go at some point. I've had so much fun in it, but it's time for someone else to take it racing. I guarantee they'll have an amazing experience..."

Setting the scene

The 2.4 was the starting point for decades of sporting Jaguar saloons. We examine one of the finest survivors.

Words: Ian Seabrook

It could be argued that Jaguar's reputation for sporting saloons really began with the 2.4 of 1955. While the MkVII was certainly surprisingly brisk, and handled well, it was the compact form of the 2.4 and a surprisingly low purchase price that helped the 2.4 find more homes, in Europe at least. While American buyers were happy enough with the large MkVII, European tastes were for something rather more suited to small, country lanes and the new 2.4 really fitted the bill. With motorsport success and a later, 120mph 3.4-litre version, these cars set the scene for everything that was to come from Jaguar.

Not that a compact saloon was a new idea for the Coventry firm. A hangover from the SS Cars days before the Second World War was the 1½-Litre, which used a four-cylinder Standard engine with Jaguar's overhead valve layout. It wasn't really sporting though, for all its fine lines. 70mph was rather hard work.

But thoughts of a new compact saloon were already firmly in the mind. Early on, the decision was taken to turn to monocoque construction, with independent front suspension. The influence of Citroën can be seen here, with Jaguar engineer Bill Heynes in particular impressed with the trend-setting Traction Avant. The XK120 and MkV would both use independent front suspension by torsion bar, as did the Citroën. The 2.4 would bring monocoque construction to the party, but the front suspension was now independent by coil spring. The clever touch, at the behest of chief engineer Bob Knight, was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JAGUAR MK1

Styling would gently evolve into MkII and S-Type. Fog lamps added a touch of class.

Original dashboard sticker still in place.

Car has always been used sparingly.

"that lovely smell of wood and leather that so typifies British cars of this era"

the use of subframes mounted on rubber, to keep noise and harshness from entering the cabin. Even now, trademarks that would define Jaguars for decades to come were in place.

The 2.4 was launched at Browns Lane in September 1955, and its list price of £1300 went down very well indeed. Taken against later compact saloon developments, the gentle 112bhp of the 2.4 may seem rather lethargic. In 1955, its 100mph top speed and 0-60mph time of 13 seconds were very reasonable indeed. A 1955 Austin A90 Westminster needed more like 18 seconds for the dash and was all done by 91mph, despite having a larger engine. Then there was the handling too. Belgian journalist Paul Frére won a race in that very first year, though the rear track, some four inches narrower than the front, did not entirely help its road manners.

Rather more performance was on offer with the 3.4 of 1957, which advertised its potential with cut-down rear spats – all the better to clear centre-lock wire wheels. 120mph was now within reach on a good day, and acceleration was very strong. From 1957, you could even specify disc brakes on both models. Really, the formula was being pushed hard now though, so the MkII that took over from 1959 would include a wider rear track in its list of improvements. It was at this point

that the earlier 2.4 and 3.4 became known as the MkI.

THE MKI TODAY

It took a long time for the compact Jaguars to find their place in the classic marketplace, and even so, it's only really the MkII that easily gains the plaudits, especially in 3.8 form. Others have taken a lot longer to find favour, which is one reason that the MkI has become rather a rare sight. That's a shame, because they really are one of the best saloons of the 1950s. They have style, a fine interior and plenty of performance for most people, even in 2.4 form. With its full wheel spats, the 2.4 is arguably the most handsome of the compact saloons, though opinions do vary on the matter!

Finding good examples is really therefore rather special, and when Jim Henshaw alerted me to this one during his work commissioning cars for Brightwells Auctioneers & Valuers, I was very keen to find out more.

Incredibly, this immaculate 2.4 has covered fewer than 27,000 miles in its 50-odd years, and it has managed to avoid the need for restoration, due to unscrupulous care by its three owners. The car was first registered to WR Powell in Talgarth, Brecon in Wales. He paid £1538, though received £500 in part exchange for his Ford Zephyr.

AWARD-WINNING

He appears to have used the car gently, before it was sold locally to Powell's friend Fred Lloyd. Lloyd had already been looking after the car for Powell, and took the chance to take it on. He then began entering it

Seats are wonderfully creased by age.

Original tool kit is still in place.

Wonderful veneer dashboard is in first rate condition.

JAGUAR MK1

in Concours events organised by the Jaguar Drivers' Club, and there are photos of the car with trophies as far back as 1978.

The current owner purchased the car from Lloyd in 2015, but has kept up the regime of sparing use and good care – though not quite as much as Lloyd, who apparently kept the car in a room of his house. All three owners lived within a few miles of each other, but current owner Jim Beagley recalls seeing the car as a child. "Fred's wife worked at my primary school, so I can remember seeing the car when I was child. I think I saw it for the first time in 1980, so it has always been a part of my life. Fred has had the door jambs painted, and a stainless steel exhaust, but otherwise, it's very original."

That's apparent as soon as you clamber aboard, with that lovely smell of wood and leather that so typifies British cars of this era. The leather shows some gentle signs of ageing, but that just adds to this car's appeal. It's not a workshop-fresh restoration, but a car that has simply been very well cared for and used sparingly. You can even still see the original dealer sticker on the top rail of the dashboard.

The same is true of the paintwork, which has a deep shine to it, but isn't perfect. Look closely, and you can see fine scratches picked up through years and years of polishing. Again, this just hints at age rather than detracting from the experience. The brightwork all looks as good as new however, including the fine hubcaps. I much prefer them to fussy wires. You can also appreciated Sir William Lyons' styling skill as you absorb the fluid lines of the MkI. The nose treatment is especially pretty, backed up by that tapering rear which links the car to the XK range. The way the roof flows into the rear quarters is very much a streamlined version of the SS era saloons.

EXCEPTIONAL DETAIL

The detail is exceptional under the bonnet too, with stickers still in place to advertise Trico windscreen washer fluid and to urge you to change your wiper blades every year. It's spotless under here, and only some minor tarnishing on the exhaust manifold shows any sign of age at all. Minor details really leap out here, like the original bakelite battery cover and radiator fan cowling.

When asked to, the engine doesn't so much fire into life as gently gather pace until it is suddenly running. There's a gentle exhaust burble but the overall feeling is of exceptional smoothness. Jump aboard and the comfortable driving position is immediately apparent. The large steering wheel helps take some of the heaviness out of the steering and the only slight ergonomic failure is the gear lever, which sits too far forward and requires a surprisingly long movement from first to second.

Full wheel spats identify this as a 2.4. 3.4 used cut-away spats.

2483cc XK engine produces 112bhp SAE.

Jack and wheelbrace stowed in the boot.

Period advertising on screenwash bottle.

JAGUAR MK1

2.4 introduced monocoque construction to Jaguar's range.

It certainly doesn't fall nicely to hand. The action is also a little on the vague side, though there are no troubles finding the necessary gears. It's just that the gate does not seem particularly well defined.

Out on the road, poor weather sadly curtailed a full exploration of the 2.4's potential, but we certainly had enough time to feel just how delightfully tight this car remains. The original Moss gearbox has a delicious, non-synchro first gear whine that reminds you how old this car really is. Otherwise, you could be forgiven for thinking it a vehicle from the 1960s. After all, it's only really in the company of other Jaguars that the performance could be described as leisurely. Tractable and effortless too of course, both hallmarks of the XK engine, especially in fine fettle.

Sure, the ride can't match the magnificent floating serenity of later Jaguars, there are still leaf springs at the rear after all, but while it can be a little bouncy at times, it's a long way from uncomfortable. Refinement certainly remains absolutely first rate, which is a credit to Bob Knight and his clever use of subframes. The difference this makes is quite astounding compared to other large, monocoque cars of this era.

All in all, this is a car which mixes traditional with a later, more urgent feel. It's certainly a credit to its three owners and a car any Jaguar fan would surely be very happy to own.

"a gentle exhaust burble but the overall feeling is of exceptional smoothness"

Second owner Fred Lloyd at a Jaguar Drivers' Club event in 1978.

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Seeing red

Steve Natale recounts the life and times of a distinctive D-Type, with connections to Formula 1 and Led Zeppelin, finally finding a home in the USA...

Words: Steve Natale

"Who painted this D-Type red?" was my thought when I first laid eyes on this legendary machine. Most Jaguar competition cars are BRG, or British Racing Green, a livery thought by many to be 'proper' for a car of this ilk. Sure a few black, blue, or even white cars are out there, but a bright red car stands out like a low-cut sequin cocktail dress at the Queen's tea party. In answer to my question: it was born that way. Yes, Jaguar made this car and one other D-Type, bright red with matching red seats. One theory is that it was intended to be sold new in Italy, where red is the color of preference for Italian racers, but the real reason for the color remains a mystery, adding to the mystique of one of the greatest racing car designs ever created.

A LEGEND IS BORN

Jaguar began developing a replacement in 1953 for its C-Type, the model that had helped cement the Coventry firm's international reputation for racing prowess with wins at Le Mans in 1951 and 1953.

Under the direction of company founder William Lyons and chief engineer William Heynes, a state-of-the-art sports racing car began to form with an exciting shape that the world had never seen.

Using the latest advances in aircraft technology as inspiration, the D-Type featured a high-strength alloy monocoque chassis, with load-bearing external panels and tubular subframes fore and aft. This fresh and innovative way to construct an automobile represented a radical departure from conventional automotive design; most automobile manufacturers did not implement similar technology until decades later. In addition to its revolutionary chassis, the D-Type benefited from numerous other aviation-inspired features, including Dunlop disc brakes, a deformable fuel bladder, and dry sump lubrication.

Malcolm Sayer, an expert aerodynamicist who had left the Bristol Aeroplane Company to work for Jaguar, was given a free hand to create the shape of the D-Type. He described his design as "functional efficiency at all costs." Nevertheless, the car's highly effective bodywork, created in lightweight aluminum and perfected in the wind tunnel, was undeniably beautiful, with perfect proportions and compound curves.

While so much of the D-Type's design broke new ground, the latest Jaguar was powered by a development of the venerable twin-cam, straight-six XK engine that debuted in 1948. Equipped with three Weber carburetors, high-compression pistons, and high-lift camshafts, the D-Type's engine produced an estimated 250 bhp and allowed for a top speed in excess of 170 mph, dependent on rear axle ratio.

In June of 1954, the Jaguar D-Type made its official competition debut at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, creating a sensation. Campaigned at the

JAGUAR D-TYPE

highest levels of motor racing, the D-Type achieved tremendous success during its lifespan. Three overall wins at the 24 Hours of Le Mans (1955, 1956, and 1957), two wins at the 12 Hours of Reims (1954 and 1956), and outright victories at the 1955 12 Hours of Sebring and the 1956 Grand Prix of Spa are among its notable highlights.

Capitalizing on the success of its works cars, Jaguar decided to offer a D-Type for customers eager to buy a proven winner. A production line was set up at Browns Lane that constructed 67 cars for private sale, including 16 examples converted to the XKSS road car. With few exceptions, production D-Types were all equipped the same way with the short-nose, Weber equipped configuration. Sales to privateers began in the fall 1955.

In 1956 the editors at Road & Track magazine tested a new D-Type for an article that appeared in that year's May issue. The magazine made their opinion of the new D-Type abundantly clear to their readers: "'A thrill that comes once in a lifetime' is an overworked cliché, but it describes perfectly our impressions after conducting a full-scale road test on the D-Type Jaguar. This is the best performing automobile we have ever tested, and we have tested some very potent machinery. An acceleration time from a standstill to 100 mph in just over 12 seconds is startling enough, but this is combined with a genuine timed top speed of 162 mph!"

In 1956 the blisteringly fast, sensationally styled Jaguar D-Type was one of the cars to own if you wanted to be competitive racer.

FIRST OWNER

The car featured here, XKD518, was completed in December 1955 and delivered to Jaguar dealer Henlys of Manchester, one of approximately 24 production D-Types that would be delivered in the United Kingdom. According to factory records, this car was originally finished in a striking red over red color scheme, making it one of only two Ds produced in this color combination. Henlys had some difficulty locating a buyer for the new red D-Type and eventually moved it to a dealer named Bernie Ecclestone.

Bernie Ecclestone's name would later become synonymous with Formula One, becoming the president and CEO of Formula One Management and Formula One Administration, later becoming part owner of Alpha Prema, the parent company of the Formula One Group of companies. In 1972 he bought the Brabham team, which he ran for fifteen years. As a team owner he became a member of the Formula One Constructors Association. Ecclestone would go on to take

Formula One from a niche racing program to a global phenomenon, being dubbed 'F1 Supremo' by the British tabloids.

Until the 2017 Liberty Media takeover, Ecclestone was the number one authority in Formula One racing, but in 1956 his business was selling cars. Ecclestone did have some behind the wheel racing experience in the 500cc Formula Three Series, with a Cooper Mk V he purchased in 1951, running it a few times mostly at Brands Hatch. He took a break from racing after colliding with Bill Whitehouse causing him to lose control and come to a stop in the track parking lot.

In the 1950s Ecclestone made a number of lucrative investments in real estate, but always maintained a profitable car business. His Bexleyheath-based car business grew rapidly and he was buying up local dealerships, and remodeling them, creating some of the most attractive showrooms in Southern England and filling them with all types of cars including many sporting cars, attracting buyers looking for something special. One of those attracted to Ecclestone's smart-looking showroom was Peter Blond.

Blond was a talented amateur racer who had a history of Jaguar ownership starting with an SS100 - a 21st birthday present from his father as a reward for not drinking or smoking. He would later upgrade to an XK120, followed by a 'lightweight' C-Type.

"Bernie Ecclestone was just a wheeler-dealer back then," Peter Blond recalled in an interview with

JAGUAR D-TYPE

Classic & Sports Car magazine in England. "He could get his hands on anything you wanted. Somehow, he found a brand-new D-Type, and it turned out to be red. The factory price was £3,378, but he said he would let me have it for three thousand quid. Bernie always made a profit on whatever he sold, so I didn't ask where it came from. I managed to scrape together £1500 and he let me have the rest on the drip."

Blond elaborated when he spoke to author and historian Anthony Pritchard, whom he told about his purchase and first race with XKD518:

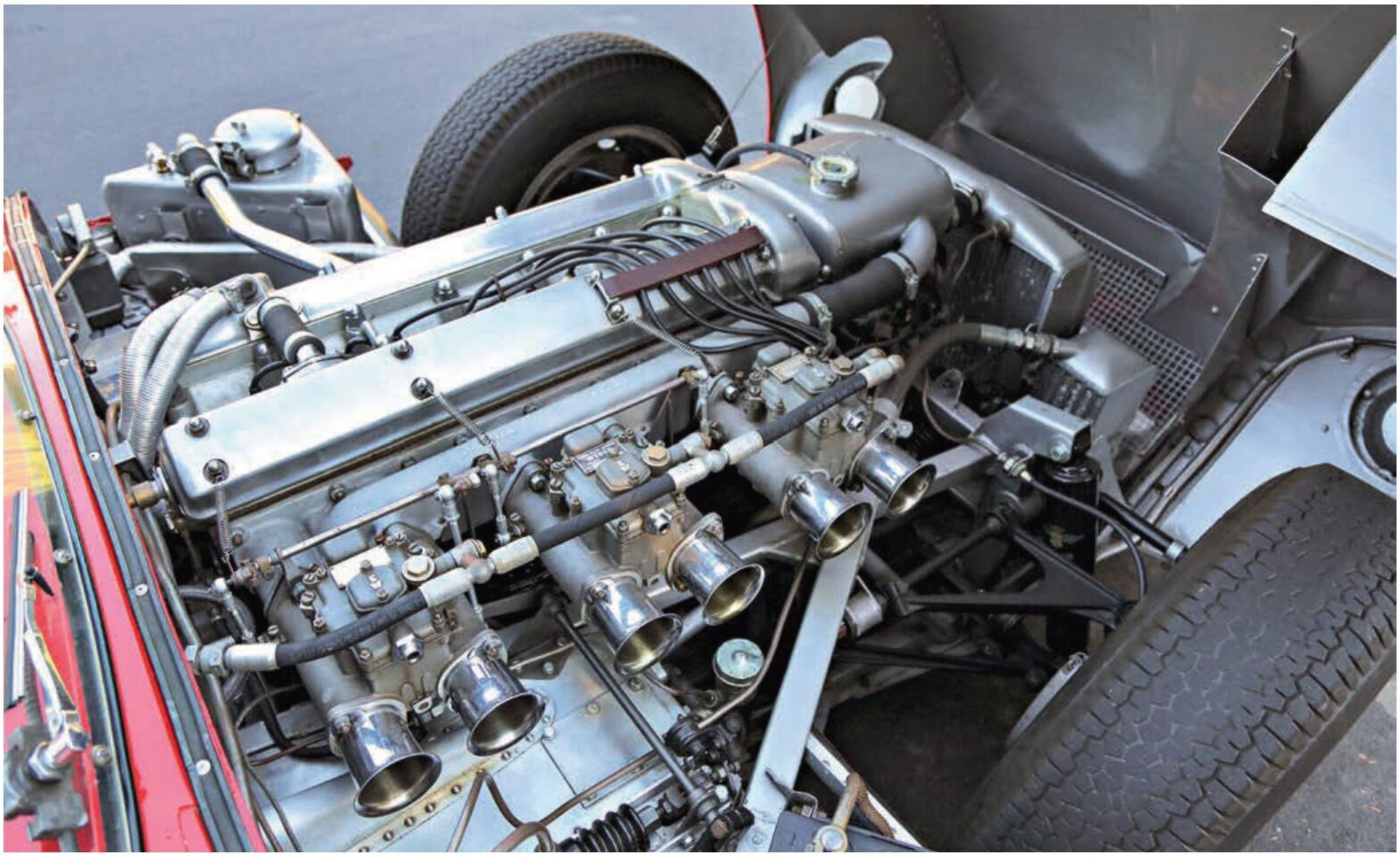
"I used to go to Warren Street quite frequently, and with new cars in short supply and the bulk of production being exported, it was a haven for available cars. It was early 1956 that I was struck by the sight of this amazing red D-Type and the young man called Bernard Ecclestone, who had a small office there, a sort of box with a secretary in it. It was already registered KDB 100 when I bought it. It was brand new and was offered to me for £3,000, which was not a bad price as Brian Naylor in Stockport was offering one for £3,750 at about the same time.

As I had enjoyed my C-Type so much, it seemed a natural progression, and it didn't cost all that much more money. It had of course a single windscreen round the cockpit and an alloy cover over the passenger seat. I think it was the best road car that I ever owned. If it started to rain, then at any speed over 50 mph you weren't aware of it. I used to wear a crash helmet with a visor, which was so much better than goggles because you could wipe the visor and if it started to mist up, you just lifted your head and the breeze cleared it.

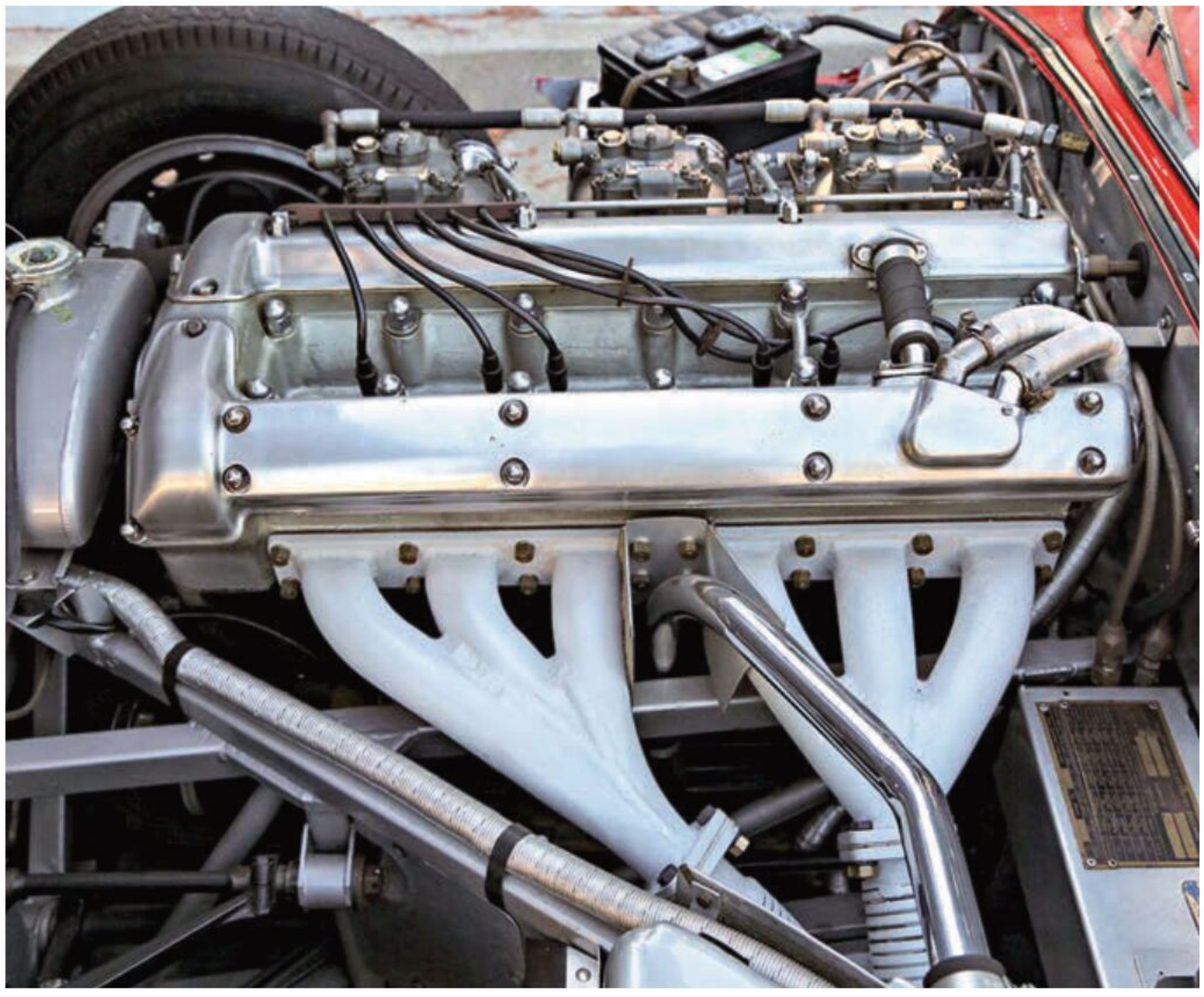
My first race with the D-Type was on 14th April 1956, when I drove it in the British Empire Trophy at Oulton Park. It was a proper road circuit, and I liked the fact that the D-Type seemed very happy there, particularly in the dry. It was my local circuit and I came to know it quite well. It was a very testing circuit - if you went off, you were quite likely to go into the lake or hit a tree. I finished fifth in the heat for cars over 3000 cc, ahead of Ken Wharton with Joakim Bonnier's Alfa Romeo Disco Volante."

Blond continued to race his red XKD518 about a dozen times through mid-1957. Successes with the car included a 5th Overall at the Aintree 100, a top 10 finish in the Goodwood Trophy, and a win at the Snetterton National Race.

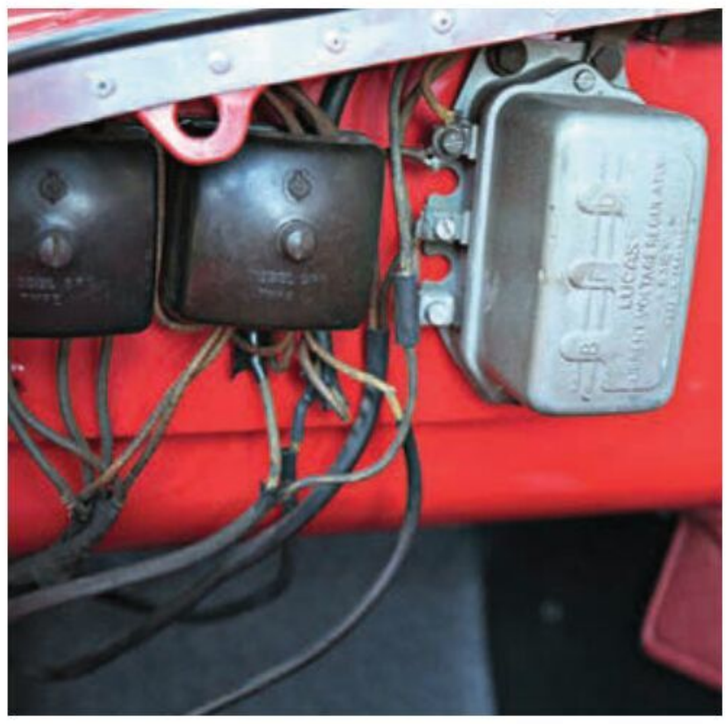
Blond decided to sell the D-Type to his cousin, Jonathan Sieff, who purchased XKD518 from him in summer 1957, subsequently entering it in the BARC race at Goodwood in August, placing 5th Overall. He and Blond campaigned the car with good results through 1959, even taking the

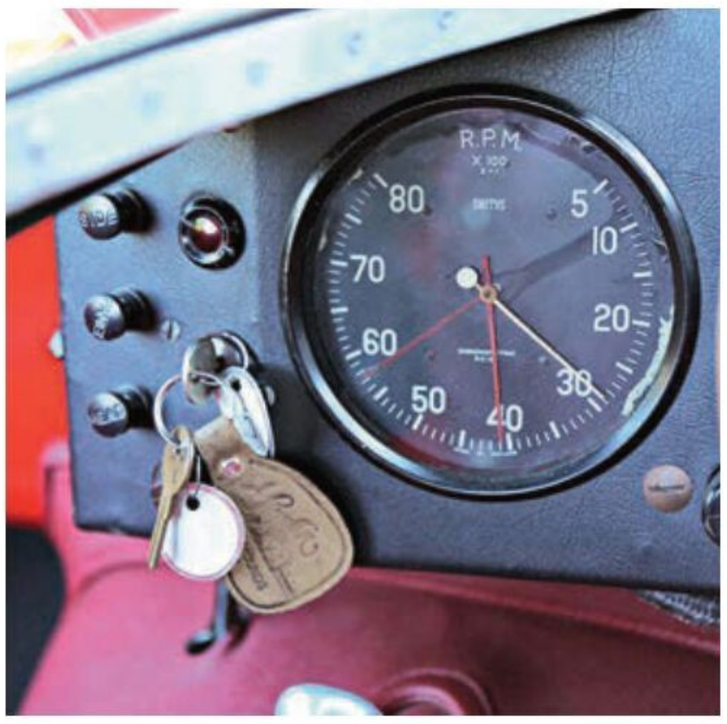


"I think it was the best road car that I ever owned. If it started to rain, then at any speed over 50 mph you weren't aware of it."



JAGUAR D-TYPE





car to Austria in May 1958 for the Aspern airport race.

At the conclusion of the 1959 season, Monty Mostyn of Speedwell Garage acquired XKD518, registered it as MM 2, and sold it to John Houghton, creator of the Biota, a Mini-based sports car. Shortly afterward, Houghton sold the car to one of the most prominent female race car drivers of the era, Jean Bloxham.

Bloxham, had successfully driven both Aston Martin DB2 and DB3S in many races during the late 1950s. On the advice of Jaguar's competition manager 'Lofty' England, Bloxham bought the D-Type. She raced XKD518 at Goodwood and Silverstone and recalled that "it was a very comfortable road car, smooth, powerful and with a superb gearbox."

In 1962, she sold the D-Type back to John Houghton after her husband Roy was killed driving a Lister-Jag. In 1967 the car was acquired by John Coombs and Richard Wilkins, who sold it to Clive Lacey. During Lacey's stewardship, XKD518 participated the first International E-Type Day at Donington Park in 1974. Few years later, the Jaguar was sold, through Adrian Hamilton, to Peter Grant, the manager of rock band Led Zeppelin.

Grant worked for Don Arden in the early 1960s, managing British tours of foreign artists. In 1966, he founded RAK Music Management with producer Mickie Most and began managing the Yardbirds. When that group broke up in 1968, its guitarist, a young Jimmy Page, brought Grant along to steer his next group, the mighty Led Zeppelin. Page

"We did some research and verified XKD518 was originally one of the two red on red D-Types produced by the factory."

and the other members of the group were car enthusiasts and purchased some interesting and sporting cars after they became successful. Somewhere around 1977, Grant purchased the D-Type. How exactly the large, six-foot five, 300-pound former wrestler fit into the tight cockpit of the D remains a mystery!

STATESIDE JOURNEY

Two years after Led Zeppelin's breakup in 1982, Grant sold XKD518 to American collector George Stauffer, who reportedly kept the Jaguar as a display in his office, keeping the car for 14 years.

Stauffer owned the car until 1996 when he sold it to Chris Cox of North Carolina. Two years later Cox moved it on to Roger Willbanks of Denver.

Don Williams of the Blackhawk Collection acquired XKD518 in 2008 from well-known enthusiast Bill Jacobs. At some point during the D-Type's history it was repainted British Racing Green and the seats recovered in black leather. A photo from 2008, soon after it was acquired by Williams, shows the car in excellent condition, with just some road rash paint chips on the front of its green nose.

"We did some research and verified XKD518 was originally one of the two red on red D-Types produced by the factory." Explains Don Williams. "It is such a rare and historic car. I decided it should be returned to its original livery." During the restoration, it became evident that the car had never been in a serious accident and

the body was in remarkably original condition. It was also confirmed that the car retained its matching-number drivetrain. For a racecar to have never been wrecked and still have all its original major mechanical components intact is rare indeed. Since its restoration, XKD518 has been exhibited from time to time by its current owner at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, California.

DRIVING THE D

I recently got a rare opportunity to both ride in and drive XKD518 to and from my photo shoot of the car. I first rode as passenger. Entering a D-Type requires some planning. Not wanting to brace myself anywhere on the lightweight aluminum body, I opened the passenger door that weighs less than my camera lens and gingerly eased myself into the cockpit (I'm glad I take Pilates classes!) after several attempts to figure out just where to place my left hand, my right leg, etc. After I was seated, I carefully shut the door and latched it. I soon realized passenger leg room was not a priority when this car was designed. Sitting crouched up like a ball, clutching my camera, I was too exited to care when the D's twin-cam, straight-six powerhouse fired-off, making a raucous racket out the side-pipe just outside my door. Just riding in this magnificent beast was a thrill, but driving it was even more amazing.

The driver has considerably more leg room than the passenger and once seated, I found it cozy but comfortable. I hit the switch and the car came to life instantly. The clutch is heavy, but not excessively so, engaging right where it should and having a great feel. The shifter is short in length, snaps positively into each gear and shifts precisely. At slow speed it bounces a little until it reaches speed and smooths out nicely. It is easy to drive at low speed, but there is no doubt it wants to run. The steering feels solid, tight and nimble. The engine says "Go faster! Go faster!" In fine tune, and with so much power on tap, accentuated by the unique, amplified Jaguar race exhaust, I wanted to do just that. However, the car was not mine, I was not on the track, and I would like to remain friends with the car's caretaker as well as the local police department, so a high-speed run was not in the cards. Still, driving a D-Type is an event in my life I will ever forget, and a bucket-list check-off.

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C14802/6	Chrome	15 x 6	Curly Hub	Competition or Jaguar E-Type / XKE Series 1 / MKI / MKII / S-Type / 420 & more	£ 515.99	£ 477.29
C14802/6SS	Stainless Steel	15 x 6	Curly Hub	Competition or Jaguar E-Type / XKE Series 1 / MKI / MKII / S-Type / 420 & more	£ 827.99	£ 765.89
C14802/61/2	Chrome	15 x 6.5	Curly Hub	Jaguar E-Type Series 1 / XKE	£ 491.99	£ 455.09
C14802/61/2SS	Stainless Steel	15 x 6.5	Curly Hub	Jaguar E-Type Series 1 / XKE	£ 791.99	£ 732.59
C28044SP	Silver Painted	15 x 5	Flat - Easy Clean	Jaguar E-Type / XKE / S-Type / 420 & more	£ 245.99	£ 227.54
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C28044SS	Stainless Steel	15 x 5	Flat - Easy Clean	Jaguar E-Type / XKE Series 2	£ 671.99	£ 621.59
C28044/61/2	Chrome	15 x 6.5	Flat - Easy Clean	Jaguar E-Type / XKE Series 2	£ 491.99	£ 455.09
C28044/61/2S	Stainless Steel	15 x 6.5	Flat - Easy Clean	Jaguar E-Type / XKE Series 2	£ 791.99	£ 732.59
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Royal connections

No, it really is a MkVIIM, don't let the windscreen fool you. We take a closer look at this special car, used by HRH Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother from 1955 to 1973.

Words: Ian Seabrook and Paul Skilleter

When William Lyons and his team put together plans for a new engine, sports cars were not at the forefront of thinking. The XK120 became a remarkable production car, but was only ever intended to be a showcase for the new powerplant. The MkVII was always intended to be the main production model, and the new, twin-cam engine would help it to become the fastest production saloon in the world.

As with most Jaguar saloons, the shape was carefully honed by Lyons himself, with Fred Gardner responsible for implementing instructions from 'The Old Man.' Gardner was head of the sawmills, but he now became Lyons' right-hand man, taking over the role from Cyril Holland, who left the company in 1945.

Gardner was a very different animal from Holland, a fully-trained coachbuilder. Gardner could be abrupt and intimidating, but he seemed to work with Lyons just as well, with the pair being responsible for the shape of some of the most beautiful sporting saloons of all time.

A NEW SALOON

One of their first tasks was the development of the new saloon, which from the start was conceived as being much larger than what had gone before. That meant the new XK engine would be very necessary to avoid embarrassing performance. Underneath, the chassis owed much to the MkV – the forgotten saloon that links the pre-war designs with the post-war. This meant independent front suspension, by torsion bar and double wishbones, while the rear retained a simple live axle on leaf springs. For the time, certainly by British standards, the front suspension was fairly advanced, and it was particularly well engineered, allowing the enormous MkVII to become a dominant form in saloon car racing, as well as international rallying – a MkVIIM would win the Monte Carlo Rally outright in 1956.

The great size of the MkVII meant it was ill-suited to British roads, but it went down an absolute storm in the USA, selling very well alongside the dramatic XK120. The V8 engine was yet to dominate in the US, so the Jaguar's keen six-cylinder engine was certainly no barrier to sales.

From 1953, there was an automatic option – the first time this option had been seen on a Jaguar. It was a Borg Warner two-speed unit, and hardly helped with the performance aspect of this sporting saloon. It could only be specified on UK MkVIIs right at the end of the production run, for in 1954, the MkVII became the MkVIIM, now with more power (190bhp SAE), a three-speed automatic option. closer ratios on the manual and chunkier bumpers, a nod to those now fitted to the XK140.

But how did a Jaguar end up in the Daimler-dominated royal fleet? I'll let historian Paul Skilleter take up the tale.

Royal history by Paul Skilleter

Of all the royal family during the 1950s (and indeed for a good while afterwards), The Queen Mother was one of the most enthusiastic about cars. She took a personal interest in those resident in the Royal Mews, and often new models from her favourite manufacturers would catch her attention. One such was Jaguar's Mk VII, and accordingly it was made known at Browns Lane that she would like a demonstration run. Alan Currie, Jaguar's UK sales manager, was given the job and, it was reported in the press, was instructed by HM to drive at 100mph... The car was obviously to her satisfaction and in the autumn of 1955 an order for a new Mark VIIM duly arrived at Jaguar.

This car, registered NLT 7, started life as an ordinary Mark VIIM, the revised version of the big saloon which had appeared in September 1954. Among the 'M' upgrades were flashing indicators, re-styled bumpers and a more powerful engine (190bhp instead of 160bhp, courtesy of higher lift camshafts).

The car selected from the line, 727554, was an automatic but it was soon to be far from 'ordinary'. Lyons had grand plans for the car, plans which would result in a totally unique Jaguar and which would inspire many of the large-scale changes seen in Jaguar's next edition of its big saloon.

Norman related the story to me when we were compiling his biography. "The Old Man said he'd been talking to Hoopers, the coachbuilders, and they said they could do a nice elaborate trim job in Connolly leather, and special carpets, headlining etc. So I took the Mk VII down to Hoopers.

"I went down and collected the car, and I must admit it was a beautiful job inside, with extra veneer, nice thick carpets, lambswool over-rugs and so on, and when I got back I put the car in the experimental shop. I then had to inform the Old Man I was back with the car – this was round about half past five in the evening. All the rest of the department had gone home, and there was only me standing there with the car.

"Then Lyons came in and I opened all the doors so he could see everything, and he looked in the front, and the rear, and he said, 'Yes, they've made a superb job of that, Dewis, it looks very good, doesn't it?'"

Ahead of the re-trimmed car being delivered to the Royal Mews, Norman carried out a further inspection and road test, issuing his reports (one to Bill Heynes, one to Allan Currie) on 4th October 1955. They were long: almost a dozen mechanical faults were listed, including whine from the Borg-Warner unit, slight roughness from the brakes, engine oil leaks, a damaged silencer, and suspected steering geometry errors as the car steered badly on roll. Norman also requested the fitting of carded dampers, that is, a set which had been bench-tested to ensure they were to specification – bought-in components often varied considerably from Jaguar's laid-down specification in those days.

Lyons was impressed by Hoopers' good work – and it gave him an idea. Trim shop manager Percy Leeson was immediately summoned, and Norman witnessed what followed next. "The Old Man said, 'Leeson, have a look at that – see what you think.' So Percy looked at the front, then the back, the seats, the leather, the carpets, then craned his neck inside and looked at the headlining. He said, 'Yes, very well done, very nice job.'

"Then the Old Man turned round and said, 'Right, Leeson, you'd better check all this out, as we need to do all the cars in the future like that, but with hardly any more cost. It must not cost much more than a few pence extra.' And he said, 'Goodnight, gentlemen,' and walked off.

"Leeson stood there with his mouth open and said, 'How the bloody hell can I do this for a few pence more?' But eventually he did it, and it didn't cost much more than a few pence..."

So that's how the Queen Mother's Mk VII came to have its sumptuous trim, which in turn was adapted for the Mk VIII announced a year later, in October 1956. Not that this was the end of the story, for the royal personage showed no sign of wanting to part with her special Mk VIIM, so in due course it was further upgraded by Jaguar, with a MkVIII grille and gaining the power steering and disc brakes of the MkIX, but retaining the 3.4-litre engine.

Driving the MkVIIM by Ian Seabrook

After that final round of upgrades, the MkVIIM remained in use until it was returned to Jaguar in 1973, at which point The Queen Mother seemed to develop a liking for the Daimler DS420 instead, owning several until her death in 2002. Thankfully, the car was retained by Jaguar, as it is surely a unique example of a car that was, at various points, a MkVIIM, a MKVIII and a MkIX! The car is now part of the Jaguar Heritage Collection, and is usually on display at the Collection Centre at the British Motor Museum near Gaydon in Warwickshire. Kept in roadworthy condition, like many of the exhibits, it can often be seen at events through the summer. On leaving royal service, the MkVIIM was re-registered as 464 HYV.

"Yes, they've made a superb job of that, Dewis, it looks very good, doesn't it?"

JAGUAR MKVII

Indeed, the day before our shoot, the MkVIIM had been at a Jaguar Drivers' Club event, driven there by one of the many volunteers that help to maintain this important fleet of historic vehicles. Before that, judging by a few bows we found, it had been used for a wedding. What a wedding car!

Because this car is in frequent use, its condition cannot be described as 'concours.' The interior shows signs of wear, some parts are sadly missing and others look rather tired. Personally, I have no problem with this, I'm merely reporting fact. I like cars to show their age, and while the outside remains in exemplary condition, sitting inside, you can feel

XK engine in 3.4-litre form, but with power steering now fitted.

"...while the outside remains in exemplary condition, sitting inside, you can feel the passage of the decades"

You can where the original two-piece windscreen was fitted.

Note seat covers, for protection against paws and claws.

the passage of the decades. There are still cloth covers for the rear seat, to protect Hoopers' leather from those sharp-clawed Corgis. Compared to other MkVIIs, it is more comfortable. The seats are certainly very soft and accommodating.

The windscreen is an interesting point. It was assumed by many to have been a factory upgrade during one of the car's many trips to Browns Lane, but Richard Hassan, who was an apprentice there at the time, is of the opinion that the windscreen was one of Hooper's original modifications. Either way, it is the only MkVIIM to have left Browns Lane with that style.

VIP PHOTOGRAPHER

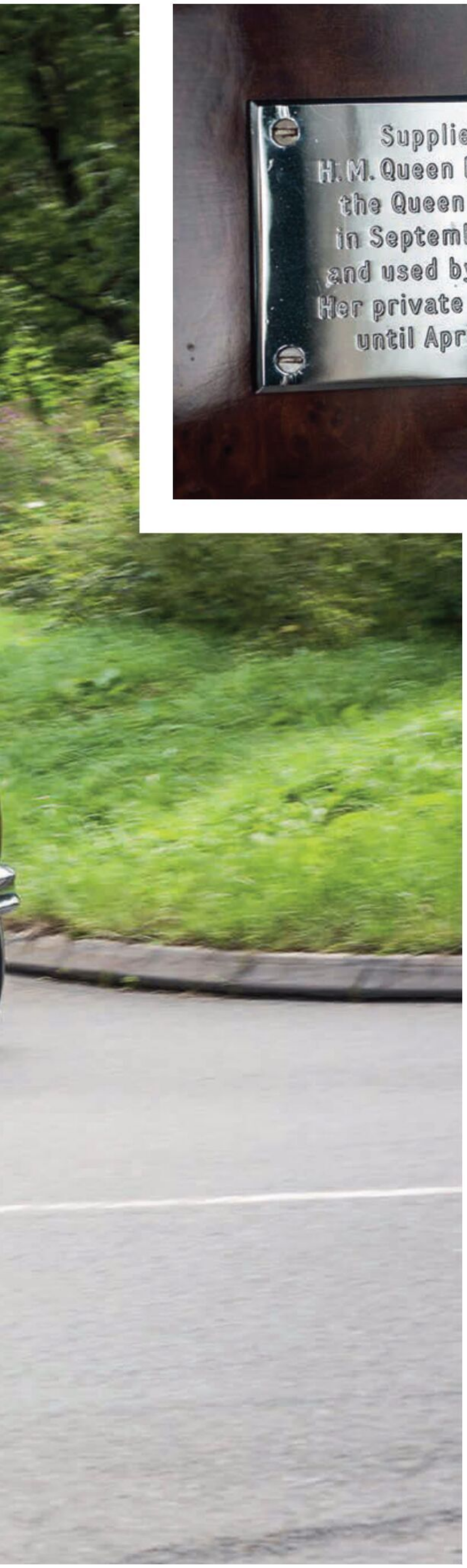
Rather than a member of royalty, I have to make do with photographer Chris Frosin as my VIP, but by the sounds of it, he was enjoying the experience. Not that there is vast amounts of room for his unfeasibly long legs in the back of a MkVIIM. For a 16ft car, it's remarkably tight back there. Less of an issue for someone of dainty stature, such as Her Majesty, and the broad seat still

Beautifully patinated front seat. Woodwork exemplary.

JAGUAR MKVII

"...the lazy transmission just employs the vast torque reserves of the engine, which allows decent progress to be made with minimal effort"

Proud dashboard plaque and rear-armrest radio controls (right).



offered plenty of space for those prized canines.

The driving position does feel slightly cramped too, though power assistance means that my elbows aren't fighting for space as I twirl the steering wheel at least. The ride is not great by the standards of what was to come from Jaguar, with that simple beam rear axle and its leaf springs not offering ultimate refinement. You'd still class it as very comfortable though.

Naturally, cornering tends to bring on comedic levels of bodyroll, though we suspect this car was never driven with particular gusto when on duty. The Corgis would have been all over the place. For the camera, I do lean on it a little more for some cornering shots, though I'm still some way from the antics of Stirling Moss, Ronald Adams and Ian Appleyard back in the day. Pushed at race pace, a MkVII looked in danger of scraping its elegant door handles.

The gearbox is smooth, however, and the engine pulls well. Modern standards have blunted this car's rather impressive turn of pace, but engage the Speed Hold, and this old lady can hitch up her skirts and sprint towards the horizon with some serious purpose. Mostly, though, the lazy transmission just employs the vast torque reserves of the engine, which allows decent progress to be made with minimal effort. It's all rather relaxing.

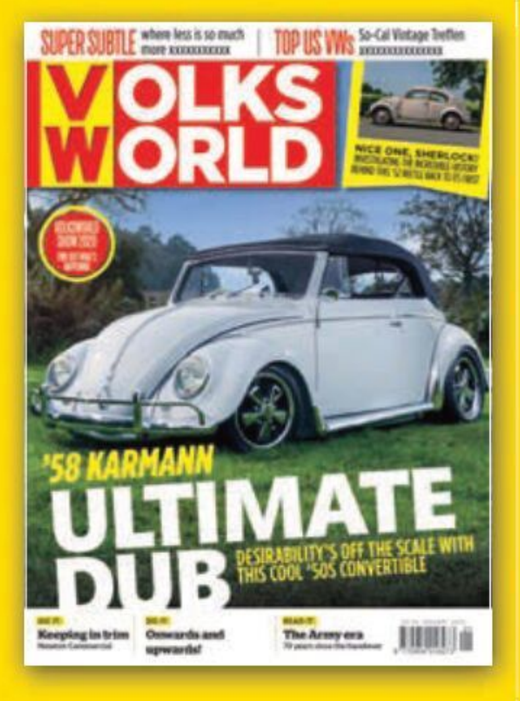
As we descend the local landmark of Burton Dassett's famous hill, I'm glad of the disc brakes, for it is a steep descent, and there's an awful lot of car to hold back in the fight against gravity. I'm not sure I'd like to drive quickly in a MkVII with drum brakes. It certainly makes me wonder how a young Moss managed to win trophies in such an unlikely race car. Perhaps he just didn't slow down.

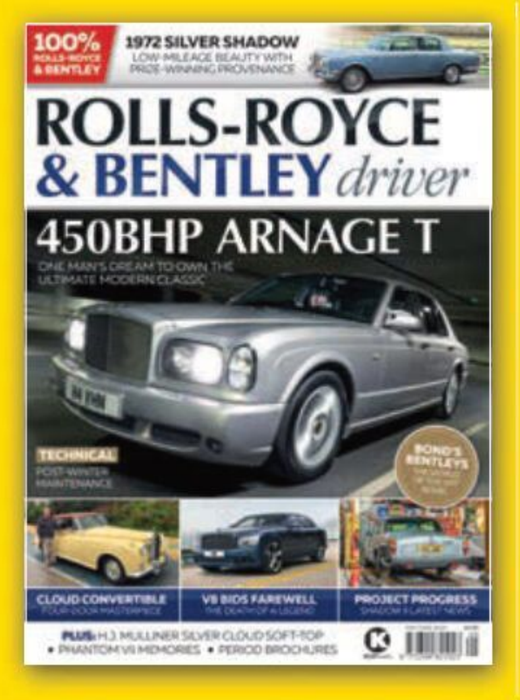
It's a very interesting driving experience though, in this most unusual car. This is Royal-endorsed car modification and it's rather charming to think that Her Majesty liked this car so much that it was part of her life for the best part of two decades.

I can see why it is a favourite with the volunteers too. It's so easy to drive, so long as you rein in your inner Moss. You're certainly unlikely to hold up modern traffic, such is the pace on offer.

It's also nice to flesh out the unusual details of this car. Curator Tony Merrygold admits that whenever the car is at shows, he gets a sea of people stating "That's not a MkVIIM. It hasn't got the split windscreen."

Well, now you know. If you were a Royal, you could have your MkVIIM and upgrade it.





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JAGUAR MKIX

Big hitter

The Mark IX was known for its performance thanks to its 3.8-litre XK engine and all-round disc brakes. This no-expense-spared restoration of a 1961 example takes these credentials a step further.

Words: Adam Tait

When choosing a saloon project, the 'Mk1' or Mk2 are the obvious candidates thanks to their speed, handling and compactness. I wonder how many of you would ever consider restoring a 'big' Jaguar? While the Mk2 is clichéd for being favoured by villains and racing drivers, the MkIX once offered genuine drivers' car status – despite its vast size – thanks to its strong performance and braking capability. The car you see here, a recently restored 1961 example, has unlocked even more of the MkIX's potential while retaining all the grace the model was renowned for.

Of course, this shouldn't come as a surprise. Its forerunner, the MkVII, was the fastest production saloon in the world when it went on sale, eventually proving itself in both touring cars and rallying with racing greats such as Stirling Moss and the late Mike Hawthorne behind the wheel. Overall honours on the 1956 Monte Carlo Rally was a career highlight for the model, beating cars that were, arguably, more suited to the tight hairpins and steep mountain passes for which the event is famed. On the flipside of this unexpected competition success (its size alone doesn't make it an obvious choice of racing or rally car) was something that offered impeccable road manners and luxury.

When the MkIX was introduced at the Earls Court Motor Show in 1958, onlookers may have thought Jaguar had accidentally placed the MkVIII on its stand, but beneath the skin the MkIX was a different beast – a mechanical progression of its predecessor. During the MkIX's launch year, Jaguar was already busy working on the radically different MkX, but despite the revolutionary styling this

JAGUAR MKIX

would bring, the MkIX still became the first Jaguar production vehicle to feature disc brakes all-round.

The previous 3.4-litre engine was dropped in favour of a higher-capacity 220bhp 3.8-litre XK engine, while the superior braking came from Dunlop's four-wheel disc system. The power increase equated to a 115mph top speed and a 0-60mph time of just over 11 seconds. Good going for something of this era that weighed nearly two tonnes.

Power steering was standard, and buyers had the option of the sluggish, yet bulletproof, four-speed Moss gearbox or the Borg Warner three-speed automatic transmission. The latter proved more popular with those who preferred the MkIX's effortless luxury, and some dignitaries may have considered the manual laborious.

It's easy to see why the hierarchies of society opted for big Jaguars as their mode of transport. They included the Queen Mother (whose MkVII was upgraded to be on par with the specification of its successors, the MkVIII and MkIX), the Nigerian Government (which ordered 40 MkIXs) and Charles de Gaulle's motorcade transport for his state visit to Canada in 1960.

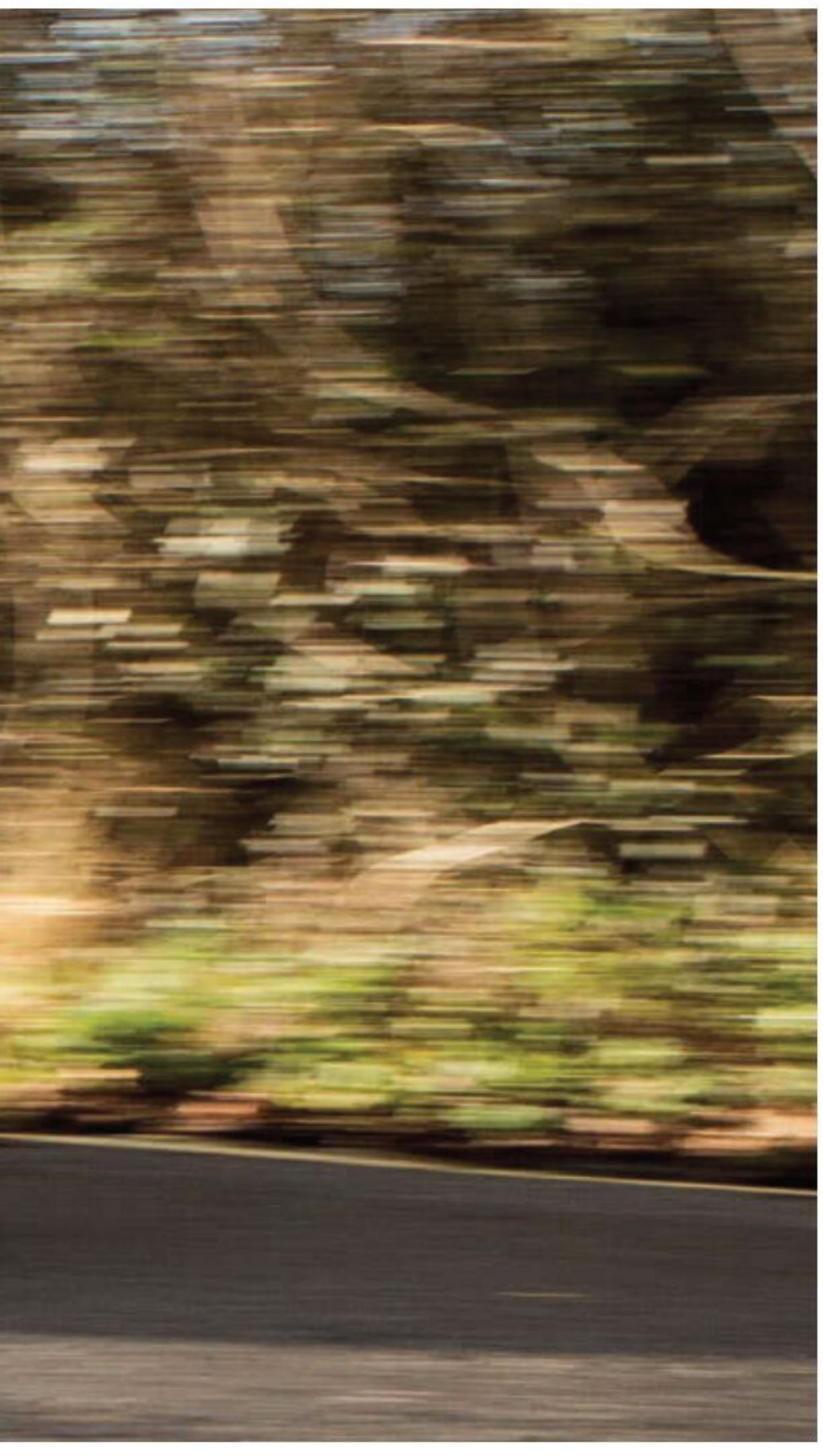
While our Essex-based road test lacked the grandeur of a state visit, the presence of a MkIX is still impressive and, in this case, the Indigo Blue over dark red paintwork just adds to its arrival. Cast the heavy door open and I am greeted with a deluge of walnut and burgundy leather, along with the pairing's unmistakable smell.

It's certainly a big car and the driving position is lofty. This must have given a commanding view of the road ahead in the Fifties, but in SUV-riddled era, road users now have an altitude that could register with air traffic control systems.

The gloss four-spoke steering wheel looks like the sort you might have to wrestle with to gain lock, and the Burman power-assisted setup must have been a welcomed standard fitment – it's certainly paying dividends as I negotiate a three-point-turn.

Given the factory nature of the interior, the aftermarket, knurled-aluminium gear knob suggests the transmission may not have been what Jaguar's founder, Sir William Lyons, intended. The Moss 'box is quite distinctive in its throw, not to mention its tone if the absence of synchromesh on first slips your mind. However, this MkIX's gearbox feels post-dated.

Richard Buddulph of Vintage & Prestige, where I met this MkIX explains, "The owner who commissioned the restoration simply asked for a car that was 'as modern-day drivable as possible'."



The uprated 4.2-litre E-Type engine keeps an authentic look under the bonnet.

JAGUAR MKIX

This unfolded into a full nut-and-bolt restoration in Portugal and the car is now reputably as good underneath as it is on top. It has only recently emerged from the major works that are said to have cost £100,000.

The gearbox turns out to be a five-speed Getrag unit. This may spoil the Fifties charm for some purists, but conversions like this are popular in classic Jaguars, and – in this case – it's easy to see why, complimenting the MkIX's high-performance luxury saloon credentials.

As I join the dual carriageway, with its derestricted limit, having five-speeds starts to make perfect sense. Overdrive aside, had Jaguar engineers been given the option of an extra cog for the MkIX in period, I am sure they would have appreciated the additional drop in revs when travelling at motorway speed.

The same might be said for the new-found, straight-line performance. How much horsepower this particular rebuilt 4.2-litre E-Type engine produces isn't known, but it certainly feels punchy; the ram pipes amplify fantastic induction noise throughout the cabin as the engine is worked through its rev range.

It's all too easy to reach a fair turn of speed, and other motorists looked genuinely surprised as a Fifties Jaguar of titanic proportions sings past, completely unstressed and at ease in the outside lane.

Although my own road test doesn't span Europe, I travel for long enough to recognise that the owners' brief was turned into reality. This view is further reinforced as I exit the dual carriage way and come to a halt.

Just as I was glancing at the

The smell of the interior is a heady mix of leather and walnut.

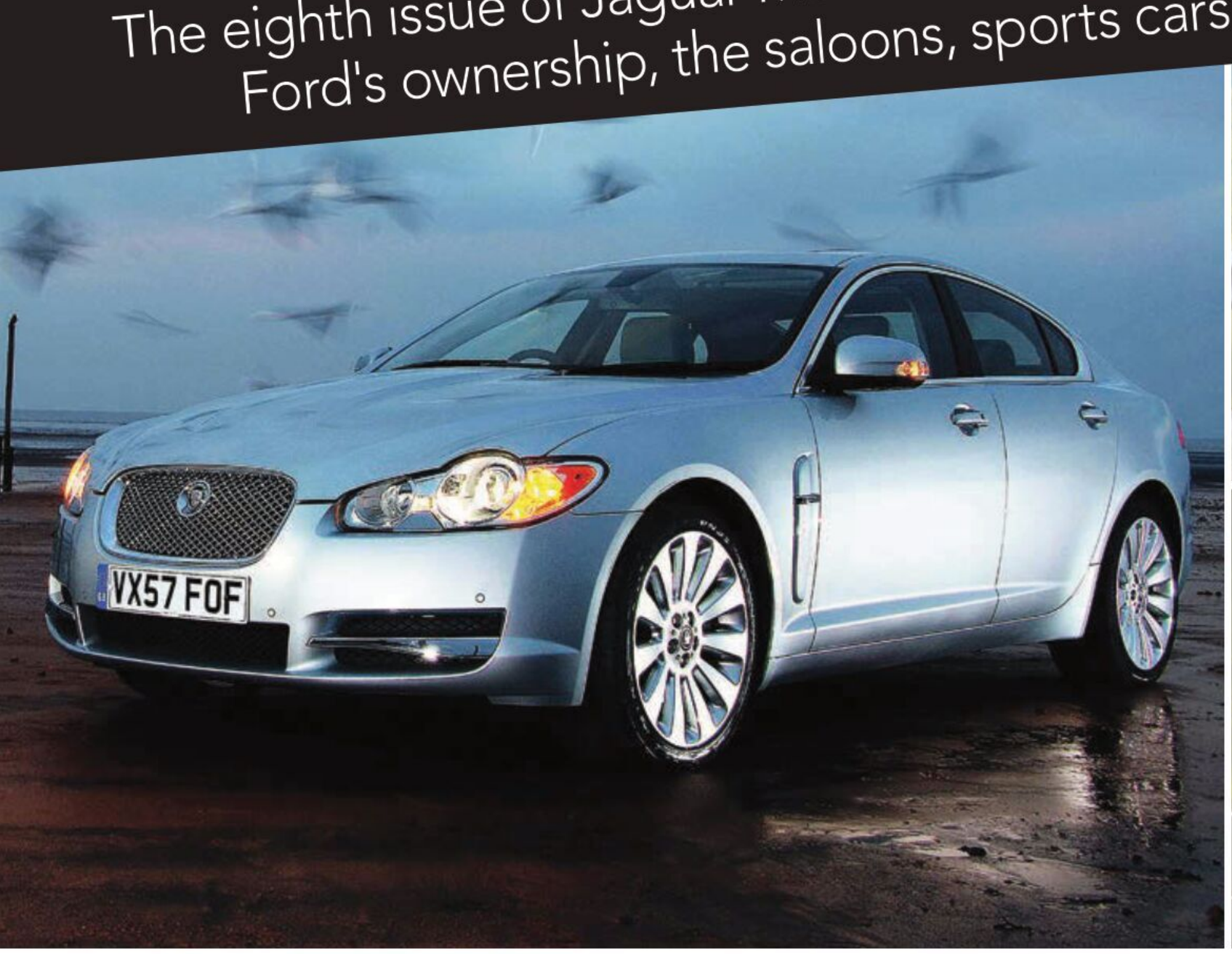
temperature gauge, concerned which direction the needle might take, a Kenlowe fan intervenes to aid the now thoroughly warmed-through XK engine. This cooling aid truly paid off during the 1,000 miles it undertook on the journey from Portugal to Vintage & Prestige's premises in Essex.

Under the bonnet, the use of a larger-capacity XK engine has still enabled the conversion to look period correct. An indication that something special might be lurking is the lack of metallic blue paint between the cam covers, as the B Series cylinder head fitted to this car originally would have been painted.

Much like the knurled gear knob, the ram pipes act as a subtle nod towards this MkIX's extensive, yet not outlandish, modification list. It becomes easy to imagine Jaguar engineers thrashing out similar ideas at the time on how to keep the new MkIX feeling superior. Although the always-impressive 3.8-litre engine and an all-round disc brake setup was their upshot, I remain certain that Browns Lane would have still approved of this incarnation with its 4.2-litre E-Type power and five forward gears. Its extra performance and modern 'box has not removed the car's sense of style or subtly; it simply makes it even more of the sports saloon the MkIX always promised to be.

THE MODERN ERA

The eighth issue of Jaguar Memories looks at the cars that came after Ford's ownership, the saloons, sports cars and even an SUV.



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