

CLASSIC
JAGUAR
PRESENTS

JAGUAR

XK120-XK150

BUYING GUIDES, HISTORY AND MORE ON THE XK120, XK140 AND XK150



FROM THE
PUBLISHER OF
**JAGUAR
WORLD**



KELSEYmedia

SUMMER 25



£14.99

03



The real world of historic Jaguars



WWW.ZWAKMANMOTORS.COM

CLASSIC JAGUAR

An Independent Publication

Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court,
Yalding Hill, Yalding, Maidstone, Kent, ME18 6AL
+44 (0)1959 541444

Editorial

Editor Sam Skelton . sam.skelton@kelsey.co.uk

Art Editor Mark Baker . mark_baker04@yahoo.co.uk

Contributors

Alan Anderson, Iain Ayre, Paul Guinness, Rob Hawkins,
Richard Holdsworth, Jim Patten, Andrew Roberts,
Peter Simpson, Paul Walton, Iain Wakefield

Advertisement sales

Talk Media Sales

Managing Director David Lerpiniere . 01732 445325
david.lerpiniere@talkmediasales.co.uk

Account Manager

Claire Meade Gore . 01732 445301
clairemg@talk-media.uk

Advertising Production

Talk Media

Production and Design Manager Neil Hepden
01732 446727 . neil@talk-media.uk

Management

Chief Operating Officer: Phil Weeden

Subscription Marketing Director: Gill Lambert

Retail Director: Steve Brown

Publisher: Gareth Beesley

Print Production Manager: Georgina Harris

Print Production Controllers: Kelly Orriss, Hayley Brown

Subs Marketing Managers: Dave Sage, Claire Aspinall

Affiliate Marketing: Kate Chamberlain

Subscriptions

Six issues of *Classic Jaguar* are published per annum

UK annual subscription price £35.94

Europe annual subscription price £42

USA annual subscription price £42

Rest of World annual subscription price £45

UK subscription and back issue orderline

+44 (0)1959 543 747

Overseas subscription orderline +44 (0)1959 543 747

Toll free USA subscription orderline 1-888-777-0275

UK customer service team +44 (0)1959 543 747

Customer service email address subs@kelsey.co.uk

Customer service and subscription postal address: Kelsey
Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court, Yalding Hill,
Yalding, Maidstone, Kent, ME18 6AL, United Kingdom

Find current subscription offers at

<http://shop.kelsey.co.uk>

Already a subscriber? Manage your subscription

online at: <http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/myaccount>

Digital issues and subscriptions

Visit www.pktmags.com/classicjaguar

Distribution

Great Britain: Seymour Distribution Limited,

2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT

Tel. 020 7429 4000, www.seymour.co.uk

Northern Ireland and the Republic Of Ireland:

Newsread . +353 23 886 3850



When you have finished with
this magazine please recycle it.



Part of the Classics World Family
www.classicsworld.co.uk



An icon

Welcome to our celebration of the car many consider to be Jaguar's greatest sporting dynasty – the XK. It was the car that changed everything – the car that really established Jaguar as the manufacturer of good value sports cars that could outpace and outshine everything else on the road. This was a fact that was hammered home to me when I went out on the Mille Miglia – none of the other competitor cars looked quite so good while going so well.



And Jaguar knew it was on to a good thing, choosing to evolve the XK120 into the XK140 and further into the XK150 rather than changing the formula that worked so well. That hasn't stopped owners from interpreting the car the way they chose, and we've a few of those one-off creations in these pages for your delectation. But the real joy in the XK has always been in the driving – and we've not only brought you road trips, but buying guides for each and every variant to ensure that if you're tempted to take the plunge, you get off to the right start.

So join us for a 132 page blast through what it's like to restore an XK, what you need to know to buy one, and how to enjoy one once it's yours. We loved every minute of putting this together, and we hope the same spirit is reflected in your enjoyment of the finished product.

Sam Skelton

sam.skelton@kelsey.co.uk



facebook.com/classicjaguarmag



classicjaguarmag

Kelsey Media 2025 © all rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden except with permission in writing from the publishers. Note to contributors: articles submitted for consideration by the editor must be the original work of the author and not previously published. Where photographs are included, which are not the property of the contributor, permission to reproduce them must have been obtained from the owner of the copyright. The editor cannot guarantee a personal response to all letters and emails received. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Publisher. Kelsey Media accepts no liability for products and services offered by third parties. Kelsey Media uses a multi-layered privacy notice, giving you brief details about how we would like to use your personal information. For full details, visit www.kelsey.co.uk, or call 01959 543524. If you have any questions, please ask as submitting your details indicates your consent, until you choose otherwise, that we and our partners may contact you about products and services that will be of relevance to you via direct mail, phone, email or SMS. You can opt out at ANY time via email: data.controller@kelsey.co.uk or 01959 543524.

Kelsey Media takes your personal data very seriously. For more information of our privacy policy, please visit <https://www.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy/>. If at any point you have any queries regarding Kelsey's data policy you can email our Data Protection Officer at dpo@kelsey.co.uk.

CONTENTS



8 XK120 HISTORY

The full story of the first XK sports car

14 XK140 HISTORY

How Jaguar evolved its legend

18 XK150 HISTORY

The final evolution of the XK story

22 THE LAST XK120 COUPE

A 1953 fixed-head SE with more than just special equipment

28 CANADIAN XK120

A thirty year restoration – but was it worth it?

36 AUSTRALIAN XK120

The life cycle of a car once destined for Le Mans

44 C-TYPE TOOLROOM COPY

A replica C-type exact in every way

52 MILLE MIGLIA

Chasing an XK140 Roadster around Italy – and yes, it's as fun as it sounds

62 RIXON BUCKNALL SPECIAL

One man's interpretation of the perfect British sports car

70 ONE FAMILY XK140

Restored after three decades by the first owner's nephew

76 XK150 ON TOUR

Peter Simpson takes the JDHT's XK150 to the Lake District

82 BANGER RACER RESTORED

The restoration of a car most thought fit for scrap

88 XK150S HISTORY

The ultimate mechanical evolution of the XK series

94 XK150 V8

...what if the ultimate isn't enough for regular modern use? Fit a modern engine...

100 XK150 FASTBACK

A one-off family friendly conversion that's as good as a factory finish

CLASSIC JAGUAR



108 BUYING THE XK120

What you need to know to buy the original XK

114 BUYING THE XK140

All the information you need if an XK140 is the car for you

122 BUYING THE XK150

Fancy the last of the line? We show you what you need to know



Surrey Jag Centre

INDEPENDENT JAGUAR SPECIALIST



With over **60 years** experience of looking after one of the greatest British Marques, **Surrey Jag Centre** have become one of the most respected Jaguar specialists in the South of England. With our factory-trained and Supreme Master Technician, we offer unrivalled levels of service and take great pleasure in looking after our customers

cherished vehicles. We also offer a collection and delivery service for our customers' cars, alternatively we will provide a loan Jaguar.

Surrey Jag Centre is run by Jaguar enthusiasts for Jaguar enthusiasts.

We look forward to welcoming you and your Jaguar.

0208 689 3333

- ▶ AUTO-LOGIC DIAGNOSTIC EQUIPMENT
- ▶ AIRCON SERVICE CENTRE
- ▶ M.O.T's & BODYWORK
- ▶ VEHICLE INSPECTION SERVICE
- ▶ ALL AGES AND MODELS OF JAGUARS WELCOME



38 ORMSIDE WAY HOLMETHORPE IND. EST. REDHILL SURREY RH1 2LW email: mail@surreyjagcentre.co.uk www.surreyjagcentre.co.uk

FOSSEWAY

PERFORMANCE

*Modern Reliability
Classic Enjoyment*

At Fosseway Performance we design and manufacture reliability enhancing upgrades for British and Continental classic cars. We provide the discerning owner with the best of modern technology whilst maintaining a contemporary and authentic appearance.

We have a wide range of products for over 50 of the most cherished classics with a particular interest in classic Jaguar cars.

Performance Brake Upgrades

E-Type Cooling Fans

Aluminium Radiators

High Torque Starter Motors

Silicone Coolant Hoses

Dynator Conversions

Classic Car Batteries

Wire Wheel Balancing Kits

High Output Alternators

Remote Brake Bleed Kits



Engineered in the Heart of England

01386 426 249

Blockley | Glos. | England

WWW.FOSSEWAYPERFORMANCE.CO.UK

SPECIALIST CHROME PLATING RECHROMING

As rechromers for many of the leading restoration companies and having numerous top concours cars carrying our work, we know we can provide the quality, friendly and professional service you require, and have been doing so for over 35 years; so please give us a call!



Even the most famous E-Type displays our chromework

POLISHING

Aluminium rocker covers and carburettor dash pots etc.

REPAIRS

Carried out on all those damaged bumpers and overriders etc.

ACF HOWELL

Est 1986

Croft Street, Walsall, West Midlands, WS2 8JR

Tel: 01922 649992

Email: sales@acfhowell.com

As seen on TV

locommotion?



Every mechanical watch has a balance wheel, but not all balance wheels are created equal. The **C12 Loco's** 'free sprung' balance wheel (and hairspring) isn't merely a part of the watch. It's the star. Placed below the time-telling dial, on the artfully coloured and stepped platine, its mesmeric oscillations are driven by a new in-house movement – Calibre CW 003, whose hand-wound, hand-finished architecture delivers a six-day power reserve and chronometric accuracy. And because we want to tell the story of how we got here – and because we're a little *loco* ourselves – we've made a feature-length documentary about it. Just make sure you're sitting down when the price is revealed.

Scan the QR code for the full (com)otion picture.

Do your research



christopherward.com

THE XK FACTOR

Alan Anderson looks back at the legendary Jaguar sports car which paved the way for the E-type.

WORDS: ALAN ANDERSON PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY ARCHIVE



There's a well-worn cliché used by motoring journalists to describe a fine car which was missing something major: "A great engine in search of car" or "a great car in search of an engine" are still widespread in print today. But in the case of the Jaguar XK120, all the elements came together beautifully to create a legend.

The 1948 Earls Court event remains a landmark in the annual show's illustrious history. The first since the end of World

War II, it signalled Britain's slow return to normality – albeit a normality still burdened by food and fuel rationing and the necessary *Export or Die* mantra which resulted in the majority of new cars made going abroad. Those few lucky owners at home had to sign a covenant not to sell their new cars for a 12-month period, to avoid profiteering.

A record-breaking 562,954 attended the London show, hardly put off by a shocking 50 per cent hike in the admission price from 5 shillings to

7/6d. Of the several new car launches three notables stood out; the Morris Minor, the Land Rover and the real show-stopper, Jaguar's XK120.

Overshadowing the simultaneous unveiling of the new MkV saloon, the XK120 was essentially a hastily contrived two-seater roadster conceived to draw in the crowds and showcase Jaguar's first ever wholly in-house engine – the new 3,442cc XK straight six. Taking nearly nine years to design and develop, it was based upon racing engine »





principles with a relatively long stroke cast iron block topped by a Weslake-designed twin overhead camshaft top end, fed by twin SU carburettors. Lyons was always one for penny watching, and wanted his own engine so as not to have to rely on a rival, such as Standard whose engines had previously been used. He was thinking far ahead and demanded a design which was ahead of its time – something that could stay in use through several generations without becoming old-fashioned. The XK engine stayed in production for well over half a century.

Lyons hadn't planned for the XK120 to become a regular production model. Initially, it was to be a limited series – the first couple of hundred XK120s were wrapped in aluminium until overflowing order books forced Jaguar to commit to tooling up for mass steel production in May 1950. Show goers were stunned by Lyon's XK120's beautifully graceful flowing Art Deco-esque lines – said to be inspired by pre-war Bugatti

and BMW – but they were equally bowled over by the car's price of less than £1,000 pre-tax. *Motor Sport* suggested that "It was even rumoured by sceptical persons that the 'XK' was too good to be true and must be just a publicity move, that Jaguar would never put it into series-production, at all events at the original price".

Even once Purchase Tax was added, £1,263 amounted to just a third of the cost of a rival Frazer Nash Replica. By the last of the outgoing XK150S models, which roughly cost the same of the new E-type, £2,176 still seems remarkable value compared to the £3,968 of an Aston Martin DB4. Small wonder that when production finally commenced in 1949 eager overseas buyers filled the order books.

Beneath those drop-dead gorgeous looks was basically the rump of the MkV saloon, which unlike the engine, was utterly conventional. The skeleton chassis was considerably shortened for a 102in wheelbase and so needed less

bracing; front suspension was a Lyons-designed double wishbone affair using torsion bar springing although simple leaf springs were fitted at the stern. Steering was a Burman recirculating box and the brakes were sizeable 12inch drums all-round. Two models were discussed at the launch – the six-cylinder XK120 and an entry level four-cylinder variant called the XK100. But while both engines were on display at Earls Court the 105bhp 1,995cc unit was discarded on cost grounds – an XK120 was both smoother and faster and with similar production costs, the XK100 was dismissed as an unprofitable model.

All engines were extensively bench tested for three hours prior to installation – albeit on town gas as it was less expensive than Pool petrol. Lyons displayed similar parsimony when it came to the original show car – it eventually went on to become a factory development hack for the Le Mans inspired disc brakes!

Compared to the similar capacity



pre-war Jaguar modified ohv Standard engine retained in the MkV (although it's said that half a dozen development mules ran the XK engine) the jump from 125bhp to 160bhp gave the lighter roadster a supercar-like pace with 60 coming up in 10 seconds or so, rocketing to a claimed 124mph in open two seater form, hence the car's name.

Jaguar's top speed claims were often stretched – most people today know that the first E-types were tweaked for the press and that 150mph was beyond the average production 3.8's abilities. In contrast, save for a few incongruities, a good XK120 would live up to its name. To allay nagging doubts from customers, Jaguar went as far as setting up a special closed speed run on the new Belgian Ostend-Jabbeke motorway on 30th May 1949 with test driver Ronald 'Soapy' Sutton at the helm. A specially prepared aluminium-bodied roadster – the second XK120 to be made – complete with an undershield, taller axle ratio and racing aeroscreen,

“It was even rumoured by sceptical persons that the ‘XK’ was too good to be true and must be just a publicity move”

recorded 132.596mph (and 126.596mph with road trim hood and screens fitted) to be hailed as the World's fastest production car. To commemorate the achievement William Lyons even had a batch of brass plaques fitted to the dashboard of certain cars to 'certify' that this road car was an exact replica of that record braking roadster.

Subtle subterfuge? Perhaps, but most independent magazine road tests regularly recorded over 120mph, one exception being *Autocar* where one example couldn't crack 115mph or sprint to 60 in under 12 seconds. A later steel-bodied SE spec fixed-head sporting 180bhp just about made it at 120.5mph on the same strip of

Belgian road, albeit battling against the traffic. To understand these results, you need to note that for safety and consistency, magazines would test their cars two-up. The quality of post war "pool" petrol would also account for the poorer performance.

The SE optional upgrade was one of the last of a myriad of modifications prior to the XK140 replacement. The most major was the shift to steel production in May 1950 which we mentioned earlier, which added 56lb to the car's already weighty 2,919lb kerb weight. It necessitated a substantial redesigning of the bodysell and front bulkhead and the deletion of much of the ash framework, although the »



alloy bonnet and door skins remained. The starting handle was soon ditched once a new style radiator grille was fitted, while carburettor and air filter alterations were made; welcome body vent flaps fitted into the front wings for better ventilation and an improved hood design were among lengthening revision list. Other notable changes included a standard windscreen washer, stiffer rear springs and wider 5.5in wheels.

The Roadster was supplemented in 1951 with a fixed-head coupé variant, announced at the first post-war Geneva Motor Show. It's to Lyons' credit that the metal roof didn't look like an afterthought and - befitting its new touring image - the new model was much more refined than the 168lb lighter Roadster. There were proper, larger doors with glass side windows, metal as opposed to plywood floors, a plusher cockpit with walnut and leather and also - thanks to the change of bulkhead design - a heater could now be offered before being standardised on both by 1952. Such was the success of the FHC that a DHC (Drophead Coupé) followed in 1953, enjoying the similar

added refinement but twinned with wind-in-the-hair enjoyment. By then price rises had seen the basic Roadster ticketed at £1 606 and the new DHC £1,644. This still represented remarkable value when compared with that other best of Britain, Aston Martin's new DB2 which cost £1,000 more.

Having proved that the XK120 was the world's fastest production model, Lyons looked to demolishing the opposition on the race tracks. After the original Ostend-Jabbeke success the XK120 regularly achieved new maximum speed and endurance records which included a re-run of the Jabbeke speed trail where the rally prepared MDU 524 exceeded 140mph. As early as 1951 Jaguar issued a Service Bulletin eloquently titled *Tuning Modification on 120 Cars for Competition Purposes*, listing a variety of factory-approved, dealer fit components such as higher lift camshafts, high compression pistons, a choice of axle ratios, uprated suspension, M14 brake shoes and bucket seats. Such was the uptake that the standalone 180bhp SE Special Equipment variant was launched.

Adding £180 to the screen prices which now cost virtually £1,700 after tax for the FHC, a further option was great looking wire wheels which the XK styling always cried out for and to help cool those heavily worked drum brakes. Sadly, this necessitated the deletion of the old fashioned rear wheel spats.

Such was the performance of even a standard XK120 it immediately earned itself fans in motorsport, attracting such luminaries as Stirling Moss, Duncan Hamilton, Tommy Wisdom and 1961 F1 champion Phil Hill. In its first ever circuit event at the newly reinstated Silverstone Tourist Trophy Race, a trio of patriotic red, white and blue XKs were seen, the latter being the ex-show car (HKV 455), all three lapped the entire field before two took the top two spots on the podium. Further track success followed including a fine first-time effort at Le Mans but rally car NUB 120 is the most famous XK120 of them all. Driven by Ian Appleyard and partnered by Lyons' daughter Pat, who subsequently became Mrs Appleyard, it dominated the Tulip and Alpine rallies several times (including scooping the first ever



Alpine Gold Cup for competing in three Alpine trials without conceding a single penalty point) as well as collecting a pair of RAC Rally victories before its well-earned retirement in 1953.

“Such was the performance of even a standard XK120 it immediately earned itself fans in motorsport”

THE WRITE STUFF

We could fill this entire issue with the accolades and plaudits the XK120 earned in the press. In the 1949 road test *Motor* said that the car's performance was so far above normal that it could be “virtually described as of scientific purposes only” and praised the performance of its drum brakes, unlike the performance of the headlamps. “A car which is a winner even at this early stage in what should be a very long and honourable career”. was the verdict.

Autocar, testing the first steel-bodied car, couldn't have heaped more praise on it if the it had tried, stating “there is a temptation to draw from the motoring vocabulary every adjective in the superlative concerning the performance, and to call upon the devices of italics and even the capital letter!” The testers called it “two cars in one...a

thoroughbred racehorse...extremely powerful.... yet docile” and saying that nothing before at such a price “has been previously achieved”. *Autocar* went to describe it as, “A car of tremendous performance and yet displaying the flexibility, and even the silkiness and smoothness of a mild-mannered saloon”.

It was the more critical Americans who took the Jag down a peg or two, despite taking three in every four cars sold. *Speed Age* disliked the “downright uncomfortable” low speed ride but countered this by saying above 50mph it was a one of the best ever tested. The magazine didn't like its overheating habits in traffic and thought the heater was designed “by someone who wintered in Florida”. However, more important sports car considerations such as looks, performance, drivability

were all deemed excellent and later tests became far more favourable. The authoritative Road & Track liked its dual personality and claimed there was “more performance than you'll ever need”. Its testers preferred the harder suspension of the ‘M’ model (the US equivalent of our SE) for its better high speed ride. By the time the XK120 made way for the roomier easier to drive XK140 in 1953 prices had swollen to £1,643 for a standard Roadster and £1,793 for the DHC SE in the UK but reduced by 17 per cent for the American market, starting from \$3,345.

The XK120 was the standard setter which put Jaguar on the map, earning it a fearsome sports car reputation. Arguably, without its success the E-type and future sporting greats might never have seen the light of day. ■



SECOND ATTEMPT

Andrew Roberts considers the middle model – sitting between the iconic XK120 and the last, most refined XK150, the XK140 is nonetheless an XK worth having.

WORDS: ANDREW ROBERTS PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY ARCHIVE

When the XK140 made its bow at the 1954 London Motor Show, Jaguar faced the significant challenge of refining the design of the 1948 XK120 without destroying its *raison d'être*. Their achievement was enhancing the appeal of the original model to create a family of sports cars with 'smoothness, silence, tractability and road adhesion.'

By 1954, the USA took almost half of Jaguar's output, and that market's demands shaped many of the XK140's

improvements, including larger bumpers with overriders and flashing indicators. It could be further distinguished from the XK120 by its larger headlamps, modified grille with thicker vertical bars and rear reflectors. The famous 3,442cc DOHC engines were to XK120 SE tune; higher-lift camshafts, altered porting, a lightened flywheel, uprated valve springs, high-compression pistons, stiffer torsion bars and rear leaf springs.

The latest Jaguar also boasted a close-ratio gearbox, and Laycock-de-Normanville overdrive, on the

fourth ratio, became an optional extra for the first time. Further improvements included Alford & Alder rack and pinion steering replacing the earlier Burman recirculating ball while the column was now at a more comfortable angle. Enthusiasts noted the modified front suspension and telescopic rear shock absorbers instead of the XK120's lever arms.

The new model shared the 102-inch wheelbase of its predecessor, but Jaguar moved the bulkhead three inches further forward to provide



greater cabin space. The choice of bodies remained the Roadster, Fixed Head Coupe and Drophead Coupe, with the first-named retaining detachable side-screens and a removable windscreen. It also featured modified doors to allow for more elegant entry and exit. FHC owners benefitted from an extended roofline that was also higher by 1.5 inches and detachable rear seats, a feature shared with the DHC. However, these were vestigial at best; the sales copy billed the Fixed Head Coupe as a "close coupled 2-3 seater". When not in use, the rear bulkhead folded to form a luggage platform.

Jaguar, with justifiable pride, claimed the Roadster was 'more than ever the aristocrat of open sports cars.' In 1954, a top speed of 125mph and 0-60 in 8.4 seconds was virtual science fiction for many Britons. In a time before motorways, a British Racing Green XK140 was the sort of car that would sweep past them on a trunk road, possibly with a police Wolseley 6/80 in pursuit. A Jaguar sports car possessed an image that, while never vulgar (perish the thought) was slightly raffish. It is probably no coincidence

that Terry-Thomas, British cinema's finest bounder, drove a DHC in the 1956 comedy film *The Green Man*.

By 1955 the Roadster cost £1,598 8s 4d, with the Drophead priced at £1,616 2s 6d, and the FHC for £1,644 9s 2d. These were certainly large sums by the

standards of the day when a Morris Minor 4-Door Series II could be yours for just £560 14s 2d, but compared with many of its rivals, the Jaguar was a bargain. The Jensen 541 was £1,821 10s 10d while the Aston Martin DB2/4 Mk. II Drophead was an even more formidable »



£3,117 15s 10d. As for overseas competitors, the Porsche 356 Super Convertible sold in the UK for £2,216 2s 6d while anyone contemplating buying a Lancia Aurelia Spyder needed to be on excellent terms with their bank managers; the cost was £2,997 7s 6d. Meanwhile, Mercedes-Benz GB could always sell you a 300SL Gullwing for a mere £4,392 15s 10d – or about ten times the average annual wage.

Customers were able to order their XK140 versions in Special Equipment guise, aka the XK140M in the USA, which included wire wheels, windscreen washers, Lucas fog and spot lamps, and a dual exhaust system. Finally, for the would-be Stirling Moss, Jaguar offered the SE version with a C-type head, sold by Jaguar North America as the XK140MC. The desirable specification encompassed high lift camshafts, altered suspension, and a 9.0:1 compression ratio, with a power output of 210 bhp. To enhance the look of their XK140, the well-heeled owner could specify a boot-mounted luggage rack, a steel underbody protective shield, whitewall Dunlop Road Speed tyres, a Radiomobile wireless and, for that weekend jaunt to Goodwood, two suitcases to match the interior trim.

Meanwhile, the Browns Lane marketing department proclaimed,



“Today, the XK140 is the Jaguar sports car of choice for many aficionados, due to its blend of the looks of the XK120 with a certain degree of refinement.”

without undue modesty: ‘All the wealth of experience gained on the race-tracks of the world and in record-breaking speed and endurance tests is built into every Jaguar to provide for discriminating motorists the highest degree of efficient performance allied to comfort and safety.’ And John Bolster of *Autosport* echoed such copy when he wrote:

The Jaguar XK140 is a very high

class machine that has more delightful qualities than almost any other car on the market. I have long ago given up wondering how they make them for the money; for sheer value there is nothing to compare with them in the high-performance field.

Autocar was similarly impressed, noting that the XK140’s almost 50/50 weight distribution ‘has eliminated the oversteer noticeable in the earlier





XK120". The impact of the extra fittings meant it was no quicker than its predecessor, despite the additional power. but the writer approved of the more responsive steering and the cabin's greater comfort. Across the Atlantic, *Car & Driver* wrote: 'The engine in all of the new models seems practically unbreakable and the handling and comfort are much improved. The rack and pinion steering is a step toward an even more tractable ride.'

The *C&D* tester also believed that moving the engine forward meant improved handling – 'The car will now go into a drift easily, and it is perfectly controllable through the whole turn.' *Sports Car Illustrated* noted, 'If used in town it can be difficult to the point of being tiring, but this is not its purpose

in life.' Instead, they found the XK140 'a delight to drive at high speeds over long distances on fast winding roads.' Back at the showroom, your friendly local Jaguar dealer would probably tell you of its superior 0-60 acceleration to Ford Thunderbird with a 4.8-litre V8 engine.

In 1955 Browns Lane fitted the XK140 with a new rotor-type oil pump, a new thermostat and a modified cylinder head, while the significant news for 1956 was the optional automatic transmission. *Motor Sport* complained such a fitting 'shouldn't appeal to sports-car drivers', but the Borg Warner box enhanced sales in the USA. From October 1956 onwards, the FHC and DHC had aluminium rather than steel doors. Sales ended three months later with the introduction

of the XK150. 3,276 Roadsters. 1959 FHCs and 2,310 DHCs were in LHD form, reflecting the XK140's impact on world markets. Jaguar boasted that 'complete and effortless mastery is in the hands of the driver at all times and at all speeds', and countless owners found this was the case.

Today, the XK140 is the Jaguar sports car of choice for many aficionados, due to its blend of the looks of the XK120 with a certain degree of refinement. As Mr. Bolster put it this was a motor car that was 'undoubtedly glamorous, so much so that it has become an international symbol of prosperity and success. The Jaguar, however, shares with the *Corinthian of Regency* times the ability to combine elegance with performance.' ■

LAST OF THE LINE

Was the final evolution of the XK breed really the best of the bunch?

WORDS: SAM SKELTON PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY ARCHIVE

Launched in May 1957, the Jaguar XK150 was the last model in a family that had earned itself road and race respect the world over. A two model range was announced at first – a fixed-head coupe and a drophead coupe; customers hoping for an open two

seat roadster would have to wait until the following year. Visible differences were clear – the wing line was raised, the bonnet was widened and given a grille treatment similar to the 3.4 litre saloon, and the windscreen on the coupe was moved forwards by four inches. The coupe also gained

a revised, and much more delicate glass arrangement. As with the XK140 though, the wheelbase and overall dimensions of the car remained unchanged, with the XK150 measuring just four inches longer and under an inch wider than the XK120 with which it shared an identical wheelbase.



Inside, all models had a new leather-trimmed and foam-backed dashboard as standard, though walnut – as on the XK120 and XK140 which preceded it – was optional. There was even more interior room, too – courtesy of thinner door panels. Underneath, the chassis owed much to its XK140 predecessor, but the optional disc brakes had become a standard feature. The 210bhp 3.4 litre XK engine was carried over unchanged from the XK140. Automatic transmission was an optional extra targeted at the American market.

In 1957 you would have paid £1,763 17s Od for your XK150 FHC, and an extra £30 for the DHC. Automatic transmission added £192 0s Od, while the SE equipment package added £176 0s Od. An AC Aceca would have cost £2,063 17s Od at the same time, an Aston Martin DB2/4 £2,888 17s Od, and a Porsche 356 £1,958 17s Od. Against these cars the XK150 seemed like outstanding value – for the same price as a Rover 105R Deluxe, you could get some real speed in a package that ceded nothing in terms of creature comforts. But we shouldn't get ahead of ourselves here – Andrew Roberts likened the cost of its predecessor on page 69 to the Morris Minor for context, and the equivalent price of £662 17s Od shows that in relative terms the XK150 was no less costly than its forebear.

When tested by *Autocar* in February 1958, it felt that "the manner in which this Jaguar goes about its business is impressive... the way in which the twin-overhead camshaft engine launched the car into the distance was quite memorable." It particularly liked the disc brakes – "Their behaviour is superb, and the fade-free retardation always



available permits an experienced driver to travel very quickly with confidence." However, it didn't like that speed caused the wiper blades to lift from the screen or that the windscreen reflected the dashboard covering. Overall, it felt that "the Jaguar XK150 is undeniably one of the world's fastest and safest cars. It is quiet and exceptionally refined mechanically, docile and comfomable, As with most cars, there are a few body details which could be improved, but we do not know of any more outstanding example of value for money."

Motor Sport magazine felt that "for an outlay of under £1,800 the purchaser of this latest addition to the twin-cam Jaguar family buys more safe speed and convenience than it is possible to obtain elsewhere." Tester Bill Boddy didn't praise every

aspect, however, stating that "Indeed, in matters of detail the Jaguar disappoints, because there are items which seem to lack the touch of experienced drivers in the planning of this fast coupe. The seats, for example, are deep and luxuriously upholstered but the driver would appreciate more support from cushion and squab, while so low is the seat that a driver of average height can only just see both front wings." Overall though, *Motor Sport* liked the car, adding "we hasten to remind the reader of the very high performance offered by the Jaguar XK150 at what can only be regarded as a very modest price, and of the sheer pleasure to be derived from driving fast this very excellent motor car."

This was echoed in Jaguar's bullish sales material, which bragged of





"comfort and refinement quite exceptional in this type of motoring" and as benefiting from "the most complete specification to be offered on any sports car in the world today". "A wonderful blend of excitement, luxury, safety" read the American brochure, while its British equivalent suggested that "In indulging his preference for the roadster type of car, the enthusiast has, in the past, accepted certain disadvantages as being inevitable, but with the introduction of the new Jaguar XK150 Roadster all disadvantages have been swept away."

After the first year, Jaguar introduced new Special Equipment versions with more powerful engines – alongside the first of the Open Two Seater model which replaced the old XK140 roadster, production having overlapped the XK150 launch. The XK150 roadster differed from its predecessor in that it had winding windows, but kept the more basic hood arrangement of the older car. The roadster was also available in 250bhp S form, with a straight port cylinder head and triple SU's. Unlike the base and SE, automatic transmission was not an option for the



XK150S. Both models were launched in March 1958 for export, but not available for the UK until October of that year. The S-spec was made available across all bodystyles in March 1959, with a Powr-Lok diff as an optional extra.

October 1959 saw the single biggest change to the XK150 series – coinciding with the launch of the new 3.8-litre engine in the Mk2 and MkIX families, the XK150 was also offered with the new 3781cc variant of the XK engine – producing 220bhp with the B-type head and twin SU HD6s for standard and SE models, and producing 265bhp with a straight port head for S models fitted with triple SU HD8s. 0-60 took just seven seconds for a 3.8S, which could top out at 135mph. 3.4-litre models continued alongside the 3.8 as a better value alternative – the basic 3.4 FHC retailed at £1,666 against £1,942 for the 3.8, while the 3.4S FHC was £2,065 against the £2,176 of the 3.8S. That meant that an XK150 could be yours for considerably less than the £1,949 asked for a Lotus Elite, or even the £1,684 of an AC Ace roadster.

Sales ended in 1961 as Jaguar readied itself for the new E-type – a car which



had to be phenomenally good for Jaguar to be able to consider it an improvement. Fortunately, history tells us that the E-type changed sports car design forever. A total of 9,382 XK150s were built across its four year life – 2,265 Roadsters, 2,672 DHCs and 4,445 FHCs.

In today's market the XK150 is recognised as the most refined variant on the theme, and prices – while still behind the original XK120 – are higher than those of the XK140 with this in mind. As a regular use model it's certainly the most capable – and yet without losing that spark that made





SPECIAL EFFECT

In 1951 Jaguar introduced both the XK120 fixedhead coupe and the SE model, cars that set the standard for future models. We discover a fascinating history awaits when we drive the very last example produced

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL WALTON



Here was nothing clever or cryptic about the name Jaguar gave its new variant of XK120 in 1951, because SE literally meant Special Equipment. However, considering the higher specification the package offered, what it lacked in creativity it made up for with accuracy. Together with the more refined fixedhead coupe version that had arrived earlier the same year, the pair transformed the XK120 from a simple sports car into something more refined, the kind of car for which the company would later become synonymous. No example exemplifies this as successfully as the final one produced in 1954 and no owner was as suited to the car as its first.

By all accounts, Alex Henshaw was a genuine British hero, the sort that

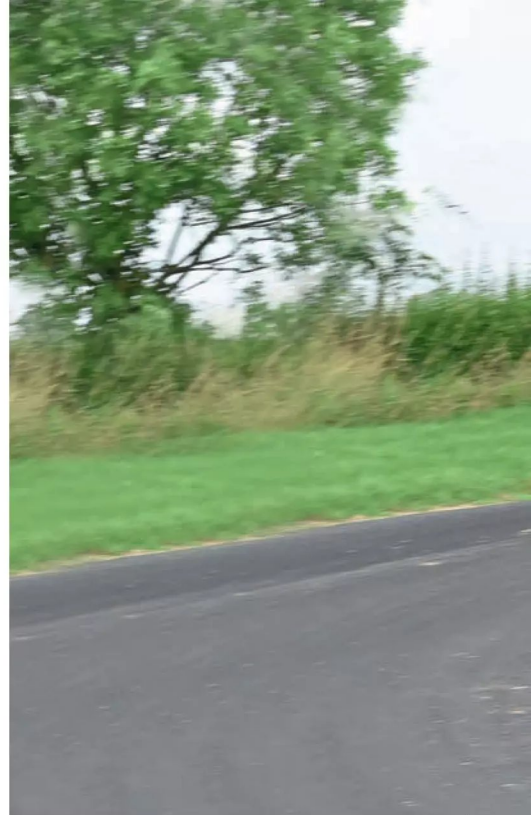
boys would have read about during the Forties and Fifties in *The Hotspur* or *Eagle* comics. Born in Peterborough on 7 November 1912, he learnt to fly at the Skegness and East Lincolnshire Aero Club in 1932. Although funded by his wealthy father (who later bought his son a de Havilland Gypsy Moth), Henshaw Jnr was clearly a natural in the air, soon making a name for himself in racing. In 1933, he competed in the Kings Cup Air Race, taking the event's prestigious Siddeley Trophy. After winning the inaugural London-to-Isle of Man air race in 1937, he turned his attention to long-distance flying and, in 1938, flew from Gravesend to Cape Town and back. The four days, ten hours and 16 minutes he took to cover the 12,754-mile round trip was a new record, which lasted for 70 years.

At the start of World War Two, Henshaw began working for Vickers-Armstrong and, after testing Wellington bombers at Weybridge, he was invited to work with Spitfires at Southampton. He moved to Castle Bromwich in 1940 and was soon appointed chief test pilot. It's said that Henshaw flew ten percent of all the famed fighter planes produced, flying up to 20 aircraft a day, often in foggy conditions. He would also demonstrate the planes for visiting dignitaries, including the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, in 1941.

The immediate post-war years saw Henshaw become a director of Miles Aircraft in South Africa before returning to England in 1948 to take charge of the family farm and other business interests in Lincolnshire. In 1953, he was awarded the Queen's Commendation »

HISTORY

XK120 FHC SE



for Bravery for his rescue work during the dreadful floods that afflicted the county earlier that year.

It's clear from the car Henshaw bought in 1954 that the now-wealthy former fighter plane test pilot hadn't lost his love of speed because it wasn't a luxury saloon he chose, rather an XK120 in SE spec, which offered more refinement than a standard roadster could offer. It was also the very last fixedhead coupe ever produced.

Jaguar had introduced the FHC at the Geneva motor show four years previously, and offered everything the OTS did in terms of performance (in fact, due to having better aerodynamics, the coupe was slightly

faster), but was much more civilised.

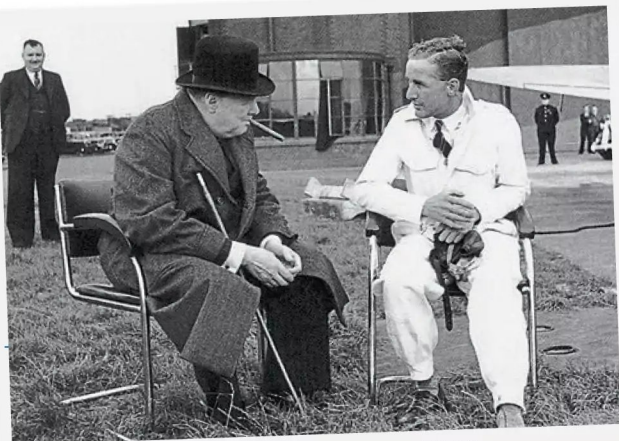
Not only did it offer the benefit of proper weather protection, but it also had conventional exterior door handles, wind-up glass windows that could be lowered completely, and opening front quarter lights for better ventilation, all luxuries that were rarely fitted to sports cars at the time, including the XK120 roadster.

The new roofline was similar to that of the one-off SS 100 coupe from 1938, but most of the bodywork was the same as the OTS except for the front wing-mounted air vents that could be opened inside. They provided good airflow to counteract the heat generated in the cockpit (a feature that was also

standardised on the open car at around the same time). The FHC's doors were slightly wider to improve access and the windscreen surround became an integral part of the bodywork with the roof.

Arguably, though, the biggest change over the open two-seater was to the coupe's interior. More luxurious, instead of leather as per the roadster, the centre console – which also featured a new layout of switches and dials taken from the Mk VII – was covered in thick walnut veneer, as were the door tops. There was even a lockable glovebox and two recessed interior lights adjacent to the rear window.

The XK120 fixedhead coupe was well received by the press. "When it is



Henshaw (right) with the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, in 1941



The coupe's second owner, Richard Colton, drives the car at Brands Hatch in 1956



realised that this car, capable of speeds in excess of 120mph, coupled with startling acceleration, has a basic price of £1,140, some idea of its exceptional value for money will be gained," reported *Autocar* magazine in its 17 October 1952, issue. "This fact, coupled with the built-in ability to withstand a great deal of hard work without protest makes it a very desirable car."

That opened up a new, more civilised market compared to the basic OTS and is regarded as Jaguar's first genuine Grand Tourer, a position that was further consolidated by the introduction of the Special Equipment model the same year.

It could be ordered new from the factory and, using information learned by success on the track, the SE package consisted of high-lift camshafts, a special crankshaft damper, lightened flywheel, 8:1 compression ratio pistons and a twin exhaust system. *Autocar* magazine discovered that in this trim the XK120 FHC could manage 60mph in 9.9 seconds (more than two faster than it had earlier achieved in a standard

roadster) and on the long, arrow-straight Belgian motorway between Ostend and Jabbeke it was able to reach the magic 120mph. "The fact that there is sufficient power available to propel this car at such a speed gives it superb acceleration," continued *Autocar*, "a quality that makes it extremely pleasant to drive and enables long distances to be covered very quickly."

Together with stiffer springs and wire wheels in body colour, the SE spec was good value, costing a mere £115 for the roadster and £105 for the FHC. With its increased refinement, the coupe and the faster SE spec was a highly desirable combination and, even in 1954, the final year of XK120 production, it made the then-elderly car still popular with more discerning buyers.

They included Alex Henshaw who bought the final FHC through his local Jaguar dealer, Roland C Bellamy, in Grimsby. Registered GJL 300 and painted in Suede Green with matching interior trim, chassis number S669195 was built on 14 July 1954, coming off the Browns Lane production

line a few months before the final open two-seater in September.

Perhaps a result of Jaguar's involvement with aircraft during the war (including manufacturing components for the Spitfire), but somehow Henshaw had a personal relationship with the company because he was able to specify the optional SU 2in carburettors with a coarse, sandblast finish, which no other XK120 had been fitted with from new. Correspondence with his family by the current owner shows »





that Henshaw, who passed away in 2007, apparently visited Browns Lane with his FHC just three months after taking delivery, insisting that it be retrofitted with the C-type head.

Available from April 1953, the special head was based on that used for the race-winning car: the inlet valve size remained at 13/4in, but the exhaust valve diameter increased

from 17/16in to 15/8in. Both the inlet and exhaust porting was enlarged so that, in conjunction with 8:1 pistons and two 13/4in carbs, when fitted with the C-type head the 3.4-litre unit was rated at 210bhp, 30bhp more than the standard engine.

Henshaw only kept the XK120 for two years, selling it on to Richard Colton, a well-known Ferrari collector and

amateur racer, who went on to compete in the car throughout the country. Sir George Burton, the chairman of Fisons Ltd, a British pharmaceutical, scientific instruments and horticultural chemicals company based in Ipswich, later took ownership of the car. Burton was another motor sport enthusiast who once raced Frazer Nashes at Brooklands and twice entered the Monte Carlo Rally in the Fifties.

It's not known how or why, but by the late Eighties the XK120 was in a poor state and stored in a draughty barn. Thankfully, an unknown saviour commissioned the respected classic car expert Nigel Dawes to restore it. On completion in May 1997, the green coupe went overseas to a Californian-based collector and was only occasionally seen, such as at prestigious events like Pebble Beach.

The Jaguar came back to the UK in 2007, after its current owner bought the car via auction. Once again, the XK120 is set to change hands as it is for sale through Manor Classics, located a few miles outside York in the gorgeous North Yorkshire countryside – which is where you find me heading to on this sunny summer's day.

Whether it's the last E-type, XJS





or XKR, there's always something special about the final example of any car. Following constant development, it should be the best example built, so GJL 300 (Henshaw's original number, reissued soon after the car's 2007 return to the UK) represents the ultimate closed XK120.

It's certainly a pretty one. Designed as per the open car by Jaguar's founder, Sir William Lyons, the XK120 fixedhead coupe is an early example of his eye for both perfect proportions and stylish details. And, although the restoration is almost 25 years old, the car's condition remains immaculate, the rich Suede Green paint being the perfect match for the soft, voluptuous curves that Lyons was renowned for.

The interior is a huge improvement over the austerity of the XK120 roadster. Boasting more thick veneer than the Duke of Westminster's TV cabinet, its luxury is more on a par with the Mk VII. However, the FHC can't compete with the saloon on space. With the top of the doorframe being much lower than the roofline and the huge steering wheel hindering ingress, climbing inside is complicated. Plus, once inside there's even less room and visibility, due to the tiny front, rear

“It's clear from the car Henshaw bought in 1954 that the former fighter plane test pilot hadn't lost his love of speed”

and side windows (the latter so low I need to stoop to see out), is poorer than that from a third-class cabin of a transatlantic cruise ship. But the classic white-on-black Smiths dials inset into the polished veneer, together with the simple Bakelite and chrome controls that typify the era, make the interior as beautiful as a finely crafted piece of furniture. It might be tight but it's not a terrible place to be.

The coupe weighs a very light 1,370kg, so the sweet and free-revving nature of the XK unit, especially when fitted with the C-type head, provides surprisingly eager acceleration for a car that was built when smoking was considered healthy. Although the Moss four-speed 'box can be tricky to get right without grating the gears, power arrives sooner and a little easier than in a standard XK120, the XK engine's familiar gruff growl echoing around the snug cabin when it does.

The unassisted steering isn't just light, it's also accurate. So although the huge diameter of the steering wheel makes me feel like I could be at the helm of a pre-war steamer ship, with practice I'm still able to effectively carve through the tight Yorkshire roads.

Even in SE trim like this, by the time Henshaw bought the then six-year-old XK120 it would have felt old-fashioned compared to newer models from Jaguar's continental rivals, including the Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint and Mercedes-Benz 190 SL. Yet, although this was the last example, I can imagine the still handsome coupe, with its extra power, fulfilled the then-grounded Henshaw's continuing need for speed. Special Equipment might not have been a clever name, but it remains the perfect way to describe this fabulous car. ■

THANKS TO: Manor Classics
(www.manorclassiccars.com)



WORTH THE WAIT

It has taken the Canadian owner of this XK120 more than three decades to restore it. We discover why it took so long and whether it was worth it

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: IAIN AYRE

Stephen Plunkett bought his drophead XK120 project in 1985, a time when BT began scrapping red telephone boxes and the futuristic XJ40 was only a rumour rather than an end-of-life £500 bargain. His finished drophead finally hit the road in 2018, all of 33 years later.

There are several upsides to this less-than-rushed approach, however. First, the mileage is still just 55,000. Second, it always provided him with something to daydream about. Third, the fairly brutal cost of restoring a car to this standard has been usefully amortised over all those years. Fourth, the expressions on his children's faces when they finally believed the car existed were exquisite. And, finally, the XK turned out to be a delight and not a disappointment, the latter being something that faces quite a few enthusiasts after

long-term restoration projects.

That was interesting to know, given that one of my own major automotive disappointments was my first drive of an XK120, having doodled them in school and always regarded them as one of the most beautiful cars ever. This initial bad impression had been reinforced when I noticed that Jaguar collectors tend to drive all their other Jaguars enthusiastically and as often as possible, yet their XKs are just polished and admired. But, as has since been pointed out, the particular XK I drove could have been a baggy old mess and not really representative. The point is that it is wise to experience several examples of a car you're interested in restoring before deciding how badly you need one. If you tried Stephen's XK, you would definitely need an XK.

At the same time as Stephen's

XK120 saw its first slumberings during a long bout of storage, I decided that I did need an XK badly, but I also wanted it to fit better, to be faster, to handle better, to brake better, to steer better, to be more spacious and more reliable, and never to rust. So I designed, prototyped, and built a few examples of the Ayrspeed Six, which look exactly like an early XK120, but which use a spaceframe/perimeter chassis, lightweight GRP repro panels and independent 4.2-litre XJ6 running gear and power.

Looking back now from inside an excellent XK120 drophead as its baritone exhaust-blare bounces off the rock walls of the Cypress Mountain road north of Vancouver, perhaps I should have restored a real one. But then again, driving down to Classic Le Mans in the powerful and competent car you have »



RESTORATION

XK120



designed yourself has some flavour to it. "You should have turned right there... you'll never make it... WE'RE GOING TO... Oooh. It does handle well, doesn't it?"

Stephen had more sense than to spend his time designing cars with a production run of a dozen or so, and got involved in sensible and profitable businesses instead. When he bought the crumbling XK in 1985, a combination of its poor condition and his being busy saw him put the car into storage, initially for 15 years. He also moved several times between Ontario and Vancouver, 3,000 miles apart; the car stayed mostly in Ontario.

He disassembled it in 2004, revealing some pretty major nastiness. However, rather than throwing away the rust-perforated bodywork and buying new panels, Stephen elected to restore what was there, and saved every original panel on the car. This was handled very competently by the Legendary Motor Company, in Milton, Ontario. Other notable contributors to the car that Stephen would like to thank have included XKs Unlimited, SNG Barrett and BAS Jag Interiors, and his wife, Janine, who has been cheerfully supportive.

His most useful tool throughout was XK120 Explored, by Bernard Viart, featuring 2,500 original drawings (and now selling for \$250 on Amazon).

It is quite a commitment to restore rather than replace rusty panels, as



any replacement patch that requires compound curves yields equally compound invoices. However, some parts of the XK120 are cheap to repair, such as the sides. Letting a new flat piece of metal into a flat panel requires ideally a fine grinder blade to reduce distortion when cutting the rust out, tinsnips to trim the new patch, a MIG welder turned down low and slow, and an hour of careful concentration. Much of the top of the XK's front wings is a simple, single curve, where Sir William's 'light line' running along the body is a straight line. Once the shape has been cut, bending a single-curved panel requires a slip roller and

ten minutes. The top two-thirds of an XK120, however, comprise beautiful and subtle multiple curves, which require new metal to be shrunk or stretched in three dimensions to duplicate the original curves. This tends to require an apprenticeship, artistic talent and a big cast-iron English wheel. There are no inexpensive words in that sentence.

With the restored body finished in 2006 and resplendent in its very unusual Battleship Grey, life intervened again and the next period of storage began. Stephen's children, Patrick and Lucia, had never seen this legendary Jaguar – just heard tales of its beauty and potency – and



ABOVE FROM TOP: The yellow paint on Stephen's new Jaguar conceals a multitude of sins; front wing is battered as well as rusty, and has been beaten straight with a brick and then filled over. Easy enough to change that section for new metal, though; the up-ended front wing was damaged as well as rusty, but getting the shape back with compound-curved panels is tricky

ABOVE FROM TOP: Determination to repair rather than replace the original panels means letting in quite a lot of patches that have to be big enough to remove all the rot; inside the rusty outer panels are lots of rusty substructures, but usefully they're mostly relatively simple shapes executed in flat steel sheet; bodywork is well on the way here, with several major panels in primer

ABOVE FROM TOP: The rebuild of the 3.4-litre XK engine was straightforward, with no unpleasant surprises and 100 percent parts availability; the freshened engine goes back into the car using a cherrypicker – and taking great care not to gouge any chunks out of the perfect paint; Moss gearbox requires some commitment and skill to use. It was also expensive, albeit straightforward, to rebuild, and is part of the car's flavour

they placed it in the same mental category as the tooth fairy. Until they actually saw it and fell in love with it.

Between 2009 and 2011 the project lurched back into life again with the restoration of the mechanical parts. The engine is a 3.4 sourced from an XK140 and fitted with a C-type head, resulting in something like 200bhp and the same number for torque. It's not scary but it is reasonably rapid: the first XKs offered race-level performance in 1948, and they're still quite fast now.

Again life intervened. Stephen is a pizza-based restaurateur, one of the wiser options in a fickle business, and he had his head down from 2011 to

"Stephen elected to restore what was there, and saved every original panel on the car"

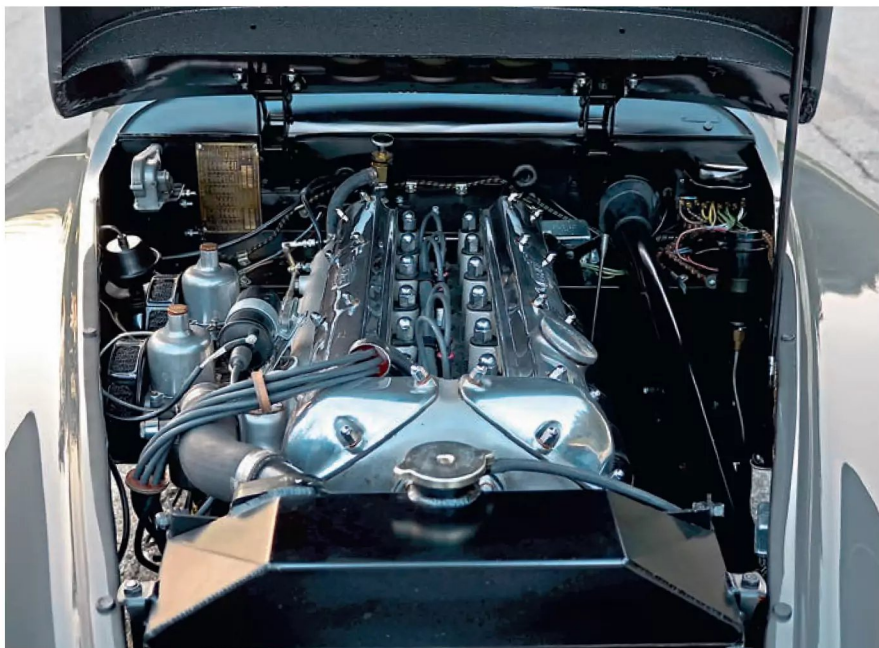
2016. He then got going again with the interior and trimming, having fully recovered from the trauma of the engine and mechanical invoices. That was just as well, because the interior by BAS Jaguar Interiors came with a bill that would impress an American hospital or a divorce lawyer. Worth every penny, though. Both the trim and the woodwork are gorgeous; better than the original.

When we photograph the car, it has only been on the road for a matter of days. Although it has been shown at the fairly major All British Field Meet, in Vancouver, and at a local Jaguar event, it's not going to be a show car so will soon collect patina from enthusiastic use.

Now free of rust and wear, Stephen's drophead XK is better than new, given the later more careful assembly »

RESTORATION

XK120



and superior materials. It's probably about as good as an XK gets.

The XK chassis is an adapted and shortened version of the high-off-the-ground Mk VII saloon chassis, so you inevitably sit on an XK120 rather than in it. The only alternative to that is to design your own spaceframe chassis with big external side sill beams, and hang the floor off the bottom of the chassis rather than on top of it, lowering the seat base by six inches or so. Some might say that's an extreme approach to achieving a good driving position,

but if you're tall, in real terms you can't drive an XK. Up to about 5ft 9in works. There's no spare room, but there is just about enough room. Stephen is, usefully, the right size and shape to fit his car, and although it's still very new to him he's coming to terms with it and seriously enjoying it. The bellow of the big Jaguar-six during exercise is intoxicating, and although it doesn't comfortably rev very high, you can use the mid-range torque for rapid progress.

The gearbox is a Moss four-speed, which, if they are in good condition,

you can learn to work with it. It's clunky, precise and sometimes balky; not the easiest gearchange as you have to be quite firm with it. There's no synchro on first gear, but although you can double-declutch into first for fun, there's no need. With 200lb ft of torque moving 3,000lb of car, you can effortlessly take off at walking speed in second gear, which would have been expected as contemporary driving technique anyway. In fact, the manual for the post-war six-cylinder Bentley Mk VI instructs you to take off in second unless you're on a steep hill. Sufficient grunt means we don't need revs.

Stephen has gone for 600 x 16 Dunlop RS5 crossply tyres, for the authentic period experience. He has already had an authentic-period flat tyre – tubed tyres are more vulnerable to punctures than tubeless steel-braced radials.

He's enjoying driving a performance car on the old-school tyres, although it's demanding. If you're driving a Morris Minor, it doesn't matter what the tyres are, but for a 130mph car it becomes much more critical. Stephen reports that the tyres have a mind of their own on road crowns and cracks, but in corners they don't wander unless upset. Grip is obviously limited, but that's part of the fun. Spax shocks have sharpened up the front suspension, although the rear shocks remain standard. XK steering is brutally heavy at low speeds, but that's only with soft radial tyres. Go back to the original small contact patch and narrow, stiff-sided crossply tyre design





and, while the steering is still heavy for parking, it's not really a problem. I've just gone back to crossplies on my 1947 Mk VI Bentley, and, while scary at speed, the feel of the steering is much improved.

The colour combo on the XK is interesting. The car was originally black with tan, and now it is Battleship Grey with tan. The paint colour is extremely rare, and wasn't popular when the car was new – but restrained warm grey contrasts well with the slightly orangey tan leather, and the paint's visual understatement complements the voluptuous curves of the bodywork sculpture.

The new woodwork is absolutely gorgeous, better than a lot of Rolls-Royce's – many coats of varnish and many weeks of full-time work culminate in a deep and flawless finish. Another

impressive invoice, but again worth every penny.

The drophead roof is in a different league from the very basic OTS detachable sidescreens and foldaway lightweight top, which are pretty hardcore convertible, but which leave the car's gorgeous lines free of any clutter. As most buyers wanted that full-on open two-seater experience, the LHD dropheads are very rare, with only a few ever exported. They have full steel windscreen frames, quarter lights, wind-up windows, less-scaled doors with exterior handles, and a lined, padded canvas roof with a hard rear window – an entirely more civilised proposition than the OTS.



The XK120 at the All British Field Meet, Van Dusen Gardens, Vancouver in May 2018

Stephen has only just started to enjoy this car, although the restoration was interesting. As he puts it, "The long process, while testing the sanity of all involved, was worth it all for the sound of the first start-up and drive." We hope and trust it will bring him many years of pleasure. ■



Now in Partnership with  **COHBAINES**

Get a new rubber for your Jaguar with the confidence of a perfect fit every time



S1+2 FHC Front & Rear • S1+2 DHC • S1 2+2 • S3 2+2 • S3 Roadster

Quote **Rubber10** to receive a 10% discount when ordering

Call Pilkington Classics today on **01527 505209**



Upgrades developed for

XK - E Type/Mk2 - XJ and Specials



Dunlop Style wheels available in
15" and 16" diameter to suit Bolt
On - Splined - Peg Drive Hubs
from £445.00 each



Supra 5 Speed conversion set
including rebuilt gearbox
from £2375.00 each



RAM high performance
shock absorbers
from £110.00 each

Heritage C Type

One of the best kept secrets in the Industry
300+ units Supplied World Wide
- uses readily available XJ Parts and is IVA compliant.

Build yourself a Classic

All prices plus VAT and Delivery

Realm Engineering

Tel: 01386 849116

www.realmengineering.com

info@realmengineering.com



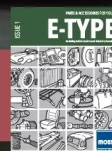
Billet Aluminium 4 pot Front
Caliper set to suit Solid or
Supplied Vented Discs
from £525.00 each



SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP TO OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Be the first to know about sales and offers from Moss Europe, as well as new and back-in-stock items, our latest blogs about classic car ownership, and much more.

FREE DIGITAL CATALOGUES



BODY & CHASSIS | ENGINE | BRAKES | STEERING & SUSPENSION | INTERIOR | PERFORMANCE & TUNING | & MUCH MORE



**MWS WIRE WHEELS
& ACCESSORIES**



**REVOTEC COOLING
FAN KITS**



**STANDARD AND
ALUMINIUM RADIATORS**



**WINDSCREENS &
DOOR GLASS**



**TOURIST TROPHY
EXHAUST SYSTEMS**



DYNOLITE OILS

FULL RANGE OF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND IN-STORE.



JAGUAR

MX-5

SPECIALISING IN MG, TRIUMPH, AUSTIN-HEALEY, MORRIS, CLASSIC MINI, JAGUAR, MX-5, AND UNIVERSAL PARTS

moss

moss-europe.co.uk | 0800 281 182

PLAN B

A racing XK120 that was once intended for Le Mans instead fell into oblivion in Australia. It has since been found and lovingly restored

WORDS: **RICHARD HOLDSWORTH**
PHOTOGRAPHY: **CHRISTOPHER KISCH, JULIAN LUGG, BOB TAYLOR, SAM LACEY**

There are as many tales of XK120 Jaguars as there are spokes in a set of Borrani wheels – but not many with the history of AJK 906. Said to be ear-marked for Le Mans, it was later sent to Australia, where it slipped into disrepair before being saved by Jaguar fan and headmaster Julian Lugg.

Successes in 1950 in the world-famous Le Mans race and in the USA, where Phil Hill (to be Formula One World Champion of 1961) brought home an XK120 in first place at the inaugural Pebble Beach Road Races and an XK120 won the Production Class at Palm Beach Shores, Florida, prompted (Sir) William Lyons and his chief engineer, Bill Heynes, to invest in future competitions for Jaguar and the XK120.

A punishing calendar of rallies, hill climbs and sprints – including the Brighton Rally, a similar event in Eastbourne and the Bentley Driver's Club 1952 Firlie Hill Climb – awaited AJK 906 after Mr MG Mackey bought it new for £1,250 on 7 April 1952, from Jaguar dealer Willetts Limited, of Eastbourne. Seen in practice at Goodwood, it caught a photographer's eye there, because at one time its picture held pride of place in the showrooms of Jaguar in London.

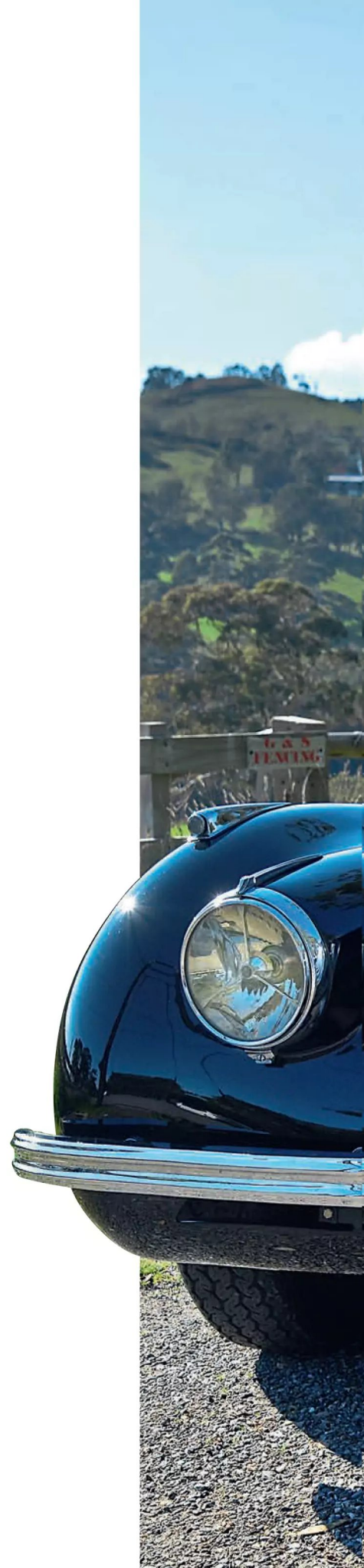
In 1959, Robert Kisch came across the car in Jack Barclay's showrooms in Berkley Square. He was on a business trip to London when the car took his fancy, and he thought it would make a wonderful present for his wife. Kisch struck a deal with the salesman, and paid £950, plus

a free lunch at the Dorchester. The salesman's story that it had once been a back-up for the works team at Le Mans must have helped the sale, too.

Kisch owned a diesel engine research and development company – Ailsa Craig, in Ashford, Kent – and his engineers, headed by two R&D men, Tony Turner and Eddie Godden, soon took more than a passing interest in the new acquisition. The car was fitted with an updated XK150 cylinder head, RB needles in older SU carburettors, wire ties for many components and, probably the most important of all, front disc brakes. The car was tested on the Ashford bypass (under police supervision) and clocked at 124mph.

Kisch's son, Christopher, says that his mother, Margaret, loved the car. "She would pick me up each day at Ingles Manor pre-prep school in Folkstone and drive me back to Park Farm in Ruckinge. It was a 40-mile round trip and she enjoyed every mile in the XK," he says. Christopher relished four years of those memorable rides in the eye-catching, black, XK120 before the car was sold on and was again raced.

Then another chapter opened up. Along with two other XKs and a Rolls-Royce, AJK 906 sailed 12,000 miles to the state of Victoria, Australia. Its new owner was ID Bennet of Mount Eliza on the beautiful Mornington Peninsula, 30 miles south-east of Melbourne, where Captain Cook's men had come ashore more than 200 years before. Once off-loaded at Melbourne docks, AJK 906 went into storage. »





RESTORATION

XK120

The year is thought to be 1965.

At some point the car was painted in Old English White, but little is known of the car during this time except that its storage by the sea after years of hard racing did little to keep the XK120 in the condition it deserved.

Fast forward to 1974 when Julian Lugg, a member of the Jaguar Drivers' Club of South Australia, was alerted by a fellow member to a number of Jaguars that were suitable for restoration in a garage 600 miles away in Victoria. Lugg was a life-long admirer of the XK120 and he and his wife, Moira, already owned a maroon-coloured Jaguar Mk V. Julian's ears pricked up to hear that one was an



Christopher Kisch's mother, Margaret Baldock, apparently loved the XK120





“One of the first things we did was to try to start the engine – and, to my relief, it fired up – a beautiful sound”

XK120. When his contact checked out the car and gave it the thumbs up, Julian snapped it up, unseen. But he finally had a project XK120.

Says Julian, “I appreciated the support of fellow club members, family and friends, especially Graham Franklin, Peter Holland and Steve Weeks, who were on hand when the car was delivered to Adelaide by truck transport. I collected the car from the transport company on a trailer and we wheeled it into the carport of our Adelaide home.”

Julian’s intention was always to return the car to the original Jaguar black with two-tone, red-and-biscuit-coloured interior, just as Lyons had intended. But that was a long way off. Says Julian, “One of the first things we did was to try to start the engine – and, to my relief, it fired up – a beautiful sound.”

The first task was to dismantle the car. Bit by bit, Julian removed its parts, being careful to record everything as he did so. He says that the exterior could only be described as “Untidy, at very best.” There was

damage to body panels and the front mudguard, plus a cracked windshield, but mechanically the car was relatively intact and original. Even the seats were leather, as originally supplied.

With work and family a priority, the restoration could only happen when spare time allowed, and time for the Jaguar was in short supply. But, says Julian, “Shed nights became a regular part of the routine with friends and other club members coming around to help whenever they could.”

In the early days of the restoration work, spare parts had to be obtained to replace those that were either missing or in a condition that rendered them past saving, and weekends regularly found him searching car wreckers or Jaguar dealers that might still hold a limited stock of parts.

Adds Julian, “My work for the South Australian Department of Education had to come first, which didn’t help the XK120 project, especially when I had to take up roles at different locations across the state. We moved home twice in Mount Gambier, in the south of the »

"The XK120 returned to the road, still proudly wearing its original numberplate"



state, and then more than 300 miles away to the Riverland region of South Australia, at Waikerie. The Jaguar, in bits, came with me every time."

Steve Weeks, in particular, was a great help to Julian with rebuilding the engine. Steve stripped the engine and was pleased to report

little wear, as consistent with the car having covered just 70,000 miles since new, despite being raced.

It wasn't until retirement beckoned that Julian could devote more time to the XK120 and start to make real progress. The complete body had already been removed, so he

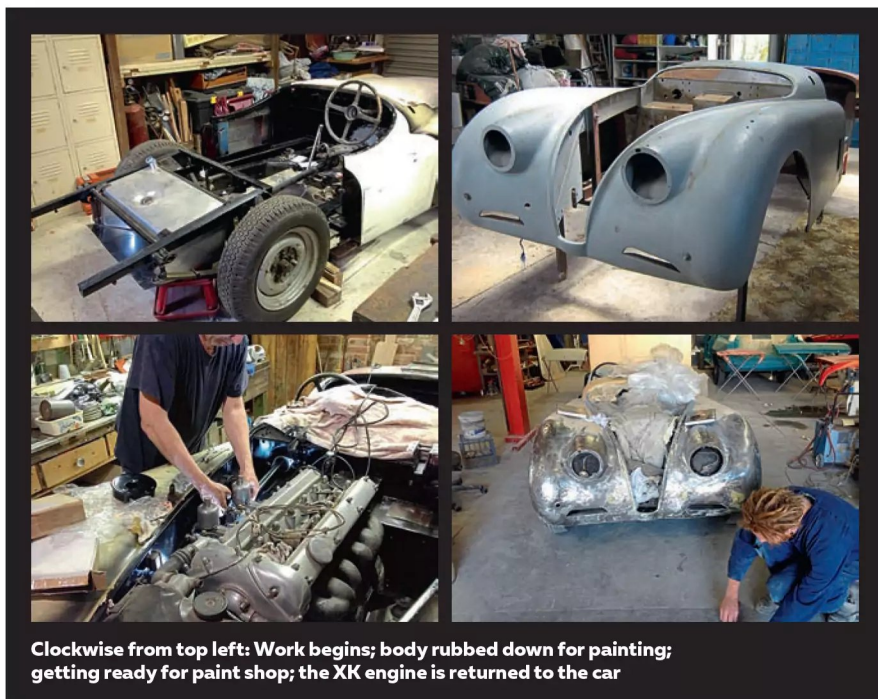
could gain access to the chassis and deal with areas of rust. Julian retained the repairable parts or had replacements fashioned at local workshops. By borrowing original parts from other XK120 owners to copy, they were able to manufacture replacements to original specification.

"Towards the end of the project, reproduction parts started to become available worldwide, one supplier being Guy Broad (UK) of Coventry, England. For the interior trim kit we turned to OSJI.com in the United States. It was painstaking work, but enjoyable as the car started to come together."

Eventually, the day arrived when Julian was able to return the body to the chassis. Although some detail work was outstanding, the XK120 Jaguar returned to the road, still proudly wearing its original numberplate. The year was 2014, more than 50 years after it had first given motoring pleasure to its UK owner. It was an epic moment.

Edwardstown Custom & Crash Repairs, in Adelaide, undertook the final paintwork in black, while fitting of the interior trim was carried out with the expertise of Allan Smith Motor Trimmer.

By this time, Julian had taken over presidency of the South Australian Jaguar Drivers' Club and could stand back and say, "Look what we have



Clockwise from top left: Work begins; body rubbed down for painting; getting ready for paint shop; the XK engine is returned to the car



achieved." It was also with great pride that the car – along with two other XK120s – performed at his daughter Zoe's wedding. "Until then, our daughter had only known it as bits and pieces in the back yard," says Julian.

The car's first long road trip was in December 2016. Along with fellow club members and 30 XKs, Julian took part in a rally to Canberra – a round trip of more than 1,500 miles. More recently, it participated in the Jaguar National Rally 2018, in South Australia, to celebrate 70 years of the iconic XK120. Along with more than 40 fine examples of XKs, the car – still carrying the original number AJK 906 – was displayed in all its former glory. Chassis 660982 never did make it to Le Mans, but, now it is back to pristine condition, Julian couldn't be happier. ■



Brighton Speed trails. AJK 906 is far right



The car at British hill climb



The XK120 arrives at the home of Julian Lugg in 1975

VISIT OUR AMAZING WEBSITE TO BUY DIRECT FROM THE UK'S LAST DEDICATED XK PARTS MANUFACTURER



**2024 is our
55TH ANNIVERSARY**
Specialising in XK Parts



SEE OUR GREAT NEW PANELS SECTION ON THE WEBSITE
We supply a vast, diverse range of panels for all of the Classic XKs



Visit our YouTube Channel



www.coventryautocomponents.co.uk

Call us (+44) 02476 471 217 Email: Sales@covauto.com

G. WHITEHOUSE AUTOS LTD

CLASSIC CAR

AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSIONS

Reconditioned units and spare parts supplied

CLASSIC CAR AUTOMATIC CONVERSION

Convert your classic car to Jaguar XJ40 4 Speed automatic

Kits now available for most cars

Tel: 0121 559 9800

Website: www.gwautos.com Email: info@gwautos.com

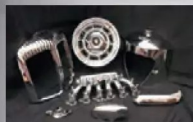
ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

C103 G Whitehouse



CASTLE CHROME PLATING

We are a family run business with a dedicated team of skilled metal polishers and platers with **more than 100-years experience** of polishing chrome, copper, and nickel plating. We specialise in the restoration of all car and motorcycle bright work to a high quality.



**ALL OF OUR WORK
IS TRIPLE PLATED -
COPPER, NICKEL
& CHROME**

Telephone: 01384 214429 **www.castlechrome.co.uk**

NAR

GROUP LTD

CLASSIC JAGUAR

SINCE 1967



PARTS MANUFACTURERS
VINTAGE/VETERAN/CLASSIC
OE SUPPLIERS TO
ASTON MARTIN AND JAGUAR
ALUMINIUM/COPPER
& BRASS CORE PRODUCTION

British
made

UK's NO.1
Cooling parts
manufacturer



RADIATORS • CHARGE COOLERS • INTERCOOLERS • OIL COOLERS
FUEL COOLERS • HEAT EXCHANGERS • CONDENSERS • EVAPORATORS
HEADER TANKS • FUEL TANKS • COLD PLATES • HEAT SINKS

Tel: 01604684850 Email: info@nargroup.com Fax: 01604751461

CLASSIC CAR INSURANCE



With access to the UK's leading insurance underwriters, we provide a choice of the finest policies.

**Up to 10% discount for
Car Club members**

Policy benefits may include:

- Free agreed valuations
- Free legal cover
- Roadside assistance and recovery within UK/EU
- Limited mileage options
- Multi-car cover discounts

Our best rates online, all the time

www.peterbestinsurance.co.uk

or call 01376 574000




Peter Best Insurance Services Ltd
Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.
Registration No. 307045 | Registered in England No. 2210270



FEATURE CAR
C-TYPE RECREATION





BUILT — TO — ORDER

Created using 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 PHOTOGRAPHY: DAN SHERWOOD

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 guru Cyril Instone (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- »



John Brown has enjoyed class wins with his C-type

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

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.

“It's a real exciting car to race,” grins

John, as he positions his car 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 »



The C-type is
fully road legal
and entertaining
at any speed



FEATURE CAR

C-TYPE RECREATION



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





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 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

"This one-off uses an in-period 3.4-litre XK engine linked to a Moss gearbox, as well as correct-spec drum brakes"

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 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. »

JAGUAR ENTHUSIASTS' CLUB



“
*keeping dreams
alive since 1984*”



Take your Jaguar passion to the next level by joining our worldwide club of the most knowledgeable and dedicated Jaguar enthusiasts around.

Receive access to free expert technical support, parts initiative program, friendly support from other members, fantastic award winning monthly magazine, along with exclusive offers on merchandise, event tickets, specialist club insurance packages for all ages, and a whole host of social activities, shows, events and track days. 'Enthusiast' - its all in the name.

WE WORK WITH AN EXTENSIVE RANGE OF CLUB PARTNERS MOST OF WHICH GIVE EXCLUSIVE JEC MEMBERS DISCOUNTS OR OFFERS,



COMMUNITY | SUPPORT | EXPERIENCES IT'S WHAT WE DO.

WWW.JEC.ORG.UK/JOIN

“Unlike many of the official continuation cars of recent years, John’s C-type is fully road legal”



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 – and following John Brown's recent decision to offer the car for sale, they will be transferred to whoever is its next owner.

“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...” ■



THE ITALIAN JOB

What's it like to be part of the greatest motorsport event in the world? *Classic Jaguar* finds out

WORDS: SAM SKELTON PHOTOGRAPHY: SAM SKELTON, MILES CHARLESWORTH

Hurtling down a mountain pass in the passenger seat of a rented Volvo, swerving to avoid Mercedes Gullwings and Porsche 356s as they came round bends on the wrong side of the road, is probably not how most people expect to spend their holiday. But the XK120 was stricken, and its support crew wasn't allowed into this part of the stage. We were the nearest support crew who could reach it, but it had meant turning back. And every minute we spent rescuing our stranded teammates, the XK140 we were supposed to be shadowing was making up even more ground on us. There would be no time to lift off or relax, even once the XK120 was back on the road we would have to play catch up...

Not that the whole week had been quite so exhilarating. My flight to Milan Bergamo was delayed by weather, and then before I could get to my hotel in Brescia there was a flooded motorway stint to go and rescue Tony O'Keeffe and more of our teammates from the airport their plane had been diverted to. On that first night, I remember thinking that agreeing to fly out to Italy for the Mille Miglia had been a terrible mistake.

It's been said by much more prominent motoring writers than me

that Italy is the world's race track. It's fitting, then, that it was once home to what has been described as the most beautiful race in the world, the Mille Miglia. Like the Carrera Panamericana and the Targa Florio, it made household names of Alfa Romeo, Maserati, Bugatti, BMW and Porsche, and taking place 14 times across a thirty-year period, it became known as arguably the most romantic of competition events. It meant worldwide fame for names such as Tazio Nuvolari, and Enzo Ferrari's very first entry into a race with a car of his own design was his AAC in the 1940 event – at which point it was called the Grand Prix of Brescia.

Paused in 1938 by Mussolini, the Mille Miglia had become known for casualties. That race saw 11 spectator fatalities including six children, and another 26 spectators injured. Two more fatal crashes in 1957 would see the end of the race in its then-known format – one crash took eleven spectators including five more children, and the second killed the driver, Joseph Göttgens. In 1958 the event was run as a regularity rally, with a few special stages at racing speeds. It kept this format until 1961, when the last Mille Miglia was run.

That is, until 1977, when it was reborn as a historic regularity rally. Open only

to cars which can be shown to have competed in period, the Mille Miglia is now one of the most prestigious events in the classic motoring calendar. With entry costing from €17,000+VAT – which covers the entry, accommodation and hospitality for a team of two, but no additional support crew – it represents a once in a lifetime event for many of those who partake. Added to this, you need to have a car which is FIVA approved or which has an FIA Heritage certificate. Despite this, the entry list is formidable, with the 2024 event including 50 Alfa Romeos, 31 Porsches, 27 Jaguars, 25 Mercedes-Benzes, 21 Ferraris and 17 Bugattis.

And it is as part of a support crew for one of those Jaguars that *Classic Jaguar* has been invited to partake. With less than a month to go before the race began, I received a call from Jaguar luminary and representative of the Fast Lane Club Tony O'Keeffe, asking if I would be interested in joining the event. It took me about five seconds to decide I wanted to, and a few days to rearrange my diary to free up a week in the schedule of editing two magazines. I was in. But I would have to sing for my supper – this wasn't a typical press jolly, I would be one half of the support crew for an XK140 entered by the event »



CLASSIC ADVENTURE MILLE MIGLIA

main sponsor The Fast Lane Club. The Fast Lane Club sources and stores cars for discerning enthusiasts in and around Yorkshire, and organises entry to a number of prestigious events for those people. Chaired by Stephen Owens – who competed with his son in an Austin Healey 100S for 2024 – The Fast Lane Club entered a total of six cars for the 2024 event. Three of those were Austin Healeys, one was an Alfa Romeo 1900 CSS Berlinetta, and two were Jaguars – an XK120 and the XK140 for which *Classic Jaguar* would be providing support. We'd be an event first, too –

all the cars entered by the Fast Lane Club would be running on Coryton Sustain, a wholly sustainable biofuel developed for classic cars by Coryton. No team entry into the Mille Miglia has ever before completed the event on biofuel, which had been shipped to Italy by Coryton specially for the event.

Back to night 1, then. Tony's late-night landing was rerouted to Milan Malpensa, meaning that with their booking made at Milan Bergamo, they didn't have a hire car. With rain sitting inches deep on the autoroute and lightning, I rerouted my satnav from our hotel in Brescia

to Malpensa, arriving to collect Tony at 1.30am with a 90-minute drive ahead of us. I finally reached the Hotel Continental in Roncadelle at just after 3am – the hotel which would be our base for the Brescia portion of the event – and all but passed out in my bed.

The following morning, I met my crewmate Craig Slater, and was introduced to the crew of the car we would be working with. Stephen and Kim Rankin had flown out from the North East of England, borrowing the XK140 through contacts in The Fast Lane Club in order to take part



in their first motorsport event.

"I've always been a car enthusiast," says Stephen. "I raced in Formula Ford when I was younger and have been lucky enough to own a range of lovely vehicle over my lifetime. This has been our first foray into classics, though. I wanted to do the Mille following retirement from eventing horses as it was something Kim and I could do together where eventing is an individual sport."

Stephen and Kim chose to go through the Fast Lane Club as both were new to classic car events, and the Fast Lane Club assured the »

"Stephen and Kim chose to go through the Fast Lane Club as both were new to classic car events"



CLASSIC ADVENTURE MILLE MIGLIA

couple that its team could guide them through the whole process – including help sourcing a suitable vehicle.

"We chose the XK140 knowing it would be a relatively comfortable ride, reliable and very stylish. At 6'3" tall, I also needed the extra space that the car offers over many of the alternatives."

One of the Healeys and the Alfa would be served by crews doing their own thing, as while the cars belonged to Fast Lane Cub founder Stephen Owens they had been entered as privateers. But two Healeys and the two Jags had consecutive numbers, and had been entered as a team – four cars with two support crew for each, which theoretically would be passing the same places at the same sorts of times. Two cars had event sponsor passes which allowed them to follow the exact route, while two had support crew passes which forced them to avoid some of the closed road stages and meet the cars as they came out the other side – meaning that while every team had its own car, those who could follow the full route had an additional responsibility to other cars entered by The Fast Lane Club team. Craig and I had an event sponsor pass for the Volvo we were using as a support car, which is what led to our somewhat hair-raising experience at the top of the feature.

Our first day out there was taken





“It's important to remember that an event like the Mille Miglia is not a race. But that's never stopped the drivers ”



up by scrutineering, surrounded by much of Brescia's high society and with complimentary champagne and canapes available alongside a red carpet full of the most expensive metal you're likely to see gathered in one place. While I couldn't enjoy the hospitality for long – as someone with a hire car I needed to help recover the one that had been left at Milan Bergamo the night before – it did start to feel more like the experience I'd read so much about. Sun, fine wine and the sights and smells of classic machinery – I could get used to this. But the start of the event in the middle of Brescia was even wetter than that first night had been, and the real work would start when my waterlogged crewmate Craig and I were in the hired Volvo chasing our XK140 away from the start line.

If you've ever taken part in a conventional road rally here in Britain, you'll understand the basic premise behind the Mille Miglia – it's a group of classic cars following a predetermined route, with members of the public out to see what's going by and car

clubs gathering at various locations along the route. Where it differs from your local car club road run, crucially, is in its timed stages and regularity events, which occur on closed road sections at intervals throughout the event. Drivers can be tasked to average a set speed across a set distance, for instance, requiring the use of complicated timing equipment to ensure that they make each checkpoint at exactly the right time.

It's important to remember that an event like the Mille Miglia is not a race. But that's never stopped the drivers from unleashing their competitive sides – and when confronted with a beautiful Italian vista and a classic Jaguar to drive it's entirely understandable that you might want to put your foot down. And it isn't only the Jaguars. Locals in their Lancia Ypsilons would frequently be overtaken by XK120s, Mercedes 300SLs, Porsche 356s, and even, in one very surprising case, by a 1952 Fiat 500C Belvedere estate. This car became an unofficial mascot of the event with the whole Fast Lane Club team »



“Hotel car parks and even roadside parking bays became impromptu pit lanes”

monitoring its progress, as it careened madly past all the support vehicles only to overheat and end up in a layby. This became a repeat and predictable occurrence, and we were overjoyed by the end of the event not only to find that it had finished, but that it had

posted better times than an XK120, a Bugatti and five Ferraris in the process. 343/357 was a respectable position for our plucky – yet mad – little hero.

Of course, with those in the classics taking every opportunity to overtake and to make up time, work for those of

us in the support cars was equally hair-raising. If we stopped to help another team, we would end up having to go even harder to catch up, when even keeping pace took a team effort from driver Craig and me on the Tulip maps. To ensure we knew exactly where the Rankins were in the XK140 at all times we started a small WhatsApp group chat, to which we would share our live locations at all times in case of a breakdown. And in order to minimise the risk of those breakdowns, every night the cars would be thoroughly inspected by the service crews while their drivers and navigators enjoyed relaxing evenings in some of Italy's nicest hotels. With cars arriving at the daily finish lines at anything up to midnight and the next start line scheduled for 7am, this meant a lot of work by torchlight in improvised workshops and relatively little sleep for the support crews – who by the end of the week were working on adrenaline alone. Hotel car parks and even roadside parking bays became impromptu pit lanes for brake rebuilds, the tracking down of electrical gremlins and even oil changes as the week passed, with cars barely getting chance to cool down before the mayhem





would begin again the following day.

And while we considered some of the days to be "easy" days, the truth is that nothing about it was easy. Day 1 was for final fixing, getting the cars to the start line and then driving the 150 miles from Brescia to Turin – and this was effectively our easy start, with cars abandoned wherever we could park them for the first bout of servicing. The XK140's front brakes and suspension were checked at the side of the road, while the timing gear was rewired in the same place. Day 2 saw us drop almost 200 miles down the coast of Tuscany from Turin to Viareggio, where we had the luxury of a hotel car park to convert into a pit area to rewire the electric fan, check the rear brakes and top up the diff. Day 3 was a tough one – skirting round Pisa to pick up the coast again, heading inland to Lake Bolsena before dropping to Rome, 271 miles from where we had started. Once again, our pits were the hotel car park, but with more than one team staying in the Holiday Inn Rome it was a case of fighting other teams for space to work and staking our claim by parking support vehicles across multiple bays until the Jaguars and Healeys »



CLASSIC ADVENTURE
MILLE MIGLIA



"We'd made it. 1,000 miles around Italy in just five days, with very little time to devote to sleep or even to keeping the cars going"



arrived. Day 4 was north to Corciano, a diversion west to the beautiful walled city of Siena and then north east to Bologna – over 300 miles and almost fourteen hours on the road, before we could give the cars their final basic checks and turn in. The final day was the easiest of the lot – 132 miles from Bologna back to Brescia, celebratory photographs and a slap-up dinner.

After five days of this, understandably, everybody was exhausted. How Stirling Moss did this in a single hit back in 1955 I will never know, even if Tony O'Keeffe as a veteran of 27 Mille Miglias and personal friend of Sir Stirling reckons Moss had the easier job. But we'd made it. 1,000 miles around Italy in just five days, with very little time to devote to sleep or even to keeping the cars going, and each and every person involved had made memories to last a lifetime. It's here that a special note of thanks must go to Lisa Feather of the Fast Lane Club, for ensuring that not only were the support crews kept well-fed as they worked into the night, but also for ensuring that there was plenty of

sparkling wine to go round at the end of the event. A glass of the fizzy stuff has never been more welcome than it was on that warm, sunlit afternoon back at the Hotel Continental in Roncadelle, as we gathered all the teams and all their cars for one final photographic hurrah.

That night in a local restaurant of Tony's choosing, we had our results. Of the six teams entered by The Fast Lane Club, Stephen and Kim had posted the fastest times in our XK140 and had won our smaller version of the event. And at 171/357, they'd given a very respectable time to say it was their first Mille Miglia. Our XK120, piloted by Ian and Nicola Warhurst, was 237/357, and our two Healeys were in 186/357 and 236/357 respectively.

Fast Lane Club owner Stephen Owens and his son Tom, in the third Healey, had made 142/357, but as veterans of the event they were more aware of what to expect. And our sixth car, a beautiful Alfa Romeo 1900 Super Sprint driven by Gad Maltz and Alexander Hamblin, came in at 180/357.

"I could not believe how well Kim

took to it, putting up with some hair-raising moments and showing a competitive side I didn't know she possessed," says Stephen. "The event itself exceeded all my expectations. The crowds were amazing and the whole population seems to support the event with cars moving out the way and no one seems to get upset by disruption the event causes. Considering how fast everyone goes I thought we did well to get a warning from the clerk of the course for speeding!"

About two months after our return home, I contacted Stephen Rankin again to look back at the event, and to ask if it had given him an urge for more classic road rallies. And not only is he keen to partake in the Mille Miglia again, he's now looking to buy a suitable car for this and other events of a similar type. "We would certainly love to do the event again, it's a very special treat. We are already confirmed for the 2027 centenary event. And we're looking to buy a car too – definitely an XK140."

Would I do it again? Well, Tony, you've got my number. ■

PAST TIMES

When Colonel Rixon Bucknall wanted a pre-war car in the mid-Fifties but one that offered post-war performance, he bought a factory supplied XK140 chassis and had it fitted with an old-fashioned style of aluminium body

WORDS: PAUL WALTON PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL BAILLIE



"No man is rich enough to buy back his past," said the great Oscar Wilde once.

Although that's no doubt true for most of us – I certainly can't afford the Jensen CV-8 my father once owned and which I'd like to – it wasn't for a certain Colonel Rixon Bucknall. When the former military man wanted a car in the mid-Fifties that reminded him of his many pre-war models yet offered all the performance of a modern one, his solution was to give a then current running chassis with a body that harked

back to the past. As he wrote in a 1957 issue of Autosport, "To blend the appeal of the vintage thoroughbred with the finest current technical attainments; to produce a machine which requires driving and which in return will give all the response and joy of the traditional vintage sports car – in other words, to aim at carrying on the breed."

Bucknall was initially brought up in Newport Pagnell but his family later moved to Langley Court, a large house in Beckenham, Greater London. Although his parents had been more interested in horses and never owned

a car, as founding members of the RAC, his uncles Ernest and Leslie gave the young Bucknall his first taste of the horseless carriage.

Rixon would later ride his cousin Ian's motorcycles on Langley Court's mile-long drive. These included a 1912 Douglas, 1914 Rudge TT and later a 3½hp Triumph. In 1923 he took part in the Camberley and District MCC speed hillclimb on Chobham Ridges.

His first car was a 1925 Morris Cowley two-seater that was soon replaced by a Anzani-engined Crouch built in Coventry. With a boattail body »



MODIFIED RIXON BUCKNALL SPECIAL

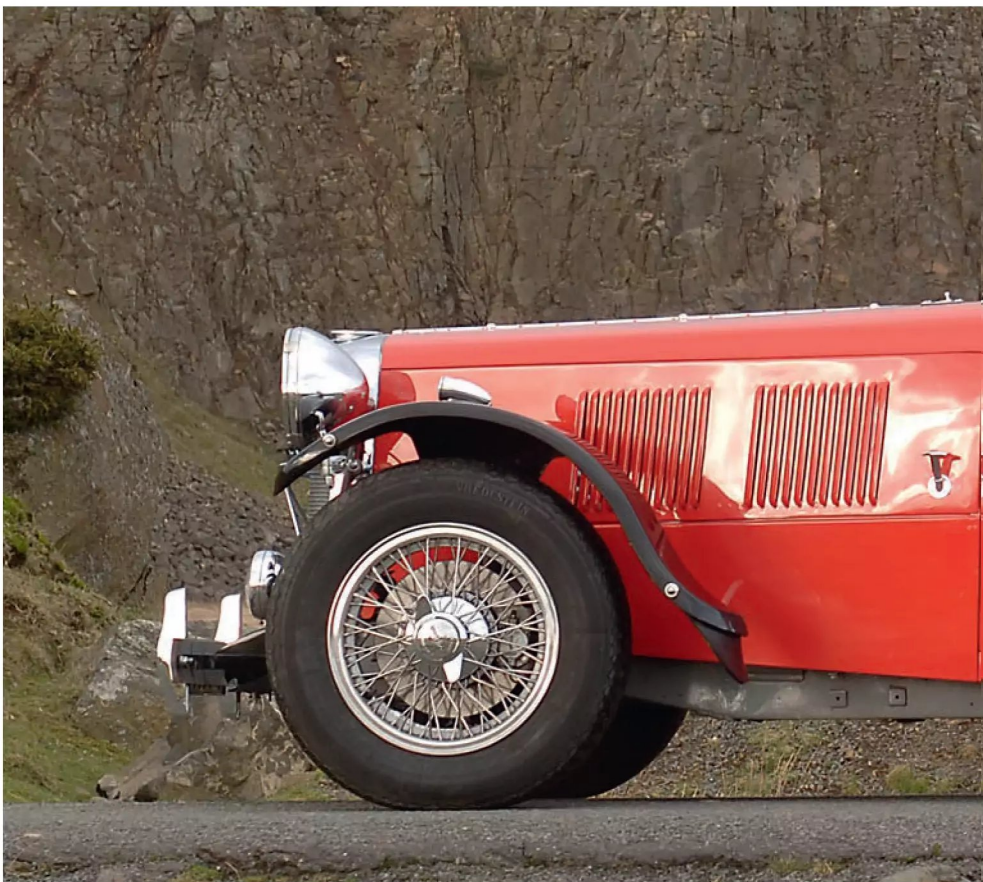
and the headlights mounted lower than standard, this was probably the first special he was involved with.

This was followed by several other British cars including a Riley Nine, a Standard coupe, Wolseley Hornet and his first Jaguar, a SS 1 ½ litre saloon.

Bucknall entered the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in 1921 and was commissioned into Coldstream Guards two years later. He stayed in the army until 1945 when, after reaching the rank of Lt Colonel, he entered business. Bucknall was also a prolific author, writing several books on railways, shipping and history.

In 1955 Bucknall was looking for something that fulfilled a personal brief; a vintage-looking car but with the improved performance of a younger model. With nothing obvious available, he decided to make his own.

The first question was what to base the car on. The Colonel soon dismissed a Bentley Continental since he considered it too large for the steep mountain passes he intended to tackle during European trips. A Frazer-Nash was also quickly discounted because its 2.0-litre engine didn't offer enough power while there was too long of a waiting list for an Aston





Martin DB2/4. This left the XK140.

Although Jaguar's usual policy was not to sell running chassis, it relented this time, no doubt due to Bucknall being one of Jaguar founder, (Sir) William Lyons', earliest customers having bought a Swallow sidecar in 1922. And so in 1956 Browns Lane delivered an XK140 chassis complete with a 3.4-litre SE unit with a C-type cylinder head. Bucknall also specified Borrani wire wheels and Marchal lights.

The second question was who would

build the car. Bucknall apparently contacted 38 coachbuilders but found that none wanted the job either because they were too busy or because they were only prepared to build what they thought he should have and not the other way around. "He (the customer) cannot be expected to pay a great deal of money for a result he does not like or does not desire," wrote Bucknall in his *Autosport* piece.

The Colonel eventually found Lesley Tye of the Hastings Sheet

Metal Works who agreed to take on the project and build what he wanted. Yet all Bucknall had in the way of ideas was a picture of an MG 18/80 with a body by the Coventry-based coachbuilder, Carbodies, plus several sheets of paper full of his own notes. The man responsible for translating what Bucknall wanted into reality was Hastings Sheet Metal Works employee, Alan Jenner.

"The colonel was a very nice man to work for," said Jenner when I »

“He (the customer) cannot be expected to pay a great deal of money for a result he does not like or does not desire,”



spoke to him in early 2008. “He knew exactly what he wanted, but it wasn’t an easy task.”

Built purely by eye, there were never any drawings for the car. “He’d visit the workshop fairly frequently,” continued Jenner about Bucknall, “and I’d show him something I’d designed in cardboard and he’d say, ‘Great – build it.’”

With the design agreed, Jenner made the frame using 1in, 16-gauge

mild angle sections while the body was from 16 gauge aluminium.

The car was then painted in the same colour as Coldstream Guards uniform; bright red with black wings. “He was always very proud of his association with the Guards,” explained Jenner.

Another Hastings firm trimmed the interior which was very much to a former military man’s specification with a place for everything and

everything in its place. There was even a compartment in the boot for his shoe cleaning kit, another for replacement bulbs, thermostats etc plus two leather holders, one for his umbrella (custom made with each panel being a racing flag) and one behind the seats for a spare half-shaft.

Bucknall took delivery of the red car in late 1956 when it was registered RB1903 for his initials and year of birth. Together with his second wife, Pauline, the Colonel soon took a trip to the Pyrenees to discover how well it performed.

“She handled magnificently,” he continued in Autosport, “and the engine and brake cooling were superb.” The only trouble he encountered was from the electric system since the spark plugs kept fouling. When Bucknall informed Lucas of this on his return to the UK, it sent a specialist to resolve the issue.

Further European trips followed when the Colonel was often accompanied by his friend, George Griggs, who recorded their adventures with his camera.

Bucknall had also made friends with fellow Jaguar enthusiast, Bill Slack, who was the workshop manager of a local garage, Caffyns. He soon became interested in the car and later suggested several alterations.





These included shortening the tail by 3in, replacing the full length running boards with cycle wings (apparently these stopped the high speed lift Bucknall was experiencing) and replacing the original screen with two separate pieces of glass sent in a V shape and with an increased rake.

The engine was also updated with a straight port head and triple carburettors which made the already fast car even faster as proved by a letter Griggs wrote to a later owner. "On one occasion when I was driving it, I was thrilled to top 'the ton' for the second time of my life."

Although Hastings Sheet Metal Works made him a unique MGB in 1963 with four-seats, Bucknall kept the Jaguar special for the rest of his life. It was only sold after he passed away in October 1975.

Nothing is known about the car until 1988 when it was for sale at David AC Royle & Co Ltd, a restoration specialist in County Durham. The company had bought Rixon Bucknall's Jaguar from a repair shop that had held onto the car for several years due to non-payment of bills by the then owner.

The car caught the eye of a Jaguar enthusiast, Mike Hughes, who went for a look, "purely for a sightsee."



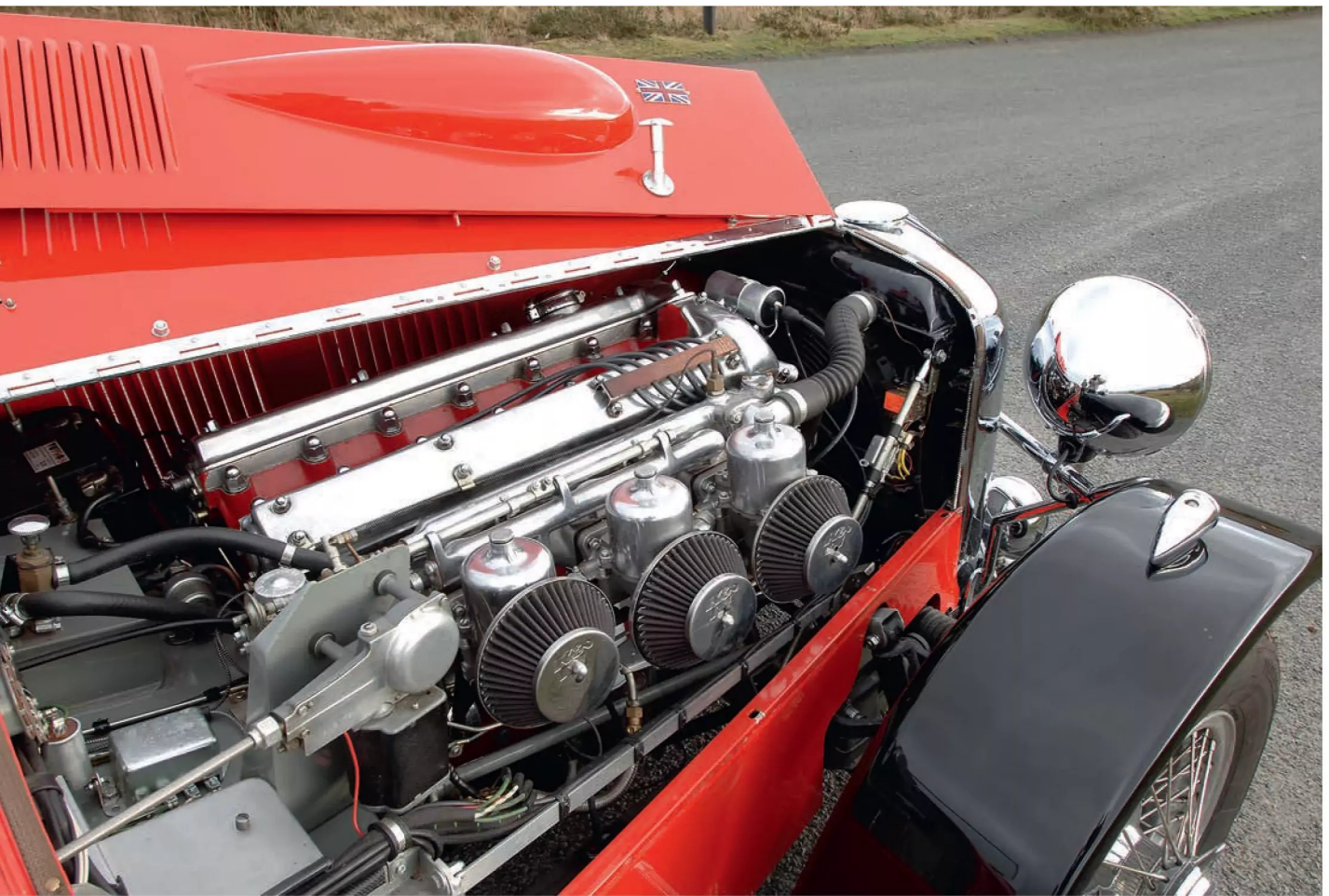
Mike was soon hooked though and knew he needed to buy it. "Although it was well out of my price range at £23k," he told me in 2008, "I was determined and so I sold both my modern car (an XJ12) and Manx Norton project, borrowed £4k off my then girlfriend and the rest on finance."

Due to so many years in storage, the car was in a largely original and

complete condition. It even had the Colonel's original RB1903 number plate.

It was still fast, too. "I recall driving the car back from Royles on B-roads," remembered Mike in 2008. "My girlfriend was following me. When we got home she complained that I had been doing 85mph and couldn't keep up! The car felt incredibly fast and as a reference it was easily able »

MODIFIED
RIXON BUCKNALL SPECIAL



to out accelerate a VW Golf GTi."

When Mike sold the car 18 months later he instantly regretted his decision. Always wanting it back, he was able to achieve this in 2002 when the car came up for auction. Still largely untouched, the Rixon Bucknall Special was by now looking tired and so Mike decided to have it restored by the Bridgnorth-based Jaguar specialist, Classic Motor Cars. Due to its originality, Mike was keen to make sure this was kept as much as possible.

"I was very careful to ensure nothing was lost from the original," he told me in 2008, "and we actually reinstated several original features. The beauty of a special is that I am the only marque expert!"

The result is a car that with its fresh coat of paint looked as good as the day the colonel took delivery 45 years

earlier. Although not handsome from all angles – the rear three quarters is awkward – it clearly fulfilled the Colonel's brief. With its large, chromed headlights, tall radiator grille and cycle wings, it must have reminded him of his many former pre-war cars.

After opening the suicide door and climb inside, it's a very snug interior, offering similar amounts of room as the donor car. "She is a Queen Elizabeth battleship as opposed to a Queen Elizabeth liner," was how Rixon Bucknall described the red special in Autosport. Although there's no denying the dark wood dash is beautiful, thanks to all the dials and switches placed logically and sensibly, the interior is typical of a military man and offers few frills.

Designed more for touring, it's a smooth and easy car to drive, the 3.4-litre straight six unit offering plenty

of torque. It'll accelerate up a hill in top while the steering is light and the four-speed 'box clicks smoothly – if slowly – into gear. By not wandering around the road like cars of the era often do, it's easy to imagine the Colonel, obviously wearing his old regimental tie and blazer, cruising through Europe at a steady 100mph.

The steering is relatively precise and accurate for a Fifties special which with little body roll means the car can do more than just head in a straight line and is able to take long, fast corners relatively comfortably. Take away that vintage-looking body and it has all the performance of the car it's based on.

So although Bucknall was able to buy back part of his past, thanks to its fantastic performance, he also designed a car that was not only perfect for the then present but the future too. ■

"He'd visit the workshop fairly frequently and I'd show him something I'd designed in cardboard and he'd say, 'Great – build it.'"



OWNER'S STORY

XK140 DHC

For the marque experts that would eventually restore it, a complete and original XK140 drophead coupe was the holy grail of Jaguars. Genuine barn finds like this rarely, if ever, crop up anymore, making the car an easily once-in-a-lifetime discovery.

But its current owner, Ian Groom, has many more personal reasons to be excited by its unearthing. The

sports car has been with his family since new and represents a direct link to his grandfather, uncle and aunt as well as his own youth.

According to the car's heritage certificate, the XK140 DHC (chassis number 807134) was built on 18 May 1955 and distributed nine days later to Rossleigh Motor Agents of Edinburgh before being sold through The Eastern Motor Company Ltd, also located

in Scotland's capital, in June. It was bought by a local farmer and butcher, Thomas Thompson, for his son, Thomas McKellar Thompson (known by Ian as Uncle Mac) for his 25th birthday.

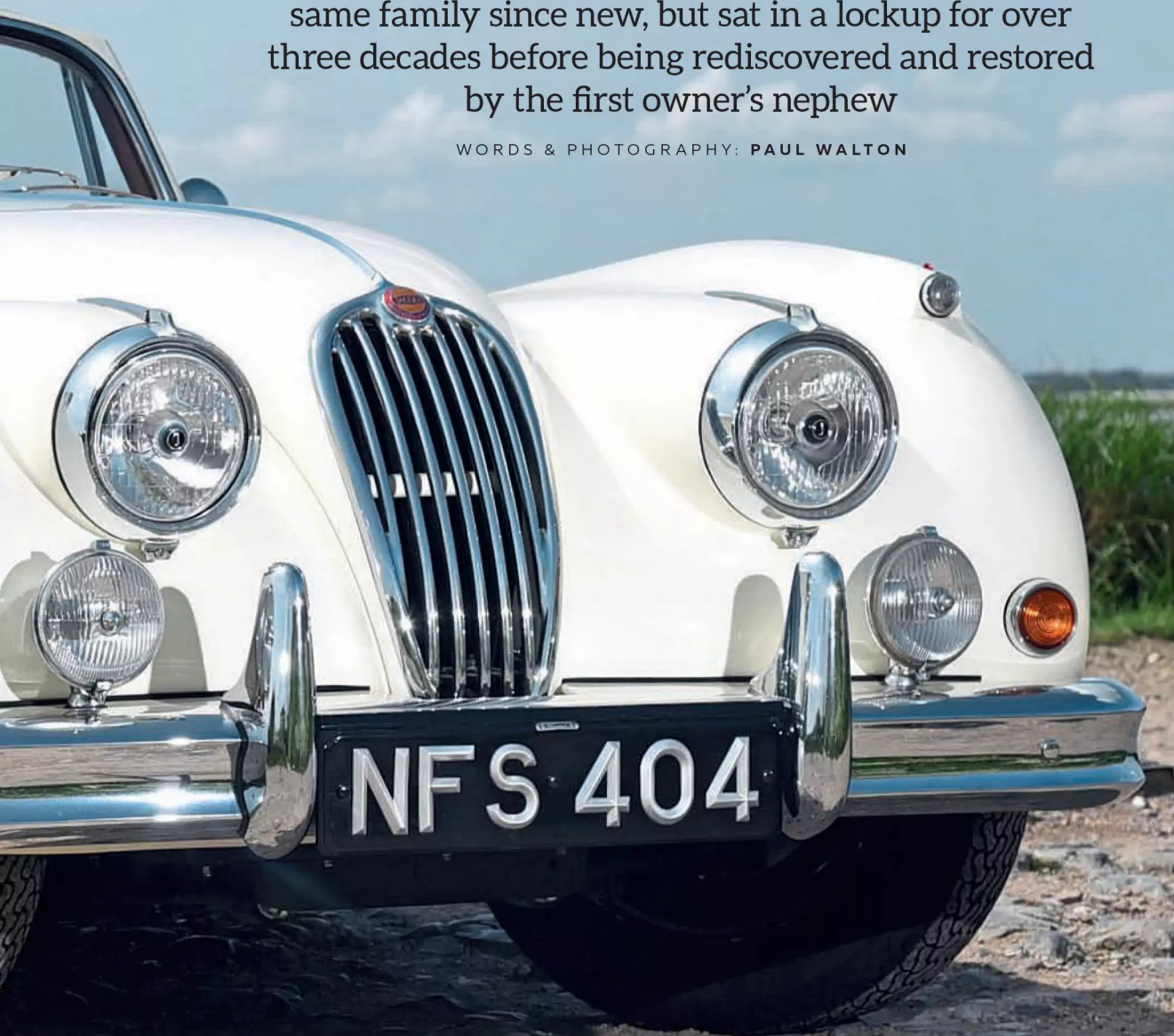
As well as a beautiful house in North Berwick, Meadowhall, the Thompsons also owned a farm in the Scottish Borders and according to Ian, knew the future Formula 1 World Champion, Jim Clark, very well since »



FAMILY REUNION

This 1955 XK140 drophead coupe has been with the same family since new, but sat in a lockup for over three decades before being rediscovered and restored by the first owner's nephew

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL WALTON



OWNER'S STORY

XK140 DHC



The car needed nothing more than a new fuel pump for the 11,000-mile XK to burst into life

his family also farmed in the area. "They were sponsors of Jim Clark's first racing cars," Ian tells me.

Thomas senior later bought another farm in Perthshire, which was managed by Thomas plus one of his five sisters, Angela.

Although the car's original buff logbook shows ownership of the Jaguar officially passed to the business in 1960, Mac clearly still liked his 25th birthday present since he continued to use it regularly. As the son of another his sisters, Morag, Ian can clearly remember sitting in the car as a child in the early Seventies. Mac even kept a journal for the XK140, writing meticulous notes about when and where he drove it, the fuel used plus any issues. A tiny, black diary



from 1974 survives but on 12 January the entries come to an abrupt stop.

Ian's uncle suffered from a heart issue and passed away in early 1975 aged just 44. By never marrying, all of his estate including the XK140 passed to Angela. But she never registered the car in her name and over the next four decades barely used it. Yet it was never totally forgotten.

When Angela died in 2010, Ian was living and working abroad but had lost contact with that side of the family and only heard about her passing from the solicitor handling the estate since he and his cousin were the sole remaining benefactors from a will she had written in 1967.

"When I went to Scotland to sort Angela's estate, her solicitor suggested I should see the man who had been looking after her and the car all these years. So I went to see him at his house near North Berwick and at the end of the meeting I remember saying to him, 'Whatever happened to the car?' And he replied, 'It may be still available, Ian; when you come back, we'll talk again.'"

Ian did return and this time was taken to a local lockup where it had been stored for over 36 years.

When Ian finally saw his uncle's former car, it was hidden under a layer of his late aunt's clothes to protect it, with leopard print covers protecting the seats. But importantly, by covering a mere 11,000 miles, it was original, unrestored and complete.

Due to Michael caring for the car for all these years, even paying for the lockup, Ian gave him a small sum for it. The next question was, what to do with the Jaguar? "The funny thing is, I'm not



even that interested in XK140s," Ian tells me with a laugh. "But I thought I should do something with the car since Uncle Mac would be pleased if I managed to restore it to back to the way it was."

Not knowing who to contact, Ian's wife simply did an internet search and the first company on the list was established XK specialist, Twyford Moors.

The company's general manager, Ian Mills, tells me he was initially sceptical when he received a call about an unrestored and all original XK140 DHC that had sat for over three decades in a Scottish garage. Such cars are rarely found now. He lost that scepticism, though, when he travelled to Scotland since it was indeed an unrestored and all original XK140 drophead coupe that had clearly not left its lockup hideaway for some time. Even the original, complete and now

rare tool kit roll was still in the boot.

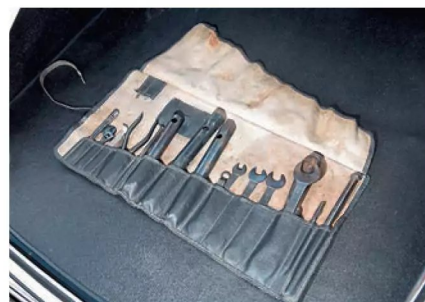
"I remember Ian being on the phone the day he went to see the car saying the condition of it was just incredible," Twyford Moors' assistant manager, Harry Rochez, tells me.

The car was subsequently transported the 440 miles south to the company's Hampshire workshop where its condition was assessed before restoration could begin. When all the grime was washed away, the bodywork, chrome and interior were found to be in surprisingly good condition while the engine could still be turned by hand and the electrical system continued to work. Even the battery would take a charge. The only things that didn't operate were one side light and the fuel pump. With a new one fitted and some fresh fuel added, Twyford's technicians were able to start and drive »



OWNER'S STORY

XK140 DHC



the car for the first time in 40 years.

Due to the original condition of the cream DHC, author and publisher Philip Porter photographed the car before work had begun so it could

be included in his Original Jaguar XK The Restorer's Guide from 2012 as an example of what the car would have looked like when new. "It rewrote some of the history books about what

these cars should look like," says Ian.

To protect the XK140 for the future, it still required a full, body-off restoration but due to its condition and history as much of the car's originality would be kept as possible. The majority of the chrome, for example, was simply cleaned and reused and the original steel wheels and spats retained. Even the original white-on-black number plates by British motoring accessory manufacturer, Bluemels, complete with the company's tiny blue logo at the top were refreshed and reused.

Obviously Angela's leopard skin seat covers were removed and the leather upholstery underneath was painstakingly cleaned and fed. Ian wanted the original pushbutton radio kept but upgraded to receive FM plus mobile phone connectivity.

The result is an immaculate example of the always elegant XK140 drophead coupe whose condition pays testament to the skill of Twyford's technicians



“Although never an easy box to get right, the joy of a clean, non-grating shift makes up for the many that aren’t”



yet clearly still retains the character of a largely original car. When I open the door the interior is far from pristine; the veneer is scratched in places, the leather upholstery cracked and worn. But in my eyes, this patina is akin to motoring archaeology and what gives the car its history and desirability. There's even a beautiful white and blue enamel badge from The Eastern Motor Company Ltd on the left-hand-side of the dashboard.

Although it appears standard from the outside, the car does hide a few modern modifications which include an electronic ignition, electric cooling fan plus an upgraded wiper system. It also has power steering that makes manoeuvring the car at slow speeds far easier. But by being nicely weighted and much more accurate than the original non-assisted rack and pinion system, it helps transform the XK140 into a genuine sports car.

As does the original 3.4-litre engine (number G 3717-8). It was rebuilt by

Twyford Moors to its fast road spec that includes lightened conrods, crankshaft and flywheel plus cams which Harry tells me are similar to those fitted to the C-Type. Although the power remains roughly the same, as Harry says it's, "All about getting low down torque".

When I squeeze the throttle the engine picks up immediately, offering a strong yet smooth burst of acceleration that's matched by the charismatic baritone growl of the XK unit. Even when trundling along slowly in fourth, the straight six still has enough torque to cleanly and easily pick up speed.

Despite the other modifications Ian requested during the restoration, which include disc brakes that are sharper and much more responsive than the original drums would have been, the original four-speed with overdrive has been rebuilt and retained. Although never an easy box to get right, the joy of a clean, non-grating shift makes up for the many that aren't. Plus a

modern five-speed Toyota transmission might be a popular and easy to make modification, but keeping the original transmission results in more of an authentic XK experience which is important for a car with this history.

The car's current beautiful condition together with its unique past and originality makes the XK140 both an interesting and highly desirable example of this always popular Jaguar. Yet due to not using the car enough recently after buying an E-Type, Ian has decided to sell the car through Twyford Moors.

Whoever takes on the cream Jaguar might not have the same personal connection to the car as Ian does, but thanks to its good looks, perfectly upgraded specification plus unique history, I doubt that will be difficult to achieve. ■

THANKS TO: Ian Groom plus Twyford Moors (www.jagxk.com) where the car is currently for sale

LAND OF THE LAKES

Our Peter's been off on tour in another of the JDHT's collection.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: **PETER SIMPSON**

No-one would ever use the term unassuming for an XK150 Drophead Coupé, but amongst the hall of fame that is the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust vehicle collection, this standard 1958 example is as near as it comes. The car has no racing history; it was never owned by royalty nor has it smashed

any endurance records. It is simply an ordinary classic Jaguar on the street, if such a notion was conceivable.

In 1958 Jaguar was in great shape, thriving on the prestige afforded by five Le Mans victories during that decade, a marketing advantage fully exploited by the company and proudly proclaimed on the boot badge adorning

the XK150. All requirements for the discerning motorist were covered by the Jaguar model range during a time when the economy was booming. The compact Mk1 had modernised into the Mk2 and the MkVIII was being augmented by the MkIX flagship. As for the XK150, its contemporary update over the XK120/140 predecessors was

The XK descends to the sylvan beauty of Crummock Water





VUF is in distinguished company in the JDHT workshop

a resounding success, supplemented by the introduction of the Open Two-Seater. This offered the ultimate in sporting prowess especially when it received the enlarged 3.8-litre engine created for the MkIX. During these heady days of Jaguar's acclaim an order arrived at Henlys of London for delivery to a customer in Brighton. The vehicle requested was an XK150 Drophead Coupé fitted with the standard 3.4-litre engine and manual gearbox. The purchaser's tastes and budget ran to wire wheels, overdrive and the special-order paint colour of Pure White, contrasted with a black hood and black interior. VUF 316 remained in private ownership for many years, doubtless turning heads and providing exemplary service as it clocked up the miles at a steady rate. In later years the Reynold's family cherished the car until generously bequeathing VUF to the Trust, where it is generally seen on display in the Collections Centre at the British Motor Museum.

THE SHAKEDOWN

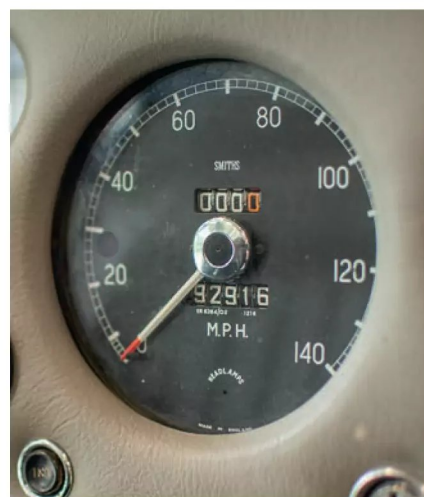
The JDHT firmly believes its museum pieces should be alive, healthy and driven as often as possible. The Collections Centre was conceived as a store of living heritage, where vehicles are constantly on the move travelling to events and fulfilling the Trust's mandate as an educational charity. As a smaller organisation than you might think, regularly stretching the legs of the exhibits would be onerous without the assistance of volunteers, whose fold I am blessed to be a part of. I am »



The engine bay is as standard as the day it was built



The XK150's badge of honour



This XK is well-travelled for a museum exhibit



The local Warwickshire hills are perfect for testing... and posing

also a contributor to Classic Jaguar and the opportunity to awaken VUF for a road trip after many years of slumber on display was a plot well hatched!

The car had covered just seventy-seven miles in the previous seven years, most of those through excursions to the MOT station. Routine attention to fluids and perishables was undertaken appropriate to its sedentary situation, although to embark on a tour covering many hundreds of miles some preliminary road testing was prudent. Firstly, the roadworthiness was analysed by a refresh of the MOT, revealing little of consequence, although VUF was spluttering somewhat from being awoken, requiring the replacement of the fuel pump. The carburettors had been cleaned and tuned the previous

year with the vehicle having covered no intervening mileage. For a decent shakedown I took the XK around the picturesque Warwickshire countryside in the vicinity of the museum. It started, stopped and performed in a sprightly manner in between, indicating the car was essentially in good order. The previous owners had certainly cherished VUF, although other than the sensible precaution of installing a Kenlowe electric fan the XK was as

“The JDHT firmly believes its museum pieces should be alive, healthy and driven as often as possible”

original as when departing the Browns Lane factory sixty-five years ago.

I very much enjoyed the thrill of planning a tour to explore the capabilities of the car and with a visit to the Lake District outstanding for a chapter in my next UK touring guide this provided the ideal venue. The jaunt would involve over five hundred miles, although to an XK that had racked up 93K during its earlier lifetime this was of trifling significance. Having said that, such distances had not been attempted for many decades so there was naturally some trepidation in anticipation of the adventure.

THE MAIN EVENT

The presence of an Automatic Enrichment Device (AED) strikes much fear into my heart through experience with a Mk2 that I formerly owned. If it stalled when cold there was only a marginal chance of restarting. Those familiar with SU Carburettors know of this auxiliary carburettor, which assists with cold starting and automatically shuts off when heat begins to pervade the block. The AED on my Mk2 was serially troublesome so I fitted a manual switch for more control. VUF was of course all original, however, on the day of departure started instantly, ran for a minute at high idle then the other switch intervened as intended to cut off the additional fuel supply while the engine remained unerringly smooth. Naturally, this is how it should be and inspired much confidence for the coming tour. I won't deceive you completely because there were still minor hesitations when pulling away under load until the engine was fully warm, nevertheless, for an old girl her manners were impressive.

The motorway traffic was intermittently heavy although the intervention of the electric fan was never necessary, the cabin remained remarkably free of heat soak and the fuel gauge was curiously slow to respond to distance covered. The XK150 is fitted with a useful 14-gallon tank, making it an ideal touring car, although from my experience of XK engines they are not noted for frugality. I therefore assumed



Pretty as a picture, the Pure White paintwork was a special order



Rolling back the years with some spirited road testing



Gateway to the mountains: climbing the Kirkstone Pass



The "Back o' Skiddaw" is a lesser trodden delight



Ullswater was the William Wordsworth's favourite lake

the fuel gauge was faulty and resolved to fill up after a cautious distance.

The Lake District National Park border arrived after two hundred miles four hours constant driving, with the XK happily keeping up with traffic flow on the quicker sections, even in the White Jag Man overtaking lane. There is no shortage of power on tap. I felt it prudent to top up the tank before assaulting the mountains, despite the needle still reading half full. I managed to insert just over seven gallons, meaning the tank was actually half full and the gauge correct. Astonishingly, fuel consumption was calculated to be 28mpg. Much of this I would attribute to the overdrive, which works superbly, transforming the snarling fifties flyer into a composed mile-muncher.

It was also appropriate to lower the roof and take full advantage of this XK being a drophead coupé. Compared to my Series 3 E-type convertible the XK hood is superior in every way. It is child's play to erect, even easier to recline and lined for comfort. This does make it more bulky and some assert that the lines are sullied (certainly when compared to the open two-seater) although for long-term ownership I know which I would prefer. Driving with the roof down is highly pleasurable and sitting beneath a relatively tall windscreen minimised any danger of my flat cap disappearing into the wind.

The 150 had proved itself competent at speed on the drive up but now the terrain became more challenging as we set out to explore the twisty roads

and mountain passes of Lakeland. The route devised involved a hundred-mile circuit from a starting point on the shores of Windermere at Brockhole, a beautifully situated late Victorian mansion, built like so many overlooking the lake as a summer residence for a wealthy industrialist. The house now serves as the major visitor centre for the national park. Setting off, our anti-clockwise itinerary launched quickly onto the hills with an ascent of Kirkstone Pass, the highest in the Lake District at 1,500 feet above sea level. Gradients are relatively shallow and bends are leisurely, permitting the sublime views to be appreciated rather than necessitating battle with the steering. With no power assistance one may guess there is heavy work involved, »

ROAD TRIP XK150

although in reality, other than when attempting low speed manoeuvring the vast diameter of the steering wheel ensures even the weedy-armed can cope admirably. Nonetheless, it does hinder human movement and getting out of the car is an ungainly struggle.

The delightful descent to Ullswater drifted beneath towering mountains where I longed for a drone hovering above the stunning white XK to film progress and assure movie stardom. Leaving the lake our drive pointed towards the quieter northern fells. I

was particularly keen with this tour to incorporate wide ranging landscapes and mix renowned beauty spots with off the beaten track, but equally worthy, locations. The next area on the agenda, known as the "Back of Skiddaw" precisely achieves the latter requirement. One of my favourite roads hereabouts runs westwards from Caldbeck to Uldale, crossing the B5299, affording expansive views of a part of Lakeland few tourists visit. This leads to the northern fringe of Bassenthwaite Lake, popularly discussed in pub quizzes, because it is actually the

only lake in the Lake District, all others being named mere, water or tarn.

Crossing the cultural shock of the thundering A66 trunk road, tranquillity was restored and further enhanced through the encounter with an idyllic road following the shores of Crummock Water and Buttermere. This is a place to maintain a slow pace and savour scenery that many would argue is beyond compare. It is wild but colourful; rugged yet entrancing. The mountains loom ahead with the weaving ribbon of asphalt beckoning as it ascends



Above Derwentwater after a rain shower – no problem with the rapidity of erecting the drophead hood.



The rugged grandeur of Honister Pass is not the place to learn the art of Moss box gear changes



In parts of the Lake District it's still 1958

Honister Pass. Once more, the XK was completely at ease, the muscular torque of its 1940s derived straight-six effortlessly swallowing the contour lines. However, now is perhaps the opportune moment to mention the elephant in the room that may cause anxiety to drivers of later classic Jaguars – namely the Moss gearbox. I would like to say there is nothing to fear and it's almost as straightforward as any modern transmission. Naturally I can't be that audacious, although there are techniques to make life easier, the problem is remembering to apply them when compelled into rapid gear changes! Actually, rapid is entirely the wrong action to consider when operating the Moss box. Remaining calm, slow and smooth is the key, a gentle pause in neutral between gears and a blip of throttle to match the revs when downshifting goes a long way to looking like a seasoned professional. The trouble is, even though all Moss boxes work on the same principles each one has a unique character that can only be learned by trial and error. For most the major disquiet is the selection of first gear, the one without synchromesh. We have all heard of double declutching and this is useful when downshifting into first, although matching the road speed to the revs of the intended gear is equally so. Even when stationary there may still be grating as first engages and feigning moving the lever into second gear before slipping into first helps with aligning the noisy bits. From this you might suspect me to be old hand at this game and even though I confess to obtaining my PSV licence in a 1950s half-cab double-decker bus with a "crash" gearbox (no synchro on any gear), that was nearly forty years ago and I have lost the fluidity of my younger self. These days I can fluff it as easily as the next man.

Honister plunges steeply into the Borrowdale valley through which we meandered to the next lake, Derwentwater, where a minor road takes a lofty course above the western shore. A brief dash on the A66 bypassed the town of Keswick before byways ambled past Castlerigg Stone Circle and into the charming St. John's in the Vale. This offers a peaceful approach to Thirlmere where the A591 is joined for the climb over Dunmail Raise. On the summit of the pass is a 1950s AA box, probably in full working order the last time VUF drove past, although now made defunct by the rise of



Paying our respects to Wordsworth's final resting place at Grasmere church



Only kidding – VUF never missed a beat

the mobile phone and preserved as a listed building by the Automobile Association. It suffered damaged recently when winter winds ripped it from its moorings, but was thankfully repaired by the AA's maintenance team.

The A591 leads all the way back to Brockhole, although our route diverted through Grasmere village, thronged with visitors soaking up the legacy of the poet William Wordsworth's long-time home. Their day was undoubtedly further lifted by the sight of a venerable pale Jaguar gliding by as though "wandering lonely as a cloud o'er vale and hills". I'm sure Wordsworth would have been a XK drophead man.



Welcome home: the Museum staff are happy to see VUF return safely from her holiday to the land of the lakes.

Our Lakeland circuit presently drew to a close and VUF was still on song. That was just as well with two hundred miles to cover before the road trip was completed on return to the British Motor Museum. Over five hundred miles and a few heavy showers were rather a rude awakening for a car accustomed to the quiet life in a museum. However, by now my confidence in the XK was overflowing and I anticipated and duly experienced an unruffled homeward journey, whatever the motorway traffic threw at us. Nevertheless, if we had encountered queues of stationary vehicles, there existed an otherwise unemployed electric fan for peace of mind. ■



BANGED UP

This 1958 XK150 FHC was once used as a banger racer. It suffered terrible damage, yet survived and has been restored to a fast and highly usable classic. We tell its unique story before trying it ourselves

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL WALTON RESTORATION IMAGES: MIKE READ



Of the hundreds of cars that we have featured over the years, none has a history quite as remarkable as this XK150 fixed-head coupe. Once used as a banger racer, the car amazingly survived – just – and has recently been restored. Although a long way from a concours winner, it is a fast, good-looking and hugely enjoyable machine that gives more than a nod to its unique past.

Little is known about the early years of the XK150 3.4 FHC with chassis

number S824211DN, other than it was dispatched on 19 February 1958 and was originally in Old English White with a red interior. It's thought the original engine was replaced in the Seventies for a 3.8-litre, originally fitted to a Mk IX, and was still on the road as late as 2000. An older, Kent-based gentleman bought the car to restore and got close to finishing the project before passing away in late 2009.

For reasons unknown, his widow insisted the car was taken to a scrapyard and destroyed. An angle

grinder was put through the pillars to cut the roof off; the doors, bonnet and bootlid were removed and the interior stripped. It was at this point that Suffolk-based banger racer Laurence Wells bought the car for the all-Jaguar Big Cat Cup to be held on Sunday, 4 July 2010 at Ipswich's Foxhall International Raceway.

"It was a very clean car with not a bit of rust on it anywhere," Wells wrote on Pistonheads.com in 2010. "But the best parts of it was [sic] missing; all the interior apart from the dash, no wheels, »

RESTORATION

XK150 FHC

roof had been cut off etc. It probably was restorable, but we decided to have a bit of fun with it, seeing as it was the first of its kind to hit the [banger] track."

It took six months for Wells to prepare the car for the race, including reattaching the roof, stripping the car of its exterior trim and strengthening the chassis by inserting huge bolts in several strategic places. He also made a basic bonnet, and door panels that were welded onto the wings, plus he fitted a bootlid from a Mk2. The original hubs were also replaced so

the car could be fitted with modern alloys. Finally, because speed isn't important in a banger race, the MkIX's 3.8 head was replaced with one from a Mk2 that had two carburettors.

According to Wells, the XK150 was fast. "I was pulling away quite easily from a lot of the newer XJ6s with bigger engines," he wrote online in 2010 after the event. But, despite being the oldest car on track, the others didn't go easy on the 52-year-old coupe.

There's a clip of the race on YouTube that, due to all the other Jaguars

taking a hammering – including several XJ6s and XJ40s, a 420, a Daimler DS420 limousine and an XJ-S – is hard to watch. But, a four-car pile-up when the XK150 was rear-ended and shoved hard against a wall explains how this once highly collectable classic received its many injuries.

Following the race and after passing through another scrapyard, the almost unrecognisable car found its way to Jaguar and Austin-Healey specialist Denis Welch Motorsport, in Staffordshire. It was then advertised on eBay for £4,500.

In 2012, marque enthusiast Mike Read was looking for a chassis for an XK120 special he was planning to build and saw the former banger racer for sale online. "It did look awful," Mike admits, "but no one had bid on it. I called Denis Welch Motorsport and made an offer, which was accepted."

Despite the extensive damage, when Mike started stripping the car he discovered that the front bulkhead was close to being perfect with little rust. "I like saving things, and thought it was a shame to scrap the car," he says. "I eventually found an original XK120 chassis in the States, so decided to restore the XK150."

First, though, he needed to discover the car's identity. "Once I'd stripped the body down and could access the chassis





number, I found it had been ground off. It should also appear on the front cross member under the radiator and this time it was still there, albeit faintly."

With the help of a contact in Australia who has access to Jaguar's build records, and because the car had its original body and gearbox, Mike could prove that the car was S824211DN, and requested a registration from the DVLA. The car was soon issued its original number, 1515 DU.

Mike realised the car would never be a concours winner due to its rather sketchy history, so from the outset

knew what he wanted to achieve. "Being bent to buggery all over the place, it was never going to be perfect, so I decided to keep it looking like a racer."

The chassis needed straightening, but everything from the front wings forward (which had to be pulled out on a jig) was usable, although it was missing a bonnet – which Mike sourced, as he did doors. And because Wells had shortened the roof, Mike had to find one of these, too.

At the other end, the back was so badly damaged following that four-car pileup it needed a complete new rear end, which was built by Bill Lawrence

& Son, an XK panel specialist based in Hampshire, onto which a pair of original wings that Mike already owned were fitted, as was a replacement bootlid.

Although Mike and his son, Tom, did much of the initial work, a bodyshop in Dereham refitted the roof, improved the shut lines, welded in the new floor at the back and prepared the car for painting.

Instead of going for its original Old English White, Mike specified Ecurie Ecosse Blue. He explains, "I love the colour and I haven't seen another XK150 in the same shade. Plus, I thought it fitted rather nicely »



The solid-looking XK150 before it was originally sent to the scrapyards in early 2010



It's difficult to believe this mess could one day be restored



The 3.8-litre engine before restoration began



Cutting the rear wings away revealed the poor condition beneath the surface



Stripped and ready to be reassembled



The only part of the car Mike kept is its bootlid, which hangs on his garage wall



with the car's racing history."

Mike kept the 3.8-litre block, but as he already had a triple-ported head from an E-type and a set of three carburettors that he'd bought years earlier, he swapped them for the Mk 2 head and the two carbs the car came with. "It was meant to be," he says with more than a little satisfaction at it all coming together.

The original gearbox was reused, as was the steering and suspension, albeit all recommissioned, and the latter was fitted with modern polyurethane bushes.

Finally, Mike sent the car to Rob Kitchen at Norfolk Classic and Sports Cars in Fakenham to have it checked over mechanically and to set the castor and camber. Rob soon discovered, though, that the original rear axle was bent – no doubt

another victim of the banger race – which was subsequently replaced.

After eight years of hard work, this once banged-up car was ready to be enjoyed once more. Having kept in contact with Mike throughout the latter stages of the restoration, I'm excited to see the final result. I won't be disappointed.

The car looks terrific when I visit Mike one sunny day in July and is a long way from the mangled monstrosity he started with. Part of its appeal comes from his choice of exterior paint. Although an unusual colour for an XK150, it is the same hue as the two Ecurie Ecosse-entered D-types that celebrated Le Mans victories in 1956 and 1957 so I reckon it's a natural choice for this 1958 sports car.

Hanging on Mike's garage wall is the dented bootlid from the 2010 banger

race, the sole reminder of its former life. When I say that it's easy to judge the poor state of the car by this single panel, he says simply, "Yeah, it was bad." Surely the understatement of the year.

The car has a wonderful yet natural-looking patina, despite being finished in April 2020. That's because all the exterior trim comes from Mike's exhaustive collection of original parts sourced during previous restorations. "Rather than buying new, everything I had in the store that could be used, I used," he explains. Old and imperfect, the tiny dents in the oval radiator grille, together with the slight pitting of the headlight rings, give just a hint of the car's colourful past.

The only part of exterior trim that Mike's collection couldn't yield was a pair of bumpers – so none are fitted. Still, it gives the normally

svelte XK150 FHC the pseudo racing image he wanted. Add a pair of white racing roundels, and the car could have just left a Sixties track.

It's immediately obvious when I open the door that this ruggedness continues inside. Although the bucket seats are new and the retrimmed dash has all the correct dials (again, coming from Mike's shelf), with no roof lining and two basic door cards that lack the thick veneer along the top, it's considerably different from how it would have looked when new. There's even a roll cage behind the seats that Mike picked up for a mere £35 from eBay. It's still comfortable, though, and this simplicity makes the car usable, drivable and practical – ideal for Mike, because he drives the coupe most days.

With little to no sound-deadening, the familiar twin-cam growl of the 3.8-litre XK unit fills the cabin yet even under full power it's never so intrusive that Mike and I need to shout to make ourselves heard. With the three carbs being perfectly set up, the engine is quick to respond to my request for power, the surprisingly hard acceleration arriving instantly, yet smoothly. There's also plenty of torque and I could, if I wanted, leave the car in third and it would still pick up speed keenly.

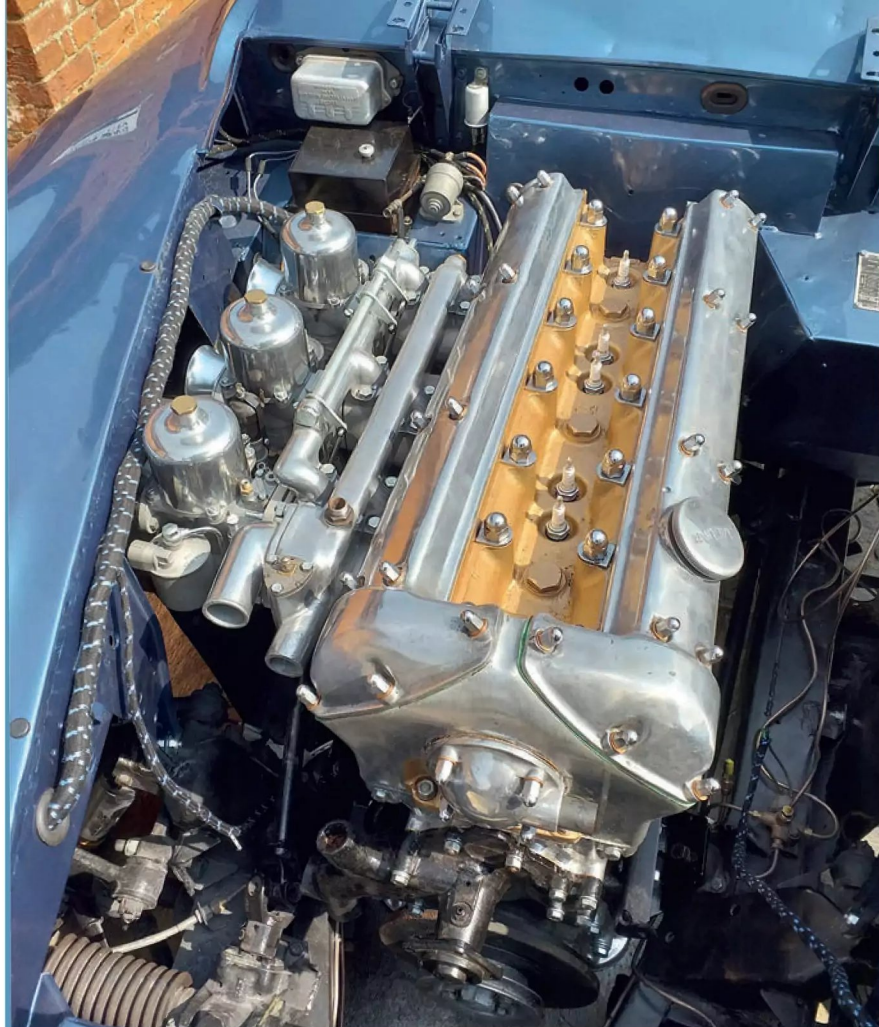
But to do so would miss a major part of what makes the car so enjoyable to drive: the short, sharp shifts of the original four-speed gearbox. Precise with nice mechanical changes, blipping the throttle before snicking down into third and then second ready for a corner is a genuine moment of motoring joy. Little wonder Wells found the car so quick while being chased around the Ipswich banger track.

The steering is surprisingly accurate for a Fifties sports car, allowing me to scythe through bends with pinpoint accuracy. Grip is never in doubt, despite the narrow width of the Yokohama tyres.

What I enjoy most about driving Mike's XK150, though, is its tough, no-nonsense character – how it pushes me to drive harder and faster, as if to say, "I survived a banger race so I can survive anything. Even you."

There's an irony in knowing that this once battered, beat-up, unloved car has been transformed into one of the best driving examples we've ever featured. The only thing more remarkable than its history is the car itself. ■

THANKS TO: Mike Read



FIRST CONTACT

The first Jaguar to be factory-modified for increased performance was the 1958 XK150S. We look at the model's history and significance before trying one for ourselves

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: JIM PATTEN



A single letter can have so much meaning. Tag an 'S' after XK150, and this single letter tells the knowing observer that here is an extremely fast car. In today's line-up, it is the letter 'R' that denotes the performance role.

It took Jaguar many years to make a performance version of its production line-up, although there was always something in the background as an option, and the company even flirted with Special Equipment options.

In recent times, Jaguar has embraced the performance opportunities, but we need to go back to America and 1982 for the first appearance of the 'R'. Bob Tullius of Group 44 fielded the first (post D-type) purpose-built Jaguar-powered race car (which would evolve into the ferocious Group C cars), the XJR-5. It

was the fifth in a line of Jaguar race cars that were retrospectively called XJR-1, E-type Series 3, XJR-2, 3 and 4, plus various guises of XJ-S. Jaguar adopted the 'R' for the performance option of its production cars in 1988 with the XJR 3.6, where the improvements were restricted to the chassis. The following year came the XJR-S 6.0-litre and, in 1994, the XJR 4.0-litre, the first-ever appearance of a supercharger as standard fitment on a Jaguar. So what took the company so long to introduce a sporting model to its range?

From William Lyons' early Swallow company through to SS, the brand concentrated on style for its cars – just look at the first-generation S.S.1 or the Airline saloon if evidence is needed. Sporting attributes arrived in 1935 with the S.S.90 two-seater sports,

but, with the same side-valve engine as the saloon cars, performance of this delightful car was limited. However, the following year, things improved as the model evolved into the SS Jaguar 100. With overhead valves, here was a true performance car, which, in 3½-litre guise, nudged 100mph. More than 300 cars were made.

The real breakthrough came when the XK120 was announced in 1948. Nothing could match its genuine 120mph performance. Initially, the car was unbeaten on the world's race circuits, with very standard cars coming home in 12th and 15th position at the 1950 Le Mans 24 Hours. So good was the legendary XK engine that Jaguar constructed a tubular frame chassis to clothe a purpose-built race car, which became the XK120C (later



Not all XKs were fitted with wire wheels. This example had steel wheels with Ace wheel embellishers

C-type). Engine modifications would trickle into regular production.

On release, the 3.4-litre engine was rated at 160bhp, but the factory offered a raft of upgrades aimed at the amateur racer that were also suitable for the road. Jaguar outlined the new parts in a service bulletin midway through 1951. New pistons increased the compression ratio to either 8:1 or 9:1, while high-lift camshafts, re-jetted carburettors and a Burgess straight-through exhaust system all contributed towards an increase of power to 180bhp. Thicker front torsion bars and nine-leaf rear springs helped to improve the suspension. Only the brakes let this formidable package down. With solid steel wheels, heat build-up had no escape. Help came in 1951 with the addition of optional wire

wheels (Italian Boranni wire wheels had been available as after-market fit).

In September 1952, Jaguar combined these modifications into a sub-model, the Special Equipment (in America, XK120M, for modified), recognised by an 'S' prefix on the chassis number. In 1953, the same year that a close-ratio gearbox was optioned, a limited number of cylinder heads of the type used on the C-type were released, complete with valves and high-lift camshafts, and a pair of two-inch SU carburettors on a special inlet manifold completed the tuning package. These upgrades were available on Jaguar's flagship saloon, the Mk VII, to evolve into the Mk VIIM where, like the SE XK, detail improvements included upgraded torsion bars and some cosmetic changes, too.

When the XK140 was announced

in October 1954, many of the special equipment parts were incorporated into the standard model, the 3.4-litre engine now giving 190bhp as standard. A Special Equipment model was available from day one, which incorporated the C-type cylinder head, with either 1¾in or two-inch carburettors. Unlike the XK120, the C-type 'head' was finished in red, with C-type badging on the cam covers. The competition options continued, with aero-screens and racing seats still available. A fully loaded XK140 could exceed 130mph.

The 2.4 saloon, announced in 1955, wasn't ignored, although it had to wait a couple of years before the introduction of a formal tuning booklet. Three stages of tune were offered. Stage one boosted engine power from 112bhp to 119bhp. Stage two, which included the »



Beverly Hills Car Club

ONE OF THE LARGEST DEALERS OF EUROPEAN
AND AMERICAN CLASSIC CARS IN THE WORLD!

Looking for classic or luxury sports cars?
We buy and pick up from any USA Location Worldwide shipping



1958 Jaguar XK150S 3.4 Roadster #16223

This left-hand-drive 1958 Jaguar XK150S 3.4 Roadster with factory overdrive featured with matching numbers and finished in magnificent color scheme of Carmen Red combined with a Black interior. Do not miss your opportunity to acquire such remarkable and original XK150 'S' model that will make an excellent restoration candidate.

For \$84,5000



1970 Jaguar XKE Fixed Head Coupe #17417

Introducing this 1970 Jaguar XKE Fixed Head Coupe featured with matching numbers. Finished in Regency Red exterior color complemented with a black interior. Equipped with a 4-speed manual transmission and a 4.2-liter inline-six engine. Look no further than this extremely desirable E-Type that is mechanically sound. For \$39,950



1962 Jaguar XKE Series I Flat Floor Roadster Right-Hand-Drive With a Louvered Bonnet #17202

This rare 1962 Jaguar XKE Series I Flat Floor Roadster Right-Hand-Drive with a lowered bonnet featured with matching numbers. Finished in an exquisite Opalescent Silver Blue and is one of 400 right-hand-drive 'Flat Floor' examples ever produced. The coveted XKE Flat Floor Roadster is a true automotive masterpiece that combines timeless design and is mechanically sound. For \$159,950



1990 Jaguar XJS V12 Convertible #18098

This 1990 Jaguar XJS V12 Convertible featured with 58,357 miles on the odometer. Finished in its factory color Jet Black and Barley Tan leather. This 1990s classic comes with the driver's manual handbook, service booklet, and manufacturer's literature. An attractive XJS Convertible that is ready to be enjoyed and is also mechanically sound. For \$14,750



1969 Jaguar XKE Fixed Head Coupe Right-Hand-Drive #17262

This 1969 Jaguar XKE Fixed Head Coupe Right-Hand-Drive featured with a matching number engine. If you are in search of a classic car that combines timeless elegance and impeccable craftsmanship, look no further than this E-Type Series II that is mechanically sound. For \$56,500



1952 Jaguar XK120 Roadster #17605

This 1952 Jaguar XK120 Roadster featured with a matching numbers. Finished in Old English White complemented with a red interior. Equipped with a 4-speed manual transmission, 3 1/2-liter engine, and Birmingham SU carburetors. This Jaguar presents a unique opportunity for enthusiasts to recommitment it to its former glory and enjoy the thrill of owning a piece of automotive history. For \$69,950



1987 Jaguar XJSC HE #17235

This rare and sought-after 1987 Jaguar XKE Series I Flat Floor Roadster with a lowered bonnet featured with matching numbers. This particular example has been loved by its long-term owner since the 1960s. With its long-term ownership and timeless design, it represents a rare opportunity to own a piece of automotive history. For \$108,500



1970 Jaguar XKE Roadster #18164

This 1970 Jaguar XKE Roadster featured with matching numbers. Finished in a Willow Green exterior which is perfectly complemented by its black interior. This classic beauty can be brought back to its former glory, ready to hit the open road once again. For \$44,500



1973 Jaguar XKE V12 Roadster Right-Hand-Drive #17039

Presenting this Right-Hand-Drive 1973 Jaguar XKE V12 Roadster with 2 Tops that is finished in Signal Red combined with a Beige interior. This S3 is equipped with a manual transmission, V12 engine, and four Zenith-Stromberg carburetors. Look no further than this extremely desirable last series E-Type that is mechanically sound. For \$79,950



1992 Jaguar XJS Convertible #18201

An ultra low-mileage 1992 Jaguar XJS Convertible featured with merely 21,176 miles on the odometer. Equipped with an automatic transmission and a 5.3L V12 engine. Do not miss your chance to own a piece of automotive history with this XJS Convertible that is mechanically sound. For \$12,750



1955 Jaguar Mark VII Saloon #16987

Presenting a 1955 Jaguar Mark VII Saloon featured with a numbers-matching engine block and finished in Black complemented with the same color interior. This vintage gem has just come out of the dry desert state of Arizona. This Jaguar Mark VII Saloon has the potential to become a show-stopping masterpiece. For \$11,750



1963 Jaguar XKE Fixed Head Coupe #18340

Introducing this 1963 Jaguar XKE Fixed Head Coupe featured with matching numbers. Finished in Signal Red exterior color combined with a black interior. If you're in the market for a classic Jaguar than look no further than this 3.8-liter XKE that is mechanically sound. For \$64,500



1992 Jaguar XJS #18363

Introducing an ultra low-mileage 1992 Jaguar XJS featured with merely 10,345 miles on the odometer. This Jaguar comes with the original window sticker, owner's handbook, service book, a clean CARFAX report. This is mechanically sound. For \$34,750

Please check our website as we have cars being delivered daily to the showroom
ALEX MANOS, BEVERLY HILLS CAR CLUB 4576 1/2 Worth St., Los Angeles, CA 90063
T: +1 (310) 975-0272 <https://www.beverlyhillscarclub.com> E: sales@beverlyhillscarclub.com



high-lift camshafts, took the power to 131bhp, while stage three required a new B-type (similar to the C-type) cylinder head and SU carburettors, but power rose to the dizzy heights of 150bhp. Such was the power of the new 3.4-litre saloon that, with its B-type cylinder head, 210bhp seemed to be enough, although a C-type 'head with two-inch carburettors could be ordered.

With the revolutionary E-type in the wings, rather than introduce a completely new model to replace the XK140, Jaguar played safe with the XK150 in 1957 – effectively a bulking-up of the original design. Not that it was much heavier than the outgoing model; the effect was more of the high-waist and big glass area design. Both models, though, tipped the scales against the lithe XK120, where the later massive bumpers and other parts added the pounds.

But the big news was the introduction

of disc brakes (although drum brakes were nominally standard), a design that Jaguar had been working on closely with Dunlop. But, initially at least, the model line-up followed the usual path, from standard 3.4-litre engine rated at 190bhp to the SE at 210bhp.

If Jaguar's competitors thought that Jaguar had grown complacent, they would soon get a rude awakening. 'Bill' Heynes and his team, specifically Harry Weslake, had been hard at work developing a new cylinder head fed by three two-inch carburettors. Known as the 'straight port' cylinder head, due to the arrangement of the inlet ports, when used in conjunction with 9:1 compression pistons, power would leap to 250bhp, with torque at 240lb ft. This compared to the best SE model rated at 210bhp and 216lb ft.

The first model to be fitted with



the revised engine was the open two-seater, announced in March 1958. With the first trial of triple carburettors being made in 1956, the introduction date would have been earlier but for the disastrous factory fire in 1957, which had a massive impact on Jaguar. Performance throughout the range was dramatically improved, with more than a second slashed from the 0-60mph time, falling from 8.5 seconds to 7.3 seconds. Maximum speed rose from 123mph to 136mph. Fixed and drophead coupes had to wait until February 1959 before they had the 'S' option.

To deliver the extra fuel requirements, the car received twin SU fuel pumps, while to minimise wheelspin from the increased power it gained a limited-slip differential (or Powr-Lok, in Jaguar parlance). Although Jaguar made much of automatic transmission, an option from the XK140 onward, only the manual gearbox was available for the faster car. Coincidentally, Jaguar introduced improved disc brakes across the range, where quick-change friction material was then possible.

In 1958, the 3.4-litre engine was enlarged to 3.8, but, rather than replace the slightly smaller unit, both remained in production. The first installation was in the Mk IX saloon; the XK150 and newly introduced Mk 2 saloon had to wait another year. In standard form, there was a useful hike to 220bhp, with 240lb ft of torque, the same torque as the 3.4S but at lower revs. There was no waiting for the 3.8 'S' variant, with its 265bhp and 260lb ft torque; it was launched at the same time. (A word of caution about power outputs. Following the gross over-exaggeration in the US market, UK manufacturers had to follow course. Jaguar's figures were extracted with every possible power drain, such as the water pump and dynamo, removed. The true figure for the 3.8 'S' is more like 220bhp, with other models similarly reduced.)

On the road, both 3.4 and 3.8 'S' are »



Interior is indistinguishable from the standard model

LED bulbs & upgrade kits designed & developed in the UK



Money-back guarantee, tech support & personal service

Better Car Lighting Since 1978



We have developed "invisible" orange indicator systems for early cars, orange flashing from inside the original red lenses, and orange flashing front sidelights, and every bulb on all classic Jaguars can be upgraded. We have also developed multi-function systems to turn reversing lights in high power reversing lights, extra brake lights and red rear foglights.



You will spend more time looking at your dash than the shiny coachwork. We can make it just as beautiful. As well as a range of colours, including ice-blue for early Jaguars, we have the world's only LED instrument lighting bulbs that will dim with your OE dimmer switch or rheostat.



Tell us about your ideas for upgrading your classic Jaguar and we can give suggestions and free advice. We have upgrades that you simply can't get from anyone else, and they all come with a money back guarantee.



Our LED headlight upgrades are designed to be the best, not the cheapest. They are guaranteed for five years. Do it right, do it once.



Our flasher sounder will ensure that you always hear your indicators. Suitable for all systems, and in pos or neg. Just 29.99+VAT.

Quote C1 Jag 2024 for a discount on your order.

01789 576118

www.bettercarlighting.co.uk enquiries@bettercarlighting.co.uk



KIM CAIRNS - Established 1972
Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten



1956 JAGUAR XK 140 SE FIXED HEAD COUPE. Subject to a total 4-year restoration by a restorer in Switzerland to exacting standard and finished in British Racing Green with Jaguar Tan Trim using authentic match for the leather seats, door cards trim and carpet. Desirable SE spec which includes the more powerful engine using a C type Head and dual exhaust system, mated to a Moss 4 Speed gearbox with overdrive. The car comes with a detailed history from the last owner in 2019 detailing all expenditure. Plus, a detailed account of work done by the previous owner in Switzerland. All presented in a leather bound folder which includes photos, heritage certificate, original handbook and lubrication chart. Excellent properly restored example now showing a little gentle patina.....£76,995



1952 DAIMLER SPECIAL SPORTS CONVERTIBLE DB18. Coach built by Barker, one of only 500 built, 3 were fixed head and the rest drop heads mainly by Barker, there were a few Hooper bodies. Comes with an extensive history including original log book detailing the ownership including a short time with Gold Coast Studios in USA for approximately 3 years then it came back to the UK. MOT details from 1968 through to 2018, with original handbooks, Jack and Tools, spare keys. Finished in immaculate Sage Green over Smoke Green with Beige tan hide, Beige carpets, wooden trim and rear bench seat. Becoming increasingly rare to find£32,995



1986 DAIMLER DOUBLE SIX *ONE OWNER AND ONLY 33,000 MILES. Supplied by Stratstone Jaguar of Berkeley Street London on the 26th of September 1986. The original bill of sale is within the file. Finished in Masons Black with Magnolia Hide and Magnolia Coachline. With main agent and specialist service history along with documented maintenance and repairs mainly by Weybridge Automobiles, well known specialists. Within the service book 7 service stamps, serviced at 1,602 miles, 5,908 miles, 12,180 miles, 21,800 miles, 32,180 miles, 32,677 miles and 33,159 miles. Looks to be totally original paintwork immaculate Masons Black with unmarked Magnolia Hide. The specifications include electric sunroof, air conditioning, cruise control and factory fitted telephone. This desirable series III Daimler Double Six 5.3 litre V12 Automatic comes with its original maintenance handbook, stamped service book, drivers handbook and operating instructions for the cellular mobile phone all within its original Daimler wallet. When only the best is good enough don't miss this one.....£27,995



TO VIEW ALL OF OUR CARS PLEASE VISIT WWW.KIMCAIRNSCLASSICS.CO.UK

FREE DELIVERY ENGLAND, WALES OR ANY UK PORT
Common Road, Snettisham, Kings Lynn Norfolk PE31 7PF
01485 541526 kimcairnsld@gmail.com

100s OF CLASSICS FOR SALE

ROVER V8 ICONS Memorable models across the decades

CLASSIC Car Buyer
17th January 2024 18452 718 www.classiccarbuyer.co.uk

1275GT PROJECT SET FOR AUCTION

STURDY SWEDE: VOLVO 264 GLE

MARKET EXPERTS SHARE THEIR HOT PICKS FOR 2024

UK auctioneers select their cars to watch in 2024 - and it's emerging classics from the early 2000s that dominate

The rising value of the classic car market has led to a surge in interest in emerging classics from the early 2000s that dominate the market. These cars are often overlooked but have the potential to become highly sought after in the future.

BUYING THE RENAULT 4
The 2CV rival with even greater versatility



1980s EXECUTIVES: JAGUAR V MERCEDES & BMW

CLASSIC Car Buyer

SPOTLIGHT ON



AUSTIN A40 FARINA

LANCIA FULVIA

TRIUMPH GT6

CLASSIC Car Buyer

BRITAIN'S LEADING WEEKLY NEWSPAPER FOR CLASSIC CAR ENTHUSIASTS.

TO SUBSCRIBE:
GO TO SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CBU
OR USE THIS QR CODE TO GO DIRECTLY TO OUR WEBSITE

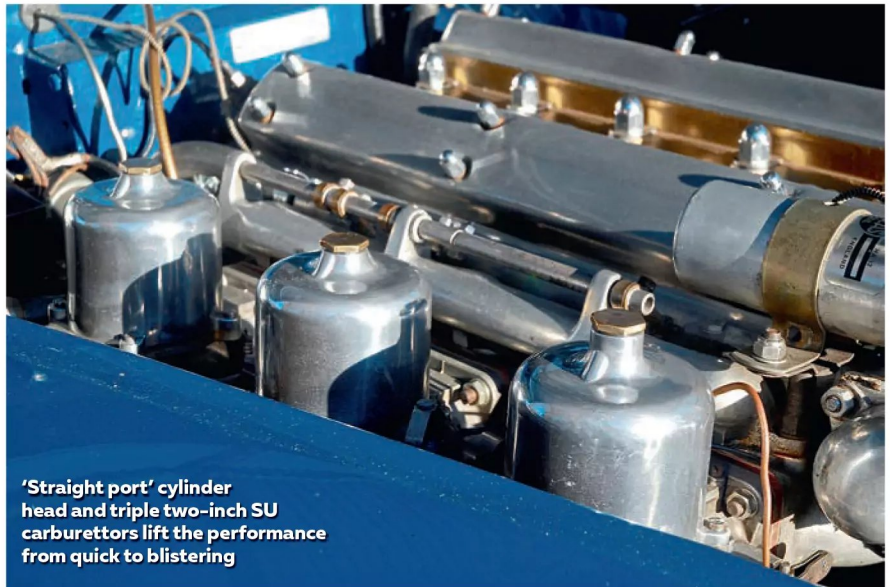


extremely quick cars, not just by the standards of the day, but in modern times, too. To put this into perspective, when, as *Jaguar Quarterly*, we tested an XK150S against the mighty Mercedes 300SL, the Jaguar was the faster car. The handling might not have been as fine, but it was more predictable and gave the driver more confidence.

But, there can be no doubting the lack of subtlety in the chassis. The front springing medium of torsion bars is first rate, but, at the rear, the half-elliptic springs tied to a conventional live axle are as vintage in style as they are in performance. Even so, with the suspension geometry properly set up and decent tyres, a well-driven XK can hold its own against anything in period, except, perhaps, some of the Latin exotica. Its forte is as a GT car, where the XK150S excels on speed-limit free motorways and, in overdrive top, more than 100mph can be maintained for as long as road conditions allow.

In today's market the XK150S is a serious consideration and it commands a substantial premium, due to its performance and relative rarity. Of the combined production total of nearly 1,500 cars (estimates vary), the majority were open two-seaters, accounting for almost two-thirds of that number, the lion share being the 3.4S, with just fewer than 40 3.8S. The balance was split between 350 fixedhead coupes and fewer than 200 drophead coupes. The rarest of these rare cars is a 3.8S left-hand drive open two-seater, with a mere 14 built.

The temptation is there to make a standard car appear to be an 'S'. Caveat emptor [let the buyer beware] has never been more appropriate.



'Straight port' cylinder head and triple two-inch SU carburetors lift the performance from quick to blistering

If you are looking to buy, check the chassis number. It will be the same as the standard XK150 sequence, but with an 'S' joining the prefix letter (VS 3.4S, VAS 3.8S). Be especially careful to check the chassis plate against the registration document as this, too, can be changed. To be absolutely certain, seek out a Jaguar Heritage certificate.

For first-time 'S' drivers, it takes a while to exploit the full performance; the long throw of the gearlever into first, the whine of the gear, and the long travel into second absorb concentration. But, as soon as these actions are perfected, your mind switches into performance mode. It is tempting to hurry the gearchange, but you will be chastised by the sound of crunching gears (don't worry, they are tough). As confidence grows, so

does belief, and getting a measure of the incredible speed, brakes and handling follows, especially if the car remains on 16in wheels with cross-ply tyres (although most cars today are radial shod). Handling is so predictable that if the rear end does break away, a little sawing at the wheel soon brings things back on line.

If you fancy a standard XK150S, then the fixedhead Cotswold Blue car featured here is a perfect example. Offered for sale at the time of testing with gentleman dealer Jeremy Wade, it is a well-preserved older restoration that has been in long-term ownership. Of note, is the unmolested interior, specified with the very rare Reuter reclining seats, and correct tool kit.

Still in superb, blemish-free condition, Wade re-commissioned the XK by overhauling the correct Dunlop braking system, fitting new painted wire wheels with Blockley tyres, overhauling the overdrive unit and fine tuning the magnificent 3.8-litre engine. On the road, it is a perfect representation of a standard car, with the staggering performance associated with the 3.8S. ■



The open two-seater was the first XK150 to use the 'S' engine



Subtle badging declares this car an 'S'



BEST OF BOTH

With a previous owner wanting an XK150 for long distance touring, this 1959 fixedhead coupe was slowly updated, culminating with the original 3.4-litre unit being swapped for a modern 4.0-litre V8. The result is a useable, fast but still classic feeling car

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL WALTON



In my view (and you might disagree), conversely just as one of the best things about classic cars is how they drive, one of the worst things about them is often the same thing. Sometimes slow, occasionally uncomfortable and usually hot inside, while it's these differences over modern models that make them fun, they can also detract from the overall enjoyment of ownership. If only there was a way to make an older car feel more modern but without losing any of its character.

That's exactly what's been achieved with this XK150. The addition of a

4.0-litre V8 plus many other modern updates have not only resulted in an interesting juxtaposition but a very usable and desirable car.

The XK150 – chassis S825007DN – started life in September 1959 as a standard fixedhead coupe in Pearl Grey with a red leather interior and powered by the 3.4-litre version of the XK unit. Other than it was sold through long standing Jaguar agent, Sturgess of Leicester, little is known about the car's early life.

In 2007 the coupe was restored by established marque experts, JD Classics,

for what's described by the current vendor as an "affluent Irish lady". As well as the new blue paint, chrome and upholstery, she also wanted the car to be more usable. And so several sensible upgrades were added during this time including air conditioning and a modern stereo (both systems sourced from an X100-generation of XK8).

She clearly liked the updated car since in ten years the female owner covered 12,500km (7,500 miles) in the coupe. However, the current keeper – Ron Gatenby – reckons there was a problem with the 3.4-litre unit and so in »



around 2018 she sold the car back to JD Classics. It's now when the Jaguar was taken to another level with the original 3.4 engine and manual transmission swapped for a 4.0-litre V8 from an XK8 plus a modern four-speed ZF automatic gearbox. The V8 must have been a reconditioned unit rather than sourced from a damaged car because when Ron bought the now completed XK150 the same year he was told by the technician that built it, "take it easy and run the engine in for a few miles".

To help keep the V8 cool in the tighter engine bay than it was originally designed for, louvres were cut into the XK150's bonnet while an aluminium radiator with an electric cooling fan were fitted as was an oil cooler, negative earth alternator electrical system plus a stainless sports exhaust system.

Heated 'tombstone' front seats with built-in headrests from a pre-2000 facelift X100-generation of XK8 replaced the originals as were colour coded inertia reel seat belts

"Ron wasn't looking for the car when he first saw it; he originally travelled to view a standard Mk2"

while a totally new veneer dashboard was fabricated and populated with modern dials. Together with electric windows, heated front screen, electric folding mirrors and parking sensors, it was a very modern take on this most classic of Jaguars.

Yet Ron wasn't looking for the car when he first saw it; he originally travelled from his home in Yorkshire to JD Classics' Essex-based facility to view a standard Mk2. "But when I got into the showroom and I saw the car," he tells me, "I was really taken by it and said, 'I'll still drive the Mk2, but I would like to test the XK150 as well.'" After driving them both, Ron found the saloon to be very "clunky" by comparison and

so bought the V8-engined XK150. "It's effortless, almost like a modern car from that perspective," he continues. "But by keeping the retro styling of the XK150, it's a brilliant installation."

Over the past six years, Ron has used the car for several touring holidays including to the Cotswolds, the Lake District and around his native Yorkshire. Which he tells me, with its effortless power and comfortable interior, it's perfectly designed for. There's even a set of colour coded luggage cases in the boot that have been especially designed for the car.

"It does get a lot of admiration," he admits proudly, "with people often pulling up alongside for a better view. »



MODIFIED XK150 V8



Not long after I bought it in 2018, we went down to the Cotswolds. I remember when we pulled into Leicester Forest services for a coffee break, a guy came up to me and asked how a car that was registered in Leicester in 1959 looks like that now?"

Despite his many travels in the car, Ron tells me the XK150 has been ultra-reliable during his ownership, especially after he fitted a trickle charge facility under the front wing.

However, with him fancying a change ("An XK120 maybe?") Ron's V8-engined XK150 is currently for sale through Yorkshire Classic & Sportscars based a few miles outside of Ripon. Intrigued by this combination of old and new, it's where I head to one sunny June morning to see the car.

To paraphrase Tom Cruise in Jerry Maguire, it had me at hello. Although the 16in wire wheels and bonnet louvres make it appear slightly more masculine than normal, due to the clever and non-intrusive way the V8 has been installed, it looks like a perfect and largely standard example

of an XK150 fixedhead coupe. Even when I lift the bonnet, other than the modern plastic cam covers, the V8 looks surprisingly at home in this much older application although it must have been more difficult than threading a needle with a shoelace to make it fit.

It's only when I open the driver's door that I see the real changes. Because thanks to those large 'tombstone' seats, modern steering wheel, the familiar horseshoe shaped centre console that houses the XK8-sourced stereo and auxiliary controls plus a J-gate gear selector, the interior looks like it's from the 2000s rather than the 1950s. However, with the modern dials set into the veneer rather than in a plastic binnacle, nothing looks as out of place as you might think and with the donor model itself being over two decades old, it still has a traditional ambience befitting a genuinely classic car. Only the ugly plastic vents in the middle of the dash spoil the ruse.

But otherwise, like everything else about Ron's XK150, no corners have been cut in the interior's

construction, no areas where new and old don't quite fit together or in perfect harmony. It's beautifully finished and perfectly constructed.

After turning the XK8 sourced key in the ignition and press the new aluminium starter button located in front of the gear-lever, the 4.0 V8 bursts into life with an enthusiasm that sets the tone for the later driving experience.

It's not known how much the car now weighs but with a standard XK150 FHC 3.4 tipping the scales at 1,462kg (3,226lb), even with the V8 and the other modern accoutrements, it will still be less than the 1,640kg (3,615.5lb) of an XK8 4.0-litre coupe. So when I squeeze the throttle pedal properly for the first time, I'm genuinely surprised by its acceleration. That relative lack of weight results in a rawness that's missing from the more refined donor car, the usually lazy V8 needing much less persuasion to deliver its power.

Something else that takes me by surprise is the noise from the sports exhaust, a deep, gravelly roar that fills the cabin in the same way a Rolls

“Even when I lift the bonnet, other than the modern plastic cam covers, the V8 looks surprisingly at home in this much older application”



Royce Merlin must under the canopy of a Spitfire which again is in keeping with the car's age and character.

When I drove a Mk2 with a similar V8 a few years ago, I remember thinking that despite being beautifully engineered, there was too much power for such an old car. But despite the XK150 being of an even older vintage, its chassis is better at coping with the V8's 290bhp than the saloon had been, suffering from less obvious scuttle shake under full power. Together with the accurate and smooth power-assisted steering plus reasonable high levels of grip,

it's easy for me to forget I'm driving a car that was first built when the original Mini went on sale and HM Queen Elizabeth II was only a few years into her seven-decade long reign.

Yet neither does it feel totally modern since there's still a 'floatiness' to the ride usually attributed to wire wheels. This together with the old-fashioned unbridled grunt from the V8 makes this XK150 feel more like British muscle car from the Sixties such as a Jensen CV-8 or Sunbeam Tiger than a classic Jaguar whose origins stem from the immediate post war years. Not only does it make

Ron's blue coupe much more usable than a standard model but never at the detriment to car's character. Take away the extra power, the big seats or the refreshing air conditioning and it looks and still feels like an XK150.

I understand this uprated XK150 won't be to everyone's tastes but thanks to the high level of the work plus the age of the parts used, it's clearly a classic Jaguar. Just a more comfortable one. ■

THANKS TO: Ron Gatenby and Yorkshire Classic & Sportcars (www.ycsc.co.uk/01765609798)



PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

When the original owner of this 1960 XK150S 3.8 fixed head coupe needed more room for his growing family, instead of changing cars he changed its shape resulting in a handsome yet practical Fastback design.

Over 62 years later, we look at the car's fascinating history

WORDS: PAUL WALTON PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL BAILIE



Leonardo da Vinci is openly recognised as one of the greatest painters of all time but what isn't so well known was his crippling perfectionism and he regularly didn't finish his creations due to never being happy with them. Take his most famous painting, the Mona Lisa, for example. Despite being commissioned by Francesco del Giocondo for a portrait of his wife in 1503, the Italian master continued working on the painting until 1717, two years before he passed away in France when this now iconic picture

became the property of King Francis I.

The first owner of this XK150S fixed head coupe, Mr A.E. Richardson, was clearly another perfectionist because for several years he steadfastly tried to improve the car. With this including a fastback style of body, the result of his constant meddling was a handsome yet practical and totally unique example.

The car's story started in early 1960 when Mr Richardson was looking to replace his Alvis 2.5-litre with a car that could regularly transport him from Surrey – where he worked as a senior

partner at a firm of solicitors, Clutton, Moore & Lavington of Thornton Heath – back to his family home in Durham. This meant the car needed to be quiet, comfortable and fast while also offering enough room for his two young children.

He finally decided on a Jaguar XK150S 3.8-litre FHC and on 7 March 1960 took delivery of a brand-new example in black – chassis T825146/DN – from Cooden Engineering Co, of Cooden Beach, Bexhill-on-Sea.

From the outset, Mr Richardson was always convinced the XK150 could go »

MODIFIED XK150 FASTBACK

faster than the claimed 140mph and starting on 14 March 1960 – just seven days after collecting the car – he began writing to Jaguar about this. Amazingly, some of these correspondences have survived and they reveal a man who was obsessed with the car's power and speed. Even in that first letter he asked about the maximum power while still being run in plus how long it could be kept at the redline for and whether Jaguar could supply both a speedo and rev counter with a higher reading than was currently fitted. He also stated he drove around 1,000 miles in a weekend.

When Jaguar's technical service manager at its Browns Lane service department, a Mr G.G. Pinder, replied three days later he said there was no harm running the engine up to 5,800rpm for short periods of time and, while a replacement rev counter couldn't be supplied, Jaguar did have a speedo that finished at 160mph, 20 mph more than the standard version.

"It was quickly becoming clear that the car was no longer large enough for his family"

Clearly not impressed by this, Mr Richardson wrote back to Mr Pinder on 22 March to again request a higher reading speedo. "At 2,500rpm," he wrote, "I find on overdrive the speedometer reads 70mph and I assume that at 5,000rpm it should reach 140mph. I shall therefore be pleased to know whether any speedometer is available for higher speed when the rpm exceeds 5,000rpm."

He finished the letter by saying that in his old Riley, his normal time to cover a stretch of the new M1 was 40 minutes but as proof of how far he pushed his XK150, he'd recently

shaved four minutes off this time. "As you can appreciate," he continued, "the rpm has been more than 6,000. I shall be obliged if you kindly let me know the maximum rpm permissible for, say, half hour bursts in the car."

Mr Pinder replied three days later again saying a replacement speedo with a dial graduated up to 160mph could be purchased but Jaguar didn't recommend speeds above 5,000rpm for long periods. Clearly becoming exasperated by Mr Richardson, the service manager finished by saying, "I do not think you need to have any concern regarding this matter as you will find the road performance to be





satisfactory without using excessive rpm." Translation: it's a fast car, please leave us alone. Mr Richardson gave in and during September 1960 a new, 160mph speedo was fitted.

He continued to use the Jaguar for the next few years, quickly racking up the miles and by April 1962 the XK150S had covered 61,600. But it was quickly becoming clear it was no longer large enough for his family. Since he was still clearly enjoying the car, instead of replacing it with a Jaguar Mk2 or anything else more sensible, he contacted Roy and Len Hartin of L&R Hartin Panels Ltd of Hanwell, West London to ask what could be done.

Not as well-known as other independent coachbuilders from the time, the Hartin brothers had started in 1945, initially working out of their father's lockup. Originally concentrating on mundane body repairs, the turning point in their career came when the owner of an MG approached the pair about designing and producing a new aluminium body for his car. It later transpired the legendary motorsport team owner, John Cooper, let this young man use his Surbiton workshop and was so impressed by

the MG he asked the Hartin brothers to produce the bodies for his F1 and sports cars. As proof of the quality of their work, the pair would later work for Lotus (including Jim Clark's 1965 Indianapolis 500 winner) and McLaren.

Yet despite becoming established in motorsport, it didn't stop them from taking on private commissions such as Mr Richardson's XK150S. What he asked for was a 'Sebring' style of roof that would offer more leg and head room for his children as well as a bigger boot than the standard coupe. The design the Hartin brothers came up with was loosely based on the Ashley Hardtop which were currently being fitted to Sunbeam Alpines.

The car was stripped from the doors backwards and a new style of GT body was hand shaped from aluminium. Not only was the roof longer and taller but the angle of the rear screen and boot lid were both much steeper than standard, all of which created more interior room. To tidy up the nose, the front wings were slightly redesigned with the sidelights being incorporated into the front indicator units. After being resprayed in white, the result was a handsome, well-designed »

MODIFIED XK150 FASTBACK

and perfectly proportioned car.

On a surviving advert from the May 11, 1960, issue of Motor magazine for the XK150S 3.8, Mr Richardson had written down all the available axle ratios, surmising at the end that the car's top speed was a potential 172mph. Since he was still clearly obsessed about reaching a higher figure, a very long 2.88:1 final drive replaced the standard unit. A set of new stiffer Alpine springs were also fitted.

When the conversion was finished in late 1962, he carried on using the car for his long, weekly commute and by

February 1963 the mileage had risen to 77,500. After reputedly getting the needle off the new 160mph speedo, he once again asked for another only this time Jaguar relented (no doubt to stop the letters) and it later sent him one from a D-type that went up to 200mph.

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a car whose owner wanted to max it out at every opportunity, in 1964 the 3.8-litre XK engine needed to be replaced.

Due to a copy of a letter to the Vehicle Licensing Office, it's known Mr Richardson still owned the car in March 1978 although it's thought he sold it not

long after, something he later regretted. "In many ways, I wish I had not parted with it all these years later," he wrote in a 1988 letter to a subsequent owner.

Over the next two decades it passed through several other owners yet despite just 150 XK150S 3.8 fixed head coupes built, the car was never converted back to its original form even when it was restored for its new owner in the early Nineties by renowned marque specialist, Peter Thurston in Kent.

Due to being made from aluminium, the Hartin's new rear section had





“So well-conceived was the design that it could easily have been the model’s fourth body style”

survived intact although the lower sections of the steel front wings unsurprisingly needed replacing as did the sills and boot floor while the original doors were reskinned in aluminium.

The then owner, Ricardo Galvani (a former director of racing parts specialist, Cambridge Motorsports), reckoned the XK150S Fastback would make a practical classic rally car and so at the same time as the bodywork was completed the suspension pickup points were strengthened, and a full roll cage added. Front racing-style seats with harnesses replaced the

originals yet amazingly, the 200mph speedo that Jaguar had supplied Mr Richardson over 25 years earlier was still in the dashboard and was kept.

Cambridge Motorsport’s sister company, Mass Racing Developments, then tuned the 3.8-litre engine and by adding D-type cams and triple Weber carburettors in place of the original SUs increased to 295bhp, an increase of 30. To keep it all cool, a modern radiator then replaced the standard original. The four-speed box was swapped for a more modern Borg-Warner T5 five-speed unit. CooperCraft four-pot »

UNDER THE HIGH PATRONAGE OF HIS SERENE HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT II OF MONACO

TOP MARQUES MONACO™

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

zondacrypto



7 - 11 MAY 2025 | 20TH
GRIMALDI FORUM | MONACO
SUPERCARS - CLASSIC CARS - WATCHES | EDITION

FERRARI 250GT CALIFORNIA SPYDER SWB BY BOUTSEN CLASSIC CARS

www.topmarquesmonaco.com

#topmarquesmonaco





calipers gripped standard disc brakes and the suspension was restored to Mr Richardson's Alpine specification. His 2.88:1 final drive was also replaced with a 3.54 unit since the former was far too long for competition use. Interestingly, though, Ricardo did test the car with the 2.88 final drive at the Milbrook Proving Ground's banked circuit when it reached an indicated 135mph.

Although a long way from the 170+ Mr Richardson reckoned it was capable of, it was still an impressive speed.

When the car was finished in 1992, Ricardo entered the car in several events in both the UK and Europe while in 2008 it was shipped to Argentina for the gruelling 1000 Millas (whose stickers the car was still wearing when we photographed it), a similar event

to Italy's Mille Miglia. The car was sold at auction in 2017 when it made £113,500 (incl. premium), meaning its rallying days are perhaps over.

Due to the already perfect lines by Jaguar's founder and first chief designer, Sir William Lyons, very few XK150s have been modified and those that have – such as the Foxbat from 1959 that was fitted with the wooden estate section of a Morris Minor Traveller – weren't aesthetically pleasing. But with its perfect proportions and similar swoopy lines as the original, that can't be said of Hartin's Fastback. So well-conceived was the design that it could easily have been the model's fourth body style alongside the fixed head and drophead coupes plus the open-two-seater. So good was the design, Mr Richardson was later adamant Jaguar had copied the car's lines for the E-type 2+2. And although tight, the rear bench certainly offered more room than a standard XK150 FHC for his children.

Based on the car's history, there's no denying Mr Richardson was clearly a perfectionist. But like Leonardo, it's obvious his constant pursuit of perfection led to something very special. ■



BUYING GUIDE

JAGUAR XK120

What you need to know to buy the iconic classic sports car

WORDS: **SAM SKELTON** PHOTOGRAPHY: **MATT RICHARDSON**

The XK120 of 1948 was originally developed as a test-bed for the new XK engine that had been developed by a small team of engineers during the Second World War. Initially bodied in aluminium, series production would be in steel for cost reasons once Jaguar found that demand would comfortably outstrip its projected

supply. Based on the chassis of the MkV saloon and featuring a 3.4-litre 160bhp engine under its lithe body, the original plan to build just 200 was hastily reconsidered. The £1,263 purchase price wasn't enough to put off several hundred keen buyers from leaving deposits.

Jaguar modified the concept over the years, introducing a fixed-head

coupe and then a drophead coupe, as well as the SE model of 1953 featuring special equipment. Rivals couldn't keep up, in terms of style, performance or price – and the XK120 was the car to be seen in during the early 1950s.

Its 1954 replacement, the XK140, was more of an evolution than a revolution, as was the XK150 of 1957. It would take until 1961 for





Jaguar to launch a similarly striking new sports car – one which, once again, utilised the XK engine that the XK120 was developed to test.

BODYWORK

The primary thing to check on a steel bodied car is corrosion, as the sheet steel was thin and even then hides an ash frame that can rot. Check the front wings first, as these are large and complicated pressings making repairs difficult and replacement expensive. By expensive, we mean that a wing without a headlamp pod or sidelamp pod is still over £4,600 new. The headlamp area and sidelight pod in particular can corrode, these can be replaced separately if you're on a tight budget. Headlamp pods are just over £1,000, sidelamp pods a very reasonable £72.

Check the panel gaps and the way they fit together, check that the lines down the side of the car aren't interrupted showing signs of previous repairs. The bonnet can be creased, and this is tricky to repair. The front valance can attract stone chips and rust, and where the scuttle meets the A-pillar is another known trouble spot. Open the doors and check that they don't drop; they're heavy and



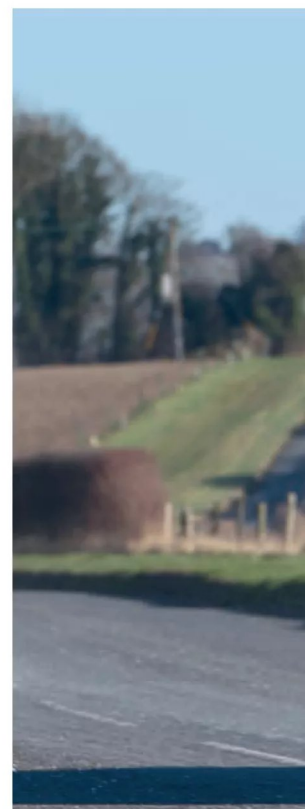
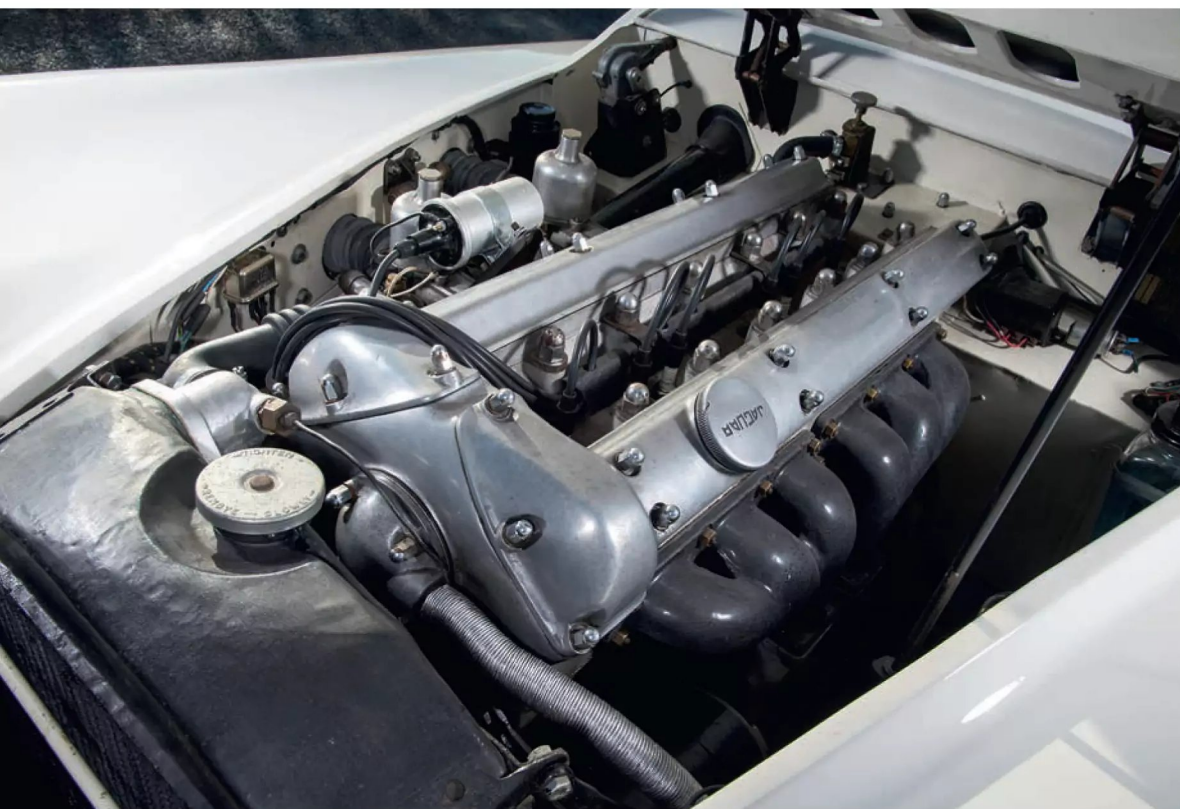
rot either in the A-post or the hinge box can cause problems. Check the beading between the rear wings and rear panel, as this can trap water.

Chassis tend not to rust too badly, but check the rear chassis rails and the anti roll bar mounts. While checking underneath, look at the sills for any nastiness. You may see galvanic

corrosion here on alloy bodied cars, but the likelihood is that these will all be in good condition given their value today.

ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION

Good news here, because the XK engine is generally reliable and there »



are scores of Jaguar specialists offering everything from a service to a brand new engine. That work isn't cheap though – while it's a different version of the engine, the rebuild our XJ Series III had back in 2019 was not a cheap undertaking. Expect around a pint of oil to be used every 200 miles on the average engine, and a little blue oil smoke is normal as long as it's not a cloud. Oil leaks are fairly normal – but if it's the rear crank seal it can't be changed in situ. Rattling timing chains need changing, as do noisy water pumps. Check the basics – you want 40psi of oil pressure on a warm engine

at 3,000rpm or 20psi at idle, and you want to check it doesn't overheat.

Moss boxes can be difficult, but they're true to the car's character and parts are available to rebuild them. A little whine in first is normal, while poor synchromesh on the top three gears is an indication that a box rebuild will soon be necessary. Many cars have had five speed conversions, and there aren't to be sniffed at if carried out by a reputable specialist – they don't devalue or add value to a car. Differentials are typically hardy, long lasting units and there's nothing especially complicated about them

if they need to be rebuilt. Routine maintenance is all it ought to need.

SUSPENSION, STEERING AND BRAKES

Many of the car's underpinnings were developed for larger and heavier saloon models, so they're understressed in this application and should prove reasonably reliable in service.

The Metalastik bushes in the front suspension can wear out – many owners upgrade them to polybushes which are less troublesome long term.



XK120 TIMELINE

1948

XK120 unveiled at Earl's Court Motor Show. Initial plans to make just 200 soon overturned.

1950

Production changes from alloy body to steel body over ash frame after 242 cars built.

1951

Fixed-Head coupe unveiled with fixed roof and more luxurious interior incorporating a walnut dashboard. SE model introduced with 180bhp, twin exhausts, higher life cams and wire wheels.

1953

Jaguar introduces a Drophead coupe, offering the FHC interior and fixed screen with an open convertible roof.

1954

Production ends as Jaguar launches the new XK140 model.

You can expect a little play in the steering box but excessive play suggests a rebuild will be imminent. Likewise, be wary of cars with no play. Overtightening the steering box can mask play at the cost of accelerating wear. You will find that some cars have been fitted with electric power steering systems these days, as owners age and find the unassisted steering too heavy. This shouldn't devalue the right car – and if you don't like it, removing the system should be easy and inexpensive.

Brakes are drums all round and reasonably simple to stay on top of.

Pistons can seize though, especially on cars that see light use – so on your test drive make sure you apply the brakes sharply to a stop to check for pulling to either side. Disc brake conversions exist using XK150 parts – unless you're uprating your car's performance, it's not necessary to uprate the brakes as the standard units are more than adequate.

INTERIOR AND TRIM

What you get here depends upon your model of choice – fixed head coupes and drophead coupes have a

very different interior to the roadster. In the roadster there's little to be concerned about – the dashboard is leather trimmed, like the seats – it's all basically waterproof and easy to keep looking good except for the carpets. In the drophead and fixed-head, the dashboard is a beautiful slab of walnut, with continuation fillets along the door cappings. The lacquer and veneer can peel if it gets overly damp, and restoration isn't cheap. Replacement is an option, but a dashboard and capping kit will cost approximately £4,600 to replace. We'd rather find one with decent wood. »

The leather and carpet are also easy to source, but are equally not beyond the skills of an average local trimmer. If your interior is good enough to use as a pattern, this is what we would recommend.

Electrically these cars are simple – loose or corroded connections are likely to be the biggest issue. As standard these cars came with twin 6v batteries and a dynamo, but many have been uprated to a single 12v unit and an alternator.

Check the hood for any damage on drophead and roadster models, and make sure that if you're buying a roadster it still has the sidescreens for the hood. Dropheads have winding windows like the coupe; the roadster does not! In both cases, a replacement hood will cost around £1200.

VERDICT

Let's be honest, if you have the money to go looking for an XK120 and you

"Rivals couldn't keep up, in terms of style, performance or price."

fancy one, it's not the sort of purchase we can influence with a buying guide in a specialist magazine. You'll already be scouring the classifieds regardless of what we think.. But if you don't, XK120 buying needn't be fraught – there are plenty of specialists out there and most parts are easy enough to get hold of, the clubs are full of brilliant and helpful people and you're guaranteed to turn heads even at Jaguar events.

Which only really leaves the question of which XK120 to buy. That's largely down to budget these days, with roadsters worth considerably more than the fixed head or drophead coupes. Our recommendation would be a drophead coupe – arguably the least pretty XK120, but better value than a roadster while retaining that

wind in the hair thrill. But as with any old car, we'd be prepared to compromise on the specification in order to buy on condition – and that's the most important factor; buy the best you can afford regardless of body type or colour and trim.

VALUES

Concours XK120s are fetching silly money in our opinion – we've seen fixed-heads for over £150,000 and roadsters approaching £300,000. The truth is that for a very presentable and usable XK120 roadster you should be spending around £110,000 to £150,000 at a reputable dealer unless there's something very special in its history file. Dropheads in





similar condition top out at around £120,000, as do fixed head coupes. Obviously, alloy bodied roadsters are toward the upper end of the spectrum and a usable one might set you back around £200,000 today – add fifty percent if it's an absolute show stopper. SEs command a price premium of around 15% over equivalent standard cars. Realistically you won't find a usable roadster for under £85,000 these days, and the entry point for a usable fixed head appears to be around £65,000 if

you're lucky at an auction. Below these prices you should be budgeting for at least a partial restoration.

The last decade has seen prices for all XKs jump to approximately double what they were in 2013, and while the classic car investor market is always fluctuating, we see no reason to suggest that they won't continue to appreciate at a similar rate if looked after and maintained. It is however imperative to use them in order to retain value, as periods of standing idle are most detrimental to older cars. ■

SPECIFICATION

1951 JAGUAR XK120

ENGINE: 3,442cc I6

POWER: 160bhp

TORQUE: 244lb ft

0-60MPH: 10.3secs

TOP SPEED: 120mph

ECONOMY: 17mpg

TRANSMISSION: 4-spd man

PRICE NEW: £1,263 3s 11d

VALUE NOW: £65,000-£300,000





BUYING GUIDE

JAGUAR XK140

If this halfway house between original looks and final usability appeals, what do you need to know?

WORDS: SAM SKELTON PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS FROSIN

Launched in 1954, the Jaguar XK140 wasn't so much a completely new model as a comprehensive evolution of the XK120 which had preceded it. It brought more interior space, sharper rack and pinion steering and telescopic shock absorbers, giving greater suspension travel – but the overall look and feel of the car was little different to its predecessor. That meant it had the same 3.4 litre XK engine, the same svelte curves over an ash frame, and the same choice of three body styles.

By this time though, nobody was kidding themselves about limited production runs – the XK was a hit, and Jaguar intended to keep it that way. Which is why it didn't mess with the formula by too much. Yes, there were flashing indicators, bigger bumpers for impact protection and a new, single piece cast grille, but it was still the same XK that had wowed the public just six years earlier in 1948. For 1957 Jaguar would revise the formula once more – the more comprehensively adapted XK150 was more of a grand tourer than either of its two predecessors – but it kept the same basic package that had rendered the XK so appealing. Only with the E-type of 1961 did Jaguar see fit to change the formula – and even then, the key principles of affordable performance were retained.

BODYWORK

Like the XK120, the bodywork is comprised of steel panels over an

ash frame – and like the XK120, the steel wasn't especially thick. So you're going to be dealing with similar problems; rot will be by far the biggest bodywork problem and it's not only confined to the metal bits.

The front wings are large and complex pressings, and even from a specialist such as SNG Barratt you're looking at somewhere in the region of £5,000 each – and that's before things like the sidelight or headlamp pod are added in. These pods themselves are four figures, too. So making sure the bodywork is good should be top of your list. Check the panel gaps and body lines for anything amiss, while you should also check where the scuttle meets the A-pillar for rot and the front valance for signs of stone chips. Doors can drop because of rot in the A-post or hinge box, particularly in the FHC and DHC which have window mechanisms to add weight.

Chassis tend to be okay as far as rot goes, but check the rear chassis rails and ARB mounts carefully. It can be hard to see the state of the wooden frame while the car is assembled, but check the history carefully for evidence of past repair or replacement work. If there are no bills, assume the worst.

ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION

As we have said in other buying guides, the XK engine is unlikely to pose serious problems in a car with as much as this – if you have the money »





to buy it, you'll probably have the money to maintain it and with almost everything catered for by specialists, engine issues shouldn't keep you off the road for long. However, it all comes at a cost. Our Series III Sovereign 4.2 had a full engine rebuild in 2019, that dipped into five figures – and inflation means that jobs like this will only get more expensive over time. You'll use a litre of oil every 400 miles or so on the average XK engine, and expect a little blue smoke unless it's straight out of a rebuild. If there's a plume of fog following you, that rebuild is likely to be imminent. Rear crank seals leak and can't be changed without removing the engine, and timing chains can stretch becoming rattly. Check the oil pressure too, 20psi at idle is what you want to see, doubling by about 3,000rpm.

Check for worn synchromesh on the gearbox, as it indicates a rebuild is likely to be necessary – and don't worry about a whine in first. The XK140 was Jaguar's first sports car to be available with a Borg-Warner automatic – check that it changes up and down nicely, but these tend not to be unreliable in service. Brake bands can wear, but that's par for the course

given their age. Five speed conversions are popular and don't devalue the car.

SUSPENSION, STEERING AND BRAKES

The biggest upgrade over the XK120's predecessor was the shift from a steering box to a rack and pinion setup. This is inherently reliable, though the rack and pinion can wear over time. Some cars have been fitted with electric power steering these days, which shouldn't devalue the car as it offers greater ease of use and can be removed easily to restore the original feel of the car. We wouldn't, however, pay a premium for a car so converted unless we really had trouble manoeuvring a standard example.

The suspension system is reliable, and much of it is carried over from its predecessor with the exception of the telescopic shock absorbers. These are shared with the later large saloon models, and both standard and uprated variants are available from most Jaguar specialists if needed.

Like its predecessor, a standard XK140 uses drum brakes all round – and these are both powerful and reliable

in regular use. Pistons can seize in cars used rarely, so make sure you test the brakes sharply to assess whether the car pulls left or right. If it does, bank on a brake rebuild. It is possible to upgrade to discs using XK150 parts, but it's more hassle than it's worth unless you plan to uprate your engine considerably. The drums stop a standard example perfectly well. Again, we wouldn't consider discs to be an upgrade that adds value to the car – but nor do they devalue the right example.

INTERIOR AND TRIM

Like the XK120 which came before, the Roadster has a simpler and less opulent interior either to the FHC or the DHC, with no wood reflecting the likelihood that things were going to get wet. Carpets can rot, but apart from that you won't find many effects of weather in a roadster – only age as the leather dries and cracks. The FHC and DHC can therefore be much more expensive to retrim, with full wood kits totalling around £5,000 and refurbishment by a cabinet maker unlikely to be much cheaper. If you buy a FHC or DHC< decent wood is a priority inside. »



The leather bits are all available off the shelf, but personally we would prefer to engage the services of a local trimmer. The craftsmanship will be equally good and you're likely to find it cheaper than using a kit.

Hoods can wear, and sidescreens (on the Roadster) can go walkies over time. Not the end of the world for a

car used only in good weather, but if you're buying you want it to be complete and usable, or to negotiate enough off to replace whatever's not there. Bank on between £1,000 and £1,500 for a new hood at the time of writing for either the DHC or Roadster.

Unusually there were 2 battery arrangements in these cars – with the open models having a single 12v battery and the FHC having two 6v batteries wired in series. Many 6v installations will have been swapped by now to a simpler 12v arrangement, but neither setup devalues the car.

VERDICT

The XK140 is that rare thing – a car that improves upon its predecessor while also being worth less. With that in mind, if you have the money to consider buying an XK, the 140 is the most sensible of the three to buy. Your

only real choice will be which XK140 to buy – and in our opinion, the drophead coupe melds the user friendliness of the fixed head with the open charm of the Roadster – while being cheaper to buy than the Roadster to boot. And don't worry about getting it wrong too much either – if you can afford to buy the car the likelihood is you can afford to get a specialist to give it the once-over first; there are plenty of them and they will all be happy to help. Not only that, but parts are relatively plentiful, and the clubs are full of experts who can guide you through the minefield of purchase.

What is more important than anything though is to remember to buy on condition – and if your budget allows for an average Roadster or a very good FHC, then pick the FHC every time. A better standard of car will always be easier to own in the long run – and it's far cheaper to have a

SPECIFICATION

1955 JAGUAR XK140 DHC

ENGINE: 3442cc I6

POWER: 190bhp

TORQUE: 210lb ft

0-60MPH: 8.5secs

TOP SPEED: 125mph

ECONOMY: 17mpg

TRANSMISSION: 4-spd man

PRICE NEW: £1741 7s Od

VALUE NOW: £30,000-£130,000



respray or an interior recoloured than it is to embark on a full restoration.

VALUES

The XK140 is a much more cost effective option than the XK120 which preceded it, and even concours examples sell for more sensible money than their predecessors. You're looking

at about 10-15% less like-for-like, which means that the best XK140 Roadsters will fetch about £130,000 at a reputable dealer, the best dropheads about £100,000 and the same for the fixed-heads. At the sharper end, £30,000-£45,000 will get you something complete that you could use, but be aware that cars like this appear rarely these days – most have already

been snapped up for restoration. Prices at present are fluctuating – and which we wouldn't consider buying any XK as an investment right now, we also don't think you're likely to lose money on a purchase if well-maintained and cared for. However, we'd advise you to keep the car in use if you want it to retain value, as long periods of storage can lead to higher bills in the long run. ■

CLASSICS

WORLD

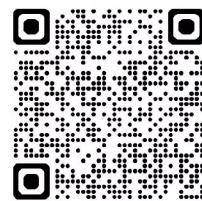


**SUBSCRIBE
TODAY
AND SAVE
UP TO 45%***

4 GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE

- **SAVE** money on the shop price
- **Never** miss an issue
- **DIRECT** delivery to your door
- **Cancel** at any time

SCAN ME



Visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/CMT
Or Call: 01959 543 747 and quote CMT

Hotlines open Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate

*UK Direct debit offer only. Savings based on the standard basic annual rate of £113.62 which includes the cover price of £5.99 plus Kelsey Media's standard postage and packing price per single issue for 12 months (13 issues). You will pay £62.30 every 12 months. Offer ends 31st December 2025. Your subscription will start with the next available issue and you will receive 13 issues every 12 months. Prices correct at time of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions, visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms. If you decide to cancel your subscription we will put a stop to any further payments being taken and will send the remaining issues that you have already paid for. For offers outside the UK visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/CMT. Data protection: We take great care in handling your personal details and these will only ever be used as set out in our privacy policy which can be viewed at shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy

Classic Mercedes



**SUBSCRIBE
TODAY
AND SAVE
UP TO 45%***

4 GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE

- **SAVE** money on the shop price
- **Never** miss an issue
- **DIRECT** delivery to your door
- **Cancel** at any time

SCAN ME



Visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/CMD

Or Call: 01959 543 747 and quote CMD

Hotlines open Monday – Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm. Calls are charged at your standard network rate

*UK Direct debit offer only. Savings based on the standard basic annual rate of £52.44 which includes the cover price of £5.99 plus Kelsey Media's standard postage and packing price per single issue for 12 months (6 issues). You will pay £28.75 every 12 months. Offer ends 31st December 2025. Your subscription will start with the next available issue and you will receive 6 issues every 12 months. Prices correct at time of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions, visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms. If you decide to cancel your subscription we will put a stop to any further payments being taken and will send the remaining issues that you have already paid for. For offers outside the UK visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/CMD. Data protection: We take great care in handling your personal details and these will only ever be used as set out in our privacy policy which can be viewed at shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy

BUYING AN XK150

For anyone tempted to spend their hard-earned cash on Jaguar's later development of the classic XK, Rob Hawkins offers some expert advice

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROB HAWKINS & CHRIS FROSIN

As with earlier members of the XK family, the 1957-61 XK150 is a highly desirable classic sports car, albeit with some advantages over its forebears. These include the extra modernity of disc brakes all round as well as a useful performance boost, particularly in S and SE guises. Available as an open two-seater (OTS), fixed-head coupé (FHC) and drophead coupé (DHC),

all versions of the XK150 were wider than the two previous generations of XK, and inevitably a little heavier.

The XK150 used either a 3.4- or 3.8-litre version of the XK engine, which initially produced 190bhp and 210bhp respectively. However, Jaguar launched the S version of the XK150 in 1958, featuring triple SU two-inch carburettors, an improved cylinder head with enhanced inlet porting,

and a limited-slip differential. To many XK fans, the XK150 S with a 265bhp, 3.8-litre engine is the model to have; it can accelerate to 60mph in under eight seconds and can exceed 130mph. Also look out for the SE (Special Equipment) models that were similarly modified, including examples with a 210bhp 3.4-litre engine.

Roadworthy XK150s that promise to be in top condition can sell for between



£100,000 and £200,000. Drophead coupés and open two-seaters appear to be more expensive than the fixed-head coupé, and the S or SE badge also helps to boost the value – although you need to check for evidence (such as a Heritage Certificate) that the chassis number begins with a T or S (S or SE model) to ensure there isn't merely a set of triple carburettors fitted inside a standard engine bay. Marque specialist Twyford Moors also warns that some fixed-heads were converted to dropheads, and such non-originality should be reflected in the price.

PRACTICAL CHOICE

The XK150 is arguably the most practical of all the XK models. Even the seemingly no-frills OTS version is relatively refined, with wind-up windows and a more accommodating cockpit for two people thanks to a lack of rear seating (the fixed-head and drophead have small rear seats). Other luxuries to look out for include an overdrive on the manual gearboxes, which allows for more laid-back cruising. There are numerous period mods and acceptable upgrades – which we'll discuss later – that are worth looking for when buying an XK150.

All models have a modestly-sized boot with a full-size spare wheel. Routine maintenance is within the scope of the average DIYer and most components are straightforward to access, so don't be afraid to ask a seller for evidence of oil changes, refreshing the brake fluid and coolant every two years, and lubricating the suspension. It's fair to say that an XK150 is a usable sports car that's capable of long-distance touring; but to accomplish such dreams, you need to choose wisely and don't cut corners on cost.

BODY & CHASSIS

A good starting point when inspecting any XK150 is to take your time walking around it, checking over the paintwork and the standard of panel fit long before you start looking for corrosion and other metal-related problems. With a steel body, doors and boot, and an aluminium bonnet, the entire assembly sits on a ladder-frame chassis.

Check that the gaps between the doors, bonnet and boot are evenly spaced. Uneven gaps between the front wings and bonnet may not be straightforward to fix, particularly if the wings have been replaced and perhaps



The 265bhp, 3.8-litre engine in the XK150 S is the ultimate performance motor for this model



Long, deep footwells give the XK150's interior a grand tourer appeal

ill-fitted. Similarly, if the doors cannot be shut flush, simple adjustment may not help, especially if there's corrosion in the A-post and hinge boxes, not to mention the chassis. Twyford Moors recommends checking the operation of the hood on dropheads and OTS models: "This can be costly to correct. Also, check door fit and operation with the hood up and down, because hood tension can cause these to move."

If bodywork panels are missing or need replacing, don't assume they will be cheap or can be picked up secondhand. A boot lid costs around £2,400 and a bare door is a little cheaper at around £2,000.

Closely inspect the condition of each front and rear wing, checking for corrosion around the wheelarch; on the front wing, check around all the lighting and along the bottom edge. Open the »

BUYING GUIDE

JAGUAR XK150

access panels to the batteries to inspect inside the front wings, and also check the side vents. Repair sections are available for some parts of the wing; if a full replacement is required, however, they're not cheap at around £4,000 each (rear wings cost around £1,500).

Look underneath the car to check that all outriggers are present and intact. At the same time, check that the chassis rails are solid along with the critical mounting points for the rear leaf springs. Twyford Moors finds corrosion is common around where the anti-roll bar and lower wishbones are mounted.

Return to the bodywork and check that the steel sills are free from corrosion. Repair sections are available for around £400 per side, but are time-consuming to fit to ensure the bodywork retains its shape and the doors can be closed properly. The same can be said of the floors, with a full floor including gearbox tunnel (manual 'box only) costing around £400, but requiring a strip-down of the interior.

The main chassis rails that run from front to rear need to be able to drain water and 'breathe', so look for drain holes and check there are open ends at the front and rear of each chassis rail to allow air to flow in and out. This obviously helps to keep the inside of the chassis dry.

LOOK FOR LEAKS

Have a good look around the underside of the engine for oil leaks, particularly where the engine and gearbox are attached. Oil can leak out here from the rear main oil seal, which is a rope seal (unless it has been upgraded to



a later type). Renewal of the seal requires the engine to be removed and stripped, although Twyford Moors offers this advice: "Rear main oil seal leaks are such a common problem that if you look for a car with no sign of oil here, you will never buy an XK short of one of our fully-restored cars with the Twyford Moors modified rear seal. As long as it's only a slight leak, this shouldn't be a deal breaker."

The company also recommends looking for oil leaks from the oil feed pipe to the back of the cylinder head, the cam covers, oil breather and oil filter housing. All of these problems can be fixed, but it's worth noting that oil from these areas can work its way

down and appear to come from the rear main seal. You should also inspect all coolant hoses for leaks and coolant residue, especially the hose connected to the bottom of the radiator, which is in the firing line of road dirt.

There are several potential fuel leaks, including the fuel tank sender, which can be inspected via the nearside rear wheelarch. It's mounted onto the side of the fuel tank and, whilst you may not be able to see or smell fuel, there may be signs of residue or a clean line where fuel has leaked down. The fuel pump is located on the offside chassis rail and can be inspected by looking underneath the car, close to the driver's door. Old fuel hoses that



The original-spec six-volt batteries sit inside the front wings



The XK150's shallow boot can swallow a moderate amount of luggage



are not resistant to ethanol can perish and leak, along with carburettor seals.

Check all the brake pipes for corrosion and where they are connected to the brake calipers, looking for brake fluid leaks. Some brake pipes may be routed through the chassis, so they are not so straightforward to replace. You also need to inspect the front and rear telescopic dampers, looking for a misting of oil around their bodies; replacement dampers cost around £80 or so each.

XK ENGINES

The 3.4- or 3.8-litre XK engine used in the XK150 you're looking at may have been rebuilt or replaced during

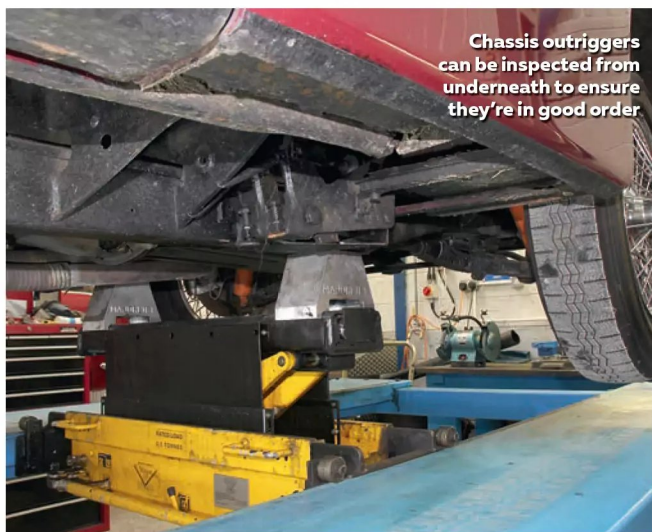
“The XK150 used either a 3.4- or 3.8-litre XK engine, which initially produced 190bhp and 210bhp respectively”

the lifetime of the car. If the seller is claiming the car has its original engine, ask to see evidence of this, such as its number and any relevant details on the car's Heritage Certificate.

When the engine is running, the oil pressure should be 15-20psi at idle and at least 40psi at 2,500rpm. If the oil pressure is low at idle but acceptable at 2,500rpm, it may

be possible to adjust this with a different oil pressure relief valve.

For engines with a manual gearbox, press the clutch pedal when the engine is idling; if the engine revs drop, this may mean the centre main thrust bearings are worn. These can be replaced, although this problem, which increases end float in the crankshaft, can result in excessive wear elsewhere, »



Chassis outriggers can be inspected from underneath to ensure they're in good order

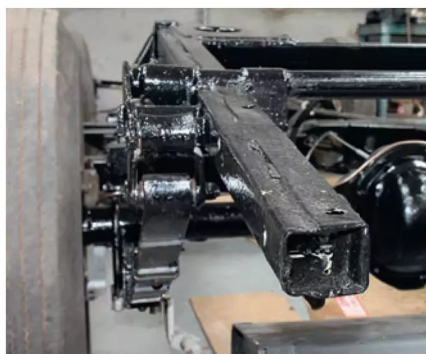


Raising part of the vehicle underneath this rear leaf spring mount helps to check its structural integrity



The XK150's chassis is a simple ladder-frame design

“Routine maintenance is within the scope of the average DIYer and most components are straightforward to access”



Both ends of each chassis leg should be open to allow airflow through and avoid the build-up of damp



Potential buyers should inspect all coolant hoses for leaks and residue



Petrol may have leaked past this sender unit on the side of the tank



The electric fuel pump mounted underneath the XK150 should be inspected for leaks and corrosion

so the engine may need a more thorough strip-down and rebuild.

There are a few other problems to look for that could suggest the engine needs a partial or full strip-down. For instance, listen for rattles from the top area of the engine when it is running, which may be caused by worn camshafts. These cost around £800 to replace, but the final bill can easily double and double again if you decide to have the cylinder head stripped and rebuilt, which is wise when the cams are being replaced.

Listen for rattling noises around the front of the engine where the timing chains are located. Noise from here could suggest worn tensioners and guides, which involves a partial strip-down to replace them. Don't expect an XK engine rebuild to be cheap, especially if you want a reliable and correctly set up engine afterwards; set aside at least £10,000, although the final bill can be significantly more if problems are discovered.

MOSS GEARBOX

Most XK150s are equipped with a Moss four-speed manual gearbox with no synchromesh on first gear. An optional overdrive unit was available, and there are also a few models fitted with a Borg-

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND SAVE UP TO 45%*



TO SUBSCRIBE :
GO TO [SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/JWO](https://shop.kelsey.co.uk/jwo)
OR USE THIS QR CODE TO GO DIRECTLY
TO OUR WEBSITE



TERMS & CONDITIONS: *UK DIRECT DEBIT OFFER ONLY. YOU WILL PAY £62.30 EVERY 12 MONTHS. SAVINGS ARE BASED ON THE YEARLY COVER PRICE (£5.99 PER ISSUE) PLUS POSTAGE. OFFER ENDS 31ST DECEMBER 2025. YOUR SUBSCRIPTION WILL START WITH THE NEXT AVAILABLE ISSUE, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE 13 ISSUES IN A YEAR. PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF PRINT AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE. FOR FULL TERMS AND CONDITIONS VISIT [SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/TERMS](https://shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms). DATA PROTECTION: WE TAKE GREAT CARE IN HANDLING YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS AND THESE WILL ONLY EVER BE USED AS SET OUT IN OUR PRIVACY POLICY WHICH CAN BE VIEWED AT [SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/PRIVACY-POLICY](https://shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy). YOU MAY UNSUBSCRIBE AT ANY TIME

“Most XK150s are equipped with a Moss four-speed manual gearbox with no synchromesh on first gear”



The XK engine is quite a lump to move, even when removing the aluminium cylinder head from the cast iron block

Warner DG250 three-speed automatic.

The Moss 'box should be reasonably smooth to operate; first gear needs to be selected carefully and will whine, but the other gears are smoother to engage and quieter. Klassik Transmissions offers the following warning on its website:

“Parts for Moss gearboxes have not been available for many years. We can replace bearings, layshafts, gaskets and oil seals. As no new replacement gears are available, we have devised a method of reworking the synchromesh parts to improve on the gear selection.” They charge upwards of £750 to strip and rebuild a Moss gearbox, fitting new bearings, gaskets and seals and reworking the synchromesh.

The rarer automatic gearboxes can suffer from worn brake bands and friction plates, according to the independent Borg Warner Specialist. A rebuild of an early DG gearbox can cost between £2,000 and £3,000.

BRAKES & SUSPENSION

The XK150's all-round disc brakes comprise Dunlop twin-piston calipers with solid discs and a handbrake mechanism on the rear. Each piston is housed separately and can be removed, which helps with servicing, especially if a brake pad cannot be extracted. Replacement brake components are available, with discs priced from around £50, sets of pads



from £40, and individual calipers from £150. If a new set of discs, calipers and pads is required across the front axle, it can be just as economical to upgrade to a set of more modern four-pots for around £600.

Check the handbrake can be operated and that it holds the vehicle stationary when the gearbox is in neutral. All of the handbrake components can be removed and serviced, but it's a time-consuming job. If the seller claims the handbrake is never used, don't take this as an excuse for the next owner to do the same.

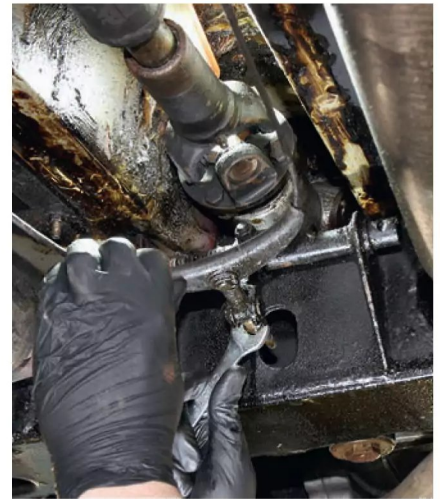
The XK150's suspension consists of upper and lower wishbones at the front with torsion bars, telescopic dampers and an anti-roll bar. At the rear, there's a live axle with leaf springs and telescopic dampers. Visually check the rear leaf springs for corrosion and broken leaves, and make sure the clamps that hold the leaves together are intact and not excessively corroded. The U-bolts that secure the middle of each set of leaf springs can corrode and the nuts on the end of them can loosen. If possible, use a pry bar to check the front and rear mounting bushes for each set of leaf springs, looking for excessive play in the bushes. Budget from around £200 for a set of leaf springs for one rear corner and £80 or more for a telescopic damper.

Check that a bump stop is fitted at each corner of the vehicle. Whilst these are cheap to replace at around £10 each, they help to protect the chassis in the event of the suspension being fully compressed; if they're missing, the chassis may have taken an impact.

Rack-and-pinion steering was fitted to the XK150. Turn the steering wheel lightly whilst the vehicle is stationary and at the same time »



The braking system uses Dunlop twin-piston calipers all round; pads can become stuck, but partially removing the piston can help



Handbrake maintenance is essential, starting with knowing how to adjust the cable



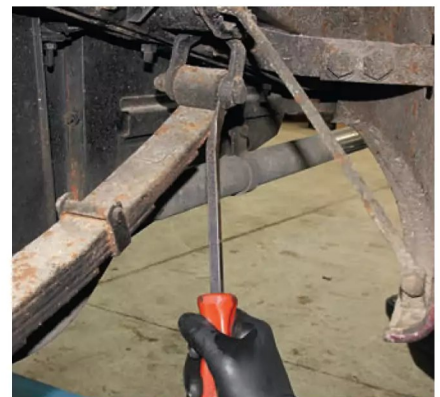
Each rear brake caliper has an adjuster for the handbrake mechanism



Front suspension includes telescopic dampers and an anti-roll bar, where the drop-link bushes can become worn and cause a knocking sound



Look for a bump stop at every corner of the car; they protect the chassis when the suspension is fully compressed



Visually inspect the leaf springs for corrosion and, if possible, test the mounting bushes with a pry bar



Shake a raised road wheel top-to-bottom and side-to-side to check for play in the suspension and steering



Routine maintenance is a must, including regular greasing of the suspension



watch the front wheels. There will be some movement in the steering wheel before the wheels move, but if it's excessive or there seems to be lots of play in the steering, the rack may be worn. Budget around £800 for an exchange reconditioned steering rack.

THE ELECTRICS

The XK150's electrical system is quite basic, powered by two six-volt batteries located inside the front wheelarches. With the steering on full lock, there should be sufficient room to undo the wing nuts to remove an access panel at the rear of one of the front wheelarches to reveal one of the batteries.

A positive earth electrical system is employed, which may have been changed to negative earth to allow the fitment of modern equipment, such as an alternator instead of a

dynamo. If you wish to convert a vehicle to negative earth, it's worthwhile upgrading to a single 12-volt battery; remember that such components as the radio and ammeter will need converting or replacing, the fuel pump may need to be changed, and the wiring for the wiper motor and heater may need swapping around. Budget for around £1,500 or more for a specialist to supply the parts and complete this conversion.

Twyford Moors explains that wiring can be overlooked, especially during a restoration where it's covered with fresh tape, but the old wires often become brittle and problematic.

OUR VERDICT

With the luxury of all-round disc brakes, wind-up windows, a more spacious interior and better performance than its predecessors, it's easy to see

the appeal and appreciate the extra practicality of the XK150. However, it still pays to keep a reserve fund available to avoid disappointment and to cover any unplanned repairs. These cars can lead to potentially expensive bills, so you should be extra vigilant when buying. Indeed, we'd recommend consulting a specialist and having a pre-purchase inspection carried out for extra peace of mind. Opt for the 'right' example, however, and you're unlikely to regret your XK150 buying decision. ■

THANK YOU

We're grateful to Twyford Moors Classic Cars (www.jagxk.com), Klassik Transmissions (www.klassiktrans.co.uk) and Borg Warner Specialist (borgwarnerspecialist.co.uk) for their help with this feature.

Telephone
01753 644599

RUNNYMEDE MOTOR COMPANY

Mobile
07836 222111

SENSIBLY PRICED AND VERY DESIRABLE CLASSIC JAGUARS



1960 Jaguar XK150 FHC

1960 Jaguar XK150 FHC in Old English White with Burgundy hide interior. Totally restored some years ago but remains in near perfect condition. Fitted with numerous sensibly upgrades including electric power steering and 5 speed transmission. If this car is of interest, bring an expert with you for an in-depth inspection together with your debit card ☺ as you will undoubtedly want to own this car. Recently reduced to £89,950



1972 Jaguar V12 E type 2+2 Coupe

1972 Jaguar V12 E type 2+2 Coupe, in Willow Green with a nicely patinated Suede green leather interior and new green carpets. An original UK supplied motor car in lovely condition for its age. Excellent spec of chrome wire wheels and manual transmission and purchased from us back in 2016 and garaged ever since. It has a thick history file with service invoices, photographs and many expired MOT certificates backing up the 81,500 total mileage. This represents an inexpensive route into the ownership of an E type that will undoubtedly be enjoyed by the next fortunate owner. Realistically priced at £47,950



1970 Jaguar 4.2 Series II E type Roadster

1970 Jaguar 4.2 Series II E type roadster in Carmen red with black hide interior with a matching black mohair hood with black carpet throughout and sitting on excellent chrome wire wheels. This car is shortly to be available and coming from long term cherished ownership. Infrequently used in recent years but kept in superb condition. The anticipated price will be around £62,500.



SOLD

1966 Jaguar 3.8 MkII

1966 Jaguar 3.8 MkII in Opalescent Dark Blue over red interior, a matching numbers car with a Jaguar Heritage certificate. An exceptional example with numerous upgrades including a Tremac 5 speed gearbox, upgraded engine with 9.1 compression, 2" Carbs, lightened & balanced crankshaft & flywheel, stainless exhaust, uprated brakes and electric power steering and fabulous car to drive. An extremely high-quality example which drives as good as it looks. Reasonably priced at £49,950.



1958 Jaguar XK150 3.8 FHC

1958 Jaguar XK150 3.8 FHC in signal red with tan hide interior. Rebuilt to a high standard within the last 8 years by a competent engineer. Some minor finishing still required hence a recent reduction to £56,500

We currently have 35 cars in stock which can be found by visiting our website at www.runnymedemotorcompany.com or please call Martin Brewer for more details on any of our cars. We are seriously low on stock, please telephone if you have something interesting to sell.

Email: martin@runnymedemotorcompany.com www.runnymedemotorcompany.com

Cooling Parts

Classic Jaguar Parts

XK120, XK140 & XK150

Here comes summer! Keep your Classic XK engine cool under pressure with a premium water pump, radiator, cooling fan and silicone hoses.

Discover more at sngbarratt.com



Part No.	Product	Price
C6746CONV	XK120 Water Pump Conversion Kit	£377.20
C7618	XK150 Water Pump	£237.68
HK019SCW	XK120 Cloth Wrapped Silicone Hose Kit	£166.33
HK020SCW	XK140 Cloth Wrapped Silicone Hose Kit	£120.96
HK021SCW	XK150 Cloth Wrapped Silicone Hose Kit	£111.89
C6746	XK120 Water Pump	£269.62
C9616A/2	XK140 Aluminium Radiator with Fan Cowl	£955.89
C12922A/1	XK150 Aluminium Radiator	£762.08
SBS1341	XK150 Revotec Cooling Fan Upgrade Kit	£316.74
SBS1348	XK120 Revotec Cooling Fan Upgrade Kit	£268.95

Prices exclude VAT



Choose from over 300,000 parts and accessories at SNG Barratt for classic and modern Jaguars.

+44(0)1746 765 432 | sales.uk@sngbarratt.com | sngbarratt.com

S·N·G
BARRATT