

XK CLUB

XK Gazette

OCTOBER 2026 • ISSUE 349



THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE XK CLUB

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Welcome



We had a very healthy turnout of XKs for the recent Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace. Julie and I attended on the Saturday of this superb event, and it was quite emotional to see the incredible line-up of XKs and E-types.

Next year, the XK Club will be celebrating its 30th anniversary. It is extraordinary to think it is 30 years. Our ethos has always been to promote and encouraging using our cars, and we have had a load of tours, Club Days and Weekends, technical seminars, dinners, track days, drives, lunches and so on.

Of all the tours, I suppose the one that probably stands out most was that to St Petersburg in Russia. It seems almost unbelievable now, but we took 40 XKs into Russia and managed to get 40 out again!

Organised by the late Fred Secker and our office team, it really was a *tour de force*. From memory, we took a ferry from Newcastle to Norway, then drove through Sweden and Finland to Russia. There we were escorted to St Petersburg. The British Ambassador came from Moscow to attend our main dinner at one of the many amazing palaces.

From Russia, we entered Estonia, where local enthusiasts led us to Tallinn, which was delightful. We then crossed the Baltic Sea to Sweden and drove to Copenhagen, where we were joined for dinner by a Danish prince, plus racing drivers Jackie Oliver and nine-time Le Mans winner Tom Kristensen.

What memories. This is the great thing about tours – they create memories, foster lasting friendships and provide wonderful driving. And, I could add, unique experiences. Sadly, it is difficult to imagine we could ever have a St Petersburg tour again but, as the old saying has it, 'When one door closes, another opens'.

Philip Porter

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Rain fails to stop play at Club Weekend

XK CLUB
CLUB NEWS
by Paula Porter



I am writing this fresh off the back of the Club Weekend, which began at the British Motor Museum at Gaydon. Not only did we have time to look around the museum, but we also had a private tour of the JDHT Collection next door, including a rare look around the workshops. We were also privileged to have a Q&A with author and designer Keith Helfet, who designed many of the cars in the JDHT Collection.

We finished Saturday with dinner and dancing in Stratford. Then, on Sunday morning, we set off for a scenic drive to Hanbury Hall in Droitwich Spa. The cars were parked on the driveway up to the house, and they looked great. We managed to stay fairly dry throughout the day, including while we ate our picnic lunch, but just as people were coming back from a tour of the house, the heavens opened. I thought we would never moan about rain again after the summer we have just had, but we soon forget!

As Philip mentioned last month, South of France Representative Jean Charles Bello has very sadly passed away. I'm sure that lots of people will have come into contact with him over the years and he was a great friend to the club. He will be sadly missed.

On a lighter note, check out our members' discounts on page 41 because we have a new supplier listed among them. Classic Car LEDs are offering our members a 7% discount. To get in touch with them, give them a call on 0800 246 5678 or visit their website: www.classiccarleds.co.uk. Use code XKC26.

The nights are drawing in and you might be searching for something to look forward to, so why not book in for our Sarastro dinner in London on 27 November? It was a great evening last year, and it would be the perfect time to book a hotel in London and get your Christmas shopping done while you are there.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the XK Club

- 4653** Martin O'Leary *Herts, UK*
- 4654** Edward Riddle *Essex, UK*
- 4655** Richard Adams *Wilts, UK*



Privateer C-type finds a new home

London-based specialist Fiskens has announced that it's sold its second C-type of the year. It sold XKC 019 – pictured above – to its previous owner in 2007 and has now found a new custodian for the car, which was sold by the Jaguar factory in 1952 to Antwerp-based garage owner Herman Roosdorp. He drove it to third place in the

following year's Spa 24 Hours, and also achieved a top speed of 145.4mph at the 1953 Jabbeke Speed Trials. The C-type was then sold to Dutch Maserati importer Hans Maasland, who continued to race it in The Netherlands, and it later spent almost 20 years in American ownership before returning to Europe in 1984.



COVER SHOT

Steve Beeson once again coordinated an exceptional line-up of E-types and XKs for both clubs at the Concours of Elegance, which was held at Hampton Court. We'll have a full report in an upcoming issue.

FEATURED EVENT

Le Mans Classic Tour

1-5 July 2027 • Organised by Classics on the Road



The inaugural Le Mans Classic Heritage takes place in 2027, with a race programme that concentrates on earlier cars than the Le Mans Classic Legends. Classics on the Road have created a four-night experience designed exclusively for XK Club and E-type Club members, and it includes scenic drives as well as outstanding hospitality and fine dining. Participation is limited to 30 cars. For more details, see classicsontheroad.com.

EVENTS CALENDAR

2026

1-4 October	Audrain Concours
7-11 October	Zoute Grand Prix Car Week
9-12 October	Autoclásica, Buenos Aires
11 October	Coffee and Classics, Classic Motor Hub
16-18 October	Classic Expo, Salzburg
17 October	CSCC race meeting, Castle Combe
22-25 October	Auto e Moto d'Epoca, Bologna
1 November	London to Brighton Veteran Car Run
13-15 November	NEC Classic Motor Show
19-22 November	Rétromobile New York
20-22 November	InterClassics Brussels
27 November	Club Dinner, Sarastro, London

2027

27 Jan-3 Feb	Rallye Monte-Carlo Historique
3-7 February	Rétromobile, Paris
2-6 May	Scenic Suffolk Tour
23-29 May	Portmeirion & Mid-Wales Tour
27 June-3 July	Northumberland Tour
1-5 July	Le Mans Classic Tour
1-5 September	Garden of England Tour
1-14 September	Corsica Grand Tour
24 Oct-8 Nov	Far Eastern Odyssey Tour



JLR set to cut workforce

On the eve of launching its Type 01 in New York – and having already offered a glimpse of the production car's interior (pictured left) – Jaguar Land Rover announced that it was to cut 4,000 jobs. The process will happen during the next two years and will mostly affect the UK head office, and is being carried out in an attempt to save £1.7 billion in the face of difficulties such as American tariffs and increased competition from Chinese marques. JLR stated that it was hoping to make the cuts via voluntary redundancy, and Chief Executive PB Balaji said it was 'committed to supporting everyone with care, fairness and respect'.

Motoring history on show in London

The Royal Automobile Club's St James's Motoring Spectacle returns to Pall Mall in London on 31 October, on the eve of the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run. The street is closed to traffic so it can be taken over by a display of more than 100 cars, from pioneering veterans to modern supercars. More than 12,000 people attended last year's event, and it will once again be free to visit. A line-up of Grand Prix cars will celebrate the centenary of Britain's first Grand Prix, which was organised by the Royal Automobile Club and took place at Brooklands in 1926, and the event will run from 10am until 3pm.



Supercars take centre-stage at Salon Privé



More than 30,000 people attended the 21st edition of Salon Privé, which was held from 2-6 September at Blenheim Palace. There were two winners in the main concours: a 1969 Lamborghini Miura S won Best of Show in the Concours d'Elégance, while a 1995 McLaren F1 took Best of Show in the inaugural Concours d'Excellence. Broadcaster Richard Hammond and his fellow judges, meanwhile, awarded the Concours de Vente Prix d'Honneur to a 1994 Bugatti EB110 SS prototype. The event will return to Blenheim Palace on 1-5 September 2027, with Salon Privé London taking place on 15-17 April. See salonpriveconcours.com.

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Jaguar XK140 DHC LHD 1956

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- Extensively upgraded
- Silver with blue interior

£92,500



Jaguar XK140 SE FHC RHD 1956

- Recent full restoration
- Genuine C-Type cylinderhead
- Green with tan interior

£89,750



Jaguar XK150 DHC RHD 1958

- Original UK right-hand drive car
- Upgraded for modern use
- Silver with blue interior

£77,750



Jaguar XK150 FHC 1959

- Converted from left to RHD
- Extensively upgraded
- Indigo blue with grey interior

£64,750

Letters

email: letters@xkclub.co.uk

Seeking an XK's history



One of our newest members in Devon and Cornwall, Dave Young, has recently purchased a rather interesting XK 140 OTS. She has been beautifully restored. The exterior is a wonderful British Racing Green, with excellent paintwork, and the interior is matching Suede Green.

However, you may have noticed the lack of an opening boot. NWK 360 was originally a FHC and then converted to an OTS. There are two carpeted shelves behind the seats where the boot would normally be, and no spare wheel. The vehicle was purchased from a Mathewson's auction at Thornton-le-Dale in April this year. There is a great YouTube video by Derek showing the car prior to the auction.

This 140 was manufactured on 27 June 1955 and originally sold by a distributor in Adelaide, Australia. We do not know when she was imported back, but believe some time was then spent in Hamilton and Inverness, Scotland. VSE Engine Specialists in Wales worked on the engine – with its C-type head – in 2005.

Dave is keen to find out if members know any further history on this XK, especially where and when the conversion to OTS was done. So, if anyone has information about NWK 360, do let me know: nick@provennltd.com.

Nick Haigh

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Neil Kershler is one of the 'original' Sydney XK group of blokes from the very late 1960s, when news of the UK XK Register first reached our shores. Now, after decades, he is close to getting the XK 140 OTS RHD ex-UK chassis number 800058 on the road again (its past history is in *The Jaguar XK 140 in the Southern Hemisphere*). He also has a Rolls-Royce Merlin engine lurking in his workshop...

John Elmgreen



MYSTERY LIGHT

I have a question: I saw this rear light on an XK 120, which combines the indicator with the regular light. The owner of the car could not tell me where this is from. Could you please post this in the next magazine? I am sure one of the readers would know where to source it!

Christian Mitterdorfer



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1950 JAGUAR XK120 ALLOY

Chassis 670140 is one of the 183 Left Hand Drive Alloy cars. Completed in February 1950, the Heritage Certificate confirms it was exported new to Belgium. Fitted with a 3.8 Litre Sigma built engine that is lower and further back in the chassis, it breathes through triple Webbers, the steering uprated to rack & pinion, the gearbox is an all-synchro overdrive unit and the brakes are discs all round. Totally sorted, easy, balanced and super quick
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PENDINE



Your XK story in the Gazette!

From technical features and restoration series to accounts of your XK adventures, all articles are gratefully received...

We've had a great response to our previous calls for contributions to the *XK Gazette*, and would like to thank everyone who has sent us articles. Quite simply, we wouldn't be able to publish the magazine every month without them!

As autumn arrives, we'd like to encourage you to consider putting pen to paper and supporting the magazine by sending in an article of your own. Perhaps your story involves long-term XK ownership – or even the recent acquisition of your first XK. Maybe you're coming towards the end of a rebuild project and have documented the inevitable up and downs as you've gone along. You might be going on one of our club tours, or planning a trip of your own – or you've got your eyes on taking part in a particular event.

People often mention that they'd like to see more technical articles in the magazine, so if you've worked on a particular area of your car and feel that you could pass on some helpful advice, please let us know. Likewise, if you'd be interested in reading an article about a specific technical process, drop us a line and we'll put something together for a future issue.

It doesn't matter if you've written a number of previous articles or have never done anything like it before, if you've got an XK tale to tell, please email james@xkclub.com. It would be great to hear from you!



Our friends in the north pt2

Peter Leech concludes his story of a recent trip around the great driving roads in northern England

Our second day in the Lake District was to be a full tour, taking in the lakes and visiting the west coast for a quick paddle at St Bees, as well as all the other famous mountain pass routes (Honister, Hardknott, Wrynose and Whinlatter). All fantastic driving roads, with some sections being so steep, and with such tight hairpins, that it was impossible not to lift the inside-rear wheel and get some wheelspin.

In one place, I recall looking up to see where the road was going and looking almost directly underneath the MGA, which was leading us. In fact, you needed to leave some good gaps to the car in front because the last thing you would want to do is have to stop on a hairpin; you may never get going again and may have to roll back, which could have been very hair-raising. These passes are not for the faint-hearted, especially in a classic car, but they are great fun nonetheless, giving a great sense of achievement and providing amazing views.

That evening, back at the hotel for the third night, I experienced a tour organiser's biggest nightmare. It was our third night at the same hotel, so I had arranged and booked a different location for dinner. This was a pub (which shall remain nameless) about five miles away, with excellent reviews, and because we are a party of 12, I booked many months in advance, even though it was only a Monday evening. When we arrived, the car park did seem extraordinarily busy, and on entering, we were told our reservation had been cancelled and they were fully booked with Rotary Club and some other event.

After some words, we were left in the car park with nowhere to eat. Following many frantic phone calls to the local pubs and the hotel, we found that our hotel could manage us at late notice and were extremely helpful and accommodating. So, they saved the day and we were very appreciative.

Our week was going very fast and now it was time to leave the Lakes and head north and east, then south. Brian and Shelia had planned and were leading this day. Our first obstacle was to get around Carlisle in the most interesting way. Brian led us across country right up to the Solway Firth to Bowness-on-Solway, which contains a small spot appropriately

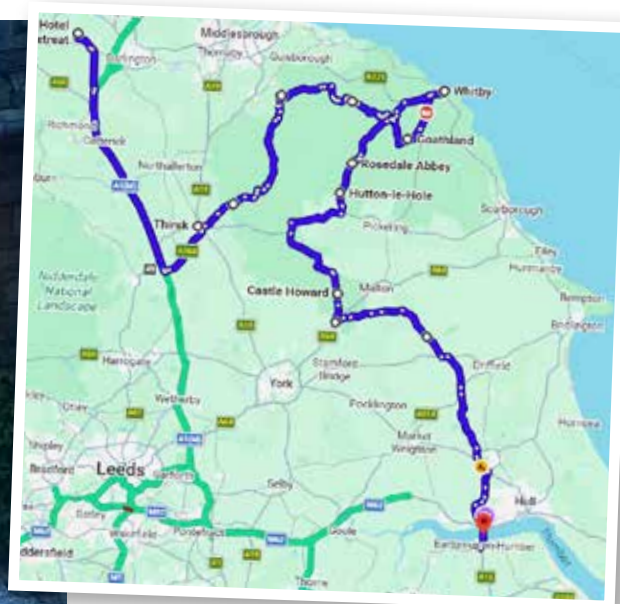


named Wallsend because it is the western starting point of Hadrian's Wall.

Our route then endeavoured to follow the route of the wall east until we reached one of the main Roman sites of the wall at Vindolanda. Here we stopped for a very interesting tour and lunch. We then headed south, into and through another Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the North Pennines National Landscape. We passed through the charming small town of Alston then followed the B6277 heading for Barnard Castle. Along the way, we stopped for a visit to High Force Waterfall, which is so named by the force with which the River Tees is accelerated through

Above: the route the group followed into and around the Lake District. It included a number of spectacular passes that tested cars and drivers alike (right)





Clockwise, from top left: arriving back at the Ravenstone Manor Hotel; the route along the East Coast; pausing to let the locals pass; the group at the appropriately named High Force Waterfall

a small gap in the rock face and cascades down to the pool below. It was the most spectacular waterfall I have visited in this country and is apparently considerably more impressive at times of high rainfall.

Our final destination for the day was Headlam Hall Hotel and Spa; this is a fabulous hotel and one I have stayed at a number of times before. The owner Tim is a classic car collector and among others has an XK 150 drophead that he will hire out to special guests at £450 per day, so we were jolly pleased we were in our own and not hiring! Due to this connection, we were honoured by having the front gates opened for us and being allowed to park in front of the hall.

Day six was our final full day, and we were being led by Howard and Rose. Going east from Headlam is not too exciting country, so Howard took us on major routes to quickly get us into the good stuff of the Yorkshire Moors. Today had a TV theme because the first stop after passing through Northallerton was Thirsk, where a really interesting visit was paid to the veterinary practice, house and museum of James Alfred Wight – aka James Herriot.

Following a great visit and lunch in Thirsk, we followed Howard into the North Yorkshire Moors

National Park. He found some superb driving roads across the moors, some so minor that we met a farmer driving a flock of sheep down the road; we just stopped while they went around us. Then into Goathland, aka Aidensfield in the TV police drama *Heartbeat* – that timeless classic set in the 1960s with great cars and great music. We spent some time there, where our cars added a little atmosphere, had a pint at the Aidensfield Arms and went to see the steam train departing the station on the Pickering to Whitby line. More interesting roads and we reached our final hotel just outside the charming seaside town of Whitby.

That evening, we took the bus down into town for a walk, and to visit the most famous (and best) place in the north for fish and chips: The Magpie Café. It didn't disappoint and was followed by a good walk right to the end of the harbour wall in the setting sun. A fitting end to be at the sea on the East Coast, having visited it on the West Coast at St Bees.

Thursday was our final day on tour and, due to everyone needing to get home, my brother David and I had a planned a full day but with the expectation than most people would head off in different directions from the lunch stop. We planned an interesting route south

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Clockwise, from top left: fish and chip time; East Coast sunset; the picturesque grounds of Castle Howard; Emma Stothard's 'Herring Girls' sculpture at Whitby

from Whitby across the moor, taking in some fabulous roads through Rosedale Abbey and on to Hutton-le-Hole via the famous road known as Chimney Bank. This we had thought was going to be the best road on the trip, but those passes in the Lakes were definitely better. From there, we passed through Helmsley on our way to Castle Howard, the approach to which is quite stunning from the north. Having turned south at Slingsby, you see the very tall obelisk about three miles away down an arrow-straight road and when you get to it, you have arrived at the roundabout and entrance into the car parks.

This was where we said our goodbyes and everyone went off in different directions. We had never really 'done' Castle Howard, so we went for a big walk around the outside of the house, including the lake and the Atlas fountain – all quite stunning.

We then set off for home unaccompanied and followed the route via Wetwang, Beverley and The Humber Bridge into Lincolnshire and home.

We had been quite lucky with the weather. It was just warm enough to be comfortable when the roof was down, and was overcast much of the time and rained quite often, but it never rained on any of the most interesting drives or on any occasion when we wanted to be out of the cars exploring.

The cars performed well with a few minor issues. My brake lights were working only if I stood on them very hard – a poor-quality switch that I only replaced two years ago – and the other XK had some clutch linkage issues. The MGA had an intermittent electrical fault, which turned out to be an additional isolator switch that was not making good contact; we simply bypassed it. The Triumph Stag also had brake-light problems and one rear shock absorber failed. The Rover Vitesse and the MGB had no issues at all.

It had been a great week covering a large chunk of the country, including five national parks, both west and east coasts, and a total of just under 1,000 miles in seven days. Next year, we are already planning seven days in September covering the whole of Wales. We are calling it GTOW: the Grand Tour of Wales.

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The Gable 120s

John Elmgreen takes a look at some of the confusion surrounding a Hollywood star's XKs

Along with Terry McGrath, I am currently in the throes of writing a book about all 240 alloy XK 120s. This is in the context of my pursuing the histories of all XKs worldwide for many decades, starting in Australia in 1969.

For many years now, we have made a careful study of the XK 120s owned by Clark Gable. At one stage, there were so many claims for Californian XK 120s as having belonged to Gable that we joked we should set up a specific register for all of these cars. However, we are now clear that, in fact, Gable only ever owned two XK 120s, despite the claims for a number of

other cars. This conclusion has been reached by examining claims made for various cars, and also by my acquisition of no fewer than eight biographies of Gable, each of which has been pored over to check all references to Jaguars.

The first XK 120 owned by Gable was one of the early cars sent to Charles Hornburg in Los Angeles and sold new there by Roger Barlow at International Motors. It is commonly said these days that this car was chassis number 670003, and indeed it was rebuilt by JD Classics in the UK as the first Gable XK 120, including painting it in what has become known as 'Gable Gray'.

Chassis number 672282 is definitely an ex-Clark Gable XK 120, and was delivered to him while he was filming in the UK (Photograph courtesy of RM Sotheby's)





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**COVENTRY CAR
FOR FILM STAR**
Clark Gable, the American film star, has just taken delivery of one of the new Jaguar XK 120 super-sports cars. It is his third Jaguar. Gary Cooper, Robert Montgomery and Dick Powell are all said to be on the waiting list for new Jaguars.



However, close examination of all available records leaves it as an open question as to whether this first Gable XK 120 was 670003 or 670006. Despite our best efforts over many years, no definitive evidence has emerged to enable it to be categorically stated which one of these was the Gable car. Certainly, at the time, no one provided Jaguar back in Coventry with information about the first owner of either such car, nor did either of these cars go through their mid-lives with any claims of a Gable connection. The known histories of each are unknown – or, at best, vague – for many years.

The second Gable car is definitely known to be 672282, registered in the UK as MDU 420. Gable took delivery of this car in the UK when he was there filming, and the photographs of Gable in it in Cornwall, and of the car being delivered to him, have been reproduced in numerous publications. He toured Europe in it before taking it back to the USA. I also had the privilege of owning the original documentation for this car, created when Gable sold it – including with his original signature. It was later in South Africa before finishing up in Switzerland, where it was lovingly restored by well-known Jaguar man Georg Dönni. It remains in Europe.

Another XK that recently made a claim to be a Gable car is chassis 672623, and it is said that Gable had the car customised by George Barris's famous custom workshop in Los Angeles. It was fitted with a Carson hardtop. The history that has been claimed

for the car is false in that it claims that Gable took delivery of the car at a time when he was, in fact, a tax exile in England and Europe.

The facts just do not back up the claims made for a Gable connection to this car. This background was made known publicly when the car was offered for sale on the well-known online auction site Bring a Trailer, but may have been ignored. A document was produced on a Barris letterhead but is not considered to carry any weight. Nor does a poor-quality photo purporting to be of this car in the Barris workshop fit in with the story. For one thing, it evidently shows an alloy car, not a (later) steel car.

The book will in due course have a very detailed analysis of all the available information about the relevant cars – far more detailed than this little article! It will record the known history of 670003 (no Gable), then set out separately the history of Gable's first XK 120. It will also deal with the story about the XK 120 that ended up on the West Coast in 1949 without a crankshaft (yes, really!), and that of Chuck Hornburg's drive across the USA from New York to Los Angeles in 1949 – possibly in the Gable car.

Gable did, in fact, own a Mark IV drophead coupé, acquired in 1948 and sold about a year before he got his XK. He may also have had a Mk V because one can be seen in the background of one of his photographs with Bill Lyons and the XK 120. A pity that no ownership information was sent back to the factory at the time.

Oscar-winning movie star Clark Gable was once described by actress Joan Crawford as being 'a king wherever he went'. He's pictured above with Jaguar boss William Lyons



SCREAMING JAGUAR

Peter Wiget explains how he tracked down a troubling noise coming from the engine of his XK 140

Peter's beautiful XK 140 Drop Head Coupé, pictured in happier times before being sidelined by a noise from the engine

During early July, with perfect summer weather and temperatures of 34 degrees Celsius, conditions were ideal for taking my XK 140 DHC out for a drive. However, on the way back home up the hill, a terrible, extremely loud screeching noise came from the engine compartment every time I accelerated.

My first suspicion was a loose or brittle fan belt. Since the belt could have been more than 20 years old, I ordered a new one, installed it, and set off on my next drive. However, after only about 2km, the same loud screeching returned.

To prevent major engine damage, I immediately aborted the drive and turned my attention to the most likely causes, namely a defective bearing in the alternator or water pump. After removing the fan belt, however, the water-pump impeller, which is directly connected to the pump, could be turned freely without producing any scraping noise. The situation was different when turning the alternator pulley, where a slight scraping noise could be heard. I therefore had the front alternator bearing replaced at the next service. But even afterwards, a slight scraping noise could still be heard when turning the drive pulley. Apparently, this was not a bearing problem, but simply the sound of the brushes rubbing against the commutator.

The alternator was reinstalled with the new fan belt and I set off on another drive. This time, the loud screeching could already be heard after about 500 metres. Back in the garage, I ran the warm engine without the fan belt. The familiar screeching could be heard loudly every time I increased the engine speed. Using a stethoscope, the source appeared to be on the carburettor side, at the front-right of the engine.

To help with the diagnosis, I then fed ChatGPT the facts I already knew. It suggested the following possible causes:

- Air leakage in the intake system of the front carburettor (brake-cleaner test negative).
- Leaking vacuum line to the distributor (negative; the vacuum hose is airtight).
- Defective timing-chain tensioner (rather unlikely because this would be expected to produce more of a rattling/scraping noise).
- Insufficient oil supply to the front camshaft bearing (requires further investigation!).

After removing the intake-side valve cover and the front camshaft bearing cap, I expected to find severe signs of running damage on the front bearing. Fortunately, neither the camshaft bearing nor the two bearing shells showed any indication of serious damage. Gently running a scribe over the relatively soft bearing shells did reveal some light scoring, but nothing too dramatic. After some cleaning with a Scotch-Brite pad and more thorough cleaning afterwards, I reinstalled the front camshaft bearing and tightened it to the specified torque according to the Jaguar Service Manual.



Removing the intake-side valve cover and front cam bearing showed light wear but nothing too serious. Peter's subsequent diagnosis was a lack of oil supply to the cam bearings

I then carried out a brief test run with the valve cover removed and checked whether oil was emerging from the front camshaft bearing. The test was positive. However, after a short period of running, the screeching could be heard again. This time, though, it was considerably quieter – almost negligible. In order to bring the engine up to full operating temperature while reducing the massive amount of oil being splashed around, I loosely placed the valve cover back on and continued the test until normal operating temperature was reached (approximately 10 minutes). The screeching could be heard throughout the entire test, but it never returned to its previous, extremely loud version; it remained only faint.

Since checking the valve clearances was overdue anyway, I decided to measure the clearances of all valves and then remove the camshafts and correct the valve clearances according to the workshop manual.

With the camshafts removed, it was possible to check whether the axial oil passage was providing oil flow to all the radial outlet holes. An initial test with compressed air showed air emerging from all the lateral camshaft openings. However, an additional test using a long, semi-circular rod inserted through the central opening, which has a diameter of 7mm, revealed considerable resistance in the middle section. Repeatedly pushing the rod in and pulling it out brought out thick, tar-like deposits. With the help of brake cleaner, this cleaning process of the oil-feed passage was repeated until the rod could be pushed in and withdrawn without resistance and without bringing out any further tar-like deposits.

Assuming that insufficient oil supply to the camshaft bearings was the cause of the ominous screeching, I will close this report here. The required replacement parts (shims, gaskets, etc) will arrive within the next few weeks. Reassembly and the final test will take place at about the time you're reading this.

Once again, driving vintage and classic cars has proven the truth of an old principle: every new noise has a cause – and it is a serious early warning that can help prevent much greater damage!



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The finished article

After 31 instalments, **Roger King**'s epic home-rebuild series comes to an end with the final touches on his beautiful XK 140

Well, I couldn't put it off any longer. I was getting into the workshop first thing in the morning and finding things to work on that I really didn't need to be doing, such as installing extra fused relays, or rechecking castor and camber angles, or making elevenses (my definition of 'first thing' may not match accepted usage). No, it was time to go for the first start-up of my car's original SE engine since 1983 (photos one and two).

I find first fire-up a very stressful activity in an old car. I had checked with Ken of the eponymous Newman Cams as to whether or not I needed to do a camshaft break-in procedure (run for 20 minutes at 2,500rpm the instant it catches, to work-harden the cam lobes). I discovered that the cams are through-hardened so it wasn't necessary, which was a relief.

In all honesty, I wasn't expecting much on the starting front because I have long experience of firing up rebuilt engines for the first time, which usually ends abruptly with switching off to fix coolant leaks, fuel leaks, severe overheating, rough running with vacuum leaks, etc. I checked the fluid levels again



and set the distributor at a nominal 10 degrees static advance. I centred the carburettor needles, set the jet heights and equalised the throttle stop screws. I then removed the spark plugs, pulled the fuel pump fuse and turned the engine over until the oil pressure gauge needle started to move, thus priming the system. The plugs went back in and the leads connected, with a timing light clipped over lead number six.

With a friend standing by – four eyes are far better than two with all the potential problems to watch for – I turned on the ignition switch and primed the 'choke' before tentatively pressing the starter button. To my complete astonishment, I didn't even hear the starter turn – the engine started instantly, and sat there humming like a turbine at about 1,200rpm. No drama, no leaks, and good oil pressure. Once it had some temperature showing, I dialled in a slightly smoother idle at around 12 degrees BTDC at 600rpm on the timing light. Some carb adjustments were made, and that was it. I almost felt cheated!

When Jimmy Stewart of ClassicFabs had built my exhaust system, he kindly fitted a couple of lambda sensor bungs in the exhaust collectors for me. This

enabled me to do some test runs with an Innovate air/fuel ratio meter connected, which showed me the carbs weren't too far out in needle and jet sizes. Classic Carburettors had done a good job! The setup would be fine for a couple of hundred miles, after which I would book a rolling-road session to check things over more thoroughly. But it was time to get some of those miles under the car's wheels, and what better way to do that than to enter Mike Read's excellent XK Club East Anglian Autumn Drive?

The tour was really a great way to end the 2023 driving season. There was just one teensy-weensy problem. If you look very closely at photo three and get the angle of the light right, you might be able to spot that one of the cars on the drive is not actually a Jaguar. I wasn't entirely happy with the setup yet, so I pre-empted Ford's involvement with the Jaguar marque and we turned up in my 1968 Mustang fastback. Well, the Mustang's V8 is roughly twice the size of the Jaguar's engine so maybe it could count as two XKs?

With the final fettling finally finished, it really was time to take the XK out. My second attempt at a petrol-powered christening was to take a drive out to



2

meet my start-up friend at Bicester Heritage, where he was marshallng for the VSCC winter driving tests. This seemed a great first test for the car, but in my wife's opinion, there were actually plenty of better ways (the clue is in the word 'winter'). Nevertheless, early one December morning saw us heading over to Oxfordshire. It was very cold and misty, but the car ran faultlessly, and my long-suffering wife's aversion to damp airfields was slightly ameliorated by a cup of hot chocolate from the Bicester Heritage café (photo four).

The other pleasant surprise was the performance of the heater. The new Clayton matrix and the uprated heater fan produced a proper warm blast with the fan on full, which definitely earned the car some brownie points.

With the mechanicals proved, and the 150-mile round trip completed successfully, it was now time to bite the bullet over weather protection. My XK's beautiful chassis black frame and Mist Grey underside were about to vanish under a layer of thick, brown-black goop. It was Dinitrol time.

You can show your car and keep it away from the weather, or use it sparingly and take reasonable measures to avoid rain and protect it against corrosion. Or you can plan long-distance pan-European tours that can throw any kind of weather at you with no warning and, if you're not careful, watch your beautifully restored vehicle slowly start to dissolve from the inside out. For example, my Mustang has now done 60,000 miles since I restored it, travelling to Portugal, Norway, Sicily, Czech Republic, Southern Spain and so on. I covered the



3



4

underside in Dinitrol wax 25 years ago and it's still doing its job, needing just an occasional refresh.

The Jaguar went over the pit, now lined with plastic sheet, the wheels removed and the brakes, underside mechanicals and exhaust system covered. It was time to fire up the compressor and the cavity wax gun. Cue before and after photos of the boot floor and underside (photos five and six).

The same views of the sill area shows how susceptible the structure could be to corrosion, with shelves and brackets everywhere to trap the dirt (photos seven and eight).

It's enough to make a grown man cry, but at the end of the day if you really want to get back to shiny paint, it can be done over a weekend with a large quantity of cleaning cloths and a big bottle of white spirit. I think it's worth doing this protection if you're going to use the car a lot – or, indeed, a little – because the underside of an XK couldn't be better designed to trap water, mud and salt if you tried. It's worth making sure there's plenty of the thinner cavity wax inside the doors, too – it works on wood just as well, and I had had first-hand experience of how the wood can rot.

Now that the car was on the road, I began to think about things I might want to improve. Photo nine



5



6



7



8

gives a clue as to the nature of some of these. I wasn't keen on Jaguar's automatic choke system. Basically, you have a small, separate and very crude carburettor, which comes on when you start up from cold and goes off only when the coolant is warm enough to trigger the Otter switch mounted in the inlet manifold. This means that there is a large amount of petrol being poured into the bores of the cold engine for quite some time, until the temperature switch decides it's had enough. Not good for cylinder bore wear.

You can see some additions to the dashboard in the photo. On the left is a switch for the hazard lights, which I think is essential for any classic these days. I have fitted a Retronics RDB10 light relay instead of the old Lucas DB10 unit, which allows use of LEDs, and gives hazard warning lights by adding a switch and one feed wire. On the right is the override switch and warning light for the electric fan – I don't have the original mechanical one fitted – and next to that is a switch with a built-in orange warning light. This is the choke control. In standard form, the Otter switch in the inlet manifold simply closes the choke circuit when cold and opens it when hot. The added switch on the dashboard does the same – but I decide when it opens, not the car's cooling system.



9



10



11

My technique for starting is to pull the switch on, start the car with no throttle, then hold it at idle on the throttle and turn the switch off almost immediately. It doesn't take that long to warm up, and the modification saves all that neat petrol washing the oil off the cylinder walls when cold-starting while the coolant warms up.

Photo 10 shows another of the electrical modifications. Despite what was the norm in the 1950s, if I'm going to use my cars I like to have the electrical circuitry better protected. To this end, I discreetly add modern fused relays to protect the switchgear and wiring for the higher-current circuits. This means a row of relays for low beam, main beam, spot/driving lamps, horn and electric fan. Mine are below the wing line on the inner panels on the offside, as seen in the picture.

So, now the XK is ready to start getting some miles beneath its wheels (photo 11). The eagle-eyed among you will have spotted the pair of wing mirrors now fitted. These are original NOS mirrors, as would have been fitted by the dealer. I was a bit concerned because previous experience of wing mirrors had not been great, with them often prone to body vibration to the point where they were not a lot of help. I needn't have worried because the steel and support of the original front wings is so sturdy that the mirrors

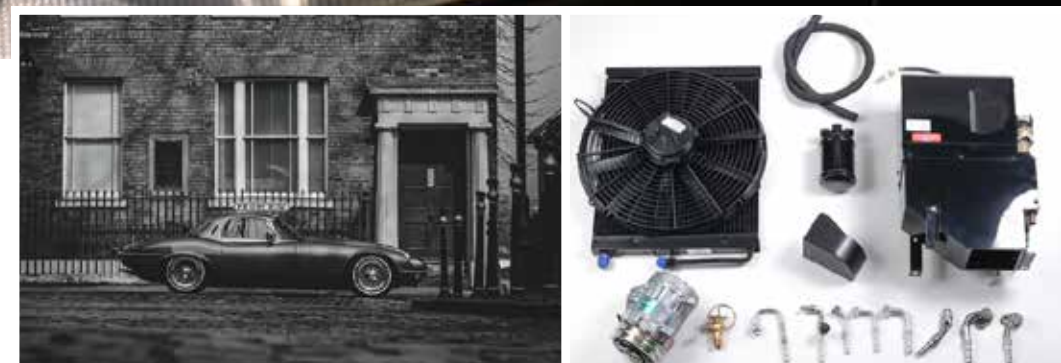
do not move one iota when on the road. They have slightly concave glasses, so give a pretty good field of vision and, to my mind, look just right for a 1950s car (everyone aspired to expensive add-on wing mirrors back then!). More importantly, they give a valuable extra pair of eyes facing rearward.

We've now completed a couple of thousand miles in the XK, including a tour of Brittany. It is every bit as good a touring car as I thought it would be – probably better. It shares a garage with my 1968 Ford Mustang which, at 13 years younger, ought to outshine it. But the Jaguar's steering, ride quality and ease of driving leave the Mustang standing. The way it drives, it could pass for a car from the late 1970s – but the way people stand and stare as it goes by, and judging by the comments it gets when parked, these stylish and spectacular cars still strike a chord for anyone interested in cars that are not characterless, angular boxes.

You have to learn a different driving technique, too. When cruising along a dual carriageway in lane one, if you want to pull out to pass someone in front, you have to check lane two several times. You will usually find somebody right in your blind spot, travelling at the same speed as you to allow their passenger to film you on their phone.

Happy XK'ing, all!

We'd like to thank Roger for documenting the rebuild of his XK 140 so thoroughly and entertainingly. If you're restoring an XK and would like to write about it in the Gazette, please email james@xkclub.com



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A change of direction

Gil Keane from Better Car Lighting explains what you need to know about LED indicator upgrades

Dramatically slowing down and changing direction is one of the most dangerous manoeuvres any motorist can undertake. The risks are vastly reduced if other road users can tell which direction you are heading in. Over the years, the methods of achieving this have changed and older methods have fallen into obscurity – younger drivers have no idea about hand signals and would not understand them. Similarly, if you drive a car that used semaphore signalling, or indicators that flashed a colour other than orange, it simply does not register with modern road users.

Anyone with a love for older cars will be loathe to do anything that changes their appearance or character, and bolting on orange indicators is unlikely to improve the original design. Instead, now that the world of electronics has come to our aid, we can be a little more intelligent and subtle. If we take semaphore signalling as an example, they are

attractive features but of little use as indicators. However, if we simply change the standard festoon bulb for a self-flashing, double-sided orange LED one, they become as visible as the side-repeaters on modern cars, while retaining their period charm.

Some cars had front sidelights that flashed white when signalling. Some had no indicators on the front. In either case, it is relatively simple to install dual warm white/orange LED bulbs to do both the job of the front sidelight and to flash orange, to effectively and understandably signal your intentions to other motorists. Best of all, nothing looks any different from outside.

Likewise at the rear, some cars had no indicators, and some double-used the brake light on one side to flash bright red, which meant something in 1950 but not now. Today, we can use a system of special LED bulbs that are red (and very bright) for tail and brake lights, but which, with the help of a small control unit, flash bright orange through the original red lens when

Above and above right: making sure modern road users understand your intentions is at the heart of indicator upgrades on a classic car



signalling. Again, from outside, nothing shows.

LED flasher bulbs, even ones that are much brighter than the original filament bulbs, draw only around 10 per cent as much power, which is good, right? But that means the original flasher relay will not work with them. Plus, where a heavy-draw filament bulb will often ‘pull’ electrical energy across quite dirty contacts, LED bulbs can’t do that. They need good connections at every link in the energy chain. Both points are easily overcome, but you need to be aware of them.

In most cases, electronic ‘LED-friendly’ versions of your flasher relay will be available. Being electronic, these will have no moving parts and will be silent. The required audible warning will be a separate unit, and some people will try to fob you off with things that sound totally wrong on a classic car. You can now get a small sounder to make the original ‘tick-tock’ noise, so your car does not sound like a prop from *Doctor Who*.

Where there is not an appropriate matching electronic version of the flasher relay, there are special LED bulbs designed to work with the original relay. This can be a good solution where you also have hazard warning lights, which have their own relay.

Another trap that confuses people is when the car has one light on the dash, shared between left and right flashers, as a visual display. This is possible because the car maker has used a little-known property of standard car ‘common-earth’ wiring: every live wire becomes an earth when the power is taken away. This is because one end goes to earth via a bulb or other device. So they have two wires going to the dash bulb and, whichever way you indicate, one will be live and one earth. This is called polarity reversal and is fine on filament bulbs, but LED ones cannot cope with it.

‘The people who designed your car were at the cutting edge of their time and pushed boundaries’

Again, the solution is quick and easy. A simple three-legged device called a diode bridge is used. The bulb has one of its two wires put to a good earth and the other goes to the output from the diode bridge, and the other two input wires go to left and right flasher lives. Then the power can come from either side to the top, but cannot cross over and confuse the electronics. Five minutes of your time and it’s fixed.

Most companies that supply lighting upgrades will have someone who is well-versed on the ins and outs of upgrading, although not all have a good understanding of what is needed when upgrading to LED. Those ones can be misleading, because they will seek to hide their ignorance by telling you that it can’t be done. Or that you shouldn’t do it because you will destroy the originality of your car. Neither is true. The people who designed your car were at the cutting edge of their time and pushed boundaries. Anything they could do to improve those cars they did without fear or prejudice. You should be similarly brave. If we try to continue to use old cars in modern conditions with no concessions to improving road safety, they will be legislated off the road. That would be a tragedy.

One of the good guys

Philip Porter reviews a new book by former Jaguar designer Stuart Spencer

My old friend Paul Skilleter (frightening to think we first met at Le Mans 53 years ago!) has recently published a book entitled *Paradiddles, Pistons, Propellers and Portraits*. What, you may be thinking, on earth does that consist of and what is the common denominator that links those terms?

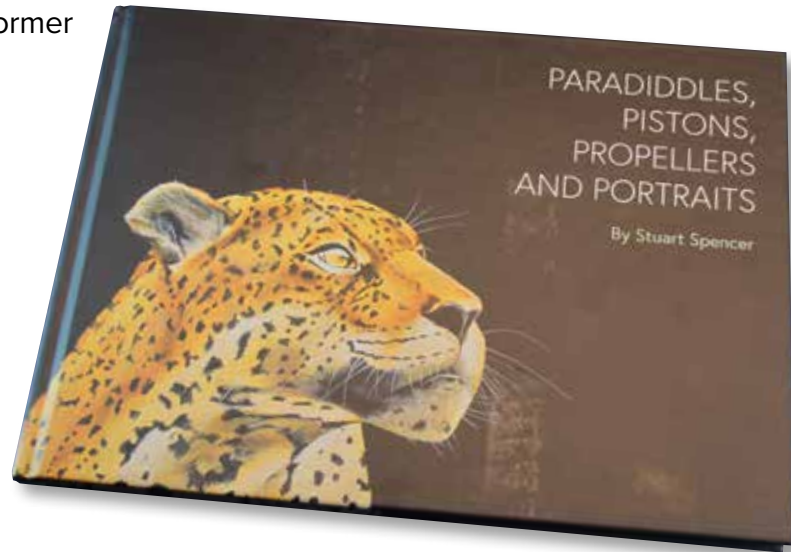
The answer is the author of the volume: one Stuart Spencer, former Design Studio Manager at Jaguar and Aston Martin. I admit I had to Google ‘Paradiddles’: it is a foundational drum rudiment that combines alternating strokes with a double stroke. So, now you know! I also have to admit I am none the wiser, but better informed.

My own recollection of Stuart was that he was one of the few nice guys at Jaguar. So many middle managers thought they were so important that they had to put you in your place, but that was not the case with Stuart. He was always cheery, sincere and helpful. As such, he stood out.

Growing up in Birmingham during the Second World War, he became interested in music and art, and entered the British motor industry in Coventry via the old Rootes Group (Humber, Singer, Sunbeam, Commer and Karrier, from memory) before joining Jaguar. There he worked under the flamboyant design chief Geoff Lawson, a fun guy whom I interviewed a few times, and in this period they launched several versions of the XJ saloon, the XJ220 supercar, the S-type and X-type. Stuart's book gives a fascinating insight into all the politics that went on behind the scenes when Ford acquired Jaguar and proceeded to make a pretty good mess of it all.

I have to admit it was quite moving to read about Geoff's sadly premature death at the age of 54. I well remember his packed funeral. So, if the 1980s and '90s are periods of Jaguar's history that interest you, when the XK name was revived, you will find this a good read.

In a fine, and long, tradition, Stuart was a true Jaguar man – one of the last, or maybe *the* last.



Hardback, A4 landscape format, 160 pages, 400-plus illustrations, including many of Jaguar prototypes. Limited edition of 400, signed and numbered by Stuart. Price £19 including UK P&P Available on eBay from paulskilleterbooks or by contacting jagworld1@aol.com

Spencer's book includes not only the story of his time at Jaguar during the 1980s and 1990s, but also some of his own illustrations



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Out & about

AREA NEWS & INFORMATION



UK Devon and Cornwall: Exmouth Car Show, 9 August

At the Car Show in Exmouth on 9 August, I met up with two of our local members. Nick Sheron has a wonderfully unrestored, mechanically sound XK 140 FHC in British Racing Green. Unusually, VLG 777 has an indicator arm on the steering column rather than the normal dashboard-mounted version. Also, there are robust custom-made wing mirrors – great for the Devon lanes. The car also has a beautifully patinated red interior.

Mark Hosegrove now owns a white XK 120 FHC, registration BJK 966. In the August 2026 issue of the *XK Gazette*, Philip Porter's introduction was about the XK archivist David Bentley and how his copious files were bequeathed to the XK Club for safe-keeping. For 25 years, David owned this 1954 XK 120 FHC and the car was featured on the front cover of the April 2024 *Gazette*, after it was displayed in the Classics Gallery at the Geneva Motor Show.

Mark is now the latest custodian of this car, based in Exeter. His main experience with classic cars has been confined to restoring and maintaining MG TCs, so the XK is a bit of a departure. BJK 966 recently went to Twyford Moors so that a more experienced set of eyes could check it over. They rebuilt the front

suspension and fitted a more modern tandem brake master cylinder.

Mark is currently battling with the SU H8 sandcast carburettors, which the car has sported for over 40 years. They seem a bit fickle and insist on dribbling petrol over his garage floor. He's looking forward to getting to grips with this lovely XK and meeting up with other XK owners in the Devon and Cornwall area. *Nick Haigh*



Out & about

AREA NEWS & INFORMATION

UK MIDLANDS: CLUB FEST, 14-16 AUGUST

Martin Reynolds attended this year's popular Club Fest meeting, which was held on 14-16 August at the Three Counties Showground in Malvern. He reports that he had an enjoyable day in the sunshine and sent us these photographs.

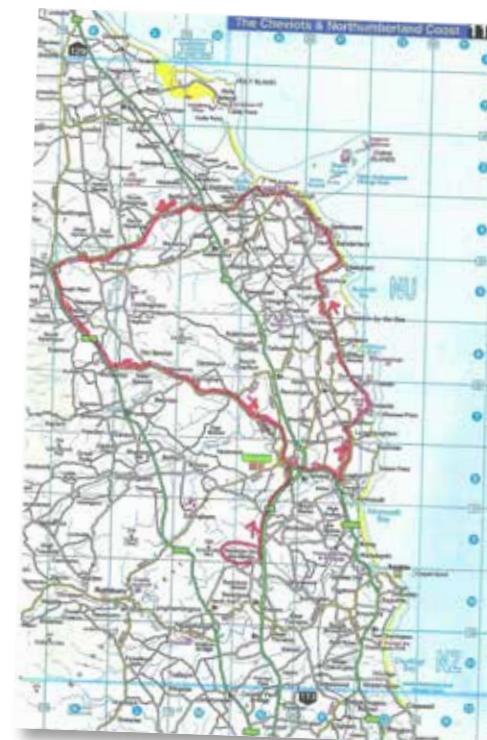


UK YORKS & NE: LUNCH MEET, 26 AUGUST

We had a wonderful welcoming stay at the Cook and Barker Inn near Morpeth, with 15 of us for lunch on the Wednesday. Those who stayed over on the Wednesday night had the chance to enjoy a scenic route organised by Robert and Sally. See the route pictured on the right.

There is no doubt that Northumberland has many hidden secrets and far less traffic than the rest of the UK. Don't tell anybody but the prices were lower too. On the trip we had the chance to visit Bamburgh Castle, which has an amazing history.

Afterwards, we had an invite to Robert and Sally's for tea and two delicious homemade sponges. We also had the chance to admire Robert's XK 150 and HMC – the latter being a remodelled 1990s version of the Healey 3000. He loves it. *David Simons*



Coming up...

UK SOMERSET AND BRISTOL

28 OCTOBER The Natterjack Inn, Evercreech Junction, BA4 6NA (thenatterjackinn.co.uk). Return visit to this traditional pub for probably our last lunch of the year. Good food, generous portions and close enough to the Haynes Motor Museum if you have time.

All meet times are from noon in the venue's car park, with lunch booked for 12:30. A check for numbers attending will be made a week prior to the meet. Members from other areas are most welcome to attend any lunch that's of interest. Please contact area rep Stephen Hill (sjhill99@gmail.com) to be added to the mailing list.



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UK Channel Islands Mark Blanchard. mblanchard9@gmail.com

UK Cheshire Mike Bielinski. 07768 948 904, msb@mykris.co.uk

UK Devon & Cornwall Nick Haigh. nick@provennltd.com, 07836 603215

UK Dorset Paul Abadjian. Frampton, Dorset, 01300 321199, mail@retroclassics.com

UK E Anglia (Norf, Suff, Cambs) Mike Read. Brisley, Norfolk. 07971 498001, lyn996@aol.com

UK East Midlands Ciprian Nistorica. Nottingham, 0115 9262266, info@thorntonrestorations.com

UK Essex David Cuff. Hatfield Peverel, 07866 678840, jdcuff@googlegmail.com

UK Hampshire Robin Appel. Southampton, robin.appel@robin-appel.com, 01489 877251

UK Kent Mike James. Goudhurst. mikejames788@gmail.com; 07889 424644

UK Isle of Man Ian Thompson. Ramsey, IOM. thompson01@manx.net +4 762 448 0845

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BODY AND CHASSIS JIG

Body and chassis jig as designed and built by club member Trevor Jipson to do the full restoration of his XK 120, as documented in the *XK Gazette* in 2018. Trevor wishes this to be available for anyone undertaking an XK restoration. As well as Trevor's restoration, it has also helped myself and one other member with their projects. There is no charge for this because Trevor wants to donate this for the use of the XK Club members. I have a lot of photographs available so you can see what is there. My location is near Chelmsford, Essex. Dave: 07866 678840.



XK 150 BUCKET SEATS

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Events

XK EVENTS & TOURS

For full details of all events, please visit the club website: www.xkclub.com
Please also see the area event listings on page 39



7-9 NOVEMBER 2026
NEC CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW
Club presence organised by the XK Club



27 NOVEMBER 2026
CLUB DINNER AT SARASTRO
Organised by the XK Club



2-6 MAY 2027
SCENIC SUFFOLK TOUR
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23-29 MAY 2027
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27 JUNE-3 JULY 2027
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CONTACT



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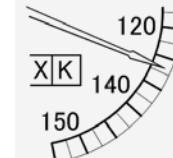
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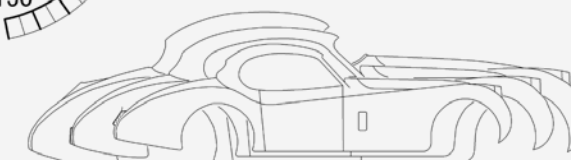
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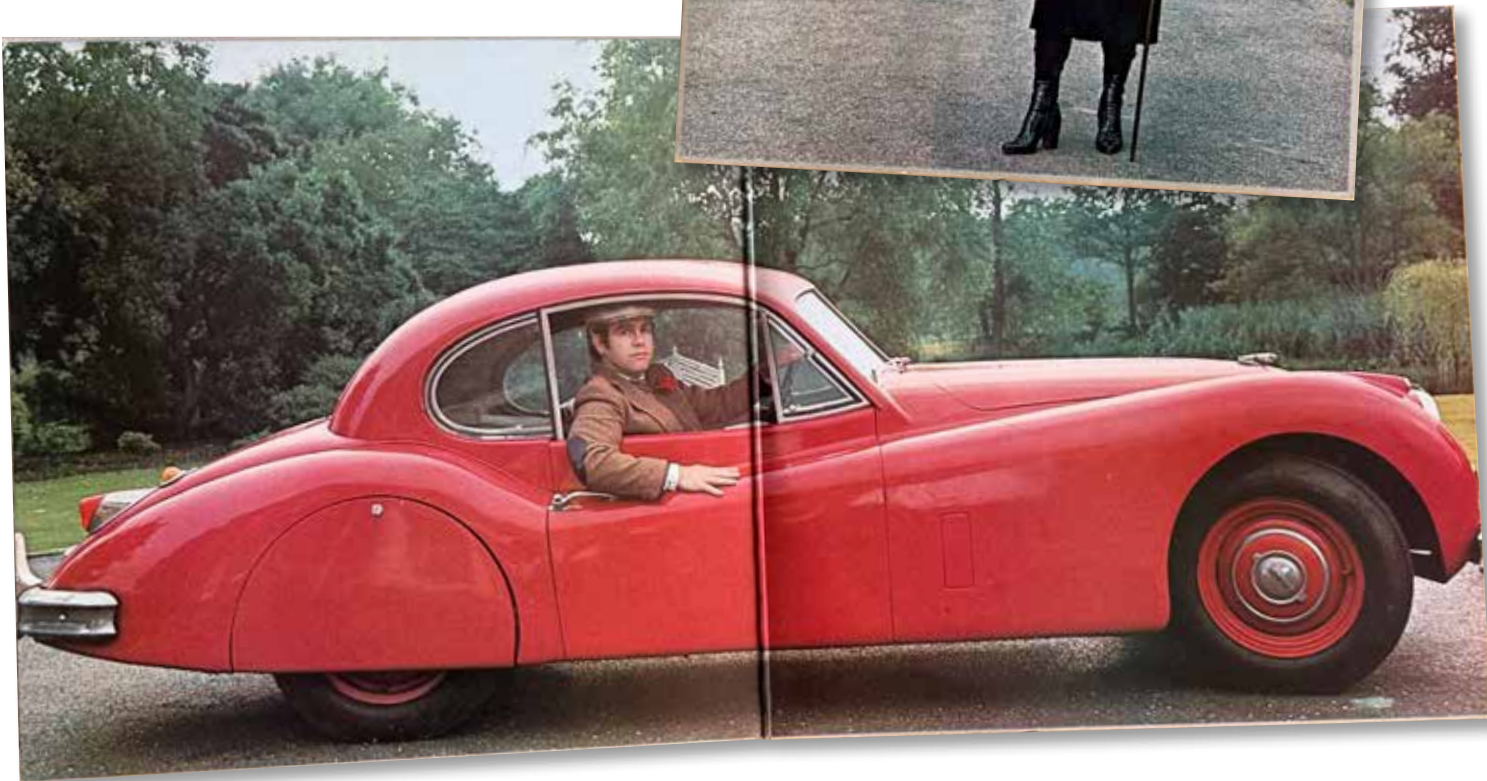


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Date 1978
Location Windsor
Photographer Terry O'Neill

After last month's Jaguar-related album cover, we couldn't ignore this 1978 offering from Elton John. *A Single Man* was released that year on John's own label – The Rocket Record Company – and while the cover shows the legendary singer posing on The Long Walk with Windsor Castle in the background, the inside of the gatefold sleeve features Elton in the driving seat of his red Jaguar XK 140 Fixed Head Coupé. The images were shot by Terry O'Neill, who made a name for himself by capturing contemporary celebrities in the 1960s, including the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, but his photographs of Elton are some of his best-known work. Little appears to be known about the XK itself, but if you can enlighten us, please let us know!

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