

THE XK



SPIRIT

THE ARISTOCAT REGISTER MAGAZINE



Sporty Red Aristocat

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EDITORIAL

we approach the Christmas season once again I'm sure that most of us would not have predicted such a virus that would cause so much devastation to us all worldwide. With the news of more than one type of vaccine hopefully ready to be rolled out prior to Christmas this is tremendous news as there is hope that through the spring and summer of 2021 the pandemic will be tamed and our lives can return to some sort of normality.

But what will normality be like I ask? With most of us learning to use the likes of 'Zoom' and other forms of communication, life as we have been used to it prior to the pandemic will in many respects be very different and for many very challenging.

As I mentioned in our last Summer edition I was moving from the 'Dark Side' to the "Light Side" and would explain a little more in the next edition.

I have been fortunate to grow up with a father who not only worked in the Motor Trade but later in life was able to own his own Garage Business. This meant that from a young age I was used to seeing various motor cars appear and disappear at regular intervals. Initially basic wheels but over the

years a variety of sports cars and exotic machines graced our driveway. This gave me a taste and desire to own my own set of wheels and when I was 18 years old my journey started, and throughout my life I have had the pleasure of either owning or using many different motor cars.

As previously mentioned this caused me to become a 'Petrol Head' and over the past 15 years we have been the proud owners of several Jaguars.

Not being a 'man of great riches' all have been used Jaguars and considerable amounts of dosh expended on them to keep them in tip top condition. Our last Jaguar, a mint X-350, aluminium XJ8 was I thought probably to be our last, serving us for many years. Unfortunately after 5 years of ownership in 2019 we had to spend over £1600 to keep her up to scratch and this got me thinking about the next ten year or so of car ownership.

I had read much about Elon Musk, and the story of his incredible life journey as a true Entrepreneur Businessman. His achievements with Tesla, SpaceX, the Boring Company etc. etc. got me thinking about electric cars and this led onto investigating what was

currently available and the cost implications for the future as keeping an older vehicle, particularly Jaguars, was becoming too costly.

After spending considerable time in 2019 searching the current situation the new Tesla Model 3 was undoubtedly far in advance to other manufacturers in the electric vehicle field, due to the fact that they had committed to designing and manufacturing electric only vehicles.

So, in August 2019 accompanied by my friend Barry (XK120, X type and XK owner) I took a test drive of the new Tesla model 3. I was personally blown away not only with the performance but also the handling etc. etc. that we arranged to return the following week so that both of us could test drive the model 3 again and evaluate. The conclusion was that in February 2020 I placed my order and after a long wait, we finally took delivery in September. I have only so far been able to do about 500 miles but will report further next year.

From all of us we wish you a restful and happy Christmas with your families. A big thank-you to all who have contributed this past year to 'The XK Spirit'.

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DRIVER'S SEAT

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Well, here we are, rapidly darkening evenings and cooling temperatures, thinking about putting the Aristocat away for the winter and realising that I have almost had a wasted summer of Aristocat motoring.

Although we did have a fantastic summer with plenty of warm days, the times I have been out in the Aristocat have been few and far between.

In fact just last Friday, I took my Aristocat to my local garage to put it through its MOT and I discovered that the car has covered just 333 miles since its last one.

The MOT was slightly different this year. Halfway through the brake test the rolling road failed. After a few attempts to get it going again they decided to dust off the accelerometer they keep on the shelf for cars with limited slip differentials.

It was the first time my local garage have used it on the Aristocat. After placing it into the passenger footwell, the tester headed off for the nearest long, straight and quiet stretch of road to slam on the brakes. In this instance it was a private driveway

to the local church. Fortunately, no services, weddings or funerals were taking place so it all went off without incident.

Back over the inspection pit, the tester and another technician took a close interest in the layout of the front suspension geometry. There was nothing untoward here as it is standard XJ6 suspension, but they hadn't appreciated how much the geometry can change depending on how much load is on the front wheels. In the end, the MOT test took about 90 minutes before I walked out with a Pass certificate.

I have probably mentioned it before in my monthly messages, but I always like to promote small, local independent garages. I have always found that the technicians show a real interest in cars like the Aristocat and I often find that they are more flexible in completing work or undertaking MOTs on the car.

Despite the lockdown, I haven't completely wasted the summer with the Aristocat.

I have recently bought a leather colouring kit from Furniture Clinic, as I have decided to undertake a renovation of the interior.

My enthusiasm was aroused after reading Richard Bastable's excellent article about the interior renovation of his Aristocat in the last edition of XK Spirit.

I managed to meet up with him during the brief period in the summer when we were not in isolation. It really is a top class job that he has done, and I managed to pick up lots of tips from him. Thank you, Richard.

I have now planned the changes I want to make to the dashboard, but I have started to tackle the interior colour first. I am buying new leather/vinyl for the door cards etc. from BAS International in Cwmbran, and Furniture Clinic have matched up the colourant.

COVID willing, I hope to have everything ready for the next summer and my Aristocat will be out and about in a resplendent mid-Grey interior and new dashboard.

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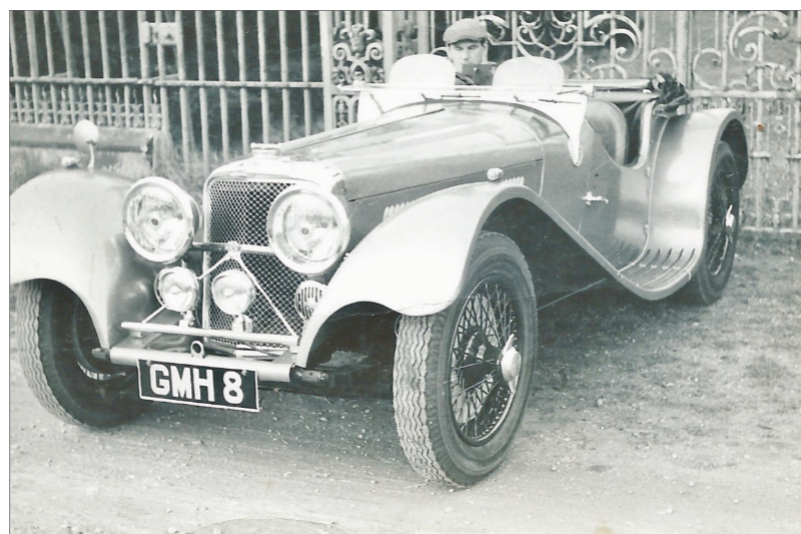
A return to the fold

As a lad, I was always fascinated by anything that had wheels that you could ride on. As a budding engineer, I also like to mend, adapt and even create anything that crossed my path that might help my cause inexpensively. I became an apprentice at Bristol Aero-Engine Company Ltd. which subsequently became Bristol Siddeley Engines Ltd. and then a division of Rolls-Royce PLC.

By the age of 17, I had been through the bike, mini-motor, auto-cycle and motor cycle phase, by 18 I had a driving licence and had swapped my first car (a Model Y Ford) for an Ashley bodied Austin 7 special. By age 21, I had built a Riley 2 seater special out of a Riley Falcon saloon, more importantly, I had been left £250 by an aged Aunt and so was now able to look for a serious sports car.

I had a more affluent old school friend who had recently acquired an SS100 Jaguar, this was a wonderful and totally unique vehicle in this area at that time and I 'pipe-dreamed' about owning one too. With new funds available, I researched the market and found that the only SS100 available was in Lytham St Anne's. We planned to meet halfway. My friend with the SS100 drove me to the venue with my back pocket uncomfortably loaded with pound notes, we did the deal for a serious £235 and both SS100s were driven home in proud procession.

I was recently given a wonderful book called Jaguar XK120 In Detail' by A G Clausager and was delighted to find on page 14 a photo of my old car registered GMH 8 fuelling up to take part in a Scottish Rally in Coronation year 1937.



I enjoyed this wonderful car for several years but sadly, I did have a few problems. The aluminium mudguards suffered serious metal fatigue. One of the aluminium con rods broke giving me a nightmare 80mph to 0mph experience, a rebuild with steel rods and a new sump followed. Next, I had a crown-wheel bolt failure giving me an exciting axle lock-up experience, sadly the rebuild had to use a crown wheel and pinion from an SS Saloon and so rpm at speed was excessive now. A bit dishevelled with some lower spec. mechanical items made me feel it was time to up-grade.

The previous owner had asked to be told if I ever planned to sell, so I let him know and he agreed to give me back the £235 originally paid, not bad after 5 years use and serious wear. However, he had the last laugh – he totally restored the car and sent me a photo you see above. He parked the car in Derby and was 'accosted' by an American who said, 'I want your car, name your price'. He thought of what to him was a silly price, the guy paid up and took the car to the USA days later.

Now a committed Jaguar fan, the obvious next choice was an XK120, this proved easier as this time a suitably priced example came up at a dealer in Bristol for £200. Apparently, previously owned by a midwife in Scotland, I discovered that the running-in stop under the accelerator pedal was still in place! However, the classic mid-life valve-clearance closing problem had resulted in it now running on 5 cylinders – enabling me to beat the price down to a very acceptable £165.

We had this car to go off on our honeymoon in 1964. My wife who had learned to drive in the SS100 at a local aerodrome was most impressed with this DHC model XK120 as in winter it was warm, had a soft headlining and an interior light, very sophisticated !



Mike with his wife and their first XK

This proved to be one of the best cars for reliability and durability that we have ever owned. It served us loyally up to the birth of our first child in 1967 when lack of space forced a regretful sale. I sold it to a pilot friend at work and I believe it is still with the same family somewhere in West Wales.



Mike with his XK150

Now with a carrycot to transport, the space behind the seats in an FHC XK150 looked ideal. There happened to be one sitting on the forecourt of a garage in the next village (a hire purchase reclaim case). It took months of regular visits before the paperwork was sorted and I was able to buy it for £200, a good price given that it had registration number XKD 1, though not highly valued at the time.

The braking, steering and road holding were a massive step forward from the XK120 but the lack of fresh air and contact with the elements were a serious disappointment in practice. However, more children meant that we were out of space again and I sold the car to a local lad a few villages away. He wrote the car off just a few months later and XKD 1 was never heard of for many years. Only a couple of years ago at a local JEC meeting I was asked for any pictures of XKD 1 as the registration had been recovered and acquired by the CEO of a well-known Jaguar replica company.

By 1969, with a second child, our need was now for family transport, as still a serious Jaguar enthusiast there was no alternative but to acquire a 3.4 MK2 (the sporting man's family car!). By now Rolls-Royce Bristol had been supplying Directors with 3.4s so after a friend had obtained and used these old ex-director cars, I was able to be the third owner of these 7+ year old cars for £250 each. I had two, and I was able to run each of them for about 5 years before rust caused door-sill and rear end MOT failures and I took them off the road.

Financial pressures forced me to give up running Jaguars and then dinghy and cruising yacht sailing took over for the next 30 years.



One of Mike's Mark 2s, obviously in need of some bodywork repairs



A Mark 2 used as a 'hack' to tow Mike's boat in earlier days

In 1972 I acquired an old farmhouse with extensive outbuildings. However, the dramatic mortgage interest hike to 14% in early 1973 meant that for

the next 5 years I had to supplement income to avoid having to sell up. Not surprisingly, I turned to repairing Jaguars owned locally by friends and colleagues. I looked after three XK120s, a Mk X, an S-type, 3.8 and V12 E-types and two 3.4 Mk 2s through all the standard problems of loss of oil pressure, loss of compression, timing chain clatter, excessive oil consumption, etc., etc. Eventually promotions at work rescued me and I still own the farmhouse and sheds and have never had to sell or scrap any loyal potentially classic cars ever again. The two 3.4 MOT failures were driven into a shed and left along with an MG midget.

Some 20 years later I spotted a set of Aristocat kit car parts partially assembled for a very low-price that I thought I could complete as a cheap project while still sailing. I liked the Aristocat for being an XK lookalike based entirely on ex-XJ6 Jaguar traditional parts and therefore 'honourable'. However, after some recovery work the cost of escalating demands of much more stringent single vehicle approval (SVA) testing required for kit car registration made the prospect of economic success unlikely, so this car also went into the shed with the others pending disposal decisions.

About 8 years ago, now over 70 and potentially unsafe at sea, we gave up sailing and sold the boat. We now had two ambitions - to get another camper van which is where we started holidaying before going sailing, and to get an open car to remember our early wedded years of open top touring. An eBay 'barn find' shed clear out of all our old 'stored' cars netted a total of £8500 to fund our intended car purchase, hopefully an Aristocat.

John's new project

◀ With only £8500 available our need was to find a tidy car with SVA but otherwise, to keep price down, in need of mechanical work to complete and/or repair. Autotune, the most helpful Aristocat kit suppliers, helped us find a beautifully finished and SVA'd Aristocat DHC XK120 with the price reduced to within our budget for a quick sale. As I drove up to view it and had first sight of the car it looked so beautiful that I vowed there and then that I would have it regardless of any mechanical imperfections I might discover later. I had an acceptable run round the block, did the deal and then put it on my trailer and took it home.



warm-up was fixed with a simple mod recommended by JEC's excellent XJ6 technical advisor David Marks.

We have achieved our objective, we now have a beautiful XK120 lookalike with a galvanised space frame, replaceable fibreglass body, genuine 4.2 twin cam fuel injected XK engine, E-type inboard disk independent rear suspension, wishbone front end with 4 cylinder finned disc brakes and power assisted steering. All within a dhc hood and wire wheels all for under £1200. It is easy to maintain as all parts are still readily available and the kit supplier is most helpful.

Always appreciated wherever we go, it is noticeable that around

25% of folk who look don't know what it is, 50% do recognise it but as a very rare sight these days, and only 25% know that it isn't genuine. As the price of most original XKs is now between £70k to £150k and rising, they are rarely seen other than at classic car gatherings. More affordable replicas and lookalikes can still be seen in pub and seafront carparks, so I am an unashamed campaigner for better recognition by the classic car community of the value of replicas and lookalikes in keeping public awareness and interest in the classic XK Jaguar range alive. The JEC started well but need to develop this category much further. **- Mike Whitfield**

It did turn out to have a number of mechanical problems (big end gone, necessitating a total engine rebuild using a reground crank I had in stock, too low suspension setting hitting all speed bumps, a not ideal pedal/design location for tall person, a poorly plumbed DIY stainless fuel tank, master cylinder condition and reservoir location problematic, etc., etc.) but all of the problems I could inexpensively fix. A later final most persistent problem of unreliable fuel injection performance during



The picture above says it all in Northern fashion

I hope that you are all well and that you and your families have come through the summer in fair form. It has not been easy for a large number of folk in the UK and around the world. I would not have wanted to make the decisions that governments have had to make to try and keep the virus in check. Could be worse and as I finger the keyboard, Trump has just lost and will not leave gracefully. Covid- 19 and an election battle cannot be great for the USA.



Pauline and I have been, like most of you, wanting to do things but not really sure we should. The Cat has been running well (famous last words) since the modification to the air flow cooling system. I was hoping to go to the Le Mans 24 hour and the Le Mans classic races but it was not to be. Instead I sat and watched the virtual 24hr race on Eurosport. I am no computer fan but the graphics were fantastic. My grand children say just a bigger play station. The Le Mans classic was postponed until next year. With the main Le Mans moved to September we got tickets and planned the trip. Only 50,000 to be allowed but in the end the French had an other wave of Covid- 19 cases so spectators were banned but the race went ahead. More sitting in front of the TV and it was surreal watching with no spectators, like all sports events nowadays. It would have been our 43rd and 44th visit to the racing at Le Mans but next year we hope to attend. Like all of you I am sure you are all hoping for a better and more settled 2021.

With summer turning to autumn I had a rush of blood to the head buying a Reliant Scimitar GTE 6A. It needs work but that has never bothered me.

At present it is on jacks in the drive while I work on her and now the engine is running and all the gears work. I had lots of problems with wheel nuts not coming undone and turning the studs in the hubs. Only one wheel nut left to sort out and then the lights and other parts and it should be ready to try out.

While all this was going on the TR8 blew a head gasket. It was being converted to run on LPG but this had not quite been finished. As I will be laid up until next year and then worked on.

I feel that it would be good if we could have a local get together for us Cat owners. We all enjoy the cars and have all developed and modified them in different ways. We read about our efforts in the magazine and I feel it would be great to have a 'local' meeting. Although I am not a great one for going to rallies etc. I do feel that a get together on a weekend afternoon would be very great and interesting.



I am in Enfield, North London and have only ever seen one other owner, Ian Beale.

It was great meeting Ian and Rebecca for a couple of hours. I would be happy to try and organise a meeting at a venue for those of you in the South East.



As I only know Ian and Rebecca (they live about 40 miles away), I would ask those who may be interested to email or text me. I hope all of you local to the South East will think this worthwhile. This will obviously only be possible when we are through this Pandemic.

I would also like to thank our editor for all the work he does for the magazine and yet he now does not even own a Cat.

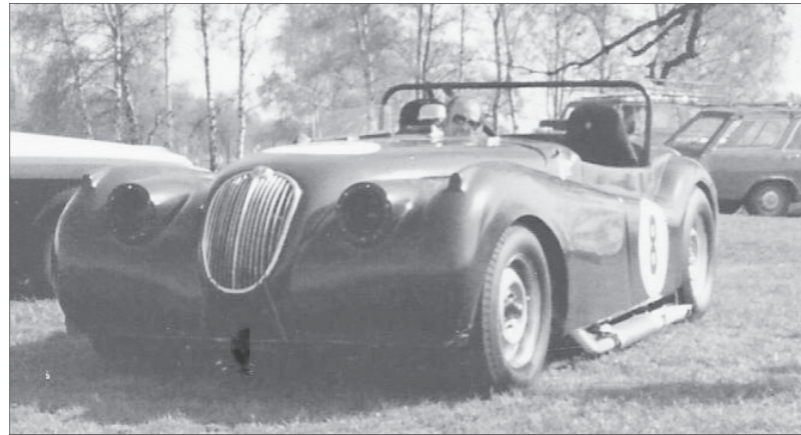
Please keep it up your doing a great job. **- John Knight**

Aristocat – the origins!

By the end of 1983 with the cost of trying to race our McLaren in Historic motor racing on a seemingly exponential rise, I felt the time was right to go back to my grass roots and build a 'Kit Car', just as I had been involved with in the early 1172 and Ford Special Kit Car days. To build something interesting, but low cost, for both road and race.

Having the tuning and maintenance side of the workshop meant there was a constant stream of Jaguar saloons coming through which were all mechanically perfect but badly infected with Lancashire rust. Why not build a chassis to take all these excellent Jaguar parts, but what would we clothe it in? The little MiniCat XK120 that we had built for Sally a few years earlier had proved very popular and so it seemed sensible to build a full size XK! It would sound like one as well as looking like one. After much searching the right opportunity arose, and when offered the chance to take a mould from an original XK body we jumped at it.

The plan was to base the kit on a 'one donor' principle; break an entire rusty Jag until there is nothing else left to use, just a few rusty bits on the drive! At the time, the most commonly found rusty Jaguar, was the Series 1 XJ6 saloon and so we bought a rotten MOT failure from which to cannibalize the necessary parts. I had decided it was important to keep the build of the car as straightforward as possible for any amateur builders who we might market the car to. The main result of this was that we would need to widen the XK body by 5 inches to accommodate the XJ6's wider track axles complete with their subframes. We were a little concerned about how this



would affect the beautiful XK looks of the car, however by inserting the extra width right down the middle we were able to utilise the wider Jag Mk2 radiator grille which helped keep the balance of the car's shape. The resulting body shell was 5" wider than the XK120 and XK140 but was just 1in wider than an XK150, which led us to the conclusion, and subsequent advertisement tag line, that the car was 'Within the Spirit of the XK', rather than being an exact replica.

Helping in the workshop was local mechanic Fred Worral, having been with us for a couple of years. Fred loved Jaguars and had proved to us that not only was he an excellent mechanic, but also took great care and attention to detail much needed when building a car from scratch. Together we carefully broke the XJ6 and then stripped, cleaned and refurbished all the important parts. With all important dimensions established and all the big pieces laid out on the workshop floor, I was able to design and make a simple space frame chassis out of 1.5" box section steel which included mounting points for all the major Jaguar components including suspension subframes, engine, gearbox, steering, pedals, brakes, radiator, etc. We managed to get

the engine and gearbox about 12 inches behind the front axle – as opposed to mounted upon it like in the XJ6 which helped to improve the weight distribution. I then took our prototype 'hack' chassis to local welder Tommy Shaw who built a jig around the frame and from it produced the first beautifully welded chassis. Liberally coated in red oxide paint we were ready to start the assembly!

I knew the standard 2.8 engine in the car we had stripped wasn't going to cut it for my own prototype, but I knew just where I could find the perfect unit. A local company had sponsored a hydroplane which had raced on Windermere back in the early 1970s with the boat sporting a factory built 3.8 Jaguar race engine and it was now languishing in a local warehouse. I struck a deal to buy the boat and once we had it at Autotune removed the engine and tore it down for inspection. Former works Jaguar Le Mans engine builder, George Hodge was consulted, and he gave us help and advice to restore the engine back to its original Le Mans specs. Onto this engine we installed the close ratio 'Moss' gearbox that had served us so well in the old Jaguar Transporter years earlier!

Around this time the McAlpine construction firm were busy building the M65 motorway to connect Blackburn to Colne and all their staff and trucks were using our little petrol station for their fuel needs. When the supervisor called in one day I took him to one side and showed him some of the interesting cars in the workshop, and asked what the situation was with the newly completed sections of Motorway, especially once everyone had finished work. Well he said - with a wink of his eye - we clear the site and then put signs up at the entrances telling people to keep out, and you know the night watchman: he would probably be looking the other way...



So, once we had the rolling chassis finished off, basically looking like a 300HP front engine Go-Kart, Fred and I waited till early one Sunday morning and quietly crept past the large KEEP OUT signs making our way down onto the beautifully smooth, freshly laid tarmac. After a few recce runs ensuring the road was clear, and nobody was on site, we began to blast the Aristocat up and down the motorway, and after several good runs we retired back to the workshop to check everything over. With the tiny side mounted C-Type silencer I am not sure quite what the residents of Rishton felt about our Sunday morning test session but we were away and gone before anybody arrived to investigate.

The next run would prove a bit more serious, as I wanted to get

the handling of the car sorted out before fitting the fibreglass body and so I booked a mid-week test session at Oulton Park in early 1983. What I hadn't realised was that there was a British Touring Car Round at Oulton the following weekend and when Fred and I arrived we discovered an extremely busy paddock. I spent the rest of the day blasting the big alloy panelled space frame around Oulton doing my absolute best to keep out of the way of lots of very quick tin tops being flung round by super stars who must have been wondering just what sort of lunatic was driving around in a half built car! The test proved that the car was very forgiving to drive and had no particular vices that could bite an unsuspecting driver, but we stiffened up the front by adding an XJ12 anti roll bar and played with spring rates to get it even better.

A few weeks later and we heard of a unique race taking place at Oulton Park, as part of the Jaguar Drivers Club allcomers race, a class had been added for 'Formula Replica'. This was to cater for replicas of 1950s and 60s sports cars, how perfect! Unfortunately the race was just a couple of weeks away and we had about six weeks work to do, we decided we couldn't miss it and so the midnight oil was suddenly, not just being burned, but positively roaring in Reservoir Service Station! The first set of fibreglass panels to be produced from the moulds were delivered and although beautiful in finish they were much too thick for a race car, they were manufactured for us by Fibreglass Construction in Burnley a huge company who had made all of the Chevron body panels amongst many other jobs. More recently they were heavily involved in power and pleasure boat hull construction and it was



clear the boat guys had been on the Aristocat shell not the Chevron guys!! With time in such short supply we had no choice but to fit the heavy shell and get on with the build, and were into the last few days before the race and with the nose and tail sections mounted we only had time to hinge the drivers door, bolting the passenger side permanently in place! Somehow, we made it, in the early hours of the Saturday of the race we were still fitting mirrors and aero screens but passed scrutineering and onto qualifying. In the race itself I found myself dicing with Robin Atkinson in his lovely Westfield built Lotus 11 replica. The Aristocat was going very well but the driver was somewhat exhausted so decided not to do anything silly and bring the car home to the finish.

The project had proved to be very challenging, yet great fun, but most importantly it also proved to be very affordable since there was more money tied up in some of our Historic Racing gearboxes than put into this entire race car. Shortly afterwards we heard the excellent news that the 750 Motor Club were about to establish a Kit Car Racing Series. This was perfect timing and presented a tremendous opportunity to gain much credibility for our new design.

Still cannot believe that is 36 years ago!

- Anthony Taylor

A new member shares



A question has stuck in my mind, ever since I first met the previous owner of my Aristocat. (Why did you decide to buy the car? - he asked) Why indeed!

I bought my Aristocat in Mid 2019 and also joined the Aristocat Club. On reading the excellent magazine I wondered about the many different reasons there are to justify being an owner. (Can I hear my wife loudly say, 'None').

My car appears to have had three owners, each owning the car for different reasons.

The first owner built the car in 2002/3 and it was the second Aristocat he had built. From the specification it appears to me that my car was built for speed with minimal body accessories, triple carburettors and a substantial roll bar. The thorough file of data on the car build shows that he had most of the major donor car components rebuilt as he assembled the car although I have no direct evidence for this. He enjoyed the car for over 10 years, mainly using it in the south of England.

The second owner definitely liked replica 1950's cars. He had three when I met him, all convertibles. He lives in Europe most of the time, so has lots of sunny weather under which to enjoy them. He spent money on improving the appearance of the car, new leather interior, new hood, and the replacement of the roll bar with something less imposing. He looked into changing to wire wheels, but decided against it. He owned the car for about 5 years and did a fair amount of touring in Europe while based in France.

I have had the car for over a year. Of course Covid-19 has led to me keeping the car off the road longer than I planned. Like others I have used the time to make changes by adding a boot rack, XK140 Jaguar boot and bonnet badges, spotlights and other 'period' accessories; as well as the usual winter maintenance work.

Confirming that I also like the 1950's XK look in particular, I have owned a number of older cars, 1930's to 1950's, usually in the UK, but sometimes overseas; as many years ago driving a 1936 Morris 8 Tourer to Afghanistan.

I did fiddle under the bonnet, as the fitted non original fuel pump seemed to be working too hard. I bought a Jaguar part and fitted it, but then fuel came out if the carburettor float chamber overflows. After purchasing and fitting new floats and valves, (to no avail), I serviced the SU carburettors and found no change. Finally I sent the car to my local old car garage, and they fixed it. Wrong fuel pump!

I was back on the road, enjoying picnics, trips and drives around my local West Country lanes and coast until the autumn weather led me to SORN it again.

This winter I will fiddle some more; electric cooling fan, under body heat insulation, running repairs and looking forward to my 10 years of '1950's English period motoring'.

The car is built from a standard 1979 XJ6, 4.2 litre 4 speed manual with overdrive. Put into an Aristocat XK Sports chassis with Signal Red body. It was built through 2002/3 with the first MOT in June 2003. The only non standard parts are the triple 2" SU carburettors and a Moto-Lita wood rim steering wheel. It has been on the road most of the time since first MOT'd, some of that time living in France.



Summer of '69

"Back in the Summer of '69"... when it all started for Autotune.

During our 5 decades of working for ourselves, we have weathered many storms; starting with the winter of discontent, with the miners' strike. We had petrol to sell then, could only work two or three days out of 7, closed at weekends and trying to share out the loads of fuel we had with wisdom and fairness.

Unsure of the order, but we probably then moved on to decimalisation, and it was noted that not too long after than point, that the cost of fuel pretty much doubled!

Then we could not sell oil by the gallon it had to be litres, so that caused confusion, and if I am honest, Anthony and I almost still work on gallons when doing engine oil changes, though Richard will give me the quantity to charge out in litres. But we still work in 'English' and I do struggle to replace my office blinds in cm sizes. Though I do confess to getting a little better now that all the Fedex parcels show weight in kg and measured in cm. But tell me a parcel is 58cm, and it means nothing!

We had a horrendous fire at the workshop many years ago, and all because of a Mk 2 Jaguar fuel tank being drained through an automotive, correct, large drainage funnel in strong poly-something and then into the metal fuel can below. The firemen could only put it down to static as the fuel passed over the poly, creating a spark and whoosh. Remember that one!!

But we have had so many wonderful moments working on our own, for ourselves, meeting many interesting people from across the world, visiting and racing in many different countries, exhibiting at brilliant shows and really naff shows. It has all been great fun and we have really enjoyed it and indeed have our children; and they are still involved.

Richard has moved the workshop on and has people gasping at the work he and 'newish boy' Rob are doing, with the most tasty of cars. Rob did the same Motorsport Engineering Degree as Richard, which was the first one in the UK. So they are a great combination.

Sally and Richard have set up an Ebay shop now, and are beginning to sell off much of the stuff that

Anthony has been hoarding over the years, and during this long period of 'closure' they have been doing a really good job of reducing his collection! I was told not to tell "him" about "this" as he was keeping it for when he built up his next lightweight Lister. Ssshh!

And so to this year of 'cancellation'; take that howsoever you wish, but we have had the longest "holiday" ever since we were at school, so it has given us time to recharge our batteries, and we are just coming back to life again. At least, we have re-opened for Test Drives.

As the good book states, flood, fire, famine and pestilence. We have had the fuel famine, flooded the office, fired the workshop, by accident, and now we have the pestilence. Where will it all end?

But guys, just keep on building. You have your leisure project, perfect and if you have finished then you can always do a little more polishing and refurbishing. And now, we are just about there, you can get in the car and go and drive into Wales up to Scotland and go for a blast! Enjoy it, we will see you out there and 'Stay Safe'.

- Carolyn Taylor



So it seems that all three owners were typical of other Aristocat owners. One who enjoyed the detail of the mechanical side, sourcing, building and fitting the 1001 pieces that make up the whole car. One who enjoyed the recreation of the Jaguar sports car 1950's appearance and long distance touring; and now one who likes the feel of old English country roads.

- Peter Heap



When is a Jag not a Jag?



Jaguar XK120

Those of you who are JEC members may have read the article in the October 2020 edition of Jaguar Enthusiast entitled 'When is a Jaguar not a Jaguar'. The article has been prompted by the demise of Suffolk Sportscars, the manufacturer of replica Jaguar SS100 cars amongst others and the issue that they have had from a 'major manufacturer'. They claim that they have stopped trading partially due to the 'major manufacturer' telling them that the use of their logos, designs and trademarks was not allowed. Keith Vincent (JEC Vice President) has written a detailed article and focusses on certain vehicle manufacturers (including Jaguar) who are taking quite aggressive action against those producing 'replicas' of their designs.

The article points out that this is something of a new phenomenon brought about in part by vehicle manufacturers looking to sell their heritage. An example of this is Jaguar Heritage building 'new' examples of the Lightweight E type. Jaguar Heritage claim that these are not replicas as they are built to the exact specification that the original cars were built to. You can therefore understand their keenness to protect their product (which sell for an estimated £1 Million pounds each) from cheaper replicas. This isn't just an issue with Jaguar. Also Ferrari, Mercedes and Bentley too.

If you haven't seen the article, I would encourage you to read it.

The first thing to point out is that you will be pleased to know that as long as your Aristocat is registered correctly your pride and joy is safe and there is no risk of it being banned from the road.

Secondly, Autotune have always said that the Aristocat is not intended to be a copycat but designed and built 'Within the Spirit' of the Jaguar XK series of sports cars.



Jaguar XK140

Back to the question 'when is a Jaguar not a Jaguar?' There is something else that concerns me and that is whether spare parts could be subject to a similar aggressive attitude. If the major vehicle manufacturers start to claim copyright and trademark ownership of the shape and design of vehicles from their heritage, the next step could be for manufacturers to claim design rights on components and spare parts. If this were to happen, then suppliers like SNG Barratt, David Manners etc. could be put out of business and the price of spare parts would inevitably increase through lack of competition. This would lead to more expensive ownership, a reduced customer base and a consequent reduction in the second hand value of vehicles.



Jaguar XK150

I am not sure whether the marketing and legal departments at Jaguar and other vehicle manufacturers have really thought through the unintended consequences of their actions but I do feel that they are in danger of shooting themselves in the foot if the price of owning and running classic cars and classic replicas becomes too costly for the average enthusiast.

In summary therefore, I don't think there is too much to worry about for your Aristocat, but I do worry that vehicle manufacturer's may be seeing the beginning of the end of the golden age of automotive manufacturing and they are looking at ways of squeezing every last penny out of their business.



Aristocat

I would welcome any thoughts or comments that you have on this issue.

- Martin Webb