

THE XK SPIRIT

THE ARISTOCAT REGISTER MAGAZINE



Fabulous early built Aristocat

SPRING 2021 Jaguar in the news P4 & 5 / IVA passed and onward P6 / Engine rebuild P7



Too hot to handle P8



New members report P10



Engine swap P12

ENGINE NOTES

EDITORIAL

As Springtime is now upon us it's great to see the daffodils, tulips and crocuses appearing and the white blossom on our trees. Nature it seems is not downcast by the Covid-19 and the year long lockdowns that we have been experiencing but is rejoicing in the new seasons ahead. We are fortunate in the UK that due to our speed with the vaccination program, we should be seeing freedom from our restrictions progressing hopefully in a positive way in the next few months.

So what does this mean for us all? For those of you with builds perhaps this has meant lots of progress or even a renewed endeavour to crack on. And for those of you with Aristocats at last the possibility of getting them out and about to meets and trips that have been planned is possible. But as Martin, our Chairman often reminds us this time, the need for preparation, servicing, MOT etc. are all very important for a trouble free season of enjoying your classics cars.



For me it's all change as advised in the last edition 'Delilah' has been sold. For us we wanted her to go to new owners that would not only enjoy driving her but also perhaps update her to their specification. Well I'm overjoyed to tell you that Pete & Judi Thurlow purchased 'Delilah' and marked the new ownership by calling her "Betty". If you check out page 10 Judi has already sent us an article and I look forward to further reports of their upgrades and adventures in future editions.

As for me, over the past few months, I've had the joy of driving 'Red Kite' our new Tesla Model 3, sadly only on short trips, mainly to hospital appointments and to see my Physio sorting out my shoulder impingement. I've also cleaned and polished her several times but hopefully soon we will be able to get some serious mileage in, go regularly to our local Classic Car Meeting and possibly meet up with some of you members of 'The XK Spirit Register' this summer.

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DRIVER'S SEAT

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This is the third Chairman's Message that I have written while we are in lockdown and, like everyone else, I am hoping this will be the last one that I write under these circumstances. As I write this the Government have just published a roadmap to take us out of lockdown, and we are all hoping that with the vaccine roll out we can all get back to a sense of normality.

For Aristocat owners, we hope this will mean being able to get out and about in our cars in the spring for the first time in a long time. For me, my Aristocat did get out just before Christmas as I was moving home to Herefordshire. On the day of the move the weather was not ideal for Aristocat motoring. As I was driving a large van, I left the Aristocat driving to my son, Matthew. Although he thoroughly enjoyed driving the Aristocat, he did have to cope with some huge rain showers during the two-hour journey. On top of this, one of the front brakes started binding and got quite warm. In the end he completed the journey at a steady 40mph, which given the weather conditions was plenty fast enough!

Last year I wrote an article for 'The XK Spirit' about fuel labelling and ethanol in fuel. At the moment, unleaded fuel contains 5% ethanol – known as E5 petrol, but E10 petrol (10% ethanol) is due to be introduced into the UK by

September this year and there are question marks over its compatibility with older fuel systems. I have recently heard from Aristocat Owner, Barrie Trentham who has had a fuel pump failure in his Aristocat, that the prime suspect is ethanol in the fuel. Upon inspection he found the pump to be full of sticky slime from fuel hoses. Has anyone else had any ethanol related problems? If so, please let us know.

The AA's website has some information on the pro's and cons of biofuels and biodiesel. Up to 5% Ethanol in petrol (E5) is considered not to cause any compatibility issues with car fuel systems. The AA says that using E10 petrol can cause issues in vehicles made before 2000. Those issues fall into three broad areas:

Corrosion – in long term storage, fuel containing Ethanol can become acidic and cause corrosion of aluminium, zinc and galvanised materials, brass, copper and lead/tin coated steels.

Material compatibility – Ethanol's high solvency can cause problems with many seal and gasket materials used in fuel systems as well as with fibre glass resins. Besides a risk of fuel leaks, rubber components and resins can become partially dissolved, producing deposits that could foul carburettor jets.

Combustion – Ethanol's higher volatility can contribute to 'vapour lock' issues in older vehicles when operating temperatures are higher. Ethanol can also affect cold start performance.

Where E10 is sold, filling stations should continue to supply an E5 'protection grade' petrol for use in vehicles that aren't compatible with E10. These grades tend to be the 'super unleaded' or 'supreme' grades of fuel. Esso have a statement on their website saying that they do not intend to introduce ethanol into their 97 and 99 octane fuels at the moment.

In summary, it looks like it is best to fill up your Aristocat using 97 or 99 Octane petrol (as I suspect most of you are already), but even then you cannot guarantee it will be ethanol free. Look out for the E5 or E10 labels on the pumps. E5 should be OK, but try to avoid E10. There are a few suppliers who sell Ethanol removal kits (e.g. Ethanol) but I cannot vouch for their effectiveness or safety.

One final question for our members; is anyone using a space saver wheel as a spare wheel? It would be interesting to hear from Aristocat Owners who have experienced of using them.

Jaguar in the news – reassure replica owners



The second reason that Jaguar has been in the news recently is because of an open letter that they have recently published seeking to reassure owners of Jaguar replicas. You may remember that I reported in the last edition of XK Spirit about the demise of Suffolk Sportscars. The recent open letter from Jaguar is about a recent court case and is reproduced below:

You may have seen a recent news story relating to a C-type replica which portrays Jaguar Cars negatively, after a Swedish court ruled in our favour confirming that the C-type is protected by copyright. We wanted to reassure our customers and loyal enthusiasts that most of this news release was misleading, conjecture or completely untrue. At Jaguar Land Rover we wholeheartedly value our communities' continued support. Importantly, we want to allay any fears amongst the network of

enthusiasts that Jaguar Land Rover might pursue individual owners of replica Jaguars and insist upon their destruction. This is not true. We will however, take action to stop businesses using our Intellectual Property illegally for their own profit, as in this case.

The Swedish court's decision in our favour confirms that we were correct to take this case forward. According to the Swedish court, the external shape of the Jaguar C-type is protected by copyright, and this was infringed by a car being built by the defendants' company, the first of six that they planned to build and sell at over Euros 250 thousand each.

At Jaguar Land Rover we understand that original C-types and official continuations are attainable for only a few and would like to be enjoyed by more enthusiasts. We have never, nor would we, take action against private owners of pre-existing

individual replica vehicles, nor insist upon the destruction of their cars. In this case Jaguar Land Rover offered the defendants an opportunity to retain their completed replica for private use and enjoyment, however this was declined, and the defendants chose to continue with their plans to make money from our copyright.

The enthusiasm of our fans and the celebration of our heritage is extremely important to Jaguar Land Rover. We will do everything we can to safeguard our heritage and it's to honour this commitment that Jaguar Land Rover Classic was established in 2017. Dedicated to the production, restoration and maintenance of historic models, as well as the manufacture of new parts, Jaguar Land Rover Classic ensures that enthusiasts can enjoy our vehicles long into the future.

Jaguar Land Rover Classic preserve cars of historic significance and collections, we train talented technicians in specialist methods to build and maintain these special vehicles, ensuring traditional skills do not disappear, and work with owner groups around the world. When restrictions are lifted Jaguar Land Rover Classic will once again open the doors of its world class facilities for enthusiasts to enjoy. We thank you for your ongoing support. **- Martin Webb**

Jaguar in the news – electric cars

Over recent weeks, Jaguar have been in the news for a couple of reasons. Firstly in middle of February, Jaguar Land Rover's (JLR's) new CEO, Mr Thierry Bolloré announced that all new Jaguar models will be electric from 2025. The firm said it will also release six pure electric Land Rovers over the next five years, with an aim for 60% to be zero emission by 2030. Jaguar says that "... at the heart of its 'Reimagine' plan will be the electrification of both Land Rover and Jaguar brands on separate architectures with two clear, unique personalities".

With a 'net zero' target for 2039, the company is also focusing on hydrogen fuel cells alongside batteries as hydrogen technology as the associated market matures. Development of a prototype is already underway, and is expected to be on UK roads for testing within the next 12 months.

While many Jaguar enthusiasts

may not welcome the impending retirement of the internal combustion engine and the loss of all of the emotions that are tied up with it, Jaguar are playing 'catch-up' with most of their international competitors, To ensure its long-term survival, Jaguar doesn't have much choice but to go with the inexorable flow towards electric vehicles. However, as reported in Professional Engineering Magazine, Professor David Bailey from Birmingham Business School said that some big questions remain about their future. "What models will it make? How many cars will it aim to produce? How many workers will it need? And can the firm shift to an

electric future on its own, or need a partner?"

Although JLR has committed to keep its plant and assembly facilities in the UK and around the world, 'streamlining' will see it "substantially reduce" its non-manufacturing infrastructure in the UK.

"What is clear is that the firm is aiming to make fewer cars ('quality rather than volume') with less people," said Prof. Bailey. "That will mean job losses, but how many is not clear. Meanwhile the firm has dropped its previous goal of producing a million cars a year." **- Martin Webb**



Carolyn Taylor from Autotune has commented on this letter:

It would seem that many people took the Jaguar Replica letter to mean that they would hound out the builders and owners of C Type Replicas. This is not the case, and I do not believe it ever was or even could be. All replica cars on the road have passed (or should have gone through) IVA. Thus they comply with our laws, and should be

suitably described as what they are on their V5. However, we must not forget that the DVLA have it in their power to confiscate the V5 of a vehicle if it does not accurately describe what the car/chassis is. Autotune are aware of this happening.

Certainly the new boss at Jaguar is making use of some of the brooms in his newly found cupboard! It is very sad for the Swedish couple who have

made a C-type, very accurately, and believed with Jaguar on board at the time of design and build, with plans to build more, and at a very high cost and to a very high standard. But it does conflict with what Jaguar are building themselves, so they are being protective at that very high level. We understand a "Go Fund" website has been set up to assist the Swedes with an appeal.

IVA passed and onward



My Aristocat passed the IVA test in early August 2019, then DVLA took 2 months to register it after several phone calls and lots of paperwork. This was very frustrating during lovely weather for open top motoring! So she was finally registered on 1st October 2019. At least that time allowed me to do a few mods post IVA; you know what I mean!

My wife bought me a nice new leather Moto-Lita steering wheel which for me transformed the feel of the steering. My car does not have a hood, just a tonneau cover, so I only try to drive it in decent weather and I have only got wet once in the last year!



I have now driven her 1500 miles and I'm really enjoying the car. We trimmed the inside very nicely and fitted lots of sound deadening material together with using used Jaguar XJS seats. These were cut down in height with new seat cushions making them very comfortable.

My first long trip was on the hottest day of the year in June. I drove down to the Dorset coast which was about a 150 mile return trip. The cooling system worked well, even in heavy traffic at one point, the electric fan coming on as necessary. We fitted a new fan and an engine oil cooler as well as an auto gearbox oil cooler along with a new Autotune large radiator.

The rebuilt engine has performed beautifully. It is a 4.2 series 3 which I've converted to SU carburettors on Anthony's advice. This also makes it look authentic under the bonnet.

Obviously there have been very few car shows this year, so most of my outings have been joyriding, and what a joy it is to be at the petrol station as so many people admire the car and want to know how old it is?

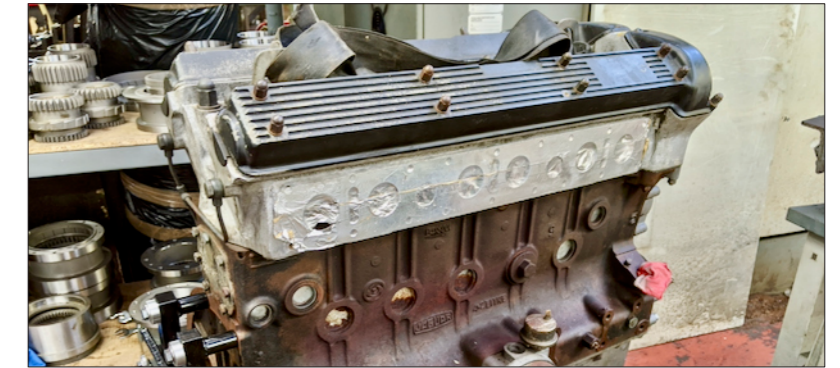
At the end of September I took it to the Shalbourne Classic Car Show near Marlborough and my friend Robin was there with his lovely Jaguar Mk 9. He particularly noticed that the Aristocat was getting much more interest than the Mark 9! I had hoped that Martin Webb might have been there with his car. I've still not seen another Aristocat on the road.

Even if I say it myself we did built the car to an excellent standard with attention to detail on the mechanicals, so it drives like a new car. I've restored lots of classic cars over many years, but sometimes it is quite a disappointment when they are driven!

My lovely Aristocat is a pleasure to drive and gives me a great buzz every time I drive it.



Engine rebuild



From my last article you may remember my reason for buying the Aristocat to get my life back on track after 3 years of severe depression. Well, it has certainly done that, 2 years of building it and the past year enjoying her has made an old man of 74 very happy bunny! Also I've not had to take a single pill for four years!

I think I owe a huge thank you to the Autotune team, not only for my lovely car and what it has meant to me but also for their willingness to help whenever asked. An enormous Thank - You to the Taylor family.



She's been put away over the winter and am really looking forward to enjoying my Aristocat once Lockdown is over.

if there is anybody building a car at the moment or contemplating one, I would love to give any advice from my experience. Give me a ring - 07703 293 767.

- Nigel Evans

I think everyone should have a lockdown hobby or project. Mine was to rebuild an XK engine to replace my current in the Aristocat. The problem with this engine is that one of the engine studs has snapped and I can't repair it without taking it all apart. These engines are prone to stud breakage as the stud goes right down into the block, sits within the water jacket thus subject to rust, corrosion and ultimate failure.

I acquired a suitable XK engine from eBay from an early S2 XJ6 (based on the engine number).



Upon dismantling the engine I broke 2 of the engine studs, not surprising looking at the amount of corrosion built up in the block. A local specialist, Winspeed Engineering, near Guildford, had a look at the block and said they

could get the broken studs out, which they did, at a price! The block needed a rebore as water had got into the bores and this was done by Banda Engineering in Portsmouth. One final bit of machining, cylinder head skim, was done by Classic and Modern Engine Services in Bracknell.

Thus, with new bearings, pistons, oil pump, valves, timing chain and sprockets the engine was rebuilt and looks good. Just at the stage of swapping the engines over – easier said than done as the full engine is a heavy old lump! One final project before installing the new engine is a gearbox inspection and re-build. Hopefully just bearings and new synchro rings and I'm not going to wait for another lockdown for that though!

- Ian Bale



Too hot to handle



The big issue that I was having was overheating with my Aristocat when the ambient temperature went up. On a run at 70mph and ambient temp at 25°celsius the water temperature would rise above the thermostat control point. When stationary the water temperature would rise even more and the engine would want to stall. I have a viscous fan attached to the water pump and a 16inch electric fan attached to the front of the radiator

I discussed this problem with Ian Bale who had carried out some modifications on his 'Cat', and basically what needed to be done was to stop the hot air in the engine bay from going forward and back through the radiator.



Closing the surround of the radiator and electric fan so that hot air in the engine bay could not flow forward and be drawn back through the radiator made a big difference. The engine ran at a normal temperature but the engine bay was hotter.

The hot air under the bonnet was affecting the battery performance on restarting so I decided to fit a secondary fan on the side. The air intake to the carbs still is very hot but that's work in progress.

The secondary fan helps by drawing colder air from under the wing into the engine compartment.

This fan is switched on at 40°celsius as the temperature rises and off when the temperature is falling by a small digital controller.

What I found was the temperature in the engine compartment reached 75°celsius when stationary for a couple of minutes. This fan helped with the battery cooling but did little to reduce engine bay temperature. I tried the secondary fan set to suck out but this wasn't a success and the sheet above the fan buckled with heat.

All the covers are made from thermoplastic sheet and held

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Legend of motorsport

The world of motorsport has become a lesser place, with the loss of Murray Walker, or as our children called him, Murray Squalker. What a friendly and iconic figure he was on the television, in the paddock, around the pits, or just enjoying the cars. Murray's enthusiasm and knowledge for all things racing was undeniable, with a full and interesting life before he took on and was part of Formula 1.

Before our F1 became more about rules and statistics, we have to record for posterity, those glorious moments of commentary:

- *There's nothing wrong with the car - except it's on fire*
 - *Unless I am mistaken - Yes, I am very much mistaken*
 - *There are seven winners of the Monaco Grand Prix on the starting line today and four of them are Michael Schumacher*
 - *With half the race gone, there is half the race still to go*
 - *The lead car is unique except for the one behind it, which is identical*
 - *We now have exactly the same situation as we had at the start of the race - only exactly the opposite*
 - *This would have been Senna's third win in a row if he had won the two before*
 - *I've just stopped my start watch*
 - *Jensen Button is in the top ten in eleventh position.*
- We will all miss you, Rest in Peace Murray Walker.
- Carolyn Taylor

together with screws. I used this as I had a stock of it in the garage and it is easy to work with.

I consider all this work in progress having several more modification I would like to peruse.

1. *duct cooler air to the carbs as this will be beneficial to the running of the engine and make it cooler*
2. *fit an oil cooler but as yet have not found a reasonably priced adaptor*



3. *plate for a 4.2 series 1 engine*
4. *lag the exhaust pipes*
5. *put fins on the engine sump (many years ago I saw an ad for such a unit but they do not seem around now)*
6. *try a system that reverses the direction of radiator fan to suck air out of the engine compartment when the car is stationary. This would mean removing the viscous fan which at present I feel is doing a good job of pushing air through the engine bay*
6. *as a last resort put vents in the bonnet which I feel will spoil the body line.*

That's the cooling for the engine

and I hope some of it will be food for thought for others.

These lockdown restrictions are likely to continue for a while in spite of the road map the government have set out.

Lets hope that the jab and common sense prevails to get us all through safe and well.

When it is possible to meet I will try and organise a get together.

It would be great to get out and meet other Aristocat owners.

The plan is for somewhere in the South East for local owners but any owner would be more than welcome. Call me - 07860 569 009.

- John Knight

New members report



Summer 2020 we were standing in the garage looking at the bike. A Harley 1550cc Heritage Soft Tail Springer. With her white wall tyres and springer front end she looked like a bike from the 50s, but she was from the 2000s and fooled a lot of people into guessing her age. She is a limited edition and we have only seen two, one in France and one in a magazine owned by Russell Crow.

We hadn't been out on her for some, time even pre Covid. Unfortunately the time had come to say goodbye to our 2 wheel days, as hubby said 'there are too many drivers who don't see a bike coming even one that makes a lot of noise'.

Pete had owned motorbikes since he was 14 so this was a hard decision. A friend bought our Harley to put in his museum so Pete started looking for 4 wheels. Pete had built motorbikes from the ground up, the last one being Full Pull (named after tractor racing with a sledge). Pete had overseen the design of the frame, had the engine built in Belgium by Tom Perles of Zodiac Drag Racing!

Her first trip was down to Faro for a show and back, a lovely bike.

So the question was what do we do next? "Look at this, how about this one", Pete said? He had seen a Cobra for sale 'a project' it said. Unfortunately it was a bit too much of a project when we went to view it!



We had owned a lovely 4.2 V8 S type so what about a Jag? And then, how about this? An advert for an Aristocat for sale. So off we went to view and taken for a test drive and naturally we fell in love and bought her. After Total Headturners made a number of adjustments for us, new steering wheel etc. we brought her home.

We joined the Aristocat Register and on further investigation then realised that 'Betty', as we call her, had started life as 'Delilah' and



was built by Chris Thacker the editor of 'The XK Spirit'! This was great news as it meant we were able to contact Chris who's been very helpful, and sent the paperwork that Headturners didn't have.

2021 and still in Covid conditions! So 'Betty' is Sorned and Pete will be tinkering with her for some time.

We have had a few little trips with her in 2020 and just like our Harley she makes a few people scratch their heads as to her age.

I expect Chris has already printed the ins and outs of her, but we hope to bring news of any work Pete has done in the future.

Hoping Covid goes soon, keep safe and hopefully see some of you out and about. On this note I see that John Knight, in the last issue, talked about a 'Cat' get together. We live near Newmarket and in our village we have a lovely pub. The pub has had small car shows in the past. This could be a meeting point if anyone is interested.

- Judi Thurlow

Letter from South Africa



We moved to South Africa where I am the Chairman of the 'Cape Jaguar Times'.

So this is what all the fuss was about! After 4 years in the shipper's warehouse my Aristocat has finally arrived here.

She looks a little sorry for herself at the moment, grimy and a lot of alloy corrosion under the bonnet.

I'm slowly connecting all the bits together so that I can spin her over and check that, in the intervening years, the 3.4 litre engine hasn't turned itself into a boat anchor!

When I started the project in 2007 it was my intention to complete the Aristocat to be my 'daily driver', complete with windscreen, wipers, heater, hard and soft tops etc. (see the photo above). Little did I know that, in 2016, we would

move to this fabulous country, enjoy the company of new friends and a climate that makes most of my add-ons superfluous.

So, in a previous issue of the 'Cape Times', I featured a (much) modified XK120. It was built for Dexter Brown, the famous motoring artist, for hill climbs and speed trials. I feel that it would be fitting to complete the Aristocat as an 'Homage' to this vehicle. It cannot be an exact replica but I shall keep to the spirit!

When I contacted Anthony and Carolyn Taylor, the manufacturers of the Aristocat, they very kindly placed an advertisement in the magazine with a choice of photos - thank you both. More news as we progress to follow. - Mike Baker

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Engine swap

I have taken out the old engine and gearbox by raising the car up and pulling the engine from underneath (the hydraulic ramp made it possible - an absolute godsend). Apart from removing the usual components (carbs, exhaust etc.) I had to remove the steering rack to allow the car to be raised. I had calculated that the ramp would lift high enough to allow the engine to come out and had a good few inches to spare. I had a sturdy dolly to place the engine on to enable it to pull out from the front of the car. All I've got to do now is remove the gearbox and then reverse the process to install the new engine.

- Ian Bale



DVLA number plate changes

The changes being introduced on 1st January 2021 will affect the ability of vehicles registered in the historic tax class to display the old style pre-1973 black and silver number plates.

Following the change in definition of a historic vehicle for vehicle tax exemption purposes in 2015, an issue was identified in the regulatory requirements for the valid display of a black and silver number plate. This resulted in an unintended consequence where any vehicle over 40 years old and registered in the historic tax class would be permitted to display an old style black and silver number

plate. This was despite the law previously requiring all vehicles first registered after 1st January 1973 to only display the yellow and white number plates with black characters.

As this was never the intention, DVLA have sought to rectify this through a legal correction which will shortly be implemented. The change seeks to prevent any vehicle constructed after 1st January 1980 from the ability to display the black and silver number plate despite being recorded in the DVLA's historic tax class. Those vehicles with a construction date prior to 1st

January 1980 will continue to be able to legally display black and silver number plates to avoid any undue costs of replacement.

Please also note that from 1st January it will no longer be permissible to fix a new number plate displaying a Euro symbol. Number plates already fixed to vehicles are unaffected. DVLA will also be introducing a new British Standard for number plates produced from 1 September 2021 which will mean all current style number plates that are first fixed to a vehicle from that date must meet the technical requirements.

- Richard Bastable