

# THE XK SPIRIT

THE ARISTOCAT REGISTER MAGAZINE



## *Autotune Racing Aristocat on stunning Island circuit*

Summer 2021 Cab refurb P4 / What's going on? P6 / Always a racer P7 / 4<sup>th</sup> July picture gallery P8



Tinkering P10



New K&N filters P11



Holidays at home P12

# ENGINE NOTES

## EDITORIAL

First and foremost allow me to apologise for the lateness of the summer edition of 'The XK Spirit', this being due to a couple of reasons namely a lack of articles that has now been fortunately addressed, and also me not being too well over the past couple of months. I am now please to say that we have received a flurry of articles (many thanks to all you contributors this issue) but would encourage all readers to have a go at writing and sending in articles and pictures of your experiences, build projects, activities and adventures etc. as we can always use articles even if we don't have enough space in an issue. I will always endeavour to use them at the next possible opportunity.

I have enjoyed the new freedoms afforded us by going now on two occasion to a local meeting of classic cars at Blindley Heath, Lingfield with my good friend Barry O'Neil. To get out in Barry's superb XK120 with the top down was a magical and most enjoyable experience on two Saturdays in



June and July. I have to say that going to these type of local classic meetings with such a diversity of machines and owners is most agreeable particularly as a passenger in Barry's XK120.

We were also able to get to Bicester Jaguar Festival on June 4<sup>th</sup> and it was great that Barry was able to join me in my new Tesla and experience electric motoring. We had a great day meeting old friends and new ones and I was particularly happy to be reunited with "Delilah", my Aristocat build, that is now in the most capable hands of Pete & Judi Thurlow. Having renamed her to "Betty" and already continuing an improvement program on her, it

was brilliant to meet up with Pete & Judi having had several conversations after they bought 'Betty' from the dealer that I sold her too. You will see a couple of articles they have contributed later in this issue.

With opportunities to get out and about once again hopefully you will be able to enjoy your 'Cats' stretching their legs in the coming months before our winter season is upon us. I will certainly be taking every opportunity to enjoy my new electric steed and weather permitting travel around some of our spectacular countryside in the coming months.

## TEAM



**CHAIRMAN**  
Martin Webb  
Hartlands  
1 Jenkins Orchard  
New Road  
Bromyard  
Herts HR7 4AL  
018 8548 3966  
aristocatregister@btinternet.com



**HON SECRETARY & TREASURER**  
Carolyn Taylor  
Autotune Ltd  
Riverside Industrial  
Estate Rishton  
Blackburn  
Lancs BB1 4NF  
012 5488 6819  
taylors@autotuneuk.com



**EDITOR**  
Chris Thacker  
Maison Ouverte  
24 Fernhurst Road  
Addiscombe,  
Croydon CR0 7DG  
020 8654 7609  
aristocateditor@gmail.com

# DRIVER'S SEAT

## COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I mentioned in my last Chairman's message that I hoped that it would be the last one written during lockdown. Well, I am pleased to say that, although officially still in the last couple of weeks of lockdown, I am writing this having just returned from a superb day at the Bicester Jaguar Festival in the Aristocat. You can read more about the festival later in the magazine.

The drive to the festival was my first proper drive in the Aristocat since last December and you tend to forget those small things that make Aristocat motoring so memorable and (usually) enjoyable. We had left for the festival early on the Sunday morning and called in at a fuel station to fill up after checking that the fuel was 5% ethanol (E5) petrol; see my chairman's notes from the Spring 2021 edition of XK Spirit. We were the only car filling up at that time, and the cashier came out to comment on the car. He then politely asked if he could take a photo of the car. "Sure!", I said. With my affirmation, he

promptly turned around and took a selfie of the car with him in the foreground and my wife, Margaret smiling broadly in the passenger seat of the Aristocat! I am sure that many of you have also had similar experiences, but it amused me that so many photos taken nowadays must be the obligatory selfie.

Another memorable experience, for the wrong reasons, happened on the way back from the festival. About 5 miles from home, we drove round a sharp, blind bend only to find a police car parked in the middle of the road attending to an accident! He was less than 10 yards away from the blind corner so I had no alternative but to brake sharply. Although I was going less than 40 mph, I locked up all 4 wheels but thankfully managed to slide gracefully past the outside of the police car on the wet road. Just as I got level with the police car, I determined that I was going slow enough to release the brakes and continue driving. The policeman must have seen the scowl from our faces as

he just shrugged his shoulders! What do they say about policemen looking younger; and perhaps acting younger?

Finally, news of another delayed event. The Stoneleigh National Kit Car show that was delayed from the May Day weekend has now been re-arranged for Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th August.

Kit car drivers have free entry if they bring their cars along. Let's try to keep up the momentum from the Jaguar Summer Festival and see a good many Aristocats at this year's event. The Stoneleigh event differs from other car shows in that it is aimed at those building cars or modifying their existing cars. Budding Aristocat builders always show up at Stoneleigh seeking advice from those of us with first hand experience of a build project. Do come along whether you have finished your car and can offer advice or whether you are in mid-build and need that advice. We look forward seeing you there.

Insurance tailored around you and your Jaguar

Quoteline: 0800 916 1288

Mon-Thu 9am-9pm, Fri 9am-7pm Sat 9am-4pm.  
Authorised & regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority



**ADRIAN FLUX**  
adrianflux.co.uk/jaguar



# Loving Lady Lucy cab refurbishment

Over the last couple of years I have gradually tried to brighten and upgrade Lucy's interior. The original XJ6 grey leather seats had seen better days as had the dashboard which was of badly varnished plywood and the interior of the doors was bare paint.



I changed the seats for some cream ones from an early XF and cut all the useable leather from the back seats for spares. The seats are amazingly heavy (they have three motors in the bottom of them) but we eventually managed to fit them.



New door cards were made from marine ply and these were covered with a lighter leather to provide contrast. Pockets for them were made from the darker leather. Mahogany door caps were made which provided a nice carpentry challenge with angles going in three different planes and a mahogany surround was also devised for around the gear stick.

The rest of the tunnel and the dashboard was covered in the lighter cream leather. The seats have the wherewithal to take headrests, however I didn't like the plastic fittings so made wooden blocks which are shaped to the curves of the seat and have holes underneath to fit over them.



These are now covered with the original back seat leather so match well.  
- John Reeve

## Beef of the day

As some of you may remember I run most of my cars on LPG. It is about 60% the cost of Petrol and 'Environmentally Friendly'. To my way of thinking this beats electricity, with batteries etc. and other petrochemical products. For a long time I have been a fan of Hydrogen as the fuel for the future but I can see that it needs much more development and a delivery infrastructure before it can become commercially viable.

The motor industry is going for electric because it sells cars and that is just about all they are interested in. The governments of this world seem to have lost their way on this as batteries are costly to make and use precious metals which are in short supply. Reclaiming a battery, producing electricity, bulk storage and dispensing the product is very expensive. LPG is part of the immediate answer as it is much

more environmentally friendly than others but for the long term hydrogen will be the answer. Fitting LPG is relatively simple the main components being a filler, tank, vaporiser, ECU unit, lambda sense, carburettor injector plates, and on/off switch. My tank is very large being 90 litres but a smaller tank will do fine. At 59p/lt. it makes motoring and the environment so much better.

- John Knight

# Jaguar Summer Festival at Bicester 4th July



from Bicester for the whole 8 hours we were there, only for the heavens to open two minutes after we got in the car to leave.

Over the rest of the morning, nine splendid Aristocats arrived. We managed to direct all of the Aristocats so they were parked in one row interspersed by a C type and an XF. The Gazebo turned out to be a useful focal point and with the two Aristocat banners displayed on the sides many people, not just Aristocat owners, used it as a useful marker point in a field full of many hundreds of Jaguars.

In addition to the Aristocat drivers and their passengers, several other Register members attended and met up with us. For many of us this was the first Jaguar event we had attended in nearly 2 years.

- Martin Webb



We drove onto the field at 8am to find we were so early that the parking stewards didn't know where the Gazebos were going to be placed.

After some discussion and several references to maps, we agreed a good spot near to the toilets. After all, most of us are of a certain age where convenient conveniences are a priority! As we got out of the Aristocat, the last of the rain we had encountered on the drive to Bicester eased off. I am pleased to report that the rain stayed away

The much-delayed and eagerly-anticipated Jaguar Summer Festival took place at Bicester Heritage Centre this year. Originally this was planned for May at Blenheim Palace, but as we all know, COVID got in the way. Despite initial disappointment that it wouldn't be held in the beautiful grounds of Blenheim Palace, Bicester Heritage centre proved to be a more than suitable alternative.

Margaret and I planned to arrive as early as possible to grab a good spot for the Aristocat Owners Register Gazebo.



# What's going on?

To answer that question has been like this; too much and not a lot. Why is that? I have been lucky and still been able to work but it is very difficult, so that's the "too much". 'Not a lot' is the ability to be able to motivate myself with all of the projects going on.

So the projects being the cars as they are still the main projects. The Aristocat was laid up under a car cover over the winter and when it was time to get it going again the weather made it difficult. It really is fun to drive but it is what I call a cold car as the heater is not great and the soft top draughty. However we have been able to use it a couple of times, one of those outings was to the JEC Summer Festival on 4<sup>th</sup> July at Bicester. This was a great venue and really good to see so many Jags in one place.

The Aristocat gazebo had been erected with a banner so it made a great gathering point so that without this it they would have

been very difficult to find.

It was really interesting to see the other 'Cats' and what their owners had achieved; some were really outstanding.

My 'Cat' needed work to recommission it and with all the modification I have made to the cooling it was interesting to see other solutions. The system works well but as always it could be better. I would like to cool the oil better but this means changing filter adaptor plate, filter etc. I seem to remember years ago that a company marketed a rap around oil sump cooler. A set of fins that were attached to the sump and the air passing over them gave additional cooling. Simple and easy but probably not as effective as a modern oil cooling system. Does anyone know of such a product?

Following the visit to Bicester I have had alternator issues.

Basically the alternator stopped working but fortunately near home. The V belt was slack and had seen better days so I tightened it but still there was no charging. Having got the spare alternator out and fitted it charged for a while then stopped. As the belt wasn't very good I ordered one from ebay.

Why is it you have to give the vehicle registration number to find a part. Halfords do not stock V belts anymore, Eurocar Parts and GFS systems only work using vehicle registration numbers. Even if you know the width and length of the belt they are no help. So with the new one from ebay fitted and adjusted correctly the alternator is working fine. Do I repair the other one, I think not, as the parts are approx. £25 and a new uprated alternator with pulley and fan £50 and with 2 years warranty. What a throw away society we have become.

- John Knight

## EU rule changes

If you are considering trailering a car into Europe, it is going to be more difficult and expensive from now on following the UK's departure from the EU.

For those of you in the past who took racing cars on trailers into Europe, it was necessary to have a Carnet, and it also involved paying

a bond and it is back! Any car leaving the ferry under its own steam will be fine, but any vehicle on a trailer will be treated as "goods."

This will incur extra paperwork and the refundable bond, which is expected to be 40% of the value of the car on the trailer, when you

enter Continental Europe. It, thus sounds like a no-no for any expensive historic race or classic car!

Discussions and legal implications are still being worked out, but it isn't expected that a solution is to be found quickly.

- Carolyn Taylor

# Always a racer

Anthony Taylor at last back out on the circuit after shoulder surgery in the Jaguar Drivers' Club 4 Hills & a Sprint. Where he was pipped on the last run by 0.6 by Geoff Mansfield in his Kougouar. The picture was taken to appreciate Carolyn's colour matching her scarf to the bike!

At the first round, at the Aintree Circuit, Anthony was deemed not recovered enough, and he gave his Aristocat entry to his younger brother Phil who came second, being beaten by a Jaguar XK8.



We would love to see some more 'Cat' Drivers join this great series,

with plenty of gamesmanship in the paddock. - Carolyn Taylor

## Tyres!

When viewing "Betty" at the dealers I was informed although the tyres were cheap and had done very little mileage, it maybe a good idea to change them. When a dealer advises this whilst trying to do a deal, it must be very important and taken on board. After purchasing "Betty" I found out who built her, Chris our Editor, who backed up what the dealer had said. Chris said he bought the best cheapest tyres he could find just to get "Betty" on the road, with the intention of upgrading them at a later date. The tyres he fitted were Value Choice 205 /70 R15H (96). Once again after emailing Anthony Taylor about the hard ride, he advised about tyre pressures and to upgrade as this

would make a big difference. Anthony recommended using Vredestein tyres type Sportrac 5 size being 225 /60 15 96V. Now after many phone calls and emails trying to find a dealer who stocks them, I had no joy, so I then made contact with the manufacturer who informed me that range of tyres is now discontinued. Before I part with my money it would be great to hear from anyone as to the tyres which are used on their Aristocats and why.

I am looking for a tyre which improves the comfort of the ride, has good stopping power, good on fuel and road holding, which the Vredestein's did have all of this and more. - Pete & Judi Thurlow

## Bargains

Autotune have a quantity of part rolls of leathercloth. These are in various colours, various types and various lengths and are all of excellent quality.

If anyone is looking for these materials to help trim their car, please give me a ring and hopefully we can help you with whatever you need.

We also have a roll of red car carpet purchased for a customer and not used.

All of these items are available at very realistic prices.

- Carolyn Taylor



# 4th July Aristocat picture gallery

We enjoyed a superb day out at the Jaguar Summer Festival at Bicester, and just to say a special thanks to Martin for setting up the Aristocat Register trip out, and Chris for assisting with contacts.

The advantage of having the gazebo was immense! And it made it great fun to sit around together and generally chat and have a good laugh.



The mob

It was good to get a copy of the note from John Knight, and good for builders to see other cars, and discuss what to do and what not to do.



Gerard Hickey from Rotherham and his recently passed IVA 'Cat' what a great looking car

We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and were pleased to see such a good turnout. Thanks to all who came.



The line up

Hope you had decent runs home; we had a good trip north but went through two bands of black cloud that absolutely sheeted it down so we now have a very clean car.



Very nice set of badges



Bill Boyd leaving chauffeur driven by his son David



Pete & Judi Thurlow's 'Betty'

Dave Telling left with no hood to return to Dorset, a very brave man.



Whose car was this?



Paul & Fiona Cooper's lovely black Aristocat



The line up

Keith Turner had another long drive back to South Wales, but they are always up for everything, and everything is in their boot; desperate as ever to get back over to France and drive.



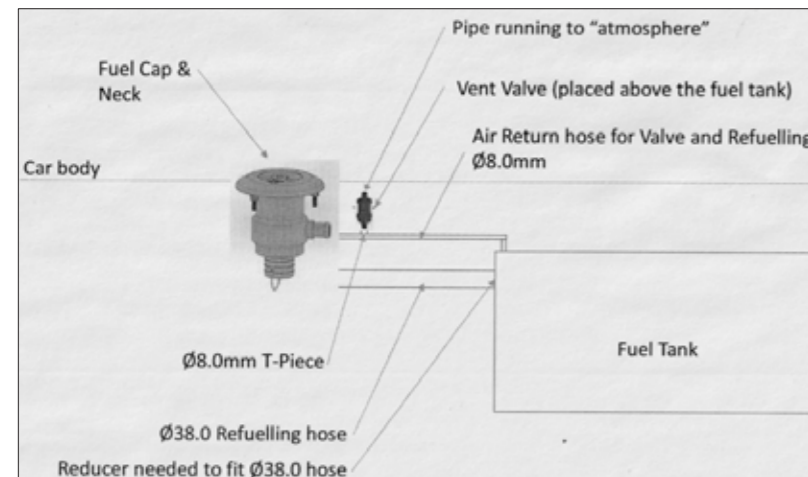
Martin Webb's superb 'Cat'

We will have to make getting together like this as an annual event and hopefully get more and more Aristocats out on display to show other car enthusiasts what a great kit car the Aristocat is; and hopefully encourage some new builders into the fold.

- Carolyn Taylor



# Tinkering



Being new Cat owners there are a few things that Pete has been tinkering with.

We had problems with the petrol filler, although we were made aware of this when we purchased her, we were told that this would be sorted. The distance from the filler cap to the petrol tank is very short and has a 90-degree bend. This is the first problem. After speaking to Anthony, he said this is the only place you can have the filler cap if you have a removable roof and it will be slow filling her up because of it. I could understand this but it was a problem as 30 mins. to fill her was a bit much! He advised that it could be the non-return valve being the problem.

The car went back to the dealer to sort this out and other small problems. The car was returned and the dealer said the filling problem was now sorted. Due to ongoing illness, I was unable to get

out in her for some time, when I did the first trip was a visit to the petrol station and I filled her up with a full tank. This was much better and only took 10/15mins. (better than 30). About a mile down the road I could smell petrol and in the mirror I could see a trail of petrol on the road that was behind us. Now with a very hot engine with petrol following us, I just kept driving until it was not a continues line following us.

I then pulled over and discovered the petrol had been coming from the tank breather pipe and out from the back of the car. After investigation I found a non-return valve that was fitted in the tank breather line. I took this apart thinking a bit of crap may have been the cause of the problem and stopping the valve doing its job. But low and behold the valve was empty. No ball valve inside. This is why it was easy to fill her up. Petrol going in air coming out the breather.

All I wanted to do was put petrol into the tank without causing a problem and also keeping the petrol in the tank. I then decide to sort this problem out myself. The filler neck had to stay as it was for the time being. I will look at this at some point in time. I spoke with Anthony again and he said the tank should be fitted with a valve that is attached to the top of the petrol tank but I am unable to get to that and I would have to remove the tank to replace it. So, after a bit of time and advice I decided to fit a new inline valve, but like most things it's not that simple. The valve needed to be above the top of the tank. It would let air out as the petrol went into the tank and keep the petrol in the place it needed to be. I had to buy a new non return valve and also a new petrol cap and filler neck so it would work which after a bit of head scratching it is now working much better and now I am able to fill the tank up in about 5mins. If I had the time, I would have removed the tank and replaced the valve which is meant to be attached to the top of the tank. I think as Anthony said the valve is the problem.

When she comes off the road next year, I intend to get the tank out sort the valve which is attached to the top of the tank and have a look to see if the filler and neck can be moved to better place to make it quicker still on filling her up.

- Pete & Judi Thurlow

# New K&N air filters



Original fabricated plenum air box

Whilst at the show in Bicester Anthony looked under the bonnet of my 'Cat' and mentioned about getting better air flow to the carbs.

Before I purchased "Betty", she had a specially fabricated plenum air box which linked to a carbon fibre canister air filter. This didn't look to good to me so the dealer suggested this be changed for neater pancake filters which he undertook before "Betty" was delivered to me. I hadn't been too happy with them as I thought the filters should have been larger. A few days later Anthony kindly called me and advised on bigger SU filters to give a better air flow. After a lot of head scratching trying to work out which SU carbs I had, I tried to find the filters he advised, only to be told SU no longer make that air filter anymore and it was then recommended by a supplier to use K&N filters. I did want the SU filters as the chrome front was embossed with the SU logo this looked more authentic, but not to worry. Many years back one of the Harleys I had at the time did have a SU carb with the SU air filter and looked great.



Air filters supplied by dealer

The purchase of K&N air filters was made and delivered and I removed the old pancakes. On inspection I noticed the filters were not completely round. The bottom of the filters had been pulled up and partly covered the main hole into the carb.

I am not sure if it was meant to be like this to make it run better or overtime the filter was pulled up with the force of air being drawn into the carbs. The filters I must say are the flimsy and very cheap. This will be a mystery to me.

So, the new K&Ns are fitted, look good and I now just need to do a thorough road test and make adjustments if necessary.

- Pete & Judi Thurlow



Newly fitted K&N air filters

## Selling

If any of you ever consider selling your beloved Aristocat, please do let Carolyn at Autotune know.

She is occasionally asked for complete, or part completed cars, by customers who want to join the exclusive Aristocat owners club, but do not wish to build a full kit themselves.

Hopefully Carolyn can put A in touch with B, helping ease of sale for both existing and future Aristocat owners! - Richard Taylor

## Motorsport

A brilliant picture from the newest Northern Event. The Jaguar Drivers' Club used it as a round of their 4 Hills & a Sprint, sponsored by Autotune Ltd. A very fast, mile of Pennine road complete with massive straw bale chicanes and a 90 degree left hander with a fast straight to the finish. Wow; not for the faint-hearted!



Fortunately all back in one piece so we are all happy, with no heroics at this event

- Carolyn Taylor

# Holidays at home this year

Normally we would have taken our Aristocat to France or Italy for our Summer holidays but this year and 12 days after attending the Jaguar Summer Festival at Bicester Heritage Centre we had a fortnight in North Devon planned.

Fiona and I plan to retire “somewhere in the area” next year so decided to carry out a recce of the surrounds. It also meant that, being the UK, we had to pack for three seasons, but we’re now pretty adept at fitting bags in the car, using every available bit of space. This time, however, I had taken up Amateur Radio at the start of Covid, a hobby similar to the work I carried out in the Royal Corps of Signals back in the 70’s.



We had to include a 10 metre collapsible radio mast, transceiver, cables and various bits of ancillary radio equipment. Fortunately, we carried out a test run so worked out exactly what space we needed and were glad we were in the Aristocat rather than a similar looking, but less roomy, vehicle. The mast fitted behind the back seats with one large bag, the other bag filling the boot. Unfortunately Fiona was forced to cut back on her wardrobe to only three changes of clothes a day in order to accommodate the equipment I deemed as essential. I was informed of this sacrifice, many, many times during the two weeks.

The weather couldn’t have been better on the way down for the first week, with the farmer and family at Pillhead Farm, Bideford, being very accommodating with regards to both the car and the radio mast. Fiona was particularly impressed with the outside heated swimming pool and made a lot of use of it in the first week whilst I contacted other Radio Hams around the world.

We put a few miles on the Aristocat exploring the area but did notice that in the majority of the South West, A-roads appear to be the size of B-Roads and B-roads being just single tracks with very small passing points for oncoming traffic, some of them massive tractors pulling lethal-looking agricultural contraptions behind.



The other drawback venturing along some of the narrower lanes were the stones and grass growing down the middle of the more rural lanes hiding the actual height of the tarmac which on the odd occasion caught on the exhaust. This made for very slow drives, nerves a tad frayed, but fortunately without damage.

We can thoroughly recommend the scenery, a mix of fab. beaches, rugged coastline and beautiful countryside. We enjoyed Hartland Quay and a drive across Exmoor to Lynton and Linmouth, and had no problems navigating the infamous Porlock Hill, both up and down.



Once again, the Aristocat behaved impeccably, and although the drive home included some heavy rain and a lengthy traffic jam, we were glad we had the Aristocat to take on holiday. - **Paul & Fiona Cooper**