

THE XK SPIRIT

THE ARISTOCAT REGISTER MAGAZINE



What a Beauty!

Spring 2023



Aristocat build update P4



Happy new owners report P9



Of a time P10

ENGINE NOTES

EDITORIAL

Having been born at the end of the 2nd World War, growing up as a young person was very different to what youngsters experience today. Food was rationed and any commodities that one could afford or desire weren't available. In the age that we now live, life is so very different with so much choice and opportunity. Back then we experienced four fairly different seasons through Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Now due to a number of factors including climate change, these fairly defined seasons are so much more unpredictable as they were those many years ago.

As I write this piece the Spring season is upon us and due to climate change the garden is full of early crocuses and daffodils. I'm sure for those of you who are building Aristocats being able to get on with the job without several layers of clothing to keep you warm is a welcome change. Also for you lucky owners it's time to blow out those bugs and cobwebs

that always seem to accumulate and crack on with servicing, MOT's plus the many little jobs and updates that you have been planning in the winter months.

As you would have read in the Winter edition last year Martin Webb has given up the Chair of 'The XK Spirit', and the baton has been picked up by longstanding member Gerard Hickey. We are so thankful that Gerard has taken on the task, particularly that at present Gerard and his wife Colette have been hit by the dreaded Covid disease over past weeks. They are currently clear with negative tests but are still very low on energy.

Having spoken with Gerard yesterday, he has kindly written his introduction peace together with some pictures of his beautiful Aristocat. We hope and pray you both will be back to full health over the coming weeks so that you can be getting out and about enjoying your 'Cat' as many events will be opening up soon.

We have highlighted three major events happening this coming June and July. It would be great to meet up with many of our members this year so would you please let Carolyn, Gerard or myself know as soon as possible if you are planning to be at any of these events. If we are to attend as a club, not only do we have to book and often pay for space to attend, but personnel to run these events are also needed. The good news is that we often have a number of free entry tickets that are available.

In closing I'm reminded that in 2004 Adrian Flux Insurance agreed to sponsor our magazine but also offer preferential rates to all our club members. This sponsorship has continued year on year and they have kindly agreed to continue in 2023. We are extremely grateful for their financial contribution over these 10 years of sponsorship. This has meant that the current yearly membership fees have not increased for 10 years; THANKYOU Adrian Flux.

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DRIVER'S SEAT

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN



I would like to introduce myself; my name is Gerard Hickey and I have been asked to take over the Chairmanship of 'The XK Spirit' for which I am very pleased to do.

The first thing I would like to do is thank Martin for all his work and efforts in the many years he has been Chairman.

I had always wanted to build my own car so when I retired 3 years ago and then covid hit us all. This was the perfect time to start a project like a car build. I have always driven and loved Jaguars so I decided to build an Aristocat. It took me about 18 months with a lot of help from the Taylors.



Anthony, Carolyn and Richard could not have been more helpful in both sourcing parts needed and ongoing technical help. As you can see in the photograph my niece used the car for her wedding, it certainly attracted a lot of

attention both on the drive down to Devon from Yorkshire and at the wedding itself. On our journey we stopped for petrol and met a guy at the filling station that used to race XK120s in Le Mans back in the 1950s. He gave me a great tip to keep the side screens fastened to the soft top; nothing over complicated just Velcro and it works a treat!

Like us all, now the weather is starting to pick up I am looking forward to getting my 'Cat' out of the garage and hopefully meet you all at the various events that are scheduled this year.

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Aristocat build update

My Aristocat build may well turn out to be the longest in history. The following photos show its current status.

It came out of the garage under its own power in April 2022 setting a new course record for distance travelled of getting on for 15 yards. The previous record dated back to 2016, when it did a couple of journeys of about 5 yards down the drive and back. Still, at least I know for sure that first and reverse gears work.

The project began in (ahem) 2003, when I bought the donor (a 76,000 mile 1986 XJ6 Series III) in Anglesey and drove it back home to Malvern. As it still had an Mot and was taxed, I drove it around for a couple of months during which I rather fell under its spell; so I had to steel myself for what seemed like an act of vandalism when I came to dismantle it.

Regarding the (positively geological) timescale of the project, the case for the defence (!) goes something like this: in 2003, I had a fairly major back garden project going on and I promised my wife, Jan, that the Aristocat project would be the last thing I did in my free time rather than the garden, so it was several years before I could focus on it properly (just doing some virtue-signalling here). My second excuse is that from 2013, I was working away from home, which still leaves the



approx. 7 year period from about 2006 to 2013 for which I haven't yet devised a plausible explanation. On reflection, heeding Anthony's advice to get the thing on the road and worry about the "frills" later would have been a good plan. Never mind, I managed to retire recently, so the rate of progress should improve.

The position on retiring was that the car was "tarped" down outside on a gravel apron by the drive because the garage roof needed replacing. I'd noted that the o/s/f brake caliper was binding when (months previously) I'd driven it out and I decided to fix the problem before attempting to drive it back. Sparing everyone the details, this has developed into an epic tale. Suffice to say that the front calipers are now working fine, but I currently await the delivery of a new master cylinder. In short, most of what I've done since retiring has been "rework".

As we all know, building cars is like pushing water uphill. We're doing this for fun, right?

Once I get the car back into the garage, my intention is to complete "nailing" the bodywork down to the chassis, having spent the usual eternity getting the door shut-lines and the wing-lines right; where 'right' means something I can (reluctantly) put up with. After that, the focus will shift to buying the lights, fitting them and tidying up some of the wiring. This activity will probably include refurbishing and fitting the dash. The heater is already fitted and plumbed in, but I still need to fit the trunking and dash vents. I will then attempt to fit the split windscreen and the windscreen wiper mechanism. My hope is that I will not have to remove the front body section to achieve this. We'll see. I'll hopefully then be able to turn my attention to fitting the brightwork and the interior.

I suppose I'll have to make some sort of decision about a soft top. If possible, I might consider trying to get through IVA without one. Well, that's the "30,000 ft" view. What could possibly go wrong?

I have to admit that I've spent a ridiculous amount of time trying to work out how to do the rear lights in an IVA-compliant way without fitting the large GRP lighting pods now supplied by Autotune with the bodywork package, and I believe that I have a solution. I'll now describe the details as they may well be of interest to other Aristocat builders and also because I want to invite comment in case I've missed something.

My understanding of the background to this (rear lights) situation is that IVA will not now permit the fitting of (typically) hemispherical side, stop or indicator lamps on the sloping rear surfaces of the Aristocat bodywork (E-marked or otherwise); they have to be mounted on a rear-facing surface; hence the new lighting pods. My intention is to fit the circular LED stop/tail/indicator light combination detailed in the following (web page) image.

As the photo shows, these lamps are only 80 mm in diameter and should (just) fit in the top of the standard Autotune lighting pods, which can then be cut back (possibly challenging, I admit, but ultimately doable).



This will radically reduce their height and aesthetic impact on the rear of the Aristocat. Further information is available at <https://www.bikermart.co.uk/LED-Stop-Tail-Light-and-Indicators-for-Quad-ATV-Buggy>.

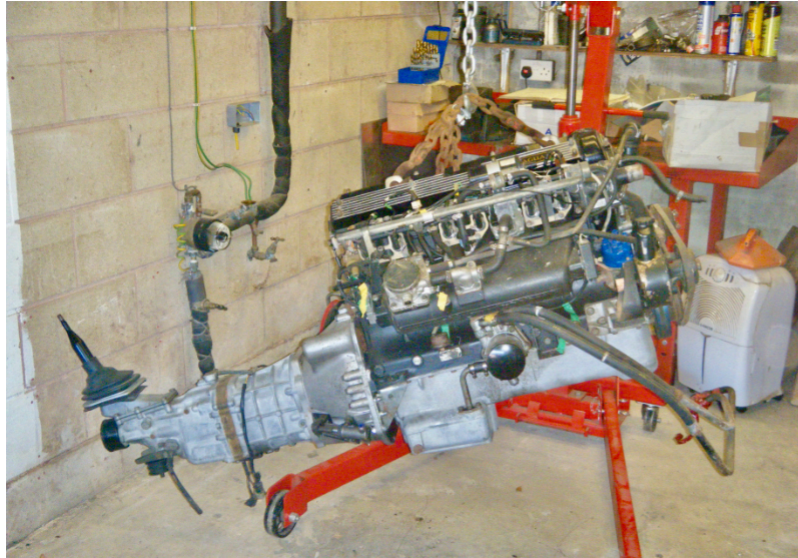
Regarding these lights, I reckon that the following points are relevant. They are approved for car use and more specifically, they are approved under ECE R6 & R7 for use (respectively) as stop/tail lights and indicator lights. In short, they're E-marked. Having spoken with the vendor, the edges are smoothed and should not fall foul of the IVA 2.5 mm minimum radius requirement. Although the photo shows the centre indicator section of these lights to be white, apparently it changes to amber on activation. The vendor also recommends that the front indicators should also be LED to avoid potential problems with the flashing rate. I still haven't chosen a front indicator yet, but there's plenty out there.

The vendor also recommends changing the flasher relay for one that will work satisfactorily with the lower current demanded by the LED lights. It looks as if a 4 pin relay will be required, but I'm still working out the details which is a solvable problem.

I would prefer to mount these lights in the XK120 like GRP mouldings sold by Autotune, but Richard tells me that the maximum light diameter that these can accommodate is 73mm. Any chance of a design revision that will accommodate 80mm diameter lights, Richard?

Moving on, I thought I'd spare everyone a blow-by-blow account of the build to date, and describe only the unusual features of which there are a couple.

The first is that the build incorporates a modern 5 speed Toyota W58 gearbox, mated to the XK engine via one of Realm Engineering's adaptor kits.



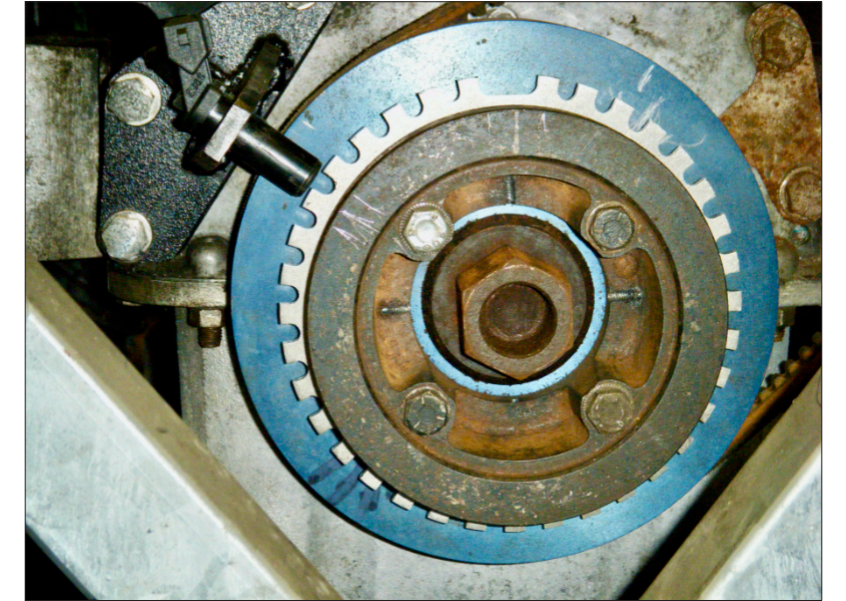
I may consider ditching the Lucas/Bosch L-Jetronic fuel injection system (with its restrictive mass airflow meter) and installing a system based on the Jenvey fuel injection throttle bodies (etc.) but I'm getting well ahead of myself here!

I should acknowledge at the outset, that thinking about an EMS is a distraction which has delayed getting the car on the road. Nonetheless, once I realised the shortcomings of conventional mechanical ignition advance/retard systems, I couldn't help myself. More specifically, the idea that a collection of springs and weights (and a diaphragm operated vacuum advance plate) could optimise the ignition timings over all combinations of engine load and speed is, to my mind, "optimistic". All this was largely based on reading the literature of Roach Classics (<https://roachclassics.co.uk/>) and an article in Jaguar World Monthly from November 2006 (page 49) which reviewed the Roach ignition management system when fitted to a brace of E Types (S1 & S2).

With the foregoing in mind, I found myself talking with David Hampshire of Canems EMS Ltd (<https://www.canems.co.uk>) at Stoneleigh in 2009. Cutting to the chase, I subsequently decided to buy a Canems ECU kit and to make the necessary provisions to fit the required input sensors (for ignition

mapping) during the build. The "required input sensors" were a MAP (Manifold Absolute Pressure) sensor and a crank speed sensor. The latter is a Ford Fiesta item, as shown in the photo, along with its associated toothed trigger wheel.

It was necessary to fabricate the custom speed sensor mounting and to machine-out the centre of the trigger wheel (a universal item supplied by Canems) to a correct diameter to fit it. In addition a steel ring was machined up, with appropriate fixing holes to facilitate securing of the trigger wheel to the crank pulley at a suitable axial position for sensor triggering. The MAP sensor is mounted at the rear of the standard (Series III) XJ6 plenum chamber and is plumbed-in to the inlet manifold vacuum tubing. Unfortunately, I didn't take a photo of it. The Canems system is a "lost-spark" system (i.e. we get a spark on both the power and exhaust strokes). To avoid coil overheating and difficulties with coil recovery time, one coil per cylinder is supported. In this case, a coil pack from a six cylinder Vauxhall will be used. The Canems ECU comes with pre-loaded settings for the target engine as a baseline to get going with, but rolling road time will be required to properly optimise the mapping. It also comes with a USB interface to a PC and the PC software to support the mapping process as well as a semi-assembled wiring loom.



From what I read, it would be reasonable to expect an improvement in mid-range torque of between 10 and 25% along with a significant improvement in fuel consumption. Obviously, all this stuff about the EMS amounts to "talking a good game" as I haven't actually got it going yet. Nor will I attempt to do so this side of IVA.

To avoid the temptation to tinker (and to preserve the new components), I've removed the crank speed sensor setup for now. If there's sufficient interest, I'll aim to report back on how the ignition mapping effort goes at some point in the future. In the meantime, happy Aristocat building (and driving!) to all. **- Pete Scarrott**



◀ The photo above shows the assembled gearbox/engine combination ready for installation.

The rationale for using the Toyota box is that it's slick, bombproof, easily available, fully "synchroed" and about 30-40lbs lighter than a Moss box with an overdrive unit. I'm told that the Jag racing fraternity often use them and they apparently don't break many. I came across a Toyota dealership store-man who was importing several of these boxes per month and selling them on into the drag racing world. They also provide a proven gearbox solution for Realm's C Type, D Type & XKSS kits.

3.0 litre (non-turbo) Toyota Supras from 1986-92 have W58 gearboxes and mine came from a 1991/92 car. The bell-housing, flywheel and clutch cover are S Type Jag and the clutch plate is part of the Realm kit. I also bought a custom-made

Toyota to Jag prop-shaft, which looks, to my eye, to have a lot less rotational inertia than the modified XJ6 item would have. The Realm kit also includes a Toyota to Jag speedo adaptor cable. Unfortunately, this would not work with the Series III XJ6's electronic speedo, so a custom adaptor made by Speedy Cables has been inserted between the gearbox and the Jag mechanical/electronic speedo transducer. This may mean that I'll have to look at speedo recalibration prior to IVA, although I suspect not. Unrelated to the gearbox conversion, a modern high-torque starter motor (from SNG Barratt) has also been fitted, which works very effectively.

The second "unusual" feature is that provision has been made for the installation of an EMS (Engine Management System) after IVA. The current limit of the ambition is to map the ignition. If that works out,

Jaguar clubs

The Aristocat Register has not been as active as it used to be. That is to say, in the earlier days when kit/replica/evocations, call them what you will, were still new to many people who were interested in cars, or leisure pursuits. Thus there were more Shows, Track Days for the Kit industry and its followers. Castle Combe Track Days were such fun; lots of Aristocat owners, our race car JSV for fast laps and people even paying Anthony to give them a fast track lap or two!! Then Chairman, David Edwards and wife Judith, would help me to get a good buffet and a Jacob's Join going (*a meal or event where each of the guests contributes a dish*), with a few (limited of course) bottles of fizz just to make it fun. Times have changed.

I think the Bicester, joint Jaguar Drivers' Club and Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club was the latest of the Aristocat days out. A big thanks to Martin and Margaret Webb, our recently retired Chairman, who brought the gazebo and organised the space. That was good to get out and meet up. Again in November of last year, Martin organised for the Aristocat Register to have a free (yes really; free) stand at the NEC Car and Classic Show. That too, was great fun. We manned the stand, on one of the days, as you will have seen in a previous article, and I was delighted to meet some new Aristocat owners, who we didn't



know. As time moves on, so cars also move on to new homes. Gerard Hickey, new Chairman and Ian Bale also helped to chat to interested members of the public passing through. And yes, amazingly, some of these dyed in the wool, classic car owners did not know of the Aristocat, and were very interested to look through a Build Manual and view pictures on the poster. We met up with Martin and Margaret on the Friday evening and had dinner. If a few more people planned on being at the NEC Classic Motor Show this year, do we go? The dates for this year are 10th to 12th November. Please consider being there and let me know asap as we have to plan and commit many months in advance. Then we could all go out and have dinner, booked well in advance at our new find Hotel, not too far from the NEC. A certain number of tickets are given to us free of charge to get in to the Show if you pre-register, although

parking is not free. But, there is a lot to see, and we have not been to such a Show for years, but really enjoyed it. Even Richard Taylor went down on Sunday last year to impart his immense mechanical knowledge who all who needed it.

So to continue with the Club theme. Possibly not all our owners are aware that the two main Jaguar Clubs; Jaguar Drivers' Club and Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club will make you very welcome if you care to join, one, the other or both. Many people are in both and their monthly magazines are excellent quality and value for the cost of the membership. There are dedicated pages to Replica and Specials, and articles are always welcomed by them for their magazines, as long as you are a member. They also have regional sections, and you could google and find out who and which is nearest to where you live. And, in case you had not noticed, we are part of a

great fun motor sporting Sprint and Hillclimb section of the Drivers' Club, even sponsoring the event trophies. All good fun and more gamesmanship in the paddock with those that got to win stuff (well, there is one, no names mentioned, but I don't think he will read this). Plus, if you are a JDC member you can enter in any car you wish as it does not have to be a Jaguar. We just want to have a day out and fun. Picture is my day of silly hats to entertain our Racing Secretary who was ill and could not attend.

The main Clubs organise much bigger events, and so if you are



looking to use your car and go off on a GB Tour or a trip to Germany or wherever; then you will find these are brilliantly organised. If you google the Clubs, they will show you where the regional meeting points are, or phone me

and I will endeavour to help you. Must go as I'm just getting ready to go to our local Jag Drivers' Club Sunday lunch out, with Area 18.

- Carolyn Taylor

Happy new owners report

My son and I purchased this Aristocat in June of last year with the help of Carolyn Taylor. The Aristocat was in a very poor state due to being laid up for three years over the Covid period. She had a number of issues to be sorted out including new hoses, ignition problems, fuel pump and regulator. Happily now she's been tuned up and is running very sweetly. We went to her first classic car meet in January and she was much admired by many attendees. Our 'Cat' is now getting regular use and we are planning to visit more shows this spring and summer and hopefully we'll bump into some other jag owners.

- Andrew Fynan



Of a time

I have chosen to live in the relative tranquillity of Galloway, a forgotten region of Scotland, where the past still has meaning. Which means there is very little here that supports owners of dated cars. Time was for those of us that are of a certain age, the car we bought took us to work and on the odd occasion provided for the soirée into the country or down the pub, heaven forbid.

In the boot was a hammer, a screwdriver and a shifting spanner! Only techno boffins had in the garage, a workshop manual and a proper set of spanners when the spark plugs needed cleaning or the wheels switching to save uneven wear; though even that was advanced mechanics for the majority.

But they were happy days, or so fading memories would have us believe. I recall a dear friend who would religiously remove accessible bits from his Franni Barnet every weekend to clean them. Replacing the parts was a simple reversal exercise, though for the most part there would be at least one part left over in his tobacco tin!



Each time he would see if the bike started and if so, then the part was re-designated 'spares' and appropriately stored somewhere in another tin, there to be lost, forgotten and in time disposed of.

It has something to do with aging, I believe it's called senility, that caused me to indulge myself, after a lifetime of hard work, to treat myself by trying to recapture those clear memories of fun filled motoring. I bought a classic car!

My first encounter was a 1948 Rover P3 Sport and yes, it has the dreaded Solex carburettors. The impending anxiety of waiting, with each excursion, for a loss of power caused by an over complicated system of fuel delivery might have educated an otherwise sensible decision maker. In me though this is clearly a lost trait, because I have recently procured a beautiful Jaguar XK120 simulation (Replica to the purist).

Why on earth would someone, of an otherwise rational disposition, do to oneself such obvious self-abuse. Particularly as I still have the Rover languishing in the garage for want of mechanical knowledge and experience. I'm blaming nobody but myself for buying into my lifelong dream that I would one day own the coveted British icon, though I'm bug****d if I'll pay £100k+ for a real one!

Extensive research of the entire region of SW Scotland has revealed, there is nobody left other than those with a thingy that they plug into a gizmo that tells them which other electric whasit they need to unplug and replace!



Even the two nearest Jaguar dealers of Ayr, who were not helpful, unlike the Carlisle dealer who at least made an effort, by introducing me to Kenneth Jardine of JEC Soleway region.

My beautiful British racing green Aristocat Jaguar XK120 replica with its 4.2 engine and triple carbs that won't balance, now sits idle alongside the equally lovely Rover awaiting someone's attention who possesses more knowledge and experience than I have. I live in hope that someone out there might just take pity that will provide either support or a

contact. I have consoled myself though, as I am now searching for something of an earlier vintage that requires none of the aged and sadly lost skillset. I thought perhaps a velocipede, or a pedalow with of course, solid tyres!

- John Jennings

Autotune has a further update:

We love the piece from John Jennings of Galloway, and are only too pleased to report on the update to his woes with the car. He bought the car which had been on the road but needed recommissioning after 6 years of hibernation.

Email from John to Anthony Taylor:

I noted all of your advice regarding the serious back-fire and poor idle running. I have been through the process of testing again of the timing, the ignition fuel delivery, air leaks and spark plugs. With the replacement washers to the fuel reservoir that lets them breathe as the last job. I started her up yesterday and she purred. I was able for the first time to take the car up and down the road. What a new year treat. Thank you Anthony for your patience and support. I will now sort out some of the electrics and at least now, with thanks to you, I can get the MOT done and go out to play with my new toy.

Anthony's reply:

At Autotune we are always pleased to help those with issues when buying a pre-built vehicle as well as those who are in the process of building. We always do our best with diagnostics by remote control if possible.

Autotune out and about

Anthony and Carolyn Taylor, manufacturers of the Aristocat, attended the Annual Trade Lunch celebrating all that is "Made in Lancashire". East Lancs. Chamber of Trade host the event to all those who they have helped with export documentation over the year. To top the Lunch they won a fabulous gift of a delivery of cocktail mixers and enjoyed a very alcoholic evening in with their friends.



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INDOOR BOOKING PAGE 3, OUTDOOR BOOKING PAGE 5 & MAP PAGES 7 - 8

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Please advise us in the next couple of weeks if you are planning to attend any of these events!