



Modern XK Forum

The place for all things XK8, XKR & New XK

Co-ordinator: Mike Horlor
Email: modernxk.jec@gmail.com

Vehicle Registrar: Allan Jones

Forum Events/Tours Team: Jim Mann

Technical Advisers: XJK Independent Jaguar Specialists (Gavin Jones/Ian Kelsall)

Email: workshop@xjkltd.co.uk

Bodywork/Paintwork Adviser: Keith Parrington - Email: keith.parrington@jec.org.uk



Sharing the Passion

Mike Horlor's update

This month Mike reminds us of forthcoming events and introduces some interesting articles



First a reminder to book your place on our Norfolk Nobility scenic run for all modern XK owners. The run will take place on Sunday 21st May starting from the Premier Inn at Kings Lynn. As usual, we can look forward to some excellent motoring on roads picked out for us by an expert with local knowledge of the most interesting places to visit. The clue is in the name so expect to see some of Norfolk's finest historical houses and beautiful scenery on the way to a good pub lunch.

For those travelling from afar, why not

consider stopping at the Premier Inn on Saturday evening (although other hotels are available), and joining us for dinner and a good old chinwag? Interested in dinner or the run? If you haven't already done so, send an email (to modernxk@gmail.com) with your names (driver and passenger), mobile phone number, and car details (model, colour, registration number) to register your interest. Please book early to avoid disappointment. Entry numbers will be limited. Apart from accommodation, food and fuel, the only charge will be £1 per car to cover the cost of the licence for the event (an MSA exemption certificate).

Norfolk will be an exciting new location

for one of these events. If you have joined us on previous runs, welcome back. If you haven't, why not take this opportunity to mingle with fellow modern XK owners?

After February's article on the dramatic Zephijy, Chris Dixon has written to alert us to another major transformation of an XKR. One of the classic car magazines has featured an XKR floorpan being grafted onto a Ford Cortina Mark III bodyshell! Designed to appear relatively standard when viewed from a distance, this car too promises to be a very different iteration of Jaguar's XKR. As yet unfinished, look out for this XKR-based project at classic Ford events this summer.

For those members travelling this month to the 'Big One', make sure you introduce yourselves in Leon. Quite apart from enjoying the event, we should be able to put on quite a spectacular Forum display for the public to savour at this historic location.

Last month our Editor had to unfortunately cut back our page content due to pressure on space, but we are back to normal this month. We start with a guide to basic servicing of the X-150 models, a humorous guide to accessing your X-150 glovebox and then Steve Smith takes us through his Jaguar history, the purchase of his beloved XK8 and some all too common body repairs to his steel bodied model. With some cars over 20 years of age, it's inevitable that rust has become the single most important issue affecting our enjoyment of this modern classic Jaguar and Steve's story contains some useful lessons.

How secure is your glovebox?

Bob Owens sounds a warning with a keyless solution

I got home from a trip in my 55 reg XKR having put my keys for my X-type, my wallet, garage door opener fob etc. in the glovebox and having locked it with the ignition key. The glovebox would not open with all my important stuff trapped inside.

I spoke to a number of people from Jaguar garages and members of the Club and some of the suggestions ranged from: loads of WD40 and keep turning for 20 minutes; put the key in the lock and tap it with a hammer to disconnect the battery, leave for a few minutes and then reconnect. It was also suggested

I had the wrong keys for the car.

I phoned an automotive locksmith who could only suggest drilling out the barrel. To my relief my son-in-law arrived on the scene and he got his head into the footwell and decided to remove the bolts from the hinges. This released the lid but it took a little gentle persuasion to get it off. However he did it and I was very relieved to get my possessions back.

Having done all that he noticed that there were two small lugs above the actual handle and if you get a couple of small screwdrivers about 4/5 inches apart and pull them together it opened the latches. We wished that we had known about this before taking the bolts out of the hinges. Also the actual barrel lock is stand-alone, not connected to the electrics at all and therefore it would seem the valet button has no effect on it.

Apparently my glovebox lock is faulty. It will lock but won't open. The next job is to find out why the boot



If you didn't already want reminding, gloveboxes are not the most secure of places to keep valuables, but then again if you don't know how to get into one without the key, perhaps they can be!

doesn't open with the key and yes I have tried WD40! I hope this might help anyone who comes across this problem in the future.

Buying Aware, or perhaps Not So!

Steve Smith takes us through what he calls “Restored to Former Glory” or repairing corrosion damage in the rear wheelarches, wings and floors of his 2004 XK8 Coupe. (photographs courtesy of Jules Bodycraft).

Jag-less to Jag-less

The whole thing began with my late and much-missed Uncle T. You know the sort. He did everything possible to make ‘little’ me happy and supported me when (as so often) I was out of favour with the parents.

It was me who had Jaguars first, indulging a passion that had simmered for years. I think it was my 1990s metallic blue XJS that Uncle T fell in love with and approaching retirement, realised that he too could leave sensibility behind and also indulge. However, he decided to go the saloon route, thus being able to take passengers and carry larger items. His last venture was a gleaming maroon XJ8 which I much admired having been Jag-less for some time. Whenever we went out in it, I couldn’t resist teasing him by saying ‘You will leave this to me in your will, won’t you?’

Sadly, that is exactly what happened and I happily drove the beautiful cat in his memory for over twelve months, during which time I treated it to a new radiator (£1,000 fitted) and a set of transformational Pirellis (£650). The time came for the second MOT in my care and I got an anguished call from the caring local garage. The call was to say that they had some serious concerns about the structure underneath and could they call an expert to assess it? The expert contacted me and gave the grave news. It was rotten. It could be saved but at a cost around six times the vehicle’s value. The obvious choice, regardless of the sentimental attachment, was to send it for scrap. Since I was in France at that time, sadly I never got to see it again but it wasn’t a total loss. There was a return of £500 from the breakers and a Club member bought the wheels with the almost brand new Pirellis for £475. So, I was Jag-less again.

On the lookout

On my commute to work at the time I had noticed other Jaguars as one does (it used to be women!) and particularly a couple of really pretty XK8s that seemed to pass me in the opposite direction most days. I took a little time to grieve for the XJ before realising that its sad demise left me free to have an XK8! I suddenly cheered up and began researching the market. I have to be open and say that I have always had some ‘caddish’ tendencies and



Steve Smith's XK8.

during time as a musician in the RAF, as a pilot and motorcyclist, I have used opportunities to indulge cad behaviour which I now look back on with some regret and a nostalgic little smile. If my late uncle’s XJ8 was, say, a doctor’s motor (and my uncle never behaved badly, ever), then the XK8 is a cad’s car. It serves no useful purpose whatever. It is awkward to get in and out of. The rear seats are utterly useless but by jingo, it is ‘bloomin’ beautiful! I know the legend about the designer being inspired by Kate Winslet and I don’t care if it isn’t true, as it is blindingly obvious that he was!

The knowledgeable reader will be aware that I am talking of the original XK8 (X-100) with all the delicious double curves and not the later versions, where it seems some geezer with a big mallet flattened out all the curves and then ‘blinged’ it up to look like something Donald Trump would like, with the gills of a basking shark and chrome badges. Ok, we are all different and mine isn’t the only definition of good taste but for heaven’s sake, why take away that gorgeous XK120 semi-elliptic scuttle that delights me and any passenger and replace it with something from a Scania?

Any road up, as they say in the Midlands, I visited a few sellers and took a few test drives. The XKR was literally scary with its ‘kick in the back’ pick up but did I need it? It costs 10mpg to have the supercharger and believe me, if you didn’t already know, the normally aspired 4.2 litre engine has, as my tyre fitter said, “Crikey! That’s got some grunt ‘ennit?” after he spun the rear wheels on exit from the tyre bay.

Here, dear reader, I must further confess to another character flaw. That is, knowing the right way to do something. I occasionally insist on doing it the wrong way and that is how I finally bought the XK8, the subject of this story.

I had recently spent some time with an old flame that I found still burned brightly for me after many years apart, and we had behaved like teenagers in my uncle’s XJ8 despite us both being in our sixties. She was

visiting now from her home in France and we were due to have lunch before she returned. I was Jag-less and time was ticking on. The sober among us know well that one should never buy a car in a hurry or on a wet day and certainly never, even partly, to impress a lady.

With time getting short, I elected to visit a dealer north of Manchester, about 90 miles away, who had ten for me to choose from. Of these, around four met my budget and several would have left a useful amount of change. Came the day, (January 2016), it was very chilly and pouring with rain. However, lunch with the special one was the next day and something had to be done. I drove several, but kept being drawn back to the silver one with the comparatively rare charcoal trim. The blue one was rather nice and several thousand pounds cheaper but there was something about Artie (RTZ) that I really felt good with. Driving was faultless too and although the local geography precluded any fast motorway testing, the bumpy roads and hills of the locality satisfied me that there were no nasty loose items in the structure and the engine and gearbox worked properly.

Researches had made me aware that the XK8 suffers rot in the rear end and as the car was twelve years old, I did my best to spot any signs. In the pouring rain, I was somewhat aware that the paint on the rear quarters was very slightly blotchy but that could just have been the rain, couldn’t it? Anyway, the arches were smooth and there was no nasty rust in sight.

My driver had been hanging around for some hours while I played at car buying and I realised there had to be a decision. I think the right car speaks to you somehow and a deal was done so that I could drive Artie home. By the time I got back, I had gone from liking to loving and that twelve months on, is still the case. Best of all, I made it to lunch next day and the special one loved it too. ‘Result!’ as the young people say. More teenage behaviour in January sunshine, by a lake.

On-going ownership

Coming out of the house one day in April, I could have sworn there was a small brown stain on one of the rear wings. A good rub with a damp cloth got rid of it but a week later there it was again. Then another one appeared and then some small bubbles. All my fears were coming true. There was filler in there and not just metal. I watched this develop through the summer, until one day I realised the, until then, smooth rims of the arches were starting to buckle. Clearly something would have to be done. I started to think the situation through. I had the car I loved and wouldn't willingly change, as in every other way it was no less than wonderful.

I found that you can buy steel repair panels



A typical example of wheelarch corrosion that has eaten its way through the bodywork.

for the wheelarches, but finding a firm familiar with this particular job was more of a problem. Even the suppliers of panels could not easily recommend a body shop who knew the job. I spoke to the chap who had tackled my uncle's XJ8 but other commitments proved too demanding of his time, although I was tempted to wait as his quote was very affordable. More time went by and the deterioration seemed to accelerate at a compound speed. You wouldn't want to see Kate covered in unsightly sores and scabs would you?

Scouring the *Jaguar Enthusiast* magazine produced ads by a couple of likely looking firms both of whom were not too far away. Phone calls confirmed they knew the car and the problem so I decided to visit them. The first was a very swanky outfit with plenty of exotic creatures on display and being taken out for exercise. I was met by the manager, having first looked in their showroom at classics I could never hope to afford with price tags approaching a quarter of a million pounds. Walking around the workshops I was rather surprised to see E-type bodyshells having holes made up with filler.

Now, I am no bodybuilder but am only too aware that plastic and metal do not always like each other too much. Where possible, a better but more time consuming job is to bend metal, file it to fit and blend it with its surroundings, rather than lob in a lump of plastic hoping that in the future it won't decide to split up with the metal you have stuck it to. Thinking of this, I said to the very nice guys giving me the tour, "Do you still do any lead loading then?" "Oh no!" came the response, "Nobody does that now". So, we left it at that and I was promised an estimate in the next day or so. When I got it, it was eye-watering, being approximately half the value of the car. It was beginning to seem like *deja-vu* all



Rust breaking through not only the wheelarch but also the sill area.

over again! Wanting to at least be doing something to resolve the situation I meanwhile purchased some insert repair panels from a very nice chap in Scotland. More of this later.

My next call was to Jules Bodycraft at Coven in Staffordshire and not far from my aunt's place. After a chat on the phone with David Gautier in which I established that they had done the job before and knew Jaguars, we left it that I should bring the car for him to look at. About three weeks later I arrived by appointment at Jules' premises. Not so swanky as the previous establishment but workmanlike and busy. On being shown round, I was delighted to see an XKR with remedial work in progress to the undersides.

David lost no time in getting on the ground (wish I still could!) and looking around underneath and in nooks and crannies, he soon making the point that it would be well worth checking the floors as part of the job. The reason for this is that (as I have previously heard) on building the bodies, Jaguar fixed some plates to the floors to enable movement of the shells around the works. These should be removed before completion to enable full protection of the underside but in practice never were. (How could they? No wonder the Germans make such extravagant claims for their luxury cars!) This means that the resultant extra skin creates an aperture for moisture, salt and road dirt to accumulate and penetrate the skin proper, often rotting out the floors.

On initial inspection David thought



The extent of the floor damage on the offside, only really identified after removal of the carpets.

this wasn't too bad and that they should simply remove the superfluous plates and re-protect the floor. David's product knowledge was, I must say impressive. At this point, I decided to share with David that I had offered to write up the story for *Jaguar Enthusiast*. He didn't miss a beat and said he felt this could only be a good thing for Jules and of course photographs would be taken at all stages for me to have and use.

Next, I produced the steel inserts I had purchased from Scotland. David examined them and declared himself less than impressed. The double-curve contours were not accurate in his opinion, although the gauge of steel was more than adequate. Also, at £95 each they were far more expensive than the ones he would obtain which are stamped out probably from the original pattern and not as these appeared, hand cut and bent by Mk.1 eyeball.

On our initial phone chat David had said he thought the job could be done for around £2,000 plus Vat. Now after physical inspection, he revised the quote to £3,000 plus Vat although this now included the floors, provided the carpets and seats didn't need to be removed for that work. They would keep the car for two weeks to complete the work.

I decided that a 'crunch' question was to enquire about filler. The answer was, that although filler has a place and may be sparingly used, Jules Bodycraft do in fact still employ lead loading for filling metal gaps and would do so in this case. I went home to think about it.

Now, I am in business myself and in the past, have managed companies, some of which were quite large and belonged to people like Unilever. Therefore, decision-making is something I am supposed to be good at, according to my references. But, when you give your beloved Jaguar to people who, brutally, are going to cut into it with saws and welding gear, they have got you by the painful bits! They can do what they like, calling you in the middle of the night to say things like "It's not looking good" and "We don't want to tell you this but..." You can hear the cash register continually ringing to wake you, perspiring, in the small hours. So, out the window goes a lot of cool, balanced, decision-making and in comes our old mate gut feeling. An old proverb I have heard attributed to the Chinese is: "It is a wise man who looks for an honest garage and a fool who believes he has found one". Sooner or later, you can either endlessly interview people who have had work done by them or if unable to find those, trust your instincts. I decided to do the latter.

Work underway

In early November, I called David to say I had decided to give Jules the job and could he take the car in say December? His encouraging reply was yes of course and they would be pleased to. Soon after, he called me to say that due to late delivery of some parts, they had a workshop gap for two weeks from the next week and so would I like my job done earlier? Well, why not? It meant I should have my car back well before the festive season, all being well.

On delivery of the car to Jules, I was delighted to see a really spiffing red E-type V12 and a very smart Daimler XJ6 also in for work. I suppose you can assess how much I care for Artie, where for years I have just regarded vehicles as means of transport,



One of the new wheelarch lip repair panel in place.

that it was actually an uncomfortable feeling leaving her and handing over the keys. David was careful to check if the radio code was present since naturally they would be disconnecting the battery. Fortunately, it was there in the handbook. Back at home I tried not to worry and waited for David's promised call to let me know how things were going.

After a couple of days, I got a call to say that the wheelarches were underway and there was a little remedial work to be done to the inner arches, rear wings and the sills but nothing to worry about. In a day or so, they would look at the floors. In the case of the Inserts, they would like permission to obtain these parts from David Manners if possible as they would be much better than those I had obtained. At £78 they would be cheaper too. I okayed this as the most important thing is to have a perfect job and for myself I can see the necessity to get those complex curves right.

I felt I should sort out the inferior Scottish ones later! The next call was more depressing. Removal of those 'transport' plates in the floors both sides had revealed extensive corrosion which required repair and this would mean time consuming removal of carpets and seats. I suppose I could have decided to ignore these but as said before, I love the car and want to keep it. I didn't at the time have these pictures and so had to trust in David. Looking at the images now, I am so glad this was found and probably just in time too as it appears I was one step away from becoming Fred Flintstone with my feet touching the ground below the car! Whatever were Jaguar thinking of? Did John Egan (or whoever was in charge then) know about this?

The rest of the story is quite straightforward I am pleased to say. When the phone went next, it was David to say that the car would be ready that following Saturday. Really, I am supposed to work that day but I had genuinely missed Artie for the two weeks and couldn't wait to see the end result. It is worth noting that I was only aware of the need for attention to the wheelarches. It is to the credit of Jules Bodycraft that they made me aware of the urgency of remedial work to the rear sills, floors and rear wings. True, this added to the cost but what would be the price of not doing the work? In terms of the cost-effectiveness of all this work, I think I was lucky not to over-pay for the car in the first place and I believe the total expenditure now is close to the market value. However, this is academic as I don't want to sell.

When I got to the garage, there she was outside, washed, gleaming and pristine. All in all, I feel I have been well looked after and have received fair value for the money I have spent. If only that could always be said where garages are concerned!



With the extent of corrosion revealed around the sill area, repair panels were made up to fit.



Repaired floorpan area with new sound deadening applied.



Later repair work on the wheelarch, before painting.



The offside prepared ready for painting.

Final Thoughts

So, if you are thinking of buying an XK8 over say ten years old, it won't necessarily require this work. In the case of Artie, part of her life has been in Scotland and not too far from the sea. Any exposure to salty air is going to hasten corrosion unless very well protected to begin. This model is known to have a weakness in this area but is strong in others. David told me that the rear subframe is much better than others he has seen. So, when buying, try to allow about £5,000 for possible body renovations. Oh and don't forget, salt corrodes aluminium too. The variety of salt they are using on winter roads today is particularly strong, so even the post 2006 models can be susceptible. Having said all that, the XK8, XKR and derivatives are

all exceptionally beautiful cars and presently are at that point in life where earlier models are ridiculously undervalued. That will change and probably soon, so get one and enjoy it!

Thanks to **Jules Bodycraft** for the work and supply of photographs. They can be contacted at **Brewood Road, Coven, near Wolverhampton, Staffordshire.**
Tel: 01902 790320.



The final, the nearside rear wheelarch repaired, repainted and looking pristine.