

# XJ Series Forum



XJ6/XJ12 Series 1,2 & 3 Jaguar/Daimlers



Forum Co-ordinator Keith Parrington

Tel: 01323 720009 - Email: keith.parrington@jec.org.uk

Technical Advice: David Marks - Email: david@davidmarksgarages.co.uk

Bodywork/Paintwork: Keith Parrington Tel: 01323 720009 - Email: keith.parrington@jec.org.uk

## Mr Brighty's Avon Coupe restoration

Back in May, Mr Brighty wrote the background story to his purchase of BML 954T, one of only 4 Daimler Double Six Avon Convertibles. The car has now been at the XjRestorations workshops for much of 2015, and should be on the road by the time this comes to print. In this issue **Keith Parrington** provides a little detail to the restoration work that has been required. A full review of the completed car will follow in a future issue.



### Initial inspection

**H**aving already travelled up country to visit Mr Brighty and inspect the car at his premises, I had a good idea as to what was coming into the workshop. Fundamentally sound, the car had sat idle for 22 years – which brings with it standard issues. The brakes were seized and the running gear was untested.

Once in the workshop, our first task was to check that the car ran. A fresh battery saw the engine roll over quite happily, but the ignition system was dead. This is all too common with the Opus ignition on the pre-HE engines, and Mr Brighty had already stressed reliability would be key. The superb SNG Barratt replacement system was fitted without hesitation.

Whilst this was being fitted, fresh fuel tanks, fuel lines and pumps were installed – with all 12 injectors being overhauled by Steve at Mr Injector ([www.mrinjectoruk.co.uk](http://www.mrinjectoruk.co.uk)). Our priority ahead of the major restoration was to hear that V12 run.

With the works completed and an oil change, the engine rolled into glorious life. A testament to the strength of design, the V12 picked up string oil pressure instantly – maintaining it as the temperature raised to normal – and sat there quite happily. The unit was in remarkable condition. The satisfaction was only slightly marred as the radiator started to leak once at temperature. But the engine at least, was now known to run.



*For those not fully aware, the company of Avon Stevens produced these convertibles based on the XJ Series Coupes.*

### Running gear

With the engine signed off as a runner, attention turned to the suspension and brake assemblies. With each sub assembly removed from the body, these Bob Knight units are a joy to work on.

This car is to be a working car, earning its keep, so a concours detail was not on the agenda. Nonetheless, the units were stripped to component parts, washed and painted, and reassembled with all new bearings, seals, joints, brakes and

fixings. The springs and dampers were replaced in their standard form to ensure a luxury waft over a sporty tourer.

The bodyshell had already proven to be in astonishing condition, but a final check and clean off confirmed the chassis to be superb ahead of reinstallation of the sub assemblies.

### Bodywork

The Coupe is a product of 1970s British Leyland, so corrosion is guaranteed. Cutting



*The Avon in question upon arrival at XjRestorations.*



*The rear suspension overhauled and refurbished ready for re-assembly onto the car.*



*The extent of some of the corrosion work.*

the roof off a production car inviting further water ingress into a modified structure is rarely going to give you a surprise. On this occasion though, we had just that. With all trim components and paint removed from the vehicle, the repair lists consisted of removing and fabricating the lower rear wing to sill joining section, replacing 3 sill end caps, one rear wheelarch lip, the lower rear centre valance, and the rear centre section of the driver's floorpan. We also replaced the passenger front wing nose cone as a few small pin holes were evident – better safe than sorry.

While the sill end caps were off to be replaced, a videoscope was passed through the sill section revealing perfect inner sills with factory coating intact beneath the sheets of Waxoyl.

The bodysheet reinforcement offered by Avon was little more than a token gesture of 2mm sheet plate formed over the inner face of the inner sill, gas welded to the top and bottom of the inner sill. This is a very crude moisture trap. The one Avon we have



*Fitting of a new nose cone.*



*The videoscope view of the inside of the sill.*



*The body out of the paint shop*

previously restored had required full inner sills due to the corrosion between the two skins of steel. BML was still in perfect shape.

With all repairs lead loaded, and the panels gapped, the car was sent to Nick at Hailsham Autobody ([www.hailshamautobody.co.uk](http://www.hailshamautobody.co.uk)) for a full bare metal respray. The car returned our workshop with a glass finish, ready for a refit.

## Trimming

The Avon convertible was a hand finished machine without any real plan and made in very small numbers. The rear seat upright and hood was a total one off, with a complex suspended headlining system.

The long stretch inside a dark garage had seen the hood corrode away to nothing, and the frame seize up. Much of the stitching had also dried and let go. Our trimmer of choice and good friend Dave Upton gladly took up the challenge of putting this right. Dave ([www.cauptonandson.co.uk](http://www.cauptonandson.co.uk)) is based near Hastings, and worked on many of the Hasting based Lynx cars including the Lynx version of the Coupe. Even so, the work proved problematic from start to finish due to the lack of thought in the original design and total lack of any pattern. After a head scratching/banging month, the car returned with a fresh interior, and stunning roof.

## Completing

Much of the chrome work had suffered in storage, but the car came with a very good spare grille, and a new rear bumper assembly was bought from SNG Barratt. All new lamps, and a very nice front bumper from our own stock saw the car come to life. A nice sent of the Kent alloy wheels finished off the look. A new stainless exhaust system and the car was MOTd. The brief

run to the MOT station and back threw up just one fault, a lack of any gear but first! Not one to see the glass as half empty, Mr Brighty saw this as an excuse to remove the engine and gearbox for a full under-bonnet detailing, while the gearbox is being rebuilt.

The car is now ready to return to the road in the spring, earning it's keep as an events and wedding car – and a very fine way to arrive it is too.



*Trimming almost complete at this stage.*