

XJ Series Forum



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



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the car's original Birmingham registration had been reassigned to another car which has since been scrapped, causing much confusion on changes in ownership and an assignment to the 1977/8 'VOP' mark which the car now carries.

I bought the Coupe in 2005 and have been working on as much of the car as possible. The temperamental nature of the OPUS ignition system gave plenty of opportunity to test the vehicle recovery system as part of the Club's Footman James insurance policy, until the SNG Barratt ignition replacement system was fitted. Over time, the twelve injectors needed replacement, as did the two fuel tanks which were gummed up with pre-unleaded petrol deposits.

In early 2011 a decision was made for a full external restoration the car, in part based on the rising popularity of the Coupe models. The Club's XJ Series Forum Co-ordinator and owner of XJRestorations (Keith Parrington) led the project, with his team carrying out bodywork restoration, including sill replacement and the fitment of a pair of genuine factory front wings.

The engine was stripped and inspected, with Chesman Engineering called in to take care of the precise engineering to the V12 components, before being returned to XJRestorations for assembly. Hailsham Auto Gearboxes expertly overhauled the gearbox, while the restored body was given a fresh coat of glorious Regency Red paint with Nick, partner at Hailsham AutoBody. Prior to complete reassembly, the body was taken to Dave Upton of C A Upton and Son for a new vinyl roof and headlining to be fitted.

The Kent alloy wheels have also enjoyed a refurbishment by the Polished Wheel

Andrew Bell tells the story of his XJ Coupe restoration

The car was supplied by the well known Birmingham main Jaguar dealership PJ Evans, in February 1978 and registered, presumably as a company car, to Grindings Limited. Although supplied in 1978, the XJC came off the production line at Browns Lane the year before, so still making it one of the later built Coupes. This year long gap will become of interest

again in 2017 once the car reaches its 40th anniversary (since production, not registration) and hence eligible for road fund licence exemption.

At some stage later in its life, the XJC proudly wore a low-numbered private registration with the 'JAG' prefix. It is understood that at a certain point in time, the value of the registration overtook that of the car itself and so it was sold separately. However in the meantime,



The commencement of work prior to the full restoration.



The rebuilt engine and refurbished engine bay.



Sill and rear wing repairs underway.

Company (see also *Jaguar Enthusiast* September 2012) and have recently been shod with Michelin XWX tyres to replace the now discontinued (and significantly better value) Pirelli P4000s.

A rare concession to updating the original specification was the fitting of adjustable dampers by XJ Restorations, along with their very own suspension springs, and Superflex bushes. In part prompted by the need for suspension repairs for MOT purposes, this upgrade has been an interesting one for experimentation. All four corners of the car can have firmer or softer settings on a 0-10 scale. To retain the original XJ 'waft' feel, dial in 0. However, this can be firmed up to suit taste in a process that takes no more than five minutes.

Following these improvements to the suspension, Jim Patten of *Jaguar World* magazine visited the south coast to test and

report back on the car. His write up of the suspension package, and the car as a whole was most positive (see *JWM* August 2014).

Some of the usual frustrations of Coupe ownership have been experienced here. Both of the massive doors had dropped, so hinges have been replaced. Despite this, doors don't shut with a satisfying clunk – no doubt a price paid for the gorgeous pillarless profile. Another Coupe problem is the wear and tear experienced with the rear window rubbers and the difficulty in tracking down properly-shaped replacements.

Now that the restoration work is substantially complete, it has been possible to really start enjoying the car and the way it drives. Appreciating the high-revving appetite of the V12 has been a revelation and I wondered how the character of this car would have been changed had Jaguar offered an option of a manual gearbox for



The interior which is still largely original.

Useful contact details.

- Hailsham AutoBody www.hailshamautobody.co.uk
- Hailsham Auto Gearboxes www.autogearboxes.co.uk
- C A Upton and son www.caupptonandson.co.uk
- Chesman Motorsport www.chesmanengineering.co.uk

the XJC as it did for the XJ-S of the same era.

With the XJ covering only 38,000 miles since 1978, having an immaculate interior and with a recently rebuilt engine, there is still a strong sense of what the car would have felt like from new in the late 1970s.

The finished job.

