

# XJ Series Forum



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



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## A 40th celebration for the XJ Coupe

**Keith Parrington** reports on the first of what may be an annual meeting for XJ Series owners

**A**fter the Club's 2014 AGM, a small group gathered to discuss how the Forums were developing and how they best serve the membership. Following the meeting last November, it was agreed that each Forum co-ordinator should arrange and organise a model specific event throughout the course of the year.

This can be quite a daunting task, as those who assist our excellent events committee will appreciate. Thankfully for me, this decision could not have come at a better time – as the increasingly popular XJ Coupe celebrated its 40th anniversary this year.

With the ongoing help and support of Terry Dye (the Club's racing co-ordinator), we were able to pull a few strings with the Brands Hatch race circuit, allowing us to have a prime track side position on Sunday 31st May for the event – coinciding with the Club's own GT & Saloon Championship race round.

Promotion started in late 2014, with a surprising amount of interest early on. Social media proved invaluable in getting news of the event out to not only the membership, but the larger audience as well. The Club's James Blackwell was instrumental in pushing this through many a 'social channel' – and a big personal thank you to him for that. I was also lucky enough to gain the support of Derek Hood and Chris Ward at JD Classics – with the promise of their original Broadspeed Coupe being available for the day. Brands Hatch then



*A great line-up of XJs at Brands Hatch for the first of what we hope will be an annual get-together like this, but perhaps in better weather conditions.*

agreed to a lunchtime track parade – and even discounted entry for Club members! Support was really gaining momentum with things looking very positive.

And then the British weather decided to be oh so British. By Monday 25th May, the forecast for the week ahead was pretty horrendous, with high winds and heavy rain predicted on the Sunday. The overwhelming personal buzz around the event started to fade away. My workshop had been overrun with Coupes having final tweaks ahead of the event, but the enthusiasm was starting to drift for a few customers.

The day arrived and I loaded my entire family into the day van and gathered our convoy of cars at the XjRestorations workshop amidst the forecasted rain and winds, and headed to Brands Hatch.

We had promoted a 10am start gathering, and were not at all surprised to have been joined by one solitary Coupe en route along the M25.

Pulling into the entrance to Brands, I was genuinely stunned to see through the rain soaked windscreen, a good ten cars already parked up along the start/finish line. The day wasn't going to be too bad after all.

We parked and got set up as best we could. The planned gazebo and stand promoting both XjRestorations and the Club was instantly dismissed – the wind would have seen it disappear across the Kent landscape in seconds.

James Blackwell and his family joined us in support as a few more cars started to enter the circuit followed by a few more. By 11am, we had a staggering 37 Jaguar and Daimler Coupes parked along the Brands Hatch circuit. The turnout was truly remarkable. From the outset I had hoped for good weather and maybe 20 cars to arrive. To have 37 cars in such weather conditions was a true indication of the long overdue attention this model is now receiving.

We had cars travel from as far afield as Belgium and Germany, and all over the UK. All gathered for this one event. The quality of cars arriving was as diverse as I had hoped. This was never meant to be a concours day, and I was so pleased to see Coupes in all states arrive – all very much treasured by their owners.

Out on track for the Club's racing activities, Dave Bye and Sam Clarke Jnr took their well prepared Coupes into battle, with Dave Bye bringing his car across the line in second place in one of the best races I have seen in the series for some time.

Sadly, due to a combination of the weather and an engine blowout on track, Brands Hatch was unable to get us out on a lunchtime track parade - maybe next time. However, a major thank you to Hugo Holder and his team at Brands Hatch for welcoming us and doing all they could to try to get us on track.

We are already talking about next year and a full XJ Series day at Brands Hatch. For now a big thank you to the membership and enthusiasts for enduring the weather and seeing the day through to the very end. Same time next year?

By 10.30am the parking area was looking really interesting with so many Coupes together in one place at one time.



And the cars kept coming in.

One of two Avon Stevens Daimler conversions that turned up, plus a modified Daimler Double Six with manual transmission.



Mr. Bell's lovely Coupe.



Dave Bye drove a superb race in this coupe despite terrible weather conditions.



The other Avon Stevens conversion and the famous Broadspeed racing XJ.



Look familiar? This is the car that featured on the Wheeler Dealers TV series.