

the Oily Rag

The Newsletter of the Vintage Sports Car Club of Calgary



THOSE WERE THE DAYS MY FRIENDS!

Back when the VSCCC held the annual European Classic Car Meet in Stanley Park, Calgary.

Editor's Comments

As some of you may have heard, I had a very bad day recently while driving down the Deerfoot in Calgary a few weeks ago. I was following a large white truck when suddenly a large heavy object came bouncing out from under his truck.



I was unable to swerve as I had a vehicle on each side and so tried to steer so that the object, (it appeared to be a starter motor or alternator), would pass under the Jaguar, hopefully without hitting anything. Unfortunately the object hit the clamp holding the downpipe from the manifold which connects to the pipe leading to the muffler. There was a huge bang followed by the unmuffled sound of the engine. I pulled to the side and looked under the car where it appeared that the clamp fitting had been hit and disconnected. The car was drivable and, although extremely noisy, I managed to limp home.

On closer inspection once I had the car jacked up, I discovered the exhaust manifold was sheared off at the head and the exhaust pipe on the left side had been badly dented as was the muffler.

I had the car towed on a flatbed over to British Auto Specialists where Kirk Chapman got it up on the lift for a more thorough inspection. Before exiting the car, the object also collided with the gas tank and left a large dent. Fortunately I have the car insured with Intact Insurance under their Classic Car insurance and they advised that the policy would cover the damage less the \$500 deductible as they classed the Road Hazard damage as a Collision and therefore I was liable.

Still, I am happy that the deductible will only be a small part of the total charge once the parts and labour are tallied up. The part that hurts the worst is that I am missing the summer driving season which is short to begin with as the parts required will be slow coming from the suppliers due to the Pandemic. Oh well, if it had to happen at least this year a lot of the shows and activities have either been cancelled or put on hold. The club is doing the best it can to replace the ECCM with a Rally which should be fun. Hope to see you again soon! ED.

T h e P r e z S e z

HELLO EVERYONE!



Its getting harder and harder to write anything these days with the most club activities cancelled or put on hold. So here goes. The Club Exec is still managing to meet via Skype so we are all in full communication concerning club activities. As you are all aware by now that this years ECCM has been cancelled so it has been decided to replace this event with a scavenger hunt /Rally on July 25 th .My thanks to Oliver and Doug for suggesting and volunteering to organize this event For all the details stay tuned as everything will be laid out on the website.

We had an amazing turnout for our first Wednesday drive which was no surprise as everyone is no doubt eager to hit the road.

As most of you know the President is without a vintage car for the first time in years however I have been turning up in my girlfriends (Deborah) 1986 Volkswagon Westfalia which is technically vintage and totally not a sportscar. The saving grace to all this is that when we are on any club drives you will never be last. Please eliminate all hills on future drives.

Our VP Brent has asked you to acknowledge that you have Safety checked your cars. Please do as it is important for certain authorities to see that our cars are being kept roadworthy. Its in all our interest to show this. Please let Brent know.

Stay safe happy and healthy

Regards

Chris Durtnall

OILY RAG RUNNING LATE THIS MONTH!

Sorry about the delay getting the July/August issue of the Oily Rag but unfortunately my computer decided that it wanted to quarantine itself too for three weeks instead of the customary two.

*This late issue is hereby christened **The Summer Edition!***



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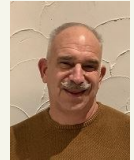
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The Board Executive Meets

Monthly On The Last Wednesday

FIRST ROAD TEST OF THE JAGUAR XK 120



An original road test taken from the Motor Sport archives, April 1951
By Bill Boddy

Factfile

Production: 1948-54

Power: 160bhp

0-60mph: 9sec

Max speed: 120mph

The car that began the Jaguar legend on road, stage and track. First to use the twin-cam XK engine, in 3.4 form, in stunning body. Optional wheel spats accentuate streamlining. Torsion-bar IFS, leafs at rear, drum brakes. Drophead and coupe more comfortable, but spartan roadster is purist choice. SE version brought stiffer springs and 20 more bhp; later C-type head offered 210bhp. Perfect spec: to admire roadster with bolt-ons and spats. To drive: SE coupe with C-type head.

FIRST ROAD TEST—JAGUAR XK 120

After going along to Henly's showroom in Great Portland Street, the 'street of cars', to snatch a preview of the new fixed-head coupe, I was able to take away for test an open XK120. First impressions of an unfamiliar fast car are not always the most favourable, and so it was with this XK. The snug hood and rigid sidescreen were erect when I took over, and as the reassurances of 'Lofty' England were cut off abruptly as he stood upright I realised that I was alone in the maelstrom of London traffic in England's fastest standard car. Naturally no self-respecting motoring journalist wants to loiter in such a vehicle, but as I pressed strongly along I was a bit put out at the way the Jaguar wallowed and howled its Dunlops when deflected from the straight ahead. You have to be used to sailing small boats to master this chap, I thought to myself.

But the response to the throttle was magnificently stimulating. It was immediately apparent that the 3 1/2-litre twin-cam engine was, like a bank clerk, devoid of temperament. I left it idling in Bayswater traffic hold-ups and poodled in top gear from 500rpm without upsetting the mixture, but when a gap appeared — my how we made use of it! After going along to Henly's showroom in Great Portland Street, the 'street of cars', to snatch a preview of the new fixed-head coupe, I was able to take away for test an open XK120. First impressions of an unfamiliar fast car are not always the most favourable, and so it was with this XK. The snug hood and rigid sidescreen were erect when I took over, and as the reassurances of 'Lofty' England were cut off abruptly as he stood upright I realised that I was alone in the maelstrom of London traffic in England's fastest standard car. Naturally no self-respecting motoring journalist wants to loiter in such a vehicle, but as I pressed strongly along I was a bit put out at the way the Jaguar wallowed and howled its Dunlops when deflected from the straight ahead. You have to be used to sailing small boats to master this chap, I thought to myself.

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FIRST ROAD TEST—JAGUAR XK 120

So to the A30 arterial, where people roaring homeward in the right-hand groove were sometimes peeved to receive a reminder from the Jaguar's very polite horn, so that we could get on with our motoring. The way we left everything behind will long live in my memory.

At first I felt alarmed at the thought of hurrying along the twisty bits in a car so softly sprung, for the XK120 is that all right. It gives a most comfortable ride though the outer front wheel scrubs in a manner I met pre-war in the MkV Bentley and V12 Lagonda. But I realised how well the wheels followed the surface contours and later, when I negotiated twisty roads at advanced throttle openings, I was surprised how correctly geared the steering seemed. Indeed, the Jaguar 'holds in' splendidly round fast bends, while only the slightest tremors are transmitted through the wheel. Whip an XK through the 'chicane' type of bend and you will quickly appreciate that, if 'disconnected' in the modern manner, the steering is very good. It is also reasonably light, although at racing speeds one is conscious of holding the car against the powerful castor action.

Rev up the engine and pleasing sounds come from the exhaust, but the outstanding impression left by this wonderful car is its combination of extravagant performance and silent, effortless functioning. The immense acceleration, with no display of effort, thrusts the car forward into the 80s and 90s in a refreshingly brief space of time. 90mph becomes commonplace in dodging between the lorries along any main road as you make hawk-like swoops past slower traffic, punctuated by firm applications of the brakes to tuck you safely behind prevailing obstructions. It is all so tremendously exhilarating and accomplished so easily that after hundreds of miles you never begin to feel blase. The quick steering and this smooth, unending surge of acceleration bring familiar towns and villages quite astonishingly close together.

The Lockheed brakes do their stuff admirably, too. Truly powerful, progressive, snag-free retardation is available, without which the XK120 wouldn't be half the car it is.

FIRST ROAD TEST—JAGUAR XK 120

This suave Jaguar was so enormously quick from one place to another that to plot its true performance seemed somewhat pointless. The engine ran straight up 'into the red' — well over 5000rpm — without the slightest anxiety. Normally, of course, I started in second, went almost at once into third up to 70, and then got going in top. How easily speed builds up is illustrated by a casual run down past Frensham Ponds from Farnham, when, baulked on the 'run in', I nevertheless got up to about 97mph along the undulating straight beside the lake. Later I saw 120 along a mile or so of straight road, but the surge of acceleration from 80mph onwards is perhaps more exhilarating than these impressive maximum speeds. For a car good for 100mph almost anywhere, the XK120 is notably docile in conception and demeanour. The fascia is devoid of masses of switches and dials; it even incorporates a cigar lighter. (Fancy smoking a cigar in an XK!) There is one of those wonderful petrol gauges that becomes an oil level indicator when you press a button. This is a snug car, too, when hood and side bits are unfurled, absolutely suited to taking the popsie to — well, to the pictures. Open, the big screen gives excellent protection even at 100mph. And torrential rain blows clear of the occupants over 40mph. Both wings are easily visible, and the rear-view mirror is excellent for those areas where they do not disguise their police cars.

Lack of cubby holes is compensated for by excellent door pockets, the doors shut 'expensively' and getting in or out couldn't be easier. The lines of the car are superb, and the hood stows away neatly. A few rattles intruded, but the gears are well behaved. I was spared a radio and heater, liked very much the fly-off handbrake, and found the headlamps penetrating. The big luggage locker is useful too — and in case anyone asks what this and similar 'amenities' have to do with real sports cars, let me say that the very rapidity and driving pleasure afforded by such cars makes them appropriate for long-distance touring.

Before parting with the car it was subjected to some very hard laps of Brands Hatch, after which it completed some very enjoyable miles in Kent with only slightly more free movement of the brake pedal to indicate how hard it had been driven. It never boiled and on the circuit only slight brake fade intruded.

FIRST ROAD TEST—JAGUAR XK 120



By the high quality of its finish and appointments alone the XK120 represents very good value for money, while its very liberal speed and acceleration, accomplished with such willing ease, are unrivalled. To drive this Jaguar is to experience one of the highest pinnacles of modern motoring.



**V i n t a g e
S p o r t s C a r
C l u b
O f C a l g a r y**

Our members share a strong interest in their vintage sports cars and the friendship of like minded individuals. They share in the joy of a hands on restoration completed

VSCCC Regalia

Chris Gorrie, our Director of Regalia, would be happy to fill your order for any of the following::

- • • • **Club Jackets**— Stock on hand includes 9 Large, 7 Med, 2 XLarge Red with the club logo and fleece lining, each \$50.00 (actual cost is more- this is subsidized by the club) Order yours before the heat wave passes.
- • • • **Club Logo Patches** - 47 in stock
- • • • **Golf Shirts**—members cost is \$25-47 in stock
- • • • **Grill Badges** — \$15 - 29 new style, 7 Old style
- • • • **Window Decals** — two free to each member
- • • • **Can Koozies**—\$2
- • • • **Pens** - 217 on stock
- • **Mugs** - lots in stock

A b o u t t h e V S C C C

The motto of the VSCCC is "***Dedicated to the preservation of vintage motoring***" and the main purpose is bringing like-minded enthusiasts together for the mutual enjoyment of our automobiles.

Membership is open to all those owning, and having a keen interest in, traditional (vintage) sports cars. Our current membership owns mostly British roadsters and coupes dating from 1935 to 1980; however all vehicles are welcome. Dues are \$40.00 per year.

General Meetings are held at 7:30 pm on the second Wednesday of each month at the Austrian Canadian Cultural Centre (3112 11 Street NE, Calgary).

The VSCCC is a member of the Specialty Vehicle Association of Alberta.

Personal information is gathered from club members solely for the purposes of distributing club related information to the membership. Our membership list will not be sold or exchanged with other clubs or commercial interests.

The membership list (including members name, phone number, email and cars owned) may occasionally be distributed to club members. Distribution is intended so that members with similar vehicles can contact each other for help and advice. If you do not wish your name to appear on this list please contact the membership secretary. Please refrain from distributing the membership list to non-VSCCC members, using it for mass email or for other purposes that have not been sanctioned by the VSCCC executive.

t h e O i l y R a g

The Oily Rag is the newsletter of the Vintage Sports Car Club of Calgary (VSCCC) which is a registered society in the Province of Alberta (Number 50229498). ***The Oily Rag*** is published electronically six times a year (January, March, May, July, September and November).

Editorial Policy: Articles and letters, are welcome and may be edited subject to space. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect VSCCC policy. Publication of submissions may be delayed due to space and time requirements. Deadline for submissions is the 20th of the month prior to publication (e.g. June 20 for the July issue).

Send submissions to: VSCCC, 215 Dalcastle Court N.W., Calgary, Ab, T3A 2A7 or via Email.

Authors and advertisers note: The "house style" of *the Oily Rag* is to set text in either Arial or Times New Roman. If using other typefaces (fonts) please check with the Editor as you may have to supply a font file to support the desired effect.

Copies of the Oily Rag are distributed via electronic means

Road Test: 1964 Lotus Elan



Though the Lotus Elan was introduced at the London Motor Show in 1962 and has made several competition appearances in England and on the Continent, it has remained a stranger to these shores until very recently. We therefore regarded ourselves as fortunate when invited to test the first model to have been brought in by a U.S. dealer, West Coast importer Bob Challman of Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Our test car, the importer tells us, is the standard "export" version that will be brought into the U.S., with the single important exception that ours was right hand drive rather than left. In all other respects, including engine tune, close-ratio Hobbs gearbox, trim, finish and so on, it is the Elan that will be sold here.

As is expected in the creations of Colin Chapman and his merry men from Cheshunt, the Elan abounds in details of technical interest. It is unconventional in almost every way, sharing hardly any design or construction practices with the Elite or with the typical mass-produced sports car all the way from its vacuum-operated pop-up headlights to its centrally located chrome tailpipe at the rear.

Road Test: 1964 Lotus Elan 1600

The chassis is constructed in an unusual if not unique manner (the now-discontinued Mercedes 300-D sedan used a roughly similar design) that offers simplicity, lightness and strength. The backbone of the car is a rectangular mild-steel box 6 in. wide, 10.5 in. high and 25 in. long that occupies the space between the seats. This box divides at the front, running along each side of the gearbox and engine unit to a cross member on which the front suspension pieces are attached. At the rear a similar but shorter triangular frame encloses the final drive housing and provides attaching points for the rear suspension. This frame unit weighs just 75 lb and its stiffness is given by the builder as 4500 lb-ft per degree of twist, an impressive figure when it is recalled that the conventional X-member type passenger car frame weighs over 250 lb and has a torsional stiffness rating that seldom reaches the above stiffness factor even with closed body attached.

On, in and around this strong center spine is hung every-thing else. The molded fiberglass body drops down over the chassis box and is bolted onto the flange at 14 points along the bottom of the box. The body is molded as a stressed-structure single unit with double thicknesses and reinforcing ribs where needed.

The suspension is independent at both ends, with double A-arms and coil-shocks at the front and coil-shock strut and lower A-arm at the rear. All suspension points are rubber-mounted and these, combined with the compressed rubber joints throughout the drivetrain, result in a chassis that does not require lubrication. The brakes are discs, outboard at both front and rear.



LOTUS ELAN 1600

Getting into the Elan requires a bit more agility than for most sports cars, mainly because of the 6.5-in. high door sills and immovable objects that the knees and feet must be guided over and around. Once seated, however, we found the driving position snug and firm, with what the importer calls a "light drive fit." The driving position inspires confidence, the forward vision is excellent, the wood-rimmed steering wheel is far enough away to be comfortable and all the controls are in their expected places. However, profit from our test drivers' experiences and don't plan any extended non-stop drives unless your backside fatigue tolerance is of a high order. Perhaps it was lack of wiggle-room, perhaps there was too little small-of-the-back support, but at the end of a 260-mile trip, even with three stops, both driver and passenger were afflicted with a case of the fidgets.

Driving the Elan, the all-synchro gearbox snicks crisply into first, the clutch bites gently but firmly, and too many revs at clutch-pop can result in a little dance to the right. Shifting into 2nd, a short snick-snick away (you can chirp the tires again if you try), you can rush off to 60 mph in a brisk 8.5 sec before resorting to 3rd. In 3rd gear you exceed 85 mph nicely and on our test car, with about 1200 mi on the engine, the commendably accurate speedometer would easily go past 100 on the 140-mph dial. It should be pointed out that our acceleration figures were obtained with two people in the car, as are all our road test figures, and that their combined weight of almost 400 lb is a considerable deterrent to the acceleration of a 105-bhp, 1500-lb car. With only one person aboard, the acceleration figures would be much more impressive.

The instrument cluster is another happy combination of form and function, with 4-in. speedometer and tachometer, a fuel gauge reading in Imperial gallons and a combined oil pressure/water temperature gauge. These instruments are Smiths, all have purposeful, readable white on black and all are located where they should be for non-distracting, keep-in-touch glances by the driver.

The handling is excellent by any standards, great fun to push along at high speeds on winding roads, accurate and agile in all conditions and, as one of our drivers said, it's all too easy to acquire a feeling of overconfidence.

LOTUS ELAN 1600

There is good "feel," though, as the point of no return approaches and this built-in alarm should be sufficient to keep all but the most insensitive driver out of serious trouble.

Working away without complaint under the hood is the "1600" version of the Lotus double overhead cam conversion for the English Ford 116-E. The cams, chain-driven, are almost impossible to detect by sound, an efficient airbox silences the rush of air into the pair of double-throated 40dcoe Weber carburetors and with the almost non-existent exhaust note you will probably be cruising along well above the posted speed limit before you know it.

The 1558-cc engine, obtained from the "1500" version with which the Elan was introduced in England (by leaving the 2.86-in. stroke alone and increasing the bore from 3.19 to 3.25 in.), puts out a flexible and usable 105 bhp at a conservative 5500 rpm.

As would be expected, a competition version of the Elan will also be arriving for road race work and this model will have the 145-bhp dohc Lotus-Ford engine that is already being seen in the latest Lotus sports/racing car, the 23-B.

The finish of the car, like everything else about it, is functional, completely free of gimcrackery and "styling" details. A bug-strainer mesh will be set into the radiator opening, but even this may not satisfy those who think it is possible to go too far in this non-adornment direction. The interior trim has the blessing of being practical and easy to clean, but such details as floor matting of unborn Gila monster hide, door handles of bent aluminum sheet and glove hole moldings that are far from perfect seem hardly appropriate when compared with the better trim details on other cars in the same price range.

As to weather protection, when we picked up the car we were cautioned not to get ourselves caught in a rainstorm and then expect to whisk the top into place in one easy motion. Fortunately, it didn't rain until our drivers had returned to the office, at which time two calm, adult males, resigned to getting soaked, were pleasantly surprised that the entire operation took less than five minutes.

LOTUS ELAN 1600

Calm is the keynote, perhaps, as there are numerous round pegs to be fitted into round holes, bits to be fitted together, ends to be tucked in, and two fittings that require the use of a 7/16-in. wrench.

Once up, however, the top is snug and gave no indication of any leaks, though the car both sat and was driven in a brisk rain. The top also afforded ample headroom even for the tallest member of our staff, though the top's side rails did require a bit of peeking under for vision to the side. Strangely enough, with the top erected and the pull-up-push-down windows closed, the interior of the Elan is noisier than with top and windows down. Obviously, somebody at Cheshunt knows a thing or two about aerodynamics.

As for the esthetic effect of the lines of the Elan, there was absolutely no agreement among members of our staff and comments ranged all the way from an ecstatic, "Next year's Corvair should look so good" to shoulder-shrugging indifference and a sour, "I've seen better-looking plastic toys." Thus we can only report that the Elan, like 12-to-1 martinis, must remain a matter of individual taste.



Classified Ads

Classifieds in *the Oily Rag* will be available as space permits.
Ads will be included for two issues unless cancelled or renewed.
All classified ads, including email links and photos are available by visiting
www.vsgcc.ca

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Classified ads will now appear on the VSGCC website. Please send all submissions to the VSGCC Webmaster.