

WELCOME TO OUR SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER

Although it's been a while since our last newsletter, you certainly have not let us rest on our laurels. The sheer demand, via phone, fax and emails, has shown us that you have all been exceptionally busy with your XKs. Pretty much the last 18 months has been non-stop! I would like to thank all of you for your support.

What Recession?

Sometimes customers have suffered frustration at the delays we can experience with suppliers.

I think that all the talk of recession and doom made most of the XK parts manufacturers cautious about building-up any stocks unnecessarily. However, their fears have been allayed as demand still outstrips supply in most cases.

Currency Impact

Long term stability is best for all concerned, not highs and lows as so often seen in the boom and the bust world of financiers. The rather weak pound has led to cars in the UK being purchased by overseas customers, with a few going back to America from where so many had been sourced by UK dealers. US customers are now aware of the shortage of good cars so are now actively collecting once again. We have new customers from Eastern Europe who also appreciate the beauty and exclusivity of the XK.

Enjoy!

In short there are just not enough XKs to fill the garages of would-be owners. Demand is high, supply is low and so it's time to enjoy XK for all it's worth. You may not get many more chances.



BROAD REPORTS: GETTING READY FOR SUMMER

It's that time of year when those of us in the more temperate parts of the world start believing that winter may soon start giving way to summer. That means it's time to pull the dust sheets off the XK and get it ready for those lovely summer days. If you're an XK owner, you have to be an optimist!



Leaving a car standing for long periods is not particularly good for it, even if it's kept dry and warm. You should always take a car out of hibernation with great care so you don't risk doing damage, and for your own safety. Our advice is always to give the car a thorough check-over before you take it on the road and give it a service, even

if it is not due for one.

Jaguar handbooks are a must and they are far better than any modern equivalent in showing you what to do and how to do it. If you haven't got one for your car, we keep reprints of them all, as well as workshop manuals for the more adventurous.

Visual



The first job before you do anything else is a visual inspection. Check the tyres for condition and pressures. The age of a tyre is just as significant as its tread depth. Old tyres should be replaced if they are hard and cracked, even if the tread is excellent.

Leaks

Now get down on your knees and check under the car for leaks. You are bound to find the odd drips of oil around the centre of the rear axle, the back of the gearbox, under the bell housing and, on 120s with original steering, under the steering box. If you haven't got any drips, you either have an exceptional car or lack of oil! If you have a lot, then you should check why.

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Take the top off the brake fluid reservoir to see if that's up to the level and if it is very low find out why before you put the car on the road. You should of course take out the dip stick and ensure there's enough oil in the sump. Also check the coolant.

Finally, check the battery or batteries for electrolyte level and to see if the terminal posts are clean and tight. They sometimes get a bit furry and this can be cleaned off using a kettle and hot water - but be very careful. You may also want to put the battery on charge as it will probably need a boost.

Starting

Having done all that, turn on the ignition. The SU rattle should tell you that (A) the pump works, (B) it is pumping and (C) when it stops that you've got some fuel in the tank and that the carbs are full and are ready to go. Before pressing the starter, just make sure that there are no fuel leaks under the bonnet, as sometimes a float will stick if the car has not been run for a while. Petrol squirting out of a float chamber can usually be stopped by tapping it with something non-metallic, but turn off the ignition first.



All being well the engines should now start. Check that the oil pressure is OK and that there are no dreadful rattles or squeaks, drive the car into the open air and let it run for a while to warm up. Being very careful not to burn yourself or make contact with any moving parts, you can also check the thermostat is working by feeling the radiator. Also have another look round for oil and water leaks.

Brakes

Before disappearing into the sunset, carefully check that the brakes are working by gently applying them at a very low speed. Also make sure that the rear brakes are not stuck on because the handbrake mechanism has seized. Once driving, dip the brake pedal again before you have gone far and before you go too fast. This time check the car is not pulling to one side, which would indicate something seized in the brakes or a fluid leak on to the pads or linings. If you are still happy, off you go and gently apply the brakes two or three times to clean up the discs or drums as well as the pads and linings before getting up to speed.



Oil Change

A service is very much our recommendations. Changing oil and filter once a year at the start of the season, even if not many miles have been covered, has a lot going for it. You should ideally drain the old when it is hot, to ensure the maximum sediment and anything else undesirable is removed from the sump. A tip here is to make sure the sump plug is easy to loosen before you get the car hot or you may have an uncomfortable time trying to undo it later. Use drip trays when removing filters and dispose of old oil and filters in the proper places.

Our recommendation for engine oil is a 20/50 grade. Duckhams was once a favourite but it seems to be no longer made. In the UK, Millers offers a good classic 20/50 oil. Do not waste money on fancy oils. You will gain no benefit. We offer a range of filters from direct

replacements for the originals to more modern, efficient and conventional varieties. My advice is to either use the original paper type, which does its job perfectly, or fit a full conversion to the cartridge 'spin off' type which is easier to change.

Grease and Other Oils

While you are under the front of the car, it is a good time to grease the steering, transmission and suspension - again look in the handbook to make sure you have not missed a grease point.

The engine oil we have covered but also check the steering box (if you don't have rack and pinion steering), gearbox and back axle. And remember too the grease points around the chassis and handbrake cables.



A Plug for Plugs

For those of you with longer memories of times before engines were encased in plastic, the three most important items to make sure were in good order were the oil, points and plugs. Spark plugs are deceptive in that they can look clean and in good order even when they are not and a new set in the spring is a wise investment. Also check the plug leads, particularly if you have resistor leads or caps, which can breakdown and cause misfiring.



Consider Electronic

Ignition points (contact breakers) on the other hand were what caused more breakdowns in the pre-electronic days than anything else. On the XKs they are a right fiddle to set correctly and need regular maintenance. So go contactless if you have not already done so. We offer a very simple kit that can be fitted in minutes and which, once fitted, needs no maintenance nor adjustment. We also offer full electronic ignition conversion kits that not only replace the points but also increase the spark, giving more power and greater reliability.



Now Enjoy!

That's our basic advice for putting your XK back into service and don't forget to check that everything else works - particularly the lights as, for some reason, lack of use seems to make bulbs more vulnerable to blowing.

IN OUR WORKSHOPS



Not only is the parts division flat out but so are the workshops. At the moment, we are working on a rare trio of ally 120s. One was once my father's car. It was on the Jaguar stand at the Danish Motor Show in 1952 and it took part in the Jersey Road Race that year. Once restored, it will return to Jersey for the first time since 1952. The second car is a silver 120 that has a Mille Miglia history, having come third in 1949. This car is being rebuilt for the classic Mille Miglia to relive its youth. The last car is a real challenge; this black 120 has come from Norway in a large number of boxes for a complete rebuild!

As well as these three, we are building a new special on a genuine 120 'alloy' chassis. It will be a replica of LT1 and be used for road rallies. Also for rallies, we have a 120 from Greece for full restoration, which will take part in the Acropolis when finished. Lastly we have a C-type from Germany, which we are also rebuilding for road rallying.