

The Coventry Cat



Official Newsletter of the Jaguar Association of New England

December 2013

www.j-a-n-e.org



The Pursuit of an XK120

JANE's newest member recounts his tale of patience and perseverance when he buys this 1953 XK120 SE in Oklahoma and drives it home to Maine just in time for Thanksgiving. Read about his adventure on page 17. Photo courtesy of Ford Reiche.

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It's Been a Wonderful Ride – Thank You, Thank You



Thanks to JANE and its members for giving me the ride of a lifetime!

Several years ago when the JANE nominating committee approached me to take on the presidency, I was very reluctant to take on that responsibility. But they convinced me, and now here we are two years later at the end of my second term, my last term. It's time for someone else to take JANE to the next level; our bylaws do not allow a president to stand more than two terms.

It has been an eye-opening, demanding, easy, wonderful experience.

JANE's Board members and officers are an extremely conscientious group. We have worked on a highly personal level and many new friendships have developed. JANE's Board is comprised of people of great character, and I have the highest respect for each of them and want to thank them here for everything they've done for me and for JANE. Although the nominating committee promised me a pension, apparently I misunderstood. However, I now understand that the pension I received is a lifetime of the irreplaceable memories. Thank you nominating committee, the Board, and all JANE members.

At this time JANE is in a good financial place. When I stepped in in December 2011 we had large expenses pending and a balance of approximately \$17,000 in our account. I am happy to report that, according to our treasurer, Don Holden, we now have \$26,000 in our treasury and have already applied \$4,800 toward anticipated 2014 expenses and deposits. In addition, we have updated some of our equipment and we continue to subsidize certain events.

Our membership as well has flourished according to Ed Avis, VP of Membership. We started my term with 205 members, and at last count we are at an amazing 287. We are the largest club in North America. Ed has been a great champion, as have our members as a whole, who continue to be diligent in promoting our club. There is no doubt that JANE will continue to grow in numbers.

We created (formalized) the position of VP of Events. Fortunately, Dean Saluti, more than ably assisted by his wife, Margie Cahn, accepted this position, and what an amazing job they have delivered. The number of events in the last two years I believe have been the largest, most diverse in JANE's history. Over the past two years, JANE's members have stepped up to sponsor more than 65 great events including our annual Maple Syrup Run, an Adirondacks Tour, the Magical Mystery Tour, tours of Cape Cod and of Martha's Vineyard, polo at Myopia, lawn parties at Larz Anderson Auto Museum, pool parties, picnics, and more. We have had two amazing Concours celebrations and four slaloms. I and many of our members have taken part in some fabulous racing events, and in many events sponsored by other clubs and organizations where JANE has shined, like British Invasion. Our members always make an impressive showing.

Clearly we are not just admiring our cars, we are driving them!

Now I am passing the baton to a new president, Jim Sambold. I wish Jim well, and I am truly grateful to have had your trust and the opportunity to take part in the leadership of this exciting and dynamic club. You will still see me actively involved, and I will continue to be on the JANE Board until December 2014. I know it's going to be an exciting time and that Jim is going to be a great president. We are building a full schedule of events

continued on next page



The Coventry Cat is the official publication of the Jaguar Association of New England (JANE), a non-profit organization of Jaguar enthusiasts that is a regional chapter of the national Jaguar Clubs of North America (JCNA). JANE is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

JANE Officers & Committee Chairs

- President:** Michael Kaleel, 617-338-8747, mkaleel@kaleelcompany.com
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- Secretary:** Betsy Taylor-Kennedy, 978-779-5213, betsy@taylor-kennedy.com
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- John Brady • Margaret Caruolo • Chuck Centore
- Dennis Eklof • John Feng • Rich Kosinski
- Lauren MacCarthy • Tom Moses
- Gus Niewenhaus • Ray O'Brien • Jim Sambold
- Jennifer Taylor

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An ad in *The Coventry Cat* currently reaches over 350 households with excellent demographics. Rates are on an annual basis (12 issues):

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Inside back cover	\$1200
Inside front cover	\$1000
Back cover half page	\$500

Visit JANE on the web at www.j-a-n-e.org

JANE is also on facebook at www.facebook.com/JagsNEWall

from now until next December, something you will hear more about at our Holiday Party at Vesper on December 8.

As we move into 2014, we have so much to look forward to, including the hosting of the AGM for JCNA. I hope all of you will join me, your new president, and the Board in welcoming Jaguar Club members from across the country in April. This is a chance for us to show off what I have discovered during my term as president – that JANE is an exciting, dynamic, friendly, and expansive club, keeping faith with our heritage and embracing the new. Thank you to all of you. I am looking forward to the future and am ready to tour and race.

Michael



Outgoing President Michael Kaleel receives an antique Jaguar XK120 cuff link and tie bar set in its original box from incoming President Jim Sambold (at the podium) on behalf of the club at the annual holiday party on December 8. See story and more photos on page 10. Photo by Bill Richardson.



Thanks to everyone who has already renewed for 2014. Your early renewal saved you \$5 and also qualified for the drawing to be held in January to win a refund of your basic membership (\$60) for 2014. If you haven't renewed yet, there's still time to do so before the December 31st deadline to be entered in the drawing. Renewals are good for the entire 2014 season.

NOTE: New JANE members who joined after September 1st (or if I've told you your membership is good through 2014) do NOT need to renew and are therefore not eligible for the refund.

Everyone should have received a mailing with a renewal flyer, and many of you chose to send your renewals in by mail. That's fine, but if you haven't already done so I'd encourage you to log into the JANE website (<http://www.j-a-n-e.org>) and verify or update your profile information. If you renewed via the JANE website and PayPal I assume you verified your profile information, so that's what I'll use for the JCNA roster. If you've bought or sold a Jaguar, want to upload a photo of yourself or your car, or make any other changes, it's simple to log in and do so. If you don't remember your user name or password I'd be happy to help you with that. If you don't have a computer or prefer not to log in, I can make changes for you if you'll send me the information.

If you have any questions about your membership or the renewal process please contact me at 207-737-8258 or ed@avisfamily.com.

Happy Holidays to all!

Cheers,

Ed Avis

Welcome New Members

Ford and Karen

Reiche Cumberland, ME

1953 XK-120 SE OTS (see Ford's article in this issue)

Welcome Back Former Members

David & Sheila

Scott W.

Joshua

Bruce & Cynthia

Bill

Higginbottom North Andover, MA

Lang

Lyons

McGeoch

Mancini

New Bedford, MA

Stonington, CT

S. Burlington, VT

Hopedale, MA

1969 E-Type OTS

1985 XJ6 Sedan

?

1970 E-Type 2+2

1971 E-Type SIII Coupe

Time to Renew Your JANE Membership!

If you haven't renewed your JANE membership for 2014 please take a few minutes to renew online now at www.j-a-n-e.org or complete and mail the form below.

Remember, if you renew **before December 31st** you'll not only receive a \$5 discount on your membership, but you'll also be entered in a drawing to receive a refund of your basic membership (\$60) for 2014. The winning name will be drawn at the JANE social meeting in January. Associate members are not eligible for the discount or drawing.

To renew online:

- From the Home Page, click on **RENEW** on the upper left
- From the Login screen, enter your User name and Password and click the Submit button.
- Review your profile information (and **PLEASE** update if needed)
- Pay your dues online using PayPal (see the dues structure below)

To renew by mail:

You can renew by mail, but **PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY** (your membership VP would be very grateful)!!!!!!

CHOOSE ONE:

- \$60 per year with electronic Coventry Cat (if paid by 31 DEC 2013)**
- \$65 per year with electronic Coventry Cat (if paid after 01 JAN 2014)
- \$75 per year with printed Coventry Cat mailed to your address (if paid by 31 DEC 2013)**
- \$80 per year with printed Coventry Cat mailed to your address (if paid after 01 JAN 2014)
- \$25 per year for Associate membership with electronic Coventry Cat**
(I am a primary member in another JCNA club and my JCNA number is _____)
- \$45 per year for Associate membership with printed Coventry Cat mailed to your address**
(I am a primary member in another JCNA club and my JCNA number is _____)

Amount enclosed \$ _____

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CAR 1 YEAR _____ MODEL _____ BODY STYLE _____

CAR 2 YEAR _____ MODEL _____ BODY STYLE _____

COMMENTS _____

MAIL COMPLETED FORM AND CHECK (PAYABLE TO "JANE") TO:

Ed Avis
252 Upper Pond Road
Litchfield, ME 04350

JCNA Trophy Confirmation

After December 1st, all competition scores should have been posted on the JCNA site and you should be able to view all the standings on the JCNA.com Standings page.

To see the Standings, go to jcna.com, click on the Standings link, then click on the:



2013 Results and Provisional Standings to check your scores.

Under **2013 Final Standings/Competition Awards**,

select from one of the following:

Concours (North American) | Concours (Regional) | Rally | Slalom.

Scroll down to locate your name. For North American Standings, if you have placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd, your name should be displayed. Click on your score. You should then see the list of the concours you attended. Below your list of events you have entered, you should see “click here to confirm data for your award order”. You will be required to enter your address and other contact information. Please be sure to include your email address, it is not automatically included. If you do not include it, there will be no way for you to receive an email from JCNA with further details.

Each entrant is responsible for confirming their concours, rally and slalom scores. This is because some people move and some information may have been incorrectly entered after the events you attended, and that is why JCNA does not just automatically send out trophies to everyone listed on the web site.

After your information has been received by the trophy committee, it will be posted on a link from the AGM page. (That is because that page can quickly update by the trophy committee.) You should also receive an email within 48 hours of confirming your information. If you do not include your email address, there is no quick way to contact you. If you do not receive an email from the trophy committee, they have not received your information.

When you complete the confirmation information, one of the questions is, do you want to receive your trophy at the AGM, that means you must attend the AGM, or do you want to have it shipped to you. All trophies that we have received information for will be either shipped to the AGM for presentation or shipped out just before the AGM, around the middle of March. Any trophy confirmations received after that will be processed the end of each month and you should receive your trophy three weeks after that.

For club members who do not have computer access please have one of your club members submit it for them. Someone must have computer access to see where winners are in the Standings.

Steve Kennedy
skennedy@jcna.com
JCNA Trophy Committee

Upcoming Events

2014 JCNA AGM & Boston Jaguar Party Registration Form

You can get lots more information as well as register and pay online at
www.j-a-n-e.org/AGM2014.html

Participant Information [This section must be filled out by all participants]

PARTICIPANTS NAME(S) -- indicate if delegate with an asterisk after name

MAILING ADDRESS			PHONE	CELL PHONE
CITY	STATE	ZIP	E-MAIL	
JCNA HOME CLUB	JCNA #		ALT PHONE	ALT E-MAIL

NAMES AS YOU WOULD LIKE THEM TO APPEAR ON THE NAME BADGES (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE)

I hereby agree to participate in the following JCNA-sanctioned events. In consideration of the right and privilege to enter and participate and other valuable consideration, and intending to be legally bound, I agree to release the Jaguar Clubs of North America, Inc., Jaguar Association of New England (JANE) and their officers and members from any and all liability for injuries, damage, or loss arising from my entry and attendance in these events.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Send completed form & check payable to **Jaguar Association of New England** to
Tom Finan, AGM/JANE 2014 Registrar, P O Box 1046, East Orleans, MA 02643-1046
Host Hotel: **Hyatt Regency Cambridge** (Register at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/e7f7e794>)
Special "Jaguar Club" room rates at \$169/night. 617-492-1234

2014 AGM Events, Friday, April 4 – Sunday, April 6

Number	Item	Cost	Subtotal
	Delegate Registration fee (no fee for non-delegates)	\$85	
	Friday Welcome Party (7 PM) at the MIT Museum ¹	\$70 pp	
	Saturday Delegate Breakfast (7AM - 1 seat included in registration)	Incl.	
	Additional Saturday Delegate Breakfast seats	\$32 pp	
	Saturday: Delegate Luncheon (12PM - 1 seat included in registration)	Incl.	
	Additional Saturday Delegate Luncheon seats	\$40 pp	
	Saturday AGM Banquet and Awards Ceremony	\$75 pp	
	Sunday Farewell Breakfast at Larz Anderson Auto Museum ¹	\$40 pp	
	Tech 1: 3-4pm Friday – Prepping Jaguars for Performance	Incl.	
	Tech 2: 4-5pm Friday – Building a 1/3 Scale XK Engine	Incl.	
	Tech 3: 3-4pm Saturday – Jaguar Toolkit Authenticity	Incl.	
	Tech 3: 3-4pm Saturday – Restoring Your Classic's Leather with ColorPlus	Incl.	
	Tech 4: 4-5pm Saturday – The Jaguar Parts Business	Incl.	
	Subtotal		
	Discount (Percent)²		
	Total Event Fees³		

1. Includes transportation from/to hotel.
2. Take a 10 percent discount if booked and paid before January 31, 2014, 5 percent if between January 31 and February 28, 2014
3. Fees refundable if canceled prior to March 1.

2014 JCNA AGM Schedule of Events:

Thursday, April 3

4:00 p.m.: Registration opens

6:30: Informal dinner for JCNA Board Members and early arrivals at Legal Seafood in Cambridge

Friday, April 4

8:00 – 4:00: JCNA Board Meeting

8:30 – 5:00: Registration open

8:30 – 5:00: Hotel car display open

8:30 – 3:00: JANE representatives expediting tours to off-site Boston attractions

3:00 -- 5:00: Tech sessions

6:00 – 10:00: Welcome Party at the MIT Museum

Saturday, April 5

7:00 – 8:00: Delegates Breakfast – non-delegates welcome

8:00 – 3:00: Annual General Meeting

3:00 – 5:00: Tech Sessions

5:30 – 7:30: Silent Auction

6:00 – 7:00: Cocktail reception

7:00 – 10:30: Annual Awards Banquet sponsored by SNG Barratt

Sunday, April 6

9:15: Buses depart Hyatt Regency for Larz Anderson Auto Museum

10:00 – 1:00: Jazz brunch, museum tour, and discussions with author and collector Joe Freeman
New Jaguar demo rides sponsored by Sudbury Jaguar

12:30 – 1:30: Buses depart back to Hyatt Regency

For more 2014 AGM information go to www.j-a-n-e.org/AGM2014.html.



Event Reports

2013 Holiday Party & Annual General Meeting

On Sunday afternoon, December 8th, at 3pm, more than sixty JANE members gathered for JANE's Annual General Meeting and Holiday Party. We were again at the beautiful Vesper Country Club, which has been our venue of choice for a number of years now. It is a beautiful location and the fine staff at Vesper really go out of their way to make it a memorable event, If you missed it, you missed a fine party.

The affair started with cocktails and some great hors d'oeuvres and ample opportunity to chat with old friends and new. About 4 o'clock we moved into the dining room for our Annual General Meeting. During the meeting there was the official business of membership approval of the slate of officers and board members for 2014:

President: Jim Sambold*
VP - Membership Ed Avis**
VP - Events Dean Saluti**
Treasurer Don Holden**
Secretary Betsy Taylor-Kennedy**

*Replacing Michael Kaleel who is fulfilling his two-term limit. Jim was President of JANE a number of years ago.

** Returning officer



Board Members:

Mike Axford*
John Brady
Chuck Centore
Dennis Eklof
John Feng
Michael Kaleel**
Alec Karys*
Rich Kosinski
Lauren MacCarthy
Tom Moses
Gus Niewenhaus
Ray O'Brien
Jennifer Taylor

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PRESIDENT

Several people were recognized by outgoing President Michael Kaleel for their contributions to the club during his term:

Ed Avis
John Brady
Margie Cahn
Chuck Centore
Dennis Eklof
Prebble Eklof
Carl Hanson
Don Holden
Lauren MacCarthy
Bruce Murray
Dean Saluti
Betsy Taylor-Kennedy
Al Zanengo

Finally, the Bernie Yurt Award was given out. The late Bernie Yurt was the founder of NEXKA (Northeast XK Association) that was formed many years ago and later renamed to JANE. The award is made annually to a member who has consistently over many years provided great service to the club. This year's award winner was Ed Avis for his stellar performance as JANE's VP of Membership, his work on staging events, and his service to JCNA. Congratulations Ed!

After the business meeting it was time for the excellent buffet dinner provided by Vesper. There was a lot to choose from, including prime rib, chicken, fish, and some wonderful desserts. No one went away hungry.

Following dinner was the annual Yankee Swap, which always provides much laughter, fun, and swapping of gifts. This year's most popular item was a soft, fluffy throw in an African cat motif that came from Frank and Ann Grimaldi and changed hands several times. Its final resting place was with new member Nancy Rousset, who, as the number one gift selector, also had the right to pick from among any of the many gifts at the end of the swap.

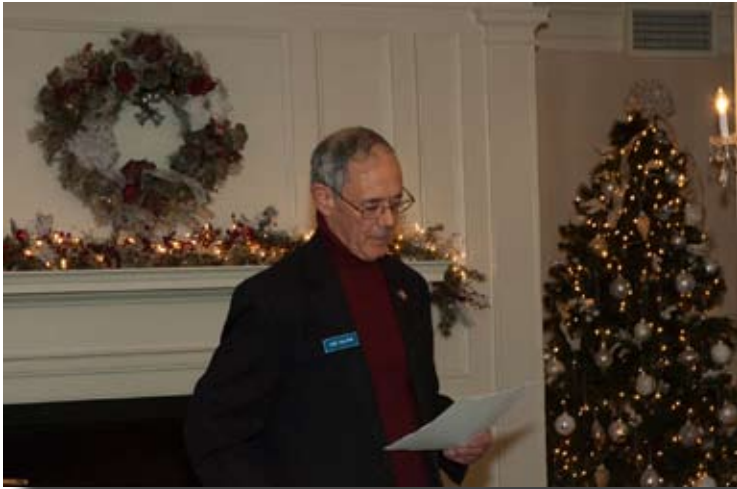
We broke up shortly before 8pm, and everyone seemed to have had a great time. Don't miss it next year!

Previous page: The Christmas tree surrounded by Yankee Swap gifts. Photo by Bill Richardson. This page: About 60 JANE members and guests attended this year's holiday party and somehow they managed to all gather for this wonderful photo. Photo courtesy Dennis Eklof.

More holiday photos on pages 12 & 13 and at www.j-a-n-e.org.



JANE Holiday Party & AGM Coverage



Clockwise from top left: Don Holden is not telling a Christmas story but rather reading the JANE financials. Ed Avis holds a Yankee Swap book while Jane Murray holds the most popular gift, a Jaguar print throw. Photos by Dennis Eklof. Let's see if you're on the naughty or nice list! "Santa" checks to see if party organizer Crin Coull is on his list. Photo courtesy Deb Richardson. Michael Kaleel congratulates Ed Avis for his contributions to JANE and JCNA. Ed received the Bernie Yurt award during the party. Photo by Dennis Eklof.



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Clockwise from above: Richard Gill enjoying his Yankee Swap gift of mini slot cars. And who could blame him? Michael Kaleel and Santa recognize Dennis Eklof for his efforts as webmaster and Board member. Have you ever seen so much plaid outside of a Highland festival? Several JANE members dressed up for the party.



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What Does the F In F-Type Stand For? More Adventures of an Early Adopter

by Dave Moulton

Well, two months have passed since last I wrote for *The Cat*, and my F-Type has mysteriously acquired almost a thousand miles in the interim. And, yes, by now I *have* exceeded 4,000 rpm and 2/3 throttle. I've even spent some time in 8th gear.

Remarkable!

So far, so very, very good. No quibbles worth mentioning. The car continues to delight in many ways, even when used in less than ideal circumstances (driving to a minor, somewhat unpleasant medical adventure in Needham, for instance, including introducing the little dear to the late afternoon traffic insanity of Rte. 128, or going to buy some wine and discovering the boot isn't quite right for a full case - uh-oh, note to self – stick to scotch, it fits in the boot!).

But what we really have to talk about this month are the remarkable qualities and complementary brilliance of the F-Type's engine (the supercharged V8 that runs across all the Jaguar models) and the close-ratio ZF 8-speed gearbox. As I've been breaking the car in, I mostly drive it pretty gently and smoothly. I often have let the car shift for itself, burbling about Boston's northwestern exurbs and our wilderness neighbor to the north with calm dignity. What I've noticed, when I could tear my eyes away from this year's gorgeous foliage, is that the tachometer swings very modestly, if happily, between 1200 and 1700 rpm as it shifts among all these gears. What?



Jagfix

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A quick visit to the brochure spec page reveals that the engine not only has a stupendous 460 ft./lbs. of torque at 2500 rpm, but that the torque falls off very gently below that, so that at 1000 rpm it still is generating about 250 ft./lbs. of torque. Dear readers, that's a *heap o' torque!* For perspective, the torque *peak* for a Lexus ES 350 V6 is 248 ft./lbs. at 4700 rpm. This means that the F-Type has *as much torque at idle* as a nice slick luxury sedan from Lexus has when it's being hammered!

The effect of this is remarkable, especially for a high-performance car. The F-Type launches effortlessly and gracefully in all circumstances from delicate to hooligan, with an utter lack of fuss. You could drive it your entire life without ever exceeding 2000 rpm (which is 89 mph in 8th gear, just so you know) and hardly anybody would ever come even close to keeping up with you! By way of comparison, I have two other "torque-monster" cars – a Mercedes AMG C63 with a 6.2 liter V8 and a Morgan Aero 8 with a 4.4 liter BMW V8 and only 2400 lbs. of weight to hold it down, and they are *nothing* like this. The Merc has a moderately heavy throttle tip and feels lazy and calm until you floor it (when, after a brief moment of contemplation by the ECU, all hell breaks loose very quickly). The Morg has a very light drive-by-wire throttle and is almost impossible to launch smoothly at less than full throttle in first, inducing happy foot so that you go

hopping down the road in big bursts of intermittent acceleration as your right foot keeps bouncing off the throttle (the approved MO is to launch in second). It's a bit like walking a Rottweiler puppy that hasn't been out for a day! Fun, but an acquired taste, and you become *very* careful in crowds.

Most automobiles have a nice 2:1 power range from about 3000 to 6000 rpm, and an economy range below that, usually down to 2000 rpm or a little below, where the car sedately motors down the road. This engine, however, starts dishing up meat and potatoes all the way down at 1000 rpm, and that fact completely changes the car's character. Nudge it into motion – it always starts in second unless you unpack the monogrammed leather riding crop that comes in its own little holder – tip the throttle slightly and you are gone. No storm. No wild, almost uncontrollable silly delights trying to tame the beast or else keep it from stalling. You're just gone!

Meanwhile, that 8-speed gearbox is popping up through the gears quite rapidly (the ratios of all those gears are really close), normally shifting up at about 1700 rpm and dropping back down to 1300. Why does the exhaust sound so luscious? Why does it feel like I'm flying?

F-Type is for Fun, remember?

And so this is what I've learned so far: just always leave the F-Type in what I labeled "hooligan mode," which leaves all the systems in their "performance" settings. It isn't *really* hooliganesque, once you get the hang of it, but the sensory quality remains fabulous, and it *is*, in fact, the essential unique character of the F-Type – *this* is the *real* car. The gear shifts are really quick, the throttle is very responsive, and when you switch to manual shifting mode (you tilt the gear lever toward you, the data window posts your current gear selection as a big on-screen number, and the *paddles are there for your shifting pleasure!*) it becomes utterly delightful as well as *very* functional.

The point here is that the F-Type is really easy to drive really well, which doesn't happen much. Many cars are easy to drive. A few are easy to drive really well. Very few can be *both at the same time*. The F-Type seems to be one of those very few.

Interestingly, it is the sensory quality, particularly the sounds, that make the F-Type so easy to drive so well – we can always tell, by ear, what gear we're in, how fast we're going, and how prepared the car is for what is coming up. In my last article I suggested that we should practice driving smoothly and quietly in "hooligan" mode. It really helps, making us smoother, more economical and more engaged in our driving, as well as far

continued on next page



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more aware of what is coming up on the road. The F-Type just keeps us advised about everything going on, with no distractions. It is really refreshing.

On the other side of this performance coin, there is way more than plenty of suds on tap. One day in New Hampshire I got stuck for several miles behind a heavily loaded gravel truck. When a passing zone finally opened up, I was in 4th gear at about 50 mph, three seconds back from the truck. By the time I got alongside the cab of that truck the F-Type was nudging 5000 rpm (90 mph) at 3/4 throttle, while the limited slip differential helped with traction and direction. Breathtaking! The F-Type is obviously and seriously quick. I wonder what full throttle to redline will be like. *That* is probably where the hooligan really kicks in.

To date (and setting aside price criteria), this may be the best road car I've ever driven. The ride remains civilized, firm but not harsh, with the active suspension doing a really nice job of managing wheel motion and suspension transitions. The control systems are stellar in their precision and smoothness. The car remains flat in corners, the brakes work really well (insofar as I've asked them to *do* anything), and as the miles accumulate I'm feeling the car become smaller around me, easier to place, turn, launch, and stop.

I also find I keep looking for excuses to take it out, for any stupid reason! Recently, for instance, I realized I'd never driven it with the top up. Suddenly, I felt a need to learn how to drive it with the top up, in anticipation of all those rainy and snowy days ahead. Go figure. (Do you think this might be slightly addictive behavior?) The car is beginning to fit like a pair of well-tailored leather gloves, and I can't wait to try it in a slalom and on the track. I'll report back again after I've gotten to those things.

What a great car! What a great pleasure!

Thanks for listening.

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David's F-Type. Photo courtesy David Sperry.

Racing a Winter Storm from Tulsa to Maine

Editor's note: Ford Reiche is a new JANE member who was nice enough to share his adventure of bringing home his first Jaguar. If you see him at an upcoming club event, say hello and make him feel welcomed.

Story and photos by Ford Reiche

THE PURSUIT OF AN XK120

It might have started with a red Matchbox Jaguar when I was very young, or later when I saw Clint Eastwood with his black XK—something share the starring role in *Play Misty For Me*, but at some point long ago I joined the ranks of those who fall in love with these things. I would get on the other side of several decades and many antique cars before becoming serious about pursuing the Jaguar I admired, an XK120 OTS.



Pushing through to my late 50's, I started to actively troll the Internet for examples of this model that came up for sale. Aware that valuable cars are sometimes restored in ways that artfully mask defects and sins discernible only by more trained eyes, I introduced myself to Ed Avis, an active member of the Jaguar Clubs of North America and the Jaguar Association of New England, right here in Maine. Ideally I would limit my risk by finding a car with very low miles or one that had the pedigree of having received some sanctioned Jaguar show award in the not too distant past. As I connected with candidate cars in Connecticut, Colorado, California, New York, etc, Ed reached out to JCNA members near each of those cars to try to get me some firsthand knowledge. This favor proved invaluable.

One car eventually surfaced that looked like it might be a keeper. After talking to the owner and viewing dozens of photos (with Ed's oversight), I got serious about a West Coast car with an older restoration. I was too busy with a business project at that time to fly out to see the car, but was able to negotiate for it to be shipped to Maine on approval; if I did not like the car I would return it on the delivery truck and forfeit the roundtrip shipping costs. From inception, there was just something about that car that did not seem quite right. The owner was a big deal in one of the car clubs, but nearly all of the communications had to go through an intermediary classic car broker. The broker's answers to several questions were just a bit too ideal...and ultimately I would conclude that several of them could not withstand scrutiny. The shows and prizes on its resume turned out to be less significant than as advertised, the possibility of an accident in the car's past could not quite be explained away, and the several apparent paint imperfections showing up in photos were all dismissed as "unfortunate reflections" picked up by bad photography. When the car transporter arrived in Maine a couple weeks later with the Jaguar's top half down, chafing into the seats, and the ignition key in the ON position, I did not even care about trying to jump it. It was immediately apparent that the misgivings I had had about the paint and the body work were justified; and ten minutes later the car was headed back to the West Coast.

My thoughts kept returning to one car I had seen three years earlier right here in Maine, the first XK I looked at...in fact, the first one I ever sat in, a 1954 XK120 OTS in BRG, seemingly good condition with older restoration. Without matching numbers or SE equipment, I thought it was overpriced by \$20,000. It soon sold to someone in California. As I learned more about the fine points of these machines I started to wonder if I had passed the most suitable car I would be likely to find within budget.

continued on next page

THE ONE

Two weeks ago, just shy of my 60th birthday, I was heading off on a trip with my wife, Karen, and I tied into the WWW with a Google search for my destination: "California, Jaguar XK120 OTS SE" and, what the hell, try "1953," too. My 60th birthday was in a few days, so why not try for my birth year? Nothing new came up for California. I already knew about all those, but what's this one in Tulsa, Oklahoma? 1953 XK120 OTS SE. "Mmmm, BRG with green interior... exactly what I want...matching numbers, Heritage Certificate, '17,000 original miles'...that must be a typo."

After a few emails and phone discussions with the owner, I had a lot of information, including photos of the car and scans of documents for every owner going back to the original purchase. The Heritage Certificate indicated date of manufacture: November 10, 1953...10 days before I was born. Karma. The low mileage of 17,000 seemed to actually tie out. The first owner lived in Coral Gables, Florida, and he never used it, but stored it in a carport with way too much exposure to the elements. He sold it in 1978 with 12,450 miles, in excellent mechanical condition, but with serious sun deterioration on the exterior paint, rubber, and canvas. That second owner executed appropriate exterior restoration in the late 1970's, then sold it in 1985 with 14,127 miles. The third owner conveyed it to my seller in 2012 with 17,400 miles. And here it was waiting for me in Tulsa with 17,555 miles and every indication of precious little use. There was hardly even any surface rust to be found, and nearly all screw heads and nuts looked like they had never met screwdrivers or wrenches respectively.

Karen and I still have the Italian sports car in which we had our first date 35 years ago, but it is not her favorite car. She does like our MG TF a great deal, and it gets a lot of use. I had long been hopeful that arranging a personal introduction to an XK120 might realign her preference. The next thing I knew, we had juggled our flight from California back to Maine in order to allow for a circuitous detour through Tulsa via a night in Las Vegas. The last time Karen and I were in Las Vegas was in 1979 on a road trip. We had stayed in a Motel 6 way off the Strip, and I remember the pain of shelling out \$16 for the room. That road trip adventure had taken us through the western US from Arizona to Montana, and the wicked cold remains one of the clearest memories of all. We had hit such cold in Wyoming that we froze up

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a bottle of wine that was stored right on the heater between the seats of the 1969 VW bug. Being cold was destined to be a theme of the 2013 road trip, as well.

A half hour after arriving in Tulsa, I concluded that this XK120 appeared to be everything I hoped for. I confirmed that I had helped relieve Karen of the burden of birthday shopping for me, and then immediately fired off a few emails: to the bank with wiring instructions, to my insurer, and to my lifelong best friend Jon Knowles, who never shies away from questionable undertakings. “Jon, I got an XK120 in Tulsa. Want to drive back to Maine with me?” “Yes, I am free after December 9.” “No, Jon, I mean tomorrow. Karen is flying home in the morning, and I am staying in Tulsa with the car.” Karen observed, “Jon’s a better wife than I want to be. Happy Birthday,” and left for the airport. The seller took me to lunch at a local Chinese restaurant, and one of our fortune cookies offered reassurance about my plans to drive to Maine: “How can you have beautiful endings without making beautiful mistakes?”



This fortune was Ford’s reassurance of a safe trip back to Maine.

THE TRIP HOME

While I was waiting for Jon to show up, I set about preparing for the type of trip that he and I have embarked on many times before over the past 45 years in all sorts of cars and boats. (Our shared resume includes the rightfully obscure distinction of holding the ocean speed record from Portland, Maine, to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and back, which we did in an inflatable rubber boat in 11 hours, 40 minutes. That trip ended up involving the staff of our US Senator and Customs officials from the US and Canada. But that’s a different story; hopefully this Jaguar road trip would not serve up any challenges that couldn’t be handled by AAA.)

The best route home to Maine looked like a northeasterly slant over about 1,700 miles. If the car held up and the impending storm did not dictate a course change, we would leave Oklahoma and pass through Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, maybe New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, ending up in Maine. I dwelled briefly on the ethics of putting big miles on this car, as just the trip home would add 10 percent to the total distance logged in the previous 60 years. The seller told me that there are only three LHD XK120’s in captivity with lower mileage. But this is not a museum piece, it had significant cosmetic restoration in the 70’s. This seller had recently changed out several parts: master cylinder, brake shoes, gas tank, fuel pump, tires, batteries. I resolved to accept the low mileage as a bonus, not a burden. I use my cars and I take good care of them.

In plotting the course for Maine I was also mindful of the pressures of time. We certainly had to be home before Thanksgiving. More pressing was the lead story on the national news about the huge winter storm that had chased me to Oklahoma from California and now threatened to shut down the eastern part of the US right before Thanksgiving. That would be Tuesday. This was Friday night, November 22. Ice and snow were due to hit Tulsa within 24 hours and would be close astern as we headed to Maine. It was already very cold.

By the time Jon flew in, I had rounded up basic tools and supplies that we might expect to need on a long trip in an old and unknown vehicle: electrical tape, wire, hand tools, continuity tester, flashlights, fluids, plus a bag of dried fruit, some nuts, and four beers for us. We needed to be equipped for only minor inconveniences; anything significant would delay us back into the teeth of this storm. If we had mechanical or weather bums of any size, we would just default to Plan B. That would involve locating safe car storage for wherever we found ourselves, flying home, and thereafter engage a reputable car hauler. Ed Avis had assured me that the JCNA had a roster of guardian angels all across the country, and he politely reminded me that it would probably be good form for me to send in my JCNA membership application and enrollment fee as soon as convenient.

From our experience in sailboats and small cars, Jon and I are no strangers to the tension between needing lots of gear but having inadequate storage space. Nonetheless there is always too much gear, luggage, provisions, etc. We loaded the trunk carefully, sequentially, and strategically, based on what/when/where needs might be expected to arise. “Excessively” might also be a good adverb here. We loaded the trunk excessively, and because we did not learn the

continued on next page



Navigator Jon Knowles riding shotgun. Note the car cover and the shop rags stuffed into the drafty spots.

trick of pressing down on the rear boot lid to relieve the pressure on the locking pins when we turned the handle to open the trunk, we promptly broke off the handle with all our gear neatly locked inside. Slight panic and a bit of profanity gave way to the relief of finding a solution, which then gave way repeatedly to the guilt of using a pair of vise grips to operate the mechanism every time we entered the boot for the rest of the trip. (I am pleased to report that a 45¢ pin and 10 minutes of time has allowed me to correct that problem with no trace of damage.)

We also found that a lot of gear could be stowed above and below the rear deck behind the seats. The huge pockets in the doors seemed pretty slick until we discovered you can't get into them without stopping the car to open the doors so that the pocket flaps can be lifted up.

Underway. Woohoo! We got up early, paid off the security dude in the parking garage at some fancy hotel we didn't stay at, and I piloted us out of Tulsa. After a few miles one thing became clear: it was really cold. 18°F. I stopped the car to get into the trunk for a towel and a 20-pack of microfiber rags, which we could use to plug air leaks in the fresh air vents down by our feet, in the gaposis between doors and side curtains, along the rear line where the canvas top meets body, etc. The lining of a car cover had an appealing furriness, so we jammed

that in the cockpit, too.

While we were pulled over I told Jon he needed to have a go at driving this critter. He is 6'4" and is painfully aware of the long list of cars he can't drive, but I had assured him from inception that the telescoping wheel on the Jaguar would afford the needed leg room. Then another thing became clear: I would be the only driver.

Jon occupied himself in the passenger seat by uploading our photos and road trip reports to a blog he had started last summer while sailing from Maine to Norway (www.abralog.net. Note: There are loads of posts, but you need to dig around on the site.) Pretty soon he started hearing back with emails from followers. One wished us good luck coping with the legendary mischief of Lucas, The Prince of Darkness. In truth, our only funky electrical issues were a clock that stopped for 20 minutes each day in the late morning before resuming perfect operation, and our little high beam indicator light that worked only in states whose name started with a vowel.

We soon found our way to a good looking breakfast spot. (It turned out that we did not make many meal stops on the trip because we were trying to log enough miles to stay ahead of the storm chasing us.) My only entry in Jon's blog was after that breakfast: "Wicked cold, and the heater is not making a meaningful effort." The best advice of the day was from our breakfast waitress in Joplin, Missouri, who may have noticed upon our arrival that Jon was wrapped in a car cover: "Looks lak yoo boas ahgunnahafta cuddle." Amen.



A telescoping steering wheel made no difference to Jon Knowles' inability to drive the XK120. And that shifter in his thigh looks painful too.

For the next couple days we hauled along the route provided by MapQuest. We never made enough miles in daylight, and I came to dread highway driving in the dark. Deer (and cows, no kidding) are much more common on the high-speed roads than we are used to in Maine, and they are far more threatening when you are hurtling along in the

dimness at 67mph with your derriere a foot or so off the pavement.

Each night we located a hotel that would allow us to park the Jaguar right at the well-lit entry door, and Jon would temporarily relinquish his car cover.

The third (and final) morning found us in West Virginia. We were up before 5am. It was 16°F and the car wouldn't turn over. We had no jumpers because Jon had practically snatched them out of my hands in a hardware store the previous day: "I'd put those back. If the battery is new, we won't need these things. And there's no room." So we lost an hour in the hometown of Don Knotts while Jon engaged a taxi to go jumper cable shopping.

We got back on the road, and an hour or two later we noticed a green mist accumulating on the windshield. By the time we could get off the highway the car was pretty much soaked with antifreeze from bow to stern along the right side, and the engine compartment was a mess. We had blown out the top radiator hose. This time the egg was on my face. I had ignored Jon's earlier instruction to be sure to get spare hoses. An hour later we had located and installed a hose, cleaned the engine compartment, body, and canvas, and we were back underway. The car ran great, but did not seem to start quite as instantly as normal. The distributor is right beneath the radiator hose, and I found that we had flooded the ignition wire sockets in the cap with antifreeze. That must have happened to every XK120 that ever blew a hose... interesting place to put the distributor.

Despite starting the day with a couple of self-inflicted bummers in West Virginia, there was a theoretical possibility that we could still push through to Maine. And the weather report was an added incentive.

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Jon's last entry in the blog accompanied a photo of the speedo needle at "a buck," as another friend calls it. "After over 1,700 miles, 13 states, temps as low as 16°F, and a hint of snow in Pennsylvania, the 60-year-old girl was awesome. She did 1,700 miles in three days, with the last day consuming nine states and 735 miles to get home to Cumberland, Maine, at 11pm, just before the snow started a couple hours later. It was a marathon road adventure in a wonderful ride."

The next morning Karen commented, "This may be the last old car you buy." It remains unclear whether this was an instruction from my benefactor or her prediction that we'd love the Jaguar that much. 🚗



Ford's XK120 SE at "a buck" during the last leg of his 1700 mile trip. That odometer reads 19,349 original miles.

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2001 XK8 - Less than 75,000 miles. Anthracite with tan interior. Never used in New England winter. This had been my son's car in California. It had 63,500 miles on it when it arrived in Massachusetts in 2009 and has been garaged each winter that it has been here. Location: South Dartmouth, MA. Price: \$12,000 Ad placed by Bonanza80DC. Phone: 617-742-0050. Email: richardbjacobs@aol.com. (9/13)



1985 Series III XJ6 - Dark Grey, 11,800 original miles. Purchased this car new, it has never been exposed to the rain. Location: New Bedford, MA. Price \$22,500. Ad placed by Susan Forgue Weiner. Phone: 508-992-1270 Email: swlang@xblaw.com. (12/13)

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X300 Wheels - Four 1997 MY X300 OEM wheels. Location: Essex, CT. Price: A bottle of nice wine or port! Ad placed by R. Hathaway. Phone: 860-757-6521. E-Mail: rhathaway@snet.net. (9/13)

Snow tires - Four Mastercraft Glacier Grip II, 205/60 R15. Less than 1,000 miles use. \$65/pair. Ad placed by Keith Carlson. Phone: 617-333-9660. Email: kfc-bhlmilton@comcast.net. (11/11)

Snow tires - Two pairs of Michelin Artic-Alpine 215/55 R16. Less than 10,000 miles. 5mm tread depth. Location: Milton MA. Price: \$50/pair. Ad placed by KCarlson. Phone: 617-333-9660. Email: kfc-bhlmilton@comcast.net. (9/13)

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