

The Grocott Jaguar

By Neville Barlow

The Grocott Jaguar is a very eccentric looking drophead coupe, based on a Jaguar Mark VII chassis. John Grocott had owned several Jaguar Mark VII's and VIII's and was impressed by them. They therefore became the basis of the car he was determined to build for himself.



It was to be a 2+2 design that would fit in with his holidays abroad. It needed to have a strong safe chassis with adjustable springs, high off the ground and of course a convertible.

He purchased a rolling Mark VIIM chassis in 1955.

He engaged the services of the Consultant

Engineers, Byatts, who produced the drawings and a set of technical aspects. They contained copies of a new front and rear radius arm suspension, adjustable for stiffness from the driver's seat. Many aspects of the Mark VII were changed leaving only the brakes, rear axle, manual transmission and engine as original.

A body builder by the name of Bob Bullock created the car. A wooden floor pan was bolted to the chassis and the body was of high grade aluminium with many curves.

It also had very over the top rear wings, which however were said to improve rear vision. The front of the car had cowled headlights and it looked like no other car of that time. Almost everything on the car was bespoke and one of the few borrowed parts was a steering wheel from a Riley Pathfinder.

It took three years to build and was finally on the road in 1959 Grocott had permission from Jaguar to register the car as the 'Grocott Jaguar' and was given the chassis number JGB1 (John Grocott Byatts 1)

John Grocott retired to the Isle of Man in the 1980's, still using his car as his main transport. When he died his family sold the car and it came back to its birthplace of Stoke on Trent.

The second owner, Barry Hawley, knew the car in the 70's. He believes the reason it took three years to complete was because Grocott kept altering the design. Barry said he drove the car several times for John because he was unable to do so himself due to illness. The car was consequently locked away for many years. Barry did some restoration work in 1996 but pressure at work necessitated it being sold.

In January 2000 the car was owned by a Geoff Hill who was an ex mechanic for Byatts who had serviced and maintained the car in the 1950's. Barry Hawley last saw the car 23 years ago and was delighted to see it recently. It has now found a home with an enthusiastic new owner. I find it fascinating that some people have the great need to own a vehicle that no one else in the world has. John Grocott needed to and he even built his own!



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