

Jaguar History and Malcolm Sayer

By Neville Barlow

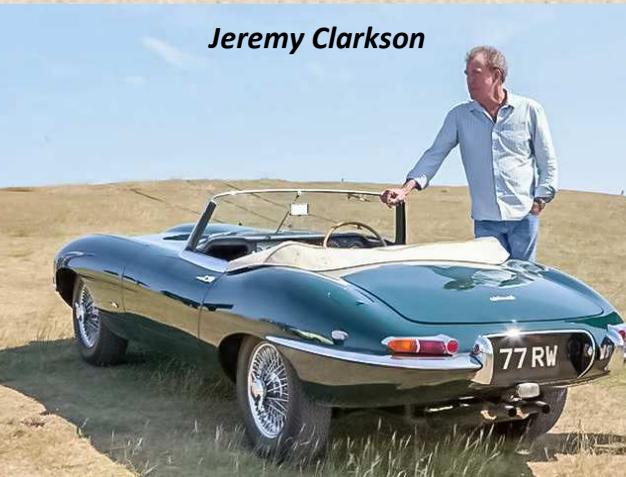
There are a couple of notable anniversaries which I am sure will be celebrated by many Jaguar enthusiasts. The first is 60 years ago the first E Type was sprung on an astonished world. The second anniversary is that William Lyons and William Walmsley who founded the Swallow Sidecar Company, which became Jaguar Cars Ltd after the Second World War. This centenary is already being prepared for in the UK.

A Company of this kind obviously has many a great stories to tell, some of which I believe are yet to be told. I am continuously coming across unusual stories that have recently popped up. The latest is a horrible vehicle called "The Snark" which was played around with in the late 1940's, not continued with but shows the beginning of the Mark VII.



"The Snark"

Jeremy Clarkson



Jeremy Clarkson once said "Jaguar has produced more one off show cars or prototypes than I have had hot dinners. When will they put in production, one of these wonderful cars?" These include the 1938 SS Coupe, Brontosaurus, The Piranha, the 1966 MK 2 County, the 1990 XJ41 and XJ42, the XJ 13, the 2000 F Type, the 2001 R Coupe, the 2003 RD 6, Concept 8, the XK 180, the CX-75 and the many Italian bodied cars that were offered to them.

Bill Heynes



We now add the Gordano to the list.

As far back as 1954 the Jaguar Companies Aerodynamicist Malcolm Sayer had proposed to the chief Engineer Bill Heynes, that the next Le Mans Jaguar to follow the 1953 C Type Jaguar, should have the engine behind the driver. There is handling advantages to be gained by a race car so configured. Sayers main aim was to reduce drag especially in the frontal area. At Le Mans, unlike most European circuits a high maximum speed matters most. Sayer was reluctant to give up the idea of the concept, so he drew up a diminutive rear engine car ready made for the very small Norman Dewes, who was Jaguar's Chief test driver. This car was called the Gordano. He proposed that his car would be an ideal entrant in the Index of Performance at Le Mans, a class usually dominated by the small French cars. In this class the winner

was the car that exceeded the minimum distance required by the greatest percentage. This class was abandoned in 1981. However, Bill Heynes ruled the idea out and preferred to concentrate on the D Type.

Malcolm Sayers' first contribution for Jaguar was as an aerodynamicist for the very successful C Type which won at its first attempt at the Le Mans 24 hour race.

The Gordano





Malcolm Sayer and Norm Dewis

His main concern was that the car worked aerodynamically and also looked good. He also worked on the D Type in the same role and helped it become the most successful Jaguar Sports Car. On the Mulsanne straight at Le Mans the D Type hit a top speed of 192.4 mph (309.6kph). This was achieved from a 3.8 litre engine which was faster than the larger engine in Ferrari's.

Sayer was also involved with the E Type from day one and much of the styling was down to him.

In 1965 Sayer developed the body for the XJ 13 a rear engine car much like his 1954 car.

Jaguar D-Type



He also commenced early proposals for the Jaguar XJS. He unfortunately suffered a major heart attack one month before his 54th birthday and died. He never saw the XJS go on sale.

Neville