

# The Rise and Fall of the British Motor Car legend, Sir William Lyons and the iconic Jaguar Cars. - Final Part 6

*By Geoffrey O'Connell (Continued from Part 5 – July magazine)*

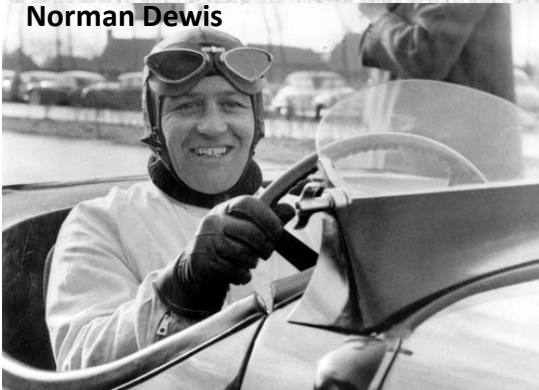
The main unit was of a monocoque construction whilst at the front the engine and front suspension were attached to a subframe as was the rear independent suspension to another subframe. Additionally, there were disc brakes front and rear. At that time, it was probably the fastest production car in the world being able to attain 150mph.

Whatever, the original plan was to manufacture two hundred and fifty E-Types however ..... The sports car was to be launched at the 1961 International Geneva Motor Show held between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of March at which on display was to be a fixed head coupe. The initial interest in the model in Great Britain was so great that it was arranged for Robert Emanuel 'Bob' Berry (1929-2021), then the Jaguar cars Public Relations Manager, to drive a left-hand drive, fixed head coupe (Reg. No. 9600 HP- chassis no. 885002) out to Geneva to be able to give prospective clients a test drive up the not-so-distant Ollon

to Villars-sur-Ollon hill climb. Bob made the high-speed channel crossing and drive to Geneva reportedly to arrive just in time for the Motor Show. However, it was apparent that demand for the demonstration runs was likely to be so high that the Jaguar test

driver Norman Dewis (1920-2019) was also dispatched on the 1159km/720 miles journey to Geneva in an open top (roadster) E-Type (Reg. No. 77 RW- chassis no. 850003). Driving and ferry-boating throughout the night he arrived just in time to be able to tidy up and wipe the car down ready for the press. The open top roadster was priced at £2098.00 and the fixed head coupe at £2,196.00. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of March the Swiss press declared the E-Type the sensation of the Motor Show. At the end of the Geneva Motor Show orders amounted to in excess

## **Norman Dewis**



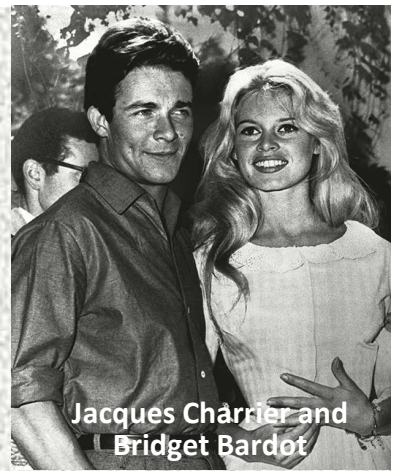
of 500 which led to a permanent production run of the E-Type during which some 72,500 were manufactured. The last words in respect of the Geneva Motor Show was did he or did he not praise the car.

Who supposedly said what? Dewis maintains that he was assisting at the exhibition when a certain Enzo Ferrari sauntered past the Jaguar stand with some select Ferrari employees. Subsequent to looking over the fixed head coupe E-Type he supposedly announced in Italian "Congratulations. What a truly beautiful car, it must be the most beautiful car in the world. But it has one fault. It does not have a Ferrari badge on it". I wonder if Dewis spoke or could even understand Italian?

For the more salacious reader it may be of interest that the first private purchaser of an E-Type at the Geneva Motor Show was supposedly Jacques Charrier, a French actor, producer and artist, who at that time was married to Brigitte Bardot.

It has been reported that he bought the gunmetal grey, fixed head coupe exhibition model.

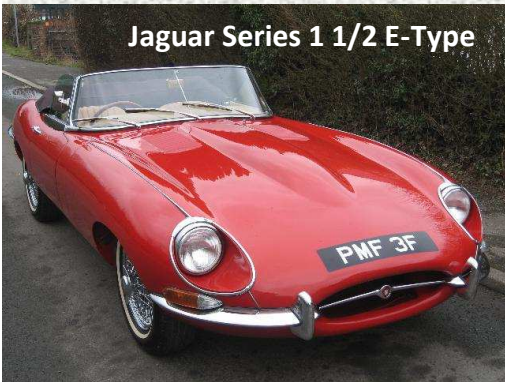
The original E-Types did not have a label such as Series 1, 2 or 3 as at the outset there was no plan to produce more than 250 of them. Subsequent to the Geneva Motor Show all that changed.



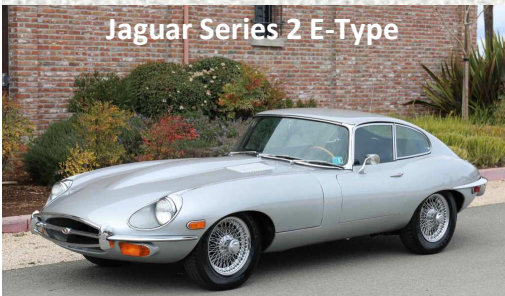
Jacques Charrier and  
Brigitte Bardot



Jaguar Series 1 E-Type



Jaguar Series 1 1/2 E-Type



Jaguar Series 2 E-Type

### Series 1.

That which was to become the Series 1 E-Types were manufactured between 1961 and 1967. In 1965 the engine size was increased to 4.2 litres (4235cc), an alternator was fitted in place of the original dynamo, as was a more efficient brake servo (booster), and a Jaguar built gearbox was fitted with synchromesh on all the gears. In 1966 a '2+2' four-seater coupe was introduced and on that model an automatic transmission became an option.

Series '1½'. Between 1967 and 1968 various alterations had to be made to the Jaguar XK-E to meet the US Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards – as they would!

Series 2. This E-Type variant was introduced between 1968 and 1971. The Series 2 included alterations to the appearance of the model and to the vehicle's specifications. They included increased apertures in the bonnet to assist in the cooling of the engine, alterations to the headlamp installation and larger rear lights, improved brakes and detailed changes to the instrument switches and internal door handles.



## Jaguar Series 3 E-Type



**Series 3.** In order to maintain the E-Type's position in the market place and to increase the model's performance the Series 3 (1971-1975) was launched. They were available as an open top two-seater between 1971 and 1975 costing £3,123.00 or 2+2 coupe from 1971 to 1973 priced at £3369.00. The engine was the new 5.3 litre Jaguar V12 (V12, sohc, 5,344cc),

which was only the second production engine manufactured in the Company's history. The V12 had been planned to power the Jaguar XJ-S luxury grand tourer but the production of that had been delayed so it was shoehorned into the Series 3 E-Type. Lofty England, the then joint Managing Director of Jaguar Cars, reported that *'the E-Type was never designed for the V12 and that it was good luck that we managed to get it in'*. It was wished to have the engine fuel injected but as there were no British systems available at that time it was decided to fit two Stromberg CD175 carburettors to each of the two-cylinder heads.

Technical improvements included improved braking, power steering as a standard fitment, the option of an automatic transmission, wire wheels and air conditioning. The last Series 3 was manufactured in June or September 1974 – take your choice. However due to the number of unsold vehicles, Jaguar Cars delayed announcing the end of the E-Type until February 1975.

The last group of cars in the period I have chosen to cover are the:

## Racing and Competitive vehicles.

The Jaguar C-Type or the Jaguar XK120-C was (technically) a two-seater, open top, competition sports car made between 1951 and 1953. To a lightweight tubular frame was affixed the existing XK120's suspension, 3.4 litre XK6 engine and transmission, to which was fitted an aerodynamic aluminium body shell. The initial C-Types had SU carburettors and drum brakes, but the drum brakes were replaced by disc brakes in 1952 and in 1953 the SU's were replaced by triple twin-choke Weber 40DC03 carburettors, and the engine had high-lift camshafts installed. Fifty-three C-Types were manufactured. At the outset a C-Type cost £2,327 1s 1d.

In 1951 a Jaguar C-Type won the 24 Hours of Le Mans with Peter Walker and Peter Whitehead at the steering wheel. A Jaguar C-Type repeated that victory in the 1953 Le Mans being driven by Duncan Hamilton and Tony Rolt. They achieved that feat recording 304 laps of the circuit at an average speed of 170.3km/h/106.5mph, the first time that Le Mans had been won at an average speed in excess of 161km/k/100mph.

The Jaguar D-Type (again technically a) two-seater, sports racing car was manufactured between 1954 and 1957 and utilized many components including the engine, that had been used on the Jaguar C-Type. However, the tubular frame of the C-Type was replaced by a monocoque construction.

The initial XK6 capacity was 3.4 litres (3,442cc) which was enlarged to 3.8 litres (3,781cc) for 1957 and to 3 litres (2,997cc) in 1958. The model was constructed expressly to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans which it did in 1955, 1956 and 1957. In 1955 a Jaguar Cars D-Type came first with Mike Hawthorn and Ivor Bueb driving.

1956 had a D-Type of Ecurie Ecosse win with Ninian Sanderson and Ron Flockhart at the wheel. In that year's event D-Types also came fourth and sixth. The 1957 Le Mans was won by an Ecurie Ecosse D-Type raced by Ron Flockhart and Ivor Bueb. Second home was another Ecurie Ecosse D-Type with third place taken by a D-Type of the Equipe Los Amigos.



Ecurie Ecosse D-Type Jaguar

After Jaguar Cars withdrew its factory-based racing team at the end of 1956, sixteen of the unfinished D-Types were converted to Jaguar XKSS as set out previously in this saga. The number of D-Types manufactured is subject to some disagreement. A few '*who should know*' give the figure of 71 whilst Jaguar maintains it was 75. Mind you the numbers are rather affected by a fire in one of the assembly halls at Browns Lane on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1957. The inferno caused very extensive damage to the factory and destroyed hundreds of vehicles including nine D-Types which were being completed as well as the manufacturing jigs and tooling relating to that model. The cause of the conflagration was never found. Unbelievably some six days later production was resumed in some areas of the factory.

Lastly but not least in the defined period was a production run of 12 open top Lightweight E-Type's which were manufactured between 1963 and 1964.

### Jaguar Lightweight E-Type



They were fitted with a tuned 3.8 litre XK6 engine fitted with triple 45 DCOE Weber carburettors and a Lucas fuel injection system.

At the outset a close-ratio four speed gearbox was fitted whilst some later vehicles had a ZF five speed gearbox.



Earlier in this carry-on I stated that I would continue the Jaguar story up until when Sir William Lyons agreed to sell Jaguar Cars to the British Motor Corporation (BMC). Incidentally the knighthood was bestowed on him in 1956 *'for his services to British industry and for the fine export performance of the company'*. The Jaguar Cars merger with BMC was announced on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 1966. Although detailed as a *'merger'* other sources advise that Lyons agreed to the *'takeover'* for the sum of £18.2 million. Reportedly there were a number of reasons for Lyons accepting the arrangement which included:

Lyons had lost John Michael, his son and heir, in a car crash whilst he was en route to the 1955 24 Hours of Le Mans event. He was 25 years old.

Jaguar Cars had to ensure it continued to receive those car bodies which were supplied by the Pressed Steel Company which had been taken over by BMC in 1965.

Lyons would continue to control the Jaguar Cars division and would have a seat on the board of the new company which at the end of 1966 had become British Motor Holdings (BMH).

After the so-called merger Lyons described the arrangement as ruinous. Unfortunately he had failed to realise how badly run was BMC. An example of that mismanagement is no better illustrated than by the fact that in the year prior to the affair with BMC, Jaguar Cars produced 25,963 cars. By 1981 that had shrunk to some 13,360 vehicles.

In 1968 BMH merged with the Leyland Motor Corp. Ltd., forming the British Leyland Motor Corp. Ltd. (BLMC). Lyons was made Deputy Chairman of the newly formed company but elected to retire in 1972. In 1984 Jaguar Cars became independent through the sale of its shares.

Sir William Lyons died at his home Wappenbury Hall, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1985 and Lady Greta Lyons passed away in 1986.

In 1989 Ford Motor Company purchased Jaguar Cars and in 2008 sold Jaguar Cars and Land Rover to Tata Motors, part of the Tata Group, an Indian multinational manufacturing company.

Here endeth the epic.

*Grumpy Geoffrey*



**Sir William Lyons**