

# Motoring

Keep in tune with what's new

## Classic 'Cat' roars into new century

**L**AUNCHED at the Motor Show in 1959 the Jaguar Mk II quickly found a very special place in motoring history.

In America it was hailed as the first true sports sedan, twice winning the coveted 'Best Imported Car' award.

And on the Australian race tracks it ended the reign of the mighty Galaxies, Mustangs and Impalas. In Europe it beat the best: Mercedes and BMW had no answer.

It won the classic Tour de France four times and it became a favourite of the Golden Boys of racing - Duncan Hamilton, Stirling Moss, Graham Hill, Roy Salvadori and Bruce McLaren.

My memory still retains the vivid impressions formed by my first encounter with a 3.8 Mk II in Carmen Red with chrome wire wheels.

I was a boy of 16 and my father's friend, who had years of racing experience behind him, took me on a long journey.

We were on the A449 just outside Worcester - and so it seemed was everything else that moved in the vicinity. The tribulations of being baulked



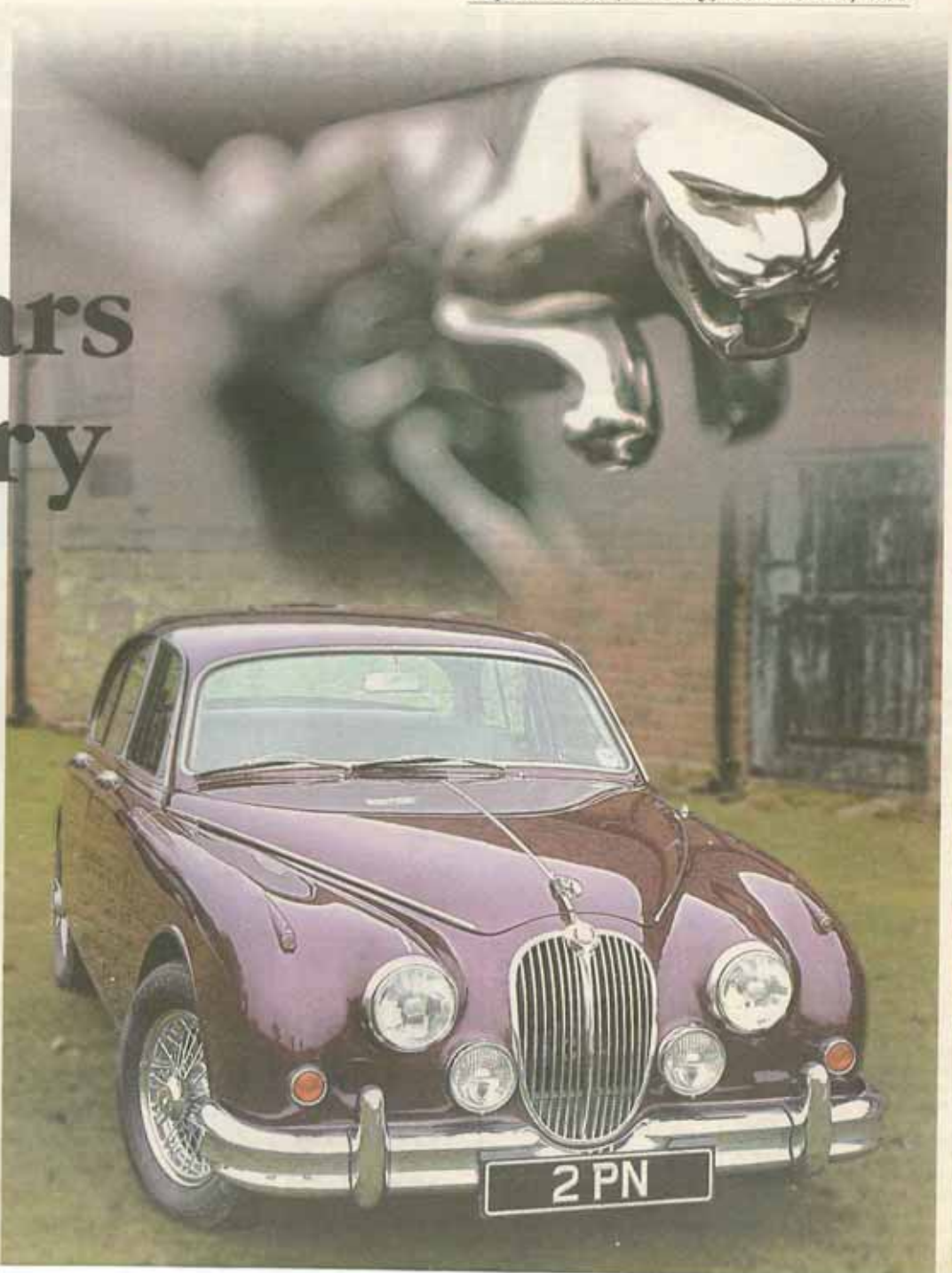
**Move over Inspector Morse - Syd Taylor relives boyhood memories in a classic Jaguar Mk II, where traditional craftsmanship is combined with modern engineering**

**Pictures: Gavin Dickson**

The whole exercise - so safe in its beauty and its pos-

expect a totally standard car from the 60s to fit into the world of motoring mayhem that is today.

With this in mind CMC have wisely chosen to re-engineer the car to a level where it can be used with total confidence as a modern day express - quite capable of dealing with the rigours of 21st Century motoring and wafting you across whole countries with ease. But if



or an age by a seemingly impassable slow-coach were suddenly punctured by the momentary appearance of a gap large enough to accommodate this modestly dimensioned saloon car.

That was when the Jaguar demonstrated its cat-like propensity for the sudden, pre-meditated, almost predatory leap forward which its XK engine made possible.

Flooring the throttle in second gear the engine answered the summons without any perceptible delay. The Jaguar made its leap and it was past the obstacle and back on its own side of the road again in no time. Never had acceleration felt so thrilling or so powerfully sensual. We continued to accelerate, cresting a rise at over 110 mph – and in that timeless, never-to-be-forgotten moment I savoured life with The Gods. Indelibly stamped into my mind was the sheer vitality and pure magic of the Jaguar Mk II: I was smitten.

Itivity, demonstrated the many features that distinguished this car from its meaner contemporaries. Its performance was outstanding for this was 1962, the days of the Morris Oxford and Ford Prefect.

The memory of that 3.8 Mk II lives with me to this day. Now with the latest Classic Motor Cars Jaguar Mk II the magic has been re-awakened. Their demonstrator is not just a restored car, it's a re-manufactured model – a shining paragon to take your breath away and arguably the best Mk II you'll ever see.

Bridgnorth-based Classic Motor Cars (who specialise in everything Jaguar from rebuilds to just servicing) recently hit the headlines when they undertook the prestigious restoration of that most famous of all Jaguars – 9600 HP, the oldest E Type in existence which was the secret 1960 prototype that was tested on the then newly opened M1 Motorway.

thy and commitment to quality when they build Mk II's. It shows in every facet of the test car with its perfect panel alignment and paintwork with a lustre deep as a mountain tarn.

Modern engineering has gone hand-in-glove with the time honoured and labour intensive processes involved in finishing these highly individual motor cars.

### Golden era

A Mk II Jaguar differs from a modern car in practically every detail. The line – derived from the XK – was designed by Sir William Lyons: not on a computer or in a wind tunnel, but in his back room.

Pretty to the core with subtle, curved surfaces which plunge deep into the emotional bullseye, it is an arresting automotive shape. Made in a golden era when roads were jam-free and life moved at a gentle pace, it would be quite wrong to

you're a stickler for authenticity then they will build your car to yesteryear's specification.

The test car was fitted with the 4.2 litre version of the XK engine and with multipoint fuel injection the increase in power and torque (to 204 BHP and 258 lbs. ft. respectively) proved well worthwhile, giving a higher top speed of 135 mph as well as improved driveability.

Brakes are also up-graded with four-pot callipers to cope with the extra performance and, most notably, steering has been changed to rack and pinion, giving the car sharper and more sporty handling. An optional five-speed manual Getrag gearbox adds to the overall sportiness.

Inside, the view from the driver's seat is like no other. You sit in splendour and the sense of omnipotence is palpable as the bonnet curves away to the lithe polished chrome back of the leaping

Jaguar. Sidelight 'tell-tales' glow red at night and the bonnet shimmers with heat from that big dohc engine.

Instruments are impressive too, laid out in what Jaguar called 'aircraft style': minor dials to the left and two large dials in front of the driver, white on black, a speedometer marked to 140 mph and a rev counter reading to 6000 rpm.

### Leather

Everything is marked in English of course – no international symbols here – and there's old fashioned quality to everything you touch.

The woodwork glows with a warmth endowed by loving craftsmen and you sense the ghosts of the men who created the original cars.

With top levels of refinement, it is the most soigné of interiors, yet it is the very antonym of ostentation. Only a cold heart could fail to respond to the visual and tactile triggers in this car.

Passengers feel it, too. The smell of leather as you open the doors; the satisfying clunk when you close them.

To start, push a button in the dash to fire up that magnificent straight six motor. Its eloquent stirrings precipitate all the excitement the senses expect and the beguiling power delivery imbues a sense of calm, yet when you want it there's a powerful surge that is irresistible.

Press the throttle and the Mk II forges forward with enthusiasm – it is by any reckoning a rapid car even today. Mellow when you want, ferocious if you dare, the delight of having an affair with such responsive and harmonious mechanicals is an unmatched experience.

When you're in the mood to press on the chassis delivers pleasure pure and simple as the road opens up and the hedgerows blur.

Responses are reliable and reasonably quick and grip is impressive too. In a CMC Mk II you can hurry

decorously, enjoying complete dominion over highway and byway.

Redolent of Old England, open roads and country house weekends, the purity and propriety of the Jaguar contrasts that even in our conformist and legislation

ridden times, gentlemen of taste are still free to indulge in an experience of truly noble motoring that only a classic like this can give.

Thanks to Classic Motor Cars Ltd (01746 765804) for the loan of their demonstrator for this test.

### Technical specification

Engine:	6 cylinder DOHC 3.8 litre. S.U. carburettors. 180 bhp (optional: 4.2 litre. Fuel injection. 204 bhp)
Transmission:	Automatic 4 speed ZF or 5 speed manual Getrag box
Chassis & Suspension:	Front – double wishbones. telescopic shock absorbers. Rear – coil springs. Panhard rod
Brakes:	Front - ventilated discs Rear - discs
Wheels and Tyres:	5 1/2 chrome wires with 205/70/15 tyres
Performance:	Top speed 135 mph. MPG about 21 average
Price:	Around £100,000
Standard specification:	Air conditioning, remote central locking, immobiliser, premium sound system including CD player. Options: electric windows, cruise control, race developed engines up to 300 bhp

