



Report on 1952 Jaguar C type XKC 028

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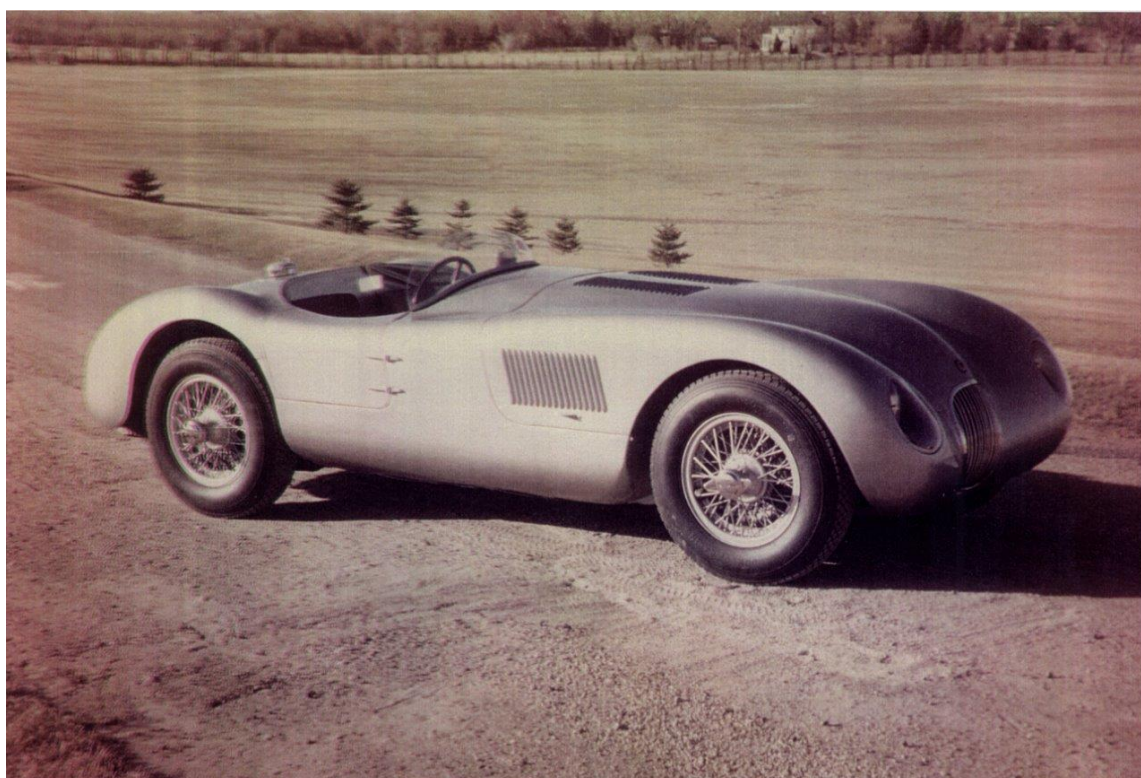
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Background

This is XKC 028 when new, a silver C type Jaguar dispatched to Jaguar distributors Charles Hornburg in Los Angeles LA on 24th November 1952. What is known about its early life is that it was primarily used as a road car and not actually raced in period. For the very reason of having had an easy early life, it has remained unusually original. It was not until 1981 that it did its first race in the hands of Joe Egle, then in 1988 it passed to Bob Baker and then in 1995 to Phillippe Reyens. All these drivers used it in US historic racing events but without accident and without losing any significant original parts.

In April 2018 I visited Jaguar racer/restorer Terry Larson in Arizona to inspect the car prior to purchase, and the car then returned to UK, after some 66 years.

Identification



This is the Chassis plate attached pop-riveted to the front bulkhead. It appears entirely original and un-tampered-with. The numbers it gives are:-

Chassis number XKC 028

Engine number E1028-8

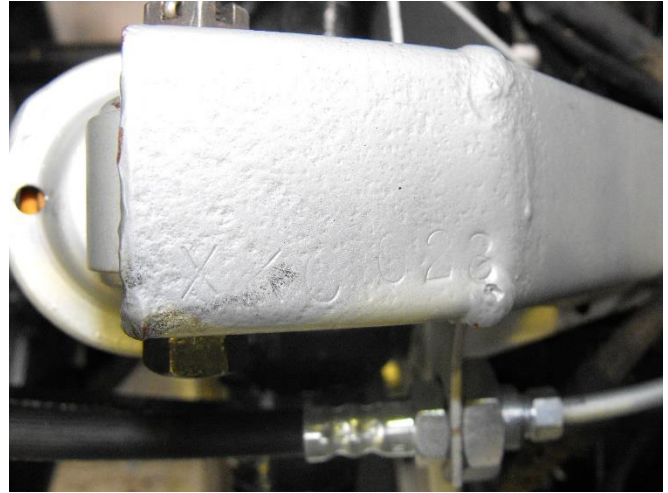
Body number K1028

Gearbox JH13314

My inspection showed XKC 028 remains a matching-number car, and all these numbers can still be found as follows:-

Chassis number.

The chassis number is stamped lightly but correctly on the OSF shock absorber mounting as in all C types. The position and font appear correct and it does not appear to have been altered in any way.



The "secret" chassis number is only visible with a mirror and is in the correct position on the chassis front upper cross-member. This appears entirely genuine and is a nice corroboration of the identity as it is not widely known about.



Engine Number.

The engine number appears twice. First on the block, stamped on the oil filter boss. The fact that it is stamped into the raw casting are signs that no grinding or alteration has taken place.



The second engine number appears on the cylinder head, stamped on the vertical front face of the "vee" between the camshafts. Reassuringly, it is also stamped into the raw cast surface with no sign of grinding.



Body number.

The body number can appear in up to three places on an original C type, and this car has a full house of all three. These are on the bulkhead above the chassis plate, on the inner NS mudwing in the bonnet, and on the centre of the tail section bulkhead. All three body number tags appear identical and original.



Gearbox number.

The main identifying gearbox number is stamped into the n.s. rear jiggging boss on the cast iron centre casing, in very small numerals. It may also appear on the cast aluminium top cover. This stamping is in the correct font and appears un-tampered-with.



Condition as purchased.

The car was presented in good running order with all the major components, chassis, body, engine and gearbox still installed in the car. It drove well on road test. The chassis had been hand-painted black, seemingly from many decades ago. The wiring loom was original and untouched, and it did not look as if the body had ever been removed fully from the chassis. The total recorded mileage was just 49,887. It did of course show signs of its 1980s / 90s race preparation, but all reversible. The modifications including the following:-

- Disc brakes. Original drums had been retained.
- Steel rim wheels. Original Dunlop alloy wheels had been retained.
- Weber carburetors, manifold and air box. The original SU carbs had been fitted to the owner's XK140
- Alloy radiator. The original Brass radiator had been retained.
- Roll hoop and strut.
- Race seat, with old driver's seat moved to passenger side, and the tool box passenger seat stored.
- Braided brake flexibles
- Non-standard brake master cylinder
- Additional engine preparation work, including raised compression and competition camshaft profile, sports coil and distributor, lightened flywheel.
- Competition back axle ratio and l.s.d.
- Mallory distributor
- Alloy adjustable race dampers
- Heavy front anti-roll bar
- Panhard rod.

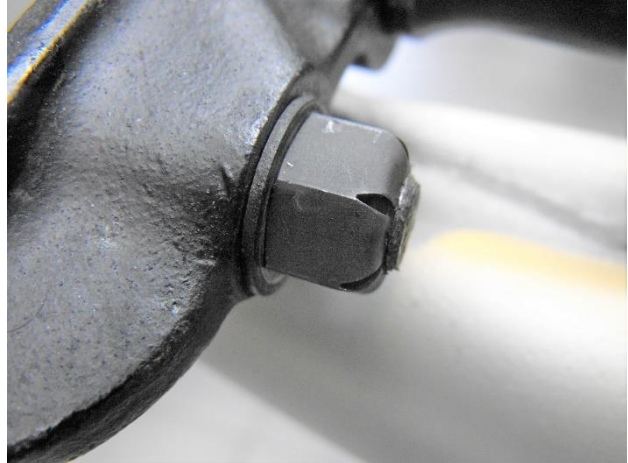
It was fortunate that those important parts had been retained and stored over that period.



The body was in remarkably good original condition but had apparently received a small impact on the OSR quarter, which had been knocked out to shape but then lead to a full repaint to USA tastes.

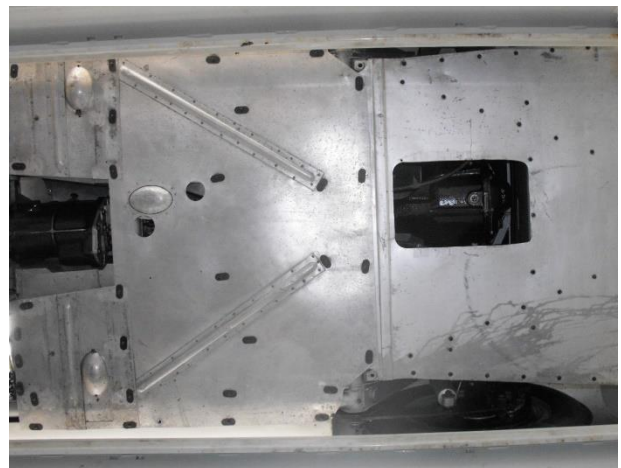
Restoration

Restoration has since been carried out by bodywork specialists Julian Parker dealing with body and chassis issues and CKL Developments dealing with the mechanical issues. Great attention has been given to details like retaining original finishes and using original fastenings. Correctly, hardly any of the original fastenings were cadmium plated, just natural black, and there was extensive use of a special period aircraft locknut, termed the Oddie nut. These are a distinctive feature of original C types



Body

The body is entirely original and has only suffered minor wear and tear over the years. As mentioned earlier, each of the three major panels carries an original body number tag, confirming that they are the correct ones for that XKC 028. All the paint has been removed from it and any waves or damage beaten out by Julian Parker. To replicate period techniques it has then been painted with traditional cellulose primers, top coat and lacquer. An absolute minimum of filler has been used so that the body exhibits the slight waviness that it would have done when it was new. Originality extends beyond just the upper panels. Even the undertrays are still present and in good condition.



Original photographs of the car when new, show that strangely it was never fitted with the normal tubular bonnet stay, listed as a standard part (BD6403) for all C types. A cable stay will not work in windy conditions as we quickly discovered. Consequently one has now been made and fitted exactly to pattern.

Chassis

The tubular chassis is complete, un-corroded and undamaged. When I first saw it, it had been hand-painted black, over the original flat silver. In order to get the chassis back to the original finish, a full strip-down was carried out. Out of period it had received a small chassis modification to accept a Panhard rod. Most C types had this as a retro-fit in period as it improved cornering. It did have mountings for the 1980's roll hoop which have been removed as part of the restoration.

Suspension and brakes

All suspension, front and rear, appears to be original and un-damaged C type. It retains the rare "A" frame top link rear axle location on the RHS only. This gives both lateral and fore and aft location. In period most of the actively raced cars had these removed and replaced by a simple forged straight upper link and a diagonal Panhard rod. In this car the "A" frame location was retained along with fitting a modern Panhard rod, which should not have worked, but somehow did!

As policy during the restoration, we have left the suspension surface finishes in the "as found" condition where practicable.

During its fairly recent racing life, the car had been converted to disc brakes. Fortunately the original drum brake assemblies were retained. These have been refurbished and refitted. The front



brakes have been fitted with huge aluminium air scoops which appear to be of great age. In all probability these were fitted in the early days of its life in the USA. The back plates have been drilled for improved air circulation in a typical 1950's USA style. The brake linings remain the old USA linings, which still show plenty of thickness.

The steering rack has been rebuilt and a new pinion supplied to replace the original which had become quite worn.

The front anti-roll bar had been removed and a heavy competition anti-roll bar fitted during its recent racing life. This has been removed and an original C type anti-roll bar sourced and reinstated in the car.

The rear axle is stamped with the serial number J52/B/24X which denotes the 1952 year of manufacture and is presumably axle number 24. This is logically in sequence for this chassis number as the first four cars were produced in 1951, and this is car number 28 but built in '52. As part of its race preparation, a competition ratio of 3.92:1 had been fitted. This would have been an annoyingly "busy" ratio for road use or tours. The original 3.54:1 ratio has therefore been sourced and fitted on an exchange basis. Interestingly the speedometer now reads correctly again!

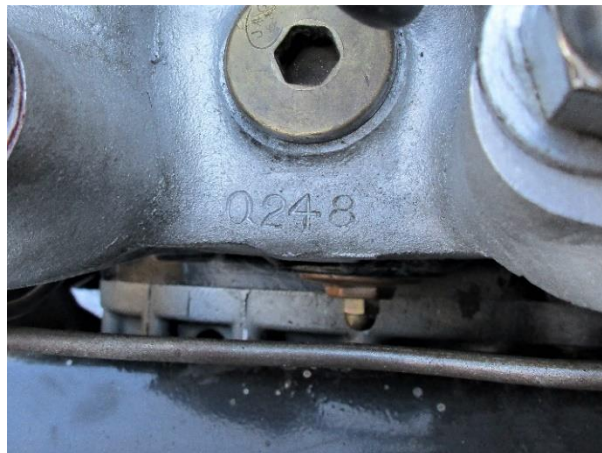


Note that all the brake lines have been replaced in the original zinc-plated steel "Bundy" tube, and all the bends have been done by hand rather than using a tube bender. Also, as correct for a C type, the lines are an unusual ¼ inch diameter, rather than the far more common 3/16".

The distinctive original C type shock absorbers had been replaced with adjustable modern US dampers for racing. As the best interim replacement, we have fitted Koni dampers. However this car deserves to have a set of the rare original C type dampers, if only we could secure a set. I doubt any C type now still has them fitted but I am presently following a lead on this.

Engine

As demonstrated by the untouched serial numbers, the engine appears original both in terms of the block and head. Again, many or most C types lost their original cylinder heads in period, in search of more power. Normally this was by fitting the later competition "C" type head, C7707. This head however is the original for the car and there is a stamping at the back of the spark plug "Vee" Q248. This number is further corroboration of its originality.



The sump pan is the correct two-part cast aluminium type. It has a flattened pan shape to lower the overall height of the engine. It has cooling fins running the full length of the underside, as the production C type was not equipped with an oil cooler.

The car had been fitted with a set of triple weber 40DCO3 carburettors for Historic racing, but they were not original to the car. Pleasingly, the original sand-cast 2 inch H8 SU carbs have been recovered, rebuilt and fitted back to the car.



As part of the race preparation, the cams were changed for a higher-performance profile. The engine had been quite recently overhauled in the USA. Because of these factors, it was decided to leave the engine and cams "as is". The drivability has not suffered and although the bottom end torque is slightly reduced, the trade-off is that the performance is actually now very good. The cam covers and sump were removed to check the internal state of the engine and the bearings, which we confirmed were in good condition, as we had hoped.

The original brass radiator still survived and this has been repaired, re-cored and refitted in place of the modern US aluminium competition example found in the car.

One nice period feature of the engine is the American core plugs. These are a neat expanding brass bung which seal in the hole when the domed centre nut is tightened. I have seen these on other cars of that period from the US. They work well and are a feature I would want to keep.



Gearbox

The serial number JH 13314 appears on the iron casing proving its originality. The C type gearbox is closely related to the so-called "Moss" box from the XK120, however it has a different top cover and has close ratio gears. The presence of these close ratio gears is shown by the fine grooves machined around the tips of the gear teeth, just visible in this photo.



Interior

The car had been fitted with a racing bucket seat and the driver's seat moved to the passenger side. The racing seat has been removed and the drivers seat has been put back in its place. With the car came an original passenger seat with a tool box built in under the seat base. Original as it is, it is not particularly pleasant for passenger comfort, so has been stored while a mirror-image of the drivers seat has been made for the passenger side. All have been re-covered in the authentic West of England cloth.

The trim is generally the correct ribbed silver Hadura typical of all original C types.

The three-spoked black plastic-coated steering wheel and the black moulded plastic gear knob may not seem the most sporting, but are 100% correct for the car. This steering wheel also was standard on just one other car, a quite rare pre-war MG!

The "Jaguar" badges, one of which was replica are now both reinstated originals.



The essential proof of this being the tiny name "J. Fray Ltd B'ham" on the reverse side. These are highly collectable and fetch astonishing prices.



The dash board has had the incorrect instrument holes re-filled, and has been restored back in the original silver. We know from period photos that this is correct. So often these were painted anti-glare black during their lives, just as this one had been.

Instruments and electrical

All instruments and electrical fittings in the car are period correct and either original to the car or totally authentic replacements. This extends to items you very rarely see like the two still-functioning Lucas ignition coils. These are distinguished by the raised rim around the base.



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The Distributor had been replaced with an unoriginal Mallory one presumably for racing. We have supplied and rebuilt a correct Lucas C type distributor for the car.

A nice detail, amongst many, are the original Lucas Le Mans 24 hour headlamps.



A particular feature of the car is that the main wiring loom is still original. It was in surprisingly good condition when I first saw it, and when the car was restored it was removed very carefully and then refitted as the car went back together again. Apart from being a nice thing to have, it demonstrates how well-kept and unmolested the car has generally been over the years.

Wheels and Tyres

Although they had been replaced for racing with steel-rim wire wheels, the rare and original Dunlop aluminium-rim C type wire wheels had been stored away and still survived with the car. These have been overhauled and re-fitted to the car. Here they are "as found".



In conclusion

XKC 028 is a particularly complete and correct C type, indeed I cannot think of a more original example. The condition is excellent and I believe it has had the most sensitive of restorations. I would particularly recommend it as a chance to see just how these cars looked on day one. Perhaps rather counter-intuitively, what is good about XKC 028 is that it actually did not race in period. This has saved it from the typical damage and crude modification that some cars suffered in racing at the time they were at their lowest value. It is absolutely a car to cherish and I would love to own it.