



Alan Hames

The Legend of

The Concours Years & Improving Jaguar's Excellent V12 E



Above: AVV 1 fitted with original Dunlop SP Sport whitewall tyres now not available – more recent pictures show blackwall SP Sport tyres. Below: 2nd January 1976 – Offside front to rear seriously damaged by the collapsed brick wall. Bonnet and wing flattened, windscreen shattered, hardtop split and rear wing and boot lid seriously dented.

Over the years 1972 through to 1991, with much help in car preparation from my son Ashley, I can hardly believe what AVV 1 and I have achieved together in Concours - 52 First Places and 23 Second Places!

I say I am surprised because until now I have never before properly looked at the records. These have been roughly jotted down over the years in a fuel and records log book in the car. Even I had not registered the totality of the achievements of my car and the recognition, of the attention to detail that I apply to AVV 1, by so many judges from England to Geneva.

This, over the years, 'is just the way I do things'.

From day one of my 43 years with AVV 1, in 1972, I started with the intention that this was a car that I never intended to sell and the first four years, up to the disaster in 1976, were difficult times for maintenance, as I was using my car as daily transport to my major construction sites. Driving throughout the winter months, the inevitable consequence, as with all cars, was that salt and corrosion would take its toll. Perhaps therefore, the wall crashing down onto AVV 1 was a 'blessing in disguise', although not seen as such at the time?



AVV 1

Part 3



After 1976, with a second car in daily use, I was able to look to dealing with all areas, both body and mechanical, that were not presentable, or that required attention. The objective became the maintenance of originality, but at the same time, where possible, improving the quality of finish and performance that was not achievable at the price, when AVV 1 was on the Jaguar production line.

An example of the lack of forethought during the Jaguar build in 1972 I am sure will be clear to any E Type owner, if a check is made on the bonnet assembly. When in production the majority of the panels

within the bonnet were factory assembled, with a multitude of nuts, bolts and oval washers and only at that point was the assembly painted. Clearly this resulted in all hidden areas between panels and fixings being left unpainted. These unfinished areas all later commenced the



Above: Alan with Sir William and Lady Lyons at Stoneleigh Show 1978 on JDC stand organised by Alan with assistance from Jaguar Cars, who helped with historic display cars from Browns Lane.

downward spiral of hidden deterioration, leading to rusted-through panels. I therefore took upon myself the task of disassembling the bonnet panel by panel, stripping these back to bare metal, copper/nickel plating against stone chipping and then home spraying each part. They were then reassembled with thin rubber interlayer gaskets to stop fretting of the new paint and all fixings were replaced with pattern matched items in stainless steel. The oval washers, a hundred or so, were individually cut out from sheet stainless steel, shaped and matt finished. My objective throughout has been to avert any future problems and as I always say, "do the job properly and try never to do it again."

This is the approach that has guided me over the years and it appears that I have managed to hold back rust in hidden and inaccessible areas. Even the large enclosed side lower sill areas have been protected, through access points I have made at either end inside the rear wheel arches and through the front bulkheads. These have allowed the use of a Waxoil spray gun to fully coat the whole internal areas. Since then I have been able to internally thoroughly inspect, using a colour screen endoscope. This has allowed checking the state of hidden areas, before the access points were sealed with removable panels. (See photograph)

In the early years there were numerous JDC concours events that were entered throughout the country and I have to say that after taking Angela to the Jaguar Spring Meeting at Beaulieu on four successive occasions, she did say that any future trips there, with me talking cars all day, she would be pleased to avoid!

Below: AVV 1 delivered for display, with Alan & Angela, in H. R. Owen showroom Kensington 1977 for JDC 21st celebrations and presentation of the "HR Owen Trophy".



Below: Alan and family at Castle Ashby House 8th August 1984, when on behalf of JDC we hosted the lunch for "Jaguar International Week"





Above:
AVV 1 competing in JDC
“Champion of Champions”
event at Jaguar Cars in
Browns Lane, Coventry.



Above:
Detailed AVV 1 judging
inside and out by the Benson
and Hedges team of judges
– nothing was missed by this
team!

Below:
The “Royal Brierley Trophy”,
(won three times) and the
“H. R. Owen Trophy” as JDC
“Champion of Champions”
in 1985.



However, 1981 was a year to remember, this being the 20th Anniversary of the launch of the E Type in Geneva. Angela and I therefore, took part in the ‘Register Commemorative Run’ with a week in Switzerland and this was a trip not

to be missed. In Dover we joined 89 other E Types and five other Jaguars for the drive down through France, which resulted in taking the whole deck of the car ferry for our cavalcade to the continent. It must however be said that before we boarded the ferry, whilst queuing in line, I was positioned directly

behind Graham Marr in his Series 1 E Type Roadster, (our present JDC Vice President) and when called forward he applied more than the necessary few revs and managed to spit black sooty marks all over the front of AVV 1. A few ripe comments resulted before friendly relations were restored!

Once over the channel the subsequent drive through Paris and down the French Autoroutes resulted in some amazement from drivers and public alike and for me some delay just short of Lyon, where I found my offside rear tyre was deflating from a cut in the tyre valve that had fretted during some speedy driving. After a tyre change, even speedier driving

was necessary to catch up with the convoy. Many of my E Type group later said that our progress had been impressive, as I overtook to fit back into my previous group position!!

The following day, (8th June), the UK E Types joined up with many others from all over Europe and our 94 cars became a total of nearer 200 E Types, at the main venue of Founex, near Geneva. The major International Concours d’Elegance then took place and at the end of day, AVV 1 and I were awarded 2nd Place, with entrants from our UK group and many competing cars from all over the continent. However, whilst I was taking part in the Concours, once again, my old friend Graham was not flavour of the day, when he found Angela beside the pool all ready for the evening events and informed her that she was going for a swim. Her subsequent drop into the pool was certainly not appreciated, but again all was happily resolved by the end of the day. The remainder of the week could make a story in itself, as this was a time when so many new friends were made who remain with us to this day, but this will have to await a later recounting!

From 1981 onward, this was the time when other major organisations began to take an interest in Concours d’Elegance events and with AVV 1, I was able to take part in events organised notably by ‘Benson & Hedges’ and subsequently by ‘Autoglym’. Also, the major showgrounds, such as Stoneleigh near Coventry, with their August Bank Holiday three day event, took an interest in cars and concours and Jaguar Cars also arranged Factory Open Days and events to celebrate their anniversaries. During this period there were so many trips that the recounting could make a book on its own. Also at this time, in 1981, it was the year of Sir William Lyons’s 80th birthday and, as a Director of the Club, over the years I had been requested to produce special Commemorative Plaques for noteworthy occasions. So, unsurprisingly, I was asked to do so again for Sir William. When completed this was mounted on a polished wood base and sent with congratulations. As can be seen from his later letter he said, “It is extremely good and I am grateful for the presentation.”

At this time there were particular notable Concours occasions, such as the ‘Stoneleigh Town & Country Festival’ in 1981, where AVV 1 was awarded Class First Prize for all cars 1965 to 1976 and Second Place Overall, against the 1000 cars total entry. Subsequently, in 1982, at the Jaguar Cars ‘Factory Open Day’, at the time of receiving my First Place award, it was gratifying to hear from Sir John Egan in his words:-

“AVV 1 is a beautiful car and when built at Jaguar we did not make them that good!”

Later awards included three first places as E Type Register, overall ‘Car of Show’, winning the Premier Award of the crystal glass ‘Royal Brierley Trophy’ in years 1979, 1985 and 1996 and later at the NEC the Jaguar Drivers’ Club overall award of ‘Champion of Champions’ as the



finest Jaguar in the JDC for 1985 and received the 'H.R.Owen Trophy'. In the Benson & Hedges series in 1989 my main award was also overall winner, as their 'Car of Show' at Beaulieu National Motor Museum,



presented to me at the time by Lord Montague of Beaulieu. Later, when 'Autoglym' took over the International Concours Series, a notable award was received at the 1994 'Goodwood Festival of Speed', where AVV 1 was once again 'Car of Show' and in the subsequent issue of 'Jaguar Driver', this was the featured cover picture.

By the time of 1999 my work was taking over more of my time as a Civil Engineering Consultant and, having on occasion at events been asked, "are you going to enter", it was clear to me that it was about time to step aside from major shows, as it appeared that new enthusiasts were not entering if AVV 1 was

taking part! I therefore continued with my enthusiasm for all matters E Type related, but entered no more Concours shows from that date to the present in 2015. Only one multi-vehicle event at Olney in 2014 resulted in a First Place, where I took part showing AVV 1, but had not entered for judging. Apparently, this was not the case and an unexpected call was received for AVV 1's award, much to my surprise. I did however, take the opportunity this year to take part in the Jaguar Cars Concours at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh, as it was about time that Angela and I made another long journey in AVV 1, to properly enjoy my car that had not travelled so far since the Geneva trip. We therefore took off on a 7 hour 350 mile drive hoping that the weather would be kind and enjoyed a long weekend in Scotland. With a sunny three days the 720 mile round trip was concluded with a final assessment of 18.25mpg, which just bettered my 1981 Geneva mpg, which all those years ago was just short at 17.9mpg. It appears that the V12 mechanicals are still in fine shape.

In conclusion, I have to say that the entering and winning of Concours events, with the regular help and support of my enthusiastic, (now older and married), young son Ashley, has not been my only pleasure.



It has additionally been derived from the time spent with so many like minded Jaguar drivers from all over the world and the ensuing discussions of how to fix 'this problem or that' and hearing of the trials and tribulations, (and the joy), that we all have from our cars over our years of ownership.



Above left: E Type 50th Anniversary event 2011 at "Recoh Stadium", Coventry, sponsored by Jaguar Cars
Above: Silverstone E Type 50th Anniversary event with AVV 1 in line for the cavalcade around the Grand Prix Circuit in company with 767 E Types Series 1 to 3. This was the greatest ever collection of 'E' Types and made the "Guinness Book of World Records".

Opposite: Access into rear sill with a colour display endoscope to check for condition and Waxoil coverage I had applied to protect the body from internal rusting.

Left: Rear brake air scoops with spot welds drilled out and dismantled for internal painting. Showing 2BA stainless steel bolted reassembly.

Right: Front suspension and various under trays and components after refinishing and ready for reassembly.

Below: Rear sub-frame assembly after total rebuild and about to be reinstalled.