

A Mark VII Story by David Seidel

On Avoiding Picking Up Dead Cats on Football Match Days

Mark VII in Need of a New Home

The advert in the Saturday Advertiser read “Mark VII Jaguar with part disassembled motor. Must go. Yard clean-up. Father getting edgy, son has lost interest. Price... Phone... etc”

After an enquiry and inspection, I discovered that the boot contained part of a cylinder head and carburettors lying on some old newspapers. The father had a very neat and tidy home in Thebarton and told me he wanted it gone, so I paid up with the promise that I would remove this eyesore on the following Saturday.

However, he gave me the stern warning that next Saturday footy was being played at the nearby oval, and I should arrive early as “idiots park almost on top of my driveway” and I could have a problem backing my truck and car trailer down the rear of the drive to extract the Jag. Secondly, he said he was a shift worker and would be at home when I came but would be sleeping, although his wife would be up and about. OK, all duly noted.

The Pickup

This was with my Bedford TK tipper with longer than usual Kessner car trailer attached. Shane Dunstone (early member of JDC) came along to give some assistance. When we turned down the Thebarton side street, I was truly faced with a big problem. Cars were indeed on both sides of the street and – wouldn't you know it – one Holden HR was parked very tightly on the edge of the drive.

I figured as a very clever truck driver I just might squeeze down the drive with some expert skill. Well, try as I may I could not do it. Plan B then came into play: I would try once more and if no luck would disconnect the trailer and manhandle it down the drive, then back the truck up to it. On this last try I got too close to the offending HR Holden and my trailer smashed the right-hand rear tail light clean out.

The father was right – some idiot had hogged the drive – and he deserved what he got. So, trailer off, down drive,



David's Mark VII. Rescuing broken down “cats” doesn't always go to plan.

hook up truck, winch on Jaguar with 2 flat tyres... now to get out. By the time I proceeded to slowly move down the drive towards the street, the now partially awake dad was out of bed. I told him he was right, and some thoughtless idiot had over-parked his drive but serve him right, I got his back-tail light.

Now fully awake, the reply came very swiftly with a degree of anger and disbelief as he informed me that it was his car which he had parked there with the intention of moving it when I arrived, thus giving me more room to manoeuvre. His wife had previously told me that his Holden was his pride and joy. Words failed me.

After offering to pay for the damage, I got in the truck and proceeded towards the street with the whole ensemble. We folded the two cast iron driveway gates inwards as far as possible before making a very tight turn out into the street. Bang! Slash! Whang! – one of the rear wings on the trailer hooked on one of the gates, which smashed into 16 pieces. The now totally wide-awake shift worker grabbed at the remaining piece and shook it, saying that he didn't want it anyway. Again, I did offer to pay damages.

Now successfully out into the street, away we went, shaken and somewhat stirred. Shane then reminded me that I had left my very expensive vice grips on the front fence.

Note to reader: Did I go back for them? You will have to guess!

Moral of The Story

Some cats do have nine lives. I eventually took the head off completely to discover the Jag did have a burnt valve with no piston damage, so I replaced it with a very sound head. Guess what? It ran very well.

The moral of this story is to never get between a sleepy shift worker, his pet car and his pet gate.

I dedicate this article to the late Shane Dunstone who was a very early member of the JDC and my dear friend, who died far too soon and is still greatly missed.

David Seidel
JDC Life Member

Editor- David is one of the kindest person's I have ever known. Why he ever helped me during my teenage years when my cars broke down, I will never know. I had a Mark 5, lowered with wide wheels and twin exhausts with motor bike mufflers. It used to sound like a low flying aeroplane. David lived at Hampstead and used to joke when I went to visit him that he could hear me coming all the way from ABC Collinswood Centre, several kilometres away!