

Jaguar Mk VII - The Case For and Against by John Williams

So often a father's influence is to blame for one's abiding interests. As a little tacker I learnt to draw sitting on my father's knee looking at him sketching, often a rakish car with wire wheels and long, long bonnet in the style of English automotive illustrator Gordon Crosby.

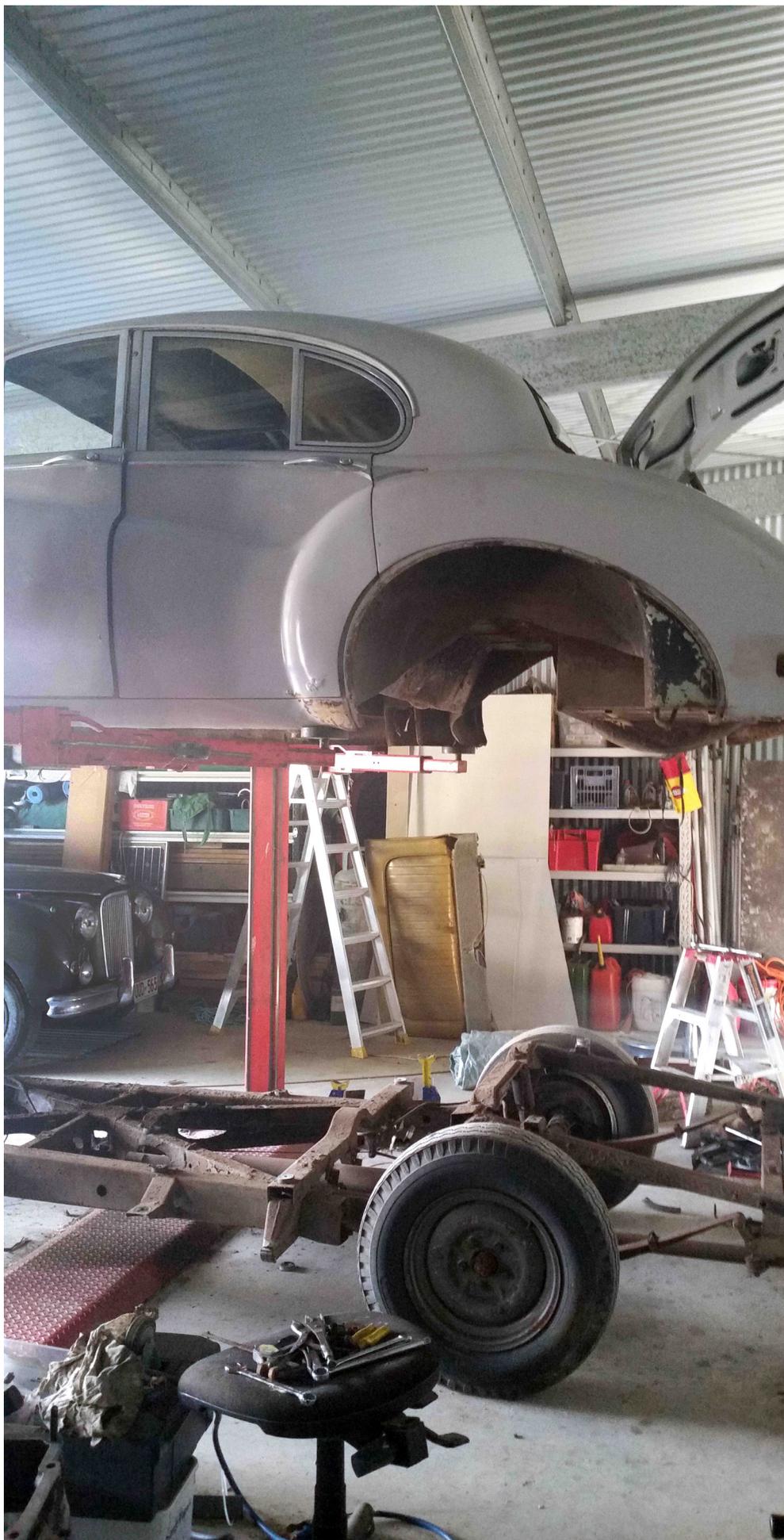
He in turn was brought up at Foleshill Vicarage and saw test cars coming past from the SS car factory at Foleshill. He became an automotive and aircraft engineer and I drew buildings for a living and in my spare time collected cars with long bonnets.

The Mark VII as we all know is an unloved child, however it is the first Jaguar designed. 'What!' I hear some murmuring, yes but... The MkV used the chassis designed for the MkVII with a modified prewar SS body and engine and the 120 used both the MkVII chassis and its engine. The MkVII's late arrival on the show stands was due to some extent to production delays because Rolls Royce motor company got the jump on William Lyons for tooling up and pressing panels for their new model at Press Steel Company, Cowley. The E type boys should bow reverence to the MkVII for providing them with that glorious engine and even the V12 crowd because as we see in the early photos during V12 development it is just two Siamese MkVII engines.

Ponderous it may look, but it won many a cup for the factory with consecutive wins 52, 53, 54, 55 & 56 at the International Trophy Production Touring Car race at Silverstone with drivers Stirling Moss, Ian Appleyard, Tony Rolt, Mike Hawthorn, Jimmy Stewart, Paul Frere and Ivon Bueb. Ronnie Adams then won the Monte Carlo Rally outright in 56 and Paul Goldsmith won the Road America NASCAR race for cars up to 3500cc.

My reason for owning them (two MkVIIMs):

- a) they are cheap (sometimes people give them away);
- b) summer night driving with the roof open onto that glorious southern sky and those ultra violet dash lights caressing the dials (MkVII owners secret business)
- c) that long robust chassis floats over the ruts on the dirt roads of the southern



John's Mark VII M undergoing a body off restoration.

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Flinders Ranges (roads probably not unlike those of the immediate post war Monte Carlo rally)

d) glorious cam covers reminding you of that Rolls Royce Merlin engine you saw as a child in the science museum

e) they have a sort of purity that only the 'original design' tends to have before its tweaked and modified.

Reason against owning a MkVII,

a) if you decide one Sunday morning on a whim to try and take the body off, it is very very heavy and once you have managed to remove it, where do you put it, its big and heavy

b) we are all going to have to hang up the petrol bowser sometime soon, so the MkVII Jaguar and Mk1 Land Rover owners may as well be first in line.

Happy motoring.

John Williams



John's Mark VII M with the distinctive purple dashboard lights.



Two Mark VII M's peeking out of the paddock shed doors.