

JAGUAR

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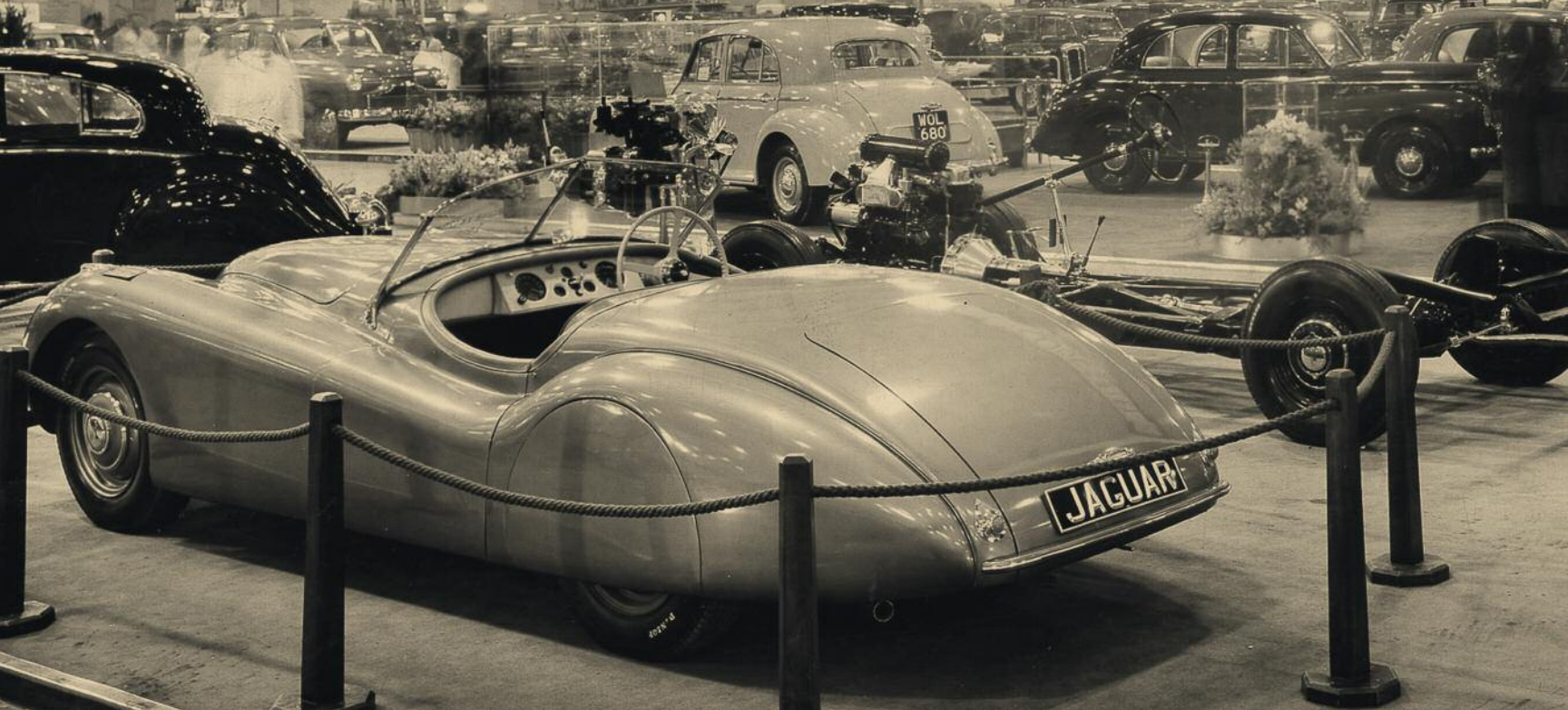
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JAGUAR

A HISTORY OF GRACE AND PACE

By Anders Ditlev Clausager

The maxims adopted by automobile manufacturers are an amusing byway of automotive history. They were intended to convey what we now call the brand image. A few well-chosen words could become instantly recognizable and memorable, forever associated with a particular marque. Famous examples in the United States were “Ask the Man Who Owns One” for Packard, and “Standard of the World” for Cadillac. In Britain, Rolls-Royce was “The Best Car in the World” and MG stood for “Safety Fast!” In present times, Audi’s “*Vorsprung durch Technik*” is internationally recognized.

Jaguar, too, has had a number of similar mottos. The classic has to be “Grace... Space... Pace,” which was used throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Today, we describe Jaguars simply as “Beautiful Fast Cars,” which I suppose is a kind of post-modernist version of the original slogan, still containing synonyms for “Grace” and “Pace”—I am not quite sure what happened to the “Space.”

The London Motor Show, held in 1948 at the Earls Court, was the venue for the first public showing of the Jaguar XK 120.



Left: A 1938 SS Jaguar 100, the first time that Jaguar matched the name of a car to its top speed of 100 mph.

Below: The 1935 S.S.I Airline is perhaps the most striking of all the S.S.I body styles, with many unique features such as the twin wing-mounted spare wheels.

We trace the lineage of the Jaguar marque back almost ninety years, although the Jaguar name itself was adopted only in 1935, seventy-five years ago, which is the anniversary that we now celebrate in 2010. Of current automobile manufacturers, Jaguar is a comparative newcomer: many marques have been in existence for a hundred years or more. But Jaguar has managed to pack quite a lot into those seventy-five years!

Its origins were humble. In 1922, two young men, both keen motorcyclists, set up a small company in Blackpool on the northeastern coast of England and began to make motorcycle sidecars, a then common means of transport. The younger man was William Lyons, and legend has it that the company's

founding date was September 4, 1922, his twenty-first birthday, as he had to reach that age legally to enter into a business partnership. He later became Sir William Lyons (1901–1985), the founder who served the company for fifty years as chairman and chief executive.

Lyons was a born entrepreneur, and had a rare flair for styling. The early sidecars bore the name Swallow, and although successful, were not by any means the final goal for the young man's ambitions. Within a few years, he extended the Swallow company's activities to making coachwork on various automobile chassis, starting with the little Austin Seven in 1927.



Right: The SS 100 Fixed Head Coupe Prototype was introduced at the Earls Court London Motor Show in 1938. It appeared at the Pebble Beach Concours in 1989.

Below: A small number of SS 100 chassis were sent to European coachwork companies to be bodied. This 1939 chassis was delivered to the small Belgian coachbuilder Van den Plas to be rebodied after the war.



With its Swallow body this car became far more stylish, yet could still be sold at an affordable price. Its success made it desirable for Swallow to find bigger premises in the heartland of the British motor industry, so at the end of 1928, the entire operation was uprooted from Blackpool and moved down to Coventry.

The range was soon extended with Swallow coachwork on other chassis, most notably from the local Standard company. In 1931 Lyons concluded an agreement with Standard for this company to supply him with a new specially designed chassis that would be exclusive to the Swallow company. On this he designed a distinctive and stylish coupé body, which was launched at the London Motor Show in October 1931 as the six-cylinder S.S.I, together with a smaller four-cylinder companion model, the S.S.II. Historians still argue over how the acronym SS should be interpreted, but we may assume that it was derived from "Standard Swallow."

In addition to their distinctive and stylish design, the two new cars offered good performance and sold at very reasonable prices. They were successful from the start; annual production increased from a modest 775 cars in the first year to 2,000 in 1934. The range was extended with a variety of other body styles, and engines were improved. Some were exported, and a small number even found their way to the United States. S.S.I tourers performed well in the 1934 Alpine Trial, and in 1935 a short-chassis sports car version, the S.S.90, was built in small numbers.

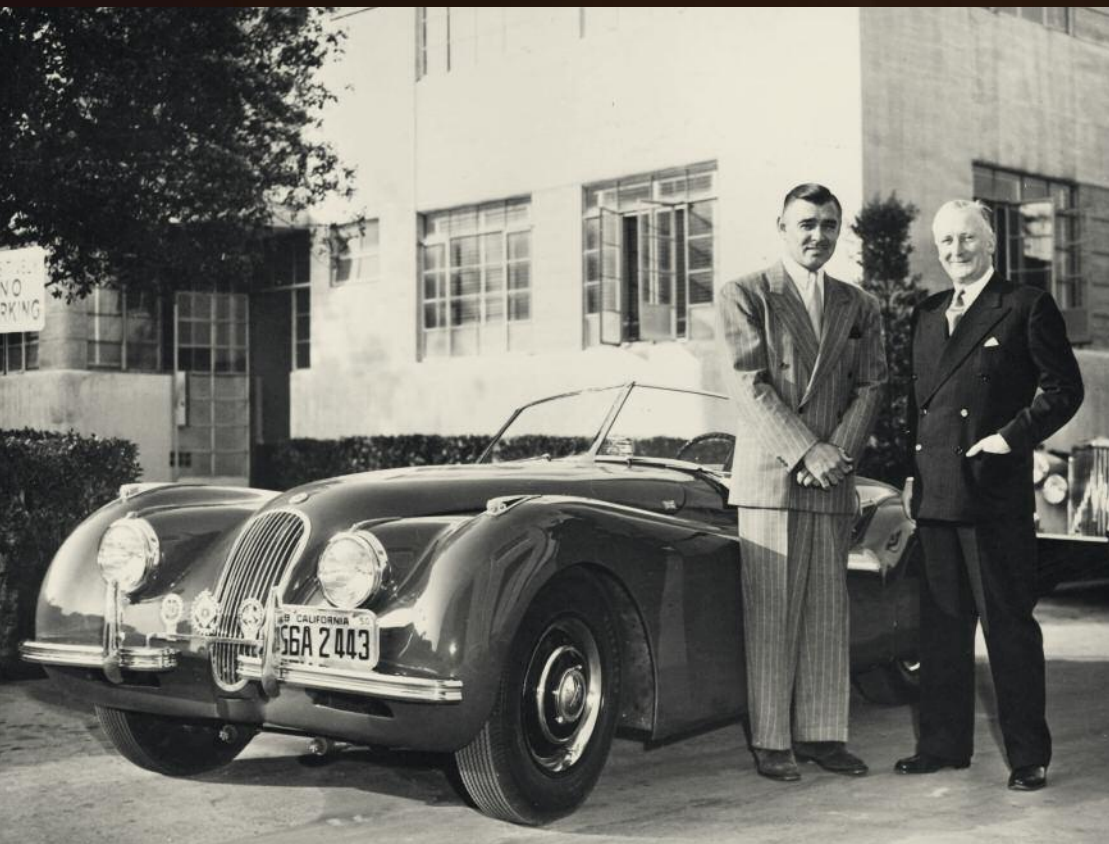
Lyons always wanted to improve his cars; his ambition was ultimately to build one of the finest luxury cars in the world. The S.S. cars still used conventional side-valve Standard engines, but Lyons commissioned a new overhead-valve six-cylinder engine, which from the same capacity gave



50 percent more power. This new engine was installed in a new chassis, and fitted with the first four-door sedan body made by S.S. Lyons felt his new model deserved a new name, and he personally selected "Jaguar" from a list drawn up by his advertising people. On September 23, 1935, the new car was duly launched to the press in London, as the SS Jaguar.

The SS Jaguar certainly embodied the Grace, the Space and not least the Pace, with a top speed well over 85 mph. A short-chassis sports car version, the SS Jaguar 100, also lived up to the maxim, with a top speed in 3.5-liter form of just over the magic 100 mph, yet it cost only £445. Although this was a limited-production model, with just 309 cars made, it had an impact with wins in the British RAC Rally. By 1939, annual production of SS Jaguars had grown to 5,000 cars, with three different sizes of engines, mostly sedans but also convertibles.

Then the company had to turn to other activities, contributing to Britain's war effort. Sidecars were still being manufactured, right up to 1945, but the company also became involved with aircraft and made the center section of the fuselage for the



After taking delivery of a new alloy Jaguar XK 120, Clark Gable had it repainted in his trademark silver-gray. Here, he is handed the keys by William Lyons himself, who was not averse to assuming the role of car salesman occasionally.

New York, and “Chuck” Hornburg in Los Angeles. The cars began to find favor with a Hollywood clientele; Clark Gable bought his first Jaguar in 1948.

Behind the scenes, Lyons and his engineers were working on a revolutionary new engine for the postwar cars. They decided to adopt two overhead camshafts, a feature hitherto found only on expensive and temperamental sports and racing cars. The aim was for 160 bhp from 3.4 liters, which would be required to give

Gloster Meteor, Britain’s first jet-engined fighter plane, which went into service with the Royal Air Force in 1945. The factory escaped the worst of the bombing that had devastated Coventry in 1940.

At the end of the Second World War, management decided to change the name of the company and the cars simply to Jaguar, since the initials SS had become infamous in another context. The first postwar cars were little changed but the sports car was no longer produced. Exports were now far more important for the British motor industry, and Jaguar began to build up an international dealer network. In the United States eventually two main agents were appointed, Max Hoffmann in

a full-size sedan a top speed of 100 mph. Lyons decided to showcase the new engine in a brand-new sports car, which was designed in a matter of weeks and unveiled to the public at the first postwar London Motor Show in 1948. The car was called the XK 120, XK from the engine, and 120 for the expected top speed in miles per hour.

The new car took the world by storm. It was one of Lyons’ most beautiful designs; the engine was a sensation, the claimed top speed almost unbelievable, and the advertised factory price of £988 similarly stretched credulity. The orders poured in, not least from the United States. In June 1949, Lyons took a prototype to Belgium for a demonstration run,



The 1951 C-type XK003 just prior to leaving for Le Mans, still wearing its trade license plates. It won the 24 hour race—the first of five Jaguar wins on the fabled French circuit.



Phil Hill and his alloy XK 120 won the Pebble Beach Cup at the first Pebble Beach Road Races in 1950.

Right: After Jaguar retired from direct involvement in racing, the Ecurie Ecosse team from Scotland was victorious at Le Mans in 1956 and 1957. The happy 1957 team celebrates, with drivers Ron Flockhart at the wheel and Ivor Bueb sitting on the rear of the 3.8-litre D-type XKD606.

Below: The series 1 Jaguar E-type, or XK-E Coupé, was an immediate hit reminiscent of the XK 120 launch. Even Enzo Ferrari called it "the most beautiful car ever made."

and the car was timed at an average of 132.6 mph. Two months later, an XK 120 won its first race at the Silverstone circuit. Deliveries began in late 1949. An XK 120 made its first U.S. race appearance at Palm Beach in January 1950, while Clark Gable had the first example that came to the West Coast. The young racing driver Phil Hill soon also acquired an XK 120, which he drove to victory at Pebble Beach in November 1950.

Six early XK 120s were specially prepared by the factory for competition, including Ian Appleyard's famous rally car (NUB 120), the car that Stirling Moss drove to victory in the 1950 Tourist Trophy, and three cars that were entered in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in France in June 1950. They performed so well that Jaguar decided to build a special lightweight aerodynamic racing version that might stand a reasonable chance of winning at Le Mans. This was the XK 120 C—with the "C" for competition—which soon became known as the C-type. Three such cars were ready for the 1951 Le Mans race, and one of them won. This was Jaguar's first Le Mans victory, and it made Jaguar a household name around the world.

By now the XK engine had been fitted also in the big Mark VII luxury sedan, with room for up to six people and luggage, and with a top speed as intended of 100 mph. With the XK 120 and Mark VII in production, it became necessary for the company to move to a larger factory, on Browns Lane on the outskirts of Coventry. The factory had been built for an aero engine manufacturer in 1939 but was then vacant. It was to remain Jaguar's main plant until 2005.

After a setback in the 1952 Le Mans, when Jaguar's first attempt at streamlining failed, the C-types returned and won again in 1953; these cars were fitted with disc brakes that Dunlop had developed jointly with Jaguar. The 1953 Le Mans victory was the first time that a major race had been won by a disc-braked car. It was also the first time that Le Mans had been won at an average of over 100 mph. In 1954 the C-type gave way to the D-type, which did not win Le Mans on its





The 1951 Jaguar Mark VII of Charles H. Hornburg Jr., the West Coast distributor for Jaguar who was responsible for many of the Jaguars that raced at Pebble Beach during the 1950s. Jaguar designed a modern streamlined body for its first all-new postwar saloon car. The Mark VII replaced the Mark V but because there was already a Bentley Mark VI on the market, Jaguar decided to call its next model the Mark VII.

debut but which did finish a very close second to a Ferrari with a much bigger engine. D-types went on to win Le Mans three years running, from 1955 to 1957. The final two wins were by the Scottish Ecurie Ecosse team; the factory team actually pulled out of racing in 1956.

Limited numbers of production versions of both the C-type and D-type were made, and many of these cars were exported to the United States. At the end of D-type production some cars were converted into the short-lived XK-SS models in 1957; just sixteen of these cars were made and most were sold in the United States. A devastating fire in the Jaguar factory on February 12, 1957, put an end to any further development of either the D-type or the XK-SS, although production was back to normal with weeks.

The company had expanded its model range with the compact 2.4-liter saloon in 1955 and the 3.4-liter version in 1957; these were the first Jaguars to use unitary body construction as

opposed to separate chassis and body, and were the forerunners of the face-lifted Mark II range of 1959, which also included a 3.8-liter 120 mph version. On the sports car front, the XK 120 had given way to the XK 140 in 1954, which in turn was replaced by the XK 150 in 1957—the first production model with disc brakes as standard, and a top speed of 135 mph in the 3.8-liter three-carburetor “S” model. This XK range finally bowed out in 1960, after more than 30,000 cars had been made.

The replacement for the XK was the iconic E-type, which was originally designed as a new racing car (a prototype was run at Le Mans by the U.S. team of Briggs Cunningham in 1960) but instead was developed to become a Grand Touring sports car. The new model was launched at the Geneva Auto Show in March 1961 and at the New York show the following month, in open two-seater and fixed-head coupé versions. Again, it created a sensation, with its sensuous styling, 150-mph top speed, and a price that was much less than any other car offering comparable performance.

The E-type was a great commercial success, with more than 72,000 cars made until 1974, but it was never as successful in racing, its best result being a fourth place at Le Mans in 1962. Jaguar did consider a return to racing in the 1960s and designed a brand-new car, having a mid-engined layout with a V12 engine, but this XJ13 prototype remained a one-off and was never raced. Thankfully it survives to this day. Its development had to be abandoned as Jaguar concentrated on the design of the new sedan range that was launched as the XJ6 in 1968, setting new benchmarks for safety and refinement. Some commentators even began to compare Jaguar with Rolls-Royce, especially when a production V12 engine was fitted in 1972, a year after this engine had made its debut in the final E-type.

The XJ6 and XJ12 sedans remained Jaguar’s main models until the 1990s. Alongside was the



Three E-type coupés took part in the Pebble Beach Concours in 1962.

Thirty-one years after the last Jaguar won at Le Mans, the Jaguar XJR-9 was victorious at the grueling 24 hour race. The winning 7-litre car was driven by Jan Lammers, Johnnie Dumfries and Andy Wallace.

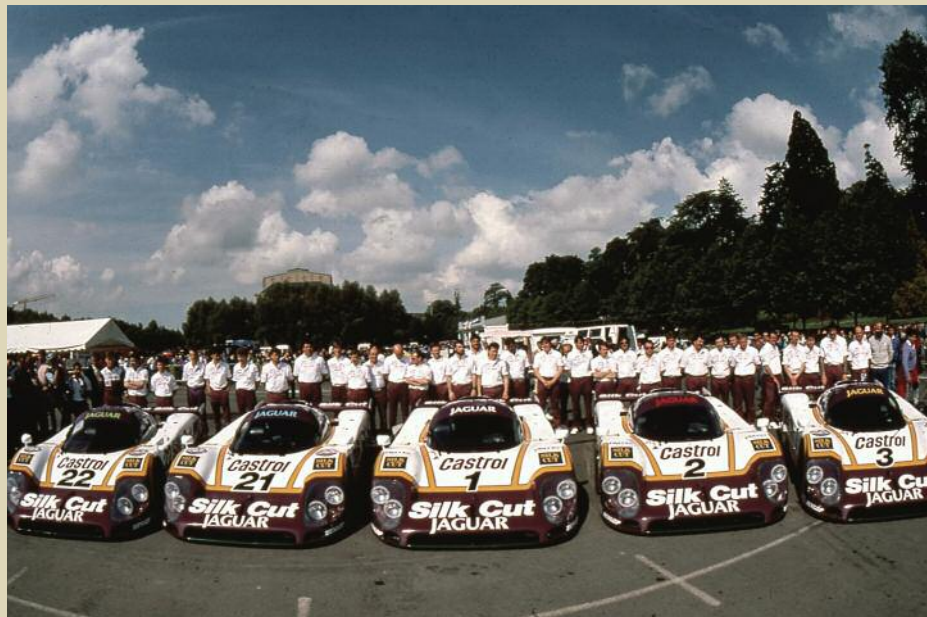
XJ-S, a Grand Touring car launched with the V12 engine in 1975 and later available with the new six-cylinder engine that replaced the XK and was installed in the new XJ40 sedan range in 1986. The XJ-S heralded a successful return to competition for Jaguar; Tom Walkinshaw's TWR team won the European Touring Car Championship in 1984. In the United States, the E-type V12 and the XJ-S had both been raced successfully, notably by Bob Tullius and his Group 44 team. Group 44 built a racing sports car with the Jaguar V12 engine for the IMSA GTP championship, and this car was taken to Europe where it appeared at Le Mans in 1984 and 1985.

The TWR team also built a racing sports car, which debuted in the World Endurance Championship in 1985. The TWR-JaguarSport team had a successful career through 1993, including two victories at Le Mans in 1988 and 1990, and winning three Championships. The team raced in the United States beginning in 1988, and their rewards included a win in their debut race, the 24 Hours of Daytona in 1988, and in the same race in 1990.

By now the Jaguar company had seen many changes. In 1966 Sir William Lyons had merged his company with BMC, the big British manufacturer of MG cars among others, and two years later both BMC and Jaguar became part of the British Leyland combine, which was effectively nationalized in 1975. These were unhappy years for Jaguar, and they came to an end only when the company was separately privatized in 1984 under the dynamic leadership of Sir John Egan. Just five years later Jaguar shareholders accepted a takeover bid from the Ford Motor Company, which was to own Jaguar until 2008.

The period of Ford ownership saw the Jaguar model range renewed and extended. From 1992 to 1994, a short run was made of the magnificent XJ 220 supercar, the fastest—and most expensive—Jaguar ever built. There was an improved X300 sedan range in 1994, and then the XJ-S was replaced by the XK8 in 1996, featuring for the first time a V8 engine, which also found its way under the hood of the sedans in 1997. In 1998 the smaller S-type sedan was launched, the first Jaguar to be assembled in the company's factory at Castle Bromwich near Birmingham.

Expansion continued with the baby Jaguar, the X-type, featuring V6 engines and four-wheel drive, built in the former Ford factory at Halewood near Liverpool in the northeast of England



from 2000 to 2009. This was not the only departure from Jaguar's traditional heritage; for a number of years the original Ford-Stewart Formula One team campaigned under the Jaguar name, sadly without any marked success. Eventually the team was sold to its main sponsor and became the Red Bull team.

In 2000, Ford had bought Land Rover from BMW, and it proceeded to create the Premier Automotive Group. The major new Jaguar during this period was the aluminum-bodied XJ sedan of 2002. Then in 2008, Ford decided to sell Jaguar and Land Rover to the Indian Tata Motors corporation, and it remains in their hands today. In the meantime, Jaguar had launched the first models of a new generation, the XK sports car, which was like the XJ with an aluminum body. It was followed in 2007 by the midsize XF sedan, which marked a break with Jaguar styling traditions but was widely acclaimed for its bold and striking, yet elegant, modern design by chief designer Ian Callum. Two years later came Callum's all-new XJ sedan, following similar design themes. For the time being, this completes Jaguar's range of three different models.

Over the past seventy-five years, Jaguar has become well established as one of the world's premier luxury brands, with a succession of models that have lived up to the precepts of combining "grace" and "pace." Jaguars are simply "Beautiful Fast Cars."

Anders Ditlev Clausager has been the chief archivist of Jaguar Heritage since 2000, having previously held a similar position with the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust. He has master's degrees in history as well as automotive design and is an internationally acclaimed historian who has authored numerous books, including of course titles on Jaguar.