BVAC News August 2026

Editor's Ramblings

I hope the recent sunny weather has encouraged you all to be out and about in your classic cars, especially those of you lucky enough to be able to get the top down. At least the heat has been more bearable round here than down south!

This month, as well as the usual reports on club activities, we have the conclusion of Robert Stewart's article about changing the engine on the Alvis 12/70, an article from Peter Charlesworth on a radical upgrade of his 1968 Jaguar S-Type and a report on a trip to Le Mans. I hope you'll find something interesting amongst that lot!

Readers last month will have noticed a picture in the Shetland article of a bright blue Jaguar F-Type – this is the 'Project 7' car which belongs to the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust and Rob Jenner brought it to Shetland. Letitia Mace has promised more information on this remarkable car for next month's BVAC News.

Clear roads, David editor@bvac.org.uk

Events Reports

Milestone 12th July

Our regular breakfast meet was graced by fine weather and a varied selection of interesting cars. I'll let the pictures do the talking.







 Contact – Editor: David Hunter editor@bvac.org.uk; Secretary: Kenny Wilson 01896 849597





Club Barbeque 18th July

Ken and Helen Grimes provided their traditional excellent hospitality at their home in Innerleithen and a very pleasant time was enjoyed in fine weather by all who attended. The traditional informal concours was held with everyone voting for 'the car I'd most like to take home'. The winner was Alastair Carr with this rather fine Jaguar E Type (pictured at Milestone recently), followed by Cliff and Irene Tosh's Mercedes SLC and Hugh Barry's Austin Healey 3000.





At the time of writing, I don't have any information to hand about the Beal drive last weekend and the Duns and Longframlington shows will have happened by the time you read this. I'll be at Longframlington, but if anyone can contribute words or pictures about the other two events, I'll include them next month.

Future Events *[click on the titles to link to the appropriate web page]*

Ford & Etal Classic Car Show 9th August 2026

This has now become an annual event in our car show calendar being a super show organised by the Estate on the Etal show field and supported by a number of crafters stalls and food and

drink vendors. We gather at the Blue Bell Inn at Crookham for tea, coffee and bacon rolls before setting off for the final short distance to the show. Booking forms are online and pre-payment is required for both Blue Bell Inn and the show.

Garage Visit 23rd August

Come along to Scott Brown Cars at Reston from 2-5pm, no booking required. Catering will be provided by the Jim Clark Café of Duns.

Bo'ness Hill Climb Classic Car Show 6th September

Kielder Vintage and Classic Rally 6th September

A choice of venues depending on your preference – west or south.

Carhailes 13th September

The return of this popular show which was missing from the calendar last year, held in the grounds of the National Trust for Scotland's Newhailes House in Musselburgh.

Car Treasure Hunt 3rd October

A run through some of the delightful back roads of the Borders packed with brain teasers and tests of observation, starting from Jedburgh. The number of cars may have to be limited, so get your entries in quick!

All our events are on the club website as are the dates of the monthly gathering at Milestone Garden Centre. Check out further shows and events.

Alvis 12/70 SC Engine Swap, Part 2 by Robert Stewart



Fitting The New Engine.

The next job was to prepare the donor engine for fitting.

When I removed the thermostat housing, it was found to be gummed up with RadWeld or some similar water leak sealer.

I removed the water pump and thermostat housing along with the water jacket at the back of the engine. This allowed me to clean out the water gallery.

Some of the aluminium covers were in poor condition so I chose to use the ones from the original engine. I also used the push rod side covers as they were different as the replacement engine came with twin 1 ½ inch SU carbs which I will not be using at this time (the twin carbs have no choke and have a manual cold start mechanism) and the throttle linkage is different.

New gaskets were made and fitted, however when test filling the rear plate connecting the water from the head to the block would not seal. I ended up using "Optimum max temp gasket maker" (brilliant stuff would highly recommend) which worked a treat. When I removed the "rocker cover" I discovered a bent pushrod on the exhaust valve for cylinder 3. I put the pushrod in the lathe and ran it against a block of wood which straightened it up nicely.



Engine ready to be fitted

I decided to fit the inlet and exhaust manifold and carburettor before installing the engine, as this affords greater access to tighten the nuts. The original single carburettor was fitted and the linkages adjusted. I was using the distributor that came with the donor engine, as there were differences from my original, again linkages had to be adjusted for manual advance/retard.

The dynamo and starter were now fitted.

At this point I was able to run the engine with a temporary exhaust and fuel supply. This allowed me to set the ignition timing with the engine running (having already set it up using a meter across the points and a starting handle to turn the engine over as covered in the 12/70 manual).

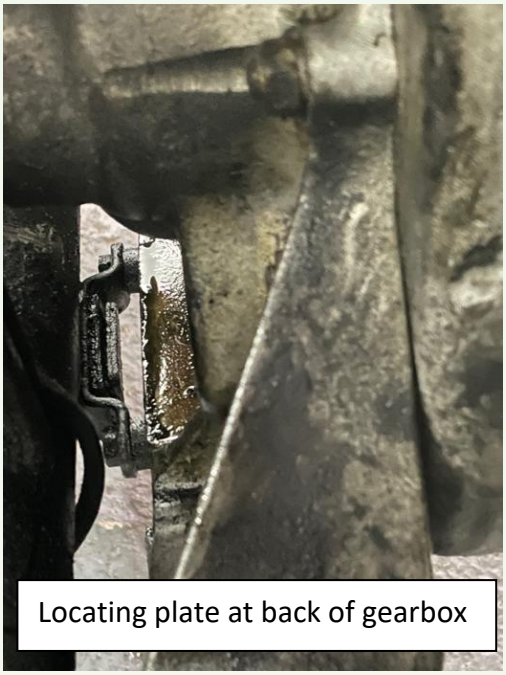
The donor engine now removed from the test cradle and suspended on the hoist and the gearbox which had been removed from the original engine was offered up and bolted into place. A new fan belt was fitted (worth doing as it is difficult to replace with the engine in the car).

All nuts and bolts got new plain and spring washers, any suspect nuts and bolts were discarded and replaced. The manifold nuts were all replaced with brass ones.

The engine and gearbox were now ready to fit in the car. Once more I am indebted to Rob and John, who came and helped with the fitting of the engine and gearbox.

The main problem we came across while refitting the engine and gearbox was the gearbox mounts which had to be forced into place. I am sure there must be a better way. It came out easily due to one of the mounting plates with the single bolt had become delaminated from the rubber.

The engine was now in place. At this point I discovered that I had not fitted the clutch lever on to the gearbox!



Locating plate at back of gearbox

This error meant I had to lift the gearbox out of the rear mounts to allow the lever to slide on to its peg.

The clutch and brake levers are in line with each other and the gearbox needs to be lifted approx. 50mm to allow for fitting.

As I was now doing this solo, I lifted the gearbox and forced the gearbox off the rear mounts using the hoist.

I then modified the gearbox mount by modifying one of the mounting holes on the gearbox into a slot which allowed fitting without forcing it.

Clutch lever now fitted I reconnected everything to the engine.

It is worth noting that the removal of the exhaust will make the fitting of the downpipe easier. I did not do this and I have the cuts and bruises to prove it!

Everything went back together well and after fitting the radiator, lights, doors and bonnet it was time to recheck everything was tight and correctly connected.

The batteries were fitted and connected. The engine, gearbox and the radiator were filled. Some fuel was put in the petrol tank and I then switched on the ignition, the fuel pump started up and the fuel pipe to the carburettor was found to be leaking ignition off, this pipe was replaced and ignition turned back on, no leaks.

After the fuel pump slowed down as the fuel was in the carburettor, I pulled out the choke, opened the throttle and pressed the starter, after a couple of seconds the engine started up and settled into a very slow tick over which I increased at the carburettor.

All lights were checked and the brakes were tested before a short test drive where oil pressure 45psi temp came up to 70C and battery was charging.

Back home and check over everything once more then set off to fill up with fuel. I managed to get ½ mile before the engine cut out with what turned out to be a faulty rotor arm in the distributer, once I replaced it the engine ran without issue.

I am now in the process of running the engine in.

After the first 500 miles at max speed 40 mph an oil change with a filter clean was carried out.

All fixtures and fastenings were checked.

Oil consumption for the first 500 miles was 1.5 Litre and fuel consumption was 23.5 mpg.

I have now covered 2000 miles and in the last 1000 miles the engine has used 1 Litre of oil and fuel consumption is now 23.9 MPG (original spec is 23 – 25 MPG), so things are improving as the engine beds in.

I put the car in to Cameron at “Ramsay Coachtrimmers” in Loanhead for new carpets as the old ones were worn and soaked in oil.

The car is now looking and driving great and I look forward to seeing you all at some of the many events we will be attending this year.





These pictures of the stitching and the repaired block belong with the previous episode.

Sorry, Ed

 Contact – Editor: David Hunter editor@bvac.org.uk; Secretary: Kenny Wilson 01896 849597

An Old Cat Turned Over a New Leaf by Peter Charlesworth

Why I electrified my 1968 Jaguar S-Type

We've all been there. You look out at a beautiful morning, want to take your car out for a quick spin, and then reality bites. Getting it started, the thick plume of smoke, a slow warm-up, stalling at the traffic lights, heavy steering at low speed, and the rising doubt as to whether you'll actually get there at all. I bought my 1968 Jaguar S-Type 3.8 in 2021 but found, for all the reasons above that I was only using it occasionally. It was more of an ornament than a practical companion. It would require a radical leap of faith and a significant commitment to modern engineering to turn it into a true daily driver, focusing entirely on utility, reliability, and modern refinement.



The transformation began with structural salvation at Classic and Retro in Durham, where significant areas of rust and filler were cut out and replaced with new panels. Inner and outer sills, wheelarches, b-pillars, door bottoms, and front and rear valances were the worst offenders. With a solid foundation to work from, and a





lower-half respray in matching cream paint the engineering could begin. I sourced a written-off 40kWh Nissan Leaf 2.0 as the donor vehicle. Kinghorn EV expertly mated the Leaf's motor to the Jaguar's original gearbox using a bespoke adapter plate. There was no butchery, drilling or cutting; the new motor, inverter and batteries are all attached to the Jaguar's existing chassis mounting points, it's all completely reversible. Everything we didn't need was recycled, with the XK engine and its ancillaries, as well as the remainder of the Nissan Leaf being sold to part fund the project.

The Jaguar's clutch pedal is gone, and the accelerator pedal has been replaced by an electronic one from a VW Passat, but the original Jaguar gearbox and overdrive remain fully functional. You simply select a gear before moving off and let the electric torque do the rest. You might worry about the weight of all those batteries, but the scales tell a different story. With the massive, iron XK engine removed and the Leaf's batteries split between the engine bay and the boot, the S-Type is actually 20Kg lighter than before, with a near-perfect 50:50 weight distribution. With new front springs and an Easysteer electric power steering system, the handling is transformed—nimble, balanced, and incredibly composed.

Inside, very little has changed. I wanted to keep the lived in feel of the interior so I purposely kept the beautifully patinated leather seats and original woodwork. I replaced the worn out carpets and transferred the old vinyl from the rotten door cards to new ones to keep everything matching; it still looks and smells like a classic British saloon, it's just much quieter than before. The new digital display is carefully hidden in the original Smiths dial that used to house the fuel gauge, and the historic left/right fuel tank switch now toggles between forward and reverse.



Outside, the only tells to the conversion are the missing tailpipes and a discreet 'Electric' badge on the boot lid. Twin charging ports are hidden behind the original fuel filler caps, accepting 7kW AC on one side and up to 50kW DC on the other. With a real-world range of 100 to 120 miles and a 30-minute rapid charge to 80%, the S-Type has finally achieved its true purpose. Since the conversion was completed last May, I have covered more miles than in the previous 4 years combined. It is fast, refined, and supremely comfortable—a 1960s icon finally granted the effortless reliability it always deserved.



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Le Mans Trip by Norman Burr



350,000 people can't be wrong

For a racing driver, ultimate career success is to win three things: the Monaco GP, the Indy 500 and the Le Mans 24h.

Quite why a race which started as an endurance test of road-going sporting machinery on public roads should have acquired such legendary status is the subject of theses, not a short article like this, but the Le Mans 24h is certainly unique, and having been there in '03, 04, 06 and 07, I can fully understand the appeal. More than just a race, it was Glastonbury for petrolheads, a week-long celebration of motoring *joie de vivre.*

Now, having just returned from the 2026 event, I can confirm that it is still a remarkable experience, just a rather different one. Attendance has increased enormously in the intervening 19 years, with over 350,000 people on site this year – to put that in context, that's over twice the number at the British GP. Along the way, the ability to drive from one viewing point to another, flash your lanyard at the guy on the gate and laze around on the grass or against the track barrier, has been lost. Car parking is almost impossible, crowded shuttle buses are the order of the day and the barriers are lined several deep in all the best spots.

Against that, facilities have hugely improved. The famously evil campsite showers and loos have been banished, now there are facilities everywhere, and no one could ever go short of food, booze, clothing, or any form of retail that could even vaguely be related to motorsport. Huge screens line the track and keep everyone informed, and the PA system actually works. Moreover, it's cheap and simple to get into the city for the enormous carnival parade that winds through the city centre on the Friday before the race, thanks to the tram system which was still being built last time I went. The circuit is the last stop on the line.



If the idea of building a tram system just to serve a race circuit seems overkill, you need to understand that the circuit is not just an 8km route around local roads that are closed off for one weekend a year. Some public roads are still used, notably the Mulsanne straight, but other parts have been replaced with purpose-built track, much of which is incorporated into a shorter permanent circuit, meaning that Le Mans hosts motorsport throughout the year.

Moreover, the site has been relentlessly developed into a wide-ranging leisure and commercial centre. There was always a fun fair, then came a motor museum, a conference centre and a big new football stadium. Under construction near the stadium is a huge multi-storey hotel, with a grandstand on the top and (presumably) astronomic room rates. The city has not simply accommodated the race, it has embraced it; even the trams are decked out in special 24h livery. It is impossible not to admire the drive and commitment.



Nestling twixt stadium and hotel on the inside of Tertre Rouge is the Team Langoustine campsite (TL), where I stayed, one of the few permanent sites leased by the ACO (Automobile Club de l'Ouest), which controls the site and the race.

Quite why a campsite run by a British race travel operator should be named after a sea-creature is lost in the mists of time. Certainly the present owner didn't seem to know. What matters much more is that you won't find a better place to camp at Le Mans. Yes, you can book direct with the ACO for one of their own campsites, sort your own food and bring in your own beer, but you won't get the instant camaraderie, good food (cooked breakfast every day if you want it) and endless quantities of beer on site, plus a rock band in the evening (which, ahem, needs a better vocalist) and a huge screen allowing you to drink in comfort while following the race.



I chose to travel solo and arrive by public transport, relying on TL for tent and sleeping bag, but most people opt to bring their own tent, car, camper or whatever.

TL also offers packages covering the Le Mans Classic, which is a very different event and happens every July. The crowds are smaller and the machinery and competition are likely to appeal particularly to BVAC members. That will be my next trip.

Team Langoustine: *https://www.teamlangoustine.com/*

Garage to Rent

Located in Greenlaw, is dry and secure and large enough for the largest cars. Might squeeze a Rolls. With the Saab about 2 feet spare at front and rear. Storage mainly but no large maintenance/repairs due to it being part of a dwelling, albeit, large one, so defer to owner. Available immediately and £45 per month. Contact Nigel at ncam1@telus.net

New BVAC Merchandise



Mike Webber reports that he has an addition to the extensive BVAC branded range:

The BVAC Rugby Shirt

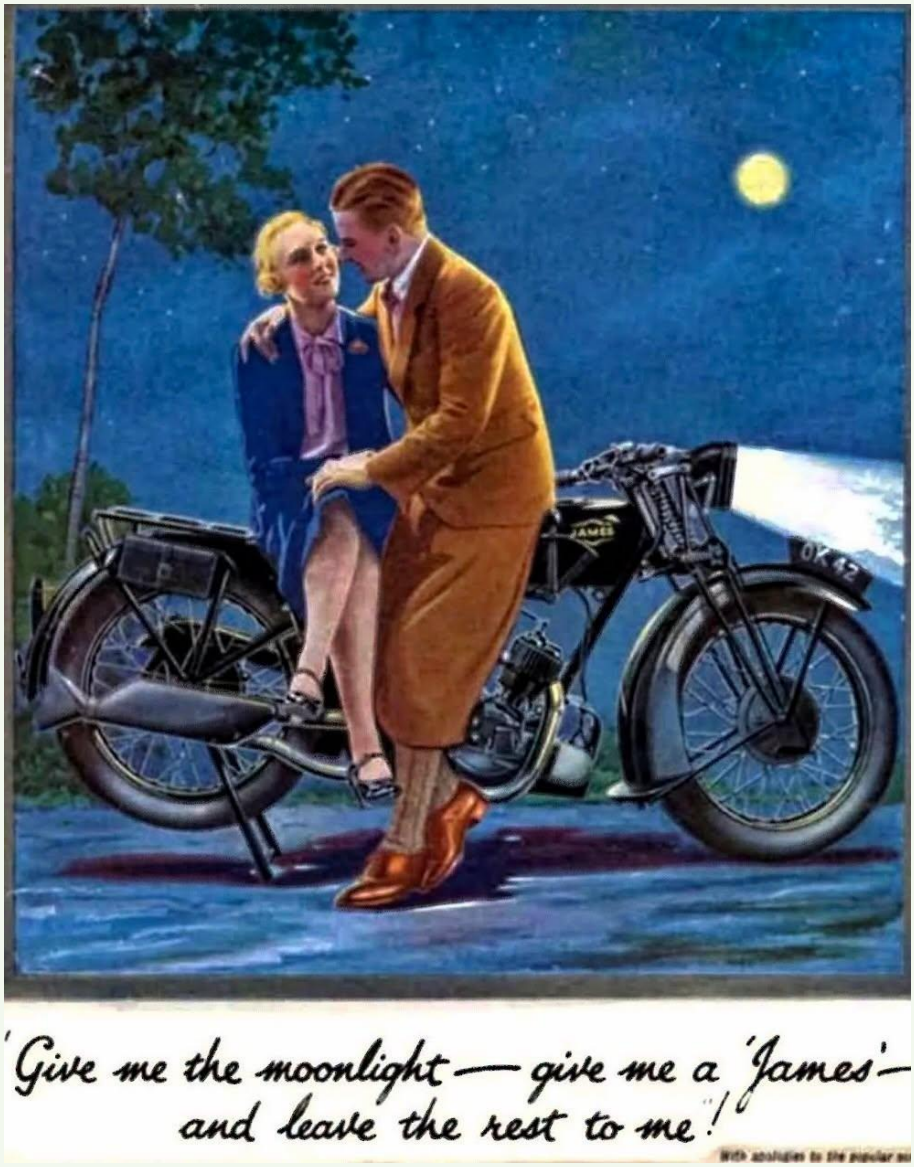
This classic rugby shirt is smart, durable and effortlessly comfortable. Made from 100% cotton this quality shirt is available in BVAC Green, navy, royal blue or black, with woven white collar and ribbed cuffs. The club logo is embroidered in a contrasting colour.

Priced at £32.50 inc. VAT, a limited stock will be on display at Milestone or you can pre-order on 07940 879726 or by email to mike.webber@bvac.org.uk

Nostalgia Corner

Thanks to Fred Magill for this one which should amuse motorcyclists of a certain age.

For those of you unfamiliar with vintage motorbikes, 'James' is the bike, not the gentlemen!



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