



Number 1

Jim Patten visited CMC to see the first right-hand-drive fixedhead, which was recently restored in its workshops

March, 1961 and Jaguar's Bob Berry makes a frantic drive across Europe to the Geneva Motor Show in the new E-type. Outside, the car is shown to journalists while inside, in a dramatic move, the new model is unveiled to the public. Demand was understandably huge. After all, few cars outside of the race circuit promised such shattering performance. But Jaguar offered more. Not only was it billed as a 150mph motorcar, it was also easy to drive in all conditions, a trait that had become something of a Jaguar trademark.

Those first few cars were almost handbuilt. Meanwhile, Jaguar had to prepare for full-scale production. With Pressed Steel Fisher manufacturing some of the panels, Browns Lane others, and Abbey Panels the bonnet, Jaguar introduced new

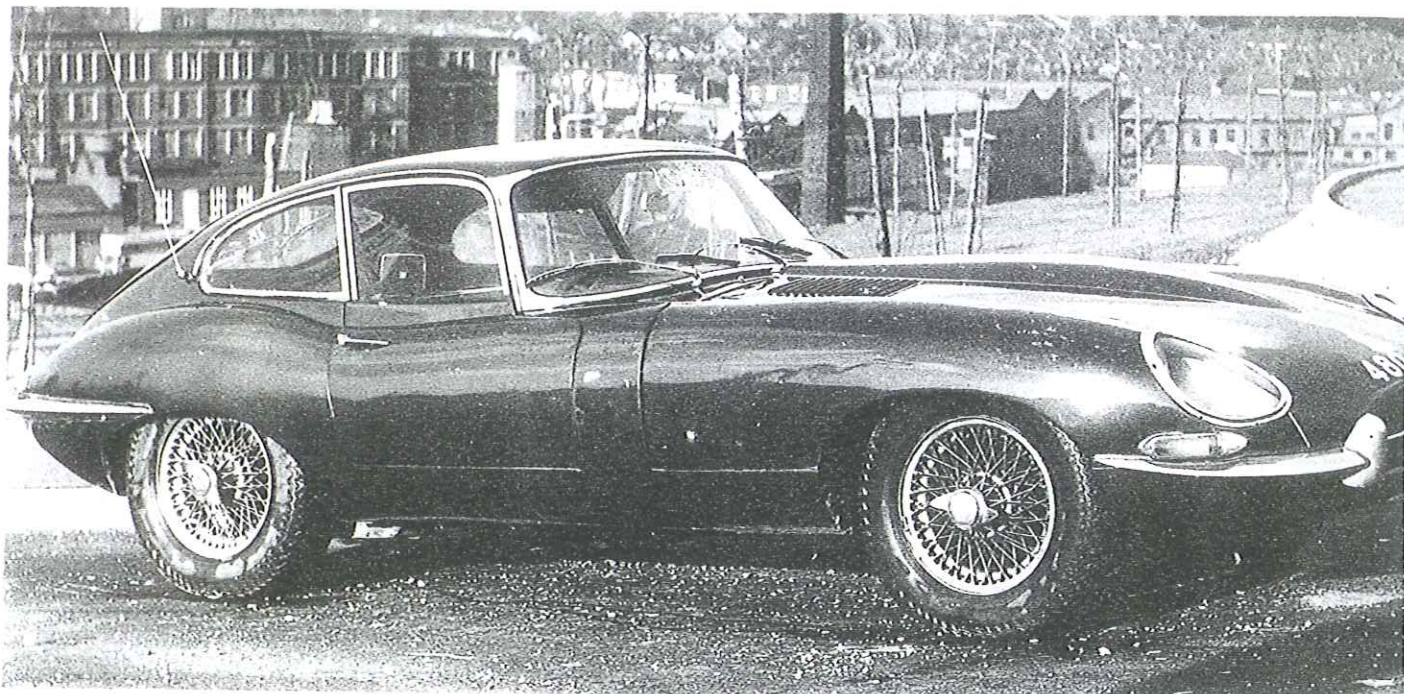
techniques in body assembly. So although externally the first production cars looked virtually identical to the show cars, there were fundamental differences. Initially, the emphasis was placed on getting the open cars into the market. In fact, Jaguar's original intention was to produce only convertibles, the fixedhead arriving later as part of its strategy. So it is ironic that a closed car appeared at Geneva, despite almost 200 roadsters having rolled off the line before the first production fixedhead.

After the first blaze of publicity, things settled down a little and, in the UK, the first production right-hand-drive fixedhead, 860001, was despatched on 28 August 1961. Whereas Jaguar was keen that the first E-type roadsters went to high-profile personalities, many of whom raced the new car, fixedheads were distributed more

discreetly. However, chassis number 860002 went to A F Davenport (see *JWM* November 2003) and 004 (CUT 7) to Dick Protheroe; both had been racing an XK and went on to race their new E-types. However, scant information is available on 001, the very first fixedhead sold into the UK, except that it was progressed via Henly's.

Incognito

CMC carries a very impressive portfolio. Its completed restorations include 9600 HP, the fixedhead E-type driven to Geneva by Bob Berry, OKV 1, the first works D-type, and 1 VHP, the first fixedhead sold in the UK. Currently in the workshop is 850004 (a car we will feature upon completion), the open two-seater registered 1600 RW and used by F R W 'Lofty' England (see page 54 for his full story). CMC's restoration of 1 VHP



One of the few images captured during 001's life, probably during the 1970s when owned by David Hamer. At one stage, it was painted in duo-purple

followed that of 9600 HP, an interesting exercise in noting the development of the E-type.

The 1960s yield virtually no information on 001 despite some key connections with Jaguar historians, including our own Paul Skilleter and 9600 HP-owner Philip Porter. So, our journey starts with Mr D Hamer, who in 1971 bought an E-type, then registered 480 HYT. Although it had been crashed through a hedge, the wreck was still good enough for him to arrange a loan of £250 for the purchase. Remember, the E-type was just ten years old by then, and with the body in fairly good order and the mechanics still excellent, Hamer set about getting it on the road, despite much of the interior being missing. A local bodyshop had a spare

bonnet and with Hamer having his own garage, called Motorvation, he thought the job would not be too difficult.

As a trendy 21-year-old, he wanted to give the E-type a colour of the time. In his

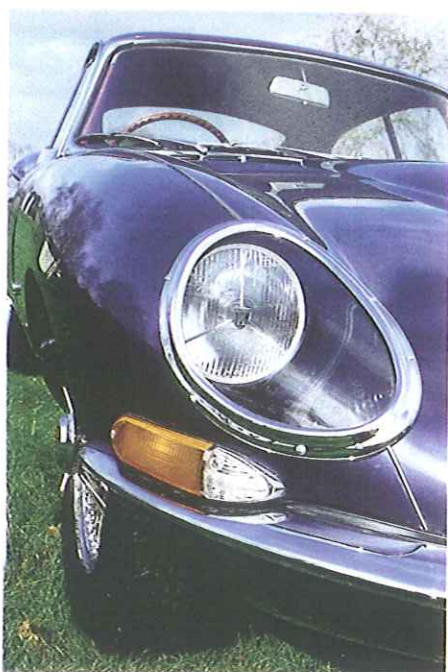
"Hamer started to think that... he did not want to go down in history as 'the man who ruined a work of art'"

own words, "My choice of colour scheme was atrocious – surprisingly the two-tone purple metallflake didn't look that good in the flesh!" But he still needed a number of parts and it was during a visit to Henlys,

Manchester, that he was alerted to the importance of his car. As he presented his chassis number to the partsman, he was told that he must have an early car as his number matched the first in the parts book. Hamer started to think that, after all, he did not want to go down in history as 'the man who ruined a work of art.' So after a call to the Jaguar Drivers' Club, he contacted Andrew Whyte, then at Jaguar. Whyte confirmed 001 as the first production fixedhead E-type.

Stripdown

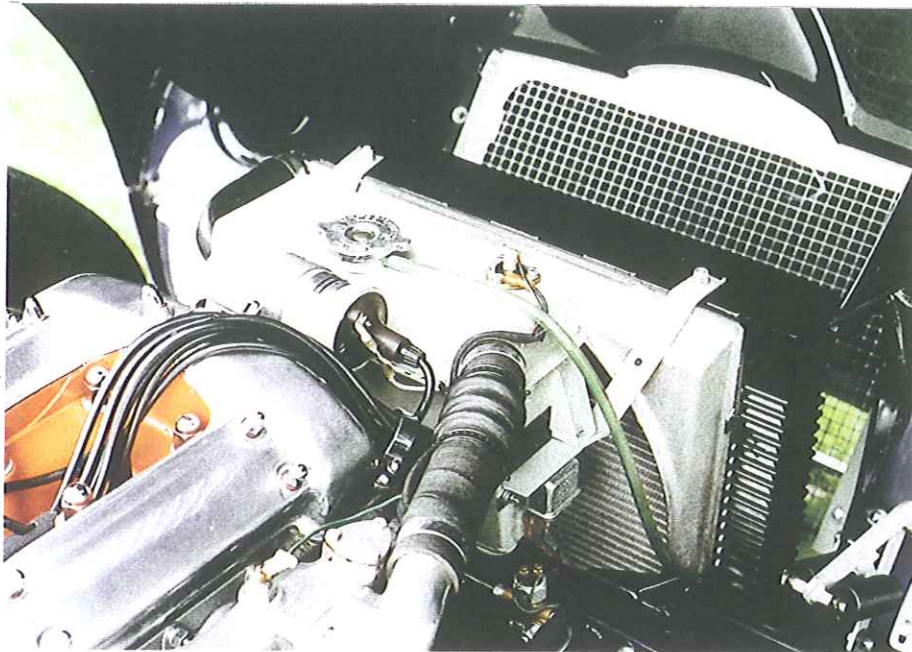
There followed two years of graft as layer after layer of paint was removed (two each of white and red) before returning it to its original colour. With most of the trim still missing (even the seats had disappeared,



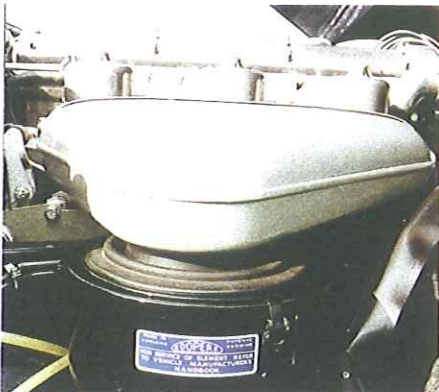
Cross-ply tyres, painted headlight scoops and headlights are all correctly detailed on the first ever right-hand-drive fixedhead E-type



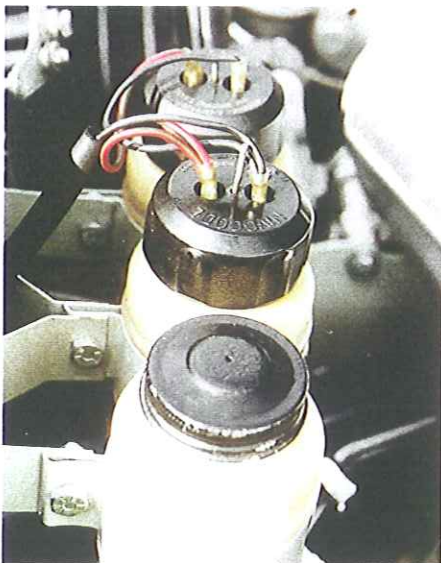
With the fixedhead came an amazing level of practicality. A ribbed load area is perfect for that grand tour with a couple of suitcases on board, and a flip-up end board helps keep the luggage in the rear. A lift-out section (just visible, bottom right) gives access to the spare wheel



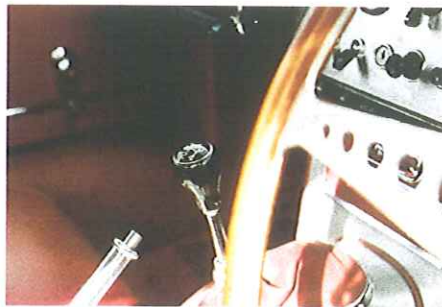
First E-types had pumpkin-coloured cylinder heads, while aluminium radiator was painted black



Air filter intake was fluted on the top, and was changed later to increase rigidity



No dust covers and black plastic are a feature of the brake fluid reservoir caps while the clutch reservoir is plain metal



Early cars used a screw-type jack and a Mk 2-style tool kit. Later cars featured a more conventional roll-up kit



Many suppliers changed during production. Butlers supplied the first few number plate lights before a switch was made to Lucas

though they turned up later), the E-type was back on the road. Hamer was now just 23.

Memories of the car are fond, although he did recall the noise of the Moss 'box first gear and the appalling brakes. Several incidents are remembered. One involved an errant Morris Minor, skidding down the road. With the E-type similarly afflicted, contact was inevitable. Angry at the driver, Hamer soon calmed when an apologetic monk stepped out of the Minor! The holidays were fun with his girlfriend, who must have enjoyed them too – they later married and still are.


Some time in 1974, Hamer wrote a feature in *Jaguar Driver* and had a call from Adrian Hamilton (son of Le Mans racer, Duncan), asking if the car was for sale. He was persistent and eventually bought it. Apparently £1,750 was paid, at a time when an E-type could be had for £500. Hamer could not afford to keep more than one car on the road at a time and as the 'E' was so important, it was sadly wasted as a daily runabout.

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Hamilton obviously sold the car on as it was bought by a builder in Beaconsfield in 1975. Derek Brant then saw the car and managed to buy it on the same day that he purchased 9600 HP, these two cars joining an early 3.8 roadster. Paul Skilleter was alerted when Brant decided to sell up, and he introduced Philip Porter to Brant. Philip subsequently bought the cars, 1 VHP (at that time registered 480 HYT), 9600 HP and the early roadster.

Porter was then a part-owner of a restoration business and, over a period of time, work was carried out on 001. The body was stripped and engine and other mechanical components rebuilt. Intending that it should take part in a trip to Switzerland, the car was taken to a specialist who promised to complete the rest of the work in four-and-a-half months. It took four-and-a-half-years! Philip reckoned by then that the paintwork had micro-blistered and another back-to-the-metal strip was needed.

It stood garaged until 1999 when it was decided that 9600 HP should be restored to take part in the E-type's 50 years celebration in Geneva. After owning the car for 22 years, Philip sold 001 to Peter Neumark of CMC in a transaction which



allowed the "total fanatical conservation restoration of 9600 HP" by CMC.

Back to the beginning

CMC would restore 860001 but not until 9600 HP was finished. Restoring these early cars is a work of intensive dedication, involving a demanding learning curve. Luckily, 001 had the advantage of being totally complete and remains a fully-matching-numbers car. Despite all the earlier work, nothing was left to chance and the body was stripped back and a full nuts-and-bolts restoration followed. The results speak for themselves.

I had a chance to drive the car on one of those rare, sun-kissed days in March. There's no chance of replicating a full '61 road test but on period-style cross-ply tyres, the performance was still impressive. A real test of any rebuild is not just in the way a car looks, but in the manner in which those disciplines transfer to action. This car not only looks good, it delivers too. The original registration number has been tracked down and is now worn with pride across the nose.

These days, life is much easier for the first production right-hand-drive E-type. Its outings are confined to shows and CMC promotional events, where you can be sure that hard-charging monks in Morris Minors are less of a risk!

*Our thanks to Nick Goldthorpe at CMC,
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