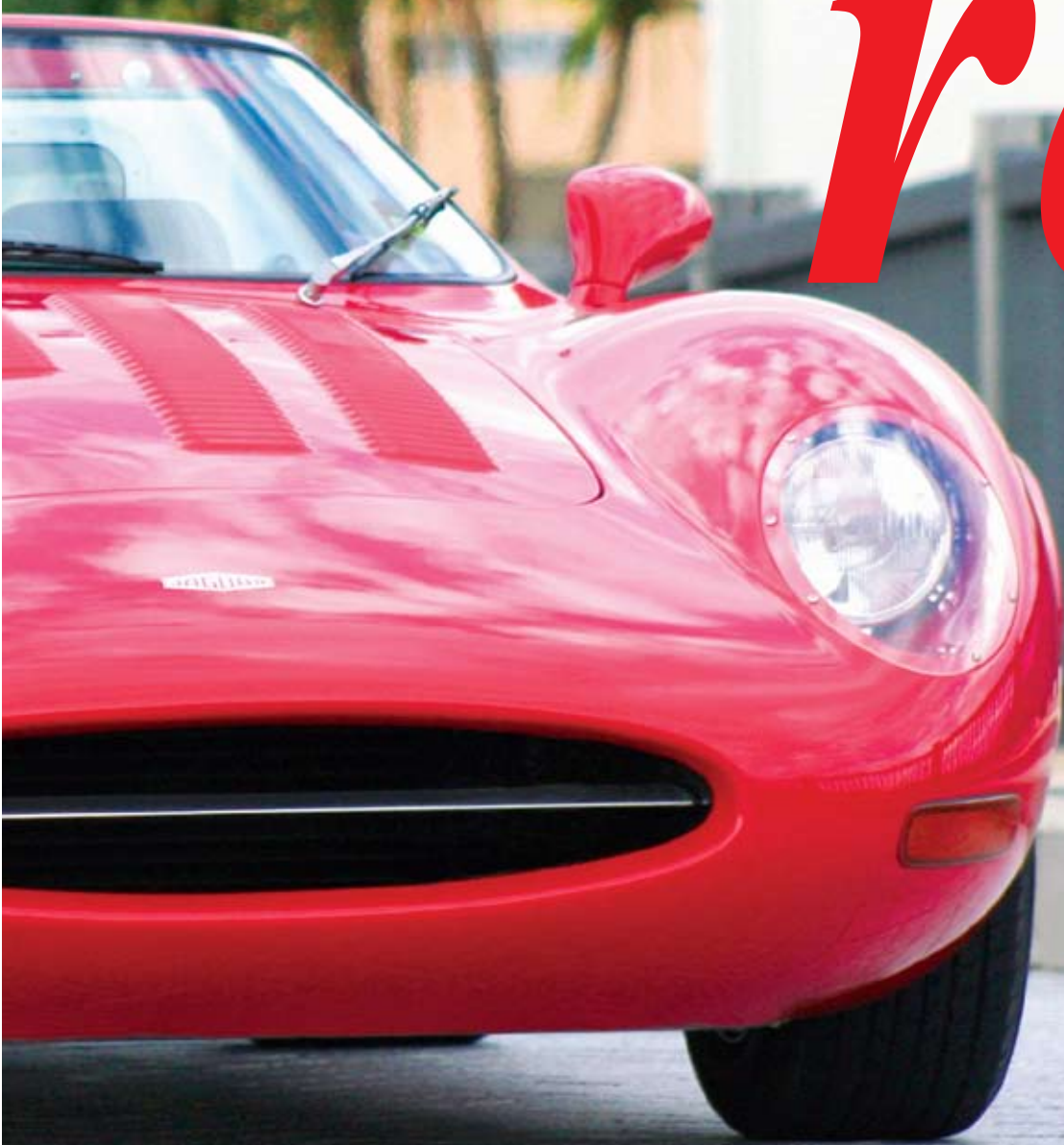




DIGBY AND GWEN COOKE AGREED TO HAVE THIS BEAUTIFUL REPLICA XJ13 CREATED

big red



AFTER SEEING A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ORIGINAL. IT WAS COMPLETED IN 2005.



40:1

40:1 Digby Cooke behind the wheel of his replica XJ13 on a Gold Coast road - looking just a little like rural Le Mans, the track the original was built to race on.

TO THIS VERY DAY NEITHER DIGBY NOR DENNIS HAVE

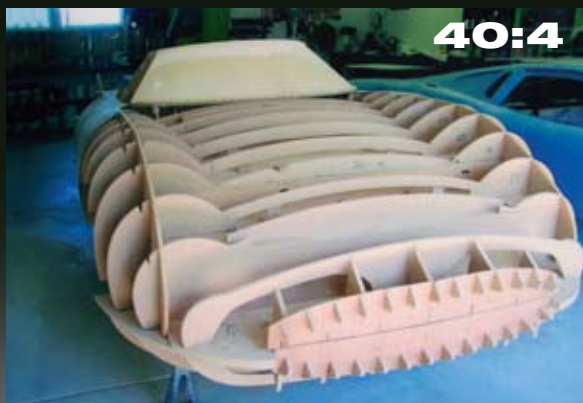


40:2



40:3

40:2 Digby swaps seats with Ron Hodgson at Bathurst in 1962. **40:3** Malcolm Sayer's windtunnel XJ13 model. **40:4** The now destroyed former. **40:5** Plans for the replica XJ.



40:4 **40:5**



IT ALL BEGAN WITH AN INNOCENT CHAT which started with the surprised exclamation: "What is that?" "That's the Jaguar XJ13," was the reply as two enthusiasts admired the car in a book.

The pair was former racer Digby Cooke, and Dennis Bedford, founder of DRB Sports Cars, and builder of some of the finest replica Shelby Cobras and Ford GT40s. Dennis had recently stepped back from his business, and Digby, with his lovely wife Gwen, enjoyed enthusiast speed events, such as the Speed-On-Tweed, in his red V12 Ferrari Barchetta and equally red Porsche 911 GT3.

As the pair concentrated their chats on the XJ13 photograph in the book, Dennis said to Digby: "Would you like one? If you do, I will build one for you and one for me - then break up the bucks so there will be no more!"

Not un-naturally, Digby was a little surprised, but after discussing it with Gwen, a deal was done - there would be two cars built by Dennis in his home garage, and they would mirror the one-off original back in England. It wouldn't have one of the very few quad cam V12 Jaguar engines built which power the original, but instead would have a standard Jaguar twin overhead camshaft production V12 engine mated to a Getrag five-speed

manual gearbox.

Digby and Dennis agreed their cars would be able to be driven legally on the road, and Digby determined at the beginning that his would be red to match his other cars. More importantly, the red would emphasise he was not trying to pass it off as the real thing.

Both cars would be created in the correct monocoque style, and as much as possible, be faithful to the factory car designed by the great aerodynamicist Malcolm Sayer in the early 1960s. The original was intended to be the sports racer which brought Jaguar back to Le Mans. However, the cost of development and speed of changes in that category of racing put a premature end to the XJ13 racing programme. Just this one gloriously beautiful and then-secret car was built - unadorned with add-on wings and ducting to distract from its purity.

To this very day neither Digby nor Dennis have ever cast an eye on the XJ13, but remarkably, this classic piece of reproduction was made by copying and scaling up a metal mode and finding some factory drawings. From that Dennis made bucks to hand-make the panels!

Sayer created the C-Type, D-Type and E-Type, but his designs were founded on aero-efficient curves which he translated into mathematical formulae. Some replicas, or even poorly repaired genuine D-Types, illustrate just

EVER CAST AN EYE ON THE ORIGINAL XJ13



BIG RED - XJ13



42:1 The original XJ13 was rebodied by Abbey Panels several years after being rolled at the MIRA track in 1970. **42:2** The Cooke car nears completion on the Gold Coast.

how very difficult it is to create the exact Sayer shape - and how very easy it is to get it wrong. The effect is even more obvious with the XJ13 which is very long and needs to be very precise.

Digby and Gwen are an exceptionally interesting couple, and as could be guessed, not just talkers - but actually make their dreams come true. They are a delightful married pair who are as down-to-earth as you would want. Each has had a colourful life.

Gwen was the widow of the first Australian serviceman killed in Vietnam, and was left alone with

a young family. That in itself is a story, but needing to support herself and her children, she worked as a fashion buyer for the department store chain David Jones, even being a part-time house model, then founded a packaging, advertising and marketing company employing a staff of two hundred.

Digby's grandfather came to Australia from England as the founding astronomer in Perth and later Sydney, being a brilliant and very successful man who created institutions which still exist today in both places.

Sydney-born Digby trained for three years as an

SYDNEY-BORN DIGBY TRAINED FOR THREE YEARS AS



42:3 The Cooke's XJ13 shows the beauty of Sayer's shape. The exhausts are correct - but very difficult to see on the original against its dark body colour.



43:1

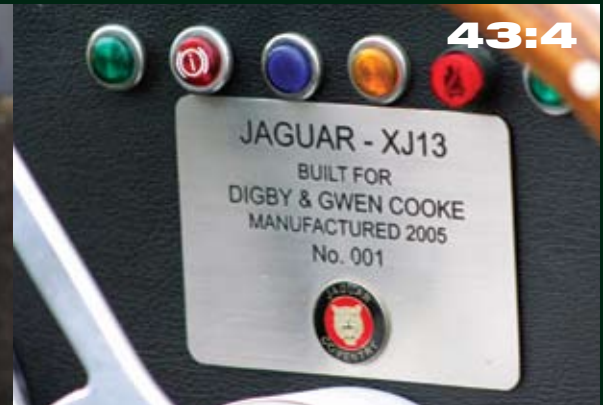


43:2

43:1 The dash layout is spectacular and very similar to the real XJ13. **43:2** The level of craftsmanship is astounding. **43:3** Specially cast hinges. **43:4** Its identity declared.



43:3



43:4

AN ENGINEER UNDER THE FAMOUS TOM SULMAN

automotive engineer under famous racer Tom Sulman, son of English born Sydney architect and painter Sir John Sulman. The prestigious Sulman Prize for art is awarded annually in his name. Tom Sulman was born in 1899, and became an Australian national legend in racing circles for his 'Sulman Singer', and competitiveness in racing and round-Australia trials. During the world wide economic Depression of the 1930s, Tom went to England looking for work, and in 1936 built the Sulman Singer single-seat racing car which he raced on English speedway tracks.

At the end of the war he came back to Australia by signing on as flight engineer on an aircraft. The Sulman Singer followed by ship, and Tom first raced the car in Australia in June 1947. By 1950 he had a motor engineering workshop in Sydney's inner-suburban Kings Cross, and had added a Maserati 4C. He was invited to become a member of The Kangaroo Stable, which planned a long distance sports car racing programme in Europe in 1955 with three new Aston Martin DB3Ss. Its drivers were David McKay, Tony Gaze, Tom, Les Cosh, Dick Cobden and Jack Brabham. Their best result was a 2-3-4 finish in the Hyères (France) 12 Hour Race. Tom Sulman was killed instantly at Bathurst in 1970 when his Lotus XV was hit from behind. He was aged 70.

Digby began racing in 1949 with an Alvis, winning

at his first attempt. He raced at the top level until 1972 with many famous co-drivers including McKay and Jaguar dealer Ron Hodgson, a racer with whom he finished second in class at Bathurst in 1962. With Peter Brock he finished second outright in a Holden Torana GTR XU1.

In the 1990s the Cookes owned four Cobra replicas built by DRB, so the relationship with Dennis was cemented when the suggestion of the XJ13 was offered. They knew if the car was to be built properly and completed, Dennis would make it happen.

A huge amount of research was undertaken, and then the complex body former produced from which the panels were rolled and hand-formed. That in itself is a staggering piece of workmanship by one man in a suburban garage. It's true that you just don't know what is out there, even in your own neighbourhood.

Two monocoque bodies were fabricated, and the accurate detail sourced from photographs and plans defies comprehension. Considering that the beautiful XJ13 is a work of art, not merely a 'car', what Dennis achieved is unbelievably impressive.

Of course, some compromises had to be made to make the car legal on public roads that included provision for fold-away registration plates, indicators, and the height is a little greater than the original. However, that takes

BIG RED - XJ13



44:1/2 Despite not having seen the original, most items mirror the 1960s car except the quad cam engine. 44:3 The ride-height is raised slightly for practicality.



THEY HOPE TO INSPECT THE ORIGINAL XJ13 WHEN

nothing away from the finished vehicle.

We have to say that the fine detail built into this creation is sensational, including door handles, the engine cover clips, steering wheel, instrument layout - and even the plaque which is riveted to the panel behind the passenger. Digby was annoyed when authorities forced him to cover the aluminium step into the car, but they deemed it necessary on the grounds of safety. Small beer in the overall scheme really and what the Cookes have is a car of exquisite beauty and a credit to their dedication - not to mention Dennis.

What is like to drive? Well, if you ask Digby and Gwen, they would say: "A little agricultural in comparison to the Ferrari and Porsche - but we really love it."

It is not the sort of car to drive off in for a holiday but the pleasure it provides at sporting events or a relaxed jaunt through the country is sublime. Yes, it is hot, and that thumping classic twice-Le Mans winning V12 engine sits just behind your ear with no insulation - but as they say - what the hell ...

Digby has competed in it at the Speed-On-Tweed hill climb many times and it always attracts a crowd. We suspect that of all the cars he has owned, this one is very personal.

As mentioned earlier, neither Gwen nor Digby have seen the real XJ13, but they plan to rectify that later in the year when they fly to England and go to the Jaguar Heritage Museum in Browns Lane, Coventry. They won't be disappointed!



The first of these two replica XJ13s was always earmarked for the Cookes, and was completed in 2005. Digby then went through the long and tedious process of making it legal for the road and approved by authorities who would then issue the correct plate. He recalled that at one point it seemed likely the car might have to be fuelled using LPG to meet emission standards, even though it was running a perfectly standard and legally certified Jaguar V12 engine. Eventually, rationality prevailed and it uses standard tank petrol.

What happened to the other car which Dennis Bedford allocated for himself? By another strange twist of fate, Australian former car dealer and drag racing pioneer, Ash Marshall, now a long time resident in the US, offered to buy the unfinished XJ13.

Marshall was the first man in Australia to top 200 mph in a front engined dragster, and break the six second barrier for the standing quarter mile. In the early 1960s he acquired the ex-Stillwell/Davey/Gardner D-Type XKD520, so clearly he had a genuine soft spot for Jaguars.

Dennis agreed to sell the incomplete car to Marshall. It was shipped to California where it is thought to remain unfinished.

Both Gwen and Digby begged Dennis to renege on his vow to break up the wooden formers he built to create his beautiful XJ13 bodies, but true to his word,

he took a sledgehammer and power saw to the timber. The Cookes considered that to be a work of art in itself.

There is only one of these magnificent replicas currently, but there will never be more than two. To the best of our knowledge, there are two more replicas in Australia, one built by John Wilson in Canberra and which is mounted on a space frame; the other is in Perth built over many years by the father and son team of Frank and Michael Owen.

The Cooke's XJ13 is individual, and is magnificently proportioned in handcrafted aluminium. The blazing red livery marks it as distinctly different from any other replicas anywhere in the world.

It performs impressively, but is docile on the road in the fashion of other V12 Jaguars. The magnificent engine has a typically wide torque band which allows it to be driven quickly too. Like the genuine XJ13, and the Ford GT40, which stopped the XJ13 project before it got off the ground, both were adapted to be very exciting and exotic road and racing cars. Who could have imagined in the 1960s when the XJ13 was conceived, that it would end up in the same stable as the Ford GT40 - or that Ford's GT90 concept would be powered by the same Jaguar V12 engine?

Digby and Gwen are understandably very proud of their car, of course, and we are filled with admiration for their dedication to creating a masterpiece. It is

THEY GO TO THE JAGUAR HERITAGE MUSEUM

45:1 A very proud Digby and Gwen Cooke with the car which is perfectly suited to Gold Coast weather and roads.

44:4/5 An example of the detail which went into the construction of this purpose-built car. The 'XJ13' plate disappears from sight easily for competition work.

