

## Our Jags

*Editor's note: Long time JTC member Jerry Maler has written a lovely story about his stunning two-tone burgundy 1948 Jaguar 3-1/2 liter Drop head Coupe. (shown on the right) The words are all Jerry's apart from some minor editing. Jerry runs an insurance business in Sayville, New York. Anyone who wishes to call Jerry to talk about his car may call him at his business — 631 589 7811*



There aren't many people in the world who can claim having owned 4 Mark IV Jaguars over a period of 33 years. Then again, maybe I shouldn't exaggerate that point either since one of the four clearly was a saloon parts car missing its engine and transmission, and another, a RHD drophead imported from England in 1972, was found to be so badly rusted and worn mechanically, that it too ultimately became a parts car. Actually, those parts became scattered around the United States and have helped to restore other Mark IV's.

But, I've gotten ahead of myself in the story. I guess I should say that I got bitten by a Jaguar sometime during my childhood. My Godfather, Richard Bowman (the founder of this club) had Jaguars as long as I can remember, and the impression his cars made on me while growing up created a deep longing to someday have a Jaguar. Not just any Jaguar, but a Mark IV drophead.

Marriage, house, piano for the wife and Mark IV Jaguar for me – that was the order that had to be followed, but it all happened within a period of about a year. WOW!

I was so anxious that I grabbed the first Mark IV that came along, a saloon. It was fun, but it lacked the pizzazz of a drophead. So, after a year, Richard clued me in on a drophead that was for sale which he had owned years before and had sold to a friend and co-worker. This friend was going through a nasty divorce, and the marital problems probably contributed to the neglected condition of the car.

That car had quite an interesting life which might have been cut short a number of times had it not been for the attentive care indulged upon it by a succession of persistent owners.

For example, Richard first acquired the car in the late fifties from a passerby who noticed a Mark IV parts car on his property and implored him unsuccessfully on a couple of occasions to sell all of the front bright-work from the parts car because this guy had unfortunately run his mark IV into the back of a truck.

Richard's steadfast refusal was met with the counter, "well, then, would you consider buying mine as is?". Richard and Lillian Bowman then had "his" and "hers" Mark IV dropheads for several years until he sold it to his friend Nick.

Nick too was a car nut who had a 1933 Mercedes 380k cabriolet which was partially disassembled but all there. Nick probably couldn't come up with all of the money that Richard wanted for the Mark IV, and Nick's 1933 Mercedes intrigued Richard, so they settled .

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upon a money and swap arrangement. Nick got an everyday driver, albeit a very fancy one at that, and Richard got a dream which he never realized because he was really a Jaguar man at heart. Ultimately, Richard sold the Mercedes, and it was shipped over to Belgium and restored.

Now, back to Nick's deplorable Mark IV drophead. The exhaust manifolds were off because the entire exhaust system was shot and became an insurmountable problem for a man with serious marital woes. Worse, the car appeared (and smelled) moldy from top to bottom sitting on a dirt floor garage. As much as I yearned for a drophead, I passed. Foolishly, I hastily pursued an ad placed in the Classic Jaguar Assn. "News & Technical Bulletin" showing what appeared to be a nice Mark IV drophead.

The RHD had a certain snobbish ring about it, and since three quarters of the production was exported to boost the post-war British economy, having one had real appeal. How foolish I was. And gullible. Shipping arrangements having been made, the car finally arrived at Port Newark in December 1972. I remember my excitement and eagerness. I also remember my utter disappointment and disillusionment. It's a wonder that I got the car home under its own power. I only drove the car

twice before cutting it up years later. Meanwhile Richard couldn't bear to see Nick's car get away, so he helped his old friend again and bought it back. I pursued my business as a State Farm Insurance Agent and forgot about cars for a while. A little while, that is.

Do car guys ever really lose the passion? In May, 1977 I became filled with the notion that I could restore the rust bucket of a drophead I had imported from England five years earlier in my own garage with the use of a chassis from the same parts car which Richard had picked clean years earlier. Such youthful bravado, to think that I would be that capable of a ground up restoration on such a formidable project.

But, I already had the parts car chassis home at this point and was returning Richard's trailer when I popped the question, "Why don't you save me all of that work and just sell the Mark IV you bought back from Nick.

This was the car I had passed on 5 years earlier when I bought the junker from England. Present at the time coincidentally were Bill Kellner, Russ Kuhn, and Mike Valluzo. Some of you reading this article should fondly remember these former members. Richard consented, and I bought the 1948 Jaguar drophead I have to this day. I got it running and enjoyed it

for several years in what I felt was shabby but reasonably presentable form. As my sons were small at the time, the car became part of the family and appears throughout our family photo albums.

Some time ago I entrusted the engine rebuild to Joe Maletsky whom I feel privileged to know for over thirty years. Back in the mid-80's, I had the car restored by my friend Mark Thornton and then showed the car extensively both in the JCNA and CCCA meets, garnering service for 12 of the first in class JCNA pewter plates. I take especial pride in having earned the prestigious CCCA Senior #1214 designation for my Mark IV.

Nice as it was, not to mention life in general, we had a total loss house fire in February 1989, and the car got badly scorched along with a restored 1957 XK140 DHC. I sold the XK140 as is, and my friend Mark did a body-off restoration for a second time. Of course he knew the car pretty well by now. Better yet, I got the color "right" the second time in two striking shades of burgundy, having never truly liked the colors after the first restoration.

**At this point I've owned this 1948 Mark IV DHC for more than half its life, and what a life that car has had !**

**Jerry Maler**