



## Interview

## Q and A

## David Seidel

Member No. 30

Questions: Graham Franklin

Answers: David & Carol Seidel

**G: What was your first car?**

**D:** This was a 1934 Chev hot-rod with leopard skin seat covers, a Holden steering wheel, and was painted black with flames running down each side. It was definitely not roadworthy and as such I had to hide it under the next-door neighbour's carport for a week until I got enough courage to tell my dad I had bought it. He eventually forgave me and helped me sell it very quickly.

**G: Can you remember your first encounter with a Jaguar?**

**D:** A family friend from Murray Bridge had a lovely fawn colour Mk VII 'M' Series auto. I loved the smell of the leather interior and it even had a sunroof. I must have been about 10 years old at the time.

Later in my high school years our headmaster gave a lesson on the quality of the Jaguar motor car, which enthused me to write a free choice essay on the marque. As well as handing it in at school, I sent a copy to Bryson Industries, for which I received a favourable reply.

**G: How did you become interested in Jaguars or classic cars?**

**D:** One brief glimpse of a maroon SS100 on an elevated stand in a car yard on South Road. I spotted it whilst a passenger in my dad's tip truck.

Later in life, I was buying cars to scrap and one of these was a Jaguar Mk IV 2 ½ litre. I placed an advert in the Wrecking column of Saturday's Advertiser which brought a great response, and this made me realise that Jaguars were in demand.

**G: How many Jaguars (or classic) cars do you now own or have you owned?**

**D:** As we live in a retirement unit, circumstances dictate that we now own just one, a 1985 Jaguar Vanden Plas 6



*David has owned many classic cars and Jaguars overtime including these two SS Saloons*

cylinder. However, over my lifetime I have owned so many classic and Jaguar cars that I have been unable to count them all.

As well as Jaguars I have owned makes including Bristol, Jowett Javelin, Graham Paige, Lancia, Mercedes, BMW, Volvo, Ford, Morris, vintage Chev trucks, vintage Austins and even a 1920s Case tractor.

**G: You were Secretary during the first and second year of the club. Do you recall those first few years of the club?**

**D:** During the early years, we were busy establishing contacts with Jaguar clubs in other states and overseas. Until we were able to produce our own magazine, the Victorian Club allowed us to use several pages in their magazine "Cat-a-Log". The other situation was to establish a permanent meeting place, and the Sportsmans Club on Greenhill Road made a room available for us for quite a number of years.

We held a competition to design a car club logo, I can't remember who won or if it was a combination of several ideas.

The committee members were from various suburbs, beliefs and backgrounds but all had a love for the Jaguar marque and the same goal in mind – to make the JDC of SA a club to be proud of.

**G: Yes the club logo. The executive spent hours "arguing" that decision. In the end Phil Smart pushed the design through. The club logo spinner is unique to the JDCSA - there is nothing else like it.**



*Deciding on the Club Logo was one of just many decisions the first executive committee had to resolve. The "Spinner Logo" is unique to the JDCSA - there is nothing else like it.*

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**G: I gather you had a full-time job over this entire period at the time. How did you manage?**

**D:** In addition to being JDCSA Secretary, I was working full time in my father's sand and metal business, Carol and I had our first child and we moved house twice. Carol did a lot of the typing and paperwork for new memberships and the sale of club wares. Wives and partners all joined in to help in the organisation of the Club - there was good comradery at committee meetings and events and we were all young and enthusiastic.

**G: In those early days of the club, SA and Vic clubs were very close and regular attendance at interstate events were common. Do you recall some of those trips to Victoria?**

**D:** I recall several trips to Victoria. In particular an eventful SS Register trip to Swan Hill when my MkIV ran out of brakes on Fullarton Road as we drove to Eagle on the Hill to meet the others before setting off to Victoria. They decided it would be safer for me to lead the convoy which I did there and back without incident. Other than that, it was most enjoyable, as there were lots of members' children and the older ones 'babysat' the little ones in the motel. (photo)

One trip was made very special when member Jim Love dressed in all his Scottish regalia and piped us from our motel units to the dining room (or was

it vice versa?) - unfortunately I can't remember which trip this was though. I'm not sure if other motel users were as thrilled as we were!

In reverse, the Victorians also visited SA, and many friendships were formed between the clubs. On one occasion, Victorian club member Cliff Rattray-Wood had trouble with the hydraulic tensioner on his XK150. My dad Max made his workshop available and we were able to purchase the required parts on Saturday and by Sunday afternoon he was all ready to drive back home.

**G: Attendance at Interstate National Concours events were also common. I assume you attended a number. Any special memories?**

**D:** The interstate trip that stands out is the one to Griffith NSW. This time we left our daughter with my mum, but took our chihuahua "Pepe" with us. A problem arose when we found our accommodation was on the second storey of the motel. We couldn't leave Pepe in the car and of course motels weren't dog friendly in those days. Steve Weeks had a brilliant idea and zipped Pepe up in his travel bag, and up in the lift we went to our motel room. We were very pleased with ourselves until the next morning when an unforeseen problem arose. The breakfasts were passed through a small hatch into the motel room, and Pepe saw this as an intrusion into his private space and began to bark. We quickly held his



*David and Carol's longcoat chihuahua Pepe*

mouth closed and tried not to break into laughter, but all was well. Thank goodness it was only a one-night stay, and we successfully returned Pepe to the car the same way he went in.

**G: Over the past 50 years of the club do you have any particular memories or happenings?**

Following several months of meetings of the self-appointed Jaguar enthusiasts with the aim of forming a South Australian club, I was astounded at the overwhelming response we received to the small advert I (on behalf of the 'committee') placed in Saturday's Advertiser announcing the formation of the Jaguar Drivers' Club South Australia. From memory, we even had visitors from Victoria and Western Australia at that meeting.

The very first Concours held in the parklands opposite CocaCola was a big learning curve for the Club. Our chief judge, Stan Puddifoot was a quality control officer of some standing and pointed out that just a wash was not good enough for a Concours event. From that time on our understanding of what was required for Concours entries became clear.

\*\*\* Feeling humbled and honoured at the 30th Anniversary Dinner when Chris Holland, Carol and I were given Life Membership of the Club \*\*\*

**G: A number of those early club members are no longer with us. Did you have any special bond or memories with any of those (deceased) members?**

**D:** For me, the early member that I miss the most is Shane Dunstone. He was an active member of the Sporting Car Club and gave good advice on setting up our car club. Shane was a regular visitor at my parents' home. When Carol and I were



*SS Register trip to Swan Hill 1975*

# Interview - David Seidel



*Carol & David's wedding cars. They used their maroon 'S Type' and Shane kindly organised another car through one of his old school friend's, whose mother owned an identical car.*

planning our marriage in August 1972, we decided to use our maroon S type as a wedding car but were unable to locate a matching car. Shane said he would fix the problem, and he contacted one of his old school friends whose mother had an identical car. They happily agreed that Shane's friend would drive the car for our wedding. After our wedding, Shane frequented our new home, and our daughter Kirsty called him "Uncle Shane". He was a dear friend.

**G: Of all the Jaguars you have owned, which was your favourite?**

D: As I have owned so many Jaguars, this is a very difficult question. My very first green Mk IV stands out, as being my first completely roadworthy Jaguar, I was very proud of owning it. I was just 18 years old.

Another outstanding favourite was a sable colour 1970 Daimler 4.2. A year after I had sold it, I rang the guy who

purchased it and bought it back from him!

**G: Have you been a member of any other Car Clubs?**

D: Yes, Carol and I have been members of the Barossa Valley Historical Vehicle Club since we moved to the Barossa in 1987, and are still active members. It is a car club for all makes and so expands our horizons with fellow enthusiasts. Also (although not a car club as such) we regularly attend the Barossa Cars and Coffee events held on the first Sunday of the month in Nuriootpa and find this most enjoyable and a great place to network.

**G: Your fondest memories owning a Jaguar or classic car?**

D: Purchasing a Jaguar Mk2 2.4 auto, Sherwood Green, advertised for sale and available to be viewed in Franklin Street, Adelaide during the following week. It was owned by a well-known

wool company and had reputedly only done 17,000 miles. I had my doubts about that, but went to inspect it anyway. It was true and the car was as new and still had the original Dunlop Roadspeed tyres. The tool kit and spare had never been out. The car had been valued for the company by the RAA but it had a flat battery and I had to sign a document stating that I agreed to take the vehicle as I saw it. This I did, and that car was one of the loveliest cars I have owned. Carol and I enjoyed many happy times on local and interstate trips in that car.

D: Also, Carol's humorous article in our magazine "The Shed" (see page 22).

D: Thirdly, Carol taking on board my interest in Jaguars, and the club acknowledging her by awarding her the Clubman-ship trophy in 1978.

**G: Any interesting or special 'Jaguar' experiences?**

D: I had a lovely 3.8 Mk2 with an infuriating problem in that it would appear to be starving of petrol and stop without any indication that it was about to happen. I was getting quite frustrated with this niggly problem, so one Saturday night I got my younger brother Robert to lie in the boot to listen and tell me if the fuel pump stopped. This he did, and we went at some speed up and down the Main North East Road trying to trigger the problem. Robert's legs wouldn't fit in the boot so they stuck out while he held on to the boot lid with his hand. Try as we may, the car wouldn't repeat the problem and we had to abort the experiment when another driver came past signalling to me that I had a body in the boot of the car.



*Two of David's favourite cars; Green MkIV 3.5 litre and a Daimler Sovereign*

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*Carol & David's Mk2 2.4 auto from wool company*

Another instance was when I had a beautiful MkVII for sale, A Chrysler executive from Canada was visiting Tonsley Park and he loved the car, so I took him for a brief run in it up the Main North East Road on a very quiet Sunday morning. All of a sudden, a very loud bang erupted from under the bonnet and the car began to run on 5 cylinders. I pulled over, looked back and there was the spark plug lying on the road. It appears that a previous owner had cross threaded a spark plug. I turned to the prospective purchaser and said, "I guess you don't want the car now?" He said, "On the contrary, if you can fix the problem for me before I return to Canada next week." I contacted an engineer to advise me as to Helicoil to restore the cylinder head thread, which I did successfully but not without one faux pas – to be doubly sure that everything was right I got my tang through screwdriver and carefully placed it across the spark plug lead while the car was idling whilst putting the end of the screwdriver in my ear to listen for any unwanted noises. There were none except one from myself – I accidentally arced the screwdriver across two spark plugs and all my fillings almost fell out! But I did sell the car.

A similar fortunate escape for me which could have had drastic results was when club member Steve Weeks wanted to buy the wire wheels from a Jaguar that I was wrecking. Foolishly, I used the jack supplied by Jaguar which was of a triangular design with a long brass threaded centre. I sat spreadeagled with both legs under the car in readiness to remove one of the wheels when the jack completely collapsed without warning. Thankfully I was young and agile in those

days and was able to quickly scramble out from under the descending vehicle. The lessons I learned from this were (1) to never have my legs underneath a car and (2) to always place a spare wheel under the car to support it in case of jack failure.

Another highlight of my Jaguar experiences. Gavin Sandford-Morgan had just imported a C-type from Great Britain and I was privileged to have a fast ride with him in it around the track at Birdwood Mill. I remember that club members were astonished at his purchase at the time because for a little more money he could have bought a brand new XJ6. If only we could have seen into the future!!

**G: Perhaps a funny motoring or club experience?**

**D:** Once on a club Observation Run across the city, we had to find a used bus ticket in the bin by the bus stop in

Victoria Square and record the Leal quote written on the ticket. All went well, I rummaged in the bin and found a ticket, only to be told by a very rough looking gentleman to clear off, as it was his bin and he made me put the ticket back.

In the 1970s, an old-time car dealer asked as a favour if I would allow him to display my immaculate 3.8 Mk2 in an elevated position at his yard, which was located near the back entrance to Chrysler Australia. This was to act as a drawcard for customers. As I was talking to him, a Valiant Charger screamed out on to South Road from the rear of the Chrysler building. The driver (according to the dealer) was none other than the celebrated racing driver Stirling Moss who had been brought to SA to help combat a problem with the limited slip differential – hence the unusual exit from the back of the factory.

My car was duly put on display for about a month, and as a thank-you the dealer gave me his dealer identification manual of "Robbie's Automobiles of the World". I still have this guide as it was never made available to the public and is very comprehensive. The dealer amazed me with his ability to drink a bottle of Coke, smoke a cigarette, chew gum, answer the phone and talk to any prospective buyer in the yard all in the same minute.

**G: A fascinating story. Thank you, David & Carol, very much for your time and photographs.**



*David in the original C-Type with Gavin Sandford-Morgan at Birdwood*