

A Story About a Jaguar Speedboat

Editor: The following story was published in February 2016 Classic Marque. It was felt that it is now appropriate and timely to reprint the article together with some updated photographs.

Project – Hydroplane

It was early 1954, and a plan was launched to build a very fast competitive boat, but it took years of effort and testing to obtain success. The "Maryanne" named after Ray Loffler's youngest daughter who was born on the same year the boat was first ready for the water, in late 1954.

A wooden Hull had to be built, it was to be a Hydroplane, a rare style of boat. A huge task as very few had ever been built in South Australia before 1954 but plans from Italy were obtained.

The hull was built by Globe Products, a small Adelaide Company who was at the time building wooden Caravans. A very powerful engine was needed and where in the mid-1950s would one obtain such an engine?

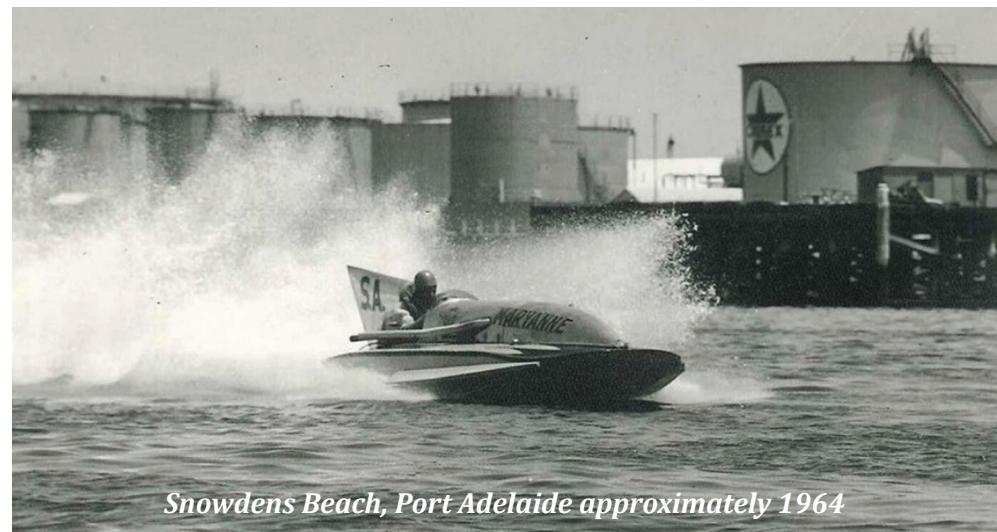
Dry Sump Jaguar Engine

The answer was a Jaguar XK120. As these engines were still very new, a search for a damaged or Insurance right off leads to a car that was crashed into the ocean from the bluff at Victor Harbor. With the engine removed the rest of the car was stored in a shed for years before it was later restored using a MK 7 engine and it still exists. (Chassis No 660197 Engine No W1870-7).

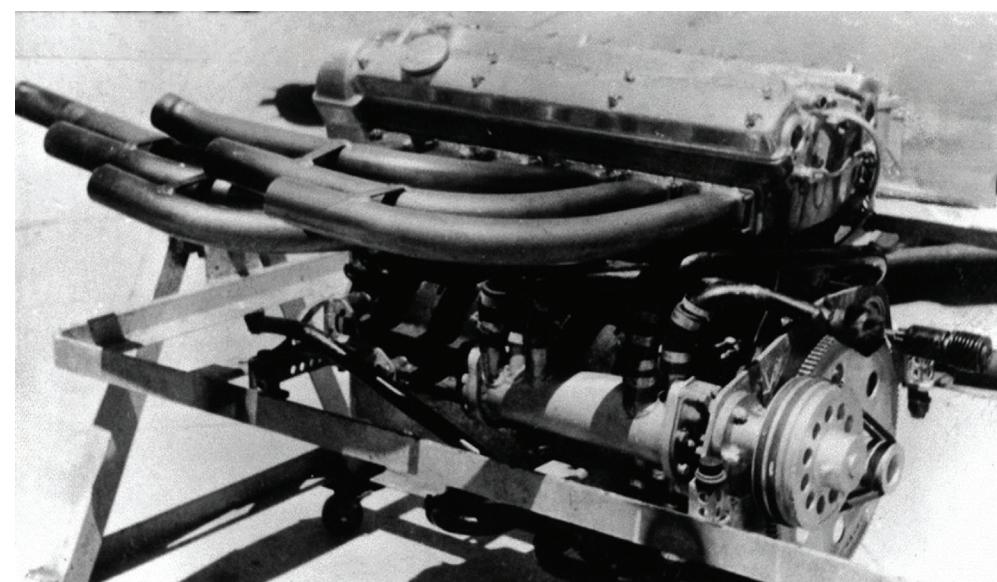
Before the XK engine was fitted to the Maryanne, it was fully balanced and highly modified with 6 Grand Prix Carburettor's, an Aluminium Flywheel, reground cams, 6 very short straight-out exhausts, dual points, dual coil ignition, pistons for a 2.4 engine which is the same bore size but with a much higher crown giving a compression of about 13:1 running on Methanol. The head was drilled to inject oil onto the Cam lobes as this was before the days of drilled Cams.

So, the Engine could be as low as possible in the boat the Sump was reduced in depth and a dry sump system was adapted utilising five belt driven oil pumps, two to supply the oil to the Engine and three to scavenge the oil back out via a water cooler to a tank mounted behind the driver. A 6-volt starter motor running on 12 volt was required to start the engine.

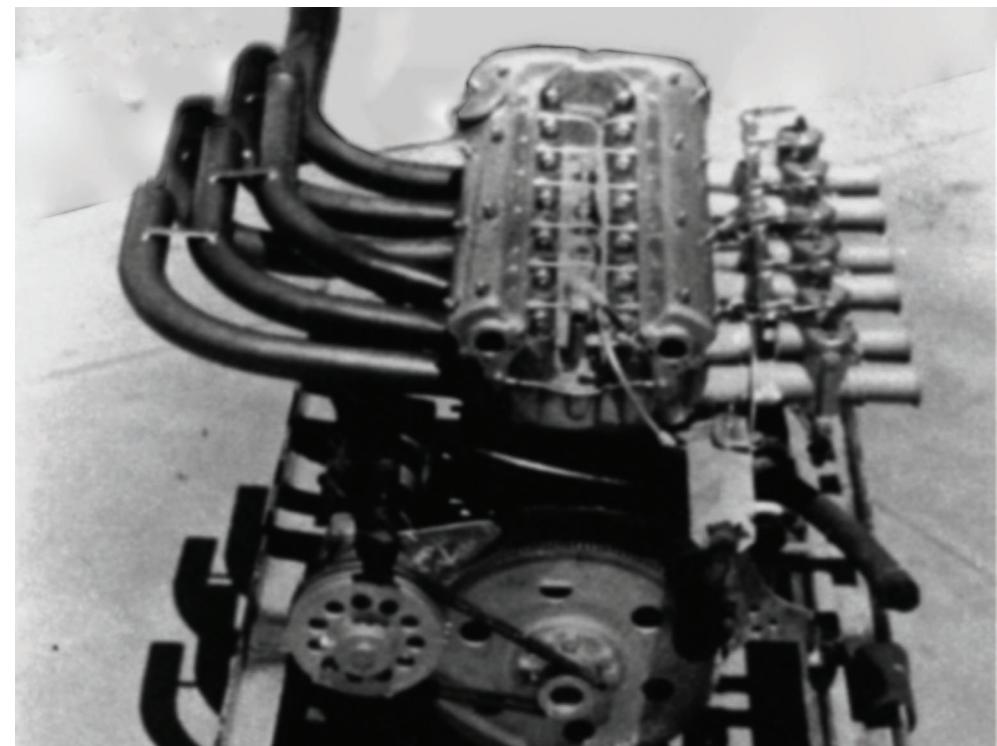
Ray spent hundreds of hours developing the boat including a special steel two



Snowdens Beach, Port Adelaide approximately 1964



The first engine with straight out exhausts and the aircraft oil pumps for the dry sump.



The early inject oil system, 6 Grand Prix Carburettor's and Aluminium flywheel

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Maryanne in Ray Loffler's back yard, approximately 1964

blade propeller driven from the front of the engine. This was raced with some success but it was hard to start from cold. The ignition was unreliable and the fuel supply was inadequate with its two electric SU fuel pumps, as two miles to the gallon was the average and this limited the engine RPM.

The cold starting was overcome by mixing a cocktail of fuels; two-parts of Methanol, one-part Benzol and one-part Super petrol. It was found these three ingredients would stay mixed for a short time, however the carburettors and fuel system needed to be drained and cleaned after each event. 17

The ignition problems were solved with the fitment of a Lucas BN146 Magneto and the fuel supply was increased by installing an aircraft fuel pump mounted on the rear of the belt driven oil pumps.

Engine No. 2

After many high stressed runs the original XK120 block eventually cracked along the bottom of the water jacket and a new one was bought from Dominion Motors in Adelaide on 17-7-1959, part no C4820 for eighty-five pounds. This new block only lasted one season before a conrod broke and punching a hole out the side.



Ray Loffler with the decaying Maryanne, Mannum South Australia, approximately 1990

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Robert Loffler, repairing the Hull, 2012



Engine No. 3

In Late 1959 a new XK 150S Engine was bought from England for the Maryanne, Engine No VS2167-8.

This was fitted complete with all the modifications apart from retaining the triple SU carburation and the compression was reduced to 10:1 by fitting special solid skirt pistons. In this configuration the engine was very reliable and would run to 7000 RPM.

Racing Incident

With the new engine the boat was running very well by early 1960, until on one of its test-runs at over 90 mph, it hit something in the water, believed to be a seal. This flipped the boat end for end. Luckily Ray suffered only a few cuts and bruises, but the boat sunk to the bottom

of the Port River for three days. The lack of visibility under water made it a long task to recover the Maryanne. The Hull was badly damaged with all the decking destroyed, and the engine with all the electrics were full of salt water.

Rebuild

The boat was fully rebuilt in three months and continued to race very successfully in South Australia and interstate, holding many South Australian records and one Australian record, achieving a top speed of 105 mph and a two way South Australian record of 98 mph.

In 1964 whilst racing in the Inland Speedboat Championship's held in Copi Hollow, a small town in outback New South Wales, the boat hit a large wash and damaged the hull badly.

Temporary New Owner

The hull without the Engine was then sold to a chap in Mannum South Australia who was to rebuild the boat with another Jaguar Engine, however he passed away before finishing the project and the hull was left in the weather for 25 years.

In about 1990, the derelict hull of the Maryanne was bought back by the original family and reunited with its XK150s engine which had been still retained by the family since 1960.

Restoration

The restoration of the boat was only started in 2011 by Robert Loffler, Ray's son. The hull was completely stripped down to the main frame and painstakingly brought back to its former

Fourth generation Loffler checking out the cars 2015



A Story About a Jaguar Speedboat (cont)

The restoration finished ready for the re-launch 2015



glory including matching the original colours and even to having the sign work done by hand. With the engine completely overhauled, and a new trailer built in September 2015 the Maryanne was again ready to hit the water for the first time in 50 years.

Ray Loffler

Ray Loffler, the owner and Driver of the Maryanne was also a Jaguar man from the 1950s owning many XK120'S including chassis No 660238, 660094, 660110, 660197, 660221, 660560, 660887, and 660794.

Unfortunately, Ray passed away at 91 in 2010 before the restoration was

completed, however the legacy lives on throughout his family including fourth generations with Jaguars, and the Maryanne a big part.

Since the boat was completed, it has had a number of runs and displays with Ray's and Robert's family and friends keen to help out as support crew and tracking down and recording history. A lot of interest has been shown whenever the boat appears in public, and it is always great to meet and chat with people that remember seeing the Maryanne in its hay days.

We have just found out recently, that The Maryanne has been listed in the

Australian register of historic vessels, by the Australian National Maritime Museum.

The Loffler family are very proud of their grandfather and his achievements.

Rob Loffler

The Maryanne is not a tiny unit. She is 17 feet long and quite lively to drive. With Ray behind the wheel, it achieved a number of awards and records.

A small section of trophies and records won by the Maryanne:

- Port Adelaide Regatta 1958
- R S L Cup 1958
- Bradley Trophy Hydroplane Championship Mannum 3 times 1957, 1958, 1959
- Australian Power Boat Championship South Australian title 225cc Hydro Record 97.466 mph 1962
- BP South Australia Unlimited Speedboat Championship 1963
- BP Trophy- Certificate of Championship twice 1963, 1964
- BP Goolwa Aquatic Club Open Unlimited Championship of South Australia 1964
- Loadmaster Trailers Trophy Certificate of Championship 1964
- Eastern Road lines Trophy Certificate of Championship 1964
- River Murray Open Unlimited Speed Boat Championship 1964.



The Jaguar speedboat at South Australian Jaguar Day in October 2019