



Q and A Steve Weeks

Member No. 22

Questions; Peter Thomas

Answers: Steve Weeks

What was your first car?

Riley 2.5: Sold to me by Gordon Brown when he bought a Mark 1. I paid it off at \$5.00 per week and eventually sold it to a back-packer. I never saw it again but would love to get it back.

Can you remember your first encounter with a Jaguar?

Yes, as noted above, my fellow apprentice Gordon Brown bought a Mark 1, 2.4 from Para Motors (West Tce). It was then that I decided the Riley would go and I bought a Mark 2, 2.4 from All Star Motors in 1968.

Gordon is still a member of our club.

How did you become interested in Jaguars or classic cars?

My dad had a number of Rileys and whenever he encountered a Chrysler Royal or any type of Jag, it became a race. He could beat the Chryslers but never the Jags and it was then that I decided I had to have one when I was old enough.

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

Apart from the Riley I already mentioned, Classic cars we have owned include: -

- **Mark 2 (2.4L):** Started as a standard car but became a triple carby 3.8. We took it to the snow numerous times – to Jindabyne where we skied at Perisher Valley. It was eventually sold to a club member, but its fate is unknown.
- **XJ6 Series 2:** Lovely car and had it for years which included 2 engine rebuilds. The automatic transmission finally failed.



Steve's Mark 2 (2.4) at the Club's first run to Belair National Park

- **XJ6 Series 1:** Registration number SNZ444, one trip to the snow where the alternator fell off.
- **XJ12 Series 2:** Sold to club member Brian Walker, who has since passed away.
- **XJ6 Series 3:** I bought this from Geoff Mockford – it was going to be wrecked, but was considered by Geoff to be too good for that. I didn't keep it for long as I had been given a company work vehicle.
- **Honda S600 Convertible:** At 12,000 RPM, it sounded like a lawn mower – I hated it and it hated me!
- **Sunbeam Alpine Series 4 GT:** Great little car, loved it and on an Easter Thursday I went to pick up an E-Type engine from an old club member (Colin Evans). It fitted in the boot and whilst driving home, a colour-blind lady drove through a red light and wrote the Alpine off.
- **XJS V12:** Great car, had it repainted and re-upholstered, but too thirsty for me.
- **XJ40 3.6:** Did many trips in it, including to the snow. It suffered a major engine failure at McLaren Vale.
- **X Type 2.1:** We bought this especially for our dog (air conditioned) and being a Jag, we could park it with the Jags at club functions. We still have it.
- **XK150 FHC:** Ex-Dave and Sally Burton's car which I still have. Ironically, we parked alongside the car the night of the very first meeting at the Brecknock Hotel.

Interview - Steve Weeks

You joined the JDCSA in 1973 and are member number 22. What do you remember in particular about those early days of the club?

I recall the first meeting well. It was raining when we met at the Brecknock Hotel in King William Street. We all completed questionnaires regarding our relevant experience and willingly handed over membership money.

The club as we know it was formed from the former XK register, which included numerous Victorians. Our club was started by a number of members of that group. Our first club run was to Belair National Park.

I also recall an early event being an economy run where we fuelled up at the Adelaide Airport and we ended at Tanunda. In those days, there were a lot of young people with families and we had a lot of parties.

You became Social Secretary sometime during the first year of the club (1973/74) until 1976 and then back again in March 1978 until 1980. As I understand that was a very demanding position back then.

John Alexander was the first Social Secretary and I took over from him after about four weeks. The position then was to organise all club events, so I formed a Social Committee to help. They were a very enthusiastic group.



Steve and Val's XK150 - previously owned by Dave Burton

You then took on the Technical Position in 1980/81/82/83. What was involved in that position?

We held technical evenings which were really popular to a point where we sometimes had to repeat a particular subject.

I usually held them at my home and members would bring items off their cars and we would teach them how to repair the particular component.

Another service provided by this position was assessing a value on members cars' which was used for "agreed values" for insurance purposes.

What other positions did you then take on and any particular memories or happenings?

Whilst President from 1986-88, we held the National Rally and flew "Lofty" (Frank England) out to Australia and New Zealand. I recall that during festivities, we attended a chicken and champagne supper on board a sloop owned by Roland Short from Brown's Lane Spares. The manager of JRA and his wife also attended. Someone suggested that we sail to Outer Harbour to look at a cruise ship, the lights of which were visible in the distance. Unfortunately, the lights were that of a sheep ship and once we were close enough to realise the mistake, we had to sail past before turning. The smell was so pungent, it sent a lot of people to the rails where many of them added some burley to the sea.

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

Like so many of the members in those days, it was a struggle to maintain a work, family and club balance but we managed.



Steve & Val's, 2006 Dark Blue X-Type

Interview - Steve Weeks

I gather there was a period of time where you were not an active member of the club - is that the case. Was it a work-related issue?

A number of reasons, firstly the family was growing up and more family time was required. Also, the club went through some bad times and we simply decided to stay away for a while.

Have you been a member of any other Car Clubs?

Not car clubs but motor bikes. I was a member of the Honda Club of SA Inc. Also at the time, I was competitively racing motorcycles and was a member of the Auto Cycle Union (the motorcycle version of the MSCA), so I travelled around a lot with the bikes on a trailer behind either the Riley or the Mark 2. My staple diet at the track was baked beans with Rice-A-Reso as a dessert.

A memory, perhaps not so fond, relates to the first Honda CB750 to arrive in Australia. Japan had shipped it to the USA but somehow it was overlooked and when the ship arrived in Adelaide, it was off-loaded and provided to Taylor Honda. It could not be sold because the model hadn't been released in Australia at the time. Given my services to the Honda agents, it was seconded to me to ride around as a promotion. I should



At Griffith on the way to the National Rally hosted by NSW in the early 70's

add at this time, Val was my fiancé and her parents were dead against her being involved with motorcycles. However, I convinced them that this was a special moment and they allowed her to ride pillion.

Anyway, we were riding along Brighton Road and I was suddenly surrounded

by other motorcycles – the riders were amazed to see such a bike as the Honda 750 on the roads. I shouted to Val, “hang on” then dropped it down a few cogs and twisted the throttle. Needless to say, the bike rocketed away from the group and after a short time, I turned around to say to Val “how was that”. To my horror, Val was no longer on the pillion. We never told her parents about the incident needless to say.

As I understand in those early days of the club, SA and Vic clubs were very close and regular attendance at interstate events were common. Is that correct and do you recall some of those trips to Victoria?

Very much so, the XK border runs and National Rallies were high on the list. I always said that our family had 2 holidays each year, one to the snow and one to wherever the National Rally was. We made many friends and still have them.

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

Yes, following on from above, the family got to see a lot of Australia. Some memories I can't talk about (some of us



The very first CB750 Honda in Australia

Interview - Steve Weeks

got into a bit of trouble but we were a lot younger then). We were always entering rallies, so much so that we treated members from NSW and Victoria like distant family members – it was always great to catch up.

I recall the first Tasmanian rally where we had 30 cars from South Australia drive over. We stayed at Ballarat which included a visit to Sovereign Hill, where it was very amusing to see Barry Kitts shackled in the stockade. I don't know who put the Police Officer up to it!

In Melbourne the Victorian Club very kindly provided us a barbecue at the wharf prior to boarding (with drinks). Unbeknownst to us however, was that the Tasmanian Club and Tasmanian Tourist Bureau had arranged a seafood smorgasbord in the Cocktail Room of the ship (with lots more alcohol). As we set sail, the ship was not particularly stable, but when it went through the heads it caused a stampede as many rushed for the railings outside. I remember that not too many of us had breakfast the following morning.

When did you and Val start a family? Did that affect your involvement with club?

Val and I were married in October 1970 and had our twins in 1974 and yes, those



At a Motorkhana in Griffith. (Left-Right): David Seidel (1st Secretary of the club), Carol Seidel, Val Weeks and Peter & Ros Holland

events affect other commitments but we somehow managed to juggle all our interests.

I gather a lot of fellow members were starting families at the time. It must have had some effects on the social aspect of the club in those days!

There were a lot of families being started in those days which didn't inhibit club activities but it did include a lot of events

organised specifically for children. One of our biggest events for the year was the Childrens Christmas Party.

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?

Of particular note was Noel Courtin, an ex-British army 6' 6" man who was indeed, very British. He and his wife



Steve seen here doing repairs on the factory XJ13. Story previously covered in May 2020 Classic Marque.

Interview - Steve Weeks

Gloria would share their home with Lofty England when he visited. Because they were about the same height, Lofty would refer to Noel as his older brother. There have been so many members in the early days who have passed away like Len Cardnell, Ian Forrester & Ron Ozlanski (who was a close friend) just to name a few.

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

My Mark 2 closely followed by the XK150 (ex-Dave Burton's car).

Your fondest memories owning a Jaguar or classic car?

Just the joy of having and driving a Jag, no matter what model it was.

Any interesting or special 'Jaguar' experience?

Some I can't mention, but the Mark 2 blowing up outside of Cooma on our honeymoon was right up there.

Perhaps a funny motoring or club experience?

As said, we made many trips to the snow in the Mark 2. On one occasion we were traveling on the Alpine Way to Thredbo, it was dark and we were going down a steep hill to a bridge at Leather Barrel Creek. There was a sharp turn onto the wooden bridge which was one way traffic. It never snows there at that time of year, but this year was heaps of snow. Val woke up to see a bow wave of snow



Steve's mother and F1 and Moto GP legend John Surtees,

either side of the Mark 2 and said "slow down". My reply was "we are in reverse with the hand brake on". (We almost made the turn onto the bridge).

Of particular note was the F1 Historic Garage Cocktail Party I attended before the Grand Prix. It included the motoring elite of not only Australia but many from overseas. I had wrangled an invitation for my mother who could talk the knob off of a door and so I told her not to

bother people. She disappeared for a time. When I found her, she told me how she had fetched a cup of tea for a rather shy chap standing at the back. I went to investigate with my mother and when I introduced myself to him, he offered his hand and responded with "I'm John Surtees". He was indeed a shy chap but just happened to be the only man to have won World Championships in both F1 and GP motorcycles.

To give an idea of how times have changed, we held a lot of Motorkhanas and in one particular event, I was a passenger in Phil Smart's XK140 fixed head (Phil was the inaugural president). We were competing in a Flag and Barrel contest and whilst I was trying to deposit a flag, the door sprung open and there was body contact which resulted in two broken ribs for me. Phil said "keep it quiet, we don't want to scare others for subsequent events".

Thank you Steve very much for your time and photographs, and a big thank you to Val and yourself for your contributions to the club over the past 50 years. ■



Not Steve, but just an example of some of the events we got up to - a Flag and Barrel race. O H & S wasn't a consideration in those days. (It looks a bit like Peter Norris & John Phillips).