



Q and A Des Brown:

Member No. 44

**Questions; Graham Franklin
Answers: Des Brown**

G. Can you remember your first encounter with a Jaguar car?

Des: Yes, I was young and living in Ardrossan, working in a bank. The Bank manager's son did competitive push-bike racing and went to Victoria for a race. When he returned, I asked him how he went and he said he did okay and that he had also bought a car. It was parked out the front and it was none other than an SS100. He paid £500 pound for it. At the time I thought it was a bit 'agricultural'. I don't know what ever happened to it, and all I remember was that it was red.

G: I gather you have owned a number of cars in your lifetime?

Des: Yes, seventy-seven (77) in total. My first car was a 1948 Austin 8 Sports Tourer. I used to look in the Adelaide Advertiser used car section, which in those days also contained interstate cars. So, I often travelled interstate and bought a second hand car. I generally kept them for a while, played around with them, and then bought something else.

On occasions, I also travelled to London and attended high end auctions where I also bought cars that included a couple of Jaguars.

G: What make of cars have you owned?

Des: Overtime I have owned a few new cars like Holdens and the like, but mainly used cars including Minis, Hillmans, Toyotas, Austins, Fords, Mazdas, Mercedes, Chryslers, Rovers, Alphas, Datsuns, Triumphs, Hondas, Magnas, Porsches, Nissans, Suzukis, Audis and Jaguars of course. (At this stage Des handed me a list of all the cars he has owned including the miles/kms he travelled in each - totally over 1.5 million kilometres).



One of Des Brown's Series 2 XJ6



Series 2 Daimler Sovereign



Late Series 1 XJ12L

Interview - Des Brown (cont)

G: Okay Des what about Jaguars?

Des: A Mk 2, S-Type, Mk4 Drophead Coupe, Mk4 Saloon, Modern S-Type, X-Type, XF, XJ6 (four), XJ12, Daimler Sovereign and a Daimler Double-Six Vanden Plas. In Jaguar kilometres travelled, it is about 250,000 kms.

G: How did you become interested in Jaguar cars?

Des: I don't really know. It just happened. They were always on my mind. I had various Holdens and Minis and then I bought a Mark II 2.4 litre. It was the 10th car I owned and I did about 35,000 km in it. Then there was the 3.8 litre S-type and various XJ6's, XJ12, etc.

G: And then the 1948 3.5 Litre Mk 4 DHC?

Des: Yes, I bought the Mk 4 for \$1,700 in 1978 in SA from a Rob McWilliams who had stored it under canvas for 11 years. To my knowledge the car was always a South Australian car and originally owned by RM Williams (The Stockman Outfitter).

I hired a trailer and took it home. Over the years it moved dozens of times from place to place and took about 25 years to restore. It was finally finished around 2004 and then I started entering it in concours. (At this stage Des showed me a book with every single \$ he'd spent restoring it, including the hours taken).

G: So, Des did you restore it?

Des: No, most of the work was done by Don Evans who had also restored a Mk IV drophead. His car was clearly one of the best in Australia and possibly the world, winning many concours trophies. He used to pip my car by a few points, but every now and then my car would be judged slightly better.

G. Both these cars are no longer in South Australia?

Des. Unfortunately, not. I sold my car in 2015 to Fred & Elaine Williams of Victoria. Don sold his car about the same time and it went overseas.

Don passed away in 2016, but Margaret has remained in the club and often



Des Brown's Series 2 Daimler Sovereign



One of Des's favourite Jaguar's - Series 2 Daimler Double-Six Vanden Plas



Interview - Des Brown (cont)

hosts Register meetings in her home.

I understand you used to race cars?

Des: I used to compete in Motorkanas and regularly competed in annual championships in Hay. I did very well and won in my Mini Cooper. I also raced a Porsche at Mallala and at Calder in Victoria.

Did you race Jaguars?

Des: Yes, I did a couple of timed sprint races at Mallala in my Daimler Double-Six Vanden Plas. On one occasion I came around the final corner, flattened it, the rear broke away, and the car went across the finish line sideways. A lot of fun.

Have you been a member of any other Car Clubs?

My first was the Morris 850 Club and also the Porsche club where I was treasurer for a while.

I am still a member of the JCCC. (Jaguar Classic Car Club)

JCCC – I don't know much about that. I was in Darwin when the JCCC broke away from the JDCSA and some members left our club. Do you recall what happened?

Des: Yes, two other members and myself formed the JCCC. The problem was that we couldn't have Register meetings without permission, we couldn't go on runs together unless we had insurance, we had a lot of unnecessary restrictions placed on us and there were also financial issues. We felt isolated from the rest of the club.

G: That was very unfortunate Des. In the early days of the club the 'XK' Register and the "Pushrod" Register were the backbone of the club. A lot of the oldest members of the club are still found in these registers. It was a shame that it couldn't have been resolved.

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

Des: Well obviously, the Mk 4 drop-head because I owned it for so long and it went through a nut and bolt restoration. Also, the Daimler Double-Six Vanden Plas. I did about 18,000 km in that car and it was really quite special.



Interview - Des Brown (cont)



However, the turbo diesel XF that I currently drive is a lovely car. I enjoy driving it because it handles very well, has plenty of get up and go, and is very economical.

Any interesting or special 'Jaguar' experiences?

Des: After Ardrossan, I was transferred with the bank to Adelaide. I was staying at a house in Glenelg with two other guys. The woman that owned the house had a garage out the back. One day I was looking around in the garage at various motor bike and side car parts. I found a name plate lying in the dust on the floor. It looked interesting and I kept it.



It wasn't until years later, thanks to the internet, that I searched for the history of the name plate and found out that it was none other than the name of William Walmsley's first sidecars. History shows that he designed the polished aluminium sidecar which he attached to ex-War Department Triumphs and the like. It had a bullet-shaped streamlined octagonal body, quite unusual for the day. He called it the "OTASELL", and registered the design officially in April 1921. They were advertised for sale at £28.



At the time I had no idea that the "OTASELL", went on to be built by the 'Swallow Sidecar Company'. At that stage, any hope of retrieving and restoring this sidecar was long gone.

G: A fascinating story Des, anything else you would like to add?

Des. No that's all.

G. Thank you Des very much for your time and photographs.

Photo Top: Des Brown (left) and Don Evans working on Des's 1948 3.5 Litre Mk 4 DHC.

2nd Photo: Des's car won many awards including Best Restoration in 2004; Most Desirable Car in 2006; and a Silver Award at the National 2007 Concours d'Elegance.

3rd Photo: The finished restoration.

4th Photo: Nameplate belonging to William Wamsley's OTASELL Sidecar. In Des's younger years, he was looking around in a garage at miscellaneous bike and sidecar parts and picked up this nameplate. It turned out it was from a sidecar that was William Walmsley's first design that went on to be 'The Swallow Sidecar Company'.

